

A European Trip Diary

July 5-31, 1995

Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia
Austria, Germany, Poland, France

War Drums Are Beating



By Bob Djurdjevi}

Belgrade, Yugoslavia

July 5, 1995 (Wednesday)

Ivor Roberts/British Chargé

(a meeting at the British ambassador's residence/Branka Djonovica 1 - just off of Uzicka Ulica where US ambassador's residence is - 17:05 to 18:30)

The Setting

I arrived at the residence before IR returned from work. So the staff led me through the huge house, and to the terrace facing the south. The vegetation was lush and the lawns and flowers were obviously well maintained. At the western part of the building, there was even a croquet lawn. "How British!" I thought, contrasting that with the tennis court at the American ambassador's residence.

When IR arrive, he was wearing a business suit. I was in my jeans and short-sleeve shirt. I explained the reason for my attire (the Austrian Airlines lost my baggage). He laughed and said that any sensible person would dress that way anyway on a hot day like this. "I only wish I could do the same," he added. "But I have a reception to go to later on" (a farewell party for the Dutch ambassador).

Purpose of Rapid Reaction Force

IR confirmed my theory that the purpose of the new RRF is to make the British and the French troops less dependent on American support. But he stressed that they are there to stay.

When asked if all of the 12,000 new troops have now been deployed, IR said that that there were still some of them arriving. In fact, the Croats are causing problems with some of them right now at Split, he said.

Frasure's Talks with Milosevic

IR was very blunt about the fact that the Americans are a part of the problem, not a part of the solution, in the Balkan crisis. He said that Bob Frasure, the US negotiator with Slobodan Milosevic, had told him that Madelaine Albright had torpedoed the deal he and SM had reached at Karadjordjevo. After Frasure had made the deal with SM, Washington came up after a couple of days with a whole new list of issues. IR said that he was afraid that any future offers to SM will be worse than this one.

O'Grady

He said that he doubted that the Bosnian Serbs had ever captured the downed American pilot, but did not consider it an important issue anyway.

Bosnian Serb Leaders

I asked IR what sort of a message would be helpful to him if I were to meet with the Bosnian Serb leaders. He replied that he had already met several times with the Bosnian Serb political leaders (Karadzic & Koljevic), "at times, in Zvornik, to the chagrin of the Americans, who want to control everything." "I've told them (the Bosnian Serbs) all myself, more than once what I thought they should do," he said. "Which is to accept the Contact Group plan as a starting point for negotiations." He also said that the constitutional issues have been clarified more than six months ago. This allowed the Serbs the same rights as were originally given to the Croats - confederate with Serbia if they choose to.

So IR sounded exasperated with the Bosnian Serbs. "Why are they so intransigent in your opinion?" I asked. "I don't know," he replied. "I only know that they are being quite unreasonable" about their position and the Contact Group offer. I said that I was against it myself as it did not spell out the Serbs' constitutional rights. "But that's been all clarified months ago," IR said. He explained that the Serbs were given the reciprocal rights to confederate with Serbia as the Croats had vis-à-vis Croatia.

Rifkind Appointment

IR said that "10 minutes ago" he had learned that John Major had appointed Malcolm Rifkind, his Defense Minister, to the newly open post of Foreign Office Secretary (following Douglas Hurd's resignation). "I am very pleased to hear that!" I exclaimed. "So am I, so am I" IR replied, adding that Rifkind was "the one who told Bob Dole off in no uncertain terms." He said he was off to London next week - both to give the new minister his report, and to get new instructions.

As we were saying our good-byes, IR said he'd like to see me again, if possible, upon his return from London.

Bora Jovanovic

(a dinner at the "Gardos" restaurant in Zemun - 20:30 to 23:00)

Croatian Build-up

BJ said that Croatian forces were reportedly amassing on both the southern and eastern fronts against the Serbian Krajina. The rest of the conversation was mostly about family matters and the schedule of meetings over the next two days.

Exchange Rates

After more than a year of a relatively stable Dinar-DM exchange rate, the Serbian currency plunged suddenly in March. Now it has recovered somewhat, but it still trades (illegally) at about 2.5 Dinars to 1 DM.

⊙ **End of Day 1** ⊙

July 6, 1995 (Thursday)

Rudolf Perina/US Chargé

(a meeting at his office, Mike Seidenstricker [press attache] present - 9:45 to 10:30)

Current Situation; Albright Factor

RP said that the current situation “is the worst in the last two years” he had been in BG. Asked to elaborate on the reasons why, he said that it was because of the failure of the Frasure mission, and the fact that there is no political solution in sight.

I said that I’d heard that Madelaine Albright had scuttled the SM-Frasure deal, and asked RP if that were true. He said that it was not. “I’ve been with Frasure during every second of his every meeting with SM,” he explained. “Frasure and SM had reached agreement on about 85% of the issues.” But they could not close the loop on the remainder. RP said that the State Dept. had actually kept Frasure in BG longer than he had planned to stay. It was because of the UN hostage situation, “just in case something were to break.” “I think that Frasure would tell you himself that he and SM had reached an impasse, and that there was nothing more he could do.”

Later on, however, Mike S. had told me that the deal was actually scuttled by the Germans and the Croats. They thought that SM had gotten too much for what he was asked to give up.

What Was Not Agreed Upon

I asked RP what were the remaining 15% of issues? He said that the language dealing with suspension (versus the lifting) of the sanctions, and the reimposition thereof, if SM were to violate the deal, was the stickiest one. There were also some other minor issues which I do not recall.

Balkan “Lightening Rod;” Treatment of Allies

I asked RP to explain why it is necessary for the US to aggravate relations with its traditional allies, such as Britain and France, over the relatively minor American interests in the Balkans. “The Balkan crisis is a lightening rod for many other contentious issues (between the US and Europe),” he said. *(I interpreted this to mean that the Balkans have once again become the spark which ignites the conflict between great powers. But this also could have meant that the Balkan crisis has diverted the attention from other issues where the European and the US interests clash).* RP said that the US allies (i.e., Britain and France) have adopted an attitude that “the US will deliver the Muslims and the Croats if they negotiate with the Serbs.” He thought that that was unfair.

UN Withdrawal

RP said that “our military experts tell me that the Muslim army is now strong enough to stand on its own even if the UN were to withdraw,” he said. He added that that is judged to be the case even without the eventual NATO bombing in support of the Muslims. “That may not be necessary,” he said.

“Greater Milosevic”

In subsequent a brief private meeting at his office after I was done with RP, Mike dropped one of the best lines I’ve heard about SM. After I had explained that the term “Greater Serbia” does not exist in native Serbian, except as a translation from foreign languages, and that, therefore, the term is an invention of the Serbian enemies, Mike nodded affirmatively. “I agree. I don’t think that Milosevic is for a ‘Greater Serbia’,” he said. “I think he is for a ‘Greater Milosevic’.” I laughed.

(Mike S. is returning back to the State Dept. next month after two years in BG).

Patriarch Pavle

(a meeting at his office, Bishop Irinej Backi present - 12:30 to 13:35)

Letter from Pavle

Before I went into my meeting with the Patriarch, his chief of cabinet, Father Lecic, gave me his letter of recommendation to be used during our planned visits to various monasteries.

Financial Aid

As soon as he had a chance to break into the conversation, Bishop Irinej Backi asked if I could help raise some funds for the church in North America. I explained to him what I did in 1991, along with Bishop Irinej of Chicago and the Patriarch. And that many people had soured on donations in the last two years, both because of corruption and because they never find out what the Church did with their money.

First Pavle, then Irinej, both agreed that, sadly, that was all true. “Unfortunately, we (the clergy) don’t have the ability to communicate,” Pavle said. I agreed, and pointed out that interpersonal communication is a profession like any other, including priesthood.

Bishop Irinej then piped in with an example in support of what I had said. He chastised Father Filaret who last year criticized IOCC in writing without Patriarch’s or Sinod’s approval. Worse, he did it on the basis of hunches not facts.

At the end of our meeting, Bishop Irinej saw me off and invited me to visit him at his diocese in Novi Sad.

*Dusan Zupan/YU Foreign Ministry
Slobodan Jovanovic/Tanjug Director
Vesna Prlja/Club Manager
(a luncheon at the Press Club - 14:30 to 16:30)*

Foreign Ministry

DZ said that he did not know as yet if he liked his new job at the Foreign Ministry. Eventually, he expects to be posted somewhere as the YU ambassador, maybe even to Washington. But for now, he is still learning the ropes. "It's very different from journalism," he said. The biggest difference, he explained, is that "it is a huge bureaucracy which moves very slowly."

Tanjug and Press Club

As DZ introduced VP to me as the Press Club manager, she explained that she used to report to DZ when he was TANJUG's editor-in-chief. I did not know that the Press Club was a part of Tanjug, and expressed my surprise at learning that.

Slobodan Jovanovic

Before SJ joined us, DZ had explained that he is both Tanjug's director, a Member of Parliament, and the SPS party boss for the BG district. He is also chairman of the Parliament's Foreign Relations Committee. "In other words, he is one of SM's friends?" I asked. "One of his closest and oldest friends," DZ replied.

Like myself, SJ was casually dressed. He apologized for being a few minutes late, saying he'd just gotten a call from Zebic (a Vice President of Yugoslavia). SJ seemed slow to clue into our conversation, as DZ tried to explain to him who I was and what I've been doing. But after a few minutes, he began to warm up. By the end of our two-hour luncheon, he said he wanted to meet with me again if possible. I was non-committal saying I did not know when I'd be returning to BG. As it turned out, SJ had deliberately made himself almost an hour late for his next meeting. "They can wait," he told the head waiter who reminded him at one stage what time it was, and that he was already half an hour late for that meeting.

SJ is originally from Vranje, in southeast Serbia. This area is supposed to be the SM stronghold. Which is probably what SJ is credited with.

*Dusan Markovic/Radio BG
(a meeting plus an interview at Radio BG's studio - 19:00 to 20:20)*

Buca

Somebody who introduced himself as "Buca," and who seemed to be DM's producer, said he was very happy to meet me. He showed me a copy of the WT cartoon

(about the Serb dog ordering the NATO soldier to “sit!”) which I had sent to DM. Buca said that he had circulated many copies of that TIM BULLETIN cartoon.

Interview

During the interview with DM, I talked about the latest satirical comment I had made about Bob Dole in my letter to the NYT - the one regarding Bill Gates and the possibility that Dole would demand that women be admitted to play in the NBA.

SM and I also talked about the reach and range of the *TIM Bulletins*, and more specifically about the media attitude in Arizona. I said that the media coverage in AZ is maybe more positive than in other states, but that that’s no reason to rejoice. “That’s only 1/50th of the challenge,” I said.

When DM asked me if I had any announcements to make, I replied that the announcement I’d be the happiest to make would be that the “*TRUTH IN MEDIA*” is closing its doors (i.e., this would mean the job is done; the truth has won). I said I did not choose to start defending the truth and the Serbs five years ago, but that I was forced into it by the lies and distortions in the US media.

The interview aired on July 7, at about 21:30.

Slobodan Lazarevic/POLITIKA

(a dinner meeting at “Verdi,” a Terazije restaurant - 20:30 to 22:30)

Serb Journalists Killed in YU War

Laza said that he had a list of 21 Serbian journalists who were killed while covering the YU war. But that the international organization of journalists had totally ignored them. He said he was writing them a letter to complain about it. “Once again, their attitude seems to be, if it’s a Serb, it’s not a victim!” Laza said.

The Bill

At the end, Laza insisted on picking up the tab for dinner. After getting the bill, he produced a typewritten piece of paper with an official stamp on it. I figured it was BG’s equivalent of credit cards. The waiter took it and then returned a short while later. “I am sorry, but our administration says that POLITIKA’s credit line with our restaurant has expired,” he told Laza. Laza looked highly embarrassed. I figure he did not have enough cash to pay for it, so I offered to do it. Laza was grateful, but looked rather sheepish.

🕒 **End of Day 2** 🕒

July 7, 1995 (Friday)

*Gen. Momcilo Perisic, Chief of Gen. Staff, YU Army
(a meeting at his office, Col. Dr. Sinisa Borovic, present - 8:00 to 9:30)*

Taxi Driver

The taxi driver who knows me seemed surprised to see me in a business suit. "Did you know that today is a holiday around here?" he asked. "For me every day is a holiday," I joked. "Or the other way around."

First Impressions

I shared the above anecdote with MP. "I guess that makes the two of us?" I said, seeing that he was also working today. "That's right In war time, there is no such thing as a holiday," MP replied.

"How are you?" I asked him after we had shaken hands. "Still usable," he replied, referring to himself as if he were some sort of an old rifle.

Ideology

MP said that he sees himself as a fighter for the rights of the Serbian people, rather than a protector of this or that ideological system. "I don't care who is a communist, or who is something else. The only thing I care about is how well people perform in the line of duty."

Financial Aid

MP then started complaining how the Serbs in the diaspora aren't doing enough to support the war effort financially. "By that, I don't mean the aid sent through the clergy," he added. He pronounced the word "clergy" with some disdain, which caused him to immediately apologize for it, before I could say anything.

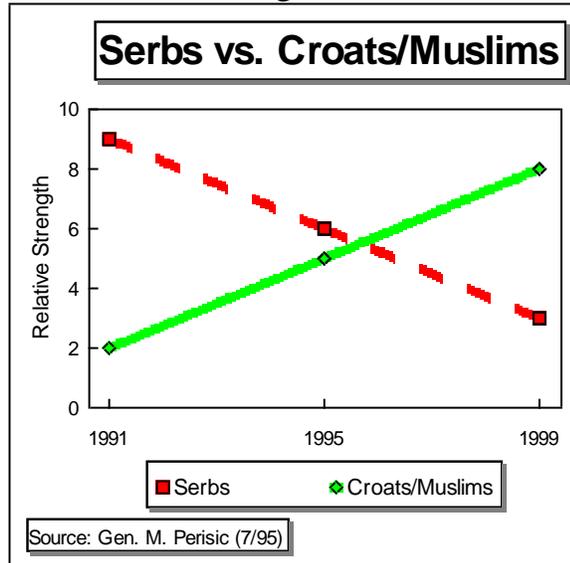
MP then proceeded to appeal to me to try to organize such a drive. "If you're willing to do it, we'll find the way to get it here," he said.

Ed. I remained non-committal, but could not help being amazed at the man's naivete, as well as his desperation. First, because the probable amounts involved are well beyond any private Serbian organization's ability to collect. Second, because something like that would be illegal under the laws of our countries, of which we are citizens. Third, because even the other aid which had been sent in the last four years is drying up, due to corruption and a lack of feedback. Finally, such a request was a sign that SM had probably cut off the funds to him, and rerouted it to the bulging Serbian police force. Which means that he is no longer able to buy the Russian equipment, either. MP returned to this subject twice later on in our meeting. Each time, I avoided any comment about it.

Diminishing Serb Strength

I evaded a direct answer by asking MP what the relative position of the Serbs was vis-a-vis its enemies four years ago. “Was it better or worse than today?” “It was better,” he replied. He said that Croatia’s military budget is \$5.3 billion, as compared to Serbia’s \$2.6 billion. “Now, would you plot these lines (of relative strengths - the Serbs vs. the enemies) into the future? Say four years from now?”

MP opened his notebook, and drew a diagram which looked like the following:



“There,” he said as he finished the graph. “We are still stronger, but if the current trends continue, we will lose. That’s why it is important for all Serbs to contribute financially.” I ignored his second plea for money, and reminded him of the fact that in May 1994, both of us agreed that time was on the side of Serbs’ enemies. He nodded.

Geopolitical Issues

MP is still doggedly hanging on to the theory he shared with me last year that the current Balkan war is a result of a clash between the German and the American interests. Rather than dispute that outright, I said that that may well be the case one day, but that, for the moment, the Balkan conflict is more of a reflection of clashing interests between the US and other Western Europeans, who want Americans out of Europe, now that the Cold War is over.

USA Today/CNN Survey

I also showed MP the June 8 survey of the American attitudes toward Bosnia, as published in the *TIM BULLETIN 95-09*. I said that that proved that despite the massive investment which the Serb foes had made into anti-Serb propaganda, by and large the American voter has not bought into the idea that the US should intervene in the Balkans.

Bosnian Serb Aid

I asked MP if they had indeed stopped the aid to the RS army after SM closed the border on August 4, 1994. MP said that the following reply “has to stay between us.”

“The relations between the RS and the YU armies, and our telecommunications and other support for Ratko Mladic was the only part of the Bosnian Serb and the Yugoslav government relations which did not change at all.” “And that’s been the case throughout this period?” I asked. “That’s right,” he replied. “Well, how did you manage to do that after the UN monitors were installed on the river Drina?” (This was one of SM’s concessions which led to the easing of sanctions in early October 1994).

MP leaned back and smiled enigmatically. “Well, that’s something we are going to leave for a discussion after the war is over.”

Bosnian Serb Leaders

On the subject of relations between the politicians, MP said that “Milosevic’s biggest mistake was when he installed Karadzic in Bosnia.” It was the first time in our two meetings that he was referring to his boss not only as a function, but also by name. I interpreted this as a sign of boldness which the public did not get to see in this man. Milosevic did not want to be seen as aggressor in Bosnia, and wanted to have a local Serb leader carry the fight as his proxy. Karadzic, in turn, “had bitten the hand that fed him.”

(I could not help but make a mental note that that’s exactly what the New York Times and other Serbian enemies have been saying for the last three years).

In addition, MP alleged that Karadzic was worth “several million dollars.” He explained how Karadzic had been on the take from the military supplies, too. “Did you know that the RS Army’s military budget is equivalent of one bullet per soldier?” he asked rhetorically. “Is that right?” I asked sounding incredulous. “I’m telling you it’s true. While Ratko (Mladic) and his fighters are bleeding, Karadzic is getting rich.”

“Where is he keeping all that money?” I asked, pointing out that, (unlike Milosevic and others), Karadzic is totally isolated, and cannot stash the money in foreign accounts. “I don’t know where he is keeping it, but I know it’s true,” MP replied.

MP added that he’d found especially repugnant the following incident: “Imagine: The Muslims launch an offensive (around Sarajevo) on (a) Thursday. The fighting continues on Friday. Thousands of Serbian soldiers are killed. Of course, the Muslims suffer much heavier casualties. And in the midst of all that, Karadzic marries his daughter on Saturday! They sing and party while the soldiers die...” MP shook his head in disgust.

(Later on, Baka told me independently that she is finding Karadzic “quite arrogant and opinionated.” She based this assessment on several years of watching the Bosnian Serb TV. “I don’t like him,” she said.)

Krajisnik - the Worst

I asked MP is Karadzic were the only one like that, or if the entire Bosnian Serb leadership were corrupt? “Actually, Karadzic is not the worst,” MP replied. “The worst is (Momcilo) Krajisnik.” “Is that because he is an economist?” I asked.

“I don’t know why. I just know that he is the ring-leader when it comes to war profiteering,” MP replied.

“And what about the others?” I asked. “Like (Prof. Nikola) Koljevic, for example?” “One only needs to pour Koljevic and glass of whiskey this tall,” he said measuring with his fingers about three inches worth, “and he is rendered useless.”

(I immediately recalled another person’s recent allegation that Koljevic was an alcoholic, which I dismissed as a rumor at the time. But do two swallows a spring make?).

MP also had some unflattering things to say about Biljana Plavsic. He thought that she often shot her mouth off without thinking.

(Later on, Baka told me virtually the same thing about Plavsic, whom she had been also watching on RS TV for a long time. Baka did not know that MP had also said the same thing about Plavsic).

“You really ought to go and talk to Ratko,” MP said. “You should see it for yourself.” I said I was planning to.

O’Grady

I asked MP if the Bosnian Serbs had held the downed American pilot at any time. “No they had not,” he said. “They’d found his parachute. That’s all.” “How do you explain then the fact that he was spotted and the parachute was retrieved near Mrkonjic Grad, while the rescue mission reportedly picked him up near Bihac. That’s about 100 km to the west!” I said. “Or the fact that the pilot himself had said that he was seen by some soldiers as well as civilians as he was descending with his parachute?”

