

Transition of the Sarajevo Suburbs

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One early test of the Dayton accords was the transfer of areas around Sarajevo—known as the “Sarajevo suburbs”—from Serbian to Bosniac control. This included the following opstinas (municipalities or counties) of Bosnia-Herzegovina: Vogosca, Centar, Novi Grad, Ilijas, Hadzici, Ilidza, and Nova Sarajevo (Grbavica). These areas were part of the front lines during the war and fighting for control of them was intense. The transition and overall peace depended upon cooperation between civilian and military agencies. Also vital was the support of civilian agencies that lacked logistics and communications early in the mission. Support for managing civil elements of IFOR began with the deployment of CA Reservists and creation of CIMIC at IFOR headquarters.

Only a few tasks that GFAP assigned to IFOR under annexes 1A and 1B were traditional military responsibilities. Under the accords, the military tasks were to be completed by D+120, while civilian tasks had longer timelines. Many agencies were given non-military tasks which were functionally organized. OSCE was assigned responsibility for elections, while the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was charged with refugees and displaced persons.

IFOR also created the International Police Task Force to retrain the indigenous police consistent with democratic principles and OHR which

was charged with coordinating activities of all civilian agencies. While each organization was important to the peace process, three were especially critical to the transition: OHR, IPTF, and UNHCR.

Although IFOR was responsible for providing a secure environment, working relationships under IPTF were key to the transition. The transfer was to occur at D+45 (February 4, 1996). As that date approached it was clear that the parties would not be prepared in areas around Sarajevo. Prior to the deadline there was increased consultation between the IFOR commander and the high representative who had primary responsibility for coordinating the transfer of authority. On D+45 they issued a statement indicating that the suburbs would be transferred between D+45 and D+90 and that the

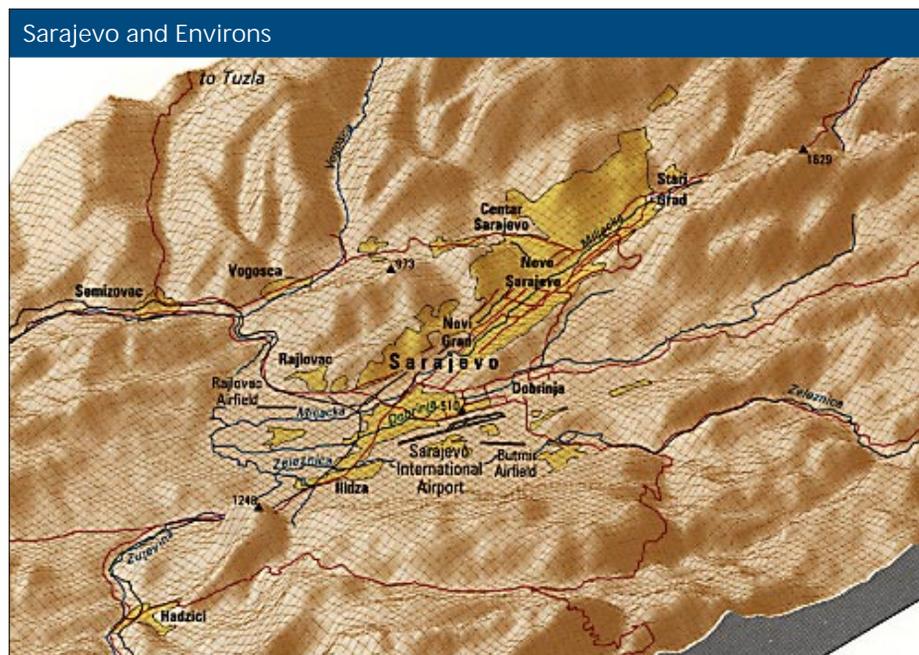
Federation police would be in full control of the areas concerned by D+91.

