

SREBRENICA

It is now part of popular wisdom throughout the western world that between 6,000 and 12,000 muslim men were massacred by the Bosnian Serbs after the fall of the “safe area” of Srebrenica on 11 July 1995. There is, however, a volume of evidence which casts doubt on whether such a massacre took place.

A. Srebrenica Safe Area

In common with Sarajevo, Zepa and Gorazde, Srebrenica had become, by 1993, a small Muslim enclave entirely surrounded by land controlled by the Bosnian Serbs. Refugees temporarily boosted the population of the Srebrenica area to a peak of 60,000 and it was increasingly difficult to keep the enclave supplied with food. General Philippe Morillon of the UN was allowed through with an aid convoy. Subsequently, in April 1993, the UN brokered a “safe area” agreement for Zepa, Gorazde and Srebrenica on the basis that the enclaves would be demilitarised, and the Bosnian Serbs would allow free movement in and out of humanitarian convoys.

Though the Bosnian Muslims handed over some weaponry to the UN, this was mainly obsolete and ineffective equipment. They retained ample infantry arms, as well as anti-tank weapons and mortars. Many independent sources, including the UN, confirm that the Bosnian Muslims launched repeated military actions from within the safe area. A particular provocation for the Bosnian Serbs was the attack on the village of Kravica, where the entire population of 100, comprising mainly old men and women, was wiped out. As late as the beginning of July 1995, the Bosnian Muslims were continuing to make these attacks.

B. Political background:

The Bosnian Serb takeover of Srebrenica reinforced a widespread perception that Serbs had humiliated the international community. Their seizure of UN hostages, which had effectively brought an end to early summer UN air strikes on Bosnian Serb positions, had made UN / NATO appear impotent. The capture of the the UN-established “safe areas”, despite the threat of NATO air strikes, compounded this impression.

Reports of massacres following the fall of Srebrenica, closely followed by the Market Place mortar outrage in Sarajevo, enabled the UN to justify taking sides by allowing the prolonged US air strikes in early September 1995. These air strikes shattered the military capability of the Bosnian Serbs and prepared the way for the Dayton peace agreement in November 1995.

The Case

NUMBERS

1. Most “massacre” estimates are based on the official UN population figure for Srebrenica of 40,000 - 42,000. But the official population figure was merely an estimate given to the UN by the Bosnian Muslim town administration for the purposes of calculating UN emergency aid. The administration had an obvious motive to inflate the figure. The UN was privately believed to consider it an over-estimate, but saw no purpose in a dispute.

2. a. Other estimates of the population are 47,000 UNHCR; and 49,000 Bosnian Government (made up of 37,000 in the town and 12,000 in outlying areas). The highest estimate was 60,000 press, which seems to have been based on estimates from 1993 when, swelled by refugees, the safe area briefly housed that number of people. Many of the 1993 refugees remained only a short time in Srebrenica before moving on. It is also known that, despite firm deterrence by the Muslim authorities, a steady stream of people had left the safe area during 1994 and the early month of 1995. The UN Commission on Human Rights, in its report published 22 August 1995, estimated the July 1995 population at 38-42000.

2. b. By 4 August 1995, **35,632** people from the Srebrenica area were registered as displaced persons by the UN in Bosnian Government controlled areas. In addition, on 21/12/95 Radio Netherlands broadcast the following report: “The Bosnian authorities refuse to clarify the fate of thousands of people that fled the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica last July. The International Committee of the Red Cross told Radio Netherlands **4- 5000** went missing AFTER successfully crossing the front line to government-held territory.... United Nations representatives were somewhat puzzled when they met a large group of men from Srebrenica in an area called the Sapna Finger, close to the town of Tuzla, where the bulk of civilian refugees from Srebrenica were being accommodated. After this initial contact, the group was isolated from the outside world by their own authorities.”

2. c. Comparing the figures in (a) and (b) above, it is by no means clear that any part of the pre-11 July 1995 Srebrenica population is unaccounted for.

KARREMANS

3. BBC Monitoring reports dated 25 July 1995 state that “According to General Couzy’s and Colonel Karremans’ estimates there were at most 5 per cent of men in the Srebrenica population” (Col Thomas Karremans was the commander of the Dutch UN battalion in Srebrenica at the time that it fell; General Hans Couzy was the Dutch Army Commander-in-Chief). On the highest estimate of the Srebrenica population (60,000), this would mean that there were no more than 3000 Muslim men in Srebrenica. It is likely, however, that Karremans’ comment applies to the population of Potocari on 12 July 1995. Some 25000 Muslims fled to this town near Srebrenica on 11 July when it became clear to them that Srebrenica itself would not be defended. If Karremans’ 5% applies to this total, it suggests that there were a

maximum of 1500 Muslim men in Potocari when the Bosnian Serbs arrived there on 12 July.