MP seemed unsure of himself as he tried to answer this question. “We did see the American flotilla on our radar screens,” he said. “And (Gen.) Mrksic (the commander of the RSK Army) did fire from small arms on some of them. We could have also shot some of them down, too (with missiles). But it was deemed prudent to let them go.”

(MP’s answer raised more questions than it answered. But I decided to let go of the subject.)

Forced Conscription

MP said that Ratko (Mladic) had appealed to him to round up the Bosnian (and the Krajina?) refugees of military age in Yugoslavia as the RS troops were thinning out in heavy fighting across a long front. MP complained that, in response, “the Germans have released 3,500 Croatian criminals from their prisons, and are sending them to Croatia.”

Milomir Maric (MM)/"INTERVJU"

(a meeting at "Sumatovac" restaurant, in front of POLITIKA - 9:40 to 10:40)

Brother Karic and Milosevic

MM said that brothers Karic's are on good terms with SM, with whom they cooperate when it is necessary to stabilize the currency.

MM said that he wasn't very happy with his employers (Karic's) as they ended up regarding the *INTERVJU* magazine as a profit center rather than a marketing expense. I figured this meant they weren't paying him enough. So he is now starting a new magazine *PROFIL*. It's a full-color glossy, modeled after the COSMOPOLITAN. It's aimed at the aspiring young capitalists in Serbia. The first issue will have over 180 pages and will be printed in Italy on high quality presses.

Belgrade's "Nouveau Riche"

MM said that the BG Nouveau Riche set which is his target market are fabulously wealthy. Brothers Karic's are said to be worth over one billion dollars. But a recent application for a Canadian subsidiary turned out that the amount is closed to \$300 million. Nevertheless, it's not bad for a country supposed to be oppressed by sanctions.

MM said that only Bogoljub Karic has good business savvy. The other brother just rides around BG in their Mercedes 600, preceding by security guard cars with flashing lights. He figures that Karic's alone employ about 200 bodyguards. "That's a real private army!" I exclaimed. He nodded affirmatively.

He said that Karic's long-term plan is to become political leaders in Serbia. But for now they are content to maintain friendly relations with SM, and make a lot of money off of the sanctions for themselves.

Brana Crncevic

MM said that Brana had supposedly submitted his resignation as an MP, which he described as follows:

"I resign for health reasons.

Not mine... wife's.

Not my wife's..."

The inference was about the mental health of Mira Markovic, SM's wife. I told MM that I recalled Brana being the first non-communist MP in the communist YU Parliament. And that he has changed his position on SM once again.

Later on, SK told me that that's exactly what MM has been doing all along - kissing ass to get ahead.

Biljana Djurdjevic/"VOJSKA"

(a meeting at the Hotel Intercontinental - 11:00 to 12:10)

Western Slavonia

BD said that Milosevic and Tudjman had made a deal about trading the Western Slavonia for Eastern Slavonia (Western Srem). She felt that most RSK officials are too virulent, if not corrupt. Milan Babic is still the strongest in RSK, she thinks.

Gen. Perisic & Communists in YU Army

BD said that she believed that MP believes that he is non-ideological. But that nonetheless there is a process underway to insert the "old guard" officers back into the army. She feels that Mira Markovic was behind that, and that there are wholesale changes like that taking place. BD said that if she raises an objection to it, this causes her superiors to question if she is still "one of us."

Her Book

Overall, I concluded that BD must have flipped. She talked about having written "a book which is 90% complete," which deals with use of religious sects for political purposes. In it, she "proves" that that someone in the US is exercising mind control over other human beings using the religious sects as a tool. When I asked her if by that she meant the US government or some private entities, she replied that it was probably both.

Ed. "What a Byzantine way of thinking!," I thought (meaning always looking for conspiracies or extraterrestrial causes), but didn't say anything.

Dr. Mina & Sveta Kozarev

(a conversation in her car on the way to SM - around 17:30)

Forced Mobilization

MK said that the forced mobilization of the RS and RSK residents was carried out during the month of June. In addition to the local police, some young RSK men with shaved heads wearing black uniforms took part in it.

Sremska Mitrovica, Yugoslavia

Anne's Call

To our surprise, Anne called from Prague to Ljilja's number. I was very glad to hear from her. She said that she and a group of friends took a train ride into Vienna, and spent about five hours moseying about the city.

☉ **End of Day 3** ☉

July 8, 1995 (Saturday)

Dr. Sveta Kozarev

(a talk in his car on the way home from the SM cemetery - around 11:30)

Forced Mobilization

Sveta said the black-shirted RSK soldiers call themselves the “Scorpions.” They arrive in black vans with the scorpion logo on the outside. “These are the worst of the lot,” SK said. “They are the people who have already been numbed by killings and other atrocities.”

I was shocked to hear the story. “Aren’t these people aware that the Ustashi also donned black uniforms as they slaughtered hundreds of thousands of Serbs?” I asked. “I know what you mean,” Sveta said. He added that some of the local people in SM who remember the Ustashi terror (SM was under the Independent State of Croatia in WW II), reacted exactly that way - with repugnance toward the RSK “Serbs” for using the “ustashi” colors and even acting similarly.

Their fears seemed justified. Some people whom they forcibly took to Bosnia were returned, as they had legitimate exemptions from military duty. One of them was a man from Novi Sad who had lost his leg fighting the Croats in 1991. The “Scorpions” took him anyway.

Another man from Okucani (in Western Slavonia), a father of two children in his thirties, was not so lucky. Even though he felt he had a legitimate exemption, he was herded along with the rest in the Fireman’s building at the western entrance to SM. He attempted to escape, just to have the “Scorpions” practically cut both of his legs off below the knees with machine gun fire. Nor was this enough for these human beasts. They were about to take this gravely injured man to Bosnia. “He would have surely died before getting there from bleeding alone,” SK said, a retired MD. But the SM police intervened, and saw to it that the wounded man was taken to the hospital. That’s how SK and MK found out about the incident. The bones in mans legs were shattered by gun fire. “But at least now he will live,” SK said. “And in what army is the crippled man going to serve next?” I asked, equally disgusted with such “Serbs.”

Dr. Ljilja Kozarev

Baby Vaccines

LK is the head of the pediatric department at the SM hospital. She said that last year (1994), the UN sanctions committee allowed the imports of the multiple children disease vaccines. The vaccines are made in Italy, and are given to one-year old babies.

But this year, the SM hospital could not get any vaccines at all until May. And even then, they only received 30 vaccines for some 500 babies which were due to get them. LK then gave an order that the 30 vaccines be given strictly on a first-come-first-

serve basis - to avoid playing favorites to anyone. Still many influential families tried to use the “veza” (connections) to get ahead in the line. For other, wealthier ones, LK had to write vaccine prescriptions which they took to have them filled in Hungary. Their babies were then vaccinated in SM.

In June, 130 more vaccines were arrived. This still left the SM hospital about 340 vaccines short of the city’s needs. “Where was the supposed UN humanitarian concern here?” she asked rhetorically.

Russian, Ukrainian Diphtheria Vaccines

The irony is that Serbia is one of Europe’s main producers of diphtheria vaccines. So when there was an outbreak of diphtheria in Russia and the Ukraine, Serbia was not allowed to export its medicines because of the sanctions. In other words, the Ukrainian and the Russians were being punished for the sake of denying the Serbs the opportunity to make some money on the transaction.

“So on the one hand, they are withholding the vaccines we need,” LK commented, “while on the other hand they are depriving other nations of the vaccines we make.”

Again, “some humanitarian organization this UN is!”, I thought.

🕒 **End of Day 4** 🕒

July 9, 1995 (Sunday)

New Entrepreneurship

This morning, I went for a long walk/march (about 2 hours) across the bridge over river Sava into Macva, and the back again into Srem across a pedestrian bridge some two miles up the river. Along the way, especially on the Srem side, I noted a spurt of entrepreneurship which was not there when I visited the city last May. Small restaurants and stores were springing up everywhere. People looked better dressed and less stressed. There were young people everywhere enjoying the weekend and the warm weather on the river. It would appear that after three years, the Serbs have mastered the art of sanction-busting.

The entire family had a delicious lunch at one such a place on the Sava river itself (“Sremac”), which was supposed to have been MK’s birthday celebration, too. The service was slow but very friendly - which is quite a bit different from the way it was in state-owned establishments.

🕒 **End of Day 5** 🕒

Interior Serbia, Montenegro

July 10-12, 1995 (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday)

General Observations

UN Sanctions' Impact

We drove from Sremska Mitrovica, through BG, on to Kragujevac and Kraljevo, and from there to Montenegro, stopping at the ancient (12th and 13th century) Serbian monasteries - Zica, Studenica and Sopocani, and at the 16th century monastery Moraca (in Montenegro). Along the way, I had a chance to observe the way the sanctions have affected this nation. I saw none of the despair which was apparent in September 1993. But I also did not see any new capital investments being made. The factories and hotels looked dilapidated. Most homes seemed to be in need of repair. There were exceptions though. Every so often along the way one would come across a row of elegant newly-built private homes. The latter phenomenon was more pronounced in Montenegro than in Serbia.

SK☆PJ Signs

As was the case during my July 1994 trip from the northwest Montenegro to the coast, this year's drive from the northeast Montenegro revealed an abundance of Communist Party signs along the road. The "SK☆PJ" were everywhere. I took a picture of one of them in Kolasin (see the photo on page 16).

Montenegrin Police

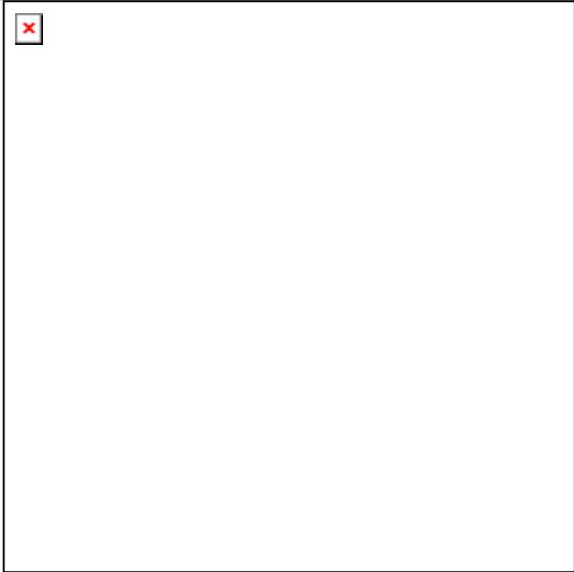
The Montenegrin police looked quite dapper in their brand new blue shirts and navy-blue pants.

By the way, I've never seen more police per mile of roadway anywhere in the world than in Montenegro. There must have been radar traps every five to 10 miles. We were caught speeding twice, but managed to talk our way out of getting a ticket both times. I told SK that he should light a candle to thank the old Serbian saints for protecting us.

Elsewhere, it seemed that if half of Montenegro was smuggling things from Albania, while the blue-shirted half were trying to catch the former. They must not have been trying too hard, as the Albanian smuggled goods were everywhere. LK, for example, bought an electric mosquito repellent from an Albanian at the Podgorica flea market. Moments later, somebody shouted "police!," and all Albanians scrambled to pack up their goods in a hurry. Meanwhile, the Montenegrins continued selling their Albanian-smuggled stuff unperturbed by the "blue shirts." They must have paid off the cops, we figured.

Map of Ancient Serbian Monasteries

“SK☆PJ” Sign in Kolasin, Montenegro



Water Shortage in Boka Kotorska

Even in the best of times, the Kotor Bay had a water shortage. That's why a tunnel/pipeline was built to carry the water from the Serbian interior town Trebinje to a little Croatian village Plat. From there, the water line split into two directions. One branch went into Dubrovnik (Croatia); the other into Herceg-Novti (Montenegro).

During the fighting around Dubrovnik in the fall 1991, the Serbs took the town of Plat. But the place was returned to Croatia under the UN supervision in 1992 as a part of the Prevlaka deal which the then YU president, Dobrica Cosic, and the Prime Minister, Milan Panic, made with Franjo Tudjman.

Now the Serbs from Trebinje are still sending the water to Plat, but the Croats have cut off the line to Herceg Novi. This means that the entire Boka Kotorska region is struggling to get by with water being trucked in by local entrepreneurs. (I have a photo of people lining up for drinking water behind a cistern).

While the world's media focus on every Serb move around Sarajevo, chastising them when they turn the water off, the Croats seem to be able to get away with the same action with impunity and in relative obscurity (the Serb media have written about it, but not the Western press).

🕒 **End of Days 5, 6, 7** 🕒

Bosnia

July 13, 1995 (Thursday)

Trip from Belgrade to Han Pijesak

(Milos Tomovic [MT], from Han Pijesak, driver for Gen. Tolimir - 9:00 to 12:30)

Border Crossing

MT stopped the car just before we got to the border crossing at Zvornik. "You can take a leak in the bushes over there if you'd like while I decant the gasoline," he said. When I returned, MT said that he is having to pour all the fuel from the container into the gas tank so as not to have it confiscated by the Yugoslav border guards. "They've gotten quite strict about it now," he added.

Indeed, when we got to the border, the guards asked him to open the trunk and checked to make sure the gas container was empty before waving us on. "And where are those US monitors?" I asked MT. He pointed to some civilians hiding in the shade from the heat of the day. "There they are," he said.

On the other (Bosnian) side of the river Drina, we were again stopped, this time by the Bosnian military police.

"What's the road like?" MT inquired.

"You can't go via Kasaba and Konjevic Polje," the guard replied. "That road is closed."

“But I just came through there this morning,” MT protested.

“Then you were very lucky. Right now several thousand Muslim soldiers from Srebrenica are trying to fight their way across the road,” the guard said matter-of-factly.

“What’s the road like?” the disbelieving MT persisted, double-checking what the officer had said with a driver of a vehicle which had just approached the bridge from the opposite direction (i.e., from Kasaba and Konjevic Polje).

The driver waved his hand. “Don’t go.”

“Damn it!” MT said, slamming his fist on the steering wheel. “I saw them (the Muslims) this morning crossing the road in groups of 10 or 20 people, carrying white flags. They were no danger to anybody.”

Then he calmed down just as quickly as his temper had exploded.

“We’ll go via Sekovici,” he said, stepping on the gas pedal.

“Via what?”

“Sekovici,” he explained, veering to the right. “It will take a bit longer, and the road is not as good, but we can get to Vlasenica that way, too.”

Drive via Sekovici

After a few minutes, the road was winding through a thick forest. Suddenly, the clearing around the highway widened.

“Early on in the war, the Muslims had set up several ambushes and killed some people here,” MT explained. “So we’ve had to cut a wider swath through the forest on each side of the road.”

We came upon a checkpoint at a village called Ceparda. Seeing our military license plates, the soldiers waved us on. A driver of a civilian car was trying to get through to Zvornik, the direction we had come from, but the guards would not let him.

As the road was winding through some pretty scenic terrain, the cows grazed, and the farmers went about their daily chores. It was hard to imagine that somewhere in those woods a bunch of desperate Muslim soldiers may be trying to fight their way to Tuzla.

Vlasenica

Eventually, we arrived in Vlasenica without any incidents. MT stopped at the post office to check for his mail. While he was inside, I observed a group of small children playing on two APCs (Armored Personnel Carriers) parked in a yard next to an apartment building. Two women, probably their mothers, were watching the kids, and helping them climb on top.

I took out my camera and walked across the street. “I am a Serb from America,” I said. “I would like to take a picture of what kinds of ‘toys’ the Serbian kids here are playing with.” I pointed to the APC. “Would that be all right?”

The two women smiled embarrassingly. “Go ahead,” one of them spoke up. “But take a picture of just the kids. I have a relative in Chicago.”

I took the picture, and thanked them. As I turned around to leave, a small boy, probably not older than five, yelled after me: "Take a picture of my cat, too."

I turned around. He was sitting under the turret on which the machine gun is mounted, hugging a skinny looking kitten.

I smiled and walked back. "Cheese," I said, as I snapped the picture.

(Later on in Vienna, I discovered to my great disappointment that none of my Bosnian photos worked out. It looked as if the film had jammed or something. All the frames on the negative were black. For a moment, I suspected a possible sabotage by the Austrian film developer, but then dismissed the idea as not very likely).

Han Pijesak

Colonel Simovic (S)

(a meeting at his Han Pijesak office - 12:00 to 15:30)

Lunch with Col. S

When we arrived at the Han Pijesak military HQ building, the same one in which I met with Gen. Mladic and some of his other officers last year, Col. Simovic was the duty officer in charge. He had no idea who I was, but soon understood why I was there after MT and I had explained the purpose of my visit. He invited me to lunch while we waited for Major Sloba Mamlic to arrive, and joined me in the officers mess on the main floor.

To my delight, they served a bean soup with bacon and some meat - a typical Serbian soldiers' staple, yet something one doesn't often get in America.

After a while, Col. S loosened up with me, maybe because he discovered that I was a civil engineer by training as he is (he is in charge of all military construction, reporting to Gen. Djukic, at whose office I met with Mladic last year).

Gen. MacKenzie

Col. S turned out to be quite a philosopher. "I've been lined up against the wall (for execution) twice in this war," he said. "After that, one sort of changes one's outlook on life."

When the war started in 1992, Col. S had lived in Sarajevo for 46 years. It turned out that we had several common acquaintances. One of them was Gen. Lew MacKenzie. "He saved my life," Col. S said.

"He did?"

"Yes. It was during the Gen. Kukanjac withdrawal" (from Sarajevo on May 3, 1992; the incident in which over 200 JNA soldiers were killed or imprisoned was described in detail in Gen. MacKenzie's book, "*Peacekeeper*." The Muslims broke their promise to let the JNA column leave in exchange for Gen. Kukanjac freeing the

Muslim President Alija Izetbegovic, whom he had taken prisoner. The Muslim militiamen intercepted the column and started killing the JNA soldiers who were sitting ducks in cars and trucks).

“Was that one of those times the Muslims had lined you up against the wall?” I asked.

Col. S nodded. “I was in one of those first 19 trucks that passed through the intersection before the Muslims ambushed us.”

Later on, as the Muslims had lined up their JNA prisoners for execution, including Col. S, Gen. MacKenzie happened to have walked in on the situation. “Let them go,” he ordered, and the Muslims complied.

The Second “Execution”

“What was the second time the Muslims tried to execute you?” I asked.

“Oh, that was later on in 1992, during the fighting near Travnik,” he replied. Eventually, a British officer intervened and saved his life.

Col. S’s Room

He lit up another cigarette. It seemed as if everybody in Bosnia was a chain-smoker. “Why don’t we go up to my room and have a rest?” he suggested.

I found it unusual to “have a rest” in the middle of the day, but not having anything better to do than wait for news from Maj. Mamlic, I agreed. In any event, since the duty officers work 24 hour-shifts, I realized that they did have to have a place to rest near their offices. We walked up to the third floor.

Col. S’s room was a tiny hole in the wall with two bunks on each side. He pointed to the one nearest the window and said, “why don’t you stretch out there?”

“Whose bed is this?” I asked, sitting down on it.

“It’s my roommate’s. But he is sick today.”

The empty mineral water bottles, books, old newspapers; magazines - were all strewn all over the floor and the little table between the two beds. Noticing that I was gazing around the room, Col. S added apologetically, “I guess we’ll have to throw out some of that junk one day.”

I didn’t say anything.

“Take your shoes off,” he encouraged me. “Lie down. Make yourself at home.”

He took his own advice and did likewise.

Kukanjac: No Longer a Friend; Kadjevic: Greatest Traitor

Col. S said that he and Gen. Kukanjac used to be very close. “But I no longer consider him a friend,” Col. S added. “Not because of that incident. There are some other reasons why we can no longer be friends.”

Col. S said that he considered Gen. Kadjevic (the chief of general staff of JNA, and a half-Croat) to be the greatest culprit for the disintegration of Yugoslavia. He said that

Kadijevic was an American spy. "He was the first non-American officer to graduate from West Point military academy," he said. He added that the Bosnian Muslim prime minister, Haris Silajdzic was also a CIA man.

