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Draft

Video-tape MOSLEMS - FROM THE NAME TO THE CONGRESS

Brief commentary

The video reviews the history of the Bosnian Moslems culminating in the Congress of the Party for Democratic Action - SDA held in November/December 1991. The SDA was inaugurated in May 1990; President Izetbegović claims that SDA represents all Moslems on the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

The video starts with views of BiH countryside and towns. It includes also scenes, presumably by actors, of men in old Turkish dress and carrying Turkish flags. During this visual representation the choir of Gazi Huserbegova Medresa sings. We are told later that this choir made a particular contribution to the religious and cultural renaissance of Bosnian Muslims. They are singing a particular song used to revive the Islam in [former] Yugoslavia.

After showing Mr. Izetbegović opening the Congress with the words : "With *bismillah*' [*Arabic: in the name of God*] I am opening this Congress.", the NARRATOR makes a historical introduction, and that is where the enclosed translation starts.

The NARRATOR states that the Bosnian Moslems are autochthonous inheritors of the inhabitants of the Bosnian medieval kingdom. One might have expected a statement that "the Bosnian Moslems together with Bosnian Serbs and Croats are the inheritors of medieval Bosnians". However the statement as made is in line with the claim of the more radical Bosnian Moslems that most, if not all Bosnians converted to Islam, and that the present Bosnian Serbs came to Bosnia after the Turks.

Bosnian Serbs consider the conquest of their land by Turks as the beginning of a long term of slavery. When the NARRATOR speaks in glowing terms about this conquest, the video shows a lot of Turkish flags being carried by actors appropriately attired; historic documents tells us that the entry of Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror to Travnik was accompanied with numerous flags. Later in the tape, President Izetbegović tells us about his activities during 1970's and 1980's, that "the sincere understanding of Islam was hindered by a decadence which lasted some 100-200 years", ... "We were in fact trying to revive those concepts... elements of Islam which spoke about the real life... about the political life of man, about his science. As the first priority, we tried to awaken interest for it by returning to memories, by removing the oblivion of glorious periods of Islam ..." [page 5]

Later history is reviewed by the NARRATOR and Izetbegović in turn.

Izetbegović claims that the Moslem elite left Bosnia after the Austrian annexation and WW1. [in fact the majority of those that left for Turkey were Turks and decedants of Turks who came to Bosnia as conquerors]. "The Moslem nation, unlike other nations in Bosnia, was deprived of its strongest component" [page 3]. Bosnian Serbs and Croats would claim that they were deprived for centuries of their development.

The Moslem political party in the first Yugoslavia JMO is mentioned with approval. The Cvetković/Maček agreement is termed "shameful"; however JMO were a party to it since they were in the government. JMO, or anybody else at that time, considered Moslems to be members of a religion.

The claim that all Moslem were anti-fascist [page 3] is preposterous. Most of their leaders joined the Pavelić Ustaše government. The activities of the anti-British Mufti

of Jerusalem are well known. He was a frequent visitor to Bosnia. Two SS divisions were formed by Bosnian Moslems [and one by Albanian Moslems].

Although there was Serbian retaliation provoked by the massacres by Croats and Moslems, the figures indicated on page 3 are grossly exaggerated.

Izetbegović states that a majority of Moslems joined the Partisans to avoid being massacred by Četniks, ie Serbs [page 4]. There is some truth in this. After the surrender of Italy, Partisan's recruiting slogan was that only Tito would prevent the revenge by the Serbs for the genocide against them perpetrated by Croats and Moslems. From the second half of 1943 when it was clear that Germany will lose the war, many Croats and Moslems, including active members of the Ustaše, started joining the Partisans.

We also read on pages 4-6 of the struggle of the Moslems in the period after WW2. The impression given is that it was only, or at least mainly Moslems that suffered. There is no recognition that they, together with other Yugoslav nations, suffered under the Communism. In fact at the bottom of page 4 we read:"only Bosnian Moslems were left without real political representation". There is no mention that at the request of the Bosnian Moslems, Tito granted Moslems the status of a nations.

It also says that conditions started improving only after formation of the SDA. "In freedom, despite the economic crisis, Moslems are erecting new Moslem centres, mosques,..." [page 7]. The facts are that Moslems did comparatively very well during Tito's friendship with Arab countries. In communist Yugoslavia amongst newly built places of worship the number of mosques far exceeds that of Orthodox churches, and is also ahead of Catholic churches. Yet, for the whole of Yugoslavia Moslems are least numerous. To quote from the report dated September 3, 1992 of the TASK FORCE ON TERRORISM & UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE, House Republican Research Committee, U.S. House of Representatives:"Bosnia-Hercegovina have long been considered by Islamist leadership in the Middle-East be ripe as a vehicle for the expansion of Islamic militancy into Europe. Additionally, the pro-Arab policies of Tito government during the 1960's further enanced the situation of the Muslims as radical Arab movements were permitted to conduct active propaganda in Yugoslavia.... Increasingly, a growing number of local youth were sent to higher Islamic studies in the Middle East...where the classes of radical mullahs included some 250 Bosnians a year."

In 1941, before the Independent State of Croatia was formed, the Serb-Orthodox represented 44% of the populatio to 33% of the Moslems. Just the reverse of the situation at the beginning of the present conflict. The change was due to the massacre of Serbs, their exodus during WW2 and immediatly after, and more recently due to the difference in the birth-rate.

The Narrator's and Izetbegović's review of historic events is more in accord with Izetbegović's Islamic Declaration, than with his statement at the Congress that BiH must be a secular state. In fact, by recognising BiH before a federal constitution was agreed, EC invited Serbs to wait to the turn of century, when it was expected for Moslems to exceed 50% of the population, to see whether Izetbegović would honour his statement at the Congress or his statement in his *Islamic Declaration* that it was the duty of Moslems, when in majority, to introduced an Islamic state organisation.

You should also receive the translation
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The video-tape MUSLIMS - FROM THE NAME TO THE CONGRESS.

Remarks on the historical content of the Introduction

It is clear that the aim of the authors of this Introduction was to emphasize, and indeed glorify, the place of the Muslims in the historical development of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In view of Mr. Izetbegović's statements to the Congress concerning the need for a revival of Islamic spiritual values and religious identity among the Bosnian Muslims, the contents of the Introduction do not come as a surprise. On the other hand, at a time when the insistence on a harmonious multi-ethnic tradition and on the equality between religions in Bosnia-Herzegovina has been paramount, the exclusively Muslim angle from which its history has been represented and the tone of the Introduction are astonishing.

Moreover, the authors of the Introduction are guilty of misrepresentations of historical facts. In their effort to convince the viewer that Bosnian Muslims are "the autochthonous inheritors"(sic!) of the medieval kingdom of Bosnia the authors have introduced a number of names of persons and documents which form part of Serbian history, although the Serbs are not even mentioned.

It may be of interest to note that the first mention of Bosnia in the 10th century referred to by the authors, actually occurs in the writing of the Byzantine Emperor-historian Constantine Porphyrogenitos (*De Administrando Imperio*) where Bosnia is described as part of Serbian lands. In that early period the territory of Bosnia covered only the valley of the river Bosna. Later, the name was applied to wider stretches of western Serbian lands. From the end of the 12th century Bosnia was governed as a separate entity by local rulers, mostly under Hungarian suzerainty.

While the narrator speaks of the 12th century Bosnian Ban Kulin and of his charter issued to the city of Dubrovnik, the film shows first the initial page of the Gospel of Prince Miroslav, one of the best known Serbian illuminated manuscripts, dating from around 1185. Miroslav was the younger brother of the founder of the Serbian medieval state Stefan Nemanja and uncle of St. Sava, the first Archbishop of the autocephalous Serbian Orthodox Church. He ruled over the region of Hum. In the 15th century, when the governor of Hum, Stefan Vukčić Kosača, assumed the title of "Herzeg of St. Sava", this region became known as Herzegovina.

Both the charter of Ban Kulin and the Gospel of Prince Miroslav are written in Cyrillic. The Cyrillic script which is still used in Serbia, was prevalent in Bosnia until the end of the 19th century when it started being suppressed by the Austrian administration. Nowhere in the film is the word "Cyrillic" mentioned, although a reference to "switching to the Latin script" at the beginning of the 20th century is made (p.2). Ban Kulin's sister was married to Prince Miroslav and, as in later centuries, political interchanges between Serbia and Bosnia, as well as the original fund of a common language, literature and art, served as the basis for a varied development, open to many influences from the east as well as from the west. Regrettably, the authors of the Introduction avoid recognition of such facts.

