

# YUGO NEWS



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**6 Apr 94**

The EC gave Greece one week to lift its embargo of Macedonia. It did not specify what it would do if Greece persisted.

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**8 Apr 94**

Contradicting earlier statements by Secretary of Defense Perry and JCS Chairman Shalikashvili, National Security Advisor Lake said that the US wouldn't rule out the use of **airpower** to protect cities, such as Gorazde, that have been declared UN safe havens.

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**11 Apr 94**

Two USAF F-16C's, flying out of Italy, **bombed Serb C<sup>2</sup>** (command & control) assets near Gorazde. The air strike was the first carried out in Bosnia by NATO. US ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright said, "It's very clear that additional attacks will be met in the same way."

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**12 Apr 94**

Serb artillery heavily shelled Gorazde and Serb forces elsewhere in Bosnia harassed UN peacekeepers and relief workers, prompting NATO to launch an **air strike**. Two USMC F/A-18's bombed and strafed a Serb armored column near Gorazde.

Will the selective application of Western air power intimidate the Bosnian Serbs or further provoke them? Several factors complicate how the Serbs will act in the coming days, and how the West will interpret their moves.

First, the air strikes aren't being

used to roll back Serb gains, but, more modestly, to encourage the Serbs to return to the peace table and accept a deal under which they would receive 49% of Bosnia, with the remainder going to the new Muslim-Croat confederation.

Second, the **shaky Serb chain of command** makes it difficult to know whether something that happens is the action of a local militia or reflects the intentions of the Serb leadership. It isn't clear how much influence Serb leader Milosevic has over the Bosnian Serbs or the extent to which Bosnian Serb leader Karadzic controls his military.

*Note: The more control the Serb chain of command exercises, the more effective air strikes would be. But if the fighting is the action of independent commanders, then an air strike would only influence that commander. Evidence of this is the Serbs in Gorazde taking advantage of NATO's focus on the Sarajevo exclusion zone.*

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**14 Apr 94**

A Dutch peacekeeper has been missing for two days as Serb forces continued **harassing UN staff** in Bosnia. Meanwhile, sniper and machine-gun fire broke out in Sarajevo (the first serious violation of the city's two-month-old ceasefire). In Tuzla, the airport and a NATO OP were shelled.

The process for approval of NATO **air strikes** has changed. Previously, the chief UN civilian in Bosnia had to give approval; now, that authority has been delegated to the UN's military commander in Bosnia.

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**15 Apr 94**

Bosnian Serbs sealed off three

UN compounds in an attempt to retrieve confiscated weapons. NATO planes circled overhead, but did not attack.

A **British jet was shot down** near Gorazde by a Serb surface-to-air missile. The jet had been carrying out a search-and-destroy mission against Serb armored units. A French plane, riddled with holes, barely made it back to its carrier.

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**16 Apr 94**

At least 200 UN peacekeepers have been **captured** by the Bosnian Serbs in retaliation for the recent air strikes. The abductions have occurred throughout Bosnia.

Bosnian Serb leader Karadzic toured his front lines, declared the minimal air strikes to be NATO's "**last card on the table**," threatened to shoot down any other aircraft flying in his direction, predicted that NATO would now have to introduce ground troops, and in a display of battlefield bravado, welcomed that prospect. *He need not have worried.*

After UN officials were unable to halt another Serb attack on Gorazde, and after yesterday's downing of a British jet, UN Bosnian chief Akashi reluctantly authorized punitive air strikes that were never carried out because of continuing bad weather.

Akashi said that current conditions made the UN's mission "**meaningless**." He and UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali will ask the Security Council to either authorize the mission to use force to protect peacekeepers and civilians, or to pull out altogether. One source close to the mission command said officials were leaning toward a

complete pullout of the 33,000 troops deployed in the Balkans.

The humanitarian effort, conducted courageously by unarmed aid workers and lightly armed escorts, has undoubtedly saved many thousands of lives. That, and the diplomatic and peacekeeping efforts that have helped prevent the spread of the fighting beyond Bosnia, are sound reasons for the UN to stay engaged there, despite the recent damage to its authority. But if the UN is to amount to more than an **armor-plated meals-on-wheels** service, it cannot be expected to rely on moral authority alone to get military jobs done.