"What is the first duty of the top JNA commander?" Col. S continued with a rhetorical question. "To defend the integrity of the country," he answered it himself. "The fact that Kadijevic left the JNA soldiers in Slovenia without live ammunition, when they were being attacked by the Slovenian territorial troops, is nothing short of treason. I would not hesitate for one second to shoot the son of a bitch if I had a chance," he added angrily.

Col. S said that Gen. Adzic (the JNA infantry commander), as well as Ante Markovic (the PM, a Croat) and Stipe Mesic (the last rotating YU President, also a Croat), along with Borisav Jovic (a Serb) - were all responsible for undermining the role of the JNA.

Bihac Airport

Col. S said that he was the one responsible for building the Bihac airport, which "is the safest airport in the world." He explained that all installations are in a bunker under some 1,200 feet of solid rock. "We've even built some special doors so that even in the case of nuclear attack they'd be safe," he explained.

Wife in Sarajevo

Col. S said that his wife refused to leave Sarajevo in 1992. Afterward, she was sorry, he said. All neighbors who used to be friendly with her suddenly started to treat her as dirt. Eventually, Col. S was able to bribe the Muslim government to let her out in August 1993, using some of the many connections he had built up after his 46 years in Sarajevo. His wife is now in Belgrade, but she is still traumatized after her Sarajevo ordeal. "She is no longer the same person," he said. "She is irritable, she has difficulty sleeping; her mood swings wildly."

Col. S said that just before his wife left Sarajevo, she had noticed a big change for the better in attitudes of her neighbors. This was the time the Serbs had taken Igman and Bjelasnica, and were advancing toward Sarajevo. The people in Sarajevo thought that the city would fall to the Serbs almost any time. The Muslim soldiers were starting to take off their uniforms, pretending to be civilians. And the neighbors were starting to kiss up to her hoping that she would put in a good word for them when the Serbs arrive.

None of that happened, of course, as Karadzic ordered Mladic to halt the offensive and to turn over Igman and Bjelasnica to the UN.

RS Leaders, Bishop Vasilije

Col. S sounded understandably bitter about the RS political leaders. He also talked about the rampant corruption in the RS. "Bishop Vasilije is probably the richest man in

Bijeljina,” he said. “I know a man who is a smuggler there, who once went in and told Bishop Vasilije ‘look Bishop, there is not enough room for two thieves to operate on the same street.’ So they divided up the territory between themselves,” Col. S. said.

Chinese Proverb

Col. S said that he’s been reading a lot during the last three and a half years of war. He read somewhere a Chinese proverb, which he thought Confucius originated. It read approximately:

*“Every 50 years or so,
Wise men shut up,
Fools speak up,
And criminals rise to the top.”*

“These are such times,” he said pensively.

Sarajevo “Ethnic Cleansing”

Col. S said that while much of the world is worrying about the Serbs’ supposed “ethnic cleansing,” the biggest cleansing campaign of the war actually took place in Sarajevo. Based on his wife’s information and other sources, he estimated that between 15,000 and 20,000 leading Serbs were killed in the city. He figured that the number of Serbs killed during the war in all of Bosnia was around 50,000 so far.

Maj. Mamlic

At that moment, Maj. Mamlic appeared at the door. We greeted each other warmly. He said that Gen. Mladic apologizes profusely, but that he could not make it as he had hoped. So he sent Gen. Gvero in his place who is waiting for me downstairs in the officers’ mess. Gen. Mladic would try to make it in the next two days or so, but he’s been in the field and could not guarantee it. But Gen. Tolimir sent a message that he would definitely be able to meet with me before I return to Serbia.

General Gvero

(a meeting in Han Pijesak officers’ mess - 15:30 to 17:30; Maj. Sloba Mamlic was also present)

Personal

Gvero is originally from Glamoc (just like Gen. Djukic, Gen. Tolimir and Gen. Manojlovic). Gvero is in charge of RS Army’s church and judicial relations. He is a bit older than I. He said he was studying for his masters degree during the 1968 student demonstrations in BG. His undergraduate degree was in sociology and political science. Their building was in Nemanjina Ulica, near the BG railroad station.

When Mamlic told him that I was one of the participants in the student uprising, he said “you are the cock who sang too early.” Since I did not get the meaning of it, he

explained that when a cock sings well before dawn and wakes up the farmer (i.e., before other cocks start to sing), the farmer usually selects him to be the first one slaughtered. "Well, as you can see," I said smilingly, "I've so far managed to evade such a fate."

He offered me white wine, which is what he was drinking. I turned him down and stayed with my mineral water.

Prince Tomislav; Communist Manners

At one stage of our conversation, Gvero asked me why I was looking at him so disapprovingly ("Sto me tako mrko gledate?"), while being nice and friendly with Maj. Mamlic. "Is it because you know him, and you've only now met me?" he asked. I replied that I was unaware that I was looking at him disapprovingly. And that if I ever did, there would be no mistake about it. "And why are you grinning like that all the time?" I went on the offensive. Gvero replied that he had something to say to me, but that he would leave that for the end of our meeting.

Gvero then added that Prince Tomislav had also once remarked to him that he (Gvero) had typical communist mannerisms.

Capt. O'Grady

I asked Gvero if the Bosnian Serbs had ever captured Capt. O'Grady (the downed American pilot). He said they had not. "But we were watching him very closely," he said.

"So how can you explain the 100 km-discrepancy between the site where his parachute was picked up, and the location where he was rescued?" I asked. I explained the discrepancy in more detail.

Gvero tried to minimize it by quibbling over terminology (I think he was lying, but not very skillfully). I said that Capt. O'Grady himself had said that he had not moved more than two miles from where his parachute had dropped. "He moved more than that, that's for sure," Gvero said. "But we never captured him."

German-US Foreign Relations

I asked him if he saw the German-US interests as being conflicting, as Gen. Perisic thinks, or complementary. He replied that he saw them as being complementary, although they are likely to clash in the long run.

Gen. Mladic's Letter

Maj. Mamlic then piped in by asking me if I had ever received the letter which Gen. Mladic sent me about my April analysis of foreign affairs ("Drang Nach Osten"). I said I had not. He said that Mladic was very impressed with my analysis, and wrote a complimentary letter to me about it. Mamlic said he would try to retrieve the letter and to re-FAX it to me.

Corruption in RS

I then asked him what the relations were like between the military and political leaders in the RS. I repeated what Gen. Perisic had told me about the alleged RK's and MK's profiteering, and wanted to know what he (Gvero) thought of it.

Gvero first tried to put down Gen. Perisic. He said he knew "who Perisic was," as Perisic was a major serving under him (Gvero) when they were both posted to Titograd (Podgorica) at one stage of their careers.

Then Gvero said that he had always had a car for the last 30 years. "And now my old car is totally run down and I can't afford to buy a new one," he said.

As for the RS politicians' graft, he said he did not know about it, and was skeptical that RK and MK would be involved in something like that.

Writing for RS Army Magazine

Gvero and Mamlic both asked me if I would write an occasional article for their army magazine "VOJSKA RS." I said that I write a lot all the time, and that if they'd to let me know which article they would like to translate and use, I did not see any problems in approving it. "But we would like you to write for us exclusively," Gvero said. I was non-committal about it, and managed to skirt a direct answer.

Meetings at Pale

Gvero asked me what my plans were now that Gen. Mladic could not meet with me as planned. I said that I'd like to go to Pale and meet the RS political leaders. "That would be a proper thing to do, don't you think?" I asked, looking him straight in the eye.

"It would be indeed," he replied. He excused himself to make a phone call to Prof. Koljevic, so as to help me set up the meetings.

When he returned, he told me that everything had been arranged, and that he would give me a car and a driver to take me there. Then he grinned again enigmatically. "Now, why did you ask me that question about the relations between the RS army and the political leaders?" he asked, looking uncomfortable.

It was evident that I had gotten to him with that question, I thought. "Because of what Gen. Perisic had said," I replied. "He said I should come here and see things for myself, which is what I am doing."

"Nice Guy"

"Haven't you forgotten something?" I now asked Gvero imitating his enigmatic grin.

"What?" he replied, again looking nervous.

"You've said that you had something to tell me at the end of our meeting," I reminded him.

"Oh, yes," he said. "I wanted to tell you that you're a really nice guy."

“And that was it?” I asked incredulously.

“That’s it,” he continued to smile.

“Chetnik” Goodbye

We walked together out to the parking lot in front of the building, and said our good-byes there. “I can see you’re a real ‘Chetnik’” Gvero said.

“Well, I don’t know about that,” I replied. “I just try to do what I can to help the truth come out.”

Maj. SM said that he had booked me into the same military hotel on Mount Jahorina, where we both stayed last year. And he gave me his extension for a secure military line which was available at that hotel. We agreed that I would call tomorrow to find out when Gen. Mladic and or Gen. Tolimir were expected back from the field.

Pale

Zdravko Miovcic (ZM)

(a meeting at his Pale office - 19:00 to 20:00)

Personal

ZM is Prof. Nikola Koljevic’s chief of cabinet. He is a bearded man in his 30s. Prior to the war, he was NK’s student of literature. After that, he did his Masters in industrial engineering, specializing in human relations. He was employed as the personnel director in the “FAMOS” factory of automotive engines, which made some motors for the Mercedes-Benz cars, too. In this capacity, he made a name for himself by eliminating 3,000 jobs using his scientific computer model, based on artificial intelligence. If some people would object to the reason for being cut, ZM would point to his system and say: “It’s because computer said so.” That usually sufficed as an explanation, he recalled.

Zepa

“This is not yet confirmed, but about one hour ago, our troops have entered Zepa,” ZM told me with the look of a person who is sharing an especially important news. “(Gen. Radoslav) Krstic telephoned the news.”

Having just learned the day before that Srebrenica had fallen, to me this was indeed a surprising turn of events. “Who is Krstic?” I asked.

“He is our field commander,” ZM explained. “Mladic is there, too.”

Now I understood why Mladic had sent a message to me that he could not meet with me today in Han Pijesak as planned.

Dr. Nikola Koljevic (NK)

(a dinner/meeting at his Pale office - 20:00 to 0:00; ZM present most of the time)

Personal

Even though this was the first time NK and I have spent any appreciable time talking to each other, NK treated me as an old friend. NK is the RS Vice President in charge of relations with the UN (i.e., the UNPROFOR, UNHCR, etc.), as well as the relations with the Serbs in the diaspora.

Gen. MacKenzie

At one stage, I mentioned to NK that I recently received a message from Gen. MacKenzie about his telephone conversation with NK in connection with the freeing of the UN prisoners (during the May-June hostage crisis).

“Oh, yes, Gen. MacKenzie...” NK exclaimed and smiled, taking a deep breath, as if getting ready to deliver a speech.

I expected him to go on, but paused, staring in the space in front of his desk, deep in thought.

“Gen. MacKenzie,” he repeated the name after a while, as if reminding himself of whom he was talking about. He shook his head. The smile was gone. “I read his book. He was not entirely honest.”

“Oh?” I said. “Why not?”

“For example, MacKenzie describes a scene at the opening of the Sarajevo airport in which a Serbian commander is standing at the end of the runway, potentially exposed to Muslim snipers. ‘Is he crazy?’ MacKenzie asked me. ‘Why is he doing it?’ ‘Because the Serbian officer is always the last one to leave the post,’ I replied. But when I read that passage in the book, MacKenzie said how the Serbs are even prepared to sacrifice their own people in order to provoke the Muslims, and later blame them for the killing. That’s just nonsense.”

I replied that I’d also read the book, and had even reviewed it, but did not remember that particular incident.

“That’s not surprising,” NK replied. “You weren’t there.”

NK added that he was the one who let MacKenzie listen to a taped telephone conversation between the Muslim government officials about a plot to assassinate him (MacKenzie). “MacKenzie was shocked,” he recalled.

Visit to Srebrenica

“We want to show the world how quickly we can establish civilian authority there,” NK explained. “And as a member of the RS government, I want to be photographed with the Muslim civilians, assuring them that nothing bad will happen to them.”

But one of the phone calls shattered this plan. ZM took the call, then put the receiver down when he was finished. "There are no civilians left any more," ZM announced. "Mladic had shipped them all out already."

"Damn it!" NK said. Then after collecting his thoughts, "I think we should still go as representative of the civilian government."

He called Dr. Radovan Karadzic (RK) to sound him out about the idea, given the new circumstances which have arisen. RK agreed that NK should go.

Throughout the evening, NK was making or receiving calls in connection with his planned trip to Srebrenica tomorrow. It took at least 30-40 calls.

One of them was from Philip Corvin, "an American poet," as NK put it. NK showed me a poem PC had scribbled in his notebook in connection with Croatia's attack on Western Slavonia. "Corvin has just been declared as 'persona non grata' in Sarajevo by the Muslim government."

The reason?

"They figure that he is too sympathetic to the Serbs," NK explained.

When Corvin doesn't write poems, he is the head of the UNHCR civilian affairs.

As it turned out, by about 23:00, Corvin started to waffle about participating in the expedition to Srebrenica, even though he was quite enthusiastic about it earlier in the evening. "They got to him," NK commented.

"Who?"

"Probably the American government," he speculated. "Corvin is supposed to go home soon, so he is probably nervous about upsetting them."

"But how did they find out?" NK wondered out loud. "They must be listening to our conversations," he muttered, answering his own question.

By the end of the night, it was agreed that they all meet at NK's office at 11:00 tomorrow morning.

Sarajevo Offensive

NK and ZM started talking about the big Muslim offensive around Sarajevo, which had just fizzled.

"Do you remember what that soldier said with whom we spoke the other day?" NK said, looking at ZM.

ZM nodded.

Turning to me, NK continued: "He said that the Muslims were charging the Serbian guns like cattle. 'I kept mowing them down with my machine gun 20, 30, 50 at a time,' the soldier said. After a while, I just could not stand killing that many people any more.'"

NK said that the soldiers like that were suffering from a serious post-battle psychological trauma.

ZM added that the Muslim-Serb loss ratios during the Sarajevo offensive were between 10 to 1 and 50 to 1, depending on the location. "Our special forces played a

key role," he said. "Whenever the Muslims would breach our lines somewhere, they'd be rushing in to plug the hole and drive them back."

Dinner

NK seemed deep in thought again. Finally he snapped out of it. "Red or white?" NK asked suddenly

"I beg your pardon?"

"Would you prefer red or white wine with your dinner?"

"Red would be fine with me," I replied.

NK buzzed his secretary and placed the order.

As we were eating dinner, which was served right in NK's office on the third floor of the old Presidency building in Pale, he started to talk about the various world leaders whom he had met in the last three years.

Cyrus Vance, Dragan Zivanovic (alias Daniel Boier)

For example, NK said that Cyrus Vance was one of the few gentlemen whom he had met during the three and a half years of negotiating with the various diplomats.

"Let me tell you," he said, "we've seen our share of diplomatic riffraff. But Vance was different." NK went on to describe the various meetings and dinners he had had with Vance at his house in Geneva.

"I didn't know Vance lived in Geneva," I interjected.

"He does not. But his friend and partner from Paris let him use his place."

An expression of curiosity passed across NK's face. He looked at me. "Does the name Dragan Zivanovic mean anything to you?"

"Dragan Zivanovic?" I repeated. "No. I've never heard of him."

"That's Vance's friend to whom I was referring. He is quite well off; lives in Paris where he is known as Daniel Boier. He is supposed to have direct access to Clinton."

NK started to shuffle through a mound of paper on his desk. He pulled out two pages. "Here!" he declared triumphantly. "Read this."

It was a letter by Radovan Karadzic dated June 8, 1995, addressed to President Clinton. I read it carefully. RK proposed a peace conference to settle the Bosnian war. The rest of it was emotional dribble; obviously not a piece professional diplomatic correspondence.

"Did this Dragan Zivanovic write this?" I asked.

NK nodded, looking at me enigmatically. "And we understand that the letter was delivered to Bill Clinton personally."

I meant to say "whoopie-do," but restrained myself. "Want to you know why I suspected that Zivanovic wrote this?" I asked.

"Sure. Why?"

"Because it was written with too much emotion; too much emphasis on historical ties and traditional friendships, and not enough on current interests. I've seen dozens

of letters like this written by Serbian-Americans. But until now, I've never seen one written by the CIA."

"So you think that Zivanovic works for the CIA?"

"I've told you that I don't know the man. But I can tell you that this letter has been written for 'Serbian consumption.' And since you told me that Zivanovic wrote it; that he is a friend and partner of Vance's; and that he has access to the US President - you can probably conclude the rest..."

NK nodded pensively.

"No friend of Vance's or Clinton's can be a true friend of the Bosnian Serbs," I speculated. "I'd be counting my fingers after shaking hands with people like that."

NK pondered my comment carefully.

"Would you like some 'palacinkas'?" he asked.

"That's my favorite desert," I replied.

NK placed the order.

Ivor Roberts

I told NK about my meeting with IR, and his comments about being exasperated in his dealings with the RS officials.

"I know. I've met with him a dozen times," NK said. "IR means well, but frankly, his intellect leaves something to be desired. He is a typical stupid civil servant."

Queen's Message

NK said that his brother, who used to live in Sarajevo, managed to get out and now lives in Novi Sad (Serbia). His brother, a playwright, has never been very active in politics. Which is why he was surprised to have received an invitation to attend a party at the British Embassy in Belgrade celebrating the Queen's birthday.

During the cocktail reception, NK's brother was approached by IR and given the following message, as if in passing: "The Queen would have no objections if the Serbs in Bosnia were to settle the territorial disputes on the ground." NK figured that that was the British government's "green light" for the RS to launch its assault on the Muslim enclaves in Eastern Bosnia (Srebrenica, Zepa and Gorazde). Which, of course, the RS did in July.

War's End

NK predicted the end of war "in one to two months; six months on the outside." I could not help but recall similarly optimistic prediction by RK in November 1992, September 1993 and May 1994. He also talked about the current offensives on Srebrenica and Zepa bringing the Bosnian war "to a boiling point."

I said that was fine as long as the military toughness was accompanied at the same time by a "velvet touch" on the diplomatic front.

(also see the "Clash of Civilizations" column in the July 13 diary).

Trip to Jahorina

It was well past midnight by the time we were ready to leave the office. “Dr. Karadzic had changed the biorhythm in the RS,” NK joked. “We all come to work late, and leave even later.”

Goran, NK’s driver and body guard, is a good-looking fair-haired, blue-eyed man, probably in his late 20s. About 6’2” tall, he has the looks of a professional athlete. As we got into the car, he said that he’d heard a lot about me, and was very happy to meet me in person.

I noticed that he switched security frequencies in NK’s Mercedes half way between Pale and Jahorina, as he kept reporting our progress along the way to the security personnel at the other end of the line.

At about 00:45, they dropped me off at my hotel. I thanked them for the ride. “No problem,” NK replied. “We all live in a private house nearby.”

🕒 End of Day 8 🕒

July 13, 1995 (Friday)

(Friday the 13th (!), yet I didn’t realize it at the time)

Dr. Nikola Koljevic (NK)

(a breakfast/meeting at Jahorina “Rajska Dolina” military hotel - 8:30 to 10:40)

The Breakfast

I woke up early, around 8:00, considering how late we’d gone to bed. Just as I was stretching in bed, there was a knock on the door. “Sorry to disturb you, but Prof. Koljevic would like to have breakfast with you. He’ll be here in about 10 minutes.”

Well I wasn’t quite ready in 10 minutes. But the icy cold shower did speed up my usual morning routine *(there was no warm water this year, as there wasn’t last year; or in 1993. I figured that was done on purpose - to make the visitors to this military hotel discern the difference between it and the civilian establishments)*.

After shaving using the equally icy water, I walked out onto the terrace in front of the hotel. It felt good to be in the warm sun.

Since more than 20 minutes had elapsed since that knock on the door, and there was still no sight of NK, I decided to go in and look for him. There he was, having a smoke in one of the back rooms and chatting with the staff. “Oh, you’re up?” he said, sounding surprised. “Hope you didn’t mind meeting me so early?”

I explained that I’ve been up already on my own, and had been waiting for him outside on the terrace.

We sat down at a table inside the restaurant inside the hotel, and had a breakfast of bacon and eggs. Since there was no milk, we both drank tea with it. We were obviously the only “guests” at the hotel. At least at that hour, anyway.

