

**THE EFFECTS OF
ARMED CONFLICT TO A SOCIETY
NATO HQ BRUSSELS – 22 MAY 2012**

**THE EFFECTS OF THE
ARMED CONFLICT ON BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA SOCIETY**

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- I was born and have lived in Sarajevo ever since, to include over 3.5 years under the siege;
- I'm employed by the NATO HQ Sarajevo for the last 16 years; *
- This presentation reflects my personal perception, and in no way represents official position of the NATO HQ Sarajevo;

Who lives in Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Bosnia and Herzegovina has historically been a multi-ethnic state;
- Ethnic overview of the population before the war – according the census from 1991:
 - Bosniaks (Muslims) – 44%
 - Bosnian Serbs (Orthodox) – 31%
 - Bosnian Croats (Catholic) – 17%
 - Others (Jewish, others, non declared...) – 8%
- ALL MIXED – no exclusive territory

How the war started

- Yugoslavia – Federation of 6 Republics and 2 autonomous regions
- Dominated by Serbs
- Serbs always had an idea of a Great Serbia
- Milosevic – wanted to continue dominating over Yugoslavia

Wars in former Yugoslavia

- Slovenia declared independence
 - 7 days war, no Serbs
- Croatia declared independence
 - War broke out;
 - Serbs from Croatia declared Serbian autonomous provinces;
- War shifted from Croatia to Bosnia and Herzegovina – “Karadjordjevo”

War in Bosnia

- Referendum for independence – 1 March 1992
- Serbs did not accept the results (70% voted YES)
- UN recognized independent BiH
- Beginning of the Sarajevo siege, 6 April 1992
- GENOCIDE and ethnic cleansing – huge territories cleaned out of non-Serbs;
- Concentration Camps;
- Over 200 000 people killed, over two million people expelled from their homes;

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War in Bosnia

- 1993 – Bosnian Croats turned against Bosnians and Herzegovinians;
- War with two enemies – two aggressors;
- General idea: To divide Bosnia and Herzegovina between Serbia and Croatia;

War Crimes

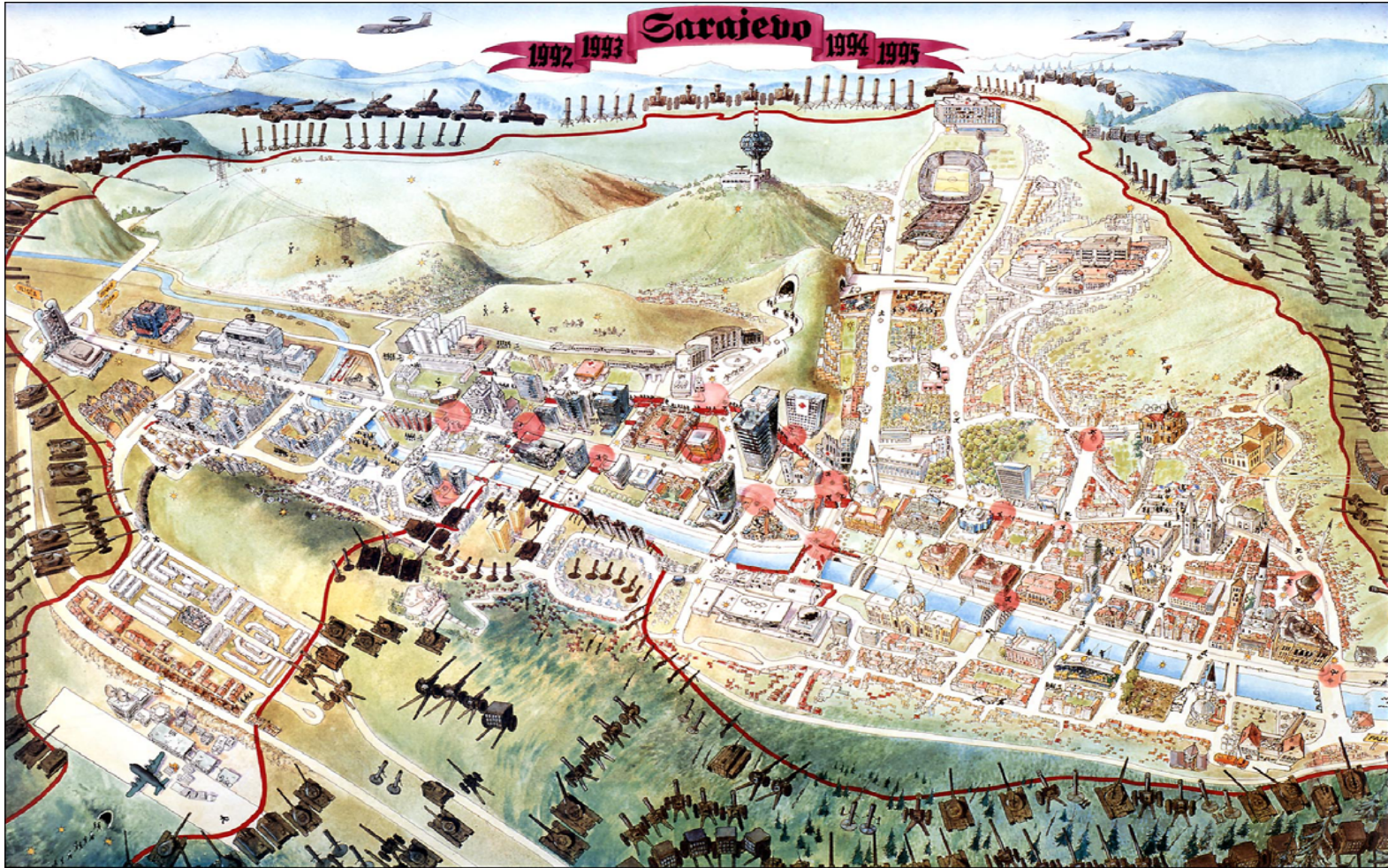
- **Ethnic cleansing and terror over civilians;**
- **Mass rape** (estimates of the numbers raped range from 20,000 to 50,000) **and psychological oppression;**
- Women and girls were kept in various detention centers and were mistreated in many ways, including being repeatedly raped;
- Women and girls were made pregnant and deliberately kept imprisoned until late pregnancy so they would have to have a child;
- Raped girls and women were regularly subjected to human trafficking;