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The Clinton administration rejected a wider bombing campaign in response to the Serb offensive and, **rewarding aggression**, signaled a willingness to be more flexible in negotiations with the Serbs, agreeing for the first time to discuss a European proposal for lifting economic sanctions on Serbia in phases prior to a full peace settlement.

Bosnian Serb leader Karadzic quickly jumped on the idea of lifting sanctions, which would be a major victory for the Serbs. He said the Bosnian Serbs would be prepared to discuss an overall solution to the war "now that America is mentioning the lifting of sanctions."

That option - buying off the Serbs economically - is one of the few left for the UN. Among them: End the Bosnian mission and let the combatants fight it out; lift the arms embargo that has only affected the Muslims; Continue with a limited humanitarian mission; return to the tough policy - and stick with it.

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**17 Apr 94**

The Serbs released 19 Canadian peacekeepers/POW's, but continue to hold more than 150 UN personnel.

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## Bumbling in Bosnia

Having seized all but the center of **Gorazde**, Bosnian Serb political leaders agreed to halt their attacks on the UN

declared "safe haven." UN envoy Akashi, who negotiated the truce accord, said that the Bosnian Serbs agreed to withdraw from Gorazde "as far as possible and as soon as possible." The Serbs rejected an Akashi proposal that the 1000 Ukrainian peacekeepers be deployed inside Gorazde to protect the city.

Having decided over the weekend against more forceful military action to stop the onslaught, the US and its allies **limited its ability to respond**. Among their reasons were objections from Russia and Western allies, concerns about wavering domestic support and a fundamental fear that tougher action would destroy any hopes for reviving peace negotiations.

The US and its erstwhile allies have said repeatedly that the Serbs would have to give up about 1/3 of the territory they now control in Bosnia as a minimal condition for a lasting peace. But without any military threat to backup that demand, the Serbs have little reason to comply.

In February, when NATO threatened to bomb Serb gun positions around Sarajevo unless the Serbs moved, a **different UN message** was delivered. The Serbs understood, and realized they would pay for their aggression. The change was striking: peace in Sarajevo, the siege of Maglaj was lifted, harassment of UN convoys ceased and Tuzla's airport was reopened. When the Serbs challenged the UN-imposed no-fly zone, they had four planes downed by NATO fighters.

As long as the West backed up its words with muscle, the Serbs grudgingly complied - even returning to peace talks. Then came the attack on Gorazde, a UN-declared "safe area." And instead of defending the city, the UN hardly did anything.

The US said air power would not be used to protect Gorazde, a key choke point in smuggling weapons to Bosnian Muslims and the last major area blocking total Serb domination of eastern Bosnia.

The Serbs saw **NATO's hesitation** as a green light to continue their assault. Then, when NATO sent in warplanes two weeks later, only one of four bombs hit a target - a wrist slap that underscored Serb beliefs in NATO's impotence. "The Serbs have been fighting for 500 years for what they consider to be national independence and dignity," said former Secretary of State Kissinger. "They are not going to be impressed by a half-hearted military effort."

Indeed, they weren't. Hours after the American bombs fell on Serb positions around Gorazde, a close aide to Serb President Milosevic went on national television to assure his countrymen that **the US didn't mean business**. He pointed to America's budget deficit, education woes and big city crime. "Now Bosnia pulls [Clinton] away from this. He can't afford to have even a few soldiers killed in Bosnia." (*They know our leadership a lot better than we know theirs*).

Instead of being humbled by NATO air strikes, the Serbs have the swagger of a boxer sticking out his jaw and asking to be hit again. Instead of acquiescing to UN conditions, they are making their own demands. And instead of looking like losers, impoverished by international economic sanctions and shunned by most of the planet, they display **the cockiness of world beaters**.

The Serb leadership believes it holds the trump cards. The way they see it, the UN and NATO have two options: either intervene massively, following up air strikes with ground troops, or ratify the Serbs victory at the negotiating table.

Gorazde proves that the Serbs are determined to take on the battlefield what they can't get at the negotiating table. Now, anything less than wide, punitive intervention by the UN and NATO that would carry the war to Serbia itself is likely to stimulate the Serbs to press their offensive across Bosnia, moving to solidify the vital corridor near the northern town of Brcko and then to eat up the remaining UN "safe havens": Srebrenica, Bihac, Zepa and Tuzla.