Various Projects

It turned out that NK wanted to talk to me about the various book and other projects he had under way. He also gave me a personally inscribed copy of a book which he has just written. He said that he would like to have it translated into English and published in the US.

I replied that the only person I know who could help with that was Bill Jovanovich, the former CEO of Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich. I explained who Bill was, and used a chance to pass on Bill's idea, that the RS and RSK should unite, and call themselves "Srpska Gora."

NK seemed cool to the idea. "We've already decided to call it Ujedinjena Republika Srpska (United Serbian Republic)," he said.

By about 10:30, ZM sauntered into the hotel on foot, wearing a blue jeans top and bottom outfit. "I am ready for our trip to Srebrenica," he declared. We drove off to Pale.

*Dr. Nikola Koljevic (NK)
(a meeting at his Pale office - 11:00 to 11:45)*

More Telephoning re. Srebrenica

After we arrived at NK's office, he continued to work the phones where he left off the night before. But it was becoming increasingly obvious that his Srebrenica trip plans were unraveling. First, the departure was delayed from 11:00 to 13:00. Eventually the trip was called off altogether.

In the meantime, ZM and a different driver took me in a VW Golf to the new Pale government building. That's where I was first supposed to see some people before going in to meet with RK. Along the way, ZM told me that Srdja Trifkovic (ST) was also in town, and suggested that we should plan to have dinner tonight at his hotel on Jahorina. He said that there was a woman from Phoenix whom ST brought along.

We first stopped by the Prime Minister's office. His pretty secretary, Biljana, said that he wasn't there, as his wife was expecting a baby any time. Before we left the building later on this afternoon, we learned that the twosome became proud parents of a third son.

*Aleksa Buha (AB)
(a meeting at his new government office in Pale - 12:00 to 13:10)*

Personal

AB is the RS foreign affairs minister. He is originally from Nevesinje in Hercegovina. He said that he had heard a lot about me, and was very pleased to meet me in person. He spoke of personal sacrifices which the families from his are had

made. In one instance, a twin brother had been killed in action. So the comrades tried to protect the other twin from danger. "That's the unwritten rule in our army," he explained. But the remaining brother would not hear of it. Eventually, he was also killed.

RK's Portrait

A large portrait of RK, looking rather presidential and wearing a green tie, hung on a wall in AB's office. I remember reacting negatively to it, as it brought memories of thousands of such pictures of Tito which I had seen in my youth.

Contact Group Plan

AB showed me a piece of paper which he said the RS had received "from its spy." It contained the latest proposals of the Contact Group, although they had not been "officially" presented to the Serbs. They seemed to resolve the initial problems which I had with the Contact Group plan - that the Bosnian Serbs were not given the reciprocal rights of association with Serbia, as the Bosnian Croats and Muslims had.

"But none of it matters," he said waving his hand dismissively. "The fact remains that America is for war. So its 'peace proposals' are never what they seem."

AB then took out a pencil. He started to draw a map of Bosnia, as the former US special negotiator, Redman (now the US ambassador to Germany), had done in March 1994. AB said that it was Redman who, in fact, had crafted the Contact Group plan. And that Redman had drawn a map like that from memory.

"That's incredible!" I said. "Can you imagine how many hours of negotiations and practice that would have taken?"

AB nodded. "But that's not it. When he came to this area (he pointed to the part of the map around Doboje), he at first drew the line like this," AB sketched the border which would have left Doboje as Serbian territory. "Then Redman corrected himself, by drawing a wide swatch of land around Doboje, handing it to the Muslims. He did it because he wanted to ensure that the Serbs reject the plan. That way the US, Milosevic and the Muslims could blame us 'for sabotaging the peace efforts.'"

Which is what eventually happened.

Slavica Ristic

On my way out, I saw Slavica Ristic, waiting to meet with AB next. She pretended to be surprised at seeing me there. "It's a small world," she said. "You look rather casual," she added looking at my vest and open-neck shirt.

"Well," I replied, "around here, I never know where I'll end up. So I came ready for all eventualities."

ZM and I walked out, as she went in to see AB.

Srdja Trifkovic (ST)

Hanging Around RK's Office with ZM

(a meeting at his Pale office - 11:00 to 12:00)

Jovan Zametica's Office

JZ's office is located in the new Presidency building, where RK nowadays hands his hat. The site is one location place of the "FAMOS" factory I mentioned earlier.

When ZM and I walked into JZ's office, ST was on the phone. "My, my..." I said. "The man looks right at home, as if he owns the place."

ST smiled and waved us in. "Just don't sit on that chair," he said. "It's broken."

We followed his advice.

"How come you're smoking?" I asked ST, after he had hung up.

"When in Rome do as Romans do," he replied laconically.

As a former (heavy) smoker (from the 1970s), I noticed that he held his cigarette as the affected women or "fagots" did in my days as a smoker. But I did not say anything.

It turned out that JZ was sick today, which is how ST got to use his office. "He has a stomach flu, or something," ST explained.

I said I was surprised to see Slavia Ristic here. He said that she was visiting her family in Nis. When she heard that ST was going to Bosnia, she asked if she could tag along. Which is how she got here.

He made it sound as if it were all a big coincidence.

At that moment, a lady from the Bosnian Serb TV/Radio walked in. ST explained that he had promised her an interview, and asked us if we would mind excusing him. ZM and I replied that this would be no problem. "I'll find a chair in RK's office which is not broken," I joked.

ZM and I walked across the hall into the office of RK's chief of cabinet. I tried reaching Major SM on the military line. "The line is down," ZM noted. "I wonder if that's so that RK cannot order Mladic to stop now?" (as RK did when Mladic had taken Igman and Bjelasnica in 1993). Whatever the reason, the military lines remained "down" all day.

Interview for SRT (Serbian Radio Television)

Later on, I did an interview with a lady from SRT. I have no idea when it aired.

"Zuti"

On one of my trips "across the hall," I met "Zuti," the hero of my July 1994 story published in the AZR, who drove me to SM in May 1994. He seemed very glad to see me, although he was unsure if I'd recognize him. But when I said, "Hello 'Zuti!'," his face broke into a broad smile. "Are you still driving RK?" I asked. He said he was.

(Also see the diary notes from May 1994, and a subsequent column which was published by the Arizona Republic on July 3, 1994).

Dr. Radovan Karadzic (RK)

(a meeting at his new office in Pale - 17:00 to 19:15 - also see the diary notes/story)

Srebrenica Mayor, CNN/SKY

Throughout the afternoon, RK had been meeting with the mayor-designate of Srebrenica (Miroslav Deronic), and other people from there who were supposed to constitute the civilian authority in the newly liberated area. He apologized for having kept me waiting, but he said that this was pressing government business for the RS.

As we started the meeting, the CNN and SKY NEWS were doing their hourly reports on the situation in Bosnia. (I remember that the SKY channel's time display showed 16:00 as Britain is one hour behind the rest of Europe). RK had two remote control units and kept flicking back and forth between the two networks. The TV set was sitting on top of a mahogany color wooden credenza at the opposite end of the long conference table, at which RK and I were sitting.

RK's new office was larger than the one at which we met the last time. The furniture was also new and looked quite elegant.

“All in a Day’s Work” (a column)

PALE, July 14 (18:10L) - Dr. Radovan Karadzic, Bosnian Serb President, reached for a peach from a fruit dish set on a long conference table in his newly appointed office.

“Would you care for one?” he asked this writer, the only other person in his spacious office.

“No, thank you,” I replied.

Karadzic carefully sliced off a piece of the peach.

For more than an hour already, we have been discussing war and peace; love and hate; honesty and deception; the past and the future. Occasionally, this former psychiatrist, whose main occupation lately has been reading the minds of the world's leading politicians, would un-mute the TV set perched on top of a mahogany cabinet across the room. He would then flick back and forth between CNN and Sky News, his main sources of information about the world's reaction to his latest moves. The Bosnian Serbs had just raised the stakes of this civil war by taking Srebrenica two days earlier. And they were mounting an attack on Zepa, the adjacent UN “safe area.”

The assault on Zepa was the likely reason the NATO planes have been buzzing overhead all day long. The day before, they bombed the Serbs around Srebrenica. “But they only to hit some rocks,” Karadzic said. I wondered out loud if the raid was intentionally so cosmetic? (to show that UN/ NATO are doing something without angering the Serbs too much).

The new Presidency building in which we were meeting was once a part of a bustling "FAMOS" factory which manufactured engines for Mercedes-Benz automobiles, among others. It is situated in the hills above Pale, close to the springs of Miljacka river (which flows through Sarajevo), and less than a mile from the ammunition dumps which the NATO airplanes destroyed in two bombing raids on May 25 and May 26.

"(Are) you sure I can't get you anything?" the ever hospitable host probed his guest again.

"I am sure. I had just finished a late lunch before we started our meeting."

Karadzic sliced off another piece of the peach. At that moment, an explosion rattled the windows of the building. It was followed by a high-pitch hissing sound. Both of us looked out of the window. A white plume of smoke was rising from a hill, less than 200 yards away. We walked to the window and looked up. A thin white trail of smoke pointed skyward.

"We must have fired a missile at one of the NATO planes," Karadzic muttered. After the NATO bombing raids on Pale in late May, the Bosnian Serb President warned that the NATO planes flying over Serb territory may be fired upon. A loud boom confirmed his assessment. But since the trees in front of the building blocked our view, we could not see if the missile had hit the target or the decoy flares which the fighter planes usually emit in such circumstances.

Karadzic walked back to his desk and buzzed his secretary. "Send A. in," he ordered.

Moments later, a soldier dressed in a camouflage uniform appeared. "What happened?" Karadzic asked.

"I don't know," the soldier replied. "Looks like we've fired on one of NATO planes."

"I can see that much myself," Karadzic said. "Find out what happened and let me know."

"(Vitaly) Churkin is coming this evening, (Thorwald) Stoltenberg tomorrow," Karadzic calmly changed the subject, as if firing missiles was a normal part of his daily routine. Turning to his visitor, he added, "I wonder what they want?"

For a few minutes, we discussed whether or not the Bosnian Serbs can expect any breakthroughs this time on the diplomatic front. They were already making their own breaks on the battlefield.

The phone rang. After hanging up, Karadzic said that was a field commander defending the major road north of Srebrenica. "There's been a lot of fighting today around Konjevic Polje and Kasaba. The Muslim soldiers are trying to break through toward Tuzla. He claims there are 10,000 of them in the woods. But 2,000 to 3,000 seems more likely to me."

There was a knock at the door. The same soldier returned.

“Mr. President, the (NATO) fighter jet was flying quite low, at probably less than 5,000 meters (about 15,000 feet),” the soldier said. “As soon as our rocket was fired, the pilot took evasive action, and fired off defensive flares. The missile missed the plane and hit the flares.”

“We shouldn’t be doing it now,” Karadzic muttered to himself. “Okay, thank you,” he said dismissing the soldier.

No more NATO planes were to be heard for the rest of the evening. Nor the following day. Maybe NATO commanders concluded that it was pointless to bomb the mountainous terrain around Zepa? Or maybe this evening’s near miss reminded them of Capt. O’Grady’s fate? (the American pilot downed on May 31). Either way, this writer was grateful to them for a peaceful evening, and a good night’s sleep. Or should he have thanked the Serbs? □

Mladic’s “Coup d’Etat” Attempt

More than half way through our meeting, I told RK what Gen. Perisic had told me - that RK was worth several million dollars, and that the RS political leadership was profiting from the war. I asked me if that were true.

RK replied that that’s sheer nonsense. He said that it is impossible to get rich on anything except for smuggling cigarettes. Which is what small-time profiteers do. “Everything else is tightly controlled,” he said. “We have proper receipts and controls for every tanker of oil which arrives here; or any other shipments.”

But he admitted that he had been hearing the same stories through RS’ own military grapevine. He leaned forward and lowered his voice: “Now I’ll tell you something so that you can understand where these stories came from.”

RK said that he had learned in the April time frame that Mladic had been preparing a “coup d’état” in compliance with Milosevic’s instructions. He said that the army had been even distributing a copy of Mladic’s (critical) speech in the Parliament to the troops in the field.

RK was incensed. So he called a meeting of all senior officers in Han Pijesak for May 1. He confronted the military assembly with his discovery of the Mladic/Milosevic plan to depose him. RK said that, judging by the reactions, most officers were shocked to learn that. “It was clear that the coup was being planned only by Mladic and a small number of communist pigs (‘komunjara’) around him, like Gvero” he said. “Gvero is one piece of human garbage,” RK added (“Gvero je djubre od coveka”).

When the meeting finished, RK felt that he had cleared the air and received the support of most of the officers who attended the session. Then he called Mladic aside and asked him to come to Pale for a one-on-one meeting. “I told him to set three hours aside for it,” RK recalled.

At the subsequent meeting between the two RS leaders in Pale, RK told Mladic that the Army is only an instrument of the state, not the state itself. And reminded him that

he, as the elected head of state, is the supreme commander of the armed forces. And that he would not tolerate insubordination or worse from his officers, including Mladic.

RK said that Mladic had denied his intent to depose and replace RK as the head of state, and promised to work together with RK and the other RS political leaders.

RK said that he was particularly peeved at the way the army humiliates a person like Prof. N. Koljevic, for example, one of the top three political leaders in the RS. "Koljevic is in charge of our relations with the UN," RK explained. "That includes the UNPROFOR as well as UNHCR (the humanitarian aid agency). But he is having to spend more time negotiating passage for UNHCR trucks with our own army than he does with the UN. It's a disgrace!"

RK said that he had picked Mladic in 1992 to be the top military commander of the RS army. But then he left Mladic to appoint the officers around him. "As a result, there are still too many communist pigs ('komunjara') there," RK said. I recalled that RK had levied the same charge when we met on Mount Jahorina in Sep/93 (see the diary notes from that trip).

I said to RK that, in view of what he had just told me, he needed to know that I met yesterday with Gvero, and discussed Gen. Perisic's accusations with him, too. "And what did he say?" RK asked. I said that Gvero replied that he did not know whether or not they were true, but that he was skeptical about it.

"I see," RK said and nodded. "Thank you for telling me that."

His Daughter's Wedding

In a conversation with ZM over lunch, he told me that a lot of people in the RS were unhappy about the fact that RK was celebrating his daughter's wedding in the middle of the Muslim Sarajevo offensive. Out of deference for that, RK had even ordered all Pale pubs and restaurants closed.

"I was invited to the wedding myself, but decided not to go for that reason," ZM explained. He said that that made NK a little angry at him, but ZM stood firm. So NK went to the wedding alone.

Asked why the people would not speak up, ZM said because most people around RK are hoping to get ahead by kissing up to him, rather than telling him the truth. "Yet RK is the kind of a person to whom you can tell the truth, and he won't bite your head off for it," ZM reasoned.

So I put ZM's theory to a test, introducing then as the next sensitive subject - RK daughter's wedding. RK replied that he was conscious of the possibility that it could be misinterpreted. That's why he approached a group of local (Pale) elders and asked their advice on what to do. The advice he received was that he should proceed with the wedding, but tone it down. "We only had a few guests for a reception after the service," he said. "And you know what the Serbian wedding are normally like - three days' affairs."

I replied that I was glad he had no problems with the Pale people, but that there is a lot more to the RS than Pale. And that perhaps he should make an effort to explain what he had just told me to wider audiences. He agreed.

Current Military Situation

RK said that the attacks on Srebrenica and Zepa were a part of what he called “My Order No. 7.” He said that their objective is “to raise the temperature to the boiling point.” ***RK also said that he expected the Croats to try to relieve the pressure on Bihac by attacking Knin through Bosnia*** (from Duvno and Livno) [emphasis added 8/18/95].

Churkin, Stoltenberg, Bildt

RK said that (Vitaly) Churkin was at this moment on his way to meet with the RS leaders. The Russian embassy car took him to Visegrad, where he was picked up and is being driven in an RS car. “I wonder what he wants?” RK wondered.

RK said that when he first met (Thorvald) Stolenberg, balding and blue-eyed, “I thought he looked like a Nazi,” RK said laughing about it. “But he turned out to be a very nice guy.”

RK said that the new chief negotiator, Karl Bildt (a former Swedish prime minister) also looked like a Nazi. But RK had not met him so far.

Sarajevo Troops’ Bravery

RK said that until now, the troops from Bosanska Krajina were thought to be the best and the toughest. “But during the (June) Sarajevo offensive,” RK said, “the Sarajevans (‘Sarajlije’) really made a name for themselves. They made us all proud.”

My Transportation

When RK heard that I was still unsure if and when I’d meet with Mladic, and that I did not know what transportation I would get to return to Serbia, he said that maybe I could go back with Stoltenberg tomorrow. He said that Stoltenberg was coming on a UN helicopter to Visegrad, from where the RS car was picking him up and bringing him to Pale.

RK buzzed his body guard and driver to come in (Dragan). He asked him to ensure that I get a ride back to Belgrade tomorrow by whatever means available. Dragan suggested that maybe I could go with Srdja Trifkovic, who was also returning to Belgrade tomorrow. We agreed to touch base again on that tomorrow, after I attempt to get in touch with RM tonight, provided, of course, the military lines are restored.

Mladic’s “Retirement”

Just as we were saying our good-byes, RK muttered that, “in the end, we’ll have to pension Mladic off.” I was taken aback by the comment since we had finished talking about that subject long ago. RK’s words indicated that the subject was still quite

clearly in the forefront of his mind. Just as I was leaving, there was some commotion in the hall outside RK's office. The Churkin entourage had arrived.

Zdravko Miovcic (ZM)

(a ride and drinks at Miljacka River springs - 19:45 to 21:00)

The Walk

After my meeting with RK, I said to ZM that I felt like a walk. We went outside. He asked if I wanted to go and see the "FAMOS" factory near Vogosca where he used to work. Before I could answer it, he said that the site is right under the hill which the Muslims hold. "So they regularly fire at workers and throw bombs on the factory roof," he said.

I was non-committal about the idea. I recalled what they say - "God only helps those who help themselves." And since I really had no legitimate reason to go to Vogosce, except to dare the fate, I thought that it would be a stupid thing to do.

ZM then suggested that perhaps we could go to the Miljacka river springs.

"Clash of Civilizations" (a column)

PALE, July 14 (20:30L) - "How would you like to go up to the Miljacka river springs?" Zach inquired.

"Sounds great," I replied, glad of chance to be outdoors after being cooped up in meetings all day. "How far is it?"

"Only a couple of miles," said Zach. "But it's straight up the mountain. We'll take my car."

Zach is probably in his late thirties. His exact age is difficult to gauge, however, because of his thick, black, bushy beard. Now an official in the Bosnian Serb government, Zach was a management consultant in Sarajevo before the war. His undergraduate diploma was in literature and arts. But after receiving an MBA degree, he specialized in management of human resources.

Having met with scores of Serb government officials in the last two days, I was struck by the fact that nearly all of them held graduate degrees; many had doctorates; none were professional politicians; all were dedicated to a cause which they see as the Serb national survival.

Take Prof. Dr. Nikola Koljevic, for example, the Vice President of the Serb Republic. This Shakespearean scholar before the war now spends most of his waking hours haggling with UNPROFOR, the Red Cross, the UNHCR or the "Doctors without Borders" over deliveries of humanitarian aid across Serb territories.

That's on a good day. When the going gets tough, "the professor," as his aids fondly call him (some were actually his students), treks across this mountainous country negotiating for freedom of prisoners, or assuring civilians that his government would protect them. Koljevic was instrumental, for example, in arranging the release of the UN prisoners which the Serbs took after the NATO bombings on May 25 and May 26.

Yet, he also sees himself as an accidental politician.

"When we realized that the Muslims were preparing for war (in early 1990), five of us met at my Slava (a Serbian religious holiday) to discuss a possibility of forming a political party," Koljevic explained, speaking at his office the night before. "We first offered the leadership to (Nenad) Kecmanovic, but he turned it down. Finally, we managed to talk (Radovan) Karadzic into accepting the role."

Later on, some of Koljevic's students who joined the Serbian Democratic Party applied similar pressure on him. "They kind of recruited me," Koljevic confessed.