On the contrary, they insist on a totally discredited theory that the Bosnian Muslims are descendants of the Bogomils, a medieval religious sect originating in Bulgaria for which there is no proof that it ever existed in Bosnia-Herzegovina. According to the Introduction, the Bogomils were "persecuted by the Roman Curia, Byzantium, Tsar Dušan and Hungary" before finding refuge in Bosnia. The Bosnian Bogomil theory was propounded by Austria in the 19th century in order to create artificially a lineage for the Bosnian Muslims separate from that of the Bosnian Croats and the Bosnian Serbs. This was aimed against emerging "Yugoslavism", with the intention of wooing the Bosnian Muslims and providing proof that Bosnia-Herzegovina (which Austria was about to annex) was mostly their land, with a past different to that of its Serbian and Croat inhabitants.

As an additional argument, some Austrian scholars interpreted the sepulchral monuments found in Bosnia-Herzegovina ("stećci") as those of the alleged Bosnian Bogomils who, with the coming of the Turks, readily converted to Islam. In spite of the paucity of sources concerning the Bosnian Church in the Middle Ages, recent research has shown that it was neither "Bogomil" nor heretical. It seems however that it had a weak hierarchic structure.

The tape shows a number of medieval "stećci": it is claimed that they are tombs of the Bogomil ancestors of Bosnian Muslims. Yet it is known with certainty that many of them mark burials of well known Orthodox Christians. With a degree of naivety, the narrator speaks of Bogomil "opposition to the anthropomorphic elements in religion" - intended to explain, one assumes, the later affinity of the Bogomils to Islam - but the tape shows several "stećci" with human figures carved on them).

While nobody wishes to deny that after the conquest of Bosnia-Herzegovina by Sultan Mehmed II (Al Fatih) in 1463 and especially in the 16th century when the Ottoman Empire was at its peak, rich Ottoman landowners built a great number of mosques and other architectural monuments of great artistic value, it is difficult to accept the glorification of this "renaissance" which Islam is supposed to have brought to the country. For those who did not wish to renounce their Christian faith, Turkish rule often meant persecution, forced migration and a fight for survival. For the majority of the population then, there could have been no question of a "renaissance".

Pursuing the theme of the flourishing of Bosnian Islamic culture in the course of the 500 years of Ottoman rule, the authors of the Introduction speak of the "Bosnian language" in which Bosnian Muslim authors and scholars wrote. This "Bosnian language" is said to have been also the "official diplomatic language at the Porte." This insistence on a "Bosnian language" is plain propaganda, devoid of any factual support. There is no Bosnian language separate from Serbian or Croat today, as there was no separate Bosnian language during the period of Ottoman rule over Bosnia. It is well known, however, that throughout the Ottoman period the Serbian language was indeed used as an official language at the Ottoman Court. This use was already established during the existence of the Serbian medieval state, through its numerous political and diplomatic exchanges with the Turks; it continued after the Ottoman conquest. In addition to many other sources which confirm this fact, it may be of interest to mention the existence of a dictionary containing Persian, Arab, Greek and Serbian phrases compiled for the sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror (Al Fatih), preserved in the Ayasofya Library at Istanbul. Its title is *Lugat-i farisî, arabî ve rumî ve sirb.*

Even those who are only superficially acquainted with the history of Bosnia-Herzegovina will realize how biased, negative and harmful this Introduction is. For the modern period, one finds that the well known and remarkable joint efforts in the cultural field of Muslim, Croat and Serbian intellectuals in Bosnia-Herzegovina at the turn of the century are not taken into consideration by the authors of the Introduction nor by Mr. Izetbegovic himself. The endeavours of those praiseworthy idealists, directed towards the common goal of raising the standard of their fellow citizens while aspiring at the same time to the rejection of foreign rule and the introduction of democracy in their land, are ignored. The cultural societies which flourished in Mostar and Sarajevo, the publishing of the famous journal *Bosanska Vila*, established in 1885 and many other examples of such activities, are left aside.

This tape is testimony to a trend in which snippets of historical data are used and rearranged with a specific aim. The great disregard for truth on the part of its authors leaves a painful impression.

The following is a translation from the Serbo-Croat transcript of a video tape produced by Sarajevo TV after the Congress of the Party of Democratic Action (Stranka Demokratske Akcije - SDA) held in Sarajevo 30 November to 1 December 1991. In reading the translation the following chronology may be helpful:

November 1990:

Multi-party elections: votes cast mainly according to ethnicity. A system of power sharing between Moslems, Serbs and Croats agreed. A. Izetbegović [Moslem] becomes President of the Presidium, J. Pelivan [Croat] becomes Prime Minister and M. Krajišnik [Serb] becomes President of the Assembly.

November/December 1991:

SDA Congress

January 1992:

EC recognises Slovenia and Croatia and invites other Yugoslav republics to apply for independence, subject to referenda.

Feb-March 1992:

Referendum held based on simple majority; boycotted by Serbs.

18 March 1992:

All parties accept EC proposal for a federal constitution.

April 1992:

EC recognises Bosnia-Herzegovina, USA recognises Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina; Izetbegović withdraws his acceptance of 18th March agreement.

MOSLEMS - FROM THE NAME TO THE CONGRESS

Narrator:

Many centuries passed before Moslems became what they are today. Much muddy and bloody water flowed through undetermined sectors of history and fate, for their spiritual tree to blossom at this Congress. Because, from the fall of the Illyricum to subsequent Roman, Slav, Turkish, Austro-Hungarian and other empires, up to the present day, Bosnia shares the fate of the specific area of a "Corpus separatum" and of a mediator between empires, powers, nations, cultures and civilisations.

Although the first mention of Bosnia goes as far back as the 10th century, there is no doubt that the Bosnian medieval state was established before the crowning of its first ban Borić in the 12th century - Banus Boricius de Bosnae. Bosnia was enjoying industrial and cultural prosperity already in the times of Kulin Ban, whose renowned charter sent to Dubrovnik in 1189 confirms the independence of a Bosnian state apparatus in economic and political affairs.

Bosnian Moslems are autochthonous inheritors of the inhabitants of the Bosnian medieval kingdom. Their ancestors, good Bosnians, known for their mildness and tolerance, belonged to Bogomilism, a people's faith which was opposed to hierarchical church organisation and anthropomorphic elements in religion. Bogumils were persecuted by the Roman Curia, by Byzantium, by Tzar Dušan and by the Hungarians. In Bosnia they found their peace-loving homeland, far from the reach of inquisitions.

The decisive historic moment for Bosnian Moslems occurred in 1463, the year in which Sultan Mehmed II Al Fatih conquered Bosnia and introduced it into a new, Islamic cultural circle of civilisation. This is why Moslems still today cherish the memory of the triumphal arrival of the Sultan Fatih into their homeland. Dovišta, at Karići near Bareš, on Ajratovica near Prusac and Buna near Mostar, where Islam was being spread by the young and the best of Fatih scholars - Ajvazdedo, Sari Saltuk and others - are witnesses of this epoch-making religious-cultural wave.

During the five-century long Ottoman rule, this nation produced several great and many smaller vezirs, beglerbegs, sandjakbegs and army leaders; many hundreds of interpreters of the Koran, experts in Mohammed's, *'alaihi as-selām* [Arabic: peace be unto him], tradition, judges, poets, lawyers, calligraphers, astronomers, doctors and philosophers who wrote in the Bosnian language, spreading the glory of their homeland Herzeg-Bosna. Their maternal Bosnian language was the official diplomatic language of the [Ottoman] Porte.

In the 17th century, Bosnian Moslems were the bearers of the first Bosnian-Moslem renaissance, in no way less significant than the one based on Antiquity which was developing amongst their neighbours. In the middle of the 19th century, following the introduction of reforms in the shaken [Ottoman] empire, conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina deteriorated. The Turkish empire retreated leaving Bosnia and Bosnian Moslems to the historic whirlwind.

