

United States General Accounting Office

GAO

Briefing Report to the Honorable  
Robert S. Dole, U.S. Senate

April 1994

# HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION

## Effectiveness of U.N. Operations in Bosnia

AD-A279 674



94-15677



**National Security and  
International Affairs Division****B-256610****April 13, 1994****The Honorable Bob Dole  
United States Senate****DTIC  
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MAY 25 1994  
S G D****Dear Senator Dole:**

Since late 1991, an estimated 150,000 Bosnians have been killed, 150,000 wounded, and 2.74 million were in need of assistance, as a result of fighting stemming from the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia. In response, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) extended its humanitarian activities to Bosnia, and the U.N. Security Council mandated the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) to provide security for aid deliveries in Bosnia and protect designated "safe areas," such as Sarajevo. Concerned about the situation, you requested that GAO examine (1) allegations that the United Nations withheld humanitarian assistance to pressure the Bosnian Muslims into an unfavorable peace settlement and that U.S. officials had knowledge of this tactic, (2) the effectiveness of U.N. operations in Bosnia, and (3) factors affecting the U.N.'s performance, with a view towards lessons learned. On March 23, 1994, we briefed you on the results of our work. This report presents the information provided at that briefing.

**Results in Brief**

We found no evidence that the United Nations withheld humanitarian assistance to pressure the Bosnian Muslims into a settlement, or that U.S. officials had any evidence that the allegations were credible. U.N. operations and international efforts, including the allied airlift and airdrop operations, are credited with preventing starvation in Bosnia for two winters. However, inadequate numbers of troops and weaknesses in overall U.N. leadership and coordination have hindered consistent assertive action to deliver aid and protect Bosnians. These factors, along with the Serbs' effective encirclement of Muslim enclaves such as Gorazde, and the international community's sense of urgency in finding a peace formula, created an environment in which the allegations could appear plausible. At the time of our review, UNPROFOR and UNHCR had improved coordination and were taking steps with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), to deliver humanitarian assistance and provide protection in designated areas.



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## **Background: The Context for U.N. Operations in Bosnia**

The former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia contained six republics, including Serbia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina (hereinafter referred to as Bosnia). Each republic had one majority ethnic group except for Bosnia, where in 1991, Muslims comprised 44 percent of the population, Serbs 31 percent, and Croats 18 percent, with the remainder mixed. In June 1991, Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence from Yugoslavia, and fighting broke out between the Croatian government and Croatian Serbs, who wished to remain with Yugoslavia. The Secretary General then mandated UNHCR to lead relief efforts in the former Yugoslavia. After 7 months of fighting, a cease fire was signed, and, in February 1992, the U.N. Security Council established UNPROFOR to oversee the cease-fire in Croatia. In March 1992, Bosnians voted for independence, and fighting broke out between the Bosnian government and Bosnian Serbs. In June 1992, UNPROFOR's mandate was extended to Bosnia to keep Sarajevo airport open. As the war spread to encompass fighting among Bosnia's three main ethnic groups, UNPROFOR's mandate was expanded to protect Bosnians in six designated safe areas. Until February 1994, efforts to end the war brought no relief from fighting. International operations in Bosnia constitute an unprecedented scale of U.N. "humanitarian intervention"--a situation where U.N. humanitarian agencies, assisted by U.N. forces, provide relief in a war zone. In this undertaking in Bosnia, 11 UNHCR and 36 UNPROFOR personnel have lost their lives. See appendix I for further background information.

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## **No Evidence U.N. Manipulated Humanitarian Assistance**

Observers alleged that the United Nations intentionally withheld aid to central Bosnia to pressure the Bosnian Muslims into an unfavorable peace settlement and, at the same time, assisted an opposition Muslim leader in Bihac who favored the settlement. We found no evidence that the United Nations withheld aid for political purposes. Fighting and obstruction by warring parties prevented the delivery of aid. For example, the Secretary General halted aid convoys to central Bosnia in October and November 1993, following an attack that killed one convoy driver and wounded nine others. An UNPROFOR contingent assisted Bihac--the home of the opposition Muslim leader--by providing it with access to commercial goods. However, the troop contingent took this action independently, without formal U.N. approval. See appendix II for our analysis of the allegations.

Most U.S. officials we interviewed were unaware of the allegations and doubted the United Nations tried to manipulate the delivery of aid. In our review of hundreds of Department of State cables and other documents, we found no indication that U.S. officials had any evidence the allegations were true.

## Effectiveness of U.N. Operations

U.N. actions contributed greatly to feeding the people of Bosnia and preventing starvation for two winters. In 1993, alone, the United Nations led an international effort in which U.N. convoys, the allied airlift, and the U.S.-led airdrop provided 272,000 metric tons of aid to Bosnians. UNPROFOR helped provide security for many of these actions.

However, U.N. operations fell short of carrying out many objectives. In 1993, only about 54 percent of the U.N. food requirement for Bosnia was delivered. Warring factions obstructed and delayed convoys on a daily basis. The same factions harassed and sometimes killed U.N. staff. UNPROFOR contingents could not move freely about Bosnia--a prerequisite for protecting Bosnians. In the safe areas, human rights were violated and many civilians killed. See appendix III for our analysis of the effectiveness of U.N. operations.

## Inadequate Resources and Gaps in Overall Leadership Weaken Operations

The Secretary General estimated that about 40,000 peacekeepers were needed to fully protect humanitarian convoys as well as Bosnians in the safe areas; 17,700 were needed to minimally carry out these mandates. However, as of March 1994, only about 14,000 UNPROFOR troops were deployed in Bosnia. According to UNPROFOR officials and troops on the ground, the shortfall prevented them from responding to all requests for security. In addition, not all UNPROFOR contingents were fully prepared to work in Bosnia. One contingent, for example, required winter training before it could deploy.

Of equal importance, U.N. operations lacked overall leadership to provide consistent direction and strategy for the mission, effectively coordinate military and humanitarian operations, and develop an overall plan. UNHCR was the lead humanitarian agency and UNPROFOR provided security, but neither had overall authority. A Special Representative of the Secretary General with overall authority was named in May 1993, but his primary mission was to achieve a political settlement while working in Geneva. In the absence of unified direction, action to carry out the mandates was inconsistent. Sometimes U.N. convoys and protective forces negotiated assertively and secured passage through roadblocks; in other cases U.N. forces remained in their vehicles and turned back. In January 1994, nearly 19 months after UNPROFOR was authorized in Bosnia, a full-time Special Representative arrived in the former Yugoslavia to provide overall leadership and took steps to improve coordination and cooperation. UNPROFOR has also begun taking more assertive action, following NATO's successful ultimatum to Bosnian Serbs to remove their heavy weapons encircling Sarajevo. See appendix IV for our review of U.N. operations.

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## **Lessons Learned in Humanitarian Intervention**

Several key lessons emerge from our work in Bosnia and other U.N. peace operations.<sup>1</sup>

- Humanitarian intervention is a dangerous operation without a political settlement and requires adequate resources and training to implement.
- Lack of overall leadership to provide unified direction for military and humanitarian efforts weakens humanitarian intervention.
- Assertive action need not always involve the use of force, but can also include tactics such as forceful negotiation, publicity, and clear resolve.
- Consistency in using assertive action is necessary so that opposing factions cannot exploit gaps in U.N. operations.
- Effective humanitarian intervention requires coordinated planning for and integration of some humanitarian and military activities.

Appendix V summarizes the lessons learned from our review of U.N. operations in Bosnia.

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## **Agency Comments**

Program officials from the Department of State, Agency for International Development (AID), U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), UNHCR, and UNPROFOR commented on a draft of this briefing report. State, AID, and DPKO generally agreed with the report's contents and provided comments that have been incorporated as appropriate.

UNHCR said our report was balanced overall, but that (1) the international community's lack of political will to reach a settlement in Bosnia was an underlying problem and (2) humanitarian and military operations were never intended to be integrated. We agree that the absence of a political settlement limited what the United Nations could do in Bosnia, but it should be noted that the absence of a settlement is a basic condition of humanitarian intervention that makes military participation necessary. We have clarified our discussion of integration and the use of force in appendix IV.

UNPROFOR commented that it was not mandated or structured to be an intervention force. We agree, but would note that UNPROFOR was authorized to use force "where armed persons attempt by force to prevent United Nations troops from carrying out their mandate" and in the safe areas to deter attacks against Bosnians. We have elaborated on this in appendix IV.

<sup>1</sup>U.N. Peacekeeping: Lessons Learned in Recent Missions (GAO/NSIAD-94-9, Dec. 1993).

## Scope and Methodology

We had the full cooperation of the U.N. Secretariat, UNPROFOR, and UNHCR and were assisted by the U.S. Departments of State and Defense, the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, and AID. To review the allegations and effectiveness of U.N. operations, we conducted fieldwork in Bosnia and Croatia and at other locations, such as UNHCR headquarters in Geneva. At these locations, we met with staff of UNPROFOR, UNHCR, U.N. Secretariat, World Food Program, and other U.N. agencies and interviewed both the current and former U.N. Special Representatives to the former Yugoslavia. We interviewed U.S. officials, such as the Ambassadors to Croatia and Bosnia, senior staff of the U.S. Mission to NATO, staff responsible for U.S. participation in the airlift and airdrop missions, and members of AID's Disaster Assistance Response Team. We met with officials of the Bosnian government, including the president and foreign minister, and interviewed staff of the International Committee for the Red Cross and numerous private voluntary organizations. For our analysis, we obtained Security Council resolutions and U.N., UNHCR, and UNPROFOR reports and documents. We analyzed data from UNHCR's convoy database and reviewed hundreds of State documents to determine U.S. government knowledge of the allegations.

