

Srebrenica: An Example of Civil-Military Co-operation

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Larry Sampler is presently a consultant with the Institute for Defense Analyses (IDA), in Alexandria, Virginia. The primary focus of his work has been the application of their “SENSE” technology¹ in transitional societies. Recent applications have included Market Democracy Programs, presented for government and business leaders from Montenegro, Georgia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and a presidential-level Senior Leaders’ Symposium in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The SENSE program and the various programs in which it is incorporated are designed to assist leaders from transitional societies as they face the difficult decisions required in order to move from a controlled economy to one that is market-based, and as they begin to learn the proper role of government in such an economy. Other research interests include civil-military relations and joint operations, especially with regard to peace support operations and other operations other than war. Mr. Sampler recently returned from Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina where, for the past four years, he has held a number of positions for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Most notably, while serving as the OSCE Director of Election Implementation, he was jointly appointed by the High Representative, Ambassador Carlos Westendorp, and OSCE Head of Mission, Ambassador Robert Barry, to serve as the Chairman of the Interim Executive Board governing Srebrenica. In this position, over a period of 15 months, he served as the de facto “Mayor of Srebrenica,” the site of what had been called the worst atrocity in Europe since World War II. He worked with both Serbs and Bosniaks to install the multi-ethnic municipal government elected in 1997. He also worked with both national and international organizations and NGOs to mitigate the horrible living conditions of post-war Srebrenica. Other responsibilities at the OSCE included serving as Deputy Chief of Staff and Operations, with responsibility for the safety and security of several thousand mission personnel and an annual operations budget of \$21M (US). His last significant post with the OSCE was as Deputy Political Director, where he held the portfolio for political-military matters. In that capacity he was deeply involved in assisting the Bosnian government to articulate a state-level national security plan, with concomitant defense plans at the entity level. Mr. Sampler’s military career was spent within the Airborne and Special Operations communities. Assignments in Africa, Europe, and Central and South America included participation in Mobile Training Teams (MTTs), Foreign Internal Defense (FID) missions, Unconventional Warfare (UW) operations, and Peace Support Operations (PSOs). Mr. Sampler completed undergraduate studies at the Georgia Institute of Technology. His graduate studies at Georgia Tech focussed on policy questions related to telecommunications as an appropriate and effective technology for developing nations in the hands of ‘modernizers’ (as articulated by John Kautsky). Further studies at the post-graduate level

¹ “Synthetic Environment for National Security Estimates,” a distributed computer-based interactive simulation of the socio-economic situation in the fictitious country of Akrona.

dealt with the state and regional security implications of various models of development among lesser-developed countries.

ABSTRACT

Srebrenica was an especially sensitive and difficult problem for the international community in post-war Bosnia. The magnitude of the atrocities and human suffering that occurred there, exacerbated by the supposed (and later acknowledged) culpability of the international community writ large and the UN Protective Forces in particular,² ensured that Srebrenica would not fade from the public eye. An ethnically mixed municipality before the war, post-war Srebrenica was 100% Serb, most of whom were themselves displaced from Sarajevo and other places. When the first post-war municipal election produced a municipal assembly in Srebrenica with a majority of Bosniaks,³ the stage was set for a very tense and ugly standoff. Implementing the election results and installing the elected assembly would ultimately require over 18 months. Three-quarters of their elected term of office would go by before they could even begin to work as a municipal assembly.

The international community, in an attempt to force the Serb majority to accept the elected assembly, suspended the wartime municipal assembly that had been established by the Serbs and appointed an "Interim Executive Board." The charter creating this board was two paragraphs, dealing only with the international leadership and ethnic make-up of the 5-person board. This board was eventually tasked with providing what minimal "constituent services" were available, coordinating the paltry assistance programs in-place for the Srebrenica, and orchestrating the international community involvement in the municipality to ensure that full efforts were directed to installing the elected assembly.

In support of the international efforts in Srebrenica, the local SFOR Commander and the Chairman of the Interim Executive Board convened a conference, inviting all the international players relevant to Srebrenica. At this conference an attempt was made to demonstrate the efficacy of the military decision making process (as per US Army FM 101-5, chapter 5), and to then apply it to the multi-agency situation facing the international community in Srebrenica in the form of a "campaign plan." This paper examines the context, international players, situational dynamics, and precursors to the civil-military campaign plan eventually developed with the assistance of SFOR. Further consideration is given to the particular elements of the campaign plan.

² "Report of the Secretary-General Pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 53/35, Srebrenica Report," a UN report that examined the role of the UN in the events of Srebrenica.

³ "Bosniak" refers to those citizens of Bosnia who are of the Islamic faith or associate themselves with those of the Islamic faith. It is an attempt to clarify the semantic problem of discussing the three constituent peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina, two of which are clearly ethnic in origin (Serbs and Croats), and one of which is drawn from both ethnicities but is religious in nature. So, reference to "Muslims" is appropriate if discussing the three predominant religions of the country (Orthodox Christian, Roman Catholic, and Islam) and reference to "Bosniaks" is appropriate when discussing political or social distinctions of the country. Since this clarification did not occur among the international community until after the war, there are still some references to "Muslims" in a non-religious context when discussion situations during or before the war. The term "Bosnian" refers to any citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Further, in the interest of clarity and consistency, and in keeping with the standards of the international community in BiH, "Croatian" or "Serbian" refers to citizens of BiH of that particular ethnic background. When speaking of citizens of Croatia or Serbia (Yugoslavia), "Croat(s)" and "Serb(s)" will be used, respectively. In discussions of events that pre-date the establishment of BiH, the terms may be used interchangeably.

INTRODUCTION

Prior to the Balkan War, Srebrenica was a bucolic and productive if not especially prosperous town in what is now Eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ethnicity played little or no role in the social and economic life of the pre-war community. The population of approximately 20,000⁴ was made up of roughly equivalent numbers of Muslims and Serbs, with a relatively small number of Croats and other nationalities. Situated in the Drina river valley, and bounded on two sides by the river itself, the economy of the area was a healthy mix of agriculture and light industry, mining and tourism. While not a militarily significant piece of terrain, it's proximity to the Drina and the subsequent battle lines when war erupted meant that Srebrenica would play a key and tragic role in the Balkan Wars.

Subsequent to the enforcement of a cease-fire, if not actual peace, Srebrenica and the events that had occurred there were lost in the shuffle of setting priorities for the international community. But Srebrenica was not to be ignored for long. The establishment of Srebrenica as a "Safe haven" for Muslims from the area under the protection of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and the subsequent abandonment by UNPROFOR in early July of 1995 had been a blight on the record of the international community. The massacre that followed was, by any accounts, horrendous, and the international community bore a large share of the blame.⁵ As international officials and, significantly, the international media began to explore what had happened in Srebrenica, international agencies in BiH found themselves being asked very direct and uncomfortable questions about a tiny town in a very remote part of the country.

Srebrenica languished, largely out of sight and mind for the international community until the municipal elections of 1996. Those elections were to determine the composition of the first post-war municipal assemblies for each of the more than one hundred municipalities in BiH. Faced with the responsibility of executing these complicated elections and then implementing them, the OSCE (organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) and OHR (Office of the High Representative) began considering how they would deal with the most obstreperous municipalities, Srebrenica being among them.

