

<b>WARID:</b>	<b>Yugoslavia (Croatia)/Croatia (Serbs)</b>
<b>STARDATE:</b>	<b>27 July 1991</b>
<b>ENDDATE:</b>	<b>23 December 1993<sup>1</sup></b>
Related cases:	Bosnia and Herzegovina (Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina) 1992-1995, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Croat Republic Herceg-Bosna) 1993-1994
Last update:	7 September 2015
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Reviewer:	Solveig Richter

### Conflict overview

Croatia was formerly a republic within the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia. In 1991, 78% of Croatia's inhabitants were Croats and 12% Serbs. While a majority of Croats favored independence, many Serbs opposed secession from Yugoslavia. After multi-party elections were held in April and May 1990, Croatia's government took steps towards independence. Serbs along Croatia's border with Bosnia-Herzegovina and at the border to Serbia rebelled against Croatia's government and established Serb Autonomous Administrative Districts in the summer of 1990. The government dismissed Serb employees from jobs in the police and administration, and the parliament downgraded the Serbs' status from a constituent people to a national minority. Fighting escalated in the following summer. Until the end of November 1991, Serb militias, supported by the Yugoslav People's Army (YPA), gained control over roughly one-third of Croatia. In December 1991, they proclaimed the founding of 'Republika Srpska Krajina' and wished to unify with Serb territories in Bosnia-Herzegovina and with Yugoslavia. Croatia's government insisted on Croatia's territorial integrity (Caspersen 2010; Nation 2003; Pavković 2000; Silber/Little 1997; Tanner 1997).<sup>2</sup>

The bulk of fighting took place in 1991. A ceasefire agreement in January 1992 scaled down the military struggle for two years. According to UCDP, it was only once a ceasefire was established in December 1993 that the confrontation sank below the level of armed conflict, defined by at least 25 battle-related deaths in a calendar year [**WARENDUC=3; WARENOS=3; WARDUR=29**]. The UCDP estimates that about 4,700 people

<sup>1</sup> According to most case-specific literature, the war did not end in 1993 but in 1995. As we have to apply the UCDP's criteria for war termination consistently to all cases, we adhere to 23 December 1993 as the end date. Nevertheless, this case description considers the military developments in 1995.

<sup>2</sup> The Conflict Termination Dataset by the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) reports four separate dyads that this case description treats as a single war. For the UCDP, a renew armed conflict started when Croatia gained independence in 1992. In our view, this was the same ongoing conflict. Moreover, we deem irregular fighters to be part of Croatia's government and the Serb rebels.

[FATALUC=5000] were killed in the armed conflict, by one-sided violence and in related non-state conflicts between 1991 and 1993.<sup>3</sup>

According to this data, 0.1% of the 4.8 million inhabitants in 1991<sup>4</sup> [PREWARPO=4800000] died due to the war [INTENSUC=0.1].

1994 did not witness an armed conflict, one-sided violence or non-state conflicts with at least 25 fatalities. For 1995, the UCDP reports an armed conflict with the “best estimates” counting 943 fatalities, below the threshold of a ‘new war’, defined by at least 1,000 fatalities. A study that analyzed the fighting between 1991 and 1995 as a single war reached a total of 22,000 fatalities.<sup>5</sup> According to the UCDP, about 83% of all fatalities between 1991 and 1995 had occurred by the end of 1993. Applying the same share to the figure of 22,000 fatalities, about 18,000 people had been killed by the end of 1993 [FATALOS=18000]. Accordingly, the war killed 0.38% of the pre-war population [INTENSOS=0.38].

The armed conflict that occurred in 1995 turned the tide in favor of Croatia’s government. The government forces, much better equipped and trained than in 1991, won the war by eliminating Republika Srpska Krajina in August 1995 (Bjelajac/Žunec 2007: 29-35).