We conducted our work from December 1993 to March 1994 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

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As arranged with your office, unless you publicly announce its contents earlier, we plan no further distribution of this report until 7 days from its issue date. At that time, we will send copies to the Secretaries of State and Defense, relevant U.N. agencies, and interested congressional committees. We will also provide copies to others upon request.

This report was prepared under the direction of Harold J. Johnson, Director, International Affairs Issues, who may be reached on (202) 512-4128 if you or your staff have any questions. Other major contributors to this report are listed in appendix VI.

Sincerely yours,



Frank C. Conahan  
Assistant Comptroller General

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## Letter

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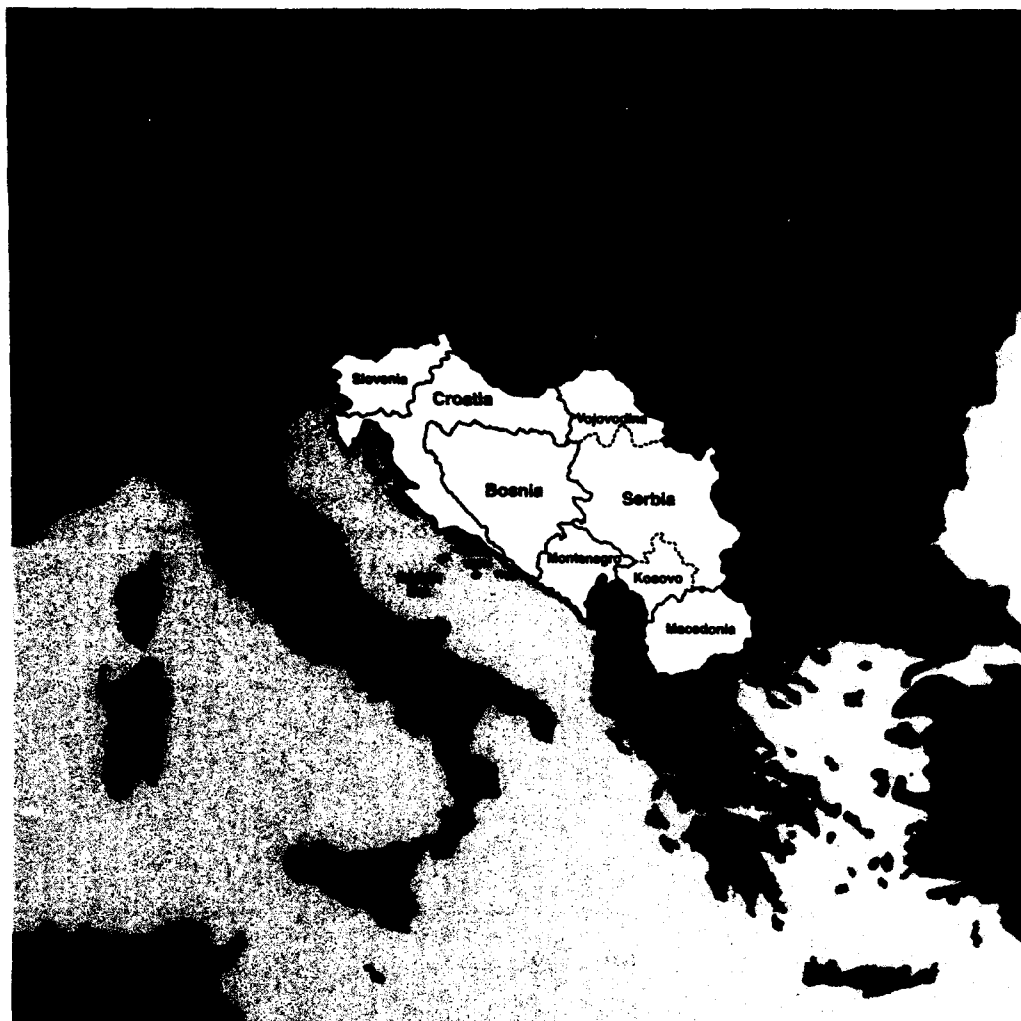
## Abbreviations

AID	Agency for International Development
DART	Disaster Assistance Response Team
DPKO	U.N. Department of Peacekeeping Operations
EC	European Community (now the European Union)
ICRC	International Committee for the Red Cross
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protective Force



# Background: The Context for U.N. and International Operations in Bosnia

**Figure I.1: The Former Yugoslavia and Neighboring Countries**



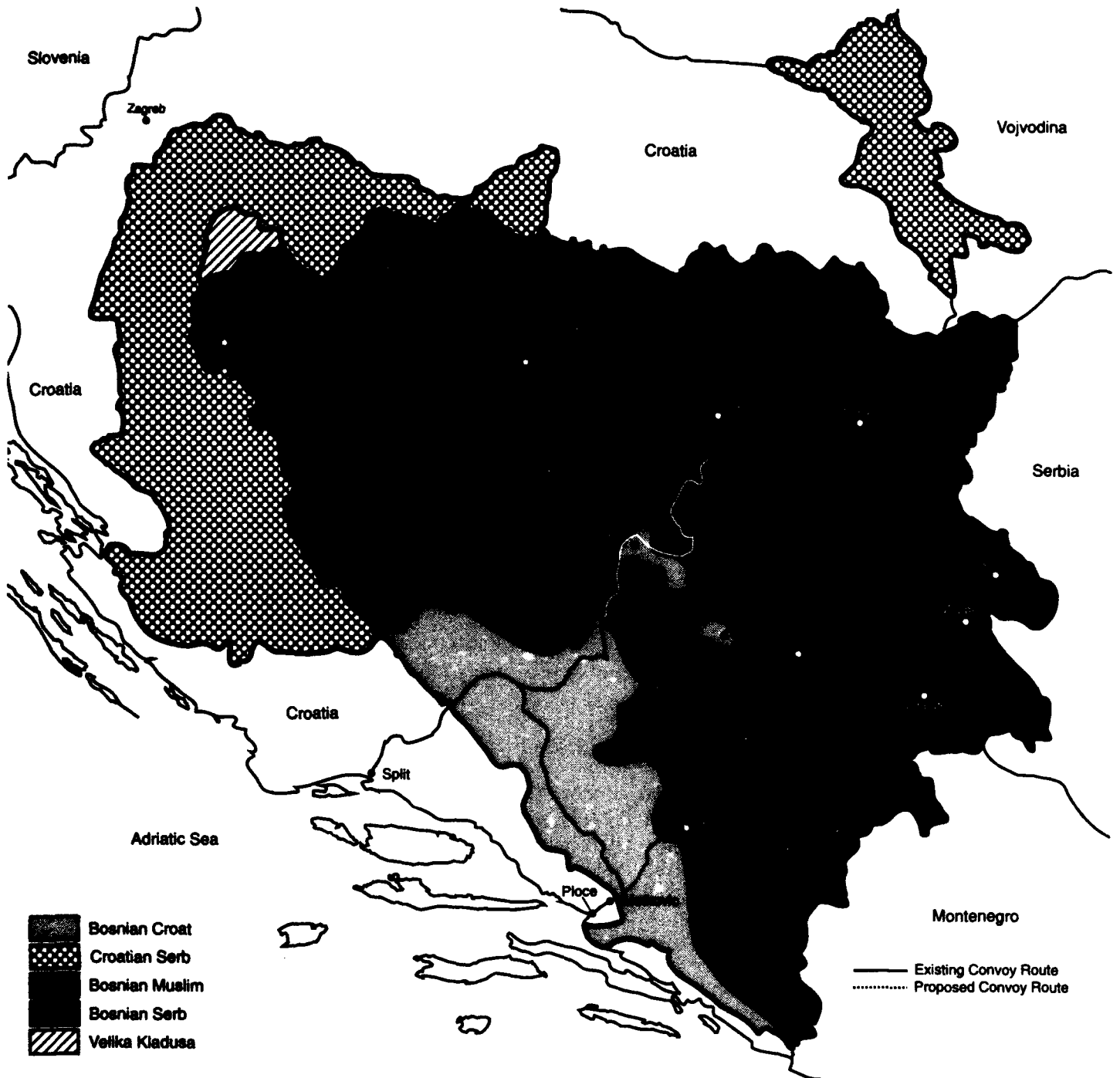
## **The Breakup of the Former Yugoslavia**

Fighting began in the former Yugoslavia in June 1991, after two of its former republics--Slovenia and Croatia--declared their independence. Croatian Serbs, opposed to independence from Yugoslavia and supported by the Yugoslav National Army, made Croatia the center of the war. After months of fierce fighting, Serbia and Croatia signed an unconditional cease-fire in January 1992. The Security Council then established the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) to ensure certain sectors of Croatia were demilitarized and to verify the withdrawal of forces. In March 1992, Bosnia declared independence and fighting broke out in Bosnia. Table I.1 provides a chronology of key events in the breakup of the former Yugoslavia.

