

# British agents instigated the Bosnian-Croatian conflicts

by Marko Barisic

*Earlier in the Serbian war of aggression in the Balkans, ethnic Croats and Muslims were allied against the common aggressor. Then, that changed. The Croatian newspaper Danas exposed the role of the British in fomenting the Croatian-Bosnian conflicts. In an article on July 16, 1993 it reported, "The first massacres in Muslim-Croat conflicts were committed by units commanded by British mercenaries, the first pictures of victims were sent to the world by British journalists." The following translation of the article is reprinted with the permission of Danas.*

Seven months ago, in a routine check of a bus on the route from Zagreb to Travnik, the Croatian police discovered 22 British citizens, their hair cut very short and wearing sports clothes. They claimed that their intention was to join the Croatian Defense Forces (HOS), an irregular formation of the Croatian Party of Rights (HSP) in central Bosnia. They were all legionnaires, professional veterans mostly from the Royal Navy, who, according to them, wanted to offer their experience in the fight against the Serbs in Bosnia. They were led by a certain Suad Vrazenica, and had been recruited in Paris. As a strong motive for coming, they talked more about their wish to "fight for the right cause," of which they were convinced through the media, and less about adventure or money as a reason. After arresting them, the Croatian police did not know what to do with them. . . . There were no clashes between the Muslims and Croats at that time, and the organizational channel that they came through was then unknown. The fact that they gave the HOS headquarters in Travnik as their destination raised suspicion. After they were stopped, the guide Suad offered money to the policemen to let them go, and was surprised when the police declined. The British were deported, and the BBC reacted with the speed of light. Two days later a TV story on those mercenaries aired, and journalists expressed wonder over what the Croats did, rejecting help from the westerners. And the Croatian policemen were even more astonished when they saw how much attention and tenderness the official British media were giving to a handful of mercenaries.

The wonder disappeared when, a few months later, Dan Damon, for *Sky News*, prepared a story on Norry Phillips, a British mercenary and former member of the Royal Navy, who, as stated in the story, had come to Croatia two years earlier to train Croatian soldiers. Upon the arrival of Unpro-

for in Croatia, Phillips joined the Croat Defense Council (the Tudjman party militia, HVO), and when the clashes between Croats and Muslims started in Mostar, Norry shifted to the Muslim side. There would be nothing strange in that if he himself had not been the one who tried to persuade the HVO commanders to take action against the Muslims. "Mostar cannot be a town with two armies," he used to say. "Let us deal with the Bosnian Army in two days, and the world will accept that."

People from the HVO found it strange that he was suggesting this, while, at the same time, selling weapons to the Muslims. Phillips was a man with strong connections in weapons supply deals and "import" of mercenaries. When it seemed impossible to get weapons and ammunition, all one had to do was to talk to him, deposit enough money in a foreign account, and the goods would arrive. He usually sent the new mercenaries to central Bosnia with the task of training the chosen members of the Croatian HVO and the Bosnian Army to be merciless commandos who would infiltrate a Serb-controlled territory as commando-terrorist groups. The British were usually leaders of those groups, which never started a single action against the Serbs. Instead, these groups of trained commandos, Croats and Muslims, turned against each other, both sides under British command.

## British mujahideen

The massacre in the Muslim village of Ahmici, near Vitez, was carried out by one of those groups commanded by a British citizen. The desecration of the Croatian monastery Guca Gora and the massacre in the village of the same name was executed by a group of mujahideen, commanded by a mercenary named Rose — a British citizen. Immediately after a massacre, the British "blue berets" [U.N. forces] would enter those villages along with British journalists, who would send out horrible pictures of war and civilian suffering to the world, all the while stressing that what was going on between the Croats and Muslims were not "sporadic clashes" but a real war. Pictures of mutual massacres and burned-out villages created, among both Croats and the Muslims, a mutual feeling of hate, to the point that they became a greater enemy to each other than to the real aggressor, and an impression was created among the international public that everybody was fighting against everybody in Bosnia and Hercegovina, that it was no longer an aggression by Serbia but a civil war.

In a recent interview with BBC, Lord Owen explained: "The Americans thought at the beginning that the problem in Bosnia was a simple one: One party is the aggressor, the others are the victims. We knew from the beginning that the problem was more complex since it was not aggression, but a civil war." Even an experienced diplomat such as Owen gave himself away with such a statement. The Croat-Muslim conflicts came to him as "God's gift," as a confirmation of his initial thesis, with which he arrived at the position of a peace mediator, while the aim of the thesis was to have no decisive measures taken against Serbia, let alone to punish Serbia by military action because of the aggression.