4. a. In a live interview with the BBC One O'Clock News on 1 August 1995, Christophe Girod, the Red Cross spokesman co-ordinating operations in the former Yugoslavia, spoke of several thousand Bosnian Muslim men who had escaped from Srebrenica and had arrived safely in central Bosnia, but were being kept from sight by the Bosnian Muslim regime. The transcript reads: "Several thousand of those men arrived in central Bosnia, but they are now kept in a military camp in the west of Tuzla. They were not able to contact their families, or at least we have not been able to make contact with their families, which means that out of the thousands of allegations we got from the displaced from Tuzla, there might be several answers about the men". On 2 August 1995, The Times reported that the Red Cross in Geneva had said that "it had heard from sources in Bosnia that upto 2,000 Bosnian Government troops were in an area north of Tuzla. They had made their way there from Srebrenica 'without their families being informed". The Times went on to say that the Bosnian Government was probably keeping the presence of these troops secret "for military reasons".

4.b. On 17 July 1995, the BBC One O'Clock News reported: "The Bosnian government says 3,000 of its soldiers have escaped from Srebrenica, the enclave the Serbs captured last week. They say the men had to fight their way through Serb lines to reach safety in Tuzla". However, no figure ever appeared for Muslim males who reached Tuzla after walking from Srebrenica, despite the publication of photos of men with heavy machine guns and ammunition (contradicting reports that they were "unarmed" and "out of ammunition"), and a photo of a 14-year old boy with an AK47. According to Amnesty International's report, published in July 1996, "at least 13,000 men successfully made their way through the forest".

4.c. It has been reported that a Bosnian Army Commander, giving details to the Bosnian Parliament on the fall of Srebrenica, said that all his forces had been withdrawn safely.

5. The International Committee of the Red Cross originally reported a total of 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men unaccounted for. This figure was made up of 5,000 who left Srebrenica just before the Serbs moved in, heading for Muslim lines, and 3,000 who were separated from women, children and elderly at Potocari and taken into detention. The ICRC has now reduced its total of "unaccounted persons" from Srebrenica to 7,300.

GRAVES

6. (i) An extensive trawl of international press coverage reveals that the various mass grave searches undertaken in the spring / summer / early autumn of 1996 appear to have recovered a maximum total of 400 bodies (not counting 300 bodies found unburied where they had fallen in fighting on the hills). Comments made to journalists suggested that a small number of these corpses had been found bound by hand or foot, or in other circumstances

which indicated execution. No information has as yet been made available as to whether the other bodies are to be considered victims of execution - nor, indeed, whether they are all Bosnian Muslims. Given the extent of the investigations, it is surprising that they have not produced any substantial evidence in support of the massacre claims - particularly as both sides acknowledged that there had been many casualties in fighting and that the resulting bodies had been hastily buried where they fell. It is also worth noting that few bodies have been recovered from the sites in Nova Kasaba, identified by US satellite photographs, which prompted initial claims of massacres in August 1995. Madeleine Albright, the US Ambassador to the UN, told the world then that these sites might contain 2,700 bodies. 33 bodies were discovered at Nova Kasaba, at four different sites. In March 1996, the magazine Living Marxism reported "Many (international TV) crews did not even bother to search out the site shown on the CIA satellite photograph because it had generally been agreed in media circles that it was not a mass grave". [about 30 international journalists visited the Srebrenica area after it fell, including Dan Rather of the US 60 Minutes programme. None published any kind of confirmation of mass slaughter evidence. One, Jacques Merlino of the French Antenne 2 station, broadcast a story saying he had found nothing. Miroslav Deronjic, the civilian commissioner for the Srebrenica-Skelani municipality, was reported by Tanjug on 21 December 1995 as saying that on 25 August 1995 he received a group of 10 correspondents from the USA, Great Britain and Austria, led by Mike Wallace the anchor and co-editor of CBS' 60 Minutes programme, who brought with them many photographs taken from an AWACS of alleged mass graves of Muslim victims. Deronjic is quoted as saying "They insisted that we should take them to the sites in the photographs so that they could assess for themselves the truth of the Muslim allegations. Without hesitation, in other words immediately, although I had not seen the photographs, I agreed to take them personally to every place in which they were interested. They showed me photographs in the region of Hrcici, K. Polje and Kasaba, and asked to be taken to these places. I got into the car with Wallace and immediately took the whole group to these locations. I spent 44 hours with them driving around the area, and allowed them to see for themselves...after the investigation, Mike Wallace personally thanked me and expressed his belief that the allegations were completely unfounded, and that the entire international public had been manipulated".]

