

YUGO NEWS



This Issue: *mutiny, arms smuggling, assaults on UN/NATO forces*

29 Apr 94

One British **peacekeeper** was **killed**, and two wounded, when their vehicle hit an anti-tank mine near Gorni Vakuf.



Near Tuzla, a Nordic battalion of **peacekeepers** was **bombarded** by Bosnian Serb artillery, mortar and tank rounds. A UN tank returned fire causing a thirteen Serb casualties.

30 Apr 94

Manfred Wörner, NATO's secretary general, and Yasushi Akashi, UN special envoy in Bosnia, **quarreled** over which could order air strikes. Removing every disagreement in or between their parallel chains of command could be as hard as bringing Bosnia's three sides back to the bargaining table.

1 May 94

160 British **peacekeepers** were **captured** by the Serbs while attempting to reinforce UN forces in Gorazde.

2 May 94

A Croatia-bound Maltese tanker, loaded with 45,000 tons of fuel oil, declared an **emergency in the Adriatic Sea**. The master of the vessel said that he intended to beach the ship off Albania. However, the tanker headed for Montenegro (a Serb vassal).

A Dutch frigate participating in the blockade of the former-Yugoslavia sent a boarding team to the tanker to assess the situation. About the same time, the frigate picked up three vessels (later identified as Yugoslavian) heading

towards the tanker at high speed. At the same time, a damage control party from a British frigate arrived via helicopter.

The British frigate then headed for the three approaching vessels and attempted to contact them, to no avail. One of the vessels, a guided missile patrol boat, maneuvered close to the British frigate, nearly causing a collision.

Several Italian aircraft, armed with anti-ship missiles, responded to the confrontation, whereupon the aggressors withdrew.

Later, the engine room on the tanker appeared to have been **deliberately flooded** and seven men, claiming to be Yugoslavs, were found hidden on the ship.

4 May 94

An Iranian air force transport plane delivered about 60 tons of explosives, fuses and other raw material for the manufacture of mortars to Zagreb, Croatia, on May 4th in violation of the 1991 UN arms embargo imposed on the area. The boxes were marked "**Humanitarian Aid**". The delivery came two days before a visit to Bosnia and Croatia by Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati.

5 May 94

The Serbs and Muslims have been reinforcing their units near **Brcko**, a vital link between Serbia and Serbs in Krajina. The UN responded by declaring it would increase the number of observers in the area, and threatening both sides with air strikes.

6 May 94

Iranian Foreign Minister Velayati gave Bosnian President Izetbegovic a \$1 million check and credit for 10,000 tons of diesel fuel. "Our fight for freedom ... would be less successful without **Iran and its aid**," said Izetbegovic.

7 May 94

UN Special Envoy to former Yugoslavia Akashi was rebuked by the US, Bosnian Muslims and others for granting permission to let seven **Serb tanks enter the Sarajevo exclusion zone**. Akashi said he allowed the Serb tanks to enter the zone in exchange for the release of the British peacekeepers captured near Gorazde. The Serbs wanted to move the tanks through Sarajevo, to south of Mount Igman, to meet a potential Muslim offensive. Four of the Serb tanks entered Sarajevo before Akashi's order was rescinded; a fifth entered after the tank commander threatened to use force.

8 May 94

Enacted three months ago, **Serbia's economic reform plan**, has several parts: The old dinar was phased out and a new one, the "super dinar", introduced. Pegged at parity with the German D-mark, the new money was made convertible. Subsidies to Krajina and the Bosnian Serbs were reduced. And tax evasion, especially by companies, was clamped down on.

The results - if the government's figures are to be believed - are impressive: Inflation, which was nudging **310,000,000% per month**, appears to have been slashed. Shopkeepers are beginning to fill their shelves (production

was up 12% in February, and 22% in March, over the same months last year). And a clutch of economic indicators point up.

With more money to buy expensive sanctions-busting fuel, there is now more traffic on Serbian roads than at any time in the past two years. (Some of Serbia's oil is from Croatia, which receives Serbian electricity in return.)

Before the war Croatia and Slovenia were the industrial powerhouses of Yugoslavia, while Serbia was its breadbasket. For these reasons the trade embargo will never starve the Serbs into submission.