Since at that time there were no conflicts between Croats and Muslims, it was hard to resist the efforts of the United States to start a Balkan rerun of Desert Storm. After conflicts started, everybody agreed that one should avoid getting involved in such a war, a civil war, at any price. However, the fact that the first massacres were performed by units commanded by British mercenaries and that British journalists sent the first pictures of the massacred people to the world, brings a new dimension to the entire story about the war in Bosnia and Hercegovina.

### **MI-6 in the Balkans**

The territory of former Yugoslavia, that is, the Balkans, is strategically the shortest land-route to the East. That is why the area is divided by spheres of influence among European and world powers which, on top of that, want to control the nearest access to warm-water ports. That is why, in conflicts and wars in this area, their interests always interweave; when it was impossible for those powers to realize their interests through political means or economic power, their secret services were activated, and through their men or instrumentation of a certain political or military group, they would prepare events that would change history. It is known today that the demonstrations that led to the fall of the Yugoslav government on March 27, 1941, were directed by the British Intelligence Service. . . . During the entire war there were British intelligence officers with Tito. British officers and mercenaries are also active in the war against Croatia, and especially now in the war in Bosnia. There are also British soldiers within Unprofor, weapons dealers, who present themselves as businessmen, as well as journalists, who, due to the nature of their work, can legally collect information. Some of these people are part of British Intelligence abroad, Military Intelligence Six, in short, MI-6.

Today, serious analysts put MI-6 at the very top of the intelligence services. Some estimate it to be equal to the American CIA, and some say that in certain departments it is even superior. They also remind us of the "glorious" past of British agents. During the entire course of World War II, MI-6 had its men at the very top of the Wehrmacht and among the top Russian officers. MI-6 is divided into departments. For a long time, especially during the Cold War, the strongest one was the Russian department and, therefore, when im

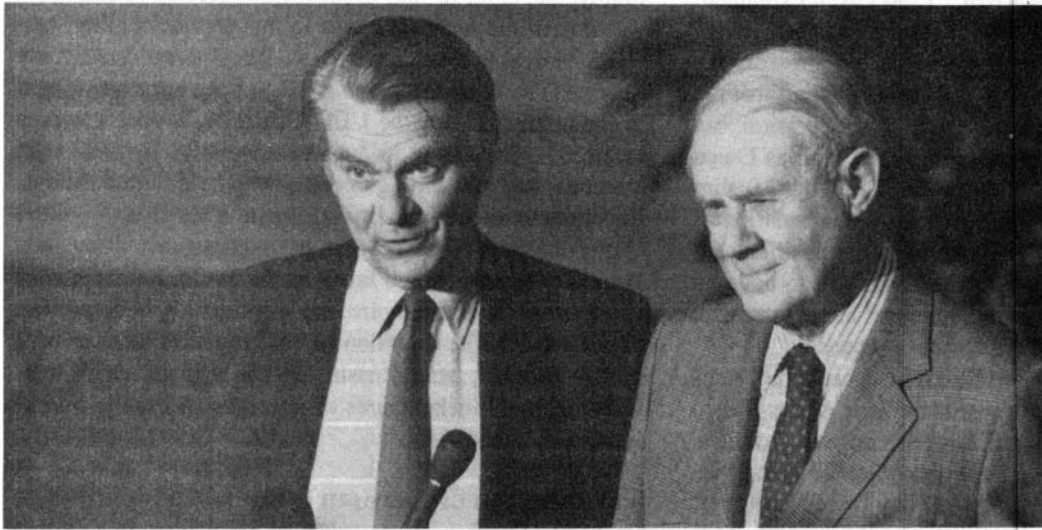
Philby, the chief of that department, defected to Russia, it was one of the heaviest blows to that service. Philby, as a chief, was a Russian agent. . . . The British Intelligence Service is not as large as the KGB, it does not expose itself to the public as does the CIA. Officially, it does not even exist. . . . Its aim is to act imperceptibly. It uses subtle methods, and acts through people who hold high positions. Its aim is to acquire quality information for British politics and economy so that they can act successfully. They want Britain to be an honored factor in the world, but from what is left of the British Empire, MI-6 is the only honored item in the world. The attention of that organization has been mostly focused, after Russia, on the regions which were traditionally British spheres of interest: Africa, the Middle East, and, lately, Asia.

