

THE WAR IN CROATIA AND BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA 1992-1995

25-27 September 1998, Budapest

*(In association with the Institute for Southeast Europe,
the Central European University, Budapest)*

The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina 1992-1995 was held in Budapest in September 1998 in association with the Central European University. The seminar analyzed the specifically military dimensions of the Bosnian War which continue to have an impact on the security of the region. A number of the major military and political participants in the conflict attended, as well as notable analysts of the war.

Background

Participants

Programme

Participants' Biographies

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BACKGROUND

Although there are a great many journalists' reports and scholarly studies covering the period 1991-1995, as well as interviews with and memoirs by some of the participants, up to now there has been no attempt at a comprehensive analysis of these two interdependent wars, which would integrate their military and political aspects. It is this continuing gap in knowledge, not only abroad but also in the region itself, that the conference organizers sought to fill, by facilitating an exchange of ideas and discussion so as to provide the dimension hitherto lacking. The intention was to provide an open forum in which key participants in the two wars would be brought together for the first time to share their experiences. It was hoped that this would provide a unique opportunity for former military commanders and government officials from Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia to exchange personal knowledge, to explore new ideas, and to engage in debate with other regional and foreign scholars.

While it is possible to argue that a definitive history of these events must wait the release of official documents from the archives of relevant states, this opportunity may be a very long time in coming. In the meantime, the chance to establish direct communication with some of the key actors in the events, now sufficiently distanced from the heat of battle for a detached perspective, offers a unique advantage that with time, as memories fade, will no longer be available. Bringing together senior military officers, politicians and experts did indeed prove very stimulating and rewarding, and generated a lively discussion, as this record testifies.

The organizers believed it was important to look at the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina not only as a contribution to forming a reliable historical record, but also as providing lessons for an understanding of the conduct of political-military affairs.

Some of the contributions clarified the decision-making process and the nature of the political options and objectives which were considered and finally adopted, including those which relate to the role of the international community. It is to be hoped that a clearer appreciation of what occurred and how will provide insights into the current situation and suggest alternatives for the future in similar situations. One particular goal was to assist in setting the historiography of this key period on a sound footing before the weight of time and political correctness reshapes the memory of the past. Indeed, both in the countries of former Yugoslavia and abroad, official versions of events have rapidly emerged as a substitute for a balanced analysis, with a tendency to become the basis for new myths and conventional wisdom. A proper understanding of these wars will help to stabilize regional security and political cooperation.

The main aim of the conference was to highlight the symbiotic interplay of military and political affairs, as stated long ago by Carl von Clausewitz: >war is a true political instrument, a

continuation of political intercourse carried on with other means.¹ Hence, every effort was made to relate military events to the domestic and international political environment, and to examine the impact of political options and decision-making on the conduct and outcome of the wars. Key areas of discussion suggested to the participants were:

The road to war: What was the sequence of events which led to war? Did the participants prepare effectively for war, both politically and militarily? What options were considered and what decisions taken?

The conduct of the war: What were the characteristics of these wars? Did the political leadership set realistic goals and did these change with time? What were the military objectives and strategies? Were they appropriate to and supportive of political objectives? What were the key phases of the military campaign and the decisive turning points? How did they reflect upon the political situation? Were the force development strategies adopted appropriate to the given goals and available resources?

Serb war effort: What were the Serbian political and military objectives? How effective was the Serb war effort? What were its strengths and vulnerabilities? Why did the Serb leaders stop the war when they did?

Civil-military nexus: Were civil-military relations effective or dysfunctional? Did the political leadership play an appropriate role? What influence did the political leadership have on military commanders and on the conduct of military campaigns?

The international dimension: What was the impact of the international factor during the lead-up to the war, on the conduct of the war and on its termination? How did the local political and military leaders react to that factor or make use of it for their own ends? What effect did the arms embargo have on the war? What was the influence of the UN and, later, NATO forces?

War termination: Why did the wars end when they did? Did the political leaderships end the wars at the appropriate time? If not, why not? What was the political and military impact of the decision to end the wars?

Extracted from the Introduction to the published proceedings:

***The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina 1991-1995*, edited by Branka Magas and Ivo Zanic, Frank Cass, London 2001**

¹ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, ed. and trans. Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton University Press, 1976, p. 87.