After the war broke out in April 1992, many Serbian intellectuals literally fled Sarajevo with their lives into the surrounding hills. Eventually, they settled in and around Pale, referring to this sleepy weekend cottage town as Srpsko Sarajevo (Serbian Sarajevo).

They were the lucky ones. As some Serb intellectuals managed escape, stories of murder and atrocities by the Muslim government in Sarajevo, especially aimed against the Serbian elite, started to spread. According to Dr. Karadzic, between 7,000 and 10,000 leading Serbs were killed. A Serb military source, a Sarajevoan who had lived in that city for 46 years, said that between 15,000 and 20,000 Serbs have been wiped out.

Even Prof. Koljevic could have become such a statistic. At one point during the negotiations leading up to the reopening of the Sarajevo airport in the summer of 1992, a group of five Muslim soldiers recognized the professor and took him prisoner. As they lined him up against the wall, Koljevic said: "Wait a second. It should be a real privilege for one of you to kill Professor Koljevic. I think that you should call your President (Alija) Izetbegovic and ask him which one of you should get the honor."

Koljevic's quick thinking bought him time and saved his life. As the soldiers tried to contact the Presidency, a UN patrol came along and rescued the prof.

It is a supreme irony that none of the major media or the Western governments have uttered even a word of condemnation of the Sarajevo Muslim government over this form of selective genocide - eliminating the Serb "cream of the crop." It's as if killing the innocent Serb civilians in Sarajevo was somehow justified on account of alleged atrocities by other Serbs somewhere else in Bosnia.

I recalled what Colonel Kos, a Serb army engineer who reads philosophy and poetry, had said to me just the other day, paraphrasing a Chinese proverb:

*“Every 50 years or so,
wise people shut up,
fools speak up,
and criminals rise to the top.”*

“These are such times,” Col. Kos added.

Such heavy thoughts were swirling inside my head when Zach’s driver pulled up. We hopped in for a short drive up the hill. As we got out a few minutes later, the sunset scene at the Miljacka river springs was so idyllic, the air so fresh, the setting so peaceful - that it was difficult to imagine that only a few miles down the mountain, where Miljacka river enters the city of Sarajevo, two civilizations were locked in a desperate mortal battle.

I was quickly reminded of such a reality. Just as we sat down on a wooden bench outside the little pub, distant artillery fire could be heard. “The guns of Treskavica,” Zach explained, as if reading my thoughts. “We are now pushing the Muslims back south of Trnovo.”

When the Sarajevo offensive began in late June, the Muslims attacked simultaneously on all fronts. In the south, they entered Trnovo, but were quickly pushed back by the Serbs. Now the Serbs were gaining ground beyond the original front lines on Mount Treskavica.

Immediately behind our benches, the innkeeper had breached the tiny Miljacka creek and formed a pretty pond.

“Gee, I wished I had brought my camera!” I exclaimed.

“No problem. I’ll go and fetch it,” Zach’s driver said.

As we waited for him to return, Zach started talking about the life in Bosnia before the war. He was born and raised in a little village just south of Sarajevo (near Trnovo). His father always seemed too busy to talk to the kids, as he tried to earn a living for the family. So the young Zach was intellectually raised by his grandfather. “That’s the way things usually are in Serb families,” he explained. “Grandpa has the experience and the time to educate the grandchildren.”

Some 20 years later, Grandpa indoctrination paid off. Sort of... At the age of 25, Zach fell in love with a Muslim girl. After three years together, he felt the pressure to decide if he would marry her. “What would Grandpa have said if I were to become the first one in our family to marry a Muslim?” he asked himself. So Zach broke off the affair. “It broke my heart,” he confessed. But he added that he has no regrets now.

Married to a Serb and a father of a five-year old boy, Zach said that he was very glad he did that. “There is one big difference between the Muslims and the Serbs,” he continued to philosophy. “To a male Serb, his family is everything.

But for a male Muslim, the women only exist to give them pleasure. That's why it was not unusual for me to see in this war the Muslims sometimes sacrifice their women and children to save themselves."

He paused and sighed, looking pensively at the small pond behind my back. "The Muslims sure knew how to enjoy life, though," he reminisced. "Right about now at sunset, they would get out, sit by a pond like this just as we are doing, sip their coffee, and smoke the tobacco."

Zach took a tobacco bag out of his pocket, and started to roll his cigarette - very slowly. Seeing my questioning look, he smiled and said: "The tobacco isn't what it used to be. But it still beats buying filter cigarettes."

The three-year affair with the Muslim girl wasn't a waste, this writer thought. Some of the Muslim life's pleasures must have rubbed off on this Serb.

"As far back as 1967," Zach continued, "Grandpa had a feeling the Muslims and we could not live together." The old man came to visit his sons who had married and moved to Sarajevo. After a few days there, he told them, "you should move your kids out of this 'baliluk' (a Muslim enclave)."

"Grandpa was right," Zach said. "Muslims are the best servants and the worst masters. They would not hesitate to step on us like the worms if they got the better of us."

Suddenly, a loud explosion rudely interrupted the tranquillity of the moment. "That shell must have come from Mount Igman," Zach explained.

"You mean the Muslims can now shell Pale?" this writer asked.

"Sort of," he replied enigmatically. "They've been gradually increasing the range and the accuracy of their artillery."

Our driver returned with the camera. We took pictures even though it was getting quite dark. A dog tied up to a tree nearby was madly wagging his tail, as he had done whenever we got up or moved before. "He must be lonely," I said, thinking of my own two dogs back in Phoenix. "He obviously likes people. If only people would like people as much." □

Gvero's "Chetnik" Comment

I told ZM what Gvero had said about me, and asked him if that was a compliment or what? He said he'd consider it a compliment, coming from Gvero.

Dr. Nikola Koljevic (NK)

(a discussion in the dining room after the Churkin dinner - 23:00 to 23:45)

Churkin

NK said that Churkin was as arrogant as ever. "He only came to collect some diplomatic points for himself," NK opined. Churkin wanted to have the Dutch peacekeepers from Srebrenica released, so that he would get the credit for it. "(Aleksa)

Buha and he are now making a statement for the press about it," he added. NK said that during dinner, Churkin hardly touched his food. "He made it seem as if it wasn't good enough for him," NK said, without trying to hide his contempt for the Russian.

(ZM was also present during the above conversation).

After that, NK and his entourage again gave me a ride to my hotel on Mount Jahorina.

Maj. Sloba Mamlic

(a telephone discussion from my Jahorina hotel - around 00:30)

Tomorrow's Plan, Zepa

I finally managed to get through on the military lines to SM. He asked me to wait a few minutes for him to get in touch with RM and would call me back. After about 15 minutes, he did. He said that RM was terribly sorry, but that he cannot make it tomorrow to Han Pijesak. The same was true of Gen. Tolimir. So what they've done was to arrange for Col. (Petar) Salapura to meet with me. After that, they will provide me with a car and a driver for a return to Serbia.

I asked SM what the situation was like at Zepa. "It's okay," he replied, without giving away anything. "It would not be a bad idea for you to finish the job quickly," I suggested, thinking of the renewed threat of bombing by NATO. "You mean like by tomorrow?" he asked. "Something like that," I said. He thanked me for the input.

🕒 **End of Day 9** 🕒

July 14, 1995 (Saturday)

Dr. Nikola Koljevic (NK)

(a breakfast/meeting at Jahorina "Rajska Dolina" military hotel - 10:15 to 10:45)

Zametica Call

When I got up, I got a message that Zametica had called. I returned the call. Zametica said that he had arranged transportation for me, and that Srdja would drive me back to BG. I thanked him and said that that would not be necessary, as I had arranged alternate transportation in the meantime. I explained that all this happened after midnight last night, so I had no chance to let RK know.

Zametica's Wedding

During our drive to Pale, ZM told me that Zametica was planning to get married on July 21. The bride-to-be was a correspondent whom JZ had met in the course of his duties at Pale.

(see also the Travel Diary Notes "On the Run..." for additional details about this morning on Mt. Jahorina).

Momcilo Krajisnik (MK)

(a meeting at his office in Pale - 11:45 to 12:30)

(see also the Travel Diary Notes “On the Run...” for additional details about waiting this morning to meet with MK at Pale).

The Setting

For some reason, MK and I first met in the waiting room next to his secretary's office. After a while, she came in and said that his office “was now ready.” We moved to it after that. I could not help but wonder why the office “wasn't ready” at first.

Personal

MK was as friendly and warm toward me as ever. He said that his children had just gone on a vacation to Igalo (near Herceg-Novi), so he was a little worried. “Why,” I inquired. “Because there are Muslims over there, too,” he replied. And the children of a high-profile Bosnian Serb official are vulnerable to potential terrorist acts - is probably what he meant, but did not say.

Rogatica Incident

We talked about whether morality and goodness usually prevail in war situations. MK said that he wasn't sure that was always the case. He cited as an example Karadjordje, who had led the Serbs to victory over the Turks, and yet was not loved by his people. On the other hand, Nikola Pasic was a moderate, and yet was very popular with the people.

MK also recalled a recent incident from the Bosnian war. A man who was a karate instructor in Rogatica before the war, distinguished himself with his bravery and became a real hero among the local people. Then one day, something had snapped in him and he disappeared for about a year. When he returned to his unit, he took two bombs, pulled the pins out, and put them under his stomach. He was killed, but so were two young recruits, who were innocent bystanders. Several other soldiers were wounded. “Yet people still love him” (the karate instructor), and have given him the kind of burial reserved only for the folk heroes.

“He was evidently a very disturbed man,” MK said. “We'll never know what happened in his unit that drove him away, and why he came back to inflict such vengeance on his comrades.”

(At the time, I just nodded listening to MK's story. Later on, I recalled that I met a man in Rogatica last year, who was the commander of that unit, and said that he had been an athlete and a karate instructor before the war. He treated me to a very nice lunch. I wonder if that Major Kusic was the guy in MK's story?)

Fear of Muslim Capitulation

MK said that there was one thing that he feared perhaps more than anything else. "What's that?" I prodded him.

"That the Muslims may decide to capitulate."

"I beg your pardon?"

MK's answer illustrated why nearly everything to do with this Balkan war is twisted and convoluted. And why almost nothing is what it seems. "Suppose they just say, 'we give up. You (the Serbs) can now take over the government of Bosnia'," he speculated. "All we want you to do is call the elections."

He paused as if collecting his thoughts. "We'd all be out of office in a second," he concluded in mocked horror.

(Because the Muslims have a numeric superiority over the Serbs or the Croats).

In other words, peace is NOT in the best interests of the Bosnian Serb leaders, at least not in any form of government in which they would have to share the power with the Muslims and/or the Croats. And that was the kind of government which had existed prior to the war, and the reason why the civil war eventually broke out. As long as the would-be peacemakers are ignoring these facts of life, which is what the Contact Group has done in the last year or so, there will be no peace in Bosnia!

Fear of Zepa Failure

Another personal anxiety which MK shared with me was his fear that with the current attack on Zepa, they may have bitten off more than they can chew. "Right now, the morale among our troops and people is very high," he said. "But if we were not able to take Zepa fairly soon, that could easily change for the worse."

He pointed out that the terrain around Zepa is so mountainous; that the defenders have so many caves and caverns in which to hide; that Zepa was the only town in Bosnia which was never occupied during the WW II by either the Germans or the partisans. Only the "chetniks" were able to get in once, but then left it, as the place had no strategic significance for them, MK explained.

War's End

As was the case with NK and RK, MK also talked about "raising the temperature to the boiling point." I asked him for his assessment as to how long the war was going to last. He replied that he figured it would be all over "in one to two months."

His answer jived with that which NK provided the other night. Since it was evident that all three top RS political leaders spoke the same way, and had the same opinions, I was wondering who was the thinker was, and who were the parrots?

Final Good-byes

After the MK meeting, I said my good-byes to Prof. Koljevic, and walked into the parking lot, where my driver and his companion were waiting for me. They identified

themselves as being on the staff of Col. Salapura. In fact, the white Mercedes which he sent for me, was his own official vehicle.

Colonel Petar Salapura (PS)

(lunch at the officers' mess, plus a meeting at Gen. Djukic's office in Han Pijesak - 13:45 to 15:45)

Lunch

When we first met last year, Col. Peter Salapura was the only officer not wearing a uniform. This time, however, he had his fatigues on, and looked rather scruffy (unshaven) and tired. He seemed glad to see me, though, and quickly offered me lunch in the officers' mess. Today's menu was green beans with some meat.

As we sat down in a corner of the room, my now "old friend," Col. Simovic, also entered the dining room and waved to me with a broad smile. I recognized some other familiar faces among the officer (and vice versa), whose names I could not remember. We just greeted each other informally, as I continued my conversation with PS.

After lunch, PS suggested "we go upstairs, where we can talk in peace." We ended up in the very same office on the top floor (which belongs to Gen. Djukic), in which we all met last July, when Mladic was also there. The 1995 painted Easter eggs were in the same dish as were 1994 ones, one of which they packed for me to take home. I still have it in my living room on a small silver pedestal. Maybe that's why I had a feeling as if time had stopped; as if we were in some sort of a time warp.

Role of America

We discussed the strategic issues facing the RS. I explained my theory - that the farther away the US is kept from meddling in peacemaking efforts - the better off the Serbs are. And that Britain appears to come the closest to what the Serbs may consider an ally.

PS replied that, in his opinion, there cannot be any peace without the US. "So one way or another, we'll have to deal with them," he said. He added that the American influence on the Croats is growing, while Germany's is ebbing. Right now, he estimated the weight of the US/German influence on Zagreb to be about 40/60 respectively. "And it used to be almost all Germany.

(Not quite, I thought, but did not say anything. I recalled the June 1991 letter, of which I have a copy in the archives, which Tudjman sent to Jim Baker, then the latter was the Secretary of State. In it, Tudjman lamented Baker's lack of support, considering how closely they "had collaborated in the past." This implied that America had played a much bigger role in Tudjman's rise to power, and the subsequent break-up of Yugoslavia, than is officially recognized).

War to Extinction

“This war will not be over when some politicians sign a peace treaty. This war will end when one of the three nations in Bosnia becomes extinct. We have to make sure we’re not the one.”

As he was explaining his point of view, very calmly and very rationally, I recalled what ZM had told me about him. “PS is a very dangerous man,” he said, with a grin of his face.

“Dangerous?” I repeated. “Why?”

“Because he is extremely intelligent.”

Despite his scruffy appearance, intelligence was oozing from this man. I said something to that effect - complimenting PS on his analyses, finding it easy to follow his logic, even if I sometimes didn’t agree. I did it in the hopes of loosening him up a bit, hoping he may drop his guard a little. It worked.

Personal, Getting Politicians’ Ear

PS then volunteered some information about his own background which backed up ZM’s comment. He said that he had spent two years (1989-1990) in Russia (then still the USSR) “studying their intelligence methods.” (*In other words, he probably went to some sort of a graduate school of the KGB*).

PS said that the problem with the world today isn’t in the lack of good military or other intelligence. “All leading agencies in the worlds, including yours (he was referring to the CIA), know very well what the score is,” he said. “The problem is that the politicians don’t listen to good advice.”

He said that he was hoping that I wouldn’t get offended by his example. He said that, “for instance, you go to Pale and tell Karadzic and Krajisnik, the two top politicians in the RS, what your views are. They are more likely to listen to you than to their own military intelligence strategists, like myself.”

I asked him why he thought that was the case, if indeed that’s how things worked.

He replied that it was “because none of these politicians are professionals, who appreciate the value of good intelligence.”

(I chuckled. I could not help but recall how many times I’ve thought or said that same thing about business executives who run huge companies by the seat of their pants; rather than on the basis of a well thought-out professional advice.)

As a result, PS continued, he said that he had quit trying to argue his points. “Now I just write reports. I keep one copy; I send one copy to Pale. One day, the truth will be known. And I have it all in my files.”

I asked him why he stopped arguing his points.

He replied, “because it’s a waste of time. I have more important things to do than try to educate the people who do not have open minds.”

Once again, he sounded very pragmatic, like a good salesman who sizes up his prospects, and then decides whom to pursue, and whom to drop.

Thunderstorm; Artillery Fire

While we were conversing about such “meaty subjects,” a summer thunderstorm was providing a noisy backdrop to our conversation. At one point, there were three loud bangs, which I could have sworn were artillery fire, just like the one last night at the Miljacka springs. At that moment, I was in the middle of a sentence, but continued talking as if nothing unusual had happened. When the three bangs occurred, PS was looking at me straight in the eye, practically trying to stare me down, and see if I’d blink. Since neither of us did, and I continued talking, eventually we both relaxed and looked away.

(I could not help but wonder later on, if that were some sort of a (KGB) test he was putting me through, to see how I would react to an unexpected situation. But then, it could have been just three loud thunderbolts, while the rest was my imagination. I am certainly no artillery fire expert).

Milosevic, Yeltsin

Regarding SM’s position vis-à-vis the current situation, especially his apparent willingness to recognize BiH (per his near-agreement with Robert Frasure), PS said that he “was befuddled” with SM.

As for Yeltsin and his apparent support for SM, PS said that Russia today “has no influence at all” on the situation in the Balkans. “Yeltsin’s only objective is to die in office as Russian President,” PS said cynically.

Dragan Zivanovic, alias Daniel Boier

I asked PS if he knew of DZ.

His faced wrinkled into a frown, as he thought intently for a few seconds. It did not look as if the name had registered.

“Maybe you’ve heard of him as Daniel Boier?” I asked.

The lights lit up all over PS’ face. “Of course I know Daniel Boier,” he said.

I asked him point blank if he thought that the man worked for the CIA, as it seemed to me.

PS smiled and nodded. “I said that in one of my reports back in 1991,” he replied.

(Evidently, RK and NK had not read them, or else they would not be putting their hopes in a guy like DZ-DB. So PS has unwittingly made his point - about the politicians not reading his analyses. But he’d also lost a point with me. For, if he had been more proactive, they may have paid attention. Instead, he showed himself to be a smug intellectual, happy to be right, but not necessarily a person who wants to get

things done the right way no matter what it took Then I thought of what Col. S had said: "Every 50 years or so, wise men shut up; fools speak up..."

Muslims in US

Possibly trying to show off a bit with his knowledge of the US politics, PS ventured into some forecasts which led him into a trap. He predicted that "the US will experience a civil war much worse than this one." And that America's problems with Islam are only beginning.

I agreed with the theory that there will probably be a decline in the US global influence, and in our multi-cultural society in the future. In fact, cited the article to that effect by Prof. Samuel Huntington, "*Clash of Civilizations*" in the Summer 1993 edition of *FOREIGN POLICY*. But I said I did not see the indigenous Muslims in the US as posing such a threat.

"But they are half the population," PS argued.

"They are not even 5%, let alone 50%," I calmly replied. Then, I proceeded to explain to him the demographics of last November's vote, which I said I had sent to his boss (RM).

PS looked a bit sheepish, so I changed the subject to spare him the embarrassment.

Which Way Home?

PS and I said our good-byes in the parking lot, as seems to have become a custom for me in these matters. He walked over to a VW Golf and knocked on the window. A man in a uniform, who was sleeping in the passenger seat, jumped up and saluted PS. "Sleeping in the middle of the day, huh?" PS chided the man. He was smiling, though, as he said it.

"Sorry," the man muttered.

PS then introduced me to "Zoki," who was going to be my driver.

"Which way should we go?" I asked.

"Via Sekovici and Ceparda, and then on to Bijeljina," PS replied.

We said our good-byes.

The three of us piled into the Golf, and took off.

VW Golf, Skoda - "War Heroes"

As we started winding our way out of Han Pijesak, I commented about how many VW Golf cars I've seen in use by the RS army.

"Golf and Skodas have been the unsung heroes of the Bosnian war," Zoki said.

"No other cars were able to stand up to the challenges these two vehicles have faced."

The man in the back seat agreed.

("Who says the Germans aren't in it?" I thought. I also recalled the big roled VW had already played in WW II as one of Wehrmacht's principal vehicles.