6. (ii) Since Nova Kasaba is an isolated hamlet in the mountains, 19km from Srebrenica, and accessible only by a single-track, unmade-up road, it is difficult to imagine that anyone would have chosen it as a mass execution site. There was a chronic shortage of petrol. Many lorries and many journeys would have been required to transport 2700 men there, which would have caused muddy chaos on the road. There was no sign of this in the photographs released by Madeleine Albright.

6. (iii) When British divers went into the flooded open-cast mine at Ljubija, alleged to hold 8000 bodies, they found nothing but a dead horse. And despite promises that the search for mass graves would resume immediately after the 1996/97 winter, there are no reports that this has happened, nor that any new searches are planned. This suggests that the investigators do not believe there is much more to find. Manfred Novak, the UN expert on missing people in Bosnia, has recently resigned because no funding has been made available for further mass grave investigations.

INVADING FORCE

7. The Bosnian Serb force that played a primary role in the capture Srebrenica and the further military action on subsequent days is variously estimated to have numbered between 500 and 2400 [apart from Roy Gutman of Newsday who wrote "General Rupert Smith's intelligence staff, using data from eight nations, estimated

the attacking force at 8000-12000, upto 3000 of them from Serbia"] supported by a small number of tanks (2 of which were destroyed in UN air attacks), and other Bosnian Serb forces close to the general area. Most massacre accounts suggest that this force of some 2000 went in pursuit of a column of between 8,000 - 12,000 Bosnian Muslim men, a third of whom at least were quite well armed with infantry weapons, and had at least some heavier weapons. It is difficult to believe that such a large group of partially armed men, travelling through hilly terrain, would have allowed themselves to be rounded up and executed by this relatively small force. It is even more difficult to believe that thousands of bodies from a massacre could have been so effectively concealed by the Bosnian Serb soldiers within the space of days that they remain undiscovered 2 years later. George Kenney, former acting Head of the Yugoslav desk at the US State Department, has written: "My understanding is, from both US government intelligence sources and from senior Yugoslavian diplomats, that the Bosnian Serb forces around Srebrenica were quite surprised to be able to take it. It had been fairly well defended, and the defenders outnumbered the attackers about 6-8:1". Michael Evans, The Times Defence Correspondent, writing on 14 July 1995, said: "The abandonment of Srebrenica to a relatively small Serb advancing force caused surprise in the West, especially after the largely Muslim government army had demonstrated considerable infantry skills in recent attacks".

MODIFIED CLAIMS

8. i. Recently, some critics of the Bosnian Serbs have started to modify massacre claims. In The Observer of 25 August 1996, Ed Vulliamy - in an article headed "Massacre victims back from the dead" - reported that "Bosnian refugees from the crushed town of Srebrenica believe that some of the 8,000 men missing - and presumed massacred - are alive, held by the Serbs as hostages and for forced labour. In Sarajevo the president of Bosnia's Union of Refugees and Displaced Persons, Murhunisa Komarica, claimed this week that the Serbs were holding up to 4,300 men and boys as young as 14, as slaves at two mines in Yugoslavia." Improbable as it was, the significance of the story lay in the fact that it had come from official Bosnian Muslim sources. It was a clear indication that they didn't believe the "survivor" accounts - or that they knew them to be untrue.

8. ii. The Prime Minister of Republica Serpska, Dr Dragan Kalinic, stated recently that some 3000 of "soldiers missing from Srebrenica" were on the voting lists for the most recent Bosnian elections.