**Table I.1: Key Events in the Breakup of the Former Yugoslavia**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Events</b>
June 1991	Slovenia and Croatia declare independence from Yugoslavia. Fighting breaks out between Croatian Serbs, supported by the Yugoslav National Army, and the Croatian government.
Oct. 1991	U.N. imposes an arms embargo on all former republics of former Yugoslavia.
Nov. 1991	Secretary General designates the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) lead agency for providing relief in the former Yugoslavia.
Jan.-Feb. 1992	Croatia and Serbia agree to an unconditional cease-fire. Security Council establishes UNPROFOR to implement terms of cease-fire.
Mar. 1992	Bosnians vote for independence, but Bosnian Serbs do not vote and fighting begins.
June 1992	U.N. recognizes Bosnia and Croatia as independent states. UNPROFOR's mandate extended to Bosnia to secure Sarajevo airport.
Aug.-Oct. 1992	European Community (EC) and U.N. cosponsor International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia. Security Council authorizes UNPROFOR and member states to protect delivery of humanitarian aid to Bosnia.
Jan. 1993	EC/U.N. negotiators propose peace plan for a multiethnic Bosnia.
Apr.-June 1993	Bosnian Serb Assembly rejects plan. Negotiators propose a new plan partitioning Bosnia into Muslim, Croat, and Serb areas. Violence continues and Security Council declares six safe areas in Bosnia.
Aug. 1993	NATO authorizes air support to defend UNPROFOR troops, if called by the U.N.
Oct. 1993	UNHCR convoy is targeted in central Bosnia, and aid convoys are suspended. Fighting continues.
Dec. 1993	UNHCR estimates 2.74 million Bosnians are in need of relief.
Feb. 1994	NATO issues ultimatum to Serbs to remove heavy weapons surrounding Sarajevo, after mortar round kills 68 there. Serbs comply and U.N. does not have to call for airstrikes.
Mar. 1994	Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats agree to a U.S. proposal for a federation to be joined in confederation with Croatia.

Figure I.2: Factional Control in Bosnia



## **Factional Control in Bosnia and Efforts Towards a Peace Agreement**

By March 1994, Bosnia had become splintered into sectors controlled by each faction, but with islands of Muslims and Croats isolated in enemy territory. (See fig. I.2.) In the Muslim enclave of Bihac, internal fighting began when the political leader in Velika Kladusa declared Bihac an autonomous province. His supporters in northern Bihac battled against Bosnian government supporters in southern Bihac, while the entire pocket was surrounded by Serbs.

As of January 1994, each major ethnic faction had large numbers of active troops. The Bosnian Muslims were poorly equipped, but had an estimated 120,000 active troops compared to the Bosnian Serbs (80,000) and the Bosnian Croats (40,000). By February 1994, the Bosnian government estimated that 150,000 Bosnians from all factions had been killed by hostilities and another 150,000 wounded. The numbers of refugees, displaced, and vulnerable rose from 881,000 in late 1991 to over 2.74 million in December 1993.

Responding to the crisis in August 1992, the EC and the United Nations cosponsored an International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia to negotiate a settlement of the conflict. An EC mediator and the Secretary General's Personal Envoy were assigned as joint negotiators. In early 1993, the negotiators proposed a peace accord establishing a multiethnic Bosnia divided into 10 provinces. This plan was rejected by both the Bosnian Serb Assembly and a referendum of the Bosnian Serb population.

After rejection of the multiethnic plan, the Presidents of Serbia and Croatia proposed a confederated Bosnia, partitioned into three republics--Croatian, Muslim, and Serb. The land of each republic would roughly correspond to the areas controlled by each faction, as shown in figure I.2. Bosnian Muslims objected because their territory would be noncontiguous; it had no access to the sea; and it could not be defended. Negotiations were deadlocked.

Then, in February 1994, 68 people were killed by a mortar round in Sarajevo. Subsequently, the United Nations requested NATO to give the U.N. authority to call for airstrikes to lift the siege of Sarajevo. NATO gave the United Nations this authority, and then issued an ultimatum to Bosnian Serb forces to remove their heavy weapons encircling the city or be subject to airstrikes. The Bosnian Serbs complied with the ultimatum after Russia agreed to provide peacekeeping forces to monitor the situation, and the United Nations did not have to call for the air strikes. Following this event, the Bosnian Croats and Muslims agreed to a U.S. proposal to form a federated Bosnian state, joining in a confederation with Croatia. Bosnian Serbs were also invited to join, but did not accept. Table I.2 shows UNPROFOR and UNHCR mandates.

**Table I.2: U.N. Mandates in Bosnia**

UNHCR was tasked by the Secretary General to	UNPROFOR, except as noted, was mandated by the Security Council to	
<p>Nov. 1991 Distribute and monitor food to refugees, displaced, and vulnerable population in Bosnia.                      Provide shelter, health, and legal protection.                      Coordinate with and assist other agencies.</p>	June 1992	Secure Sarajevo airport (Security Council Resolutions 758, 761).
	Aug. 1992	Use all means necessary to facilitate humanitarian aid delivery (Authority given to member states and regional organizations under Security Council Resolution 770).
	Sept. 1992	Protect UNHCR aid convoys at UNHCR request (Security Council Resolution 776).
	Oct. 1992	Monitor "no-fly zone" over Bosnian air space (Security Council Resolution 781).
	June 1993	Use necessary measures--including force and air power from member states and regional organizations--to deter attacks against and protect humanitarian convoys to 6 safe areas (Security Council Resolutions 824, and 836).

In November 1991, UNHCR was designated by the U.N. Secretary General as the lead agency for humanitarian relief in the former Yugoslavia. One of its major responsibilities was to manage an extensive logistics and distribution network to move food and other relief supplies to the populations affected by the conflict. UNHCR maintained large warehouses mostly outside the Bosnian border and arranged convoys to transport the aid to secondary warehouses in Bosnia. It also arranged for monitoring the ultimate distribution of aid.

UNPROFOR's humanitarian mandate in Bosnia emerged in response to the growing security hazards accompanying the delivery of relief throughout the country. In early June 1992, Security Council Resolution 758 gave UNPROFOR responsibility to facilitate the unloading of humanitarian cargo at the Sarajevo

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**Appendix I****Background: The Context for U.N. and International Operations in Bosnia**

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airport and to ensure the safe movement of this aid and relief workers. Resolution 761 followed shortly, authorizing an increase in UNPROFOR's strength to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid.

Delivery of aid was still hampered, however, both in Sarajevo and elsewhere in Bosnia. The Security Council acted by adopting resolution 770 in August 1992, which called on member nations and regional organizations to take all measures necessary to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid within Bosnia. In September, the Council passed resolution 776, which charged UNPROFOR with supporting UNHCR's efforts to deliver humanitarian relief throughout Bosnia and instructed UNPROFOR to provide protection to aid convoys whenever requested by UNHCR. This resolution authorized UNPROFOR to use force in self-defense, including situations where armed people attempted to prevent U.N. troops from carrying out their mandate.

In October 1992, UNPROFOR was given added responsibility by the Security Council in resolution 781 to monitor compliance with the no-fly zone over Bosnian air space and to authorize exceptions to the ban, such as for flights carrying humanitarian aid. In March 1993, the Security Council authorized member states to enforce this ban in coordination with the Secretary General and UNPROFOR.

In April 1993, UNPROFOR's mandate was expanded to the so-called safe areas in Bosnia. Attacks by Bosnian Serb forces on several cities in eastern Bosnia, including Srebrenica, had seriously impeded humanitarian relief efforts in the area. In response, the Security Council passed resolution 819, which demanded that all parties treat Srebrenica as a safe area, free from any armed attack or other hostile act, and requested the Secretary General to increase the presence of UNPROFOR in this city. In late April 1993, the Council adopted resolution 824, which added Sarajevo and the towns of Tuzla, Zepa, Gorazde, and Bihac as safe areas. In resolution 836, adopted in June, UNPROFOR was authorized to use force to deter attacks against the safe areas. In this resolution, the Security Council also authorized member states, acting nationally or through regional organizations, to use "all necessary measures through the use of air power in and around the safe areas" to support UNPROFOR in carrying out this mandate.

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## U.N. and International Operations

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### Responding to the crisis in Bosnia

- U.N. and humanitarian agencies provided aid.
- Allied powers provided airlift and airdrop support.
- NATO provided air support callable by the U.N.
- U.N. assumed central lead role.
- U.N. undertook one of the largest and riskiest operations.