By decision of the Congress of Berlin in 1878, Bosnia-Herzegovina falls under the rule of Austro-Hungary. However, its more or less present-day borders were established and recognised by international law at that Congress, as they were previously by the peace treaty of Sremski Karlovci in 1699, and by the peace agreement of Svishtovo in 1791, and later by the St. Germain peace treaty of 1919.

With the arrival of Austro-Hungary the Bosnian Moslems gradually join the modern European trends. In the beginning of the 20th century, after the catastrophic shock provoked by the Annexation, switching to the Latin script they declared their second cultural renaissance, thus stressing their adherence to their homeland, Bosnia-Herzegovina, to the Bosnian language, to Islam and their spiritual tree; being neither Serbs nor Croats, having always in sharp focus what they are not, always attached to their historic Bosnian territory and destiny; exactly in the year 1900, rejecting all attempts of denying their identity, they declare themselves for the first time as Moslems by nationality. In that period they form societies and institutions, newspapers with the attribute "Moslem" in their titles. Sadly, those were also the years of a mass exodus of Moslems from Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Sandzak to Turkey and Albania. The first man of the Moslem people, the President of the Party Of Democratic Action [SDA] Mr. Alija Izetbegović will speak on that subject.

Izetbegović:

If we consider the history of the past 100 years or so, I always think of three "eights": 1878, 1908 and 1918. Why these three years? These three years were decisive in the last 100 years of the history of the Moslem people. On one occasion I made a somewhat unacceptable statement that to a certain extent we look like a "plucked" nation. I was referring to a very unfortunate fact: the elite, that which was the best in the Moslem people, left as a consequence of what happened in the three years I mentioned.

As you know, Austria came in 1878. The best people decided to emigrate, having first resisted Austrian troops under Hadži Roja and Hadži Amalković. However, this resistance was defeated, and the majority, and that was the best element, left for Turkey. They left their holdings, but took with them their faith and, as they say, their good name and their thought and their spirit. They left this world and they chose, as they say, the other kingdom. They departed to a foreign ..er., they left for Turkey; according to some, they left with only few possessions. They left the land they owned, their houses etc. This was the first wave of the emigration of the leading elements, of the rich, the intellectuals, the religious intelligentsia, the cream; only the simple folk remained. That process lasted for 30 years, until 1908. That was a somewhat undetermined period: Bosnia was occupied but not annexed, Austria ruled *de facto*, but it was *de jure* Turkey.

Annexation took place in 1908 and the second wave of emigration. Then 1918 and the aftermath of WW1 and the third wave of emigration. You know this was negative selection. The essential point is that all that was best in the Moslem nation left, and that which was no good remained. We are the descendants of those who stayed. Unfortunately. Of course, not everyone left. However the Moslem nation, unlike other nations in Bosnia, was deprived of its strongest element, its strongest component; it was miraculous, to tell you truthfully, that we survived after all that, but survived we did; passing of course through very difficult situations.

NARRATOR:

The WW1 period was the period of the political idea of Yugoslavism, which was a stepmother but sometimes also a mother to the Bosnian Moslems. In December 1918 the National Council, that is the National Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina joined the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The new state denied the national identity of Bosnian Moslems. At the first elections for the constitutional parliament, the Yugoslav Moslem Organization [JMO] headed by Dr. Mehmed Spaho received 38% of the votes. JMO was the largest Moslem political organization before WW2. The basis of its program was striving for the autonomy and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and for the protection and affirmation of Moslem rights. As it was not allowed to operate outside Bosnia-Herzegovina, Džemijet, the political organisation of Moslems from the Sandžak and Kosovo, complemented JMO's aims in the two provinces.

At the request of JMO, the first constitution of the Yugoslav political union, the so called Constitution of Vidovdan 1921, sanctioned the autonomy of Bosnia-Herzegovina. It was only King Aleksandar Karadjordjević's constitution of 1929 that abolished its autonomy and integrity. In its history Bosnia was split-up only from 1929 until the shameful Cvetković-Maček agreement in 1939 and during WW2; this was against the will of Moslems and of patriots of the other two constituent nations, Serbs and Croats.

In WW2 Moslems, all of them anti fascist, shed blood for their own freedom. Their leading religious figures and civil leaders in all larger towns of Bosnia-Herzegovina rose against the fascist genocide of Serbs and Jews. They wrote important resolutions against that evil, and whenever they could they defended their neighbours. Moslems form their brigades, they rescue the muhadžirs [Turkish for refugees], they resist Četniks and Ustaše, but they resist also bolshevism. Innocent in the Serb-Croat conflict, they lost over 8% of their mainly civilian population. The number of Moslems who were killed, murdered and who suffered in other ways reaches between 200,000 and 500,000. The places where Bosnian Moslem

suffered on the river Drina were in the vicinity of Čajniče, Pokliviljane and elsewhere in the Sandžak, etc. Before the SDA party was formed no one dared mention, let alone mark these places.

Izetbegović:

Just then, possibly in those days, in that year, an idea was formed which later became a powerful movement - the idea of the Young Moslems - that was the attempt to return Moslems back to their roots, I could say to find themselves again and, while searching for their origin, return to their roots. That was not so much a search for a nation: it was more a search for spiritual sources for the Moslem people here. I was one of the first men who joined them - that is the movement started by a group of Belgrade Moslem students, and I belonged, let us say, to the second generation - I was then in high school; I first joined a group, then a movement which gathered around the idea of Islam, men who belonged to it, men who wanted to join such an idea; the end of the war came and the communist seizure of power. You see during the war Moslems found themselves in a vice: they had to choose between physical or spiritual annihilation; you know, it seems to me, they risked losing their spiritual identity in order to save their bare lives. And so a number of them accepted the Partisans as the only alternative open to them at the time, as they faced being physically eliminated by the Četnik movement, which did not hide those intentions. In such a situation Moslems had no other alternative; they accepted the Partisans and most of them joined the Partisans. It was clear that we would have to face an attempt at spiritual destruction. However, people believed that if we saved our lives, we would be able to fight later for our souls, and that fight did resume later.

The Partisans arrived; Young Moslems automatically came into conflict with them. The first arrests took place already in 1946; group after group were sentenced to prison terms in 46, 47, 48, 49; this was a great score-settling with the Young Moslem movement. Some tens of heads fell or were condemned to death. A great number, I believe over 1000, were arrested during 1949 and sentenced to prison terms. I believe that these sentences totalled several tens of thousands of years.

Narrator:

The Bosnian Moslems had their biggest disappointment at the second meeting of AVNOJ [Tito's Partisan congress] in Jajce, where a second, federal Yugoslavia was formed. Only Bosnian Moslems remained unrecognised in the illogically organised federation. The second Moslem homeland, the Sandžak, which was part of Bosnia-Herzegovina until 1872, was left without its autonomy in the new Yugoslavia, although AVNOJ decisions cite that the supreme legislative and executive organ of the Sandžak ZAVNO, intended to achieve autonomy for the province in the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia equal to that of Vojvodina and Kosovo.

The period from 1945 to the 1970's was the "icy" period for the (nationally) "undecided", as socialist Yugoslavia referred to Moslem people. During Ranković's terror they were again escaping to muhadžiluk [Turkish for refuge/exile]. The authorities were arresting and prosecuting fighters for their rights; only Bosnian Moslems were left without real political representation, without cultural and national institutions.

Izethbegović:

Well, those were really "icy" years. One can say that this was a situation in which immediately after the war Communism, socialist ideas were accepted in Yugoslavia and in the world in general; one speaks of socialism as being a world process etc. Religion was being suppressed. Communists were attempting by all means to establish - what one can refer to as a "melting pot", a pot in which everything would be cooked together to get an impersonal mass in which there is no religion or nation. In fact, attempts at similar experiments were made elsewhere in the world, and everywhere they failed because nations exist, religions exist, cultures exist. This mosaic is a natural phenomenon, and in my opinion, Communists embarked on an unnatural path. And as it transpired later, and as we predicted in the first days of the war - this policy was to end in a complete debacle, disintegration, as it has been shown in recent years; all this happened, as I said, because this was an unnatural path.