SURVIVOR TESTIMONY

9.i. Evidence for the massacre consists in the main of "survivor" testimony from a small number of individuals - the same names (Mevludin Oric*, Dasan Oric, Hurem Siljic, Smail Hodzic, Advic [* Mevludin and Dasan Oric are cousins of Nasir Oric, the BMA commander in Srebrenica, who was the leader of many commando raids on Serbs in outlying villages in which hundreds of Serbs were murdered, and who is himself being investigated as a war criminal by the Hague Tribunal]) come up in many press and broadcast reports. On close examination, the most-reported accounts include no particularly

persuasive information. "Survival" was generally achieved by the classic device of playing dead. Given that any Bosnian Serb burial operation would have had to be remarkably efficient (as noted above), it seems unlikely that witnesses would have been allowed to escape in this way. Local detail included in survivor accounts does not seem to go beyond knowledge that might be expected of anyone who had lived in the area for a time. Two key survivor accounts are contradictory: Living Marxism, in March 1996, pointed out that "One survivor, Hakija Husejnovic, told investigators that on 13 July 1995, 2000 men trying to escape from Srebrenica were caught by the Bosnian Serbs, crammed into a warehouse in the village of Kravica and killed with grenades and machine guns fired through doors and windows. Husejnovic said he survived by playing dead and covering himself with bodies. His story contradicts that of another witness who claimed that 2000 men surrendered in the village of Kravica and were taken by truck at night to an outdoor location, thought to be near Zvornik (quite a distance from Kravica), lined up and shot by Bosnian Serb soldiers. The witness said he pretended to be dead and then escaped. It is impossible for both of these stories to be true".

9.ii. Herbert Wieland, personal representative of the UN High Commission on Human Rights, travelled with a team of investigators to Srebrenica in July 1995, and then went on to Tuzla where almost all the Srebrenica refugees had been taken. Despite talking to scores of refugees at the main refugee camp and at other centres, they could not find a single eyewitness to any atrocities.

EVIDENCE

10. The world was essentially convinced by evidence as summarised by the Christian Science Monitor on 18 August 1995:

"An on-the-spot investigation by the Christian Science Monitor has uncovered strong evidence that a massacre of Bosnian Muslim prisoners took place last month... The physical evidence was grim and convincing:

At one site shown in the spy photos this reporter saw what appeared to be a decomposing human leg protruding from the freshly turned dirt.

Large empty ammunition boxes littered the open fields where the ground recently had been dug.

Diplomas, photos, and other personal effects of Srebrenica Muslims were scattered near the areas of disturbed earth.

At a soccer stadium in a nearby town, human faeces, blood and other evidence indicated large numbers of persons were confined, and perhaps shot."

OTHER CASUALTIES

11. No proper attempt has been made to estimate casualties resulting from a range of other causes. For example, it is thought that there was a bitter division of opinion within the Bosnian Muslim administration in Srebrenica (between hard-line jihad Muslims and others) as to whether the town should be defended, or whether men of fighting age should attempt to escape. There are reports that this dispute escalated into internal fighting, causing casualties. BBC Monitoring on 25 July 1995, quoting the HINA news agency in Zagreb, reported: "Gen Couzy also said that the Dutch soldiers, who had been taken hostage by the Serbs, had seen clashes between the Muslims themselves, "at at least two places in the western part of the enclave". He assumed the clashes were raging between those who had been determined to stay and the others who wanted to leave...." In addition, Bosnian Serbs claimed that, over the three years before the capture of Srebrenica, Bosnian Muslim forces led by Nasir Oric had killed some 1,300 Serbs, and acknowledged that reprisals were taken for this when members of Oric's forces were identified. Again, the Bosnian Serbs said that hundreds of armed Muslim men had escaped to the hills, and were subsequently involved in a series of engagements with Bosnian Serb forces - some witnessed by UN forces and journalists. Finally, as everyone seems to agree, there was sustained fighting between the column of Bosnian Muslim men trying to escape to Muslim-held territory and the Bosnian Serb forces.

INTELLIGENCE

12. (i) While Srebrenica was a war zone, with highly restricted access for outside observers, there were UN personnel in the area. NATO aircraft were also overflying, as were US spy planes and satellites. Indeed, some reports claim that three SAS men were in Srebrenica when it was taken. It is therefore unlikely that any mass executions and burials could have taken place undetected. The New York Times News Service, on 26 July 1995, reported US officials as saying that "so far satellites have produced nothing". It added that "Other sources with knowledge of the secretary of state's daily intelligence briefing said that Warren Christopher has not been presented with any intelligence imagery that could confirm massacres". It went on "US satellites make at least eight passes over Bosnia daily, according to John Pike, an expert on satellites at the Federation of American Scientists. These include Keyhole satellites, which can detect objects as small as four inches but which cannot see through clouds, and Lacrosse satellites, which can see through clouds but cannot focus enough to detect something the size of a human being. Then there are the Predators, known technically as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, commonly referred to as drones. Built by General Atomics, these small remote-controlled vehicles can hover over targets for more than 24 hours at a time. Four of the latest versions are thought to operate from a base in Albania. Designed to provide round-the-clock coverage, the Predators are almost invisible to the naked eye and difficult to pick up on radar. They can fly at up to 25000 feet, have infrared detectors for night vision and can purportedly relay video footage back to the Pentagon in real time".