If the stabilization works, it will take the heat off of Serb president Milosevic, by preventing economic collapse. Serbia would then be able to hold out longer for a better settlement in the Bosnian war.

Anatomy of a Mutiny

(A clarification of the 27 Oct 93 article in the Nov'93 edition of Yugo News)

The Bosnian army's 10th Mountain Brigade was blasting away at two Serb artillery positions on 5,000 foot-high Mount Trebevic near Sarajevo when three UN military observers stationed by the Serb positions decided discretion was the better part of valor. They radioed for an armored escort back to Sarajevo. Within 30 minutes two French APC's and six legionnaires from the 2nd Foreign Legion Infantry Regiment arrived to accompany the UNMO's back across Bosnian-held territory.

But, as the APC's were crossing an open area, the two-vehicle convoy was set upon by heavily armed elements of the 10th, who threatened to fire at the lead vehicle with an RPG. The vehicles stopped and the militiamen pulled the observers and legionnaires from the APC's and drove off with the two vehicles.

Grumbling over the events eventually led to talk of unilateral action by the legion against the 10th and its leader,

Musan Topalovic, who fought under the nom de guerre of "Caco."

Caco had previously found members of the foreign press and civilian employees of the UN prime targets for his campaign to provide top notch Kevlar wear for his troops. Hundreds of bullet-proof vests and flak jackets were robbed over the past year at gun point from those who made contact with the 10th. But the specter of a Foreign Legion-led lynch mob prowling the streets of Sarajevo in search of revenge may have been the event that triggered the end of Caco's usefulness.

General Jean Cot of France, at the time the overall UN commander, was airborne to Sarajevo within hours. While en route he ordered the suspension of a wide range of UN activity within the city.

The two APC's, five of the six stolen rifles and a machine-gun were returned the next day, but the damage had been done. Bosnian President Izetbegovic - made aware of the legion's intentions to hunt down one of his top military commanders and exact some sort of revenge - decided to pull the plug on Caco and ordered his arrest. Ramiz "Celo" Delalic, commander of the 9th

Mountain Brigade, and a close Caco ally, was also ordered arrested.

An assault unit was assembled from the presidential guard, military police, the 101st Motorized Brigade and special ops. Offered a chance to surrender, Caco and Celo said they would rather die than give up.

Serb artillery and sniper fire grew heavier by the minute as Bosnian went up against Bosnian. Nearly 500 of Caco's troops gave up rather than fight as the morning progressed, eventually leaving the renegade leader alone in a basement with six of his closest aids.

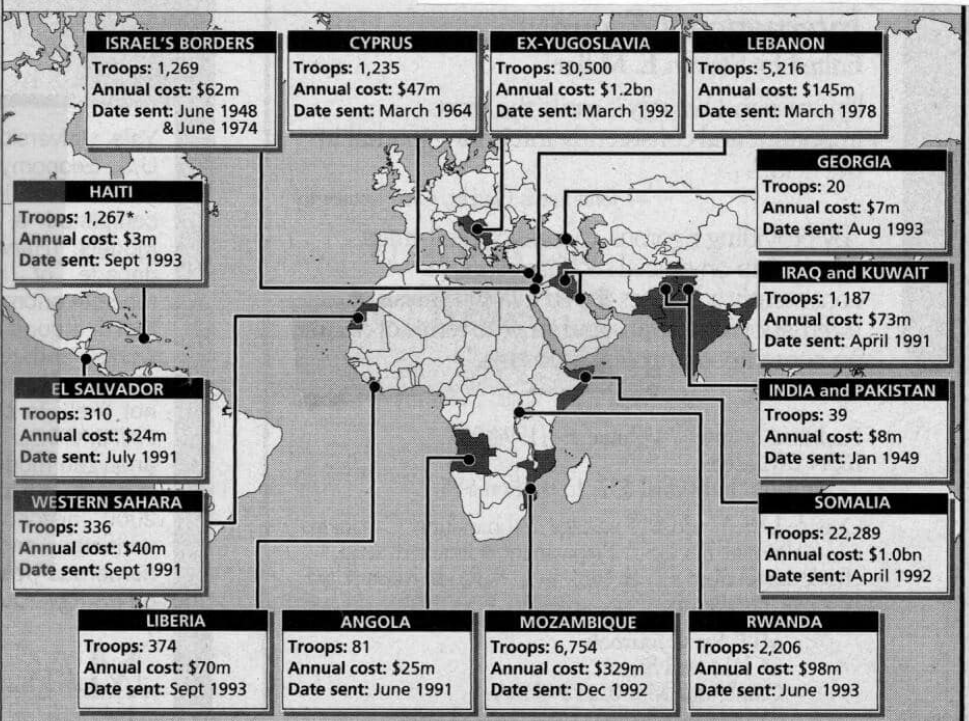
When the smoke cleared later that afternoon, more than 50 Bosnian soldiers on both sides lay dead in the streets of Sarajevo, and both Caco and Celo were on their way to a Bosnian military prison near the UN headquarters.