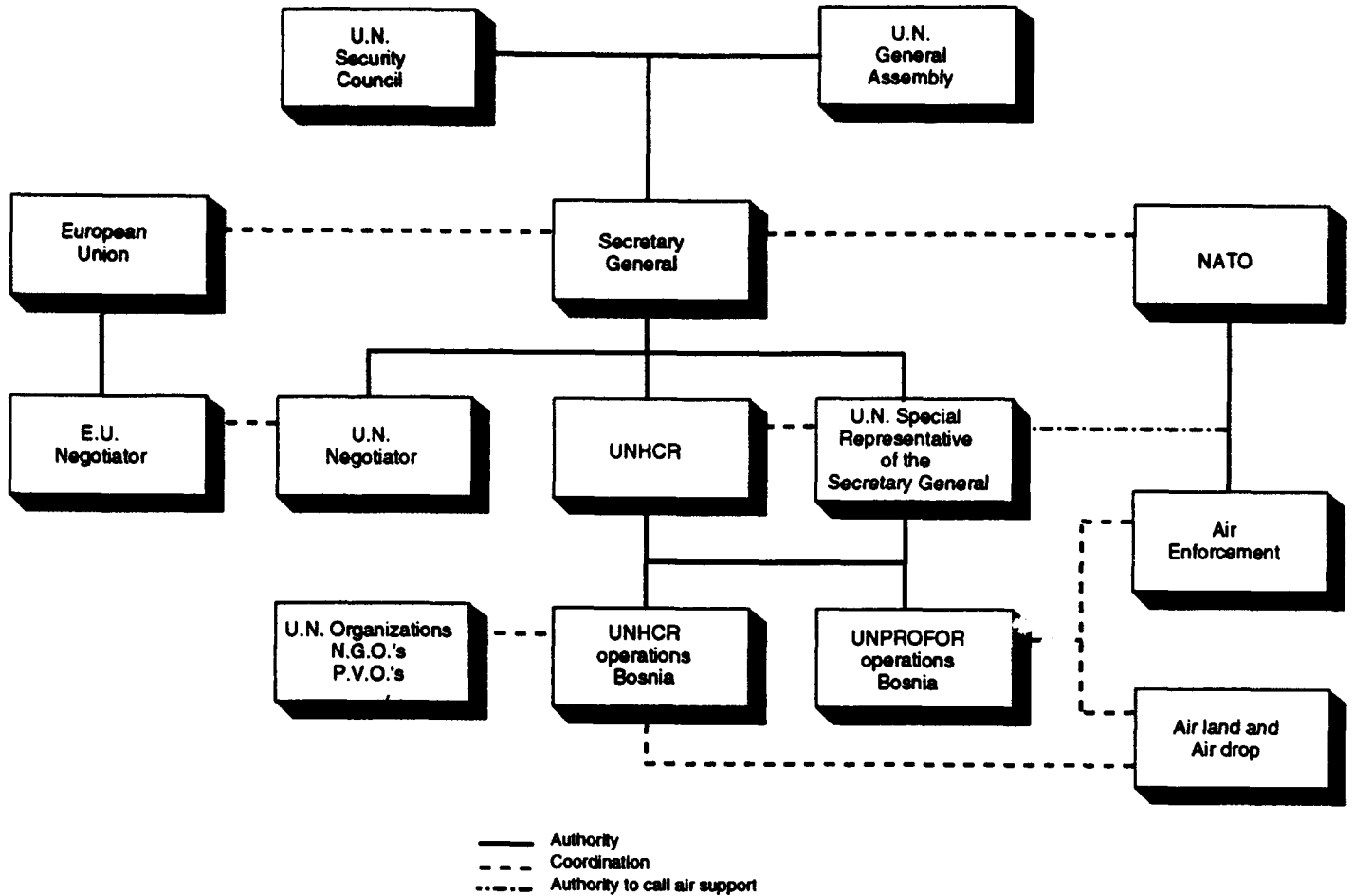
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### U.N. and International Operations

UNHCR led a U.N.-wide and international humanitarian effort. The World Food Program mobilized food resources and transported them to UNHCR's main warehouses in Croatia and Serbia. The World Health Organization conducted nutrition monitoring and provided needed medical supplies; other U.N. agencies, such as UNICEF, also provided aid. In addition, over 100 private voluntary organizations delivered humanitarian assistance. A number of them entered into contracts with UNHCR to provide, among other things, water and sanitation projects. Also, the International Committee of the Red Cross operated independently in Bosnia, delivering food and other aid. The allied airlift and U.S.-led airdrop operations were also important parts of the relief effort.

UNPROFOR also coordinated with NATO on air operations. In August 1993, NATO agreed to provide UNPROFOR with (1) close air support to defend U.N. troops at any location in Bosnia and (2) airstrikes consistent with U.N. mandates in Bosnia. Before NATO would act, however, the United Nations would have to make the first call for close air support and obtain authorization from the North Atlantic Council for airstrikes. In January 1994, the U.N. Special Representative was delegated authority to call for NATO close air support anywhere in Bosnia. He was also delegated authority to call for air strikes to lift the siege of Sarajevo, but required further authorization for other airstrikes. Figure I.4 illustrates the U.N.'s central coordination and leadership role of efforts in Bosnia.

Figure I.3: Organization of International Efforts in Bosnia





**Table I.3: One of the Largest and Riskiest of U.N. Peace Operations**

	UNHCR	UNPROFOR
Cost	\$697 million	\$1.7 billion
Staff in former Yugoslavia	678	30,000 (from 34 nations)
Staff in Bosnia	263	14,000 (from 14 nations)
Fatalities in the former Yugoslavia	11	79 (34 from hostile action)

From November 1991 through September 1993, UNHCR had received nearly \$700 million for activities in the former Yugoslavia, and the estimate of UNPROFOR's total cost through March 1994 was \$1.7 billion. Also, contributions to other U.N. agencies for work in the former Yugoslavia from November 1991 through September 1993 were \$306 million. The size, breadth, and hazards associated with UNHCR's efforts in the former Yugoslavia have been unparalleled in the agency's history. By the end of 1993, its staff in this region totaled 678, more than 15 percent of its total staff. It managed a trucking fleet of over 400 vehicles with a capacity of over 5,000 metric tons. UNHCR's operations in Bosnia's war environment have also created precedents. According to senior officials, the risks in Bosnia have exceeded all security conditions under which UNHCR previously operated.

UNPROFOR is one of the largest U.N. peace operations ever undertaken. As of March 1994, it consisted of over 30,000 troops from 34 nations, with its headquarters located in Zagreb, Croatia. In Bosnia itself, UNPROFOR was led by a Bosnia-Herzegovina command that included about 14,000 troops from 14 nations. UNPROFOR has also suffered serious casualties in carrying out its mandate. As of March 1994, all of UNPROFOR's forces in the former Yugoslavia had suffered 79 fatalities--34 from hostile action. Of these, 22 died from hostile action in Bosnia.

# No Evidence U.N. Used Humanitarian Assistance for Political Purposes

**Table II. 1: No Evidence U.N. Withheld Aid to Central Bosnia to Pressure Bosnian Muslims**

Allegation	Finding
U.N. withheld assistance to central Bosnia to pressure Bosnian Muslims into a political settlement.	Fighting, obstruction, and gaps in U.N. control and coordination hindered delivery of aid.
U.N. Special Representative stopped aid convoys just before winter to increase pressure.	Secretary General suspended aid to central Bosnia after an attack on a UNHCR convoy.
U.N. was not assertive in providing Bosnian Muslims a secure convoy route.	Warring party prevented U.N. from opening secure route to central Bosnia.

## No Evidence U.N. Withheld Aid to Central Bosnia

Observers, including Bosnian government officials, alleged that, although the people of central Bosnia desperately needed humanitarian assistance to survive, the United Nations intentionally withheld aid to pressure the Bosnian government into a disadvantageous political settlement. Bosnian government officials and workers from private voluntary organizations told us that U.N. officials took two specific actions to withhold aid deliveries. First, the U.N. Special Representative stopped aid convoys to central Bosnia, allegedly over the objections of the High Commissioner for Refugees and UNPROFOR's military commander. Second, the United Nations was not aggressive enough in opening and securing a proposed convoy route to central Bosnia. (See fig. I.2.) Because the route would provide access from UNHCR's Metkovic warehouse to central Bosnia, mostly through Muslim-controlled territory, the Bosnian government had requested the United Nations to concentrate its forces along this route.

We found no evidence that the United Nations withheld food from central Bosnia for the purpose of pressuring the Bosnian government to accept a settlement. Fighting, obstruction of convoys, inadequate resources, and gaps in unified U.N. leadership led to shortfalls in food deliveries. Reports by UNHCR, the International Committee for the Red Cross and other organizations, and accounts from witnesses on the ground testify to the fighting that hindered relief efforts. For example, in the first few days of November 1993, intense fighting between the Bosnian government and Bosnian Croats resulted in several international workers killed, wounded, or missing in central Bosnia. As noted earlier, 11 UNHCR workers and 22 UNPROFOR troops have been killed by hostile action in Bosnia.

On October 26, 1993, the U.N. Secretary General stopped aid convoys to central Bosnia following an attack on a UNHCR convoy, which killed one driver and wounded nine others. Both the U.N. Special Representative and the High Commissioner for Refugees agreed to halt the convoys. According to the Special Representative, convoy drivers insisted that the United Nations act to stop the deliberate targeting of relief workers. UNHCR subsequently negotiated an agreement in which all factions agreed not to hinder delivery of humanitarian assistance. Aid convoys to central Bosnia were resumed on November 19, 1993.

UNPROFOR undertook Operation Lifeline in an attempt to secure the proposed convoy route from the UNHCR warehouse in Metkovic to central Bosnia. According to UNPROFOR officials, Operation Lifeline had a high priority because of its strategic value. In addition to providing access to central Bosnia through mostly Muslim-controlled territory, the route connected a river leading to the Adriatic Sea with a railroad line to Sarajevo. However, Bosnian Croats would not allow the opening of this proposed route and blew up two bridges the route had to cross near Mostar. After the United Nations repaired one of the bridges, it was again blown up within 24 hours.