12. (ii) For a time, the Americans appeared to hint that they had spy photographs of executions / burials; since these have never been produced, it now seems safe to discount their existence. US Human Rights envoy, John Shattuck, admitted in an interview with the German magazine Der Spiegel that he had no evidence to support accounts that US intelligence was in possession of damning tapes of intercepted telephone calls about Srebrenica between Bosnian Serb military leaders and their JNA counterparts.

EXTERNAL INVESTIGATORS

13. The impartiality of some of the external bodies involved in the investigation of alleged mass graves is, at least, open to question. In a press release dated July 8-9, 1996, Physicians for Human Rights (a Boston-based international forensic team working for the War Crimes Tribunal) stated: "The PHR team will spend some three-months at various sites in Bosnia unearthing mass graves of victims of massacres in the region". William Haglund, who lead the PHR 1996 investigations, gave strong backing to massacre theories in a series of press interviews given while he was in Bosnia, despite the fact that his team found no more than 200 bodies during their three months in the area. Earlier, on 31 July 1995, PHR had issued a Special Action Alert on Bosnia, inviting PHR members to lobby President Clinton and members of the House of Representatives in support of PHR's Joint Policy Statement on Bosnia. This policy statement calls for a variety of actions against the Serbs and Bosnian Serbs, but none against the other warring factions in the former Yugoslavia.

EXAGGERATED CLAIMS

14. The Bosnian Muslims were renowned for inflating figures throughout the war. In a much-covered outburst to the world's media, Prime Minister Haris Siladjić accused General Michael Rose of responsibility for the deaths of 70,000 people when Bihac was captured by the Serbs. But it later emerged that Bihac had not been captured, and the official independent figure for casualties there was below 1,000, most of whom were soldiers killed in combat. When Zepa was taken by the Bosnian Serbs in 1993, Foreign Minister Sacirbey, Siladzic and ham radio operators were talking of "genocide", "mass murder" and 30-40000 dead. The UN arrived and found 50 bodies. Similarly, the Bosnian Muslims accused the Serbs of setting up a chain of rape camps where up to 50,000 Muslim women were supposed to have been raped. Extensive official investigations found no evidence of such camps, and could verify few individual cases of rape. Finally, the overall casualty figures for the Bosnian war - the generally used figure is 200,000 dead - show signs of being similarly exaggerated. The Red Cross has confirmed under 20,000 fatalities on all sides. For Bosnia to have suffered 200,000 deaths, there would have had to be 200 deaths each day throughout the three years of conflict. As George Kenney, former acting head of the US State Department's Yugoslavia desk, has written: "The fighting rarely, if ever, reached that level"

POTOCARI

15. Great significance has been attached to the fact that Dutch UN troops in Potocari witnessed the segregation by the conquering Bosnian Serb forces of Muslim fighting-age men and boys from the rest of the Srebrenica population. This has been interpreted as the first step in a war crime. In reality, however, any conquering force is likely to take a different approach towards those who may rejoin opposing forces, and those who are obvious non-combatants. Women and small children were sent by bus to Muslim-held territory. It would have been extraordinary if the Serbs had returned fighting men so readily.

POLITICS

16. According to the New York Times of 29 October 1995, on 8 July, 3 days before the BSA overran Srebrenica, the Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic went on Sarajevo radio to say that the people of Srebrenica faced “massacres and genocide”. He said he had delivered this warning to the USA, Germany, England, France, the UN and NATO. Was this simply the foundation stone for the massacre allegations which followed? Also on 29 October 1995, The Washington Post reported “The United States was first alerted to the possibility of mass killings in the area only a day or two after Srebrenica fell, in a phone call from Bosnian Foreign Minister Mohamed Sacirbey to US Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine K Albright”.