Han Pijesak to Bijeljina

With Zoran Bogdanovic ("Zoki") and
Capt.(?) Marucic ("Mare")

(also see my diary notes story "*On the Run...*"- 16:00 to 19:00)

Personal

Since almost no RS officers wear any insignia, I could not tell what rank "Mare" had. But it was clear that he was an officer whom PS had entrusted with getting me to where I wanted to go. "Zoki," a younger man, possibly in high 20s, was the driver. They were both from Bijeljina. They referred to PS informally and fondly as "Pepi" (a nick name derived from Petar, PS's first name).

(The RS Army seemed to me more like a fraternity than an army.)

Before the war, "Zoki" was a veterinary technician. "Mare" was a physical education teacher, and the coach of the Bijeljina volleyball team. He seemed thrilled when he heard that I once played a basketball game in Bijeljina against the local team. But since this was more than 30 years ago, I could not remember a thing about where it had been played, except that it was at night, under the lights. The two of them went out of their way in Bijeljina to show me where that sports stadium was. "If you played under the lights," Mare explained matter-of-factly, "it had to have been here. This was the only stadium which had lights in the 1960s." I believed him.

"On the Run..."

(Travel diary notes made in BG on July 17)

PALE, July 14 (18:30L) - The phone in Dr. Radovan Karadzic's office rang. After hanging up, the Bosnian Serb President said that was a field commander defending the major road north of Srebrenica which connects Pale with Belgrade. "There's been a lot of fighting today around Konjevic Polje and Kasaba. The Muslim soldiers are trying to break through toward Tuzla. He claims there are 10,000 of them in the woods. But 2,000 to 3,000 seems more likely to me."

Only two days earlier, the Serbs routed the Srebrenica defenders, and raised the stakes in the Bosnian war by taking this UN-designated "safe area."

"You said you came yesterday?" Karadzic asked his visitor.

"Yes."

"Which way did you come?"

I replied that yesterday morning, we tried to take the very road. "We came from Belgrade to Zvornik, but were stopped from going on via Konjevic Polje by the border crossing guards. They said that the road was closed because of fighting along the way."

"So what did you do?"

"We headed north, and drove via Ceparda and Sekovici. We saw no trouble. But as soon as we got to Han Pijesak, we were told that that road had been also closed."

"I know," Karadzic nodded. "Since yesterday morning, there has been sporadic fighting around Crni Vrh" (a mountain near Sekovici).

"Which way is (Vitaly) Churkin coming this evening?" (a Russian diplomat).

"The (Russian) embassy car is taking him via Uzice (in Serbia). We are picking him up in Visegrad (a border town on the river Drina south of Srebrenica). It's a long way around, but it's safe."

"What about (Thorwald) Stoltenberg?" (who was due the following day).

"He is getting to Visegrad on a UN helicopter. And we are also taking over there and driving him to Pale."

"So it looks like there are no safe roads at the moment straight to Belgrade?"

"Looks like it. But things can change very quickly. It's a fluid situation. I'll see if we can arrange for you to go back to Belgrade with Stoltenberg."

(As it turned out, this was not necessary. I was able to arrange my own transportation via Han Pijesak later on this evening).



MOUNT JAHORINA, July 15 (8:30L) - "What a gorgeous morning!" I exclaimed to the hotel staff, as he stepped out onto a terrace in front of a mountain resort at the 5,400-foot elevation. Most skiing events of the 1984 Winter Olympics were held around here.

"How far is it to the top?" I pointed to the Jahorina mountain peak.

"About 3-4 kilometers" (2-2.5 miles).

"I'll go for a walk then."

Even at such a high elevation, and despite the fresh morning air, one quickly starts to perspire when tackling a slope this steep. Reminders of the 1984 Winter Olympics were everywhere.

A hotel called "Vucko," for example, appeared on the left. Seeing a large wooden figure at the hotel's entrance, this writer remembered that "Vucko" was the Sarajevo Olympics mascot. The now rusted and weather-beaten road signs also reminded the Olympic athletes and visitors in multitude of languages of what to see, where to turn, where to park....

A little bit further up, there were remains of several burnt out mountain cottages, and a larger office building. The tower on its rooftop was a twisted

mess of rusted out steel. Inside the empty building shell, several cows took shelter from the sun. The war seems to have intruded even in such a serene setting.

About an hour later, back at the hotel terrace, I saw Dr. Nikola Koljevic, the Bosnian Serb vice president, also arriving there after a brisk walk. Evidently, he had the same idea on a beautiful morning like this. Dr. Koljevic and I had coffee and tea, and then headed for Pale in his car.



PALE, July 15 (11:45L) - "Are you Bob Djurdjevic?" a man asked, as I stood and chatted with the guards in front of the old Serb Presidency building.

"And who wants to know?" I replied, a little startled that someone would know me this far away from home.

"My name is Ivanov. I am supposed to drive you today," the man explained.

"I see. In that case, yes, I am Bob Djurdjevic."

"Are you ready to go?"

"I am afraid not. I was supposed to meet here (Momcilo) Krajisnik (the President of the Bosnian Serb Parliament) at 11:00, but he has still not arrived at his office."

I paused and smiled, looking at the wrist watch. "I am quickly learning that time is not a particularly precious commodity around here."

The driver and the guards laughed.

"Can I go into town then?" the driver asked.

"Sure, why not. I am not planning to be long-winded with Krajisnik. So just be here by 12:15."

Just before he left, I said, "Ivanov, ha? Are you from Vojvodina?"

"No I am from Mount Ozren" (in Bosnia)."

"That's strange," I said. "Your family name sounds as if you should be from somewhere in Vojvodina."

"Actually, my father did move from there to Bosnia," Ivanov finally fessed up.

I smiled. It was cute to see this Vojvodina Serb trying so hard to portray himself as a Bosnian Serb.

After a few minutes, Krajisnik arrived. We had our meeting. At about 12:30, we shook hands and this writer took off.

Along the road from Pale to Han Pijesak, dark clouds and sunshine played hide and seek with each other. Occasional brief rain showers and thunderbolts reminded us how quickly the weather can change in this mountainous region.

We stopped in Han Pijesak to have lunch and get directions about which way to go. I also met with a Bosnian Serb army friend.



HAN PIJESAK, July 15 (15:30L) - Han Pijesak is a pretty little town at about a 4,200-foot elevation. Since logging was big business around here before the war, it was not surprising to see so many log-wood cabins. Except that some them were hardly cabins. They were large multi-story structures which housed a dozen or more families. Kind of like log-wood high -rises. "Even in the middle of a forest the communists had to build their ugly apartment buildings," I chuckled. The people who lived in them complained that they were cold and hard to maintain in the winter time.

After lunch, we changed cars and drivers. My new driver was Goran. He was accompanied by a man who said his name was Marko. They were both from Biljeljina. The two men checked out their machine guns which they placed close by to their feet. They also put a couple hand grenades into the storage compartments of the driver and passenger doors. We asked some local people about which way to go. We knew from yesterday's reports that both roads to Zvornik were either closed or dangerous.

"Take the road via Sekovici and Ceparda to Zvornik," we were told.

As we got into the car, I tried to recline the back of my seat a little. "Just in case I fall asleep," I was joking.

"I don't think you will," Goran said.

"Why not?"

"I think it will be an exciting trip."



HAN POGLED, July 15 (16:00L) - The view to the north toward Sekovici and Tuzla from the mountain pass we had just crossed was breathtaking. This writer made a comment about it. His two fellow-travelers agreed. "No wonder this place is called 'Han Pogled' (Han View)," Marko explained.

"Was this Muslim territory?" I asked.

"No, this has been Serbian land for centuries," Marko replied. "Why would you think this was Muslim territory?"

"Because 'Han' sounds to me like a Muslim word. Doesn't it mean something like an 'Inn?'"

"You're right. It does. But that's an expression the Turks have left behind."

Marko paused, as if contemplating something. Then he added, "I guess, you're right. After all, the Muslims are also the Serbs who converted to Islam to avoid Turkish persecution."



"This is a very good water," Goran said pointing to a spring on the left side of the road.

"Then we must stop," I said. "My father, a forestry engineer, taught me that you never pass a mountain spring without stopping at least to wash your face."

"Really?" Goran said as he screeched to a stop. "That's what we say in Bosnia, too."

The water tasted great on a hot day. We splashed our faces and necks and drove on.



We came to a fork in the road. The road to the left was blocked by a barrier. A military policeman stood guard. Goran turned right.

Just as we descended into the valley surrounded by forests on each side, we heard a rattle from the back wheel.

"Sounds like a flat tire to me," this writer said.

Goran stopped the car. All three of us got out. The rear right wheel was sitting on its rim.

"Goddamn it!" Goran exclaimed. "It couldn't have happened at a worse time."

We all nodded. We knew from the map we had looked at earlier that we had just entered the war zone, the area through which the Muslim troops had to pass if they were to reach to Muslim enclave in Tuzla. Our eyes darted all around the hills on both sides of the road. For now, all was quiet.

Goran opened the trunk and got his tools out.

"Do you have a spare?" Marko asked.

Goran nodded affirmatively.

As he loosened the screws on the wheel, Marko asked, "where does this road lead to?"

"To Milici."

"Milici?"

"Yes. Why do you seem surprised?"

"Weren't we told to go via Sekovici?"

"I thought he had said Milici."

It was time for me to intervene, as ignorant as I was about the local geography. "I am afraid he did say Sekovici. I heard the man say that quite clearly."

"Damn it!" Marko exclaimed. "We're in the middle of the fucking war zone and quibbling over directions."

He swore and spit angrily on the ground.

That's when God intervened. A blue van was heading our way from the direction of Milici. Marko motioned him to stop. I am not sure I would have stopped if I were the driver of the van under these circumstances. We could have been the Muslims, for example, who stole a Serb car. But the van did stop.

"Which way are you coming from, friend?" Marko asked.

"From Zvornik."

"What's the road like?"

"Not bad. There are lots of our (Serb) troops around Konjevic Polje and Milici, but there was no shooting when I went through. I hear, though, that there is quite a show under way around Sekovici. Zulfir (a well-known Muslim terrorist from Srebrenica) and about 1,500 of his men are trying to fight their way through to Tuzla."

We thanked the van driver. He drove on.

"Mother-fucking son of a bitch!" cursed Marko, stomping his feet.

"Who are you talking about?" I asked.

"That man in Han Pijesak ("Pepi," his boss!). He would have sent us right into the enemy hands!"

That's when I realized that this was actually the second time God had intervened. The first time He did it at the fork in the road, a couple miles back.

Goran had finished changing the tire. "That's pretty fast work," I commented.

"That's nothing," the driver dismissed the compliment. "The other day we had a flat near Orasje (close to Croatian guns and snipers in Posavina). Cedo was with me and he changed the tire then. I don't think that the Ferrari crews would have been any faster."

Marko was now laughing. "I know exactly what you meant when you said Orasje. Those Croat bastards can shoot."

We got into the car and drove on. Now the challenge was to find a tire repair shop. Without a spare, it would have been foolish to proceed even under normal circumstances, let alone in a war zone.

We stopped at three places which did display tire repair signs, but none of them had any rubber with which to glue the puncture. Finally, we were told to go to a deserted bauxite mine in the hills above Milici. "That's the only place in town that can help you," a man from Milici said.



MILICI, July 15 (16:45) - We drove up the twisty and steep road in the direction of Srebrenica. The atmosphere was tense, as we did not know the terrain.

"We've already driven three kilometers," Goran said nervously.

"The man said 3-4 kilometers," Marko replied. "Give him a chance."

"There is no turning back now," I agreed with Marko. "We can't go any further without a spare."

When we saw the gates to the mine, all of us felt a sense of relief. We drove past the guards into a parking lot which was full of huge ore hauling equipment. As the mechanics worked on the tire, I had Marko take a picture of me beside one of these giant machines. Its tire was taller than an average person.

At that moment, we heard three short bursts of automatic machine gun fire. Each echoed for a few seconds from the surrounding hills.

"Someone has just been killed," Goran explained.

"How do you know?" I asked.

"That's what they do when someone dies. An honor guard fires three short bursts into the air."

"You mean someone has just been buried, not killed?" I tried to clarify.

"That's right. They do that just before they lower the body into the ground."

The heat of the late afternoon was mixing in with the anxiety of the moment. The men who were hanging around while our tire was being fixed started to talk about the fighting which has been going on for the last few days. They said the Serb military estimated that there were 3,000 to 4,000 armed Muslims in the hills above Milici. "I just saw several tanks and transporters pass on this road in the direction of Konjevic Polje," a man said.

That's where we were heading next.

"Let me tell you two something," Marko said, addressing Goran and myself. "I am in the back seat. If they open fire on us, you two duck right away below the dash. And I'll open fire from the back."

"You have it all figured out, don't you?" Goran said with a bit of derision.

"Well, I figure that when God decides to call my number up, He'll do so anyway. So what's the point fretting about it."



Inside the workshop, our tire was just about patched up. "Look at this," Goran said, showing me a small nail which caused our flat tire. "And we could have been all killed for an inch of metal!"

I walked inside the workshop. Several men huddled around what looked like an anti-aircraft gun.

"This is a Muslims improvisation," a mechanic said, pointing to the weapon mounted on two rubber wheels.

"But they were pretty stupid," he said. "See this?" he pointed to a metal bar which blocked the gunner's access to the auto-fire switch. "If they had only cut this off in half, they could have had a fully automatic weapon, not just a single shot artillery piece."

"Maybe they weren't so stupid," Marko said.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Maybe that was done deliberately to conserve ammunition."

"What are these types of weapons normally used for?" I asked. "For anti-tank assault?"

"Normally, yes, that's what they were supposed to be," Marko replied. "But in this war, all sides, including ourselves, have used them as anti-personnel weapons, too."

He explained that the latter was an especially effective use in forested terrain, when the shrapnel from the ricocheting shell can cause a lot of damage to the enemy infantry.

Finally, our tire was fixed.

As we wound our way down the mountain toward the town of Milici, Marko continued to talk non-stop. Maybe that's how some people try to calm their nerves, while others just shut up and brood. I may be, in part, responsible for setting him off.

"Isn't this the third time in this war the Serbs and the Muslims are fighting over the same territory?"

"It sure is," Marko agreed. "See that sports field over there?" he asked pointing to a wide expanse of land, which included several large swimming pools. "When the war started in 1992, the Muslims massacred many Serbs, their neighbors. Now these Serbs are buried in a mass grave near that field."

It's funny that I never heard about that from the NEW YORK TIMES, I thought.



KONJEVIC POLJE, July 15 (17:30L) - When you get into a dangerous war situation, you can feel the tension in the air. You can't quite put your finger on any specific reason which makes you suddenly pay attention to the way the wind blows, for example, or the direction in which the birds fly. You just do.

In Goran's case, when we reached the area where most of the fighting has taken place in the last two days, he showed his nervousness by flooring the gas pedal. That's why at one stage Marko shouted from the back seat: "Slow down Goran. If they start shooting at us now at this speed, you'll kill us all in a traffic accident."

Goran eased up on the pedal. And a good thing he did. For, just as we rounded the next curve, he had to hit the breaks hard to avoid slamming into a Serb tank. A truck was coming at the same time from the opposite direction.

"You see," Goran muttered, "when God wants to make trouble for you, He sure knows how to pick the worst time to do it."

I felt exactly the opposite. I thought that God had saved us through Marko's words, a few seconds ago.

"Did you see that sign on that tank?" I asked out loud.

"A sign?"

"Yes. That hand-painted on a piece of cardboard in large black letters."

"No. What did the sign say?"

"It read: 'GOD SAVES THE SERBS!'"

All of us chuckled.

We rode in silence for a while. We were now traveling along a deserted part of the road. The needle on the speedometer rarely dropped below 100 km/h (60

mph). *Our eyes were darting all over the landscape, looking for any sign of motion.*

"Hey, Goran," I said jokingly. "You've just driven past a spring. Weren't we supposed to stop at every mountain spring."

"Another time," Goran replied, his eyes intent on the road ahead.

"Come on now," I said. "I was kidding. What happened to your sense of humor?"

Goran looked over and cracked a smile.

"I remember that there was a mosque somewhere around here once," I said.

"You're right. It was right on top of that big rock," Marko said pointing to our right. "Once upon a time, a Muslim woman killed herself by jumping off that cliff. Her husband built a minaret in her memory."

Once again, the road was getting lined with soldiers and military vehicles. Some of them were digging the trenches. Others were securing emplacements for the mortars. Then there were some who just sat in the shade of the trees which lined the road.

"These could be the Muslims, for example, waiting to surrender," Goran said. "How do we know who they are? They all wear the same uniforms."

"Don't the opposing soldiers wear unique shoulder patches for each action?" I asked.

"Sure they do," Marko piped in from the back seat. "But what's to stop a Muslim from pinning a red-blue-white ribbon (the Serbian flag), for example, on his shoulder?"

"A strange war," I thought. Suddenly, a military policeman stepped onto the road and held his hand out. We stopped. "Could you please give me lift to my station, a couple of kilometers up the road?" he asked.

We had to rearrange our guns and bombs a little to make room for this large man in the back seat (he was probably about 6'3", 230-pounds).

"Thank you brothers," he said, after squeezing in. "I've been here on the front line for three days and three nights. I just have to get a shut eye."

"What was it like?" Marko asked.

"Well, we hear that about 1,500 of the worst terrorists from Srebrenica snuck through our lines the night before last, and headed toward Tuzla," the policeman said. "But I never saw any of them."

"Yesterday, though," he continued, "Some 50 Muslims surrendered to me personally! I nearly pissed my pants, as 20 of them were armed. I was alone, and they could have killed me any time they wanted."

"So what did you do?"

"I called ahead by radio for reinforcements. Then we loaded them into a truck and drove them away."

We were entering another village. "This is where I get off, brothers," the policeman said. "Thanks for the ride."

Just before we exited the village, Goran said, pointing to the left side of the road: "Here's another Muslim prisoner."

A man wearing a maroon shirt was relieving himself at the back of a house. He held his left hand at the back of his head while doing so. A Serb guard stood behind him with a machine gun on the ready.

"I hear that not all of them surrendered so peacefully?" I probed Goran and Marko.

"You're right," Marko agreed. "A Serb soldier told me yesterday that some of them were cursing the Serbs even as they were surrendering. One such a Muslim even struck a Serb soldier in the face yelling, 'do you think we are afraid of you, SOB 'chetniks?' He didn't live to savor the moment."

"And why would he do such a stupid thing?" I asked.

"Because some of them are fanatics. They think that they will become martyrs if they die while fighting for Islam."

I recalled what Prof. Dr. Nikola Koljevic, the Bosnian Serb Vice President, told me in Pale the other night. "At the height of the Sarajevo offensive (in late June), a Serb soldier said that he could not stand it anymore," Koljevic recalled. "Wave after wave of Muslims kept coming on. And he kept mowing down with his heavy machine gun - 20, 30, 50 human beings at a time."

Indeed, some knowledgeable sources have estimated that the ratio of fallen Muslim-to-Serb soldiers during the offensive was between 10-to-1 and 50-to-1. It is estimated that at least 3,000 Muslims perished in an offensive which was supposed to show their new-found military prowess.

After having passed through a couple of tunnels, the man-made lake, a result of the Drina river dam, showed up on our right. We all breathed a sigh of relief. The worst was over.

"See that restaurant over there?" Marko pointed out. "That's where Risto Djogo (the head of Bosnian Serb TV) fell to his death last year," he explained, without waiting for me to reply to his question.

"I hear that Arkan's people supposedly killed him?" I speculated.

"Who knows..." Marko replied philosophically.



BIJELJINA, July 15 (18:30L) - As we were approaching Bijeljina, a Serb military truck was parked on the shoulder of the road. "Do you see what I see?" I asked, pointing to a large American flag which fluttered in the evening breeze behind the driver's cabin. "What do you suppose that means?"

Both Goran and Marko shrugged their shoulders. "With us Serbs, anything goes," said Goran.

"Maybe it's an American volunteer who's come to fight with the Serbs?" I speculated.

"Maybe," said Marko without showing much emotion.

Yet, under the present circumstances, displaying the American flag in the Bosnian Serb Republic would be roughly tantamount to flying the "swastika" in London during WW II. The fact that the Bosnian Serbs are shrugging off so readily the use of the American flag, underlines the notion that they may still think that the Americans are their misguided allies who will come around eventually when they see the injustice which their present politics are causing.