**Table II.2: Bihac**

<b>Allegation</b>	<b>Finding</b>
U.N. gave favorable treatment to Bihac, whose leaders supported the political settlement.	UNHCR provided Bihac the lowest average percent of target aid in Bosnia.
U.N. aided Bihac's opposition Muslim leader to pressure the Bosnian government in Sarajevo into agreeing to a settlement.	U.N. troop contingent acted independently in assisting Bihac and aided its opposition leader in his capacity as a Bosnian government official.

**Bihac**

During October 1993, the opposition Bosnian Muslim leader of northern Bihac (see fig. I.2) signed agreements with Serbia and Croatia that recognized Bihac as an autonomous region. Fighting then broke out between the northern sector of Bihac and the southern sector, which still supported the Bosnian government in Sarajevo. Some observers alleged that the United Nations gave preferential treatment to Bihac to bolster its opposition leader and thereby pressure the Bosnian government to agree to a political settlement. These observers alleged that U.N. forces favored Bihac in the delivery of aid, provided the security necessary to open a commercial corridor to Bihac, and provided transportation for the opposition political leader.

We found no evidence to support the allegations that the United Nations acted to help the opposition leader or provided favorable treatment to Bihac. During 1993, UNHCR provided Bihac with 31 percent of its allotted U.N. aid--the lowest percentage in Bosnia. The U.N. troop contingent in Bihac helped establish a commercial corridor to the area, but this was an independent action, undertaken at the contingent's own initiative. Moreover, according to both Bosnian government officials in Bihac and the opposition leaders, the commercial corridor aided everyone in Bihac until October 1993, when internal fighting began.

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**Appendix II**  
**No Evidence U.N. Used Humanitarian Assistance for Political Purposes**

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UNPROFOR transported Bihac's opposition political leader to negotiations outside of Bihac. According to U.N. officials, however, he was still a member of the Bosnian presidency and the United Nations wanted to include him in attempts to reach a settlement. UNPROFOR's chief of staff and the commander of the UNPROFOR contingent in Bihac said UNPROFOR continued to provide him transportation after he was no longer a member of the presidency because he was still the leader of one of the safe areas, but stopped after he declared Bihac an autonomous region and rebelled against the U.N.-recognized Bosnian government in Sarajevo.

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## **U.S. Officials Have No Evidence Supporting Allegations**

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- **Some U.S. officials were aware of allegations.**
  - **DART team investigated and found no evidence to support them.**
  - **We found one U.S. document discussing allegations in our review of cables and other documents on Bosnia.**
  - **We found no evidence that documents on Bosnia are classified so as to limit public debate.**
- 

### **U.S. Officials Have No Evidence Supporting Allegations**

A few U.S. officials were aware of the allegations. For example, according to a memo from the Agency for International Development's (AID) Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) in Zagreb, the Bosnian government had often made allegations about the United Nations using humanitarian assistance to force it into unfavorable agreements. However, the DART team could not find any concrete evidence to support the allegations.

Most U.S. officials we interviewed said they were unaware of the allegations, and our review uncovered only one U.S. document that mentioned the allegations prior to the request for this study. Our review identified 10,690 State Department cables, memorandums, and general correspondence with a geopolitical designation of Bosnia or Zagreb dated from January 1, 1993, through November 30, 1993. To determine if the allegations were discussed, we (1) reviewed titles and descriptions of the documents, (2) conducted a computer search of the document descriptions for keywords such as allegation and Bihac, (3) reviewed a random sample of 500 of these documents, (4) reviewed a daily internal State digest of events in Bosnia and Croatia from August through December 1993, and (5) selected additional documents for review.

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**Appendix II**  
**No Evidence U.N. Used Humanitarian Assistance for Political Purposes**

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Our analysis of 10,690 U.S. documents on Bosnia showed that 48 percent were classified and 52 percent were unclassified. The classified documents generally included discussions of

- military plans, weapons, and operations;
- foreign government information;
- foreign relations or foreign activities of the United States; and
- confidential sources.

Although a large number of the documents on Bosnia were classified, we have no reason to believe this was done to limit public discussion. State officials said they were not aware of any efforts to overclassify documents, and a Diplomatic Security official said that any overclassification could be attributed to habit or lack of time, rather than efforts to hide information. One former foreign service officer did believe documents on war crimes were purposely classified to keep them from the public, but we also found unclassified reports concerning war crimes. The high proportion of classified material on Bosnia is consistent with other State practices in classifying information. For example, in 1993, we reported that 6 percent of the documents we reviewed should not have been classified, and another 15 percent were questionably classified.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Classified Information: Volume Could be Reduced by Changing Retention Policy, (GAO/NSIAD-93-127, Feb. 1993)

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## **Environment in Which Allegations Could Appear Plausible**

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- **Inability to effectively deliver targeted amounts of assistance and provide protection in safe areas.**
- **Statements by EC Negotiator perceived as pressure.**
- **For 8 months the U.N. Negotiator was also UNPROFOR Special Representative.**
- **Inability to monitor end-use food distribution.**

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### **Environment in Which Allegations Could Appear Plausible**

Several actions created an environment in which the allegations could have appeared plausible. Most importantly, U.N. operations were unable to deliver the amount of aid targeted for Bosnian Muslims and protect the safe areas. (See app. III.)

Also, statements by the EC negotiator were perceived as pressure from the United Nations. In November 1993, after aid to central Bosnia had been stopped, the EC negotiator said, "There is a time clock of acceptability in most U.N. interventions, but particularly these humanitarian interventions." He explained that aid was fueling the war by feeding combatants, and stopping aid was a possibility. In January 1994, after another round of negotiations failed, he said, "The U.N. cannot stay in Bosnia forever. However, on humanitarian grounds, UNPROFOR should remain until the snow is off the mountains." According to Bosnian Muslim officials, these statements were viewed by them as pressure to reach a settlement.



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**Appendix II**  
**No Evidence U.N. Used Humanitarian Assistance for Political Purposes**

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Further, from May to December 1993, the U.N. Secretary General's Special Representative had dual responsibilities. He was both the U.N.'s negotiator trying to reach a settlement among Bosnia's warring parties and also the Special Representative of the Secretary General, in charge of UNPROFOR. A Bosnian government official said the EC negotiator's statements, when linked to the U.N. negotiator's authority over UNPROFOR, made it appear they were working in tandem.

The inability of UNHCR to monitor who finally got relief also added to suspicions that some factions were receiving more U.N. aid than was fair, and the U.N. was manipulating the delivery of aid. UNHCR reports for October to December 1993 showed that its capacity to monitor food distribution and its access to locations in central Bosnia were poor in at least 16 of 20 locations.

# Effectiveness of U.N. Operations

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## Achievements

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- U.N. provided vitally needed food that averted starvation.
- In 1993, about 5,000 convoys were coordinated by UNHCR and protected by UNPROFOR.
- Sarajevo airport was kept operational.
- UNHCR and UNPROFOR helped coordinate
  - Allied airlift, which provided 71 percent of Sarajevo's food.
  - U.S.-led airdrops, which saved enclaves.

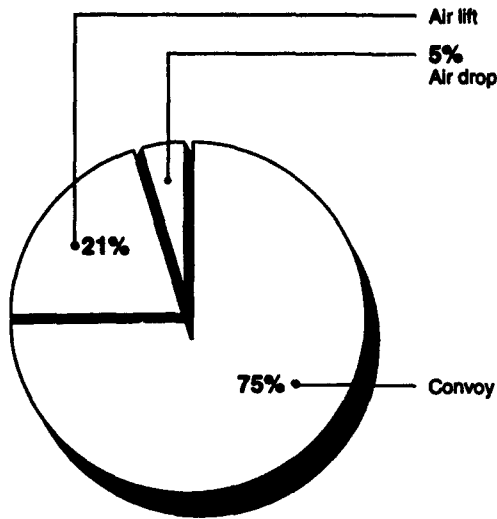
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## Achievements

As of January 31, 1994, UNHCR estimated that 2.74 million people needed assistance in Bosnia. To assist these people, UNHCR coordinated or operated approximately 5,000 land convoys, the majority of which got through, and delivered 174,053 metric tons of aid. UNPROFOR provided security for many of these convoys and deployed forces to 12 locations in Bosnia. UNHCR also worked with the allied airlift to deliver food to the Sarajevo airport, which UNPROFOR has generally been able to keep open. By spring 1993, Sarajevo became dependent on the airlift. Overall, 71 percent of Sarajevo's aid was delivered by airlift in 1993.

The U.S.-led airdrops also provided an important method of delivering aid. Overall, airdrops did not provide a large proportion of total assistance to Bosnia (See fig. III.1), but they provided a lifeline to isolated enclaves where land convoys were largely unsuccessful. For example, airdrops provided 87 percent of all aid reaching two isolated enclaves in central Bosnia. Overall, more than 2,600 flights have dropped approximately 17,000 metric tons of aid to such enclaves. Reports from observers at these locations indicate that not all aid hits the target areas, but the airdrops have saved people there. Figure III.2 shows an airdrop in central Bosnia.

**Figure III.1: Methods of Aid Delivery to Bosnia**



**Figure III.2: Airdrop to Central Bosnia**



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## Shortfalls

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- Inability to deliver U.N.-targeted requirements of aid.
- Some indications of malnutrition and hunger.
- Convoys blocked and obstructed.
- UNPROFOR and humanitarian staff harassed.
- Human rights are violated as fighting killed civilians in safe areas and other locations.

