8 July 93

During May and June's Muslim-Croat battle for Mostar the Serbs may have been arming the Muslims.

Note: Remember that at the same time the Serbs were providing artillery support to the Croats...

9 July 93

People in Sarajevo are starting to boil sewage for drinking water. The World Health Organization warned that Sarajevo faces the possibility of a "catastrophe" on a scale not seen since World War II.

13 July 93

Jailed opposition Serb opposition leader Draskovic was freed last this weekend. He was on the brink of death nine days into a hunger strike. His dangerous gamble paid off. Milosevic reckoned that Draskovic would be more threatening as a martyr than as an opposition leader.

But now Draskovic is no longer just an opposition leader among many. His Serbian Renewal Party has staged protests and circulated petitions, rallying other groups. Several Serb opposition parties planned mass rallies for this week, and that surely worried Milosevic.

Support from Western leaders jelled Draskovic's image as a moderate Serb.

The significance of the Draskovic case shouldn't be lost on Western policy makers. Whether the opponent is Milosevic or Saddam Hussein, it is important for the West to identify and protect legitimate opposition leaders. If these beleaguered countries are turned from disruption to peace, they will have to include these people.

Draft Resolution A Failure

The U.N. draft resolution to exempt Bosnia from U.N. 713 failed to pass on 6/29/93. The U.S. lost the vote.

There are three failures here:

First, this was a U.S. failure because the U.S. did not lead. The U.S. wasn't even pressing other Security Council members to support repeal of the Bosnian arms embargo because it expected to lose the vote anyway. Such a formula ensures the worst of all worlds: a contentious and divisive issue becomes public, and then, by lack of effort, the vote is lost. A vote should have been taken only when the U.S. was certain that its position would prevail.

Second, the vote on Bosnia was a failure of the usually reliable five permanent Security Council members. Perm Five unanimity says something important to the targets of resolutions. As the only five declared nuclear powers, the permanent members possess the ultimate sanction for any violation of the international order.

Third, this was a failure of the Security Council because its all-important solidarity was squandered. The Council's inability to function effectively during much of its history casts grave doubts on its reason for existence. A Security Council vote does not have to be unanimous to send a message, but it is a matter of basic politics that the more affirmative votes on a given resolution, the greater the impact of the message, especially with broad geographic distribution.

The Council as a whole should have realized that a losing vote was a profound wound to an institution that was trying to nurse itself back to health. This said, Council failure and Perm Five failure stem from a failure of the U.S. to assume its proper leadership role at the U.N.

One theory is that the U.S. simply did not wish to oppose the insistence of the so-called "nonaligned" nations that a vote be taken. If true, this is not a happy event. The "nonaligned movement" is a Cold War relic that does not need reviving. It's heyday was in the late, unalmented 1970's - years of decline and malaise.

War Crimes Tribunal

War crime evidence is being catalogued by DePaul
The U.S. ambassador countered that states will be required to arrest and hand over to tribunal anyone indicted, or face further sanctions.

"The idea (of war crimes prosecutions) makes countries nervous," said a human rights advocate. "Ultimately they fear that either they will be placed in the dock or their friends and allies will."

Reluctant to intervene militarily, the West continues to place its hopes on a diplomatic settlement. And indicting political leaders in the midst of negotiations could certainly have a chilling effect.

In 10/92 the Security Council established an "Expert Commission" to investigate and produce evidence of "grave breaches" of international law. The Commission's job hasn't been easy. It was given neither investigators nor subpoena power to gather evidence. And, despite strong verbal endorsements, many nations, including the U.S., have been slow to provide support.

It is planned that the tribunal will have better resources, including subpoena powers and the threat of Security Council sanctions to back up its demands. But there will still be constraints: Whatever the ultimate settlement in Bosnia, the U.N. won't be an occupying force and so won't have a "paper trail" to follow, as the Allies did in Germany after World War II. Further, to avoid any suggestions of "show trials," the Security Council stipulated that no accused would be tried in absentia.

In the end, the tribunal may be forced to settle for an El Salvador-style "truth commission," naming names and detailing crimes but with no legal sanction.