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PARTICIPANTS

1. Dusan Bilandzic
2. Vladimir Bilandzic
3. Norman Cigar
4. Daniele Conversi
5. Jovan Divjak
6. Adrian Hastings
7. Marko Attila Hoare
8. Tarik Kulenovic
9. Branka Magas
10. Rusmijer Mahmutcehajic
11. Stjepan Mesic
12. Warren Switzer
13. Martin Spegelj
14. Anton Tus
15. Paul Williams
16. Ivo Zanic
17. Ozren Zunic

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I. The War in Croatia

Stjepan Mesic	<i>The Road to War</i>
Martin Spegelj	<i>The First Phase, 1990-1992: the JNA prepares for aggression and Croatia for defence</i>
Anton Tus	<i>The War in Slovenia and Croatia up to the Sarajevo Cease-fire</i>
Ozren Zunec	<i>Operations Flash and Storm</i>
Dusan Bilandzic	<i>Termination and Aftermath of the War in Croatia</i>
Discussion	

II: The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Rusmir Mahmutcehajic	<i>The Road to War</i>
Jovan Divjak	<i>The First Phase, 1992-1993: struggle for survival and genesis of the Army of Bosnia-Herzegovina</i>
Marko Attila Hoare	<i>Civilian-Military Relations in Bosnia-Herzegovina 1992-1995</i>
Norman Cigar	<i>Serb War Effort and Termination of the War</i>
Discussion	

III: International Responsibility B Lessons for the Future

Paul Williams	<i>The International Community=s Response to the Crisis in Former Yugoslavia</i>
Warren Switzer	<i>International Military Responses to the Balkan Wars: crises in analysis</i>
Discussion	

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PARTICIPANTS' BIOGRAPHIES

Dusan Bilandzic: political scientist and historian; graduated in law at University of Belgrade, doctorate in economics at Zagreb University; full professor at Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Zagreb (retired) and full member of Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts; during the 1960s and 1970s principal of the Centre for Social Research of the Presidency of the LCY Central Committee in Belgrade, then of the Institute for History of the Labour Movement in Zagreb; member of the Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Croatia. After the first democratic elections (and until the adoption of the Constitution in December 1990, when the body was abolished), member of the Presidency of the Republic of Croatia; from 1996 to 1998 expert adviser in the Office of the Republic of Croatia in Belgrade. Author of: *Ideje i praksa društvenog razvoja Jugoslavije 1945-1973* [The idea and practice of social development in Yugoslavia 1945-1973] (1973), *Jugoslavija poslije Tita 1980-1985* [Yugoslavia after Tito 1980-1985] (1986), *Historija SFRJ* [History of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia] (1985), *Hrvatska moderna povijest* [Modern History of Croatia] (1999).

Vladimir Bilandzic: political scientist; deputy principal of the Institute for South-Eastern Europe, and lecturer at the Central European University in Budapest; master's degree in political science from McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada, doctorate in international relations from the University of Belgrade. Research at Institute for International Policy and Economy, Belgrade; visiting associate at Institute for East-West Security Studies, New York; delegate to Conflict Prevention Centre of OSCE, Vienna. Has published numerous papers in international academic publications; co-author of: *SDI and European Security* (1987) and *Razoružanje u Evropi* [Disarmament in Europe] (1987).

Norman Cigar: professor of strategic studies at the US Marine Corps Command and Staff College, Virginia. Worked as senior military-political analyst at US Land Forces HQ at the Pentagon. Master's degrees from University of Columbia and Joint Military Intelligence College, doctorate from Oxford University. Written extensively on conflicts in the Balkans, and has been a consultant at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia at The Hague. Has published: *Genocide in Bosnia. The Policy of 'Ethnic Cleansing'* (1995), *The Right to Defence: Thoughts on the Bosnian Arms Embargo* (1995), (as co-author with Paul Williams) *War Crimes and Individual Responsibility: a Prima Facie Case for the Indictment of Slobodan Milosevic* (1996), and *Vojislav Kostunica and Serbia's Future* (2001). Consultant to The Bosnian Institute.