### **Termination of German influence**

In the European department of MI-6 there is a Balkan sub-department, which used to be important to Britain for control of the route through Suez. Today, the aim of that sub-department is to stop the influence of Germany in the Balkans. That is also obvious in the statements of politicians on a high level. For example, German Minister of Foreign Affairs laus inkel told his allies on July 6 that "it is not the right time for the introduction of penalties against Croatia despite the conflicts between Bosnian Croats and Muslims in Bosnia-Hercegovina." On July 14, British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd told Parliament: "We believe that the time has come for the European Community — on Monday, perhaps — to consider the introduction of economic measures against Croatia as long as Croatia is involved in activities contrary to the international codes." Minister Hurd said this at a time of fierce military action by the Muslim army in central Bosnia and northern Hercegovina. A large part of the responsibility for Hurd's statement belongs to British intelligence agents, whose aim is to prevent a breakthrough of German interests and to provoke conflicts between Croats and Muslims.

Together with directly recruited VIPs, the main tools of the British intelligence service are journalists, businessmen, and mercenaries. MI-6 transmits its information to the world through BBC, which broadcasts in 60 languages. Just for the sake of comparison, the Voice of America broadcasts in only 16 languages. However, America is economically much stronger; it can use satellites and various listening devices for collecting information, while British MI-6 is still focused on classical methods of information gathering, in which the human factor is important.

Along with the political reasons for certain service activities, there are also market reasons. It happened, not once, that two African tribes ended up in a war after British mediation, both of them armed with British weapons. Bosnian Muslims also buy mainly British weaponry through the black market and dealers. The connection is completely logical. The majority of the Arab countries buy their weaponry from Britain and, in overseas Muslim funds, most of the money is



David Owen (left) and  
Cyrus Vance, at the  
United Nations in New  
York, April 1993.

Arab. Even Norry Phillips, British mercenary in Mostar, was providing mainly British weaponry. British politicians were against lifting the embargo on weapons and against military intervention against the Bosnian Serbs from the beginning. "That would mean choosing war, and we have been seeking peace until now. We are doing everything in our power to stop the fighting and not to prolong it. We have often discussed the matter with the European 12 and the opinion prevailed that the embargo should not be lifted," Douglas Hurd told *Le Monde*. Britain has not been doing everything in order to achieve peace, otherwise it would not have sent its mercenaries, who only stirred up the war, and would not have conducted large quantities of its weapons through the black market. Commander Rose, leader of the mujahideen in Travnik, the group which committed massacres in surrounding Croat villages, is completely aware of that. "I command them," Rose proudly stated into the camera of a British journalist. He set up his military headquarters in a church.

### The role of Unprofor

Britain has steadfastly and strongly opposed military intervention against the Serbs. When American aircraft cruised the Somalian sky, many thought that Clinton would keep his pre-election promise. Then, however, the statements of the determined Douglas Hurd were heard again: "Activities of the warlords in Somalia are making the humanitarian action impossible. . . . In Bosnia and Hercegovina there is a civil war supported from outside by the Serbs from Belgrade." This statement was made on Dec. 9 of last year when there were only sporadic clashes between the Croats and Muslims. For Hurd, it was civil war, even then. Since it did not escalate, his intelligence service MI-6 took care of it. Anyhow, it is very significant that the first conflicts between the Croats and Muslims occurred in the area where British Unprofor forces were located, in central Bosnia around Vitez. And long before, in November of last year, in his interview for

Channel 4, Lord Owen advocated the introduction of economic sanctions against Croatia. Now, Secretary Hurd brings this issue up again.

Today, after fierce and bloody Croat-Muslim conflicts, there must be delight at MI-6 headquarters. They have successfully performed a job for the politicians of their country. They remained friends with Serbia, prevented the breakthrough of German interests, and are, above all, selling enormous amounts of weapons to the warring parties. Norry Phillips also exults. The conflicts are developing quite all right, and when the going gets tough, he will again change sides and will survive this conflict as he has survived many previous ones. MI-6 especially appreciates the human factor. It is not without reason considered the most elite intelligence service in the world. In Bosnia and Hercegovina they did a good job. The graves confirm this.

### The task at headquarters

*The following is Part 2 of the Danas report, published on July 23.*

Norry Phillips, a British mercenary, spent five months in the homes of high-level Croatian Army officers in Zagreb. His status was not exceptional, he was just one of numerous foreign legionnaires who earned the trust of a certain circle of senior Croatian officers because of their skills in training special forces. At that time, one year ago, there was an influx of foreign mercenaries, mostly British, but French and Dutch as well. At the same time, after the great forced immigration of Muslims in eastern Bosnia, the work of foreign humanitarian organizations which opened their branch offices in Croatia, mostly in Zagreb, has intensified. The majority of those workers were taking care of the displaced population; however . . . there were others, coming on the pretext of doing the same job, but it was already known that they were members of various Arab militant organizations.