Election laws for these elections had been created to allow and encourage citizens displaced by the war to vote *in* or at least *for* the municipality from which they were displaced.⁶ If the security situation would not allow them to physically return and vote "at home," arrangements were made for them to vote "for home" from wherever they were presently residing. So it happened that, in the autumn of 1997, the *legal* constituency of Srebrenica (present residents -Serbs- plus qualified displaced voters -Bosniaks-) elected an

⁴ Population figures, like much of the information about Srebrenica, are politically sensitive. I will use approximations that were generally accepted among the international community and were used for the purposes of establishing policies for Srebrenica during the period of 1996 - 1999.

⁵ It is not my intent here to dwell on the multiple debates surrounding the performance of the international community with respect to Srebrenica, or the subsequent events in the area. It is sufficient for the purposes of this paper to acknowledge that there was considerable social trauma in Srebrenica, first experienced by the Muslims who occupied the town as an enclave and safe-haven for several years, and later by the Serbs who were displaced (primarily from Sarajevo) and became the *de facto* residents of the town.

⁶ The election laws also allowed voting for "future municipalities," and had numerous other caveats as well, none of which are relevant for the purposes of this paper.

assembly that was predominantly Bosniak, but which represented an *actual* constituency (living within the municipality) of only Serbs, the majority of whom were themselves displaced from other parts of the country.

It was expected that the implementation of these election results would be tedious, laborious, and even dangerous at times. The reality was actually worse than anticipated. In April of 1998, after seven months without progress, the High Representative and the Head of Mission for the OSCE created the Interim Executive Board (IEB) governing Srebrenica. They jointly appointed Mr. Larry Sampler, a member of the OSCE Senior Staff, as Chairman of the IEB and directed him to select four nationals (two Serbs and two Bosniaks) to serve with him. They further directed that all international correspondence with or on behalf of the municipality be directed to and through this IEB, in an attempt to further discredit the lingering Serb war-time municipal assembly (WMA).⁷

The chartering document creating the IEB was just three-quarters of a page and was “constructively ambiguous.” It allowed for the creation of a job description as the circumstances required but, at the same time, did not provide significant guidance or an overwhelming sense of authority to the IEB. At its inception there were no established ties between the international community *writ large* and the people of Srebrenica. There were several thousand Serbs displaced to Srebrenica from Sarajevo and other (primarily) metropolitan areas living in the municipality, but the “bad press” associated with the name Srebrenica prevented most international agencies from providing anything more than a passing glance to the municipality. The IEB represented the first engagement on the part of the international community with the Srebrenica population.

The IEB began work on four fronts. (1) Creating coherence among the various international agencies with respect to plans, goals, criteria and initiatives in Srebrenica. (2) Providing information and, where possible, assistance to the local residents in an attempt to woo them from their nationalistic WMA and to begin creating a climate for two-way returns. (3) Providing information and assistance to the Bosniak councilors (“in exile”) elected to the municipal assembly but prevented from assuming their mandates. (4) Insuring that each success, no matter how small, was reported and recognized in the international community in an attempt to break the embargo on effective international assistance to the municipality. The remainder of this paper will discuss the effectiveness of the international community in achieving the first element of those four.⁸

Left largely to themselves in Srebrenica, far from the oversight of organizational headquarters in Sarajevo, the international community attempted to coordinate their efforts to better shape the events that would transpire in Srebrenica. Faced with multiple organizations, duplicitous chains of command, institutional goals in conflict, and a variety of institutional cultures and perspectives, this task was daunting. In collaboration with an excellent SFOR

⁷ WMAs were considered legal and, in fact necessary, during the war. The upheaval of the war had necessitated an *ad hoc* assembly to function in the absence of state level charters or authorities. In every case, the municipal elections of 1997 were to supplant the WMA and in most cases this was done successfully. WMAs are often synonymous with “interim municipal authorities” (IMAs) which may or may not have originated during the war years.

⁸ The IEB, composed of a chairman plus four - or conceivably as many as 8 – floundered badly during its initial period. Some will argue that the IEB was never actually constituted or effective. However, the relative successes and failures of the IEB fall beyond the scope of this document. The relevance of the IEB to this paper is the role of the International Chairman of the IEB in coordinating the efforts of the international players and organizations working in Srebrenica.

Task Force Commander and his staff, the local representatives of the IC created a “Campaign Plan for Srebrenica.” This plan, while not successfully executed, did bring a coherence and commonality of vision to the situation that had here-to-fore been lacking. And it is not too great a stretch to suggest that the efforts expended in creating that campaign plan prepared the way for subsequent progress in the municipality.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ACTIVE IN SREBRENICA

Srebrenica is three to five hours from the national capital, Sarajevo, depending on the time of year and the weather. It is also an hour and a half from Tuzla, where many of the international agencies have their regional headquarters. Srebrenica is not ‘on the way’ to anywhere. From Bratunac, the last major town before reaching Srebrenica, one must travel 15km down a narrow valley, where the road will eventually dead-end at Srebrenica. Beyond the mere geography, however, Srebrenica was, at the time, also far removed from the conscious mind of the international community.

The relationships among international agencies varied from region-to-region, and among the various levels of the organizations. Although all acknowledged the ‘first among equals’ status of the Office of the High Representative (OHR), within a particular region the lead agency might, for example, be the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) because in that region refugee issues were seen to be the primary concern of the international community.

Prior to the municipal elections, the only international presence or interest in Srebrenica was the humanitarian agencies. UNHCR, WHO, and various non-governmental organizations and private volunteer organizations did work in the municipality to lessen the suffering of the displaced Serbs and their families, and the Tuzla regional officer of OHR visited on a regular basis, but there was little or no other engagement in the municipality or the surrounding area.⁹

With regards to Srebrenica, there was virtually no attention, and certainly no strategic-level attention, paid by the international community. No particular element of the international community had felt the need to assume a leadership position with respect to the community. Though Srebrenica represented a particularly thorny ‘choke point’ with regards to refugees¹⁰, it was seen by all as an intractable problem and one with a low probability of

⁹ Srebrenica was geographically in the heart of an area often colloquially referred to as “the belly of the beast.” This part of the RS was home to some of the most vitriolic and recidivistic nationalists and unrepentant hate-mongers from the time of the war. It was one of the last areas to de-militarize and militias were reputed to be active in the area as late as 1996. These factors, combined with the fact that the area was remote, isolated, clannish, and rural even by Yugoslav standards served to reinforce the social and political isolation of the municipality.

¹⁰ Muslim families who fled Srebrenica eventually settled, for the most part, in and around both Sarajevo and Tuzla: Two large Bosniak-dominated cities geographically close to Srebrenica. They occupied homes and villages that had been abandoned by Serbs and Croats who had, in turn, fled to areas controlled by the militaries of their ethnic group. After the events of July 95 in Srebrenica and during the initial implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords, vast numbers of Serbs were forced from their homes in Bosniak-controlled villages around Sarajevo and were relocated to the abandoned town of Srebrenica. It should be noted that this forced relocation was not at the hands of the Bosniaks, but was accomplished by Serb political leaders who did not want to see even the slightest chance of a successfully integrated Sarajevo.

successful resolution. So, in an environment with many other opportunities for the investment of time and effort, Srebrenica languished.