16 July 93

The Serbs eased a two-week fuel blockade of Sarajevo, allowing a hospital and bakery to resume operations.

17 July 93

Lead by Turkey, seven Muslim countries - including Iran and the PLO - offered to provide 17,000 soldiers for UNPROFOR in Bosnia. The Islamic Conference Organization also called for the lifting of the arms embargo and the rejection of the Serb-Croat partition plan.

The now dead Vance-Owen plan originally required 30,000 troops to protect Bosnian 'safe' havens. With too few volunteers, the exercise has since been scaled down to 7500. So far the West has found a miserable 1200.

Fresh out of ideas, as well as volunteers, the West seems ready to accept the partition of Bosnia. Now, if Muslim extremists claim they'll do the job, many Bosnians will be willing to turn in their direction.

The political dynamic of the situation has to be viewed as troubling. It could give radical Middle Eastern Muslims an on-the-ground presence in Europe. From there, the war and the radical influence could spread to Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo. Assuming that Iran and other Muslim countries could actually transport 17,000 troops to Bosnia and deploy them there, such a move would be an invitation for Serbia to
fully mobilize. What has been a relatively small war could suddenly become a big war.

Iran and the PLO have their own agenda. Turkey is too close a neighbor, with too many historical connections, for real comfort. Turkey's earlier offers of help were turned down by the U.S. Yet it could only embitter Bosnia's Muslims still further - were that possible - if the West, which has tried to play down the religious component of the war, were to turn down help on religious grounds.

† † †

Sarajevo is exhausted, desperate and divided. "Two hundred thousand people have died and more have been expelled," said Bojan Zec of the Bosnian news agency. "This leads to two conclusions. Some say let's just end this hell; others say that would be defeat and betrayal." But the problem is that defeat would not bring peace, yet the world refuses to see this.

The Serb-Croat plan is for the division of Bosnia into three ethnic republics linked in a loose confederation. No one bothers to disguise the fact that confederation is another name for Greater Serbia and Greater Croatia with a bit left over for the Muslims. Hundreds of thousands of people still live on the wrong side of what would be ethnic borders, so partition would mean more carnage as ethnic cleansing continued apace.

If Izetbegovic does sign the peace settlement, though, most people in Sarajevo would probably go along with it, even if it seemed like defeat and betrayal. And part of the Bosnian army is fiercely loyal to Izetbegovic - but not all. Besieged for 16 months and stuck in front lines that hardly move, another part of the army is frustrated, angry and itching for battle.

Moreover, because they are cut off from the rest of Bosnia, the authorities in Sarajevo have little idea what would happen in the rest of the country if they signed a peace plan. In Muslim-controlled Zenica, for example, the dream of a multi-ethnic Bosnia - which still flickers in Sarajevo - is dead. Troops from Zenica have no compunction in driving Croats from their homes to carve as much territory as possible for their Muslim city-state.

18 July 93

The Serbs and Croats seem to have a fundamental and potentially fatal misunderstanding.

Milosevic's main ideologist believes the Croats do not want to fight to regain Serb Krajina. His belief is based on the events in Bosnia where the Serbs and Croats are now allied (and perhaps also a belief that the Croats will fold like the Bosnians).

For their part, some Croats believe Milosevic will trade Krajina for peace with Croatia.

No deal over Krajina is likely. Milosevic knows that if he sacrifices Krajina he will threaten his own position by infuriating Serb nationalists, while the Croats have no inclination to let him keep it. (57% of Croatia favors war with Serbia if it doesn't peacefully return Krajina).

In Bosnia, Serbs and Croats may cooperate to partition the country, but Greater Serbia and Greater Croatia will not peacefully coexist elsewhere.

19 July 93

Bosnian Serb forces pressed their attack on strategic Mount Igman, overlooking Sarajevo, while Karadzic set 7/20 deadline for the Bosnians to accept the Serb-Croat partition plan.

20 July 93

Fighting intensified in the mountains overlooking Sarajevo. Bosnia's 10-member collective presidency indicated it was ready to resume talks in Geneva.