IFOR, OHR, and IPTF (through the U.N. Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina) agreed that IPTF would take the lead. According to their joint statement it was within the IPTF mandate to “oversee the preparation for and gradual transition to an integrated and representative Federation police force . . . from D+45 to D+90” while IFOR supported IPTF by maintaining an “enhanced presence” in these areas.

The statement also indicated that public safety was the focal point of the transfer. Both the monitoring and control of Federation police and Serb civil authorities during the 45-day transition were primary goals of the international community. The multiethnic character of pre-war Sarajevo was to be preserved in a stable environment. UNHCR played a central role in encouraging Serbs to remain in place both during and after the transition.

The Police

IPTF was created by U.N. Security Council resolution 1035 in December 1995. Member states were to contribute 1,721 police officers for the mission. These monitors were not armed and had no executive authority.



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Their mandate, outlined in annex 11, included the following tasks:

- monitor, observe, and inspect law enforcement activities and facilities
- advise and train law enforcement personnel
- assess threats to public order and advise accordingly
- advise on law enforcement restructuring
- facilitate assistance to law enforcement
- assist by accompanying law enforcement personnel.

Police monitors were required to have at least eight years of law enforcement experience. Some were initially assigned from U.N. missions in the region. All received a five-day orientation at the support base in Zagreb where their English comprehension and driving abilities were tested. Given the differing theories and resources of the contributing states, policing skill levels and styles varied greatly. Moreover, a steady inflow of monitors was never assured.

The Secretary General's report on IPTF stated that it was to be headed by a commissioner in Sarajevo and include 3 regional, 2 subregional, and 17 district headquarters—plus 109 police stations across the country. But the number of stations was subsequently cut almost in half and little of the organization was in place by February 1996. Although the commissioner, deputy commissioner, chief of staff, and chief of operations had been appointed, they had not yet arrived. Three regional offices had been established with minimal resources in Banja Luka, Tuzla, and Sarajevo. Yet only a handful of district and local stations had opened under an acting IPTF commissioner. The main headquarters had no staff and the Sarajevo regional headquarters was being moved. The personnel needed to monitor operations were in short supply—fewer than 400 countrywide and under 200 assigned to the area around Sarajevo.

In addition to manpower difficulties and almost no command and control structure, IPTF faced other critical deficiencies. Habitable office space was

at a premium. Also scarce were phone links, for example between IPTF headquarters and IFOR, the support base in Zagreb, and field stations. In addition, radios, base stations, vehicles, and petroleum products were in short supply. While the picture improved marginally just prior to the transition, IPTF was a fragile organization with limited assets, and communications and logistic shortages continued throughout the transfer.

Given this situation, it was clear that IFOR support would be needed for IPTF to carry out its responsibilities. Failure would present two undesirable alternatives. Either the transition of the Sarajevo suburbs would be conducted without a credible force to monitor and control public safety services or IFOR troops would have to fill the void. The first would have been disastrous for the peace process and the second would represent unacceptable mission creep.

Beyond the enhanced presence discussed in the joint statement, IFOR assistance to IPTF during the transition took two forms. The first was help with preparing the overall plan and the second was direct assistance in operational planning, management, logistics, and training. This support was provided by CA personnel with public safety expertise and ultimately furnished acting chiefs of both plans and logistics for IPTF, operations assistants, and trainers.

Assigning CIMIC personnel to IPTF headquarters served two purposes. First, it bolstered IPTF by providing management skills to an organization whose command structure was not fully formulated. Second, it ensured a solid communication link between IFOR and IPTF headquarters. This link was invaluable in managing operations related to the transition.

Transfer Planning

The transition occurred in two distinct phases. The first involved an overall plan assigning duties to OHR, IFOR, IPTF, and UNHCR, and the second was a supporting plan to integrate task force operations under IFOR. CIMIC members were integral to both. In preparing the plan it was essential to identify factors that impacted on public safety and that constrained the provision of safety

services. ARRC furnished expertise on developing the overarching plan, with CA Reservists providing input on the local police and IPTF on the management of public safety.