As far as we were concerned, after we were released from prison - some people spent as much as 10-12 years in prison, this [Moslem?] idea was of course smouldering, as was that resistance, in some way clandestine resistance, because there was no chance for public resistance. The Government had introduced legislation according to which one could go to prison for one or two years for one word. And for an organisation, or for an attempt to form an organisation, or for an attempt to organise a revolt or some general resistance, you could lose your head, or get 10 to 15 years, or be removed completely from public life. However, despite that, we were seeking ways to keep alive this thought, we were gathering something which was still within the borders of what was permissible, not completely banned, and that was religion. We wrote articles, we organised private meetings, we were attempting to keep alive the Islamic idea.

We noticed that a sincere understanding of Islam was hindered by a decadence which had lasted some 100-200 years. Islam was reduced to a religion in which one saw nothing living, nothing real, which had bearing on people's everyday life. We were in fact trying to revive those concepts and those components, those elements of Islam, which spoke of real life, and also about the political life of man, about his science. As the first priority, we tried to awaken interest for it by returning to memories, by removing the oblivion of glorious periods of Islam during its long history.

After Tito's death [1980] there were changes, and only after about three years numerous arrests took place, and a trial against Moslems was organised. The substance of the accusation was that they were propagating the creation of an Islamic republic, an organised nationalistic gathering of Moslems, causing conflicts with others etc. Today, the investigations which have been carried out show that the accusations were invented, that they were without foundation. The real reason for prosecution was to be found in the fact that rulers, who had started feeling some weaknesses, tried, by means of fear and reprisals, to strengthen their hold. One of these trials, as you know, took place in 1983. It lasted over a month and both domestic and foreign media took notice of it; 12 Moslem intellectuals received long term sentences. I was one of them; I forgot to tell you that in 1946, one year after the war ended, I was sentenced to three years on account of Islamic activities. So I spent 9 years in prison; that is a good portion of a lifetime of some 60-70 years.

Towards the end of 1989 I decided to start with the creation of a Moslem party. I thought about this while I was in prison. I spoke about it to some friends and reflected on the fact

that a day would come when I would organise the Moslem people here. The first work on this started in November 1989, a year after I was released from prison. I held discussions with some friends and then started to form a party. The aim was to organize the Moslem nation to fight for its identity, to regain its freedom, to have all those things which other nations have; Moslems were deprived of these things more than other nations. Had the existing situation lasted some 10-15 years longer, I fear that we would never have managed to return to our source. However God did not want that to happen; in my opinion we were in time. Approximately three months after the first thoughts about forming a party, towards the end of March 1990, we published the well-known Statement by 40 Moslem intellectuals, a public statement in which we announced the formation of a Moslem party.

Narrator

On the 26th of May 1990, the first inaugural assembly of the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) which is the political organization of the Moslem historic area on the territory of Yugoslavia, was held."

Izetbegović (speaking to the inaugural assembly):

This is why we are forming today this party and we demand full freedom of action as well as fully equal treatment to existing, so-called social/political organisations, and the use of information media, offices and technical and financial resources. We demand the same for other parties irrespective of whether they are national or supranational, if there are such.

Narrator:

Although according to its founders and members, the SDA is a Moslem party it came out with a supranational programme and demanding democracy for all. Fundamental principles and aims of the SDA expressed at its Inaugural Assembly were: affirmation of human rights; democracy; affirmation of identity of Moslems; autonomy and freedom of action for all religious organisations; market economy; private enterprise; abolition of property without proprietors; a cheaper state; advance in social rights; equality of all nations which form Yugoslavia; affirmation of rights of national minorities; safeguarding the integrity and immutability of the borders of Bosnia-Herzegovina and of Yugoslavia; denationalization of the property of religious organisations which had been nationalised; cultural-educational autonomy for the Sandžak.

The formation of [party] branches followed soon: Novi Pazar with more than 50,000 participants; Foča - those killed by Četnik's knife and bullet were on that occasion remembered; Velika Kladuša [town in Cazinska Krajina] with more than 300,000 participants, without doubt the biggest political gathering in Yugoslavia; and further in Croatia, Slovenia, Australia, Germany, Switzerland, Canada, Montenegro, Belgrade, Macedonia. In this triumphal progress within two to three months, the SDA became a mass movement of nearly 800,000 members.

At the first postwar multi-party elections in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the SDA got most votes, 33% of the total electorate. Out of 240 seats in the two houses of Bosnia-Herzegovina parliament, SDA got 86 seats. Its candidates, Mr Alija Izetbegović, Mr. Fikret Abdić and Dr. Ejup Ganić, became members of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Presidium,

and Dr. Rusmir Mahmutcehajić and Muhamed Čengić became deputy prime ministers in the Bosnia-Herzegovina Government.

Parallel with the political renewal, the religious and cultural renaissance of Bosnian Moslems started developing. The choir of Gazi Huserbegova Medresa made a particular contribution to this: it announced the awakening of the Muslim people: first at the opening of the mosque in Zagreb in 1986, and it confirmed it at the unforgettable celebration of the 450th anniversary of the Gazi Huserbeg medresa in Zepa.

The Islamic Union, which organised these and other celebrations, joined in this work before others. Today, with its new constitution and its Reis Ul Ulema [Moslem religious head], it is endeavouring to reorganize itself. In freedom, despite the economic crisis, Moslems are erecting new Moslem centres, mosques, mesdžide [houses for prayers], they are publishing significant works and textbooks, they are developing religious teaching and a life governed by religion. The work of the cultural society, Moslem Renewal, has been re-established; this society has attracted the best-known names in science, arts and culture; similarly the work of the Moslem charity society, Merhamet [compassion], is providing assistance to the sick, disabled, expelled [homeless?] and to the unfortunate. The newspaper *Muslimanski Glas* [Moslem Voice] has been inaugurated; it provides information about the most important political, religious and cultural events and ideas.

During the three days of the first SDA Congress, 29 November - 1 December 1991, Sarajevo was defined as the capital of the European Moslems: 600 delegates from all parts of the world gathered there, as well as a similar number of guests from 15 countries from Europe, America, Canada, Australia and other countries. Over 170 newspaper, radio and television journalists reported on the proceedings of the Congress....The President of the SDA Alija Izetbegović then addressed the congress. His address included the following :

Izetbegović [addressing the Congress]

Conditions and this particular moment are really strange, sadly, strange in the negative meaning of the word. Bosnia and Herzegovina and with it the Moslem nation, are going through the most dramatic moments of the last hundred years of their history. Briefly, it is the choice between war and peace. Bosnia knew war and peace in the past. The present situation is made exceptional and unique because the war which is looming would not be an ordinary war. War in today's Bosnia would be a total war, and many important actors in these events are not aware of it or are behaving as if they were not aware.

The [Yugoslav] Army is strolling up and down Bosnia as if everything is in order. And some new cartographers, completely oblivious that they are sitting on a powder keg, are drawing new maps and are dividing Bosnia, as if they do not like its frontiers, dating from more than three hundred years, formed by political changes of a tectonic power and during a long and turbulent history. According to them, these borders are administrative, arbitrary, while those which they are now formulating, in smoke-filled party offices, are true and historic, as if they are not arbitrary and administrative. If the powder keg goes off, everything will vanish in smoke and shame: and cartographers and generals, and all parties and all leaders, laws and institutions, most of what has been achieved over the years by the painstaking work of tens of generations. As they have the ill luck of being indestructible, the three nations, blood stained and defeated will remain; distraught and brought to edge of barbarism. Faced with this sombre vision, our party has opted for peace and avoidance of any risk of conflict. The

greater the danger, the greater and more determined our choice of peace.

Narrator:

Continuing, Alija Izetbegović stressed that the SDA has its specific aims and interests, but in fighting for peace it represents all citizens and nations of this republic because that is in the highest interest of all. Accepting without reservation the Hague Document, Moslems still believe in the possibility of the union of nations, however loosely connected, based on human rights and a free market, but they reject such creations as the one being offered by the so called Belgrade Initiative, because that is neither Yugoslavia nor democracy.

In view of the make-up of its inhabitants, Bosnia-Herzegovina must have special relations with Serbia on the one hand and with Croatia on the other, irrespective of whether these two republics will have any inter-relation between themselves. There will be no passports for Serbs on the Drina, nor for Croats on the Una and Sava.

