

## Bosnia and Croatia upgrade their alliance

by Umberto Pascali

Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granic explained the results of the high-level talks between the leaderships of Bosnia and Croatia on Aug. 8 and 9 in Zagreb, with these words: "Our meetings took place in an excellent atmosphere, so to reach an agreement was no problem at all. We needed just three minutes to draw up the final statement, because we had no point of disagreement."

The summit saw the participation of Bosnia President Alija Izetbegovic and Croatian President Franjo Tudjman; the two chiefs of general staff, Croatian Gen. Zvonimir Cervenko (the genial strategist of the resounding victory in Slavonia and Krajina), and his Bosnian counterpart, Gen. Rasim Delic; Bosnia Foreign Minister Muhamed Sacirbey and Croatian Foreign Minister Granic; and other officials.

The summit was organized immediately after the conclusion of a coordinated offensive that in 72 hours liberated 3,500 square miles of Croatian territory and put an end to the quisling self-styled Serbian Republic of Krajina, which had been created through the terror of the Chetnik gangs and the force of the Yugoslav Army unleashed against civilians in 1991, when 430,000 non-Serbs were "cleansed" from Croatia. The offensive also broke the three-year-old siege around the U.N.-protected "safe area" of Bihac in Bosnia, saving the lives of the 200,000 starving people at the moment when the gangs of "Krajina prime minister" Milan Martic and Radovan Karadzic had launched their final attack, aimed at repeating there the slaughter of the "safe areas" of Srebrenica and Zepa a few weeks before.

By Aug. 5, "Operation Storm 95" was basically concluded. Gen. Ivan Tolj, the spokesman for the Croatian Army, stated: "Up to 80% of our goals have been achieved. The self-styled Republic of Serb Krajina does not exist anymore de facto, as it has never existed de jure." The general said

that not a single paramilitary brigade surrendered as a unit, they all broke up. "Our liberation plan, Storm 95, was an ambitious one, but it was accomplished twice as fast as we ourselves expected."

That afternoon, on the bridge between Trzacka Rastela and Sturlic at the Croatia-Bosnia border, the Croatian Army and the Bosnian Army 5th Corps linked up, ending over 1,200 days of siege. "This means that nothing will be the way it was. It means *the end of greater Serbia*," said Tolj.

### 'Our Serbian citizens have equal rights'

One of the first acts of the Croatian government was to appeal to the Serbian civilians not to leave the country. The paramilitary gangs were pushing the civilians to leave. They often used them as "human shields" to get into Serb-occupied territory in Bosnia with their heavy weapons, after an agreement had been reached that such weapons were to be handed to the Croatian Army in exchange for free passage.

This was a more than generous offer, considering the crimes that the Serbian gangs had committed, including the internment in concentration camps and mass murder of Bosnian males, such as in Srebrenica. Instead, for example, 14,000 paramilitary Serb forces used the exodus of 40,000 Serb civilians on their way from Glina and Dvor to Banja Luka, under the eyes of the U.N. forces, to transport tanks, artillery, and rocket launchers into northern Bosnia.

Croatian Prime Minister Valentic called on the Serbian population not to leave their homes. "I call on the Serbs not to be manipulated into leaving and falling into a situation of complete insecurity. Let them stay here, they are our citizens, protected by the law, while those who are accused of crimes will have the right of a fair trial. Our ethnic Serbian citizens, have rights equal to our Croatian citizens. They have the right

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to a house, a job, and social security.”

A statement from the Croatian bishops issued on Aug. 8 makes the point: “In this sudden change, we note that the Serbian inhabitants of these territories, who according to the 1991 census numbered approximately 160,000, are to a great extent abandoning their homes. This occurred at the bidding of the Serbian Orthodox Church (cf. statement by Bishop Longin) and at the orders of Serbian Gen. Milan Martić. We

believe that *many did not make the decision themselves to abandon their homes*. Therefore we support the statements and attempts by the Croatian authorities to urge the citizens of Serbian nationality to remain in their homes where they are guaranteed personal and civil safety as well as the inviolability of their property. We express the hope that this guarantee will be fulfilled in its entirety for those who remain and that it will inspire the return of at least those who are not

persecuted by feelings of guilt. We urge the Croatian Caritas organization, as already begun, to organize itself to aid all who are in distress, *without looking at ethnic or confessional differences.*”

But the pressure and the fear instilled by the paramilitary gangs was too strong. Around 150,000 people just left. Although many of the Serbs in the “Republic of Krajina” had taken over the houses and property of the “cleansed” people, many others had lived there for hundreds of years. By forcing them away, Martić, Karadžić, and their ilk intend to create a mass of people who are enraged and easily manipulable, and recruitable into their paramilitary gangs.