However, as the municipal elections approached, it became apparent that there would be considerable difficulty in implementing any election in this area that resulted in a significant number of Bosniak counselors being elected. And, since projections suggested that Srebrenica would actually elect a *majority* of Bosniak counselors, the OSCE and other agencies began to take a more active interest in the municipality in preparation for the elections and the implementation of the anticipated results. The following represents a summary of the international organizations that were operating in the municipality of Srebrenica in April of 1998 (given in no particular order).

OFFICE OF THE HIGH REPRESENTATIVE (OHR)

The OHR was represented in Srebrenica by its regional officer, working from Tuzla. He was responsible for serving as ‘first among equals’ for all of the municipalities in his area of responsibility and had the difficult task of prioritizing his work and that of his staff on those municipalities where their efforts would be most effective. That might mean focussing on areas where there could be a quick show of success for detractors both domestic and foreign, or it might mean intervention in troublesome and intractable situations where solutions would come slowly, if at all.

ORGANIZATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE (OSCE)

The OSCE had a continuing presence at the field level in Srebrenica, if for no other reason than they were tasked with registering voters in and for the municipality as early as 1996. Of the principal international agencies¹¹ it is generally conceded that the OSCE had the broadest and most effective field-level representation in BiH, particularly with regards to political matters. In each municipality, the OSCE was tasked with establishing Local Election Committees, Polling Stations and Polling Station Staff, as well as working with the municipal government – usually a war-time or interim government that was ill-disposed to the coming elections – to prepare for the coming elections and, among other things, to ensure that displaced citizens had access to municipal records required to allow them to register and vote wherever they might now be living.¹² From 1996 on, the OSCE had one or more international staff who had as their sole responsibility, understanding and becoming effective in working with the local established leadership in Srebrenica.

So today, Bosniaks displaced from Srebrenica live in the homes of Serbs displaced from Sarajevo. And, in Srebrenica, Serbs from the area of Sarajevo live in the homes of Bosniaks.

¹¹ “Principal agencies” here will mean those international agencies specifically tasked by the Dayton Peace Agreement, and represented at the twice-weekly “Principal’s Meeting,” and will be limited to OHR, SFOR, OSCE, UNHCR, UNSRSG, UNIPTF. These agencies were, loosely defined, those given specific charters by the Dayton Peace Accords.

¹² This crude summary does a gross injustice to the other elements of the OSCE. In addition to elections, the OSCE mission in BiH had significant interest in (and DPA mandates with respect to) democratization, human rights, and regional stabilization. Over time “media development” was added to their areas of expertise and responsibility.

UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY
GENERAL (UNSRSG) AND UNITED NATIONS MISSION IN BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA (UNMIBH)

The UNSRSG did not intervene directly in Srebrenica but, as the head of the UN Mission in BiH, she was able to ensure that her subordinate agencies were present in Srebrenica to the degree that she felt appropriate. As with other agencies, she was faced with more opportunities for “investment” than resources could support, and she was forced to adjust her strategies and priorities accordingly. First among her resources devoted to Srebrenica were her UN Civil Affairs Officers (UNCA). These officers held a broad mandate to represent the SRSG in the local communities. One such officer, Ms. Haran Song, courageously chose to relocate to and live in Srebrenica at a time when the closest other internationals living in Republika Sprska were over 45 minutes away. She was the first international to take up full-time residence in Srebrenica during the post-war period and her dedication went a long way towards breaking the ice with Serb locals as well as encouraging other agencies to engage in Srebrenica on a more regular basis.

Also notable among the UN Mission agencies were the International Police Task Force (IPTF). This task force was composed of police officers drawn from civil police of UN member nations around the world. It was a dramatically international force, often to the detriment of its organizational success and coherence. IPTF officers were assigned to work with local police at every level and in every municipality. Due to limited resources, however, officers were concentrated on those municipalities where the prospects for improvements in the security situation were most likely, or where the local police were most likely to face provocations that would tax their abilities to perform in a professional manner. The IPTF did not, initially, play a strong role in Srebrenica since, in their eyes, it was a homogeneous Serb population, far removed from both the public eye and the likelihood of provocation on the part of Bosniaks. When the time did come for them to engage, however, they did so in full measure and with significant success.

UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)

Also nominally listed among UN agencies, was the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Notably, this office and its subordinates did not report to the SRSG, but instead reported to their own Chief of Mission in Sarajevo who in turn reported to the High Commissioner in Geneva. While coordination was good between the UNMiBH and the UNHCR, it was also apparent at times that they were not, in fact, part of the same organization in-country. UNHCR was ably represented by an office in the relatively close town of Zvornik. Their engagement was among the most consistent and sincere, focusing on the quality of life for refugees with a single-mindedness that was both admirable and, at times, exasperating. Their agency, more than any other, grappled with the day-to-day inconsistencies presented by strategic plans for the country as a whole and their immediate impact on quality of life at the individual level.

STABILIZATION FORCE (SFOR)

SFOR was the (largely NATO) international force tasked by the Dayton Peace Accords with ensuring a peaceful environment in which civil improvements could occur. Commanded by a US 4-star general in Sarajevo, SFOR was broken down into three geographical sectors. To the Northwest was the British Sector. To the South was the French Sector, and to the Northeast was the American sector. Srebrenica fell in the extreme southeastern portion of the American sector (the river Drina which bounds Srebrenica to the East is the international border with Serbia), and just north of where the American Sector met that of the French.

SFOR patrols throughout their region were of tremendous importance to providing a “secure environment.” They were known as “presence patrols,” and they served to remind those less-well-intentioned among the local populace that SFOR was never all that far away. Unfortunately, due in part to its isolation and the here-to-fore lack of provocation in and from the municipality, there were few patrols down the dead-end road that led to Srebrenica. Again, however, as needs dictated a more direct and even forceful participation on the part of SFOR, they responded in a way that more than satisfied what was expected of them. In fact, their leadership often far out-stripped what was required of them and led to the limited successes which form the basis for this paper.

INTERNATIONAL CRIMES TRIBUNAL FOR YUGOSLAVIA (ICTY)

The ICTY was perceived among the Serbs as the “grim reaper” of the international community. They had the morbid task of exhuming mass graves and collecting evidence of guilt on the part of accused war criminals. In the Eastern RS, and particularly around Srebrenica, their work was viewed with intense skepticism and considerable fear. It was known that the international community wanted villains and, among the Serbs, there was little faith that the ICTY was going to be especially careful about whom they accused or convicted. Their visits, while a necessary part of the healing process for BiH, were never constructive with regards to the local political and social efforts of the international community.