Izetbegović:

Serbia and Croatia are national states. Bosnia-Herzegovina is not and it can be only a civil state. This is because Moslems, Serbs and Croats do not inhabit Bosnia-Herzegovina: it is a mixture of these three nations that lives here, and of course some other nations in smaller numbers. If someone speaks about self-determination in the ethnic sense of the word, then he must explain how one can apply this, otherwise indisputable, principle to a mixture of people, such as for example, we find in Sarajevo, and in Bosnia and Herzegovina in general.

Therefore in Bosnia and Herzegovina the real question is not whether one should self-determine the nations and in what way, but how to self-determine their mixture. So far nobody has given a decisive and clear theoretical answer. Of course a practical answer exists: it is a multi-confessional, multi-national and multi-cultural union. Why spoil something which came about by lucky historical coincidences, something that functioned well, and something that represented in general a humane democratic and, if you will, a European solution? Why change this even if it were possible, and especially as it is impossible without force and blood, and particularly if this would mean a retrograde concept of national autocracy?

Therefore I call on all fellow-citizens, Serb and Croat, and Serb and Croat neighbours and their leaders, to seek a humane exit out of this confrontation, a solution based on rights and reason, in order to save our nations from suffering such as we saw too much of in recent days.

Let nobody try to enslave us, as they could not do it. Let them not take our rights from us, because we will take them back sooner or later. We do not cherish our lives more than others, nor do we fear death more than others; wounds hurt us in the same way. We have declared neutrality in this war [in Croatia] because it is a dirty fratricidal war in which we must not and should not dirty our hands. We have refused to send our boys into this war because this is not a liberation war. In this way we have saved many lives and many souls, lives because they were not killed; souls because they did not kill. We prevented them from becoming executioners or victims.

This stand of ours has been recognised and supported by all men of good will here and abroad. It increased enormously Bosnian prestige in the world. At a time when one is ashamed of some events which are taking place in this area, if you happen to be in a foreign land, you can rightly say that you are from Herzeg-Bosna. That means that you are for peace, democracy and human rights.

Narrator:

The President of the Party for Democratic Action said also that the irony of the moment is the fact that, although Bosnia-Herzegovina proclaimed its demilitarisation, it is at the moment a stretch of land with probably the greatest concentration of armed forces and military technology in the world. He asked what the [Yugoslav] Army's war aims in Croatia are? Why such ferocity in waging the war and why are these rockets in Bosnia-Herzegovina? Having stressed that Moslems have no intention of resolving these problems by confrontation, he underlined that the [Yugoslav] Army should be helped to transform itself. Professional soldiers should be guaranteed their earned rights. The SDA, being the party of the poor must especially take care of two threatened regions, that of Zenica and Cazinska Krajina. Zenica should become the centre of all black metallurgy. Agrokomerc must be assisted, which after all was an election promise. One should also continue with privatisation which has already started, but one must stop selling shares, because in certain cases this resulted in robbery of communal property. He continued:

Izetbegović:

This Congress must be used to introduce into the party management new, particularly younger, men. The party is enormous because it has encompassed, as members or sympathisers, the whole Moslem nation, not only in Yugoslavia but in the world. However it started looking like a premature baby with a huge body and a small head. The services of the party management have not developed sufficiently and cannot meet the increased requirements. The concentration of power in one person has without any doubt contributed to this. These shortcomings have been defined, and at this Congress effective measures will be decided to remove them. I believe that the way is open for this.

I will conclude this short report by addressing myself to the Moslem people in Bosnia and Herzegovina, to those in the Sandžak, Macedonia, Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia. The following is my message:

Just as we find ourselves today, another nation, it is not important which, has found itself at this moment on a similar crossroads. Will we bow our heads or remain upright? Will we be slaves or remain free men? The poet of that nation, which I did not name, replied with those glorious words, with which I wish to conclude this short report:

"We swear by the Almighty
That we shall not be slaves."

After the address by Alija Izetbegović, the principal guests were introduced: the Ambassadors

of Turkey, Libya and Iran, the representative of the Moslems from China, a member of the Australian parliament, representatives of Bosnian Serbs and Croats, representatives from Serbia and Croatia and other guests.

The rest of the tape consists of extracts from the discussion in the main session and from the work of some of the committees; some of the discussion is summarised by the Narrator. We have summarised or translated some of these.

The dispute between Firket Abdić [Leader from Bihać and Cazinska Krajina], member of the Presidency, and a number of other members of the party was sharp.

Abdić:

"Since the day I was elected, by the greatest number of votes, I have in the interest of the Moslem people remained silent about a great number of issues. That is a particular problem here. One must discuss it openly. If it was my intention to be silent as a member of the present regime, I would have been silent in the previous, in the one which was demanding my head; there was no democracy then and it was normal for heads to roll."

Narrator:

"There were sharp confrontations on the third day, as on the previous day. Fikret Abdić's demands to open even wider the doors to the democratic process resulted in open, and at moments emotional, contributions from some delegates; they were commenting on some assertions by him [Abdić] of what is and what is not the interest of the Moslem people and about his identification with such interests.

Omer Mehmed warned that one must not allow the meeting to become an assembly of Alija Izetbegović or of Fikret Abdić. He reminded the audience that at the time of the famous trial of 1983 Abdić was a member of the Central Committee [of the Communist Party] who staged the trial.

Anila Omersoftić complained that Abdić has not yet met the members of the SDA Executive Committee and that he still has not declared himself in the parliament for a sovereign Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Mustafa Spahić also stressed Abdić's communist past and his emphasising his own values; he also pointed out that Abdić did not have the courage to make his points fully."

Dissatisfaction was shown by some delegates about the way members of the Party's General Council were elected. An agreement was reached to elect 101 members, but the rest would be co-opted by the Party President. [the total figure is not on the tape]

Dr. Naim Kadić, President of the SDA MP's, complained that they have no adequate contacts with the Executive of the Party. Major decisions are made without consultation with the MP's of the Party; he, their president, is never invited to the meetings of the Party Executive.

The delegate from the Sandžak demanded that the JNA [Yugoslav Army] be immediately declared an army of occupation.

Dr. Nihad Hasić, a member of the Bosnia-Herzegovina Government, made the following contribution:

"We must understand that there could be no question of us being a nation in all possible aspects if we were to join the rump Federation, because we would then enter a completely new system of values which would bring back to us Yugoslavia; the history of the last few decades would be repeated. Therefore, the great battle is not because of the love of Croatia, the battle is to open towards Croatia to the same extent as towards the East, that is a fundamental question for the nation, for Moslems as a nation.

The second question concerns Europe. We are really in a cleft of categories. To what extent do we define what is specifically ours, our values, our identity in Europe which is more and more becoming a universal system of values etc.? Therefore, to what extent do we have to safeguard our specific values in the way we think, in politics, philosophy and in what is specifically ours?

Thirdly, inside Bosnia-Herzegovina itself, it is true that multi-culture is an advantage, but at the same time it is a great handicap. Why? Because we have no state of our own; moreover we have no regions of our own. We are intermixed; we have common schools, all living is common. To what extent should we define our specific categories in the way we think, in politics, strategy, philosophy? To what extent define our specific interests without being a selfish nation closed to others, for all this to be at the same time in the interest of all three nations?

The fourth question concerns the building of our institutions. Regrettably in the past we have not built institutions in time, nor our heroes [?]. A strong intellectual nucleus is required. This will be a long-term task, tens and more years; first of all we need a Moslem historic vocabulary."

Irfan Ljubljanski, a member of parliament, reported on the work of the Committee for Social Affairs:

"...Creation of new separate national institutions should not in any way bring into question the sense and development of existing, and the formation of new, common institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina... One must urgently remove the anti-religious element from the existing educational system in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and make sure that the place given to religious culture is in harmony with our being part of European culture...Concerning primary schools one must decide as far as Moslem children are concerned, to teach before anything else the value of Moslem history and culture; other subjects should be expanded at higher levels of education."

Abdo Hebib, a councillor to MUP [Ministry of Internal Affairs] made the following contribution:

"In the present complex political situation and with difficulties in matters of public safety, Bosnia-Herzegovina looks increasingly like a powder keg which could explode at any moment. We believe and hope that wisdom will prevail and that this catastrophic self-destruction will not take place. However, the fact is that until yesterday we could have talked of some parts of the republic which represented oases of peace: today we can say there is almost no area in our beautiful Bosnia and Herzegovina which we could so describe."