The old way has returned: a muddled UN policy, Serb military gains - and NATO credibility shattered.

Like dropping a pebble in a pond, the **political ripples** will be felt world wide for some time to come. North Korea, for example, is engaged in a tense and delicate confrontation with the US over North Korea's nuclear program. It is likely to calibrate its actions in response to how it perceives US strength and resolve. It gets worse: our old buddy Saddam in Iraq is feeling his oats again, as is an expansionist Russia, and probably other sundry dictators yet unexposed by the media light.

19 Apr 94

The US said **new ultimatums** could vary considerably from safe area to safe area "depending on the situation on the ground, Serb motivation, geography and NATO's will." (*Micromanagement by the US*) UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali endorsed the policy change, asking for NATO to give him the authority to call in air strikes to defend all the UN-designated safe areas in Bosnia. The US was pleased by Boutros-Ghali's reaction and by Russian Bosnia envoy Churkin, who blistered the Serbs for lying to him repeatedly. Russia's UN envoy, however, warned that more air strikes could lead to disaster. (*Further evidence of the power struggle in Russia*)

20 Apr 94

Near Sarajevo, **Serbs seized 18** anti-aircraft guns from the UN but later gave back 13.

The Serbs released about 75% of the (*let's call them what they are*) **UN POW's** they'd captured in recent days.

The UN lost contact with its observers in Gorazde when their building was hit by **artillery fire**. Also struck in the barrage were refugee centers, a food warehouse and the city's hospital. After the shelling, the Bosnian Serb leadership signed another cease-fire. "The Serbian side unilaterally declares peace in Gorazde," said Bosnian Serb leader

Karadzic. "With this, the Gorazde crisis comes to an end."

20 Apr 94

Clinton asserted that "Air power alone will not settle this conflict. This conflict will have to be settled through **negotiations**." (*Right on the first account, wrong on the second*) That is, our goal is still to deal with Bosnian Serbs who have proven themselves **incapable** of abiding by any deal, cease-fire, commitment or even random utterance. This illogic is going to continue until our policy makers recognize that the problem is not in Bosnia, but Serbia.

If the major powers want to **get serious** about this mess, take the decisions out of the hands of UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali, who obviously has no workable chain of command and never will. Forget air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs. Instead, select military targets in Serbia itself, giving NATO command the authority to run the assault according to sound military principles, with no impossible restrictions on Allied pilots devised by the perplexed strategists at UN headquarters. Tell Milosevic to get his tanks and artillery out of Bosnia.

Serbia needs to know that the cost to its brand of homicidal adventure is going to rise dramatically if it doesn't start meeting the standards of morality and behavior that the West demands.

The **Gorazde hospital** was shelled for the second day in a row.

21 Apr 94

Saying that the US has both humanitarian and strategic interests in ending the war in Bosnia, Clinton called on NATO to use **wider air power** to protect besieged Muslim "safe areas." Switching last week's position (*see the top of column 1, page 2, this issue*) he also said that the US would press for tighter enforcement of economic sanctions on Serbia. When asked what he would do if broader air strikes failed to halt the Serb offensive, Clinton would say only that

"there are other things that can be done."

22 Apr 94

The Serbs continued to shell the **Gorazde hospital**. Serb infantry entered the town for the first time and there was house-to-house fighting.

23 Apr 94

NATO gave the Serbs until 0200 (local time), 24 Apr 94, to stop their attacks and move all their weaponry out of **20km exclusion zones**, or face air strikes. The zones are around Bihac, Tuzla, Sarajevo, Srebrenica, Zepa and Gorazde. The deadline applies to a 3km to a second "safe zone" of 3km radius around Gorazde.

Two Canadian peacekeepers were wounded when their vehicle hit a **land mine** near Zemunik Gornji, on the border of Croat/Serb territory.

24 Apr 94

The West is likely to remain **two steps behind the Serbs**. To Serb strategists, the Bosnian enclaves are no longer all that relevant. Srebrenica and Zepa, in the east, are small and militarily insignificant. Serb generals have rarely claimed that they want to capture Tuzla, in the northeast, or Bihac, in the northwest. If NATO and the UN implement their plans for exclusion zones around the six enclaves, the Bosnian Serbs may grumble but comply.