Caco, however, never made it to his cell. The special police unit charged with taking both renegade leaders to prison claimed Caco was shot while "attempting to escape."

"We were a bit frustrated," one legionnaire said. "He [Caco] was ours. We owned him. Believe me, if we had come

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Source: United Nations

* Authorised

knocking on his door there would have been no bullshit about it. The legion would have done the job right."

"It was damn close," said a senior ranking military official attached to the US embassy in Croatia. "The information we got out of Sarajevo had a near break between the legion and the UN command chain over this flap. I would not have been surprised if they had gotten Topalovic first."

10 May 94

"The combination of finds [observers] have made and the continuing restrictions on certain areas and routes leads us to believe that there continue to be **heavy weapons in the zone**," said LTC David Santa-Olalla, the British UNPROFOR commander in Gorazde. (Two Serb anti-aircraft guns were found under bushes within the exclusion zone.)

11 May 94

Despite demands by France for their release, eleven French aid workers detained by Bosnian Serb authorities will face trial in June on charges of **arms smuggling**. The detainees were working for the private relief group Premiere Urgence. The Bosnian Serbs claim the aid workers tried to smuggle 1,000 anti-aircraft rounds into Sarajevo for the Bosnia's Muslim-led government. French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe ruled out the use of military force to free the eleven detainees, saying France would free them "through the perseverance of out diplomatic action."

13 May 94

With back-to-back 50-49 votes on competing amendments that made up a Bosnia bill, US senators first directed the president to seek a UN **termination of the embargo** and then added language ordering him to go it alone. (Clinton supports lifting the embargo but is against doing it without UN and NATO support.)

Sven Alaklaj, Bosnia's ambassador to the US, considered the votes to be "a

big step forward to finally having our rights to defend ourselves."

Senate Majority Leader John Mitchell, D-ME, said the bills had virtually no possibility of becoming law.

"It would set a dangerous precedent (and) undermine other UN embargoes. The most obvious example is the embargo on Iraq," said Sen. Nancy Kassebaum, R-KS.

"It shows you the ineptitude of the US Senate in giving direction on foreign policy," said Sen. John Warner, R-VA.

Fighting intensified across Bosnia ahead of a key meeting of US, Russian and European foreign ministers to set the agenda for **peace talks**.

The fatal flaw in the plan under consideration is that it repeats the errors of the Vance-Owens plans floated and agreed to in 1992 and 1993 that envisioned land trade-offs requiring the Bosnian-Serb's approval.

The agreement envisions a **loose confederation** between Muslims, Croats and Serbs, but a similar confederation plan proposed in 1961 by Tito failed because the rival ethnic factions couldn't agree. The failure of that plan prompted Tito to crack down on ethnic nationalism.

The news of yet another peace deal was greeted gloomily in Sarajevo with the **bitter cynicism** that it's all been seen before.

Muslims don't trust Croats, don't believe the peace agreement will hold

and expect Croatia and Serbia will work secretly together under a 1991 agreement to divide up the Muslim statelet between them.

One UN military **observer was killed** and another seriously wounded when they came under fire near Sarajevo.

14 May 94

The Bosnian Army confirmed that Iran had **smuggled antitank missiles** to Croatia by Brazilian ship. 2/3 of the shipment went to Muslim soldiers, 1/3 to Croats as a cut for allowing the ship to dock in Croatia.

15 May 94

Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Siladzic believes that the **peace plan** embraced by the US, Russia and European nations is flawed because it does not include a mechanism to insure that Bosnian Serbs withdraw. "We are looking for a commitment from the international community," he said.