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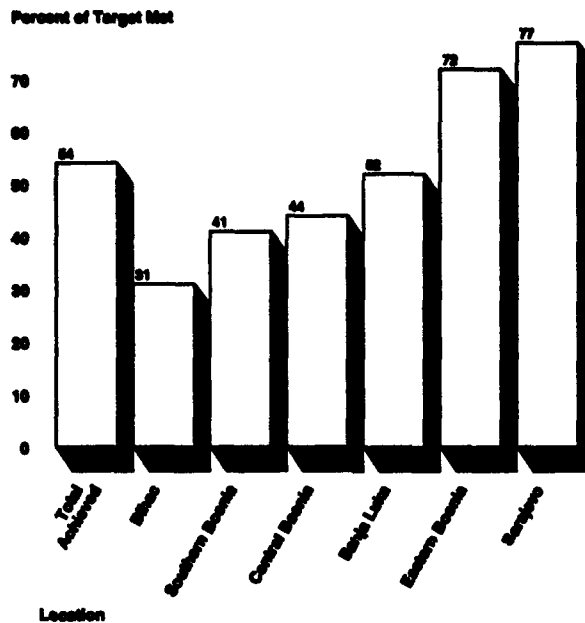
## Shortfalls

U.N.-coordinated efforts have averted starvation in Bosnia, but only 54 percent of the U.N.-estimated food requirement was delivered. In some locations, the percentage delivered was even less. (See fig. III.3.) The U.N.-targeted food requirement is calculated on the basis of calories needed to sustain body weight multiplied by the estimated population. UNHCR commented that these were only targets and fortunately were overestimates. Moreover the amount of aid delivered was enough to prevent widespread life-threatening food shortages.<sup>3</sup> Both AID and UNHCR also commented that the program providing seed to local farmers was highly successful because it allowed many locations to grow their own food. During our field visit, we saw several locations growing crops with seed from this program.

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<sup>3</sup>A World Health Organization survey in January 1994 found that household stocks of food, black market purchases, and locally available resources offset shortfalls in the U.N.-target requirement of food. Problems occurred where these sources were eliminated.

Figure III.3: Percentage of Aid Target Met in 1993



Although U.N. operations fed Bosnians and prevented starvation, there were some indications of hunger. UNHCR field officers reported evidence of malnutrition in some locations. In Sarajevo, where the airlift operation provided a relatively stable source of food, 5 percent of those in a health survey were malnourished. In central Bosnia, during December 1993 and January 1994, children and others looted warehouses of wheat flour, and groups of civilians looted convoys to obtain food. Reports and field visits to locations that the United Nations can now access, show that the extent of malnutrition is much less than previously believed. One AID official said that the level of malnutrition was low enough that AID was considering reducing its food assistance to Bosnia.

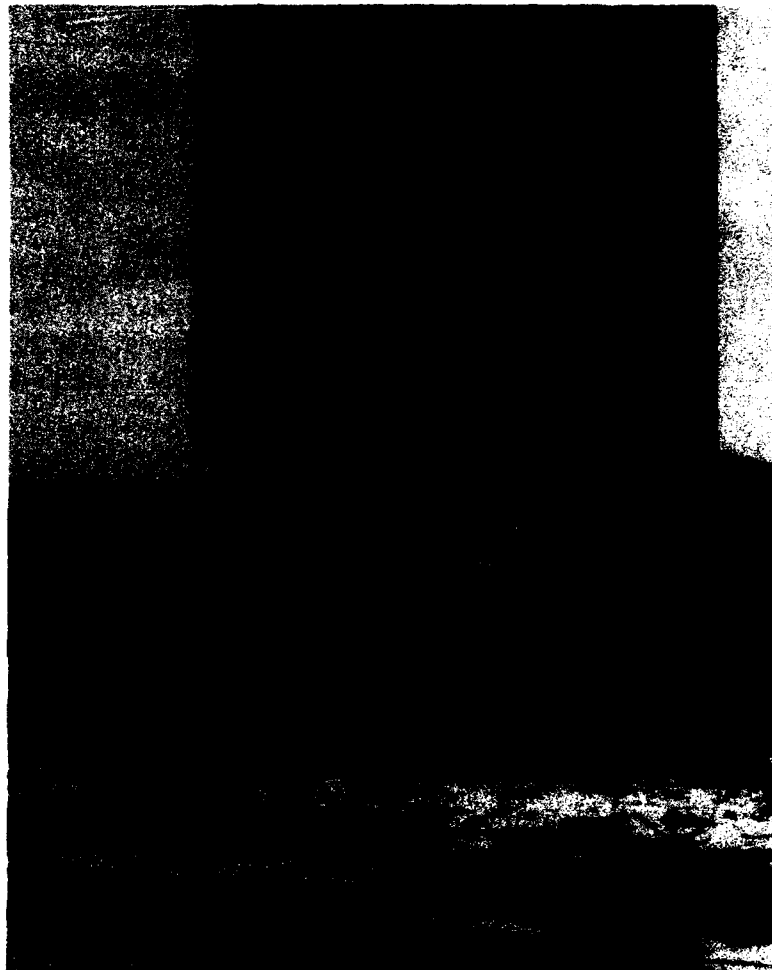
Part of the shortfall in aid delivery stemmed from the inability to secure passage through obstructions. We analyzed records of convoys to central Bosnia from October 1993 through February 1994 and found that an average of 28 percent were unsuccessful. Bosnian Serbs obstructed most convoys, but all parties were responsible for some blockages. Moreover, UNHCR officials said that the percentage of obstructed convoys understates the problem because even successful convoys took longer than was reasonable based on mileage and travel conditions. Trips that actually took one day when the factions were reasonably cooperative, often took several days. For example, we examined records of all

**Appendix III**  
**Effectiveness of U.N. Operations**

convoys along selected routes in January and February 1994 and found that over 40 percent exceeded the reasonable time.

U.N. operations were also mandated to provide security for convoys and protect Bosnians in the safe areas. However, humanitarian workers and peacekeepers were often harassed by the factions. In some instances, the parties not only blocked convoys, but insisted on body searches of U.N. staff and searching their personal items. They also confiscated U.N. fuel and stoves, and used the equipment for their troops. Also, aid has been obstructed to all safe areas and thousands of people have been killed in attacks on civilian locations. The attack on the Sarajevo marketplace in February 1994, where 68 people were killed and 300 wounded, was one example. Figure III.4 shows Sarajevo during early 1994.

**Figure III.4: Sarajevo During Early 1994**



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## Inadequate Resources and Gaps in Leadership Weaken Humanitarian Intervention

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### Inadequate Number of Troops to Assert Control

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- 3,600 troops short of resources to carry out mandates under "light option"
- 25,000 troops short under full operational plan
- Insufficient resources to protect convoys
- Gaps in some contingent readiness and training

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#### **Inadequate Number of Troops to Assert Control**

As of March 1994, UNPROFOR's troop strength was over 3,600 less than that authorized by the Security Council to provide security for deliveries of humanitarian aid and protect the safe areas. The authorized troop strength was 17,710, but deployment was 14,071. (See table IV.1.)

**Table IV.1: Shortfall of UNPROFOR Troop Strength in Bosnia**

<b>Mandate</b>	<b>Authorized strength</b>	<b>Deployment as of Mar. 1994</b>	<b>Shortfall</b>
<b>Reopen Sarajevo airport and protect humanitarian convoys</b>	<b>10,110</b>	<b>9,071</b>	<b>1,039</b>
<b>Protect safe areas</b>	<b>7,600</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>2,600</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,710</b>	<b>14,071</b>	<b>3,639</b>

According to UNPROFOR's Chief of Staff, the authorized troop strength understated actual needs because it assumed a best-case scenario where all factions would cooperate with the U.N.'s mission. U.N. plans stated that the authorized deployment of 17,710 constituted the "light option." But full protection for safe areas and convoys required a troop strength of 39,500, which was about 25,000 more than were deployed in March 1994. According to troop contingents in the field, they had inadequate resources to carry out the Security Council mandates. Two troop contingents said they would like to provide escorts for all convoys on the most dangerous routes. Instead, they had to limit their protection to stationing troops at designated points along a convoy route. UNHCR field representatives confirmed that UNPROFOR's most frequently cited reason for being unable to provide convoy escorts and protection in the safe areas was the lack of resources.

In addition to a shortfall of personnel, some troop contingents were unprepared to operate in Bosnia. For example, one contingent UNPROFOR was relying on to assume convoy protection duties had to undergo winter training before it could deploy to central Bosnia. Another UNPROFOR contingent had close relationships with the national contingent and supplied it with some winter gear. Another contingent arrived without protective flak jackets and had to purchase them after its arrival.



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## Gaps in Overall Leadership for Humanitarian Intervention

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- No single authority to coordinate effort.  
--UNHCR led humanitarian operations.  
--UNPROFOR led military operations.
  - Inconsistency at checkpoints illustrated lack of unified authority to set direction.
  - Consistent assertive action could have been better assured by unified authority.
  - No full-time Special Representative designated until December 1993.
  - Situation now improving.
- 

### Gaps in Overall Leadership for Humanitarian Intervention

U.N. operations in Bosnia suffered from the lack of unified authority to ensure that military and humanitarian objectives were integrated and matched by closely coordinated actions. UNHCR was given the lead humanitarian role in the former Yugoslavia, but this responsibility did not include U.N. security operations. UNPROFOR was directed to support the humanitarian efforts in Bosnia, but also had other security objectives, including protection of safe areas. Given the U.N.'s multiple roles, the lack of an individual on the ground to provide overall direction and coordination weakened operations.