EMBASSY OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA**2410 CALIFORNIA STREET, N.W. WASHINGTON, D.C. 20008-1679**

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Br./No.

Datum/Date. 20.9.1993.

Za / To Fax broj / Fax No.	SERB -NET 312-787-0227		
Na ruke / Attention	Mr. George Bogdanich		
Kopija / CC			
Od / From			
Vaš broj / Ref. No.		Broj strana / No. of pages (računajući i ovu/including this one)	7

PORUKA / MESSAGE:

Please find enclosed documentation pertaining to the casualties sustained by the innocent Serbian civilian population during the latest aggression by the military of the Republic of Croatia against the Republic of Serbian Krajina.



ZIVKOV IC



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1949-6\98

17 SEPTEMBER 1998

**TO ALL SERBIAN INSTITUTIONS IN EUROPE
AND THE OVERSEAS COUNTRIES**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbian Krajina presents its compliments to the Serbian institutions in Europe and the overseas states and herewith encloses documentation pertaining to the casualties sustained by the innocent Serbian civilian population during the latest aggression by the military of the Republic of Croatia against the Republic of Serbian Krajina.

The Ministry kindly requests that the contents of the enclosed documentation be transmitted to all the domestic political and media institutions, so that the same may be enlightened with the current situation in Krajina.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the RSK avails its self of confirming its highest esteem



Б/О MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Branko Filipovic
Branko Filipovic
Chief of the 1st Directory



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Off. No. 1949\93

TRANSLATION OF RSK COMMUNICATION DATED 16.09.1993.

REPUBLIC OF SERBIAN KRAJINA
GOVERNMENT

Commission for humanitarian questions
Knin, 16. September 1993.

Esteemed Mr. Filipović,

At your request we are herewith transmitting to you details pertaining to the latest Croatian crimes against the civilians of the Republic of Serbian Krajina, which have been implemented only in the last ten days.

During the latest aggression of the Croatian Army against the Republic of Serbian Krajina, in the attacks against the villages of Čitluk, Počitelj and Divoselo, 50 civilians have been killed, whose remains are not accessible to us. According to our data, in the mentioned villages there remained a total of 119 persons whose fate is unknown to us. In the village of Čitluk, there remained 35 persons, but it should be underlined that there was not a single combatant - all of them are inhabitants of the villages. We know definitely that in the village of Počitelj, Milan and Dragica Vujnović had their throats slit, but we fear that the Croatian side will not permit the transmission of their remains. In quite a similar occurrence in October of 1991, when 120 Serbs were killed in Gospić, we have to this day not managed to locate any trace of them. It is probable that a large number of them have been thrown in the caves of Mt. Velebit, and we are of the opinion that the Croats will do the same with the civilians who have been massacred in Divoselo, Počitelj, and Čitluk.



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A few days before the attack against Lika, one group of regular Croatian troopers descended upon the village of Mirlović Polje, near Drnis. On that occasion seven civilians - elders, were killed and their remains mutilated, of whom three were incinerated. Of this crime we possess video-recordings, which we are transmitting to you tomorrow, while in the enclosure of this communication we are sending you a list of the massacred civilians with their names. We would like to point out that video-recordings were made by representatives of the Civilian Police of UNPF.

In the bombardment of Serbian villages, during the attack against Lika, 15 persons were killed and 150 wounded. We are also conveying their names in the enclosure. One of the great consequences of the Croatian attack is the increase in the number of refugees - by 1200, including 60 babies. We are underlining that almost all of the Serbian houses in the occupied villages have been incinerated and demolished, so that their inhabitants would not be able to return. The incineration and destruction of the houses, according to the statements of the UNPROFOR representatives, is not a consequence of any military activities, the same being implemented after the termination of all combat on these regions.

As an exceptionally important fact in the exposure of Croatian crimes, we are mentioning the fact that Croatian military and civilian authorities have not permitted an approach to the occupied regions to representatives of any of the international humanitarian organizations, something that can be confirmed by the same. The reason is clear - the concealment of brutal crimes against the inhabitants of Divošelo, Počitelj and Citluk.

We kindly request that these facts be transmitted to Mr. Pavicević with a comment that the video-recordings from Mirlović Polje and data from tomorrow's post - mortem will be transmitted subsequently.

PRESIDENT OF THE COMMISSION
Savo Štrbac

(Government rubber stamp)

(signature)



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Page No. 4.

Off.No.1949\93

TRANSLATION OF COMMUNICATION NO. HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL 30-1\93

REPUBLIC OF SERBIAN KRAJINA

MINISTRY OF DEFENSE

Directory "Northern Dalmatia"

Section Knin

Command for civilian defense

and protection

Number - Highly Confidential 30-1\93

Knin, 10 September 1998.

Subject - Report pertaining to the deaths
of civilians in Miriovic Polje

On the morning of 07. September 1998, at approximately 08,00 h, this Command was, by telephone, informed by the military representative of the duties which it had to undertake pertaining to the deaths of civilians in Miriovic Polje. Upon conducted preparations, the Command team set out for the terrain at 10,00 h. Prior to this team, a Commission of the Civilian Police of UNPROFOR, together with correspondents and a TV team from Knin, had set out beforehand. The first information pertaining to the events were rendered to us by the commander of the unit in Kanjanima. According to his words, the attack against the village started at 06,30 h. and lasted until 11,30 h. on the day of 06. September 1998, at the locality of the village called Donje Selo.

The Command Commission and the Civilian Police of the UN discovered at the scene of the crime the remains of the following civilians -



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-
- 1) BIBIĆ Milos, of the late Ilija, born on 02. August 1926 in Mirlović Polje, by nationality a Serb, resident in Mirlović Polje. Comment - his remains were incinerated,
 - 2) BIBIĆ Vasilija, nee Bibić, the wife of Mile, born on 23. February 1926 in Mirlović Polje, by nationality a Serb, resident in Mirlović Polje. Comment - her remains were incinerated,
 - 3) TRZIN Ljubica, of the late Petra, unmarried, born on 12. January 1987. in Mirlović Polje, by nationality a Serb, resident in Mirlović Polje. Comment - her remains were incinerated,
 - 4) BIBIĆ Božo, of the late Jovan, born on 06. January 1907. in Mirlović Polje, by nationality a Serb, resident in Mirlović Polje. Comment - he was executed,
 - 5) BIBIĆ Božica, nee Trzin, wife of Božo, born on 28. December 1912. in Mirlović Polje, by nationality a Serb, resident in Mirlović Polje. Comment - she was executed,
 - 6) TRZIN Ljubica, nee Bibić, wife of Nikola, born on 02. April 1998. in Mirlović Polje, by nationality a Serb, resident in Mirlović Polje. Comment - she was executed,
 - 7) SARAC Marta, nee Besević, widow of Jova, born on 17. July 1907. in Mirlović Polje, by nationality a Serb, resident in Mirlović Polje. Comment - she was executed.

The date of death for all of the listed is 05. September 1993 in the time - period between 06,30 - 11,30 h. ie, during the time when the attack against the village lasted.



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All have been buried in the local cemetery of Baljci. In the grave of Bibic Ilija of the late Simo - the last grave to the right from the entrance, Bibic Milos-Mile and Bibic Vasilija have been buried. In the grave without any markings, fifth row from the entrance to the right - second to the fence, Bibic Bozo and Bibic Bozica have been buried. In the grave without any markings, fifth row from the entrance to the right, the first from the fence (middle left), Sarac Marta is buried. In her personal grave, the first behind the church, Ljubica Trzin of the late Peter, is buried. In the grave without any markings, the third from the entrance, Trzin Ljubica, wife of Nikola, is buried.

The burials have been conducted by employees of the municipal firm from Knin, Djulic Djurdj, Djakovic Marko, Djekovic Nikola, Raskovic Nikola, and group supervisor Rasovic Spiro. The sanitation technician was Medic Bosko, employee of the Medical Centre from Knin, the organizers of the task were Vujatovic Drago, Chief of the Command for Civilian Defense and Protection, and Marjanovic Mirko, a member of the same Command. There were present a number of representatives from the Military of the RSK, as well as local inhabitants from Mirlovic Polje and Vajjaka.

TV recordings, as well as photographs from the scene of the crimes, were taken by the present correspondents, as well as by the representatives of the Civilian Police of the UN.