Sarajevo, 2nd of May 2012, Bosnia and Herzegovina Government Building

Sarajevo Siege

- Over 3,5 years of siege;
 - No water, no electricity, no heating, no food; no phone lines, no freedom of movement;
 - Dangerous to move throughout the city; Terror over civilian population;
 - Male population at front line, female – population in search for water, fire wood and care for children;
 - On the Winter Olympic site 30 km away – skiing season!?
-



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Sarajevo Siege

- Airport - UN forces – UNPROFOR - maintaining the humanitarian aid;
- Peace keeping mission!?
- Mission of the Unarmed Military Observers!?
- Role of international community;

How was the life under the siege

- Tough – life danger every second;
- The siege affected all Sarajevo citizens and brought unbelievable hardship;
- Wonderful spirit of resistance;
- Reconsidering the real values in life;
- PROUD!
- CULTURAL EVENTS & HUMOR

Effects of war on Sarajevo children

- UNICEF reported that of the estimated 65,000 to 80,000 children in the city, at least 40% had been directly shot at by snipers; 51% had seen someone killed; 39% had seen one or more family members killed; 19% had witnessed a massacre; 48% had their home occupied by someone else; 73% had their home attacked or shelled; and 89% had lived in underground shelters;
- The psychological trauma suffered during the siege bear heavily on the lives of these children then and adults today;
- An example of 6 years old boy who stated during the war:
“I’m tired of this life ... due to constant bombardment and sniper fire I have to go to the shelter all the time ...”

1993 BEAUTY CONTEST



Sarajevo residents collecting firewood, winter of 1992–1993



NATO Intervention

- After genocide
- After 8000 people killed in 3 days in Srebrenica, UN protected zone
- After many massacres of civilians in Sarajevo and Tuzla
- Thanks to Americans

Dayton Agreement

- Brought the end of siege,
- Signed in November 1995 – the implementation is an ongoing process!
- Created a “monster” of a country:
 - 2 entities
 - 10 regions in one entity
 - 1 district

Dayton Agreement



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Present structure of the state

- 1 government – state level
- 2 governments – entity level
- 10 governments – cantonal level
- 1 government – district
- too much administration
- entities and nations can block every decision

Open issues

- Problem is not solved – radical Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats still wants to join Serbia and Croatia respectively;
- Radical Islamic elements have their agenda;
- ICTY sentences – 15 years for genocide!?
No justice for victims and their relatives!
- Average Bosnian and Herzegovinian doesn't believe in justice, democracy and human rights any more;

Open issues - continue

- Over 80% of Bosnia and Herzegovina population suffer from PTSS!?
- Unemployment rate – over 60%
- Role of women in BiH society – very marginal and restricted to individual and sporadic cases where women can have any impact on development of BiH society;
- Efforts of non governmental organizations to change current situation – very limited or no support from political factors;

Future of Bosnia and Herzegovina Society

- Believe in multiethnic society and continue to fight for it;
- Work on reconciliation and overall progress of Bosnia and Herzegovina society;
- Political goals: to join NATO and EU as a member country;
- Hope to get there (here) one day!

Thank you for your attention!

Long live Bosnia and Herzegovina!

Questions?