Daniele Conversi: sociologist, lecturer at Central European University in Budapest, author of *The Basques, the Catalans and Spain: alternative routes to nationalist mobilization* (1997)

Jovan Divjak: brigadier-general of the Army of Bosnia-Herzegovina (retired). Military education at the Military Academy in Belgrade and the École d'état major in Paris. Commanding officer of the Territorial Defence (TO) of the Socialist Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina in Mostar 1984-9, Sarajevo 1989-91; dismissed and court-martialled by the JNA for issuing an unauthorized order for firearms and ammunition to be handed over to the TO of

Bosnia-Herzegovina. In April 1992 appointed deputy chief of staff of the General Staff of the TO of B-H; from 1993 to the end of the war, deputy chief of staff of the General Staff of the Army of B-H, responsible for cooperation with civilian institutions and organizations. From 1994, president of the Citizens= Foundation (since 1998 Association) *Obrazovanje gradi BiH* [Education Builds B-H], which supports the education of war orphans; member of the Association of Independent Intellectuals *Circle 99*.

Adrian Hastings: historian, emeritus professor of theology and religious studies at Leeds University, editor of *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought* (2000). Author of numerous books, including *Church and State: the English Experience* (1991), *A History of English Christianity 1920-1990* (1991), *The Church in Africa 1450-1950* (1996), and *The Construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (1998). During the war published privately three editions of his *SOS Bosnia*; in 1994 attended the founding assembly of the Serb Civic Council in Sarajevo. A founder-member in 1993 of the Alliance to Defend Bosnia-Herzegovina; trustee of The Bosnian Institute. Died 2001.

Marko Attila Hoare: historian, Master=s degrees from Cambridge (England) and Yale (USA), doctoral dissertation *The Establishment of the People=s Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina 1941-1946*, Ph.D. Department of History, Yale (2000). Has published academic articles on the war in former Yugoslavia and the pamphlet *The Politics of the Armed Forces of B-H, 1992-1995* (forthcoming). Currently a British Academy post-doctoral fellow at Robinson College, Cambridge.

Tarik Kulenovic: sociologist, academic assistant at the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Zagreb; executive editor of *Polemos - Casopis za interdisciplinarna istrazivanja rata i mira*. [Journal for interdisciplinary research into war and peace].

Branka Magas: historian, journalist and commentator on former Yugoslavia, author of *The Destruction of Yugoslavia: tracking the break-up 1980-1992* (1993), and editor of *A Question of Survival: A common education system for Bosnia-Herzegovina* (1998). One of the founders of the Croatian Peace Forum in 1991, and of the Alliance to Defend Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1993. Former editor of *Bosnia Report*, and a consultant to The Bosnian Institute. Currently completing a book on the history of Croatia.

Rusmir Mahmutcehajic: professor of applied physics at the University of Sarajevo, where he also lectures on the phenomenology of the sacred. In 1991 appointed deputy premier of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, then served as Minister of Power and Industry; in late 1993 resigned from all governmental posts because of his opposition to the country=s ethnic partition. Founder and president of International Forum Bosnia (Sarajevo), an NGO which advocates the strengthening of civil society in B-H. Co-editor of the periodical *Forum Bosnae*, author of numerous historical-philosophical, sociological and political articles, and of: *The Genocide against the Bosnian Muslims* (1991), *Living Bosnia: Political Essays and Interviews* (1996), *O nauku znaka* [On the Doctrine of Symbols] (1996), *Bosnia the Good* (2000), *The Denial of Bosnia* (2000)

Stjepan Mesic: at the time of the Croatian Spring, member of the Assembly of the Socialist Republic of Croatia; in 1972 subjected to a political trial. Founding member and secretary-general of the Croatian Democratic Community (HDZ), from 30 April 1990 prime minister of the Republic of Croatia, and from 24 August 1990 Croatian representative on the SFRY Presidency. Prevented on 15 May 1991 from assuming the rotating post of SFRY President as required by the Constitution, he formally took up his post on 1 July in the presence of EC representatives. As former Yugoslavia=s last legal president, he resigned on 5 December 1991, retroactive to 8 October when the Croatian Sabor broke off all state-legal relations with the

rump Yugoslav federation and its members. Thereafter president of the Sabor, until he resigned in early 1994 and left the HDZ, because of its policies towards Bosnia-Herzegovina. Vice-president of the Croatian People's Party until February 2000, when following the death of Franjo Tudjman he was elected President of the Republic of Croatia.

Warren Switzer: retired senior officer of the US Army, in which he served for 25 years, including in Vietnam and on the General Staff at the Pentagon. Has been adviser to ministries of defence in a number of countries; for nine months during 1997 served as military adviser to the Federation of B-H through MPRI. Now senior program analyst at AB Technologies, Inc., where he works on the use of computer models and simulations as a means of resolving complex internal and transnational situations, in particular low-intensity conflicts. Doctorate in political science, the Catholic University of America, Washington, DC. Author of numerous papers on socio-economic strategy.