THE RETURNS AND RECONSTRUCTION TASK FORCE (RRTF)

The RRTF was first established at about this time, and was intended to address the critical need to focus the efforts and attention of all the international agencies on the most pressing problems of reconstruction and returns, and to do so in a deliberate and effective manner. The RRTF was first proposed in response to various agencies each working diligently towards the accomplishment of their own mandates, but without realizing that their well-intended efforts were having a deleterious effect on the work of other agencies and on return initiatives across-the-board. Thought not initially important in Srebrenica, the RRTF did become a key player as time progressed.

INTERNATIONAL EMBASSIES

Various governments and their embassies in Sarajevo were not important to the early situation in Srebrenica for their contributions, but were conspicuous by their absence. In the initial days of trying to implement the municipal election in Srebrenica, it was discovered that virtually all of the international embassies would refuse to even consider a visit to the municipality, much less actually engaging in constructive dialog there or contributing to help assuage the ever-worsening human suffering. Of particular note was the reluctance of the US Embassy to assist. Despite the fact that the Chairman of the Interim Executive Board was a US citizen, it was not possible at that time to even have USAID visit the municipality, presumably because it would send the wrong signals to Congressional watchdogs back in the United States.

That being said, it must be noted that The Dutch government, through assistance to specific non-governmental organizations, was seen to be engaged in some degree, both in assisting the Serbs living in Srebrenica and the Bosniaks who were driven from the municipality. Furthermore, it was the UK embassy that, in the weeks leading up to actually convening the municipal assembly in 1999, pledged to repair the municipal assembly building and restore the offices of the government in the town of Srebrenica. As is so often the case, after their bold first-initiative other embassies chose to step forward and assist as well.

HUMANITARIAN CHARITY AND INTEREST GROUPS

These groups were quite unpredictable and, while their intentions were always the best, the results of their activities were often not what they intended and not productive. Srebrenica during this period of time was a place of tremendous need in terms of humanitarian assistance. But there was also a very confusing mix of wartime municipal authorities, Interim Executive Board, Interim municipal authorities, and various Serb interest groups who claimed to represent the best interests of the population of Srebrenica. When the humanitarian efforts of these groups went awry, it was usually because they were misled into distributing their assistance to or through one of the illegal Serb political organizations. The result was that the wrong political elements were able to take credit for the assistance or, in some cases, that the assistance was being sold in Serbia and the money kept by either the political party or the individuals who conducted the illegal sale.

This situation created a fascinating need for an example of “hedonistic calculus” on the part of policy makers. Was the immediate delivery of stoves and blankets sufficiently urgent to warrant working with politically unacceptable elements within Srebrenica, thus strengthening their position in the community and maintaining the unfortunate *status quo*? Conversely, how much “social pain” was acceptable in order to force the undesirables from power? The answers to this conundrum were, as might be expected, different among the various agencies involved and became yet another reason for closer coordination within the IC.

INTER-AGENCY DYNAMICS IN SREBRENICA

As international and media interest in Srebrenica increased (due both to the coming elections and the emerging story of the massacre of July 1995), so too did the organizational interest among the international community. As has already been mentioned, various agencies had agendas that not only did not always agree, but also were often at odds. This occurred at every level from the Principals' Meetings down to municipal engagements. At the higher levels, the agencies were in the habit of meeting to de-conflict their agendas. But such strategic meetings often did little for the wide variety of situations found at the municipal level.¹³

Such was the case of Srebrenica. The international agencies working there often found themselves either ignorant of what their sister agencies were contemplating and doing or, even more disturbing, agencies found themselves at odds over particular initiatives or actions. As was previously mentioned, Srebrenica was far from the eye and mind of the international leadership in Sarajevo, for both political and geographical reasons. The humanitarian relief organizations and private charities represented the most significant international presence in the municipality, and they were not in any way guided or regulated by the international leadership. Hence, it occurred that the humanitarian assistance they rendered often ran counter to the intent or guidance issued by the OHR and Principals.

This disconnect was due in part to the different natures and cultures of these agencies. While most of the international agencies named in DPA were highly regularized and structured, with vertical reporting structures and management, the humanitarian non-governmental organizations were very informally organized and run and their structures tended to be flat and lateral rather than vertical. This reflects their interest in accomplishing their intended tasks at the grassroots level, rather than spanning the vertical levels of bureaucracy and government. So while the local head of a particular charity was able to operate independently within the broad guidelines of her/his charter, the UNHCR representative in Srebrenica often required approval up through two or three levels of bureaucracy, often taking several weeks.

Another difficulty faced by the agencies in Srebrenica was the differences in their mandates. While some agencies were governed by the same chartering document (DPA)¹⁴, all with the exception of OHR and SFOR were also directed by their own larger organizational mission statements (OHR and SFOR having been created specifically for the intervention in BiH). Hence, for example, it was expected that the UNHCR representative would look first and foremost to the execution of sustainable returns to the municipality of Srebrenica even if that ran counter to the transient priorities established by OHR. Likewise, SFOR and the IPTF might argue vehemently against such a return at this particular time because it would generate unrest and require additional resources on their part. Resources

¹³ It was, in part, to fill this need for grass-roots coordination that the RRTF was created. And by placing the RRTF, under the auspices of the OHR, it was felt that the "first among equals" principle was still being maintained.

¹⁴ Note again that "principal organizations" refers to organizations tasked by the Dayton Peace Agreement but also, more operationally, to those agencies represented at the twice weekly Principals Meeting. This by no means included all the International organizations, non-governmental organizations, and private volunteer organizations with an interest or presence in Srebrenica.

which would be taken from other municipalities where returns were already underway. In a similar manner, UNHCR might ask the IPTF to apply additional resources to generating a well-trained multi-ethnic police force in Srebrenica immediately. And, while SFOR might second this request, the IPTF would be reluctant to put resources into a police force in a municipality where results would be difficult to achieve and probably not especially noteworthy.

In January of 1998, several months after the municipal elections, an attempt to bring two of the elected Bosniaks from Sarajevo to Srebrenica for face-to-face negotiations with their Serb counterparts turned into a riot, resulting in significant property damage and considerable danger to the passengers of the convoy. This despite excellent preparations by SFOR with regards to security. In fact, it is only the preparations of SFOR which prevented a serious event from becoming a tragedy.¹⁵ The riot on the part of the Serbs was in part responsible for the subsequent decision of OHR to dissolve the interim municipal assembly in Srebrenica, and to appoint the Interim Executive Board. At a more fundamental level, this riot and the lack of prior coordination and preparation on the part of the international community sparked an interest in closer cooperation among the international agencies at the municipal level.

During the initial days of the Interim Executive Board, it was decided by all the international agencies working in Srebrenica that a meeting each Thursday would be a useful way to de-conflict plans to the degree possible at such a low level in the various organizations. There were no illusions about the ability of any of our representatives to 'buck the system' in their particular organization, but it was hoped that we would, at the least, be able to give advance notice to each other and, in particular, to SFOR and the IPTF, of events that might have security implications in Srebrenica.