21 July 93

Bosnia's president pleaded for help against the Serb offensive on Sarajevo. The loss of Mount Igman would allow the Serbs to partition the city.

† † †

The E.C. threatened Milosevic with continued sanctions, requested that the Bosnians resume negotiations and threatened to remove Croatia's access to E.C. markets. Such efforts at intimidation will hardly bring ethnic cleansing to a halt.

Germany is pushing the hardest for lifting sanctions, while England and France fear retaliation against their peacekeepers. Germany opposes sanctions against Croatia, fearing that the refugees now sheltered by that country would head north to Germany. However, Germany and England perceive a greater, and common foe, in France, which is seeking preferential treatment for its farmers in the E.C.

Given the economics,

A shipment of humanitarian aid from Slovenia was found to contain weapons instead.
Europe is not likely to help the Bosnians any time soon.

22 July 93
Guess what? Yes, international mediators announced another round of peace talks. None of the three warring sides announced their intention to attend the talks.

23 July 93
The Serbs attacked Sarajevo with their heaviest bombardment in weeks. Izetbegovic asked that peace talks be delayed and the Serbs and Croats agreed. (Not much of a surprise since they are winning).

24 July 93
NATO is getting close to Albania, but not too close. The U.S. has provided training and small arms to Albania, while NATO itself has used its ports and built new communications facilities for it. Alliance isn't likely as long as neighboring Greece objects, but the closer ties make Albania a potential staging area for a defense of Kosovo and Macedonia.

26 July 93
Bosnian Serbs shelled the U.N. military base in Sarajevo, damaging or destroying a dozen vehicles. (fired by UNPROFOR, NATO or the U.S.)

27 July 93
UNPROFOR warned the Serbs who attacked their base that the U.N. would retaliate if the Serbs bombarded them again.

Note: Yesterday's attack on UNPROFOR was the worst this year. The lack of an immediate and overwhelming response - whether by UNPROFOR, NATO or the U.S. - is incomprehensible. The U.N. might as well just pack it in.

28 July 93
The Serbs attacked another strategic mountain overlooking Sarajevo.

Bosnia announced that 'progress' was made in the latest round of peace talks.

2 August 93
Bosnia's Muslims, Serbs and Croats tentatively agreed Friday on a plan to partition Bosnia, but there has been no accord on a map for the division, and the fighting hasn't stopped. Izetbegovic threatened to quit the talks unless the Serbs stop their offensive on the strategic mountains overlooking Sarajevo, while Milosevic proclaimed that peace was at hand. Clinton has pledged to send American peacekeepers to Bosnia if all sides agree to a diplomatic settlement.

If NATO allies refuse to go along, the U.S. is ready to launch air attacks on its own to end Sarajevo's siege.

The U.S. plan would involve air strikes in addition to providing air cover to UNPROFOR.

The targets would be artillery emplacements and other front-line military activities, rather than command-and-control centers, bridges and targets away from the battlefield. But the air strikes themselves wouldn't be intended to alter the military outcome. The plan is meant to protect relief supplies and Muslim safe areas.

Action could come in a matter of days.

3 August 93
NATO agreed with the U.S. proposal to use air strikes to break the siege of Sarajevo. Many issues remain unresolved, including whether the U.N. or NATO would direct the operation. But even before that matter is settled NATO planes could attack Serb positions if they continued to fire on UNPROFOR. The agreement wasn't easily won and still may never be realized. (Many U.S. allies, including France and Canada, object to NATO involvement).

6 August 93
Facing the threat of air strikes the Serbs 'promised' to withdraw from the mountains overlooking Sarajevo. The Muslims, meanwhile, had used the threat of air strikes to toughen their political stance.

The Serbs shelled the strategic bridge linking Croatia northern Croatia to it's coastal province of Dalmatia.

Sources
The American Spectator, Wall Street Journal, The Economist, FBI Daily Reports, USA Today

Inflation in the FY was 42% in July (a compounded annual of a quadrillion $)
Serb trade unions were threatening a general strike to start this week.