17.i. Evidence of Bosnian Muslim stage management of the aftermath of Srebrenica can be seen from their refusal to admit refugees into Tuzla for the first 48 hours after they started arriving. Unprofor had warned on 26 June that Srebrenica would fall and said that all the measures necessary to house the refugees had been taken. An official from the Red Cross in Geneva, who was going to Tuzla on 14 July, was asked by a BBC reporter whether she would bring in aid for the Tuzla refugees. She replied that this would be unnecessary: the Tuzla authorities had all the provisions they needed. The Daily Telegraph, on 15 July 1995, reported under the headline “Muslims manipulate refugees’ agony”: “The Bosnian government deliberately increased the suffering of the Muslim refugees fleeing Srebrenica to put pressure on the international community, according to the documents made available to The Daily Telegraph. The papers include instructions to the United Nations from the government of Alija Izetbegovic in Sarajevo that the refugees must be taken in their thousands to a single location rather than being spread around the numerous available centres. The resulting television and media reports of chaos among aid workers overwhelmed when the refugees arrived at the UN base in Tuzla were intended to bring about a decisive international response”.

17.ii. Ruder Finn Global Public Affairs, a Washington public relations firm, was retained by both Croatia and the Bosnian Government. They won the US 1993 Public Relations Award for their work on this account. In a book by French journalist Jacques Merlino, Paris 1993, entitled “Les verites Yougoslaves Ne Sont Pas Toutes Bonnes A Dire” James Harff, a director of the company, is quoted explaining how he succeeded in using American Jewish Organisations (B’nai Brith, The American Jewish Committee, The American Jewish Congress) for his goals:

“...We pulled this off remarkably well: bringing the Jewish organisations into play on the side of the Bosnians was an extraordinary gamble. This immediately opened the way for us to equate Serbs with Nazis in the public’s eyes.... We knew that the game should be played like that. In targetting the Jewish audience we had played on the right card. There was an immediate and visible shift in terminology in the press, using expressions with a strongly emotive element such as ethnic cleansing, concentration camps etc, all intended to invoke Nazi Germany, the gas chambers and Auschwitz. The emotional impact was so great that no one could go against it without being accused of revisionism. We had hit the mark”. He was also quoted as saying “We had a job to do and we did it. We are not paid to moralize. Speed is vital. It is the first assertion that counts. All denials are entirely ineffective”.

ERDEMOVIC

18. One of the most telling parts of the evidence suggesting that massacres took place came in the form of the trial and conviction of Drazen Erdemovic by the UN War Crimes Tribunal. Erdemovic confessed to taking part, as a member of the BSA, in the killing of 1200 Muslims in a single day (16 July) at the village of Pilica, near Srebrenica. But there are various suspicious factors surrounding Erdemovic. A Croat by birth, the investigation into his role was started by the Serbian authorities in Belgrade, who then handed over the case to the War Crimes Tribunal at the Hague. A representative of the federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) took an active part in the Hague proceedings, despite a total lack of previous co-operation from the Serbian authorities. Since Erdemovic was transferred to the Hague “as an important witness in the case against Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic and his military commander General Ratko Mladic”, it seems likely that this was an opportunistic political move by the Belgrade government, earning them credit with the international community, while simultaneously weakening the Bosnian Serb leadership, with which it was at odds. Erdemovic’s defence counsel, Jovan Babic, told the Tribunal that Erdemovic preferred to be tried in the Hague, even though he could expect a harsher outcome there as compared with a trial in Belgrade, “not because he doesn’t trust the authorities in Yugoslavia but for other reasons he disclosed only partly”. When convicted by the War Crimes Tribunal, it was determined by doctors’ reports that he was not in a fit state to be sentenced. Nevertheless, in late 1996 he was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment. After sentencing, Erdemovic was shown in television pictures to be walking freely in the courtroom, smiling and shaking hands with his prosecutors. UN investigators found a total of 200 bodies at Pilica.