According to UNPROFOR's Force Commander, credibility was a necessity to carry out the mission. Consistent, assertive diplomatic and public relations action in dealing with the warring factions, coupled with matching responses on the ground when confronted by roadblocks would have bolstered this credibility. Instead, the operation lacked central authority to set policies and integrate humanitarian objectives with supporting military activities. As a result, responses to obstructions varied greatly, according to UNHCR and UNPROFOR officials. Weak responses early in the operation set precedents that undermined subsequent efforts. For example, sometimes UNPROFOR escorts worked closely with convoy leaders to negotiate forcefully with those blocking passage. But in other cases, U.N. peacekeepers were passive and allowed checkpoint guards to turn them around or even acquiesced to searches of U.N. vehicles. According to

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**Appendix IV****Inadequate Resources and Gaps in Overall Leadership Weaken Humanitarian Intervention**

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UNHCR and UNPROFOR officials, the inconsistent responses undercut the authority of U.N. forces in the eyes of the factions. The weaker responses became the standard against which those blocking the U.N. measured their actions. One Bosnian Croat official, for example, told us he knew very well that his enemies could stop U.N. movement at anytime with a single guard holding a clipboard, and he could not allow anything less for his forces.

The factions also obstructed U.N. efforts by requiring UNPROFOR and UNHCR to obtain clearances before moving through territory they controlled. For example, the Bosnian Croat Office of Displaced Persons and Refugees required U.N. and other convoys to request clearance 7 days in advance, notifying it of each driver, vehicle, and escort. A typo or change in a driver or truck could cause the convoy to be turned back at any checkpoint. Overall leadership could have helped in developing a consistent strategy on (1) the level of assertiveness to be used when confronted with such obstructions and (2) how proactive U.N. operations were to be. There were differences of opinion on these issues. For example, the former UNHCR Special Envoy said that he believed a vigorous response was necessary. He cited the example of one contingent that would roll its armor up to a checkpoint and tell the guards that the convoy had clearance to proceed. The guards frequently overlooked a discrepancy on the clearance form. The Force Commander also believed UNPROFOR should be more assertive and, in late 1993, issued a directive that units be more proactive in regaining their freedom of movement--an action necessary to protect Bosnians in the safe areas.

On the other hand, UNPROFOR and U.N. officials said that there was a thin line between assertiveness and the use of force, including air power, to carry out the mandates. They said that UNPROFOR should not cross the line because it could then be perceived as taking sides in the conflict and its neutrality would be compromised. UNHCR officials were also concerned about the use of force, saying it could subject vulnerable humanitarian workers throughout Bosnia to retaliation. With regard to clearances, U.N. and other agencies recognized the legitimate right of local authorities to require reasonable clearance procedures to ensure that humanitarian aid convertible to war uses did not slip into the hands of enemy troops. However, from mid-1993 and onwards, problems in obtaining clearances at every checkpoint significantly hindered operations.

Assertive action, short of using force, did work in some instances, as noted, and single authority to provide early direction for consistent action could have improved humanitarian intervention. However, it was not until January 1994--nearly 19 months after UNPROFOR's initial mandate in Bosnia--that a full-time Special Representative with responsibilities for overall operations was posted in the former Yugoslavia.

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## Lack of Integrated Plan for U.N. Operations

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- No overall plan to link military and humanitarian actions into common strategic objectives
  - No doctrine for humanitarian intervention
  - Private voluntary organizations not incorporated into planning.
  - Strategy, tactics, and approaches being developed internationally
- 

### Lack of Integrated Plan for U.N. Operations

According to UNPROFOR and UNHCR officials, there was no overall plan integrating humanitarian objectives with supporting military assistance. In September 1992, the Secretary General issued a document describing operations, but this was not an operational plan, with an overall strategy for coordinated operations. According to an UNPROFOR officer in Zagreb, the lack of a plan with overall mission objectives allowed operations to drift. Underlying the lack of objectives was the rationale that the mission in Bosnia was simply a holding action. For example, the U.N. Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and the High Commissioner for Refugees recognized this and stated that, "in the final analysis, the lasting solution to this humanitarian crisis is peace and reconciliation; humanitarian aid is not a substitute for peace, but it can mitigate the cruel effects of war." In the absence of an overall plan, strategies varied widely. In Bihac, the troop contingent independently helped establish a commercial corridor to help feed the area. According to the contingent, the goal was to make the isolated enclave self-sufficient as quickly as possible. Although this strategy enabled the location to sustain itself for awhile, it also had the unintended consequence of making UNPROFOR appear partisan after the opposition leader in Bihac rebelled against the Bosnian government.

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**Appendix IV****Inadequate Resources and Gaps in Overall Leadership Weaken Humanitarian Intervention**

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According to UNHCR, it was not possible to develop an overall strategy and plan because there was no political settlement on which to base such planning. While we agree a long-term solution would have helped, we believe an overall plan was needed to coordinate protection and aid delivery in the war situation that existed.

UNHCR also did not have a concept of operations that linked military and humanitarian actions, according to senior managers in Bosnia. UNHCR had limited procedures for implementing disaster operations, and Bosnia was the first time UNHCR implemented relief operations with military support in an active war zone. Also, UNHCR commented that there was never any intention to integrate humanitarian and military operations because that would imply force should be used to deliver aid. If UNHCR was associated with the use of force, it could compromise the humanitarian mission.

Although these may be legitimate concerns, the lack of an integrated plan left gaps in coordinating operations with the military, and made the role of private voluntary organizations unclear. According to staff of several of these organizations, the support and cooperation they received depended on individual relationships rather than an institutional connection to efforts in Bosnia. UNPROFOR officials confirmed this, explaining that troop contingents were authorized to protect private voluntary organizations as their resources permitted. UNPROFOR contingents did provide assistance to these groups, monitoring and escorting many such convoys. But there were some gaps. In December 1993, for example, staff from a private voluntary organization working under a UNHCR contract and with U.N. licenses were captured and detained in central Bosnia. The staff radioed to an UNPROFOR contingent for help. The contingent spoke to them but did not assist. After several hours, the staff radioed again for help. Finally, a UNHCR official secured their release.

According to UNPROFOR and U.N. officials, such extreme examples were rare. Moreover, military protection was made difficult because many of the private voluntary organizations did not coordinate their activities adequately through UNHCR. We believe an overall plan would have helped clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved.

Recognizing the need for more closely coordinated efforts, UNHCR and UNPROFOR jointly developed command orders for UNPROFOR's Bosnia-Herzegovina command in October 1993. Also, the U.N. Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the U.N. organization tasked with coordinating disaster relief, has developed guidelines for using military-humanitarian assets in disasters. These were completed in December 1993, following a conference

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**Appendix IV**  
**Inadequate Resources and Gaps in Overall Leadership Weaken Humanitarian Intervention**

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hosted by NATO and co-sponsored by the United Nations and the International Federation of the Red Cross.<sup>4</sup> These guidelines, however, do not address the delivery of humanitarian assistance in a situation of armed conflict. They do not clarify fundamental questions about the level of assertiveness in delivering aid; how to maintain credibility, fairness, and impartiality when working with a military force; or the optimal level of coordination and cooperation between military and humanitarian units in a wartime environment.

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<sup>4</sup>Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defense Assets in Disaster Relief (U.N. Department of Humanitarian Affairs, 13 Dec. 1993)

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## **Gaps in Managing Military-Humanitarian Cooperation Impede Effective Action**

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- **Underlying distrust and misunderstanding between military and humanitarian staff.**
- **Different priorities**
  - Military emphasizes protection and security.**
  - Humanitarian emphasizes provision of assistance.**
- **Cooperation improving as military provides useful planning and logistical support.**

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### **Gaps in Managing Military-Humanitarian Cooperation Impede Operations**

According to UNPROFOR and UNHCR officials, considerable distrust existed between military and humanitarian staff. A U.N. official, for example, told us that many UNPROFOR contingents had stereotypes of irresponsible relief workers; UNHCR staff had images of authoritarian and inflexible troops unable to understand the humanitarian mission. According to a UNHCR officer in central Bosnia, these stereotypes hindered cooperation until quite recently, when hazards forced UNHCR to work more closely with the military. A convoy leader provided a specific example of how a lack of cooperation hindered operations. In leading a convoy through a narrow pass, he reached a location where snow prevented him from proceeding. The convoy driver asked an UNPROFOR contingent that was monitoring the road why it had not informed the convoy of the blockage. The contingent explained that no one had thought of informing UNHCR. The convoy leader, an experienced military driver, further added that UNHCR, itself, did not have the contingent's radio frequency or telephone number and had just recently developed an integrated radio net for the area.

