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## The U.N. in Bosnia

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# There's no business like show business

by Katharine Kanter

As the British elites slapped themselves on the back in self-congratulatory speeches on Victory in Europe Day, the Serbians celebrated too, by launching a shell onto a bus shelter in the Sarajevo suburb of Butmir. Nine people were killed and 17 severely wounded. Sarajevo is a U.N. security zone.

On May 9, U.N. spokesman Gerard Tugeois admitted that two Serbian tanks shelled Bosnian Army positions *inside the U.N. exclusion zone* in Sarajevo. The tanks fired out of Mrkovica, 4 kilometers from the center of the capital. This is the first time since February 1994, that tank fire has been trained on the city.

Later that day, Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic told Bosnian radio that there are 225 pieces of heavy matériel, including 33 tanks, which, in violation of U.N. resolutions, are now in Serbian hands around Sarajevo. Some were taken out of storage under the control of Unprofor, the U.N.'s so-called peace-keeping forces (*how* they were taken out has not been specified); other pieces were brought up to the area.

U.N. military spokesman Gary Coward admitted to the London *Guardian* that "there are tens of heavy weapons in Bosnian Serb Army hands around the city, and not in U.N. collection points." Mortars and rocket-propelled grenades hit Sarajevo throughout the week, fired from U.N.-patrolled so-called "exclusion zones" ringing the capital, around which, according to the Bosnian minister for internal affairs, the Serbians are reinforcing their units.

### Neither holy nor Roman nor an empire

Like the Holy Roman Empire, which was none of the above, so the U.N. safe havens: They are Serbian, not U.N. zones, and they are neither safe, nor a haven. The United Nations, at Serbian request, put a stop to all civilian travel in and out of the Bosnian capital a month and a half ago. The next question is, when the Serbians will "order" the United Nations to stop bringing in food as well. The only route in use now is an extremely dangerous track over Mount Igman, swept by Serbian mortar and anti-aircraft fire.

A number of people have been killed trying to reach Sarajevo over the track. It is not generally known, for example, that on March 26, a 23-year-old woman was killed and

two Bosnian officials wounded by anti-aircraft flak, when a group of Bosnian dignitaries, including the general manager of the Bosnian news agency, Faris Nanic, were told by the U.N. to get off the bus on Mount Igman in the middle of the night, and *run* the last 500 meters, under Serbian flak, into the city. Most of the party were elderly people. The U.N., which had promised an escort of armored vehicles, did not turn up at the meeting point. It was also the U.N. which had cancelled the party's flight from Zagreb at the last minute, alleging that it was "too dangerous."

As for the other U.N. "security zones," on May 9, some 13 civilians were wounded when Tuzla, the capital of the Northern Province of Bosnia, came under artillery fire, directed against the market place; four people were killed. At the time of this writing, May 11, heavy artillery fire is trained on Gorazde, also a "safe haven," from 82 mm and 60 mm mortars.

There is supposedly a 20-km "U.N. exclusion zone" for heavy weapons around Gorazde. Serbian units, according to Bosnian Army intelligence, are now regrouping in the area, undisturbed by U.N. patrols, which are presumably there to graze upon what is left of the grass; intense helicopter traffic is reported between Gorazde and the Serbian rebels' capital at Pale.

Bosnian Army intelligence reports state that 1,500 volunteers have been brought from Serbia over into northern Bosnia, in preparation for intensified fighting across the entire territory.

### Tudjman lunches with Hurd

The imponderable, is what the Croats will now do, following their move to re-take Western Slavonia; the logical next step would be to join forces with the Bosnians and cut the Brcko corridor, drying out overnight the logistical supply line for Serbian forces in northern Bosnia. To prevent such a move, the Serbians have already begun bombarding Croatian positions. On May 10, more than 2,500 projectiles were fired on Orasje, a village next to Brcko, the key to the corridor.

Croatian President Franjo Tudjman himself would no doubt be satisfied with the recent "gains." According to the diplomatic editor of the London *Independent*, President Tudjman at a lunch given by Queen Elizabeth II in London on May 7, was seated next to British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, and "is understood" to have made undertakings to the foreign secretary, that Croatia *will abstain from further military adventures*, that the Army will cooperate with the United Nations, and allow the United Nations freedom of movement in Western Slavonia. The Army had made parts of Slavonia off-limits to the United Nations.

Meanwhile, back in fairyland, Gen. Sir Michael Rose, who stepped down on Jan. 24, 1995 after two years as U.N. commander in Bosnia, has been awarded the Distinguished Service Order. It was given to Rose "for his inspirational leadership and personal courage."