### **The military balance at the end of the war**

When the ceasefire (temporarily) ended the war in 1993, both sides had realized only a part of their objectives. Croatia’s government succeeded in seceding from Yugoslavia despite a military intervention by the YPA. The government, however, did not establish control over more than 25% of the country (Barić 2008: 93). The Serb militias founded Republika Srpska Krajina on Croatia’s territory but, even with the cooperation with the YPA, they were not strong enough to impede Croatia’s secession from Yugoslavia. Moreover, in accordance with the peace plan drafted by mediator Cyrus Vance and agreed to by Croatia’s government and the YPA in January 1992, the latter had to leave Croatia. UN blue helmets were deployed and mandated to demilitarize areas with a Serb majority or with a substantial Serb minority where fighting had taken place (UN Secretary-General 1991: Annex 3). The territories of Republika Srpska Krajina were not contiguous and were only connected via the Serb-held territories in Bosnia and Herzegovina (CIA 2002: 271). In contrast to Croatia, Republika Srpska Krajina failed to gain international recognition (UN Secretary-General 1991: Annex 3; UN Security Council 1992). Consequently, it would be misleading to claim that the Serb side had won the

3 [http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/gpcountry.php?id=41&regionSelect=9-Eastern\\_Europe#](http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/gpcountry.php?id=41&regionSelect=9-Eastern_Europe#) and [http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/gpcountry.php?id=171&regionSelect=9-Eastern\\_Europe](http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/gpcountry.php?id=171&regionSelect=9-Eastern_Europe) (27 Jan 2014).

4 Republic of Croatia – Central Bureau of Statistics 2009: 84.

5 Documenta – Centar za suočavanje s prošlošću: Rat, dokumentiranje i pravni status žrtve, Zagreb 2011, p. 4, <http://www.documenta.hr/assets/files/publikacije/dokumentiranje.pdf> (27 Jan 2014).

war [**VICTORY 1994-1995=0**]. The armed conflict in 1995 brought about the government's triumph. Thus, this case description provides two codings for several aspects of the military balance at the end of the war. After the armed conflict in 1995, the government claimed a clear victory [**VICTORY 1996-2012= -1**].

At the end of 1993, Serb militias still controlled about one-third of Croatia [**REBTERR 1994-1995=1**]. They would, however, lose their territories in 1995 [**REBTERR 1996-2012= -1**]. Prior to the war, the Croatian Government did not control many areas with a Serb majority (CIA 2002: 84). In 1991, the Serb militias and the YPA pushed Croatian governmental forces back even further, with the exception of Western Slavonia (CIA 2002: 102-103). Despite UN peacekeeping, Serb units maintained control over large parts of Croatia until the end of 1993. If we consider only areas with a Serb majority before the war, Serb militias controlled many more territories than Croatia's government. However, by highlighting the secession from Yugoslavia, all of Croatia can be regarded as disputed territory. In that sense, the Croatian Government prevailed. Coding for the question as to which side controlled more territory at the end of the war reflects both aspects [**MORETERR 1994-1995=0**]. After its triumph in August 1995, the government controlled more territory than the Serb militias [**MORETERR 1996-2012= -1**].

Cunningham et al. (2009) assess the Serb militias' relative strength as 'moderate' [**REBFIGHT 1994-2012=0**]. At the end of 1993, both sides were able to continue fighting. For that reason, UN blue helmets remained in Croatia [**CONFIGHT 1994-1995=0**]. In 1995, Croatian governmental troops, supported by a Corps of the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, overwhelmed the Serb forces within a few days. Following its initial resistance, the fact that the Army of Republika Srpska Krajina fell in disorder (Bjelajac/Žunec 2007: 31, 35; CIA 2002: 372-375) indicated that it had lost its ability to fight in more than a sporadic manner [**CONFIGHT 1996-2012= -1**].