DIRECTORY CHIEF

(signature) (rubber stamp)

Drago Vujatovic

Muslim plot to shape new Bosnia

Ian Traynor in Sarajevo

WHILE Western capitals and international mediators keenly await a decision tomorrow from Bosnia's parliament on the Geneva plan to partition the country, a power struggle is under way inside Sarajevo's Muslim elite not so much over the plan as over what kind of rump state will follow the peace.

For the past four days the capital's movers and shakers have been plotting and arguing in secret conclaves in shell-pocked halls and smoky back-rooms in an attempt to hammer out a blueprint for the rump Muslim-dominated state which is emerging.

Bosnia's Serb and Croat leaders have already accepted the plan, which leaves the Bosnian Muslims about 30 per cent of the partitioned country.

President Alija Izetbegovic has called an emergency session of what remains of the Bosnian parliament tomorrow to deliver a verdict. But in an effort to preempt debate and present MPs with a *fait accompli*, another, exclusively Muslim, assembly meets today.

The consensus here is that it is today's assembly, and not

tomorrow's parliamentary session, that is the key meeting.

"In many respects the assembly is more competent to decide than the parliament," Alija Isakovic, a leading Muslim nationalist activist, said yesterday. "The Serb and Croat sides have made their decisions and we must make ours." Mr Isakovic heads the Congress of Muslim Intellectuals and is regarded as close to President Izetbegovic.

His growing presence and assertive Muslim nationalist statements have alarmed Bosnian secularists and non-nationalists of all confessions and races, who now talk openly of quitting the embryonic rump state.

"If I wanted to stay in a Muslim state, I would go to Iran or Morocco," said a young Sarajevo Muslim. "I was born here and want to stay here. But the only thing that keeps me here is the prospect of a civil society. If it turns out to be a Muslim republic, I'm leaving."

Today's assembly has been organised by the main Muslim political party and by religious and academic figures, and its backers constitute a Who's Who of power and influence in Muslim Sarajevo, from the president and military leaders to the head of Bosnian television.

A hard core of 30 to 40 leaders representing five key Muslim organisations has been meeting to plot today's outcome.

All the signs are that they have already accepted the Geneva plan and are concentrating on dominating the institutions and political machinery of the rump state being formed.

They argue that their assembly of about 350 representatives from the parts of Bosnia not seized by the Serbs or Croats is the true representative of the Muslim people and that its decision will constitute a mini-referendum on the peace plan. But unlike those in parliament tomorrow, the assembly is self-appointed and unelected.

All its deliberations have been behind closed doors and today's debate is also likely to be a closed session.

Critics point out that the population of the proposed rump state, while Muslim dominated, will be 25 per cent non-Muslim, made up of Serbs and Croats loyal to Bosnia who abhor the nationalist regimes in Belgrade and Zagreb and their campaign to partition the republic.

Mr Isakovic and his colleagues maintained yesterday that everyone in the Muslim-dominated state would enjoy full civil rights. But by exclud-

ing non-Muslims from today's meeting, they have effectively denied them a voice in deciding their fate.

"The very moment the borders are fixed and open, the Serbs and Croats will leave," said Kemal Khrelja, another leading congress member.

"Izetbegovic is preparing this assembly to proclaim a Muslim republic. It's a coup d'état," said Muhamad Filipovic, a leader of the Muslim liberal opposition. "Izetbegovic is behind this. They've already accepted the peace agreement. Now they're fighting for power in what comes next."

"Some want the rump state to continue as a mini-Bosnia-Herzegovina, preserving democracy, human values and ethnic diversity," said Gordana Knezevic, a Serb who is deputy editor of the Sarajevo daily paper, Oslobođenje. "Others want to see a 100 per cent Muslim country."

● Croat government forces fired on UN peacekeeping soldiers trying to rescue a comrade wounded in a frontline minefield on the edge of a Serb-held enclave, UN officials said yesterday. The UN commander has protested to Croat military command about Saturday's shooting, in which no one was hurt.

The Guardian 9/27/93

Muslims resist crackdown in north-western rebel enclave

Reuter in Zagreb

TENS of thousands of people in a maverick Bosnian Muslim enclave took to the streets to resist a military crackdown ordered by their president, Alija Izetbegovic, dissident spokesmen said yesterday.

A close aide to Fikret Abdic, leader of the Bihac enclave, said security forces loyal to Mr Izetbegovic seized police installations in five enclave towns in north-west Bosnia yesterday after ordering a 24-hour curfew and occupying local radio stations.

But tens of thousands of unarmed civilians had swarmed on to roads between key towns in an effort to block Bosnian government soldiers from seizing more targets, said Mr Abdic's legal adviser, Ahmed Zilic.

Legislators in the Bihac enclave proclaimed an "autonomous province of Western Bosnia" on Monday after 18

months of fending off Serb siege forces without help from Bosnia's Sarajevo-based central government and army.

They said the vote was a revolt against Mr Izetbegovic's centralism and reluctance to sign a Geneva peace agreement with Serb and Croat foes to end Bosnia's ethnic war, despite the death and displacement of millions of people.

Mr Izetbegovic denounced Bihac's breakaway as an unconstitutional "stab in the back" of Muslim unity in Bosnia. He ordered the government army Fifth Corps, based in the enclave of 300,000 people, to suppress the uprising.

The Bosnian parliament voted by 61 to one yesterday to dismiss Mr Abdic from Bosnia's collective presidency. A replacement must be found within 10 days.

Mr Abdic is a wealthy entrepreneur and as a maverick member of the collective presidency has long been a bitter political rival of Mr Izetbegovic.

Signs of an uprising in Bihac emerged as Bosnia's Muslim-dominated rump parliament voted in Sarajevo to accept a peace plan but only if "territory seized by force" was returned, something Serb and Croat foes have rejected.

The Guardian Sept. 30, 1993

Izetbegovic troops fire on Muslim civilians

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT
AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

BOSNIAN army troops yesterday fired in the direction of civilians in a remote Muslim enclave in Bihac that declared its independence in a revolt against President Izetbegovic.

A reporter watched security forces trying to suppress the breakaway enclave shoot at the ground in front of civilians to drive them from Cazin which they had taken over without violence hours earlier. The incident happened after 500 heavily armed government troops raced into Cazin, whose access routes were sealed off by anti-tank mines and military police.

Lorries carrying supporters of Fikret Abdic, the Bihac political leader, sped off after soldiers opened fire behind them. Nobody was injured. Moments later most of the government troops set off for the village of Pianici outside Cazin, where residents were reported to have thrown up a barricade.

Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader, threatened yesterday to withdraw all territorial concessions made to the Muslims after they failed to accept the Geneva peace plan.

The mostly Muslim parliament in Sarajevo on Tuesday effectively rejected the Geneva peace plan, saying it accepted the proposals but only if its Serb and Croat enemies gave back land seized during the war.

Rejection of the peace deal by the Bosnian Muslims and the approach of winter spell disaster for more than two million people dependent on United Nations food hand-outs, a UN official said yesterday. Ray Wilkinson, for the

UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), said the decision by the Muslim parliament "leaves us looking into the jaws of disaster. We have warned before that, unless there is a speedy peace, the whole aid operation could be compromised."

Mr Wilkinson said the high commissioner for refugees would have great difficulty in delivering food, medicine and other aid to 2.7 million people in Bosnia this winter if fighting continued.

Naveed Hussain, UNHCR field officer for Bosnia, said the agency had received only half the estimated \$350 million (£232 million) needed to feed, clothe and keep Bosnians warm through the winter until March.

Isolated pockets would be the worst affected. In eastern Bosnia, about 25,000 people were still trapped in Srebrenica, originally a town of 6,000. Most were living in houses without windows or roofs. Mr Wilkinson said: "Convoys to these areas are at the mercy of besieging Serbs' good will."

As Lord Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg, the peace negotiators, met in Geneva to discuss the next moves, fighting broke out in several parts of Bosnia. Bosnian Serbs broke the ceasefire signed with the Muslims two weeks ago and fired shells on Sarajevo and on Maglaj in northern Bosnia.

General Rasim Delic, commander of the Bosnian army, called for an immediate ceasefire with the Croats immediately in central Bosnia and in Mostar to the south.