US POLICY

19. On 25 August 1995, the US Commissioner to the UN, Madeleine Albright, released US satellite pictures which she claimed showed a mass grave site at Nova Kasaba, near Srebrenica. On 28 August 1995, a mortar shell fell on the Markala Market Place in Sarajevo killing 37 and wounding 90. Within 24 hours, a UN investigation had concluded the Bosnian Serbs were certainly

responsible. Less than 48 hours later, NATO began a series of 4,000 bombing raids against the Bosnian Serbs. It was the extensive damage done in these raids that forced the Bosnian Serbs to accept the terms of the Dayton peace agreement some eight weeks later. On 5 October 1995, writing in *The Christian Science Monitor*, David Rohde wrote: "US interest has waned. UN officials have long accused the Clinton administration of releasing the Nova Kasaba photos to deflect criticism from its tacit approval of the Croatian army's forced removal of 150,000 Serbs from the formerly Serb-held Krajina region of Croatia in early August. The issue of Srebrenica has been dropped, they say, because it no longer fits the administration's agenda". Another interpretation might be that, by suggesting to the world that war crimes had been committed by the Bosnian Serbs at Srebrenica, Madeleine Albright was beginning to prepare international opinion for out-and-out anti-Serb action by the UN / NATO.

SERB OFFER

20. According to Jan Willem Honig and Norbert Booth, in their book *Srebrenica - Record of a War Crime*, "At around 2100 (on 10 July), one of the OP commanders held by the Serbs in Bratunac radioed in to the battalion (Dutchbat). The Serbs had asked him to convey an ultimatum. Dutchbat was given 48 hours to evacuate the enclave, starting from 0600 the next morning. The Serbs guaranteed a safe evacuation for the battalion and the Muslim population." Honig and Booth go on to say that, because of "a tragic misunderstanding" which led Dutchbat to believe that the Serbs had been given an ultimatum to withdraw from the enclave by 0600 or face intensive NATO bombing, Dutchbat again took up (at 0600 on 11 July) the blocking positions they had occupied on 10 July. It is likely that this was interpreted by the Bosnian Serbs as a clear rejection of the offer made at 2100 on 10 July. In any event, it is unlikely that the offer was insincere - had it been accepted by Dutchbat, the Bosnian Serbs could hardly have gone back on it without causing international fury. The significance of the offer is that it suggests the Bosnian Serbs had no fixed agenda of slaughtering the Muslim population of Srebrenica.

KRAVICA

22. Journalists who visited the warehouse in Kravica, where John Shattuck (US Human Rights Envoy) suggested two thousand Bosnian Muslim men had been executed, could find no evidence to support the allegation. Dutch television journalist Rolf Hartzuiker went there in February 1996, a week after John Shattuck, and has written "It is a complete fake. John Shattuck must have been deliberately lying. The story about the warehouse is really bullshit. It was shot at from the road, with a heavy machine gun. The wall around the entrance is full of bullet holes, as is part of the inside wall behind the entrance. The rest of the room is more or less undamaged. Inside never have exploded grenades or rockets, as was claimed by Shattuck and others".

MUSTIFIC

23. Ibran Mustific, a representative in the Bosnian and Federal Parliaments and founder of the SDA in Srebrenica, was taken captive by the Bosnian Serbs when the enclave was overrun. He claims that the enclave was deliberately sacrificed by the Bosnian government and says that “the number of survivors is too high for their calculations.. In the Bosnian Parliament, I initiated the formation of a special committee whose task would be to search for the survivors from the enclave - I claim there are survivors! There are certainly quite a few survivors from Srebrenica. I am convinced that at least someone out of those men who were separated in Potocari, among whom I was, must have survived if I have survived. Otherwise, they wouldn't have released me as a witness.”

SERB CAMERAMAN

24. A Serb journalist / cameraman, Zoran Petrovic-Priocanac, was reported to have made statements claiming that he had witnessed and filmed the execution of many Muslim men. Reports also suggested that he had wiped the most damning sequences from his tapes. The Dutch journalist , Rolf Hartzuiker, spoke to Zoran on the phone on 28 June 1997: Zoran denied the quotations attributed to him by *Der Stern* and said that he harbours great bitterness about the way he has been misreported by the international media.

Summary

The evidence for the massacre theory consists of arithmetic (the subtraction of known survivors from the official Srebrenica population figure); the testimony of massacre eyewitnesses; and some (generally non-specific) corroborative testimony from UN personnel. In addition, there was confessional evidence to the Hague Tribunal from a Croat-born soldier, Drazan Erdemovic, who was fighting with the Bosnian Serbs; and revelations by a Serb cameraman.

The case against is the lack of bodies; the doubts about the basic arithmetic; the apparent ending of the search for bodies; the implausibility of the massacre stories; the apparent inaccuracy of many of the press reports confirming massacre stories; and the sheer political convenience of the “war crime”.