Sources inside Serbia told *EIR* that many of the refugees who arrived there are already thinking of going back to Croatia. “Only now are they beginning to talk about the insanity of this irrational three years of Greater Serbia and the paranoia of the ‘racial superiority,’ ” the source said.

Despite the understandable resentment of the Croatian population toward their Serbian co-citizens who profited from or accepted the ethnic cleansing, during the entire “Storm 95” operation, the civilian casualties amounted to 19. Croatian Vice President Ivica Kostović said that only 200 people had been detained, and that the Red Cross will have complete access to all of them. During the exodus, literally at every turn of the road, the Croatia police guaranteed the security of the Serbs.

### **A smashing defeat . . . for Britain**

Operation Storm 95 has been an unprecedented defeat for the masters of the Greater Serbians, the British oligarchy. “London went berserk more than Belgrade,” a Bosnian observer told *EIR*. “So much so that those British gentlemen began to make serious strategic mistakes.” In 1993, British intelligence, the infamous MI-6, was caught red-handed organizing a confrontation between Bosnians and Croatians in central Bosnia. The dirty trick provoked a war between the two victims of the Anglo-Serbian aggression. The British knew that collaboration between Zagreb and Sarajevo means the end of Greater Serbia. It is the reason why the large empire of the British-controlled media and sycophants “went ballistic” trying to demonstrate that the Croatians, by liberating their national territory and saving the people of Bihać, were committing a crime. It did not quite work.

At the same time, the British have thrown everything they have into a psychological warfare game to create hostility between Croatians and Bosnians. Suddenly, the *London Times* published its by now famous map-on-the-menu—a map of Bosnia divided between Belgrade and Zagreb supposedly drawn by President Tuđman during his May 6 visit in London. It was supposed to provoke a Bosnian backlash against Croatia. A few days later, the “map” was unmasked as a pathetic fraud. Croatian Ambassador in London Ante Čičin-Sain revealed that the source of the map (which included obvious misspelling and geographic errors) was Brit-

ish Liberal Party leader Paddy Ashdown, who had himself drawn the “incriminating annotations” on the menu. Ashdown is a “former” member of the SAS, the elite military corps that supplies personnel for intelligence operations of the kind organized in central Bosnia in 1993.

Like a wounded beast, the British oligarchs are screaming. The British foreign minister is roaring against the United States and Germany for not condemning Croatia. Both whippers and screams are coming from the entire British-controlled political and media spectrum. To no avail. The last great hope to provoke a split between Bosnia and Croatia, was an invitation by Russian President Boris Yeltsin to Tuđman and Serbia’s President Slobodan Milošević to come to Moscow to discuss “peace.” Izetbegović was purposely excluded. Tuđman posed two conditions—enough time to prepare such a meeting, and the presence of Izetbegović.

Instead, on Aug. 8, Tuđman awarded Bosnian President Izetbegović the highest Croatian government decoration, the Order of Queen Jelena, and presented Muhamed Sacirbey with another high honor, for their contributions to improving relations between the two countries.

And this defined the atmosphere of the Zagreb talks. Concrete decisions? Yes, explained Foreign Minister Granić: even closer military cooperation between the two armies in the area of Bosansko Grahovo, Kupres, Kulen Vakuf, and Donji Vakuf. I.e., according to military experts who spoke to *EIR*, an operation to free the area around Banja Luka, the center of the Chetnik operation and the base for the Serbian aircraft that hit civilian targets in both countries, is to be expected. A second point of agreement: concern for the help supplied by the U.N. to the Serb paramilitary groups and U.N. complicity with those groups in smuggling heavy weapons from Croatia into Bosnia. Third, a call to the international community to “help peace” by preserving the “integrity and sovereignty” of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

And while the situation in Belgrade explodes in mutual recriminations among Milošević, Karadžić, the metropolite Pavle, and others, more evidence of the Serbian genocide is being unearthed. The mass graves near Srebrenica documented by aerial photos, evidence of rapes, mass executions, torture, and of the direct responsibility of General Mladić were all reported officially on Aug. 9 by White House spokesman Michael McCurry.

On the same day, CIA Deputy Director John Gannon testified to the Senate Intelligence and Foreign Relations committees that there was no “ethnic cleansing” committed by the Croatians; instead, the Greater Serbians and Radovan Karadžić and his colleagues are responsible for genocide. “At least several thousand [Bosnians] were murdered in Srebrenica and Zepa,” and the number could rise much higher, he said. The Serbian gangs have destroyed thousands of Muslim villages, targeting particularly mosques and cemeteries. In the territory they occupied, Karadžić’s men have killed or “cleansed” 90% of the non-Serbs.