Martin Spigelj: general of the Croatian Army (retired). Military education at academies in Yugoslavia; 1982-5, commanding officer of the Territorial Defence (TO) of the Socialist Republic of Croatia; from 1985 until his premature retirement in May 1989, commanding officer of the Fifth Army (North-Western Theatre) of the JNA, with its headquarters in Zagreb. On 1 September 1990 joined the government of the Republic of Croatia as Minister of Defence; 15 June 1991 appointed commanding officer of the country's ZNG (National Defence Council), but resigned because of disagreements with the political leadership related to the country's defence. From 25 September 1991 until his retirement on 1 January 1993, chief superintendent of the Croatian Army. Now completing his memoirs, and recently appointed adviser on military affairs to President Mesic.

Anton Tus: general of the Croatian Army (retired). Military education in academies in Yugoslavia, the USSR and the USA; from 1985 to 8 May 1991, commanding officer of the Yugoslav Air Force and Anti-Aircraft Defence; dismissed by decree of the President of the SFRY Presidency for opposing the involvement of the military in political issues. With the formation of the general staff of the Croatian Army on 21 September 1991 he became chief of staff, but was relieved of these duties on 22 November 1992. Until his retirement at his own request in early 1996, chief military adviser to the President of the Republic of Croatia, with special responsibility for international military co-operation. Vice-president of the Croatian Movement for Democracy and Social Justice.

Paul Williams: professor of law and international relations at the American University in Washington, and principal of the Public International Law and Policy Group. PhD University of Cambridge 1998, J.D. Stanford Law School 1990. 1991-3 served in the Office of the Legal Advisor for Europe and Canada in the US State Department, with special responsibility for issues relating to the dissolution of SFRY and USSR; subsequently, senior associate with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Legal adviser to the Government of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina at the Dayton negotiations. Author of *The Treatment of Detainees* (1990), and co-author with Norman Cigar of the politico-legal study *War Crimes and Individual Responsibility: a prima facie case for the indictment of Slobodan Milošević* (1996). Consultant to The Bosnian Institute.

Ivo Zanic: former freelance writer and researcher, now lecturer in media studies at University of Zagreb; doctorate from the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb (with a dissertation on the relations between political communications and traditional culture). 1994-8 editor of *Erasmus B a Journal for the Culture of Democracy*; has published numerous papers on political myths, symbols and rituals, in Croatian and other academic journals, including a survey of Croatian and Bosniak

political myths for *Der Jugoslawien-Krieg. Handbuch zu Vorgeschichte, Verlauf und Konsequenzen* (1999). Author of: *Mitologija inflacije: govor kriznoga doba* [The Mythology of Inflation: report from a time of crisis] (1987), *Smrt crvenog fiće: ogledi i članci 1989-1993* [Death of the Red Fiat: essays and articles 1989-1993] (1993), and *Prevarena povijest: guslarska estrada, kult hajduka i rat u Hrvatskoj i Bosni i Hercegovini 1990-1995* [History Deceived: the gusle-player=s stage, the cult of the bandit and the war in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina 1990-1995] (1998).

Ozren Zunec: sociologist and professor at the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Philosophy, Zagreb, where he founded the Chair of Sociology of Military Issues and War. Founder and chief editor of *Polemos - Casopis za interdisciplinarna istraživanja rata i mira*. [Journal for Interdisciplinary research into war and peace]. Author of: *Planet mina: takticko-tehnicki, humanitarni, socijalni, ekoloski i medunarodno-pravni aspekti uporabe kopnenih mina u suvremenom ratu* [Planet of Mines: the tactical, technical, humanitarian, social, ecological and international-legal aspects of the use of land mines in contemporary warfare] (1997), and *Rat i društvo. Ogledi iz sociologije vojske i rata* [War and Society: essays from the sociology of the military and war] (1998). Co-director of the private, independent, non-party institution Strata Research, editor of *Hrvatska vojska 2000. Nacionalna sigurnost, oružane snage i demokracija - materijal za raspravu*. [Croatian Army 2000. National security, the armed forces and democracy B discussion papers] (1999), and with Anton Tus coordinator of *Projekta 108*, under whose auspices the study was carried out. In February 2000 placed in overall charge of Croatia=s intelligence services, but resigned a month later.