Different priorities of the military and humanitarian operations underlay their mutual suspicion. UNPROFOR emphasized security and protection of the convoys and its own troops. For example, a spokesman for one contingent in central Bosnia said it had to be accountable for its own protection since it had suffered so many casualties. UNHCR staff, on the other hand, emphasized the

delivery of aid. The approaches to scheduling illustrate the different priorities. According to the former UNHCR Special Envoy for the former Yugoslavia, he would reroute scheduled convoys if a convoy was obstructed. This flexibility helped ensure that relief was delivered, but "drove UNPROFOR crazy," since it could not understand why schedules should be changed so frequently. An UNPROFOR logistics officer said two factors made such changes difficult. First, UNPROFOR was trying to maximize scarce resources throughout Bosnia and a change in one location made many other necessary changes. Second, security was paramount, and such changes made it difficult to ensure security.

Cooperation among military and humanitarian units, however, varied considerably, and in some areas was well-managed. In Bihac, we witnessed excellent cooperation between UNHCR and the local UNPROFOR contingent. UNPROFOR and UNHCR warehouses were co-located, with UNPROFOR providing security and helping UNHCR staff with food and other supplies. According to other private voluntary organizations in central Bosnia, cooperation they received varied considerably. The director of a large private voluntary organization, for example, said he received excellent assistance in developing a water and sanitation project in Sarajevo. He said that beyond escorts and protection, UNPROFOR units provided him with supplies, consultation, and labor. He added, however, that the level of cooperation varied, depending upon the national contingents and personal relationships with them. He also noted that speaking the same language as the contingent was crucial in getting cooperation.

By the end of 1993, cooperation and coordination were being managed more effectively. UNHCR officials, for example, said that many of the earlier problems were being overcome. In some locations, an integrated communication system was being established. A convoy operations center was set up to coordinate convoys in central Bosnia, and UNPROFOR coordination meetings were attended by humanitarian liaison staff. One UNHCR official also pointed out that many military staff had been seconded to UNHCR to help plan and implement logistics. UNHCR's convoy database, for example, was set up with military assistance.

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## **Weaknesses in Command and Control**

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- Nations funded their own troop contingents until February 1993.
- Contingents contacted capitals for instructions.
- Some directives not carried out by troop contingents.
- U.N. command and operational control over national contingents is a subject of debate.

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### **Weaknesses in Command and Control**

Weaknesses in UNPROFOR's command and control developed at the outset of operations in Bosnia. Initially, each nation paid for its own troops without reimbursement from U.N. peacekeeping funds. However, on February 20, 1993, the United Nations began funding all UNPROFOR troops in Bosnia because independent funding eroded the U.N.'s command and control. In a report, the Secretary General stated:

Troop-contributing Governments may find it difficult to respect fully the principle that the troops provided by them operate under the command and control of the United Nations. This danger is more likely when the Governments concerned perceive the conflict to be one which affects their national interests...the special financial arrangements for UNPROFOR's Bosnia and Herzegovina Command have already created a number of problems of this nature.

Command and control problems limited UNPROFOR's ability to carry out its mandates. For example, one troop contingent was directed to move some of its troops to Zenica to protect a major UNHCR warehouse for central Bosnia. The troop contingent called its capital for instructions and then refused to deploy to Zenica. According to UNHCR officials, the warehouse and local operations were not safe until UNPROFOR was able to deploy a different national contingent to



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**Appendix IV**  
**Inadequate Resources and Gaps in Overall Leadership Weaken Humanitarian Intervention**

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the area. In another example, a troop contingent was ordered to redeploy to Mostar, where intense fighting between Bosnian Muslims and Croats was causing widespread suffering among the civilian population. When we visited the contingent several months later, it still had not redeployed. An officer of the contingent told us that each national contingent had discretion in carrying out day-to-day operations. Moreover, the command to redeploy to Mostar exceeded UNPROFOR's mandate.

Security Council resolutions, however, mandated UNPROFOR to provide security for humanitarian assistance, and UNHCR and private voluntary organizations were operating in Mostar. UNPROFOR elevated the dispute to the United Nations. According to U.N. officials, the Security Council, in an exchange of letters with the contingent's government, made clear that UNPROFOR's mandate did extend to such actions as the order to redeploy.

Our work on U.N. peacekeeping missions in Cambodia and Somalia identified similar command and control problems. We reported that independent actions by troop contingents weakened U.N. operations and that the use of uniform command and control by the United Nations is a subject of debate.<sup>5</sup> According to officials from the Departments of State and Defense, central control and direction for operations is essential to execute a mission. However, final authority for command lies with the national contingent.

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<sup>5</sup>U.N. Peacekeeping: Lessons Learned in Recent Missions (GAO/NSIAD-94-9, Dec. 1993).

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## **Misconduct in Some Contingents Eroded Credibility**

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- Over 380 troops repatriated for discipline.
- Conduct varied.  
Contingent with 875 had 160 repatriated.  
Contingent with 1,363 had 2 repatriated.
- Each contingent commander is responsible for discipline of own troops.

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### **Misconduct in Some Contingents Eroded Credibility**

According to UNPROFOR officials, misconduct by UNPROFOR troops reduced respect for the U.N. force and eroded credibility. Staff of private voluntary organizations also stated that even if only a small fraction of U.N. troops were involved in misconduct, the opposing factions believed that other U.N. troops were also undisciplined and deals could be struck with them. Conversely, respect for a national contingent was very specific and was not necessarily extended to others.

As of January 1994, 383 troops had been repatriated to their home countries for disciplinary reasons. The number of repatriations varied widely depending on the troop contingent. One national contingent with a troop strength of 875 had 160 repatriated for disciplinary reasons, while another, with 1,363 troops had 2 repatriated for discipline. According to the UNPROFOR chief of staff, soldiers were repatriated for acts ranging from drunken behavior, to abusing civilians, to black marketing. However, as with other peacekeeping missions, neither the United Nations nor UNPROFOR could devise a code of conduct universally acceptable to all nations contributing troops. Thus, UNPROFOR could recommend repatriation of individuals, but each national contingent was responsible for the discipline of its own troops according to its own military code.

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## U.N. Response to Allegations of Misconduct

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- Independent investigation completed. No organized criminal activity found within UNPROFOR, but individuals found guilty of black marketing and other crimes.
  - U.N. issued I.D. cards and set P.X. controls.
  - Inspector for UNPROFOR named on April 4, 1994.
- 

### **U.N. Responses to Allegations of Misconduct**

Because of the perception that UNPROFOR contingents were conducting organized black marketing, prostitution, and smuggling of individuals out of Sarajevo, the United Nations undertook an investigation in October 1993. Based on interviews and reports, the investigation found that individuals were involved in some criminal acts, but there was no organized criminal behavior. As a result of the investigation, 23 UNPROFOR troops were repatriated and 7 civilian U.N. workers were dismissed.

Even before the investigation, UNPROFOR had begun to address problems of misconduct. UNPROFOR issued a photo identification to help ensure that U.N. contingent troops could be identified. In addition, a ration card system was established for commissary privileges. Under this system, participating personnel were given a limit on the quantity of cigarettes, alcohol, and food items that could be purchased each month at the U.N. commissary. According to an UNPROFOR officer, it was difficult to make all personnel from participating countries understand that these items were for personal consumption and not for sale or barter.

To provide better accountability for misconduct, the United Nations appointed an UNPROFOR inspector general on April 4, 1994.

## Lessons Learned in Humanitarian Intervention

- Humanitarian intervention is undertaken in the absence of a political settlement. Such operations are dangerous for both peacekeepers and humanitarian staff and require adequate resources and training to successfully implement.
- Lack of effective leadership to provide unified direction and guidance weakens humanitarian intervention.
- The use of force is controversial in delivering aid, and no clear guidelines about its use, except for consistent and uniform use in self-defense, emerge from our studies on Bosnia and elsewhere.
- However, evidence from Bosnia and from other peace operations suggests that uniform assertive action, within clearly defined limits, is effective. Specifically:
  - Assertive action need not always involve physical force, but can also include tactics such as forceful negotiation at all levels, publicity, determined attitude, and professional demeanor.
  - Early precedents in using assertive action help establish credibility and respect for the mission and set a standard to follow.
  - Consistency in the use of assertive action is important so that opposing forces cannot exploit gaps in executing the mission.

- **Although a political settlement may be the solution for humanitarian crises, effective humanitarian intervention still requires strategic planning in terms of concept and operational procedures for closely integrating humanitarian objectives with supporting military activities.**
- **Specific steps in managing military-humanitarian cooperation, such as joint planning and integrated logistics, communication, and scheduling--can build trust and take advantage of the expertise of the military in implementing large scale operations.**
- **Humanitarian airlift and airdrop operations can provide an important delivery mechanism in situations where land convoys cannot get through.**
- **As in other peace operations, command and control of contingents, within clearly specified limits, is important for effective implementation.**
- **Troop misconduct can erode credibility and respect for the mission and undermine ability to carry out the operation.**

# Major Contributors to This Report

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## **NATIONAL SECURITY AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIVISION, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

David R. Martin, Assistant Director  
Tetsuo Miyabara, Project Manager  
James M. Strus, Senior Evaluator  
Laverne G. Tharpes, Senior Evaluator  
John Neumann, Evaluator  
Carolyn S. Blocker, Reports Analyst

## **NEW YORK REGIONAL OFFICE**

John E. Tschirhart, Core Group Manager  
Mari M. Matsumoto, Evaluator

## **EUROPEAN OFFICE**

Inez M. Azcona, Senior Evaluator

(711060)