

An appeal from the government of Bosnia and Hercegovina

This statement, received Sept. 29, is being circulated internationally by the government of the Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina.

The facts about the war

The Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina, as an independent and internationally recognized state, has been established after the dissolution of former Yugoslavia. Unfortunately, the dissolution process is developing neither in a civilized manner nor peacefully. The war option, started in Slovenia, rapidly spread over Croatia, and then over Bosnia and Hercegovina.

In multinational, multireligious, and multicultural Bosnia and Hercegovina, war terror culminates in the aggressor's aspiration not only to conquer the territories, but also to cleanse them of non-Serbian population. This is happening despite the fact that the Republic's official authorities have persistently advocated a civilized and peaceful way of breaking up the former Yugoslavia.

The authorities of Bosnia and Hercegovina have entirely fulfilled the procedural requirements for international recognition explicitly defined by the European Community and other international bodies during the process of dissolution of the former Yugoslavia. The developments in Bosnia and Hercegovina as such did not fit into the scheme for creating the "Great Serbia" opted for, among others, by the complete almost one-national, well-armed former Federal Army (JNA) and extreme Serbian forces, under the militant leadership of the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS).

Great concentration of military forces and equipment of the former JNA on the territory of Bosnia and Hercegovina, strengthened by military effectives withdrawn from Slovenia and Croatia, planned armament of a part of Serbian population in Bosnia and Hercegovina by the former JNA, and strategy and tactics of aggression prepared in detail, enabled the aggressor to blockade, within a comparatively short time, all the towns and larger settlements, roads, telephone, TV and radio communications, etc. On the defending side stood unarmed people confronted with the national deceit and treason committed by their own armed forces. It is estimated that the aggressor (Serbia, Montenegro, the former JNA, and the militant part of the SDS) has concentrated on its

side:

- approximately 100,000 soldiers and officers of the former JNA;
- over 2,400 armored vehicles, out of which 600 [are] tanks;
- 50 aircraft, fighters;
- 1,800 guns of various large calibers;
- a rocket-equipped brigade;
- almost unlimited quantities of infantry weapons and ammunition of all calibers;
- additional forces from Serbia and Montenegro, specially trained in applying genocide to the non-Serbian population; and
- complete logistics, including airports and combat aircraft from Serbia and Montenegro.

The purpose of the aggressor's strategy is to conquer and get under its control more than 70% of the territory of Bosnia and Hercegovina, cleanse it of the majority Muslim population and the Croats, and to come forward with a request for recognition of the newly created situation by the international community.

After more than five-months-long aggression against Bosnia and Hercegovina, the impression is that the lonely unarmed people are left by the international community. The international forums seem to try to present a war of aggression and conquest as a civil war, and ease their conscience through some humanitarian aid providing for a limited number of displaced persons.

However, it is to be hoped that the world will finally get to the heart of the matter and give help necessary for the liberation of the whole territory of the Republic.

The liberation of the entire territory of the Republic from the aggressor is a prerequisite for starting the creation of a legal state, with the predominant role of the private sector and a market-oriented economy. This is again a prerequisite for more generous international financial and technical assistance in reconstruction of the country destroyed by war, which is the topic of this paper.

Victims and horrors of warfare in Bosnia and Hercegovina

The brutality and inhumanity of the aggressor during the

previous five months of war can hardly be compared with anything in the past. According to current reports:

- over 80,000 people have already been killed, of which more than 70% [are] civilians, including an extremely great number of children;
- more than 1.8 million people (42% of the total population) have been left homeless, of which about 400,000 persons escaped to Croatia and a great lot of displaced persons are wandering about the West European countries;
- more than 100 concentration camps have been reported on the occupied territory of the Republic where civilians are confined, brutally tortured, and killed.

Snipers and machine-guns have been tactically placed in all the towns and larger settlements with the purpose of terrorizing the whole population and paralyzing all vital activities. Children, women, old people, medical and humanitarian organization staff, and other citizens are everyday victims of this crime.

Schools, universities, and child-care centers are closed; students and children are either displaced, gone to war, or are taking refuge in cellars.

Numerous families are under great stress, [forced] to endure aggression and all it brings; innumerable are the human dramas, disappointments, and frustrations; many family ties, ties of friendship and business relations have been broken off, which all give rise to doubt about the possibility of living together in these regions.

Destruction and devastation of material property

The aggressor's aim to rob, or to destroy all he fails to or cannot rob, is evident at every step in this Republic devastated by war.

The extent and structure of the destruction, as well as the methods and means being used, will be the subject of special investigations. Below are some illustrative examples.

- Literally complete towns are being torn down. Sarajevo, the capital of the Republic, has been exposed to more than four-months-long destruction by bombing and blocking of communications; it is being starved, water and electricity supply has been cut off.
- Mostar is virtually destroyed, including its bridges, industrial plants, churches, mosques, and other urban facilities.
- All bridges on the rivers Sava and Neretva, as well as dozens of bridges on other rivers, have been demolished.
- Railway bridges have been destroyed, wagons demolished or looted, locomotives ruined or looted.
- Postal and telecommunications systems have been disconnected, main telephone centrals burnt down, TV and communication towers destroyed or controlled by the aggressor.
- Airport equipment has been looted from most airports; airports in Sarajevo and Bihac have been damaged by

shelling.

- Headquarters of major companies in Sarajevo have been burnt down or destroyed, and most of the equipment [has been] stolen.

- Very few factories have evaded robbery of equipment, raw materials, finished products, technical documents, or complete destruction.

- Many agricultural estates have remained without livestock, agricultural machinery, and provisions. Tens of thousands of private village holdings have been condemned to a similar fate: Houses, farm buildings, cattle, and machinery have been destroyed.

- Urban transport facilities in several cities have been completely demolished or stolen; Sarajevo is most directly affected by this, being the most populous city. Buses, trolley buses, and trams have been completely destroyed, the electrical system and garages demolished, which, in addition, makes life in Sarajevo almost unbearable.

- Documentation relevant to cadaster, geology records, and water power engineering has been destroyed and it will take years of strenuous work to restore it.

- Schools, libraries, hospitals, child-care centers, various institutes, museums, cultural and sacred buildings are subject to systematic destruction and robbery.

All the aforesaid, along with everyday fighting, have paralyzed economic activities throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, so that the authorities are faced with the serious problem of how to provide food, heating, and power supply for the coming winter, and how to organize the recovery of the economy devastated by war.

What must be done

With the coming of winter in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is typically very demanding, the risk to life is growing dramatically. If exponentially greater quantities of humanitarian relief are not provided, including food, medicines, clothing, and shelter, the potential loss of life due to hunger, exposure, and disease may exceed 300,000, according to the U.N. estimates. Vast new numbers of refugees could be created and head toward Europe. This does not include additional casualties and refugees caused by the ongoing fighting.

Besides bringing an end to, or at least minimizing the level of aggression, the only way to mitigate the suffering and loss of life is to:

- 1) distribute relief to all regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina (and not just Sarajevo);
- 2) establish several secured land corridors (especially Plöce to Sarajevo as well as Zagreb to Sarajevo);
- 3) repair promptly bridges and roads to facilitate travel;
- 4) build temporary shelters and repair existing ones; and
- 5) insure the flow of adequate supply of water, fuel, and electricity.

All this needs to be done without delay.