The Federation Interior Ministry was asked to submit a plan for public safety during the transition which proposed police saturation. The numbers suggested were several times higher than the total existing Serb police force in these areas. In addition to a police force that was out of proportion to legitimate public safety concerns, the Federation proposed policing tactics that would have further intimidated those Serbs who chose to remain, including house-to-house searches and checkpoints to control access to transition areas. The size and tactics of the proposed force were inconsistent with democratic policing practices under GFAP and could have destabilized the public safety environment. It was clear that the Federation police would have to be closely controlled and monitored. Given the limited IPTF manpower and logistic support, this presented a significant challenge.

By February 9 all major agencies including IFOR agreed to the preliminary components of a plan. It was decided that transition of the suburbs would take place one opstina at a time. That would allow IPTF and the supporting agencies to focus on an individual suburb and enhance the presence of police monitors in the critical days before and after the transfer. Careful consideration was given to size, population, political environment, presence of vital public facilities, and threat assessments in selecting the order of transition. The plan coordinated efforts of OHR, UNHCR, IPTF, and IFOR. These included a joint information campaign conducted by IFOR and OHR to build confidence in the transition and encourage Serbs to remain in place. OHR also focused on political structures to prevent inflammatory rhetoric and encourage adoption of amnesty legislation to allay fears of former Serb soldiers who were considering remaining.

IFOR prepared a plan to generally increase its presence immediately before and after the transition of each opstina. CA Reservists from CIMIC also coordinated surveys of each area to identify high impact civic improvements. These projects were intended to build confidence and improve the quality of life. UNHCR opened local offices to provide relief, reconciliation, and safe havens in the transitional areas.

The IPTF plan was the centerpiece of the planning effort. With the overarching scheme in place identifying roles and responsibilities of each component, IPTF was left to devise a Federation policing strategy which fit into the overall plan. As noted, the task force had little staff on hand at the time of transition. Its emphasis was on



Pointing out "hot spot" on election day, Sarajevo.

U.S. Air Force (Benjamin M. Andera)

assigning every monitor in the mission area to the field. Moreover, it was not able to target recruiting on operational or logistics specialties. An infusion of experienced personnel and an ability to integrate the civil police plan with the military was essential for IPTF in preparing an operational plan.

Public safety specialists from CIMIC who augmented the IPTF headquarters staff provided requisite expertise. Working with the acting commissioner and his staff as they arrived in the mission area these CIMIC members



addressed various challenges to ensure the development of plans to closely integrate IFOR and IPTF operations. CIMIC staff members also used military assets to reduce logistics and communications shortages on IPTF operations.

CIMIC personnel coordinated preparation of the IPTF portion of the transition plan. After deciding that the operation would be phased and the order in which the areas would be transferred, IPTF prepared a timetable to maximize its impact on the transition process. However, even with all IPTF resources focused on one opstina at a time, it was clear that the police structure proposed by the Federation would be overwhelmed. The only way a few monitors could supervise the police was to cap their number, which became a key feature of the IPTF plan.

Under the task force scheme the Federation was limited to 545 policemen in the transition areas. Each area was allocated a maximum number. Authorized officers were issued photo identification valid in only one area. For example, since 80 officers were issued badges for Vogosca, IPTF only had to monitor that number.

In addition to reducing the number of officers, the plan controlled Federation police tactics. CA Reservists working with the IPTF deputy commissioner prepared guidelines limiting the types of arms, searches, and checkpoints and requiring prompt reports on arrest and detention. Only uniformed operations by trained personnel with IPTF-issued credentials were permitted in the areas. These officers had an orientation on the guidelines before credentials were issued.