"Strange people!" I said, leaving it to my companions to apply the comment to whomever they deemed appropriate.



Epilogue

BIJELJINA, July 15 (19:00L) - After having driven through the city center, we arrived at what was evidently a "safe house" for the Bosnian Serb military intelligence people on the outskirts of Bijeljina. I was met here with a hearty welcome by some 5-6 people who said they were all of Montenegrin or Hercegovinian origin. They'd obviously been briefed by PS as to who I was, as they kept toasting me as "Bob, our brother Serb from America." I swapped some tales with them, including that some of my Irish-American friends were greater Serbs than most of the Serbian Americans. They toasted these people they didn't know, and asked me to bring them with me the next time I came.

The commander of the outpost insisted that I take home a bottle of consecrated "slivovitz." He crossed himself each time he offered me "cevapcici" and a drink from his bottle, which had a wooden cross submerged in the amber liquid. His people called him Mica.

Afterward, we again changed drivers and cars. This time, it was a freshly-shaven, lean-looking Zoki, a man in his 30s with a sizable mustache, who drove me across the Raca border crossing into Serbia. Everybody seemed to know him at the border, so I had no problems with my American passport. Zoki spoke and acted like a real professional.



SREMSKA MITROVICA, July 15 (20:00L) - Mina was only partially surprised to see me when I wrapped on her office window. "Mom (Ljilja) called several times (from Krasici) asking if you had arrived," she said. "So I figured you must have gone into Bosnia again."

Baka said she had the same premonition. □

Zoran Manojlovic ("Zoki")

(a drive from Bijeljina to Srem. Mitrovica - 19:15 to 20:00)

Personal, Drive to SM

This "Zoki" was evidently quite a character. And not just because of his lean look, and a huge, well-cultivated mustache. His whole demeanor suggested the man was a leader.

He was freshly shaven, and wore a familiar after-shave. He told me that he had just returned from the field "setting up an action." After that, he had to "clean up a bit." He did more than that. He looked as if he were ready for a date with Cindy Crawford.

Along the way, I explained to Zoki that I had an American passport, and was not particularly anxious to have it stamped at the border. "Don't worry," he replied calmly. "I understand. We'll just show them the passport from the distance."

When we came to the border crossing at Raca, "Zoki" drove around a long line of vehicles waiting in line to clear the checkpoint. When we finally appeared at the border, "everybody" seemed to know him. A Yugoslav police officer, who was checking the documents in another car, asked him if he could get something for him in Belgrade. "Sure thing," Zoki replied, winking at the guy.

When a young YU policeman asked for our documents, Zoki showed him his.

"What about this man?" the policeman asked, doing his job diligently.

"Please show him your passport," Zoki told me.

While I was fishing for it in my bag, Zoki was talking casually to the border guard. "This gentleman from America was the guest of Gen. Mladic," he skillfully dropped the name everybody knew.

Finally, I'd found my passport, and pulled it out.

The guard took one look at it from the distance, as Zoki had predicted, and waved us through.

"Ciao, Zoki!" yelled the other policeman, who had ordered an item from Belgrade, waving to us as we drove off.

As we drove across a narrow old railway bridge, Zoki said, "this bridge was built by the German prisoners of war."

"Really?" I replied. "My Dad was in charge of some German prisoners of war who built the bridge at Sabac. I wonder if they were the same ones?"

"It's possible," Zoki opined. "Sabac isn't far from here."

We drove in silence for a while.

"What's your last name?" I asked.

"Manojlovic."

"Manojlovic?!" I said, expressing surprise. "That's not a bad surname to have in the RS army, is it?"

(Gen. Manojlovic is a popular Bosnian Serb officer who led the assault on Bihac in November 1994. He would have taken the enclave, had the RS political leadership not stopped him. He is supposed to have slammed his cap to the ground in disgust, and yelled: "Fuck them all!" Gen. Manojlovic is now the "TIC" of the RS army).

Zoki grinned ear-to-ear. "You're right," he said.

He also told me that he was the one who recruited the other "Zoki" (Bogdanovic) into the military intelligence unit a few months ago.

"He is a good man," I said, referring to my driver this p.m.

"Yes, he is," Zoki agreed. "He has a good heart."

As we were saying our good-byes in SM, he said that he wished I would come back to Bijeljina, so that I could spend some time with all of them and see the city. "And bring your Irish friends, too" he said grinning again. He was referring to Maher and Byrne, of whom I spoke in Bijeljina, without using their names (see my diary notes-story).

🕒 **End of Day 10** 🕒

Sremska Mitrovica, Yugoslavia

July 15-16, 1995 (Saturday, Sunday)

Baka's Apartment

Diary Notes

Except for a few short visits by relatives, I spent most of the weekend in Baka's apartment working on my diary notes.

On Monday a.m., Sanja drove me to Belgrade, as she herself went to work there at Serbia's PTT.

🕒 **End of Days 11, 12** 🕒

Belgrade, Yugoslavia

July 17, 1995 (Monday)

Zoran Djindjic (ZDj)

(a meeting at his office - 9:30 to 10:30)

Life in Serbia

ZDj was a little late for the meeting, and apologized for it.

As we started to talk politics, he gave me the old "song and dance" story about how life's tough in Serbia.

In response, I described to him all the new private establishments which I had noticed throughout Serbia, and especially in SM, where I knew they did not exist at this time last year. "To me, it seems as if life is better this year," I asserted.

"Maybe," he said. "But none of them have any money."

He alleged that most of these new retail stores or restaurants are a front for smugglers and sanction-busters, who are looking to invest some of their profits in legitimate enterprises. "But most of their money is stashed abroad," he said.

The argument had some credibility, as I recalled Mina also talking about the owner of a nice new pizza parlor in SM as being a rich smuggler.

SPS Political Pressures

ZDj also complained about the arm-twisting in which the ruling party (SPS) engages when a prominent local citizen considers becoming a candidate for an opposition party. Suddenly his wife's assets are frozen; his kids' jobs are no longer available, etc. "It doesn't take long for him to get the message," ZDj explained. "They (SPS) are bleeding us dry financially."

He said that his party gets DM 5,000 per month from about 20 individuals, which is the basis for its DM 100,000 monthly budget. "The political conscienceness does not yet exist in Serbia," he said, referring to the fact that it is difficult to raise money from private donors, as the Western parties do.

SPS Poll

Still, he said that they (DS) were gaining in popularity. Citing a recent SPS poll, the only party which seems to have the money for something like this, ZDj said SPS got 26% of the voters' support; the Radicals (Seselj) 16%; his own party 13%; Kostunica's 8%; Vuk Draskovic's 6%; Hungarians 5-6%. The rest (some 26%) are undecided voters, he said.

He said that JUL (Yugoslav United Left), a new Mira Markovic party, only has some 2-3% of the voters supporting it. But its influence is much greater, because she is Milosevic's wife.

Gen. Perisic Budget Woes

I told ZDj about my meeting with Gen. Perisic, and about his complaint that he doesn't have enough money in the military budget.

ZDj agreed. He pulled a sheet of paper, to which he referred as the latest budget, as said that the entire budget was only DM 1.6 million. Of that amount, he claimed that 36% is spent on military salaries. "Which leaves only about 15% for upgrading of military readiness," he said.

That just about squared with what MP had told me, too.

Krajina

I asked ZDj if he was getting the impression, as I was, that the Krajina region had been written off by Milosevic. He nodded, and replied that he was.

Dennis Snider (DS)

(a meeting at the Canadian Embassy -11:00 to 12:30)

Personal

By contrast to Mary Mosser, DS was very friendly. He has now been the fourth Canadian ambassador/charge with whom I've met in the same office, sitting on the same corner of the same couch. The only difference was that the dark blinds were drawn this time. DS explained that by the construction which was going on outside. So he did not want the workers peering into his office, he said.

Throughout our meeting, DS displayed the mannerisms of a former military man. He spoke quite slowly, carefully pronouncing every word, and often frowned, as if to impress the visitor with the weight of the thoughts gathering under his eye brows.

He also said that he knew Perina (the US chargé) quite well.

The "Big One"

Still, by the time our 1.5 hour meeting was finished, about the only thing worth recalling was DS' forecast that the Croats were getting ready for an assault on the Krajina. And that he was afraid that "this could lead to a Big One."

Since the term "Big One" could have meant many things, I decided to probe a little more closely. It turned out that DS was not referring to a US-Russia shoot-out, which was one possibility, but to a new Croat-Serb (YU) war.

"As long as Milosevic is the head of Serbia, I would not lose too much sleep worrying about that," I said. "His main preoccupation these days seems to be to figure out which Western ass he should be kissing today so as to get the sanctions lifted."

After our meeting, DS escorted me personally all the way down to the street-level lobby of the Canadian Embassy. After the hassle I had had at this very building with Mosser in September 1993, this was a pleasant change of attitude.

Natasa Nikolic

I snuck in a few minutes between my meeting to visit this wife of a cousin of mine. He was in Greece, as a producer of a concert which his musicians were giving.

Voja Kostunica (VK)

(a meeting at his office - 13:15 to 15:15); Miodrag Djordjevic [from Paris] present

Miodrag Djordjevic (MD)

VK was also late for our meeting. He brought along a man in his 60s, who introduced himself enthusiastically as Miodrag Djordjevic, a retired Serbian businessman from Paris, who now divides his time between BG and Paris. He said he had a brother in SF, who had been telling me about me. So he was very pleased to meet me.

MD spent the entire two hours with VK and I. He seemed like a pleasant man. But I never figured out why he was there.

SPS Poll

It was interesting to compare the results of the same recent SPS poll in VK's interpretation, as compared to the one ZDj share with me this morning.

According to VK, SPS had 24% of the voters' support; the Radicals (Seselj) had 16%; Djindjic had 11%; VK's own party 9.5%; Vuk Draskovic had 4.5% and JUL had 2%. The rest were undecided. VK said that the poll was based on a sample of 6,000 people.

Boris Vukobrat

VK and MD had both heard of Dragan Zivanovic (alias Daniel Boier). But they also pointed out another interesting emigre personality, Boris Vukobrat. MD said that the man got rich trading oil with the USSR. MD used to work for the French oil company, Elf, so he knew these things first hand. He said that there were some deals in which Elf was directed by the French government to do business through Vukobrat, even though they had a better deal offered by someone else.

So MD figured he must have been either on the KGB payroll, or was very closely associated with it. Now Vukobrat has written a book about how he would reform YU. They gave me a copy of the book. The back cover identifies Vukobrat as a "Yugoslav," who was born in Zagreb in 1940 to a Muslim ("Bosnian!") mother, and a Serbian father (from Krajina). His wife is a Muslim from Bosnia.

He emigrated to Paris in 1965, and enrolled at the Sorbonne.

Vukobrat is "a recipient of the highest French medal - the Order of the Legion of Honor - for advancing the cause of French trade with the East."

Vukobrat identifies himself now as the head of the "*Peace and Crisis Management Foundation*," based in Switzerland.

Back Cover of Boris Vukobrat's Book

Moma Djorgovic (MDj)/TELEGRAF

(a meeting at his office on Terazije - 16:00 to 16:45)

Personal, Publishing My Articles

He was also late. I was beginning to wonder if anybody would make a meeting on time today. As it turned out, I ended up hoping for it in vain...

MDj is a former BORBA reporter who quit in 1994, to start *TELEGRAF* along with his 50/50 partner, Slavko Curuvija. Djindjic is his university pal, but is otherwise not involved with the paper. *TELEGRAF* is published every Wednesday.

MDj seemed very proud of what they've been able to achieve in just over a year. Acknowledging that his critics call *TELEGRAF* sensationalistic press, or "yellow journalism," he said they've nevertheless become the most significant challengers to "serious" magazines, such as *NIN* or *VREME*. MDj cited circulation figures which exceeded those of both of its main competitors.

Then MDj said that he would like very much to run some of my pieces in his magazine. He said that he was impressed by the *TIM BULLETINS*.

I was non-committal.

(MDj struck me as the person of the same mold as Maric, now of the INTERVJU, formerly of DUGA. These are the persons who are after the almighty buck, no matter whose ass they had to kiss, or however else they had to prostitute themselves to get it).

Dusan Velickovic (DV)/NIN

(a meeting at his office - 17:00 to 18:15)

Mr. Cigar

DV was very friendly, even though he did not have the guts to run any of my articles in the last two years, at least.

At one stage, DV showed me a long article, which he said was offered to him by someone from the US, written by Dr. Norman Cigar. DV asked me if I knew who that was. For, if the piece were close to what the US policy was, DV said he would use it.

I replied that I had no idea, but that the address ("Command & Staff College" in Virginia) sounded to me like a cover for a CIA-type operation. I promised to check it out and get back to him.

(When I discovered a few weeks later, while still traveling in Europe, that this "Dr. Cigar" character was cited as a source in an OpEd piece published in the WALL STREET JOURNAL by Albert Wohlstetter, I sent a FAX message to DV to the effect that no friend of the truth and/or Serbia could be cited as a source by a "Nazi" such as Wohlstetter).

Slobodan Rakitic (SR)/SABORNA STRANKA

(a meeting at the Intercontinental - 18:45 to 19:30; his wife and son also present)

His Family in Tow

We were to meet at 18:30 at my hotel. SR was also late. "This just isn't my day," I consoled myself, after getting a call from the reception telling me that there was a gentleman downstairs to see me.

To my surprise, there was not just a gentleman downstairs. SR had brought along his wife and his son, too. He muttered something about how he was sorry to be late, but offered no explanation why his entire family was in tow for his first business meeting with someone from America.

I suggested we sit down at the bar next to the reception. We all ordered juices and minerals water.

A Broken Man

SR sounded to me like a broken man. Once the No. 2 person in Vuk Draskovic's SPO party, he was reportedly kicked out of it by Vuk's wife, Danica. Worse, even though he and his supporters had been elected to the Parliament as SPO delegates in the last election, they had all lost their seats. According to the Serbian Constitution, which they unsuccessfully challenged in court, each party wins a proportional representation.

In other words, the individuals don't matter; the party matters. So the nominal SPO party leader found himself thrown out on the street unceremoniously like a piece of garbage.

Now SR has formed a new party, which he called "Saborna Stranka" ("Congressional Party"). SR said that he had originally intended to call it the "Orthodox Party," but the Patriarch objected, not wanting the Serbian church's name to become politicized.

Hawkish Wife; Wimpish Son

SR's wife monitored carefully every word he said. She jumped in occasionally to correct him, or to embellish on something he had missed.

Their son only spoke two words during the entire meeting: "Hello," when we first met; and "Good-bye," when we parted.

(The whole experience was rather bizarre. Here was a guy who was kicked out on his ass by a woman [Danica Draskovic]. And there he was bringing another woman, his wife, as his supposed shield to a meeting with a stranger! I was happy when the meeting finally ended.)

Bora Jovanovic (BJ)

(a dinner at Francuska 7 "Writers' Club" at his office - 20:30 to 23:00)

Personal

BJ had been routing again that we go to a restaurant in Zemun. But after our last bad experience there, I wasn't anxious to oblige. So I suggested the "Writers Club" in BG. BJ at first objected because "we could be seen."

"So what," I said. "I am not here incognito."

Then he complained that there might be too many mosquitoes if we were to sit outside.

So during the day, I stopped by and asked the staff what the mosquito situation was like in the evenings. "Not bad," said one waiter. "There are hardly any," said another.

"Bora, we are eating at the 'Writers' Club' tonight," I told him, when I called back to confirm the arrangements.

He did not protest until the very end of the evening, when he meekly noted that the dinner would have been probably cheaper in Zemun.

Vuk Draskovic

As the fate would have it, Vuk Draskovic was also having dinner at Francuska 7 this evening. "A jerk and a traitor!" Bora commented disgustedly looking at him. Later on, even Vuk's wife, Danica, also showed up. The farce was now complete, I thought.

(BJ also informed me proudly at one stage this evening that he had never said a word to Anja about my trip to Bosnia. "That's great!" I said, trying to sound enthusiastic. "Congratulations. I am proud of you." But privately, I thought that the whole thing was rather pathetic. My trips were none of Anja's concern in the first place. I did not even tell my own wife about it! Nor my mother! But seeing how Bora savored small domestic victories, such as not telling his wife what wasn't any of her business anyway, made me sick to my stomach. He used to be MY BIG BROTHER! This was especially disappointing after having just wasted my time with another wimp (SR)! It was hard for me not to notice the obvious parallels with respect to BJ's relationship with Anja, and SR's attitude toward his own wife.

At the end of the evening, as Bora and I walked down Knez Mihajlova street, I asked him when it was the last time that he had been here. He said he could not remember. "It's been a few years," he admitted. I felt like crying. But I just hugged him instead.)

🕒 **End of Day 13** 🕒

Vienna, Austria

July 21-24, 1995 (Friday-Monday)

“Bosnia: The Great Divide”

VIENNA, July 21 - A well-read colonel of the Bosnian Serb army recently quoted to this writer a Chinese proverb:

*“Every 50 years or so,
wise people shut up,
fools speak up,
and criminals rise to the top.”*

“These are such times,” he added.

Give or take a few years, that’s exactly what’s been happening in Europe, too, at least since the Berlin Congress of 1878. The world’s first attempt at creating a “United Nations”-like setting redrew the borders of Europe. The Congress’ participants went home feeling good, figuring they’d solved the Old World’s worst ethnic problems. Just as the League of Nations founders did in Geneva, curiously, some 50 years and one world war later. And as the UN founders felt in San Francisco, exactly 50 years ago, as World War II was winding down.

It would appear, therefore, that the Chinese (or this Serb colonel) have figured out something about us which we haven’t, or didn’t want to. We in “the West” are no better than “the East” (implying deception and treachery), despite our governments’ pompous pretenses to the contrary. More often than not (about every 50 years!) we’ve made monumental mistakes which led to events of cataclysmic consequences for mankind. And we are about to repeat this infamous feat again in Bosnia of the 1990s.

“Why are we upsetting relations with our traditional allies over a region (Bosnia) in which, objectively speaking, we (the US) have minimal interests?” this writer asked a senior Western diplomat.

“Because Bosnia is just a lightning rod for other conflicts of interest,” he replied. Indeed.

The Bosnian civil war isn’t about Bosnian Muslim or Serbian sovereignty as much as it is about who will rule Europe now that the Cold War is over.

As far back as 1991, France made it clear it no longer wanted the US security umbrella in Europe (read NATO) as it initiated plans with Germany for a pan-European force. The idea drew scorn and criticism from the US government. The Americans barely had a year or two to get used to the notion which the globalists (Bush, Clinton) were selling - that we are the only remaining “super power” in the

world.” And here were some lowly Europeans, the US reasoned, who should have been grateful for our 50-year⁺ protection, trying to pull the rug from under us!

So the “State Dept. et. al.” set out to make sure the Germans stayed signed up to our cause, rather than to that of the more temperamental, and thus more volatile, French. Or the other like-minded Europeans.

The Germans obliged. First, they followed the US lead in recognizing Bosnia in 1992, a state that had never existed before. And in June 1993, at an EC meeting in Copenhagen, the German Chancellor Helmut Kohl even volunteered to be the spokesperson for Bill Clinton, even though the American President never asked him to do so. The subsequent “clarification” by the State Dept. was embarrassing for both governments.

In 1994, the US and its (Cold War) “allies” (read “Cold Peace” adversaries) formed the “Contact Group” (US, Germany, France, Britain and Russia). After having undermined the Owen-Stoltenberg plan which the Bosnian Serbs accepted in September 1993, the US presented them in July 1994 with a proposal which read more like the terms of surrender. Yet, by all accounts, the Serbs were victors on the battlefield. Naturally, they rejected the plan.

Aleksa Buha, the Bosnian Serb foreign minister, told this writer during a recent meeting at Pale, that the American negotiator (Amb. Redmond) deliberately excluded Dobo, so as to ensure that the Serbs would reject the Contact Group plan.

In other words, right from the outset of the Bosnian conflict, the US government has been for war, not peace. The current calls for the lifting of the arms embargo, or the massive air strikes against the Serbs (despite the failures of the earlier ones), only reinforce that impression.