An excellent example of how such coordination might work would be the preparations for graveyard visits in Srebrenica. The first Bosniaks to actually return on a regular basis to Srebrenica were (predominantly) women who returned to visit and maintain prewar graveyards in the municipality. These were highly regulated affairs, involving convoys of busses from Sarajevo and Tuzla on strictly maintained routes and schedules. Early efforts even included producing detailed manifests of who would be riding on each bus, with particular attention being paid to any men who might be on the trip (in large part to make sure that the men would not be molested by RS police for alleged war crimes of one sort or the other). SFOR presence patrols would be dramatically increased, and checkpoints would be established along the route... Local police, under the close supervision of the IPTF, would be expected to perform their duties under circumstances considered difficult at best.

With each iteration of graveyard visits, the level of coordination among international agencies improved. And with each successful visit, the importance of such coordination was further emphasized.

¹⁵ I am personally grateful for the dedication and patience of LTC Mark Littel, Commander of the SFOR Task Force in the area at the time of the riots. The professionalism of he and his staff and command, and his patience in dealing with poor decisions made by the international civilian representative on the ground – namely, me – prevented us from suffering for our folly. I note as well that SFOR suffered two airmen seriously injured when a helicopter deployed in support of the failed attempt to reach Srebrenica by convoy crashed.

INITIAL ATTEMPTS AT COORDINATION

The peculiar relationship between the military and many of the international and non-governmental organizations warrants mention. Keeping in mind that my observations are solely my own and are peculiar to the situation in Srebrenica during the time period being considered, there are some general statements that can be made.

The relationship between civilian relief agencies and the military in peace support operations globally is often one of dependency. Non-governmental organizations¹⁶ — in most theatres of operation — rely on some form of external military support for things as wide-ranging as general security, emergency medical assistance and evacuation, and mail delivery. The military, for their part, are often tasked to provide support and/or security to these various civilian agencies that goes beyond the scope of what they are routinely equipped and trained to provide. Furthermore, the institutional “culture” of the two groups could not be more different and the relationship is one that is predestined to be fraught with difficulty.

The non-governmental organizations of which I speak here are field-based and deployed for a year or more at a time (living on the local economy), relatively decentralized in their decision making, frugally funded, and narrowly focussed on a particular humanitarian or social need. Their success is largely measured by intangibles and their continued existence is often dependent on annual fund-raising among governments, foundations and private contributors. The military, by contrast, typically establishes a base of operations with a strong “center of gravity,” where virtually all decisions of any significance are made. Soldiers and commanders are rotated at least twice-annually. Funding is, by comparison and in the eyes of the non-governmental organizations with whom they work, virtually unlimited, and the success of a particular military field presence can be established at any point in time by evaluation of a particular (and published) set of essential tasks, critical tasks, statements of intent, etc.

So, still speaking in gross generalities, in the eyes of an NGO in the field, the military is a monolithic bureaucracy that can't make decisions in a timely manner, that is afraid to mix with the local populace, has more money and resources than they could possibly need, but use complex and incomprehensible institutional excuses for not sharing those resources or applying them in the way that the non-governmental organizations *know* is the most efficacious manner. The military commander is seen as a “light weight,” who never really immerses himself/herself in the details of the local situation, focussing instead on their next assignment, on-going training and administrative concerns for their unit, and their own career. The good news in this situation is that bad commanders rotate out quickly so there is no need to spend effort or time in training or establishing rapport with them. But the bad news is also that commanders rotate out quickly, so that there is no *chance* to train or establish rapport with them. Military commanders are, to the international non-governmental organizations, often seen as annoyances to be tolerated, rather than colleagues to be consulted.

¹⁶ “NGO” is used here in a very literal sense, meaning “non-governmental organization.” The premise being that governmental organizations have an *a priori* relationship with the supporting military, while non-governmental organizations have no such pre-existing relationship.

Likewise, military commanders often see less than the best in international non-governmental organizations. To those in the military, non-governmental organizations might be seen as intellectual dilettantes, more interested in leaving early for their next trip to the coast than they are in their work. Military staff, usually confined to their bases except for work-related excursions, are often on the job ten hours a day or more, seven days a week and always available. In contrast, the internationals with whom they work live in the local community and, even when working, might be difficult to reach. To the military mind, non-governmental organizations often have no concept of planning, logistics, or operations. From the military “large view,” perspective, a non-governmental organization’s attention to the situation and needs of individuals (as opposed to strategic goals articulated by higher headquarters) is utopian and counter-productive.

Military commanders are tasked by higher headquarters to make definitive progress with regards to precisely defined tasks or to give quantifiable answers to fairly complicated questions. The difference in perspectives can be seen in an actual exchange, where an SFOR officer, conducting a command-directed survey, asked a senior staff member of a prominent international agency “When do you expect your Human Rights Monitoring Mission to end?” He received the impudent and less-than-productive answer of “When they stop beating and killing refugees.” The military commander often sees the world (or at least her/his role in it) in Boolean terms with quantifiable elements, as dictated by higher headquarters. The non-governmental organizations live in an analog world of intangibles, with only broad guidelines provided by their headquarters.

The sub-title for a presentation on the first attempt to state a coherent IC policy for Srebrenica is illustrative of the difficulties regarding initial attempts at coordination. Entitled “Srebrenica: Visualizing the Way Forward,” the title slide also included the following subtext: “*The bad news is that, until you somehow define it, you can never achieve success... The good news is that the absence of success doesn’t have to be failure.*” That such an auspicious title should then be qualified by an apology, in advance, for failing to achieve success is perhaps significant. Further into the presentation, a slide titled “OPERATIONAL MODEL: How Things Work in Srebrenica” noted seven organizations (though there were several more left off the slide), working in concert under GFAP authority to generate benefits and sanctions, based on the consent and compliance of individuals, parties and entities (Figure 1). This was a gross simplification, given that the organizations noted did not meet, did not have a coherent or deliberate plan, and did not even share (at that time) the same goals for Srebrenica.

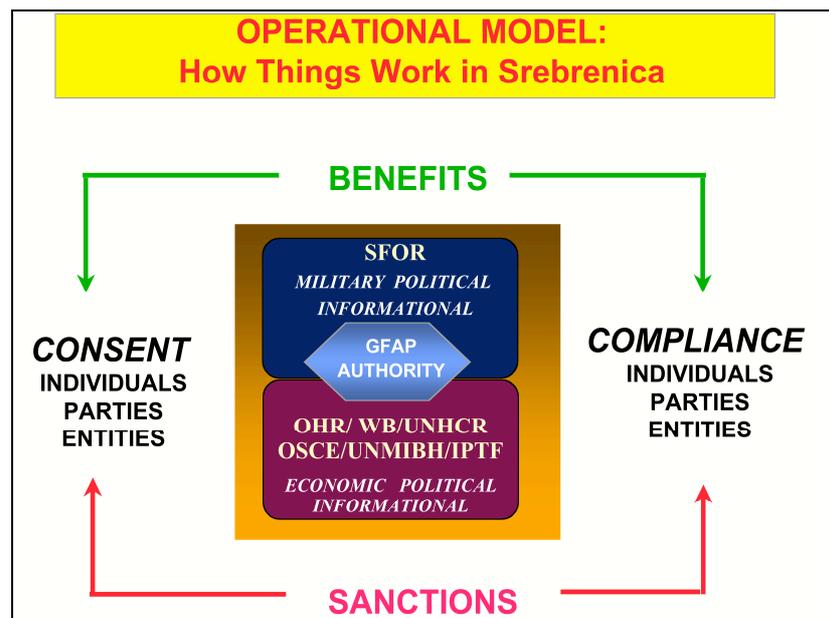


Figure 1: Operational Model of how things work in Srebrenica.