Federation officers were interviewed by IPTF prior to being issued photo identification and signed a document accepting individual responsibility under the guidelines. This screening helped develop familiarity and communication among monitors and police. Public fears of the Federation police were allayed by the fact that IPTF maintained files on these officers. Moreover, this process also ensured ethnic representation among the police during the transfer (see figure). A multiethnic presence was of both practical and symbolic importance.

While screening was conducted by IPTF it was managed and supported by CA Reservists from CIMIC who arranged for the military to photograph police officers and prepare identity cards. The team managed logistics and supervised the overall process. CIMIC also helped IPTF establish a schedule and procedures for the transition. The timeline required that one opstina be transitioned every six to seven days from February 23 to March 19. This allowed IPTF to focus personnel and resources on a specific area two or three days before transition and reduce it shortly after, maximizing its impact during critical times.

Key resources like power stations and water facilities were made patrol priorities by IFOR, allowing IPTF to concentrate on the civilian populace

pressure on IPTF. Plans covered widespread civil unrest, fires, public utilities emergencies, sniper attacks, detection of mines and unexploded ordnance, and casualty evacuation. In addition to planning, CIMIC personnel helped expedite the intake of new officers. They trained monitors at the civil police support base in Zagreb and helped the United Nations accommodate more monitors. This augmentation together with a change in deployment policies that funneled monitors into Sarajevo district reduced shortages in personnel, especially later in the transition.

Regarding command and control, CIMIC personnel set up a joint operation center to coordinate IPTF operations with those of IFOR during the transition at headquarters, Multinational Division Southwest, the divisional command responsible for Sarajevo. CIMIC personnel arranged for a military communications link with the IPTF headquarters operations center. By creating the CIMIC center and linking it with military communications, IPTF improved its capability to coordinate with IFOR. While only an alternate, this communications capability was valuable in emergencies.

This IPTF access to IFOR communications is a good example of CA coordination between civilian and military organizations. It did not significantly tax the military communication network but greatly increased the ability of IPTF to reach its units in emergencies. Moreover, the presence of IPTF personnel in JOC and access to military communication at IPTF headquarters gave IFOR instant access to key IPTF personnel and information which was critical throughout the mission.

The transfer of the Sarajevo suburbs was not without problems. IPTF planning, however, was flexible enough and communication and coordination between IPTF and IFOR adequate to meet the challenge. But overall success is hard to measure. The number of Serbs who remained in these areas was smaller than hoped but not much more than expected. And while property damage occurred, there

was no widespread destruction. There was only one fatality, a woman killed by a booby-trap on the last day—an unavoidable event even with perfect planning. Moreover, although there was violence, the transition was relatively tranquil given the emotional nature of the conflict. Significantly, it did not derail the peace process, which is perhaps the best indicator of the transition team's success.

The transition could not have advanced without close cooperation between IFOR and IPTF. CIMIC linked the civil and military sectors and served as the catalyst in establishing cooperation, contributing directly to IPTF plans, and enabling the task force to fulfill its mandate. The liaison conducted by CA personnel assigned to CIMIC resulted in an exemplary IPTF and IFOR team.

CA Reservists were uniquely qualified to be the link between civilian and military agencies. Their experience enabled them to appreciate tasks assigned to civilian agencies under the accords. The public safety team had dealt with similar problems in their everyday lives. Throughout the operation the IPTF commissioner acknowledged that civil affairs personnel provided capabilities in law enforcement, police training, and patrolling urban areas. Thus they garnered credibility with their counterparts, enabling them to forge a critical link between IFOR and IPTF. **JFQ**

Ethnic Representation in Police Force

Opstina	Serb	Croat	Muslim	Total
Vogosca	30	8	48	86
Centar	6	2	12	20
Novi Grad	3	3	29	35
Ilijas	24	15	50	89
Hadzici	24	5	51	80
Ilidza	28	18	72	118
Grbavica	9	13	68	90

and Federation police. CA planners from CIMIC along with IPTF developed contingency plans, and crisis response was coordinated with IFOR to further reduce personnel and resource