16 May 94

Bosanka Raca is the frontier between Serbia, the Bosnian Serb Republic and Serb-held territory in Croatia and western Bosnia.

For three weeks many people have been expecting a battle for Brcko, the northern Bosnian town where the corridor is at its narrowest, a bare five kilometers across. Now the Serbs have let the UN deploy observers there.



If the Muslims and Croats could cut the corridor, they could strangle vast areas of Serb-held territory. They have tried - they shelled Brcko last week - and still cannot summon enough strength to do it.

✦ ✧ ✧
Bosnian Muslims overran a Serb position on a plateau overlooking Tuzla. The Muslims captured some heavy weapons and inflicted heavy casualties on the Serbs.

17 May 94

Seeking to gain control of a Serb communications post, the **Bosnian Army offensive** continued in the north-east.

18 May 94

Citing the heavy financial burden and human costs, France's defense minister said France would **withdraw 2,500 peacekeepers** by the end of the year. (It currently has 6,800 in the region.) But France's foreign minister later "clarified" that the move was partly a routine troop rotation and the rest was dependent on peace efforts.

20 May 94

The **Bosnian Army offensive** continued against the Serbs on several fronts.

✦ ✧ ✧
Britain joined France in threatening to pull its 3,250 peacekeepers out of ex-Yugoslavia unless there is progress towards a peace accord.

21 May 94

A UN-chartered Russian IL-76 transport plane carrying Jordanian troops and US anti-artillery radar (*See the 16 March item in the Apr'94 Yugo News*) was **shelled by Serb tanks** shortly after landing at Tuzla.

22 May 94

More than two million Albanians live outside their country, mostly in

Kosovo but also in Macedonia. **Albanian nationalists** have always regarded as unjust the 1913 territorial settlement that left so many of their people outside.

Albanian President Sali Berisha is demanding that foreign leaders not forget the issue of Serbia's province of Kosovo, with its overwhelmingly ethnic Albanian population. He has also been telling Albanians in Kosovo that they must, for the foreseeable future, **give up their dreams of independence** and union with Albania. Why? If war were to break out, all would be lost. Hundreds of thousands of refugees would pour into it and Albania would lose its chance to join the European mainstream.

Kosovo's Albanian leaders have never disguised the fact that their struggle for independence is only a prelude to union with Albania. Yet short of a wholesale slaughter of Albanians in Kosovo, few in the mother country care much about their fate. **Many actively dislike their Kosovo cousins.** (Some Kosovo businessmen have perpetrated scams against the less experienced former communists).

For the moment, Ibrahim Rugova's Democratic League of Kosovo has rejected compromise, but rumors have been circulating in Pristina and Belgrade that both Rugova and the Serbs may be discreetly groping towards a compromise.

Albanian Map

23 May 94

Two UN buses were sniped at, killing one and wounding two.

24 May 94

The UN failed to resolve a dispute over the **withdrawal of Serb forces** from Gorazde. Tensions in the UN-designated "safe area" have blocked the resumption of overall peace talks in Bosnia.

26 May 94

The **outsider's differences** lie deeper than the disputed effectiveness of air strikes or the "who's in charge - NATO or the UN?" question. They rest on disagreement about where pressure should be applied. Which side, in short, now has most interest in more war: the Serbs, who have won more land than they can defend, or the Bosnians, hoping to claw territory back in the field?

An American view, well aired in the White House, is that further war in Bosnia is better than peace that rewards Serb aggression. Europeans, most vocally the French, tend to a contrary view: a world unwilling to fight for justice in Bosnia should accept that peace is its priority.

27 May 94

Bosnian Serbs defied NATO and refused to withdraw 150 troops from the Gorazde exclusion zone. The Serbs, insisting the Muslims must retreat first, denied UN observers access to the zone.

30 May 94

The **Muslim offensive** continues in north-central Bosnia. "We are suffering big blows," said Bosnian Serb leader Karadzic. "We have chosen not to go to counteroffensive yet, and are awaiting the international community ... to warn and stop the Muslims."

Sources

Wall Street Journal, Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, USA Today, Soldier of Fortune, The Economist, New York Times, Milwaukee Journal/Sentinel, FBIS Daily Reports.