The peace will come to Bosnia, therefore, only when the US is forced to accede that the wider war is too high a price to pay for its modest ambitions in post-Cold War Europe. Which is what the recent Serb escalation of conflict (the taking of the UN “safe areas”) has been all about.

Bosnia has, therefore, once again become Europe’s “great divide.” This is where the American interests clash with Russia’s, as well as those of our nominal allies. If we want to dominate Europe, we will have to do it with our own ground troops (not just NATO air power). But recent polls in the US have shown that the American public has no stomach for such undertakings. Which means that Bill and Clinton and/or Bob Dole had better pull in their horns, lest the Europeans clip them.

One thing is for sure. The term “our European allies,” east or west of the Great Divide, has become an oxymoron. □

Berlin, Germany

July 25-27, 1995 (Tuesday-Thursday)

“Kangaroo Court in the Hague”

BERLIN, July 25 - A “Kangaroo Court” was a term the British colonialists had invented to describe a mockery of justice. In America’s Wild West, such “jurists” were called a lynch mob. Nowadays, both terms aptly describe the US and Muslim-influenced “justices” at the so-called International Court for Crimes against Humanity in the Hague, Netherlands.

This week, they convicted Serb leaders, including Dr. Radovan Karadzic, Gen. Ratko Mladic and Milan Martic, of alleged crimes against humanity. A spokesperson for this Kangaroo Court said on CNN that the indictments were supposed to increase the political pressure on the Serbs.

Isn’t justice in our democratic societies supposed to be not just blind of prejudice, but also independent of politics? If so, haven’t these lowly jurists just pronounced their own political death sentences by agreeing to be used as political instruments of pressure on the Serbs?

Besides, if the same justice principles were applied consistently and retroactively, wouldn’t the American presidents F.D. Roosevelt and Harry Truman, for example, have to be labeled as war criminals? After all, they were in charge when hundreds of thousands of innocent German and Japanese civilians were incinerated by the American bombs in Dresden, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. By comparison, the accused Serbs look like small time pick-pockets.

Whatever shreds of the Hague “justices” credibility remained after they had bungled the supposed evidence against Slobodan Milosevic (according to the NEW YORK TIMES, they turned it over earlier this year to the Dutch Secret Service who “lost” it), none will remain after these Serb indictments.

For, just over two months ago, these “jurists” looked away as Croatia literally drove its tanks through the UN-backed Vance Plan. Hundreds of innocent Serb civilians were killed, some squished like ants under the wheels of Croatian tanks. That was a far greater number of victims than were even the exaggerated recent Muslim casualties in the Srebrenica and Zepa enclaves. Yet, the 1991 Vance Plan was supposed to protect all civilians in Western Slavonia, including the Serbs.

Indicting only the Serbian leaders while ignoring the crimes against the Serb civilians is bound to fan the flames of war in the former Yugoslavia. Such a duplicity will only reinforce what the Serb extremists have been saying all

along - that the only Western justice they can trust is the one they earn with their guns.

For example, what choice do now the Bosnian and/or the Krajina Serb leaders have but to fight on to the death? If the West (US/NATO) wanted to hurt its Muslim protégés in the worst way possible, it has just done it. Now, the only remaining solution to this political crisis will have emerge from the battlefield. After Srebrenica and Zepa, some other Muslim enclaves are also likely to fall. They may have been saved had the US/NATO really tried to win the best deal for the Muslims at the negotiating table.

And the Bosnia show will probably escalate to a big Serb-Croat war, a senior Western diplomat told this writer during his recent visit to Belgrade.

Which means that the Balkan war hawks, including those in the US Congress who now advocate heavy bombing of the Serbs, are also working to destroy their proxies - the Muslims and Croats. For, by the time all the bombs are dropped, all the anti-aircraft missiles are fired, and all the innocent Serb civilians are killed as inevitable "collateral damage" by the self-proclaimed "civilized West," there will still be a few million Serbs standing and ready to fight to the death. What ground troops will he send then against them, and in the name of what American vital interests?

If the President has any marbles left after his latest foolish escalation of the war, he will throw in the towel and go after easier pray somewhere else in the world. For, if he sends in our sons and daughters to die once again for the sake of saving someone's diplomatic or political careers, the American people will go after him.

You see, the Serbs are the first people to take on the Ottoman Empire on behalf of Christian Europe. They lost the Battle of Kosovo in 1389, but won the war against the Turks after 500 years of guerrilla warfare. Even Germany's Bismarck knew better than to mess with them. The Serbs helped defeat the Austro-Hungarian empire in WW I. And Hitler's Germany in WW II. And that's whom our draft-dodging President is hoping to scare with bombing threats?

Worse than naive, such politics is downright duplicitous vis-à-vis our allies. The American war-mongering rhetoric may have been at least an honorable, albeit a stupid, course of action, if the US did intend to fight the Serbs. But since all American leaders, from Clinton on down to Bob Dole, have vowed not to use American ground troops in Bosnia, the preceding indictments merely put the UN peacekeeping troops at risk (i.e., the British, the French, the Ukrainians, the Dutch, etc.).

In other words, Clinton is fighting the Serbs over the backs of our allies.

The bottom line of such an ill-conceived US policy will not only be a military victory by the Serbs, and the near extermination of either Bosnia's Croats or

Muslims, but a destruction of the Western alliances which have been so carefully crafted over the last five decades.

It's hard to imagine that even kangaroos could bungle things so badly. ☐

“Between Heaven and Earth”

BERLIN, July 28 - A crude hand-painted sign on a run-down building in East Berlin, not far from the former “Checkpoint Charlie” border crossing between the West and the East, read as follows (also see the photo):

“The border runs not between the peoples, but between top and bottom.”

The implication? The Berlin wall may be down, but the class differences remain.



An East Berlin Slogan
Error! Cannot read or display file.
Source: Bob Djurdjevic, Phoenix, Arizona

The West

“Good afternoon,” this customer said walking into an AVIS office in the heart of West Berlin.

“Good afternoon,” a young, female clerk replied.

“I am returning car.”

“And where is it?”

“Over there,” I pointed to the curbside parking on the street in front of the office.

“Do you want me to leave the keys in?”

“Actually, I wonder if you would mind driving the car into our parking garage?” the clerk asked.

“Not at all. Where is the garage?”

“Just around the corner.” She explained how to get there.

I obliged, even though nowhere in the US would I be required to do anything more than bring the rental car in one piece to the front door of the vendor's office.

After struggling with parking meters, and the obscure stairs to find my way back to the AVIS office, I finally returned, expecting to meet the grateful staff for the trouble I had gone through for them. Instead, the chair of the clerk who directed him to park the car was empty.

“Where is she?” I asked another clerk.

Instead of answering the question, the second clerk asked if she could help. "But I've already given my documents to that other lady," I explained.

After some shuffling of the papers in front of her, the second clerk proceeded to key things in on her computer keyboard.

"There you go," she said matter-of-factly, presenting me with a bill.

"Wait a minute!" I exclaimed. "This invoice is for about 7,600 Austrian Schillings (the car was rented in Vienna), while my contract called for about 3,100⁺ Schillings. What's going on?"

The clerk looked at her computer printout again, and calmly said: "But you brought the car in one day early."

I could not believe my ears. A customer returns the car one day early and is expected to pay more than double the contracted amount?

"I returned the car one day early, and you expect me to pay more than I had contracted for?" I asked out loud.

"That's what our computer says," the clerk replied, seemingly unperturbed by the ludicrousness of her reply.

I shook my head in disbelief. But rather than fight the stupid computer, I decided to play it by its stupid rules. "Okay, then," I said, "give me my papers and my keys back. I'll bring the car to you tomorrow."

"I am afraid we can't do that," the clerk replied. "The contract has now been closed out."

Once again, I could not believe my ears. "But that's blackmail!" I shouted. "Why did you not inform me of how idiotic your system was before you closed out the contract?"

The clerk remained mum. She just shrugged her shoulders.

Visions of dumb German characters ridiculed in the 1960s TV series "Hogan's Heroes" were swirling in my head. Back then, I was skeptical that such morons really existed. Now, it seemed as if I had just met their 1990s reincarnation wearing a red skirt.

"Let me speak to your manager," I demanded.

A few moments later, a bespectacled lady in her mid-thirties, also wearing a red skirt, emerged from a back office. She did not smile, either. She did not even say "hello" to this customer. She just walked up to the counter as if steadying herself for a fist fight.

"What is your name?" I asked wryly, now trying to gain the upper hand in this confrontation.

She blurted it out.

"I am afraid I did not catch that. How do you spell it?"

I took my notebook out, and poised my pen.

"How about I give you my business card?" she suggested.

The Reichstag

*“Dem Deutschen Volke” (“To the German People”) reads the message
inscribed in stone above the entrance*

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Source: Bob Djurdjevic, Phoenix, Arizona

“That would be just fine,” I replied. Her name was Sabine Wulf. I summarized for her what had just happened.

Ms. Wulf repeated the ridiculous explanation I was given by the clerk.

“So are you trying to tell me you won’t give me my car back?” I asked.

“No I am not,” she replied. “You can have your car back if you’d like.”

“So why then did this clerk tell me I could not?” I asked, pointing to the culprit who stood next to the manager.

Ms. Wulf ignored my question. “We just have to void the contract and issue you a new one,” she explained.

“A new contract?” I winced. “After all this you want to write a new contract?”

“But we have to call Vienna first to get their contract number,” Ms. Wulf continued engrossed in their internal rules, without paying attention to what I had said.

So she called Vienna.

While I waited for her to get the new contract number, I recalled with my daughter a similar incident with another rental car company in Munich, some 13 years ago. “Not much has changed since 1982, huh?” I said. My daughter nodded.

Ms. Wulf was now working out a new “no charge” contract for us.

“You know what?” I said to her.

“What?”

“Don’t you get a sense that your computer is stupid? Why are you letting an idiot run your office? You should fire your computer!”

She nodded absent-mindedly as she was filling out some figures on the contract.

“Please sign here,” she said, pointing to the boxes she had circled.

“I will not sign this,” I said.

“Why not?”

“Because this contract shows that I owe you 6,600 Schillings tomorrow, rather than the 3,100 which my original contract said.”

The manageress now got visibly flustered. She got on the phone and spoke in rapid German to someone for several minutes. Then she fussed and fumed some more before printing out a new contract.

“There,” she said, “Please sign it now.”

I looked the paper over carefully. It seemed in order. I signed it.

“Now that both of us are happy, why don’t you just keep the car until tomorrow, when your computer will let you return it?” I suggested.

“I am glad you’re happy,” Ms. Wulf replied, “but I am not.”

“You’re not?” I repeated in astonishment. “You wasted your customer’s time for an hour with your silly rules, and in the end you’re the one that’s complaining? I can’t believe this! Don’t I maybe deserve an apology from you?”

She just shook her head and looked down at her papers.

I walked out.



The following day, at exactly 10:12, one minute after the almighty AVIS Germany computer allowed them to close out my contract, she did just that. When I arrived at about 10:30, Ms. Wulf handed me the completed paperwork. Without apologies, of course. Or a thank you for the nearly \$400 dollars I had paid for three-days’ rental of the car. Or good wishes for a safe journey. Or for a nice day.

On the way out, I had to keep reminding myself that all this happened in the heart of West Berlin. Still, I considered myself lucky under the circumstances. She could have told me to go to hell. I shuddered imagining what might have happened to me in East Berlin. Do they still arrest people there for speaking up?

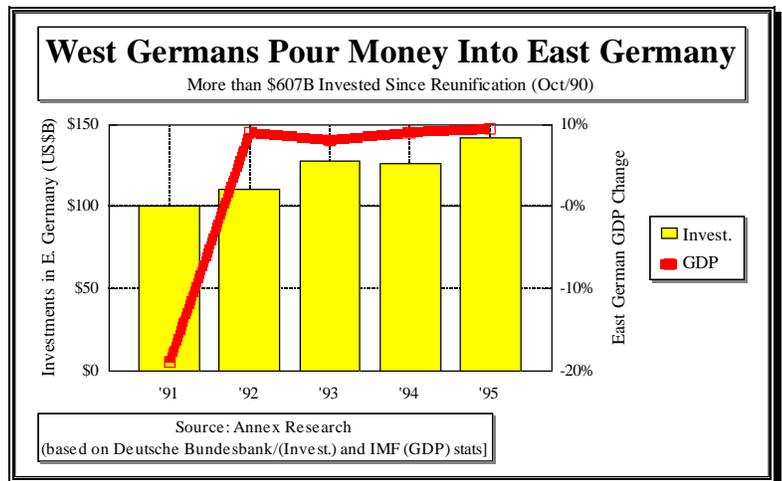


The East

East Germany is being reborn. Literally. There are probably more cranes in East Berlin alone, than in the rest of Eastern Europe put together. Our long bike ride through the streets of East Berlin revealed that its entire infrastructure is being rebuilt - water mains; telecommunication facilities; roads; street car tracks...

Nor is Berlin an exception. We saw similar undertakings in Leipzig, for example. And along the 430 km (269 miles) freeway from Nuremberg to Berlin.

“The entire East Germany is one giant construction site!” I exclaimed at one point to my daughter.



Since the reunification in October 1990, the well-heeled West Germans have poured more than 850 billion Deutsch marks (about \$607 billion dollars) into making their poorer Eastern brethren feel as equals at the family dinner table. Yet, nearly five years later, as you saw by the opening slogan, many Germans still feel as second class citizens in their own country.

Now compare the \$600 billion which West has already invested into the tiny East Germany with the \$4.6 and \$5 billion respectively which the entire Eastern Europe, including Russia, received from the top Western multinational companies in 1992 and 1993 (based on a UN report from July 1994). Mexico alone got more - \$5.4 and \$6.9 billion respectively!.

One does not need to have a Ph.D. in economics to appreciate that a relative shortage of Western investments in Eastern Europe only accentuates the differences between the haves and the have-nots. And that, unless we (the West) reverse such policies immediately, we will have helped create major social and economic upheavals in this part of the world, and a fertile ground maybe even for a world war.

In February 1992, the late President Richard Nixon upbraided his Republican pal in the White House, George Bush, expressing similar concerns. Bush shuffled his feet, made a few promises, and then went on fighting the election.

Clinton started his presidency with a much-heralded meeting with Boris Yeltsin in Vancouver. More cheap promises and platitudes emerged from that session, but no discernible investments. In fact, Congress has since been talking about cutting back what little we were doing in Russia (on account that the Russians weren't licking our boots fervently enough).

What chances, therefore, do the such policies have of converting a former enemy into a true partner, as the Partnership for Peace slogan envisaged? Based on what I saw in Germany and the other Eastern European countries this summer, the chances range from slim to none.

So to whom will the Russians turn for help then, if not the US? Certainly not to Germany, which is already deeply engaged in its own problems. With the US giving Russia a cold shoulder, chances are that the Russians will once again turn to themselves for a cure. The last time they did that was in 1917. They cured themselves back then by exorcising themselves, while the Western world watched in shock.

Chances are, however, that the 21st century Russian exorcism isn't going to be as benign as that one 80 years ago. In fact, it is more than likely that the next time the Russians get to flex their military muscles, it will be at the expense of the self-congratulatory Washington, which has already chalked up to its credit the supposed victory in the Cold War. The Cold Peace, as Yeltsin put in at the CESC Budapest conference in late 1994, may be followed by a very Hot War (with Yeltsin first gone from power, of course).

There is only one thing that can prevent this lunacy - a sudden and overwhelming resurgence of wisdom and humility in Washington. How likely is it to happen? Based

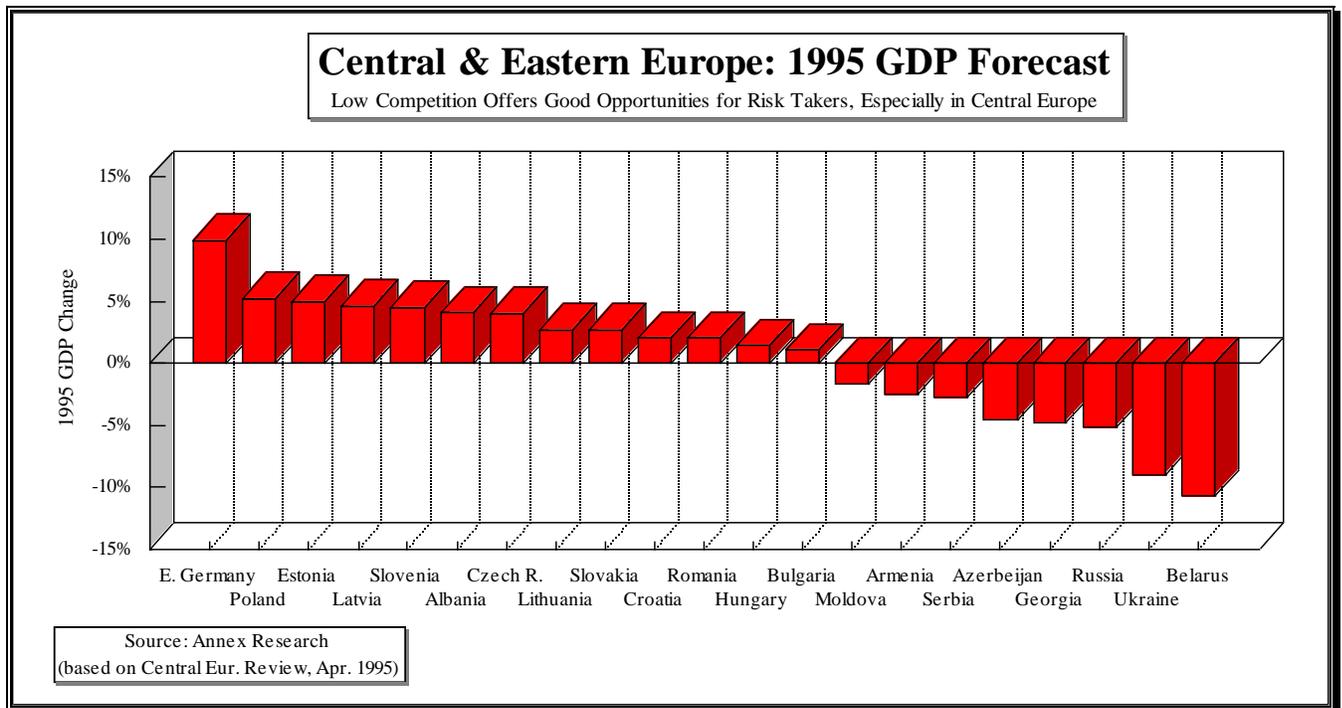
on all current indicators - about as likely as hell freezing over, snow falling in Hawaii or the politicians and the homeless swapping beds.



SUMMARY

In summary, after all the new East German highways are built, new telephones hooked up, new apartment buildings refreshed with new water mains, the stodgy German inflexible, rules-driven, anti-customer mentality will remain.

That's good news for Germany's more creative neighbors who had fared poorly during the industrial-level competition which cherished absolute discipline and obedience. The information technology, on the other hand, provides powerful alternative to the cranes and bulldozers. But first, the Eastern Europeans must built up their telecommunications infrastructure. Given the lack of interest in the West to invest and transfer such technologies there, despite the Partnership for Peace rhetoric, the Russians may have to opt for the only alternative which can level the playing field - destroying our infrastructures by military means. □



Warsaw, Poland

July 28-29, 1995 (Friday, Saturday)

Slow Progress in the East

(Scenes from Warsaw, Poland)

A hint of tele-infrastructure being built?

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Source: Bob Djurdjevic, Phoenix, Arizona

***How long before
cellular phones are
also banned?***

**Error!Error! Cannot
read or display file.**

**A sign at the entrance to a
Warsaw park**

Source: Bob Djurdjevic, Phoenix, Arizona

The Warsaw Ghetto Memorial

(surrounded by weeds)

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A Dead Tree with Jewish Death Notices

Source: Bob Djurdjevic, Phoenix, Arizona

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***Were the Poles happy to
get rid of Jews?***

*Yet they could not wait
for "their" Pope to die, as
decency would have
required, before naming
one of Warsaw's biggest
boulevards "John Paul II"*

⌚ **End of Diary** ⌚