Neither side eliminated or captured its enemy's top political leadership. After the war, the Serb leaders Milan Babić and Milan Martić were convicted by the International Criminal Court for acts in the Former Yugoslavia. Babić committed suicide in 2006.<sup>6</sup> Franjo Tuđman, Croatia's president in the 1990s, died in 1999 [**LEADER 1994-2012=0**.<sup>7</sup>

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6 See [http://www.icty.org/x/cases/babic/cis/en/cis\\_babic\\_en.pdf](http://www.icty.org/x/cases/babic/cis/en/cis_babic_en.pdf), [http://www.icty.org/x/cases/martic/cis/en/cis\\_martic\\_en.pdf](http://www.icty.org/x/cases/martic/cis/en/cis_martic_en.pdf). The trial against Goran Hadžić, another former president of Republika Srpska Krajina, was ongoing in 2014: [www.icty.org/x/cases/hadzic/cis/en/cis\\_hadzic\\_en.pdf](http://www.icty.org/x/cases/hadzic/cis/en/cis_hadzic_en.pdf) (30 Aug 2014).

7 <http://predsjednik.hr/bivsi-predsjednici> (30 Jan 2014).

In sum, the Serb side held an edge over the government in 1994 [**WARBAL 1994-1995=0.17**]. One year later, however, the armed conflict turned the military balance to the advantage of Croatia's government [**WARBAL 1996-2012= -0.67**].

### The post-war military balance

In 1994 and 1995, Serb forces were not part of the state's military or police. The Erdut Agreement (Basic Agreement 1995: para. 3) prescribed the demilitarization of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium under UN supervision. The required demilitarization was completed on 20 June 1996 (UN Secretary-General 1997: para. 6). In order to assess whether both conflict parties thereafter contributed to Croatia's armed forces and police, data is needed on the Serbs' representation in these institutions. In the 2001 and 2011 censuses, 4.5% and 4.4% of the respondents respectively declared themselves to be Serbs.<sup>8</sup> The Constitutional National Minority Rights Act (Croatian Parliament 2002: art. 22) stipulated proportional representation of national minority members in the public administration. Referring to this Act, the Police Law (Hrvatski Sabor 2011: art. 49) demanded proportional representation in the police. Nevertheless, in 2013, only 754 of 26,364 staff members in the police were Serbs. The Serbs' share had even declined from 3.1% in 2008 to 2.9% in 2013.<sup>9</sup> In 2014, less than 0.1% of the active soldiers in the armed forces were Serbs.<sup>10</sup> Looking at this number, it is likely that there had only been a small number Serbs in the armed forces in the years before as well [**STATEFOR 1994-2012= -1**]. As mentioned, the Serb side possessed separate forces until June 1996 [**SEPFORCE 1994-1995=0, SEPFORCE 1996-2012= -1**].

The ratio of respective troop numbers remained stable between 1993 and 1995 (see Table 2 in the annex). After the end of June 1996, the Serb forces in Croatia remained dissolved [**TROOPS 1994-1995=0, TROOPS 1996-2012=n.r.**].

According to the 'the Military Balance' yearbooks, government forces and Serb militias were at par with respect to the number of main battle tanks in 1993. For 1994 and 1995, Serb troops allegedly possessed more main battle tanks than the government. No numbers were reported regarding artillery held by the government forces for 1993 and from 1994 to 1995; the gov-

<sup>8</sup> Croatian Bureau of Statistics 2011: Census of Population, Households and Dwellings 2011, population by ethnicity, 1971-2011 Censuses, [http://www.dzs.hr/Eng/censuses/census2011/results/xls/usp\\_03\\_EN.xls](http://www.dzs.hr/Eng/censuses/census2011/results/xls/usp_03_EN.xls) (5 Feb 2014).

<sup>9</sup> Neostavrena prava i promašene politike – zastupljenost manjina u tijelima državne uprave i pravosuđe, p. 11. This document was compiled by the Serb National Council and the club of the Independent Democratic Serb Party in Croatia's parliament. It is based on data provided by the government. We thank Saša Milošević, deputy president of the Serb National Council, for sending the document to Thorsten Gromes.