THE “SREBRENICA CAMPAIGN PLAN”

After six months of work in Srebrenica under the nominal “first among equals” guidance of the Chairman of the IEB, the international community was somewhat more organized but no more coherent than it had been at the beginning of the year. This lack of coherence was particularly frustrating to the military officers serving with SFOR. As has been mentioned, Srebrenica was located in the area controlled by the Americans¹⁷ There was mutual frustration between (and often among) the civilians working in Srebrenica and the military. The civilians were disappointed that the military rotated every six months with the result that, just as a particular unit became acquainted with the peculiarities and individuals of the area, they were returned to their home station and replaced with a new unit. For their part, the military officers would often point out that, even without the expert knowledge of the region, they felt that they could contribute more to the international efforts, particularly with regards to planning.

After one such exchange at about the mid-point of the military rotation, the Task Force Commander and the Chairman of the IEB proposed a conference where the international community would consider and then apply the framework of military decision-making processes to the difficult situation faced in Srebrenica. As the idea developed, the task force staff worked very hard to interpret the techniques they used for planning combat engagements into an algorithm appropriate to a peace support role involving multiple independent agencies and multiple chains of command.

The conference was scheduled for 2 December 1999 at Camp Dobil; the SFOR base closest to Srebrenica (about 45 minutes away). The fact that the conference would include

¹⁷ Multi-National Division (North) is, for the purposes of this paper, analogous to “the American Sector” because Srebrenica and the surrounding area fell within the area of responsibility of US military units within MND(N).

both lunch and dinner at a US military dining facility was yet another reason to attend for many of the civilians invited. It would be the closest thing to an American holiday meal that many of them would see that winter. Invitations were issued to the particular individuals who worked in Srebrenica, as well as to representatives from their organization one level higher. This was done to assuage fears among the organizations that SFOR was attempting to suborn the other agencies in the field.

The first task for the conference was to establish a method or algorithm for the work to be accomplished. For this we decided to extract the relevant chapter from US Army Field Manual 101-5, "*Staff Organization and Operations*." Chapter 5, entitled "*The Military Decision Making Process*" seemed to provide the kind of process and guidance that we thought was needed. By carefully editing the text, removing as many war-fighting references as possible (words and phrases like "enemy," and "preparation of the battlefield") we attempted to create a tool that would be useful to the disparate members of the international community in Srebrenica. The tool, however, was not a perfect match, and adjustments had to be made. The three most difficult adjustments required were: (A) Coping with institutional resistance to military terminology and algorithms among some of the agencies. (B) The fact that FM 101-5 is intended for use by a single commander's staff for planning the operations of a military unit at particular level, with the inherent assumption that a command and control relationship exists between the planning commander and the subordinate units that are elements of the plan. (C) The fact that this type of deliberate planning and the empowerment it suggested were novel to the representatives of the international community with whom we were working.

The planning conference began with the SFOR Task Force Commander and his staff briefing the participants on the context and application of Chapter 5 of FM 101-5. It was something of a difficult task, as most of the civilians in the room were, to say the least, skeptical of the applicability or acceptability of military doctrine (or tips-techniques-and procedures) to a multi-agency civil-military situation.

After this introduction, the participants then collectively went through a modified and significantly abbreviated version of the Military Decision-Making Process that begin with each representative answering the question "What is the mission or intent of your organization (with regards to Srebrenica) at the next higher level?" To a military planner this is not a difficult question. The answer could be provided by any leader of a subordinate unit and, failing that, would be available as a written document. For the participants in this planning conference, it was the first indication of just how difficult it would be to apply military decision-making techniques to civilian agencies. Many of the representatives could not state the intent of the next higher within their organization regarding Srebrenica. It was not a case of poor communication downward in those organizations, or poor preparation on the part of the participant. It was the fact that, for the most part, the intent of higher headquarters for the civilian agencies had never been explicitly articulated.

So the first task that we faced was to draw out by inference, and in at least one case by a telephone call to higher headquarters, what the higher headquarters would provide as guidance, had they felt the need to do so. Responses ranged from the general: "Coordinate civilian implementation of GFAP w/ focus on Srebrenica" (OHR) to the very specific: "Kick start freedom of movement to and from Srebrenica with a UNHCR bus line going to Tuzla and, when appropriate, Sarajevo" (UNHCR). The problem was that, aside from geographical

focus, the various guidance offered shared little common ground. In some cases they were actually in conflict one-with-another.

So the task of generating a synergistic “higher headquarters intent” was abandoned in favor of several discrete statements that we hoped would function as interlocking pieces of what we would consider the ‘intent of our higher commands’ (but constantly acknowledging the absence of any single higher command in reality). It was decided that guidance from higher headquarters might include the two statements noted above, as well as the following:

- Influence/order eventual RS Government to take responsibility for effective government in Srebrenica.
- Oversee a successful local police force ensuring the security of all persons.
- Install an effective, functioning, multi-ethnic government, reflecting the results of the September 1997 elections.
- Generate effective and sustainable returns to Srebrenica by June-September of 1999.

Working from these statements and within the conceptual confines they established we were able to begin brainstorming and discussing a campaign plan for Srebrenica. We managed to generate our own “Mission Statement” which was referred to as the “International Community Mission Statement (derived from discrete organizational mission statements)” to satisfy the participants. Our mission statement was:

“The International Community, in concert with the governments of Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, contact group governments, and aid agencies, will establish relatively normal governance in Srebrenica, improve the quality and standards of living (both social and political), and establish conditions for effective and sustainable returns to occur in 1999.”

This mission statement was neither brilliant nor groundbreaking. It did not articulate anything new or revolutionary. It did, however, represent significant progress in the sense that a disparate and internationally diverse team was able to articulate such an apt and definitive statement of our collective mission. In pragmatic terms this achievement, in and of itself, was a notable success for the international community. There is some irony, perhaps, in the fact that the IC can claim an almost unprecedented success in reaching a milestone that our military colleagues would consider an elementary starting point.

Continuing from the mission statement we had developed by consensus, we next articulated our “International Community Intent.” This, as you might guess, is analogous to the “Commander’s Intent” in a military campaign plan. But while in the military model there is a single commander who states his intent to the satisfaction of his (single) commander, we were again faced with a multiplicity of decision-makers with an even more daunting array of supervisors. Nevertheless, we were able to articulate the following three elements of our intent:

- **DECISIVE POINT:** We must create a mindset to accept returns in either direction. If we cannot accomplish this, we will not be successful. There is a danger in addressing the concrete and quantifiable elements of a return plan while ignoring the less obvious or tangible but tremendously important matters of perceptions of security, sense of community (among returnees), optimism about the prospects for improvement, etc.
- **CRITERIA FOR SUCCESS:** A sustained flow of voluntary two-way returns. “Sustained” in the sense that to achieve the intent of the DPA, we cannot be satisfied with a token political gesture, where the aged return, but the wage-earners so critical to the long-term benefit of the region do not. Also, in the sense that the returnees must be able to create and sustain a community, with respect to infrastructural requirements, social contract requirements, etc.
- **END STATE:** Effective, sustainable returns initiated between June and November 1999.