The
Times
Oct. 1
1993

A SELF PORTRAIT

This videotape is a precious and unique document. It was released by "Muslimanski Glas" ["The Moslem Voice"], the chief organ of the Democratic Action Party and represents a self-portrait of this Party, in the way which at the end of 1991 its leaders considered best-suited for their platform. As the 1990 elections had shown it was the principal Moslem party in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At present it is virtually impossible to get hold of a cassette of this video tape. This is partly due to the war conditions. But no doubt the Democratic Action Party realised that the glorification of Islam and the Ottoman Empire would damage its image, particularly outside Bosnia and Herzegovina, and so decided quietly to withdraw it from circulation.

An atmosphere of religious exaltation is introduced by the singing of the hymn "I am Your Son" created especially for the occasion. The author is a poet and well-known Islamic radical, Džemaludin Latić, who is the editor-in-chief of "The Moslem Voice". The hymn is strongly militant, with a refrain on the "beloved and fierce sūra" - that is a chapter from the Quran to honour the blood of martyrs and "God's Throne". In the Bulletin, which was published after the Congress, the text of the hymn was accompanied by a copy of the poster announcing a famous film based on the life and deeds of Mohammad, the Prophet of Islam. Underneath the text of the poem, a photograph of the Kaaba was published. It represented the central shrine of Islam in Mecca with an image of a muezzin calling the believers to prayer.

Izetbegović himself introduced his speech at the Congress with *bismillah*, i.e. the Islamic formula "bi-smi-llāhi-rahma-ni-rāḥīm" (in the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful). Izetbegović's comrade in struggle over many years, Omer Behmen, gave the closing speech, with a thanksgiving to the Almighty (al-ḥamdu li-llāhi rabbi-ḥ-alamīn) and the Moslem greeting, likewise in Arabic, "as-salāmu ʿalaykum" ("may peace be with you")

What characterizes this videotape is a voice of sincerity contrasting with the propaganda war which has been going on so intensively for several years in and around former Yugoslavia. The ideologues of the Democratic Action Party - Azis ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ and Džemaludin Latić - could not resist the temptation of releasing on tape, and so preserving for posterity, the atmosphere of Islamic enthusiasm which from the beginning to the end permeated the Party Congress. It startlingly contradicted the party's official civil, democratic, and supra-national platform.

The tape is indisputably authentic and represents the real nature of the Democratic Action Party: the Moslems prepared it

by - and for themselves. It challenges a view widely held in Europe and America that all the Bosnian and Herzegovinian Moslem leaders are secularised, moderate and far removed from any religious radicalism.

It is assumed that it is their enemies who are accusing them of a presumed "Islamic fundamentalism", in order to denigrate them amongst the democracies. The Chairman of the Democratic Action Party and President of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Moslem leader, Alija Izetbegović, appears in the West as a benevolent and humane democrat, who cherishes the welfare of all the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina, irrespective of their national and religious affiliation.

Izetbegović's political rhetoric has been carefully adjusted to produce just such an effect, particularly when addressing the West. In brotherly and frequent meetings with the leaders of Iran, Turkey, Pakistan, and other Moslem countries, he has always been much more explicit in voicing his (pan)Islamic belief in the unity of the Islamic world.

The principal narrator of the tape is Izetbegović himself who, as some of you may know, was the author of 'The Islamic Declaration', a radical panIslamic manifesto, first published in samizdat in 1970. The Declaration was never repudiated and a second edition in 1990 was sold openly in Sarajevo just as Alija Izetbegović was reaching his political peak.

The most interesting and informative part of the tape is Izetbegović's monologue on the historical destiny of Moslems in Yugoslavia. Usually he weighs his words carefully and often resorts to a metaphorical and ambiguous style. From time to time, however, he gets carried away by strong emotions and unshakeable faith in Allah, and, in spite of himself, conveys his true feelings. Speaking of the revival of Moslem self-consciousness, Izetbegović stresses the need to re-awaken the memory of famous events from the long history of Islam.

Fully in line with the note introduced by the opening hymn "I am Your Son", as the signal of the "religious and cultural renaissance" of the Moslems, the appearance of the choir of the Gazi Husrev Bey religious college (medresa) is particularly praised.

As an apotheosis of that revival the tape includes a grand concert of Moslem songs held in Sarajevo, at the "Zetra" hall. A religious ~~song~~ - an ilāhi - is dominated by the repeating chanting of Allah's name, so that the entire enchanted gathering gives the impression of a gigantic dhikr - the prayer of Islamic dervishes, the aim of which is to bring on a state of mystical ecstasy. Even a profane, non-religious song, called "sevdalinka" - or 'blues' - which is sung by a famous singer Zehra Deović, suggests a heavenly mood.

Though his speech to the Congress contains tactical concessions to democratic values, and Alija Izetbegović is a skilful tactician, the revivalist nature of his own convictions goes back to his involvement in the Young Moslem movement which he joined during the Second World War: "That was the attempt to return Moslems back to their roots, I could say to find themselves again and, while searching for their origin, return to their roots". Izetbegović stresses that this was not a search for national but rather for religious identity. He says "That was not so much a search for a nation: it was more a search for spiritual sources for the Moslem people here."

The Democratic Action Party, which is in essence the continuation of the Young Moslems is, thus, not a national party like its rivals in Bosnia and Herzegovina, The Serbian Democratic Party (Srpska Demokratska Stranka) and The Croatian Democratic Union (Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica). From the very start it was something quite different in kind.

A careful study of the tape reveals the true Democratic Action Party. It is also the essence of the political platform of Alija Izetbegović and those who share his views. The real nature of the Party is Islamistic, while the essence of its political programme is Islam, which is to say Islamisation of individuals and of the society as a whole. Early warnings about symptoms of the politicization of Islam in Bosnia-Herzegovina before the dissolution of Yugoslavia were rejected, and those who gave the warnings were blamed because they allegedly accused unjustly all the Bosnian Moslems of being Islamic fundamentalists. The vast majority of Bosnian and Herzegovinian Moslems were indeed secularised and, objectively speaking, unreligious, particularly in big towns. But what they wished to warn of - and the warning unfortunately proved to be justified - was the appearance on the social and political scene of organised movements, groups, and finally of a party with a radical Islamistic platform. In any Moslem country of Asia or Africa Izetbegovic's party would be recognised as a party of Islamic militancy. But for some arbitrary reason the same criteria were held not to apply to Bosnia.

The historical background of Bosnia-Herzegovina which the tape provides would suggest that the Moslems monopolised civilisation: The role of Serbs and Croats is expunged. Alija Izetbegović laments the fall of the Ottoman Empire and the exodus of the Moslem elite after the Austrians took over from the Turks. He blacks out the effective political role of the Moslem representatives both in royalist and in Titoist Yugoslavia; and claims that all would have been lost if his party had not sprung up to revive the leading role of Bosnian Moslems. He asserts that had it not been for his party, and had the decline lasted another 15 years, "I fear we would have never managed to return to our sources".

In order to understand the contemporary situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we need to remind ourselves of the continuing conflict of conceptions between two Moslem leaders, the pragmatic and secular economist Fikret Abdić on one side, and the convinced Islamistic ideologue Alija Izetbegović on the other. Whereas in the elections for membership of the Presidency Fikret Abdić won a majority of votes, Izetbegović unquestionably dominated the leadership of the Party. In practical politics the ideologue triumphed.

The conflict has acquired the momentum of a Holy War with the Serbs as the incarnation of evil. In the areas where the Croats and Moslems have driven out all Serbs, as in the case of Mostar, Radio Sarajevo still managed to present Serbs as the guilty party.

It is true that a small but articulate minority of Serbs, principally from Sarajevo, did believe they had a role to play in Izetbegović's state and they willingly participated in what looked to the outside world like a multiethnic government. Against this background the West accepted the ruling party's denial of its Muslim militancy: a denial all the more effective because party leaders dressed and spoke as Europeans rather than Middle Easterners. The Serbs were thus identified as the destroyers and wreckers of a potentially tolerant and open society. In reality, as this tape will show, the ruling party had its roots deep in panIslamic ideology.

The war only sharpened and exacerbated existing divisions. It also inevitably stimulated the terror and fear between the three warring communities, two inspired by incompatible national irredentism, and the third asserting its identity in religion and willing to dominate the two others in the unitary state of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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