<sup>10</sup> Answer by email (6 February 2014) by the Independent Public Relations and Publishing Department of the Ministry of Defense to a request by Thorsten Gromes via <http://www.morh.hr/hr/pitajte-ministarstvo-obrane-republike-hrvatske> (5 February 2014).

ernment had, however, drastically increased its advances in artillery (see Table 3 in the annex). As one ratio changed to the benefit of the Serb militias and the other to that of the government, there was no significant shift to the advantage of one side [**ARMS 1994-1995=0, ARMS 1996-2012=n.r.**].<sup>11</sup>

From 1994 to 1995, both sides controlled significant territory. The Erdut Agreement stipulated that the Serb militias transfer the last part of Republika Srpska Krajina to the UN Transitional Administration. For the post-war period, one can assume that an absolute majority of inhabitants enabled political control over a municipality. According to the 2011 census, Serbs constituted an absolute majority in 17 municipalities, totaling only about 48,000 inhabitants.<sup>12</sup> They therefore did not have any control over significant territory [**TERRCON 1994-1995=0, TERRCON 1996-2012= -1**].

In 1994, no substantial change regarding the warring parties' control over territory took place. In May 1995, the government conquered Western Slavonia, and in August of the same year, it seized control of most remaining parts of the former Republika Srpska Krajina. In January 1998, the UN Transitional Administration on Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium ended. Thereafter, the government established control over the entire territory of Croatia [**TERRWIN 1994=0, TERRWIN 1995-2012= -1**].

As reported, the territories of Republika Srpska Krajina were not contiguous with one another. Serb militias did not control any territory as of the end of 1995. The coding rules demand that the Serbs would have to be categorized as more vulnerable under such circumstances [**VULNERAB 1994-2012= -1**].

The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) was deployed in 1992 and replaced by the UN Confidence Restoration Operation (UNCRO) in 1995. Following the Erdut Agreement (Basic Agreement 1995), signed on 12 November 1995, the United Nations mandated an international force as a part of its transitional administration in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Sirmium until January 1998 (Fortna 2008). There were no peacekeeping forces in Croatia after that point [**PEACKEEP 1994-1997=0, PEACKEEP 1998-2012=n.r.**].

None of the permanent members of the UN Security Council announced an intention to ally with one of the conflict parties military in the case of a new war [**P5ALLY 1994-2012=n.r.**].

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11 These comparisons do not consider the Croat and Serb troops in Bosnia and Herzegovina or Serb forces in Yugoslavia and later in Serbia. After the war, Yugoslavia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina signed the Agreement on Sub-Regional Arms Control (1996) that defined ceilings on the possession of heavy weapons and a ratio of 5:2:2 in favor of Yugoslavia.

12 Croatian Bureau of Statistics 2011: Census of Population, Households and Dwellings 2011, population by ethnicity, by towns/municipalities, [http://www.dzs.hr/Eng/censuses/census2011/results/xls/Grad\\_02\\_EN.xls](http://www.dzs.hr/Eng/censuses/census2011/results/xls/Grad_02_EN.xls) (5 Feb 2014).

Altogether, the post-war military balance changed drastically to the benefit of the Croatian Government [**POSTBAL 1994= -0.25, POSTBAL 1995= -0.38, POSTBAL 1996-1997= -0.83, POSTBAL 1998-2012= -1**].

Altogether, the scores for the military balance at the end of the war and for the post-war years shifted from parity to the government's advantage within a few years [**BALANCE 1994= -0.04, BALANCE 1995= -0.1, BALANCE 1996-1997= -0.75, BALANCE 1998-2012= -0.83**].

## Economy

Croatia's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita multiplied in the post-war period.