At the time of NATO's February ultimatum to the Serbs to stop shelling Sarajevo, some of their "excluded" artillery was quietly hauled off - to Gorazde. The same tactic may now be repeated. The signs point north. The Muslims and Croats would like to cut the thin strategic **Posavina corridor**, which links Serbia with Serb-held territories in Krajina and western Bosnia. By contrast, the Serbs dearly wish to widen it.

25 Apr 94

Bosnian Serb forces grudgingly

began **withdrawing from Gorazde**. After two weeks of Serb promises and betrayals, the US and NATO insisted they wouldn't lower their guard, saying NATO was ready to launch large-scale air strikes should the Serbs resume shelling or fail to meet tomorrow's deadline for a complete withdrawal from the wider 20km exclusion zone around Gorazde. Despite the withdrawal, sniper fire continued.

NATO military planners, who feel that the **alliance's credibility** is now on the line in Bosnia, are worried that their ability to respond to such harassment will be thwarted by the UN. NATO was infuriated when UN envoy Akashi refused to allow NATO to attack after the Serbs continued to shell the town in defiance of NATO's demand on 23 Apr 94 for an immediate cease-fire.

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A UN food convoy, plus 140 Ukrainian peacekeepers, arrived in **Gorazde**. UN helicopters began evacuating the city's wounded.

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## 26 Apr 94

The Serbs blocked a UN aid convoy headed for **Gorazde** despite pledges to allow access to the town.

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British Foreign Secretary Hurd, whose government currently opposes such a move, said that **lifting the arms embargo** on the Muslims is "perfectly logical if the international effort to stop the war has failed."

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Russian Defense Minister Grachev sided with Russia's UN ambassador in opposing NATO air strikes.

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## 27 Apr 94

The UN **aid convoy** stopped yesterday by Serbs outside of Gorazde was allowed to proceed into the city.

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The Secretary of State Christopher and British Foreign Secretary Hurd reaffirmed that there would be air strikes if the Serbs don't comply with the deadline. But another US official added a few minutes later that **the deadline might not be**

**ironclad**. "I think the question that we'll be looking at is, 'Are they moving towards compliance with the NATO ultimatum?'"

Shortly after the deadline, the UN said that the Serbs were in **"effective compliance"** with the NATO deadline to withdraw heavy weapons from around Gorazde.

Several tanks and artillery pieces remained in the exclusion zone, but were abandoned or being transported. "They are **not a threat** to be used, as best we can tell," said a US official. Asked if it NATO would bomb the weapons remaining in the zone, he said "it would be stupid" because such targets weren't militarily significant.

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## 28 Apr 94

The UN approved the deployment of **6,550 more peacekeepers** to protect the six UN-designated "safe areas" in Bosnia after the US dropped objections (*see the 1 Apr 94 article*) to an expanded force. The additional peacekeepers represent a 39% increase over the 17,000 currently in Bosnia. (There are 33,000 total in the former Yugoslavia). Some of the reinforcements are targeted for operations in Krajina, where a fragile ceasefire has held between Serbs and Croats.

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Islamic foreign ministers urged the UN to **lift the arms embargo** against the Muslim-led Bosnian government.

How the violence in Bosnia might turn dangerous on a world scale, is through an additional force that must be reckoned with - **Islam**. The primary Serb victims in Bosnia are Muslims. Not many people in Europe or the US are losing any sleep over this fact, but the Muslim world, extending across Asia and into the Middle East and Africa, is watching intently. More specifically, the fate of the Bosnian Muslims is of particular interest to the secular, Western-leaning governments of Turkey, Egypt and Pakistan.

In Turkey, the fundamentalists have just won the mayoralties of Ankara

and Istanbul. Turkey's prime minister recently visited Washington and the capitals of Europe, exhorting her listeners not to send a message to the public in these secular Islamic countries that the West is essentially a **closed "Christian club."**

That is the message Europe repeatedly sends by denying Turkey membership in the Common Market. And it is the message the West sent by imposing an arms embargo that affected only Bosnian Muslims, who after they tried to defend their towns were criticized by the West for making the peace negotiations "difficult."

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## Quote

"Serbia isn't Somalia." (Arkan, Serb militia leader)

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## Sources

Wall Street Journal, New York Times, The Economist, Milwaukee Journal, Milwaukee Sentinel, USA Today, FBIS Daily Reports.