For those who worked in Bosnia among the international organizations and agencies, you may see some familiar refrains worked into the language of this statement of intent. Building consensus about something as important and explicit as decisive points, criteria for success, and desired end state was no small accomplishment.

We identified seven essential tasks that must be completed in order to satisfy our stated intent and to achieve the (collective) intent of higher headquarters. These essential tasks were:

1. Influence and engage the RS Government.
2. Establish an effective local police force.
3. Seat/install the municipal government elected in September of 1997.
4. Maintain a safe and secure environment.
5. Provide effective and coordinated international effort in support of returns.
6. Create an incentive to return (in both directions – to and from Srebrenica).
7. Provide and ensure a stable local political environment.

Each of these tasks was accompanied by a paragraph or two of text that explained how they were significant and, to some degree, how they would be accomplished. We further identified other subordinate and implied tasks as well. It is worth noting again that this exercise, while common and self-gratifying to the military practitioner, was quite illustrative and informative for the civilian agencies represented. It was an uncommon opportunity for each agency to see into the “who, what, when, where, why, and how” of the other agencies with which they worked. Arriving by consensus at statements as explicit and directed as those above, which were useful in their own right was, *as a process*, a tremendously useful activity which should be replicated whenever and wherever possible.

Having identified the intent of higher headquarters, articulated our mission statement, elaborated essential tasks, subordinate tasks, and implied tasks, we next identified resources that we held collectively or unilaterally that could be brought to bear on the situation. These ranged from UNHCR bus lines which could be used to support or foster refugee visits, to information campaigns that could be initiated by the OSCE, OHR, and/or SFOR.

It became immediately apparent to the group that there were scarce resources allocated to the situation in Srebrenica. It would be easy to suggest that this was due to the lack of coordinated planning in the past. The reality, however, was that Srebrenica suffered from the stigmatism of the events that occurred there during the war. So identifying resources was something of an exercise in futility at that point in time. It was not until some two years later that any real attempt was made by the international community to use the leverage of capital improvements in the community to effect behavioral and attitudinal changes among the population.

After much discussion, we determined that our assets available¹⁸ included the following:

- Use of UNHCR busses.
- Bosnian Women's Initiative funded projects.
- Legal Aid.
- AMICA project(s).
- Town Hall Meetings.
- Non-food aid provided by UNHCR.
- Radio shows.
- SFOR Civil Affairs assets and expertise.
- The RS government's desire for legitimacy.
- Micro-credit initiatives.
- IPTF trainers.
- Local police.
- Information Center in Srebrenica (primarily for return issues).
- SFOR.

¹⁸ By "available" we limited ourselves to resources we could request at our level, with reasonable expectations that our request would be honored. A request by our UNHCR representative, for example, that a bus run be established between Srebrenica and Tuzla might reasonably be granted (depending on the competition among municipalities for the scarce resource of UNHCR busses). But a request that USAID initiate a program of any sort in the municipality was not feasible for political reasons, and would not have been considered as an "available asset."

- International aid that can be tied to returns.
- OHR Bonn Authorities.¹⁹

In a similar manner, the group attempted to explicitly state constraints or obstacles to the success of our mission. This was almost comical at times, because there were so many obstacles and they were of such magnitude that it was initially difficult to identify them individually. To invert a common expression, “We couldn’t see the trees for the forest.” We eventually were able to identify the following constraints:

- Lack of resources (material, economic, social).
- Lack of effective RS (higher authority) government.
- Limited mandate of the envoy (Chairman of the Interim Executive Board).
- Lack of two-way returns.
- Information operations products take so long to create and approve that they’re obsolete when issued, often making them worse than nothing at all.
- Information operations products do not penetrate the local community very well. Not well recognized or accepted. Don’t take-hold very well.
- Physical distance from Federation.
- Lack of any media access for the local populace other than local (Serb).
- Lack of political initiative or will on the part of individual contact group countries to engage in Srebrenica.

The final step in our campaign planning process was to determine and articulate the “Concept of the Operation.” By this point in the day, many of the participants were exhausted. The planning process and the constant brainstorming, negotiating, conceding and cajoling it required had taken a toll. The fact that the process itself was new and foreign to the group only made things worse. Despite that, however, a three-phase plan was devised, with specific tasks supporting sub-goals that, in turn, supported goals and end states.

This process got very messy, especially by military standards. The countless “shortcuts” our group had taken in the preceding steps of the decision-making process came back to haunt our efforts at this point. Where, earlier, a particular task or goal might have been left “constructively ambiguous” in the interest of consensus, that ambiguity now led to confusion when placing tasks and sub-goals into the operational plan. Had this been an exercise at a military school somewhere, the lesson learned from this phase of the planning would be that attention to detail and explicit articulation of those details in the early stages of planning are essential to the latter stages of the process. This was not an exercise, however, and we were forced to work with the material we had generated.

¹⁹ The OHR was given broad authorities at the Bonn meeting that significantly enhanced the ability of the OHR to influence and, as necessary, intimidate local authorities.

The three phases of the plan, each three months in duration, while not a thing of organizational beauty, were marginally functional. They allowed us to focus our attention and institutional resources much more narrowly than had been done in the past. At the same time, poster-sized renderings of the campaign plan were placed in the offices in Srebrenica to assist us in preparing for the subsequent phases of the plan.

The plan provided the international community with something of a litmus test against which we could measure the latest initiative from one or more of the agencies or embassies, and against which we could measure our progress. While very little was actually accomplished on the timeframe established in the campaign plan, the efforts of the international community during that period were remarkably more coherent and organized and, had the contextual situation been different, might have achieved remarkable results. The lesson here, if there is one, would be that, while preparation is important “timing truly is everything.”

CONCLUSIONS, OBSERVATIONS, AND LESSONS LEARNED

In the modern age of instant communication and near-instant gratification, it is difficult for politicians and their constituents to accept the fact that there are problems in this world that are, at a particular moment in time, intractable. Their expectation that there will be a timely return on moneys invested is simply the wrong paradigm for working in transitional or post-conflict societies. Their inability to understand and accept this fact means that those acting on their behalf in places like Bosnia and Herzegovina come under unnatural pressure to generate or create solutions to problems that are not yet ready for solution. This brief and informal paper has touched upon the difficulties faced in Srebrenica in the wake of municipal elections in 1997. But the situation was similar in a dozen or more other municipalities in BiH, and will be replicated again in Kosovo and anywhere else that international demands out-pace a realistic and practical expectation for results.

This dysfunctional paradigm on the part of policy-makers at the global level percolates down through the agencies tasked to deal with the situation at the national and municipal levels as well. Interest from the various national capitals is focused with laser precision on the issue of the day. This often means that whatever was last covered on CNN or BBC World will, within days or hours, provoke policy interest in “the capitols.” Interest which will invariably take the form of guidance and/or requests for information (and not always in that order). And, as often as not, once the media interest fades, policy interest will fade as well, provided the issue has not generated some manner of lingering concern among domestic constituents at home.