Table 1: GDP per capita in current USD<sup>13</sup>

<i>Year</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>GDP per capita</i>
1994	4650000	3135
1995	4669000	4722
1996	4494000	5194
1997	4572000	5140
1998	4501000	5578
1999	4554000	5068
2000	4426000	4862
2001	4440000	5192
2002	4440000	5974
2003	4440000	7690
2004	4439000	9237
2005	4442000	10090
2006	4440000	11229
2007	4436000	13372
2008	4434000	15694
2009	4429000	14044
2010	4417800	13327
2011	4280600	14372
2012	4267000	13159

## The scale of compromise after the war

In 1994, the Serb side ruled in Republika Srpska Krajina and the government had a say in the rest of Croatia [**GOVERN 1994-1995=0**]. In 1995, the proclaimed Republika Srpska Krajina ceased to exist. Nevertheless, there was a Serb factor in Croatia after that point. As their names indicate, the Serb People's Party (SNS) and the Independent Democratic Serb Party (SDSS) claimed to represent the Serbs in Croatia.

In the electoral period 2003-2007, the SDSS was part of the parliamentary majority and attained positions in the executive, below the level of ministers (Kasapović 2003: 55-56). After

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13 <http://api.worldbank.org/v2/en/country/hrv?downloadformat=excel> (31 Jul 2014).

the elections at the end of 2007, the SDSS was represented in the government in the position of Minister for Reconstruction and Return. After the election in 2011, the SDSS became again an opposition party<sup>14</sup> [**GOVERN 1996-2003= -1, GOVERN 2004-2011=0, GOVERN 2012= -1**].

In the four years after the elections at the end of 2007, the government would have been short of a majority in parliament without the three seats held by the SDSS. However, neither the constitution (2010) nor other key documents established any veto positions which would have forced Croat and Serb parties to compromise [**VETO 1994-1995=n.r.**<sup>15</sup>, **VETO 1996-2012= -1**]. Thus, the question of the conflict parties' position towards the veto is not relevant [**VETOSAT 1994-2012=n.r.**].

Political parties with a Croat or Serb prefix as well as parties with a multi-ethnic orientations ran in all post-war elections [**ELECT 1994-2012=0**].<sup>16</sup> All these elections were basically free and fair.<sup>17</sup>

Most Croats supported the government's struggle for Croatia's independence and the new state's territorial integrity, whereas many Serbs rejected Croatia's independence and tried to secede from Croatia and establish Republika Srpska Krajina. According to the UCDP, in 1994, the first post-war year, Croatia's government had gained international recognition for its state but did not gain control over the areas held by Serb troops in the Krajina and Western and Eastern Slavonia. In May 1995, government troops overran western Slavonia; in August of the same year, they took control of the Krajina. In November 1995, the Erdut Agreement prescribed that the Serbs in eastern Slavonia transfer power to the UN Transitional Administration, which transferred power to the government within two years [**EXBORDER 1994-1995=0, EXBORDER 1996-2012= -1**].<sup>18</sup>

As the conflict was caused by the issue of secession, the internal borders and responsibilities of sub-state units did not play any role [**INBORDER 1994-2012=n.r.; COMPETEN 1994-2012=n.r.**]. Dissent over economic policy played a role in forging Croatia's polarization. After escalation, however, it is hardly possible to separate economic aspects from the struggle over state borders [**ECONOMY 1994-2012=n.r.**].

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14 Leutloff-Grandits 2008: 160; Freedom House 2012.

15 This item is not relevant for these years as both sides ruled different parts of Croatia. Opponents did not hold a veto right in either territory.

16 See all results in the local language at: [http://www.izbori.hr/izbori/dip\\_ws.nsf/public/index?open&id=783A&](http://www.izbori.hr/izbori/dip_ws.nsf/public/index?open&id=783A&) (29 Jan 2014).

17 See the ratings for the political rights in Croatia by Freedom House at: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Country%20Ratings%20and%20Status%2C%201973-2014%20%28FINAL%29.xls> (26 Mar 2014).