Thus, in July of last year, a meeting of Hezbollah mem-

bers took place in Zagreb. Members of that organization residing in Zagreb, Hassan Haidar Dzabom and Radwan Khatounom, citizens of Lebanon, entertained a large group of British citizens of Arab descent, and some of them traveled to Split afterwards, from where they tried, by various means, to cross the HVO-controlled territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Some of them did not succeed, but the majority did, mostly with the help of a tested method: bribery. And when they had difficulties, British mercenaries, or British working with humanitarian organizations, appeared as mediators to help them get the permits to pass. It was not so strange then, since there were no indications of possible Muslim-Croatian conflicts. It was thought that every new individual would contribute first against the Serbian aggressor.

The second secretary of the embassy of Great Britain in Zagreb, Doug Houston, has particularly distinguished himself in humanitarian missions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially recently, since the Muslim attacks on Croats in central Bosnia increased. He spends quite some time in the area of central Bosnia where the British Unprofor is located (in Vitez), helping displaced civilians, both Muslims and Croats. Traveling often between Split and Vitez, Houston met quite a number of HVO commanders who thanked him for his concern for the displaced persons. However, they were surprised by his reports from his tours, which he regularly sent, through the embassy in Zagreb, to the Overseas Department for Aid (ODA) with the Foreign Office (British ministry of foreign affairs). Since, due to the ferocity of Muslim actions and their good knowledge of the deployment of the Croatian forces (resulting in hitting the weakest points of Croatian defense in central Bosnia), the HVO forces doubted the neutrality of British peace forces, they started controlling all the reports that were being broadcast from that base.

### **Secretary Houston's mission**

Houston reported from Vitez in the first half of June that "it is expected that they [the Bosnia-Herzegovina forces] will take the entire valley from Travnik to Busovaca." He reported to his superior that the Bosnia-Herzegovina Army already had taken Travnik and most of Vitez and that it was advancing farther along the main line of communication, adding that, unfortunately, they were ethnically cleansing the area. Houston is a professional and he does not comment on events. The HVO workers were disturbed by the fact that none of the reports from the Unprofor British base in Vitez showed an intention of those forces to try and do something for the rescue of civilians, since they could not stop the Muslim offensive through military means. Instead, Doug Houston knows that Muslims want to take the ammunition factory in Vitez (the weapons factory in Novi Travnik has been in their hands for a long time already), but the only thing he is afraid of is that "the retreating Croats will mine the roads and we want to prevent them from doing that." The British Unprofor battalion succeeded in that. The Croats,

while getting the population and army out of Travnik to Vitez, persuaded by the "Blues" who promised to put themselves in between the two armies, gave up the mining.

The fighting in central Bosnia continued, and the Bosnia-Herzegovina Army was able to advance farther along the roads, which were free of mines. Due to their immense superiority in men, the Muslims have already taken Fojnica, next in line is Bugojno, while Kakanj and Kraljeva Sutjeska have also already been taken.

Houston reported to his chief: "The HVO forces in Kakanj have surrendered, which is good news for us. Hadzihasanovic said those Croats should not be worried." Enver Hadzihasanovic is the Bosnia-Herzegovina Army Zenica Corps commander, and Unprofor can check out, in Rudnik prison in Zenica, how he treats the Croats.

The second secretary of the British Embassy reported that mujahideens have not respected the latest cease-fire with the Croats, and Houston could have seen this for himself, since the British citizen Rose is the commander of one mujahideen formation that became notorious for massacres.

### **Creating the war**

The British role in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina has its official side as well. Besides mercenaries, businessmen, and various humanitarians, official representatives of the British government have also been involved in creating the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina through the second secretary of the British Embassy in Zagreb, "The Croats in Kakanj have surrendered and that is good for us," is not the attitude of a neutral monitor and humanitarian worker. And neither, certainly, is the fact that the British Blue Helmets prevented the Croats from carrying out their plan to mine the road while retreating.

In order to protect its interests in the Balkans, British policy has employed unacceptable means. Through its political activity and starting thesis that this is a civil war here and not aggression, through its current intensive intercession for sanctions against Croatia, and especially its active participation in creating the war through its mercenaries, humanitarians, and so-called businessmen, Britain has, actually, in its own distinctive way, involved itself in the war. This is being confirmed night and day by its reports from the battlefields. One need only look at the choice of news aired by the BBC to note the lack of logic. The news mostly refers to Mostar and the area south of Mostar where there has been almost no fighting in these last few days, while the towns in flames in central Bosnia are hardly ever mentioned. The towns in central Bosnia are only mentioned after being taken by the Muslims, and that is only put through as a fact.

There is, however, a difference between second secretary Doug Houston, who used to be the British agent in the Bosnia-Herzegovina area, and the British mercenary Norry Phillips: Each of them is entrusted with his part of the job. For now, unfortunately, they are successful.