But, with an aversion similar to like poles of two small magnets, international attention at the most senior levels around the world simply cannot be focused for even an instant on problems that are considered unpalatable in the various capitols. If the answer to a problem can't be expressed in terms that are acceptable to the policy makers in national capitols, then they assiduously avoid asking the questions.

While it may seem self-evident to suggest that this is a problem, it bears mentioning and it bears consideration. While it is not likely that domestic leaders around the world will

change their gestalt with respect to thorny issues in far-flung places like BiH, perhaps they will learn to do a better job of identifying problems that can be remedied and those that should be ignored.

This, of course, creates an apparent contradiction, even within the final section of this paper. On the one hand, there is a strong desire for engagement on the part of the international community (and by extension, the national capitols). On the other, there is the argument that capitols will not be able to productively engage until it is clear that the problem is solvable in a reasonable period of time. But the contradiction is an illusion. If the engagement of and guidance from the national capitols were consistent with respect to the activities of the international community in a particular place, much of the difficulty presented by this apparent contradiction would disappear. The problem occurs when individual embassies and or national governments are inconsistent in their engagement or in their guidance. Furthermore, when the national governments as a group are not able to coordinate their perspectives, desires, and guidance with respect to a particular issue, how can one expect any coherence among the various subordinate players on the ground?

The execution of international policy at the grassroots level is subject to influence from almost every quarter. There are national interests that are reflected by the various embassies and nationally funded or driven agents (non-governmental organizations, private volunteer organizations, and even national staff members for other agencies). There are separate and disparate agendas for each of the agencies represented in the problem at hand. There are competing political and social priorities among, not only the international actors in the situation, but also among the national players as well.

There will always be common elements in situations like Srebrenica. There will always be institutional differences among the international community, and different priorities. There will always be a need for leadership in an environment that does not lend itself easily to "followership." There will generally be the equivalent of an SFOR to provide general security. And there will always be a plethora of "higher headquarters" to satisfy. The accomplishments among the international community in Srebrenica were not, in the grand scheme of things, remarkable. They were, however, useful in the sense that an algorithm was identified that allowed for the creation of a more coherent and focused international effort. No one would suggest that the algorithm was universally successful, or that it is universally applicable. But the essential elements of identifying (and deconflicting where possible) guidance from higher headquarters, articulating a mission statement, and derivative statements of intent were, *as a process* effective and useful for the participants.

Srebrenica is too unique a situation to draw sweeping and broadly applicable conclusions, but a few thoughts might be useful for future situations with common elements. First is the problem of leadership, writ large. Srebrenica illustrates a problem that was pervasive throughout BiH, in that international agencies at the national level could not deal with the many different situations on the ground. Where in one municipality the UNHCR needed to be the lead agency because refugee return problems were the most pressing, another municipality might require OHR to be the lead agency in order to deal with attempts to redraw the municipal borders. And this operational topography might change month-by-month.

So it emerges that leadership among the agencies at the grassroots level is tenuous at best. The eventual creation and empowerment of the Return and Reconstruction Task Forces at

local levels was a partial solution to this problem. But the problem at lower levels of the organizations will never be solved until the international community can find a way to accept first-among-equals leadership at the national levels.

International efforts in Srebrenica also suffered from the high turnover of SFOR personnel in the area. Candidly, at the municipal level the most competent, experienced, and authoritative representation was usually the SFOR Commander. Additionally, the sheer size of his presence on the ground, and the resources he brought to the area meant that his role in local initiatives was significant. Srebrenica was fortunate to have had a series of company, Battalion, and Task Force Commanders who were exceptional individuals. But the fact that none of these commanders remained for longer than 6 months was crippling. It would take several months for the commander to establish credibility and rapport with the other internationals in the area and with the local citizenry and, by the time this was accomplished, the next rotation of SFOR soldiers would be heading into theatre. Understanding the operational and personnel tempo problems that peace support operations create for militaries, it would seem to be productive to look for creative ways to extend the tenure of at least select elements of the command to enhance their ability to effectively engage.

Srebrenica was an extraordinary situation presenting unusual opportunities for the international community to engage local civilians who represented a cross-section of Bosnian society, ranging from war criminals, nationalists, displaced families in need of care and assistance, victims of rape and other war atrocities, as well as businessmen, entrepreneurs, civil servants, and pensioners. The solutions and algorithms applied in Srebrenica were an inexact and often less-than-perfect attempt to deal with the situation as it was encountered. Seen in retrospect, there are quite likely many decisions that could be made differently. Most notable among them, the decision to force a convoy of civilian vehicles down 15 kilometers of bad road to Srebrenica knowing that there was the possibility of large crowds incited to riot. But, given the situations encountered, the international community in Srebrenica was able to “think outside the box” and to initiate creative solutions to problems that would not go away. Their interventions did make progress in the municipality possible, and their contributions did make appreciable differences in the lives of the population of Srebrenica.

GLOSSARY

Information in the following glossary is based on material provided on the web site: <http://www.advocacy.net.org/diary/glossary.html>.

ARC: American Refugee Committee — American relief organization.

CRPC: Commission for Real Property Claims of Displaced Persons and Refugees — Created to oversee resolution of the real property issues of displaced persons and refugees.

ECHO: European Community Humanitarian Office.

IPTF: International Police Task Force — U.N. unarmed police advisory body.

IOM: The International Organization for Migration — As an intergovernmental body, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration.

IRC: International Rescue Committee — International relief organization.

NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

NPA: Norwegian Peoples' Aid (Norsk Folkehjelp).

OHR: Office of the High Representative — The mandate of the High Representative is to oversee the civilian implementation of the Dayton agreement. The mandate derives from the London Peace Implementation Conference of 8-9 December 1995 and Security Council Resolution 1031 of 15 December 1995. The High Representative is the final authority regarding interpretation of the Agreement on civilian implementation.

OSCE: Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe An inter-governmental organization composed of European states plus the United States and Canada. Promotes democratization and human rights in Europe. In Bosnia organizes elections, supervises media, and advocates for human rights.

RIC: Repatriation Information Center.

RRTF: Reconstruction and Return Task Force — The Reconstruction and Return Task Force was established under the chairmanship of the OHR to create an integrated approach to the return of refugees and displaced persons.

SFOR: Stabilization Force — U.N. troops enforcing implementation of military aspect of the Dayton agreement in Bosnia.

THW: (Technisches Hilfswerk) is the governmental disaster relief organization of the Federal Republic of Germany.

UNDP: UN Development Program.

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees — provides protection and assistance to the world's refugees. Under the Dayton agreement, UNHCR is responsible for the return of Bosnian refugees and displaced persons, either to their original homes or to areas of their choice.

USAID: U.S. Agency for International Development — is responsible for administration and management of the official U.S. bilateral foreign assistance program. USAID's principal goals are to promote broad based economic growth, protect human health, encourage sound environmental management, and provide emergency humanitarian assistance to countries in transition.