18 Basic Agreement 1995: para. 1-3.

The Serbs were concerned about their status in Croatia. Their call for secession trumped more limited demands regarding their situation [**SPEC PRO 1994-2012=n.r.; ISSUE 1994-2012=n.r.; ISSUE2 1994-2012=n.r.**].

As a consequence of the conflict, almost one million people became refugees or internally displaced persons (Commission of the European Communities 2004: 27). In consideration of the United Nations insistence on the right of return (e.g. UN Security Council 1994: para. 7), neither the government nor the Serb rebels denied this right explicitly. Their actions, however, deviated from their commitments. As long as Republika Srpska Krajina existed, Croats did not return to that area, which was to the advantage to Serbs militias<sup>19</sup> [**NEWCON 1994-1995=1**]. After the government's triumph in 1995, many Croats returned. After that point, the issue of return mainly concerned Serbs. For several years, the government was criticized for obstructing the return of Serbs. After 2003, however, it adopted a more pro-return policy.<sup>20</sup> In 2012, the authorities registered more than 130,000 Serb returnees<sup>21</sup> [**NEWCON 1996-2002=-1, NEWCON 2003-2012=0; NEWCON2 1994-2012=n.r.**]. Despite the return process, the Serbs' share of the total population decreased from roughly 12% before the war to 4% in 2011. Looking at this shift, the government's new return policy was only a minor success for the Serbs [**BENEFIT 1994-2002=n.r., BENEFIT 2003-2012=-1; BENEFIT2 1994-2012=n.r.**].

In sum, the post-war order first favored the Serb rebels [**COMPROM 1994-1995=0.25**]. After 1995, however, the situation drastically changed to the benefit of the government [**COMPROM 1996-2002=-0.8, COMPROM 2003=-0.67, COMPROM 2004-2011=-0.5, COMPROM 2012=-0.67**].

### Stability of peace

According to UCDP's best estimates, the armed conflict in 1995 did not exceed the war threshold, defined by 1,000 fatalities [**SAMEWAR=0; DATESAME=n.r.; ANYWAR=0; DATEANY=n.r.**].<sup>22</sup> Thus, peace in the sense of the absence of war lasted from 1994 until the end of the period under investigation at the end of December 2012 [**PEACMON1=228; PEACMON2=228**]. As the government militarily triumphed over the Serb militias in 1995, this coding may appear confusing. Thereafter, however, peace in Croatia proved itself to be to be stable.

19 UN Secretary General 1995: para. 20-23.

20 Braniff 2010: 117-118; Djuric 2010: 1649, 1657; Pupovac/Milošević 2007: 45-48.

21 European Commission 2011: 13.

22 See [http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/gpcountry.php?id=20&regionSelect=9-Eastern\\_Europe#](http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/gpcountry.php?id=20&regionSelect=9-Eastern_Europe#) (29 Jan 2014).

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UN Security Council 1994: Resolution 947 (1994), [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/947%281994%29](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/947%281994%29) (26 Mar 2014).

## Annex

Table 2: Troops in post-war Croatia (IISS 1993/94-1996/97)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Government</i>	<i>Rebels</i>	<i>Ratio</i>		
1993		103300	50000	2.01	1
1994		105000	50000	2.1	1
1995		105000	50000	2.1	1
1996		64700	n.d. (rebel forces dissolved)		

Table 3: Arms in post-war Croatia (IISS 1993/94-1996/97)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Government</i>	<i>Rebels</i>	<i>Ratio</i>	
1993	200 main battle tanks (MBT) no numbers on total artillery	200 MBT 500 total artillery	1	1
1994	173 MBT 900 total artillery	240 MBT 500 total artillery	1	1.39
1995	176 MBT 949 total artillery	250 MBT 200 total artillery	1	1.42
1996	250 MBT 2500 total artillery	n.d. (rebel forces dissolved)	4.75	1