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Territorial proposals for the settlement of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina

by

Mladen Klemenčić

Edited by

Martin Pratt and Clive Schofield

International Boundaries Research Unit
Department of Geography
University of Durham
South Road
Durham DH1 3LE
UK

Tel: UK + 44 (0) 91 374 2486/2456 Fax: UK + 44 (0) 91 374 2456

The Author

Mladen Klemenčić is a Croatian political geographer. Born in 1957 and educated in Zagreb, he is currently editor-in-chief of the *Atlas of Europe* at the Lexicographic Institute in Zagreb. He has written over 50 articles and chapters for journals and books published in Croatia and abroad. In 1993, he edited *A Concise Atlas of the Republic of Croatia (and of the Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina)*. His research interests include ethnic and territorial changes and conflicts in Europe and around the world.

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The opinions and comments contained herein are those of the author and are not to be construed as those of IBRU

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Territorial proposals for the settlement of the war in Bosnia-Hercegovina

Mladen Klemenčić

1. Introduction

Of all the many attempts to describe Bosnia-Hercegovina¹ and its many contradictions, perhaps the most telling is that offered by the writer Ivo Andrić who, in his novel the *The Days of the Consuls*, called Bosnia "*the land of hidden hatred*".² Andrić, the only Nobel prize winner to come from Bosnia, was in some ways a living symbol of all the contradictions that make up the country. Born a Catholic and Croat, he was later recognised as a Serbian literary figure whose work became an important part of Serbian politics. And yet he also wrote with great subtlety about the Bosnian Muslims.

Where Bosnia is concerned, nothing is certain or obvious. The country has always been difficult to understand – even for those who think they know it well – and there is still a great deal of ignorance, even about recent events. It will surely take a long time before the causes, dimensions and consequences of the conflict – which has left hardly anybody in Bosnia or around it untouched – are fully understood and explained. The war which has been raging for the last two years is especially hard to explain in categories familiar to people from outside the region who, until recently, knew little or nothing about "*the land of hidden hatred*". Once the lists of the victims and atrocities have been compiled, it will still be difficult to explain how it all could have happened: the terrible crimes committed; the reluctance among Bosnian leaders to conclude negotiations; and the impotence of the most powerful world organizations to stop the bloodshed.

For a comprehensive analysis of all the aspects of the Bosnian tragedy, a great many books will be needed. This short survey of the territorial aspects of the conflict is, therefore, a modest attempt to systematize just one dimension of the chaotic events. On the whole, the survey is written without references – simply because the relevant literature has not yet been produced. Rather, it is based on a systematic monitoring of the territorial claims and proposals of the Bosnian communities (put at first to each other and later to international mediators) and on the proposals assembled by international organizations in search of a solution to the 'Bosnian knot'. Whenever possible, information from sources on all three Bosnian sides has been taken into account and compared. In this way, every significant proposal of internal division or partition of Bosnia that has appeared in public since 1991 has been addressed. The aim of this *Briefing* is to bear witness to the claims of each side, to explore the justification for those claims and for what was offered to the other sides, and to examine the positions taken by the international community.

¹ For the sake of simplicity and variation, the formal title 'Republic of Bosnia-Hercegovina' is hereafter frequently reduced to 'Bosnia-Hercegovina' or simply 'Bosnia'. No political judgement should be inferred from the use of a particular version of the name at a particular point in the text.

² Andrić, I. (1992) *The Days of the Consuls*, London/Boston: Forest Books

2. Land and people

2.1 Geographic features

Geographically, the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina (51,129 sq km) is a Dinaric country. Much of its territory is covered by the Dinaric mountain range, connecting the Pannonian area in the north and the Mediterranean region in the south, both within Croatia.

On the basis of physical characteristics, Bosnia-Herzegovina is usually divided into large regions: North Bosnia, Central Bosnia, the high Karst area, and the sub-Mediterranean region. Each one can be subdivided into smaller regional units (Figure 1).

North, or Peripannonian, Bosnia is a low, hilly region and is the most densely populated of the four. It covers about 40% of the state territory and is home to 55% of its inhabitants. Most of the country's arable land and orchards are here, as well as important coal deposits (the Tuzla basin) and iron ore deposits (Ljubija). The largest towns are Banja Luka, in the western part of the region, and Tuzla in the eastern part.

Central Bosnia is a mountainous area and the medieval core of Bosnia. It covers 27% of its area and has 32% of the population. It has a varied geology, in which older rocks prevail, and the area is also rich in coal and iron ores. As a result, industry, especially ferrous metallurgy, has developed. In terms of population, economy and transportation, the large Sarajevo-Zenica basin is dominant.

The region of the high Karst covers 21% of the state's area but has only 6% of the population. Two basic elements are significant in the relief: mountain ridges (*bilos*) and the Karst river valleys (*poljes*). The two main parts of the region are West Bosnia and the highlands of Herzegovina, separated by the upper Neretva river valley. This region is sparsely populated with livestock breeding and forestry as its principal economic activities. There are no large settlements.

The sub-Mediterranean area, or Lowland Herzegovina, is the smallest of the main regions. It covers 12% of Bosnia-Herzegovina and has about 7% of the population. Many Karst *poljes* and low plateaus dominate the relief. Agriculture is the main economic activity. Due to the mild climate, wine, early fruit and vegetables, citrus fruits, tobacco and flowers are the most important crops. The main settlement is Mostar, situated in the Neretva River valley on the vital transport route leading from the Adriatic coast to Sarajevo, and from there through the Bosna river valley to the Posavina transportation corridor in Croatia.

Due to both the position and shape of the state territories of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, the two countries arguably form a geographical and geopolitical whole. Usually the two countries are considered as a 'geopolitical puzzle' in which the Bosnian 'triangle' is the inner part encircled by the Croatian 'horseshoe'. In a political sense, of course, they are two independent countries.

Figure 1 Geographic regions of Bosnia

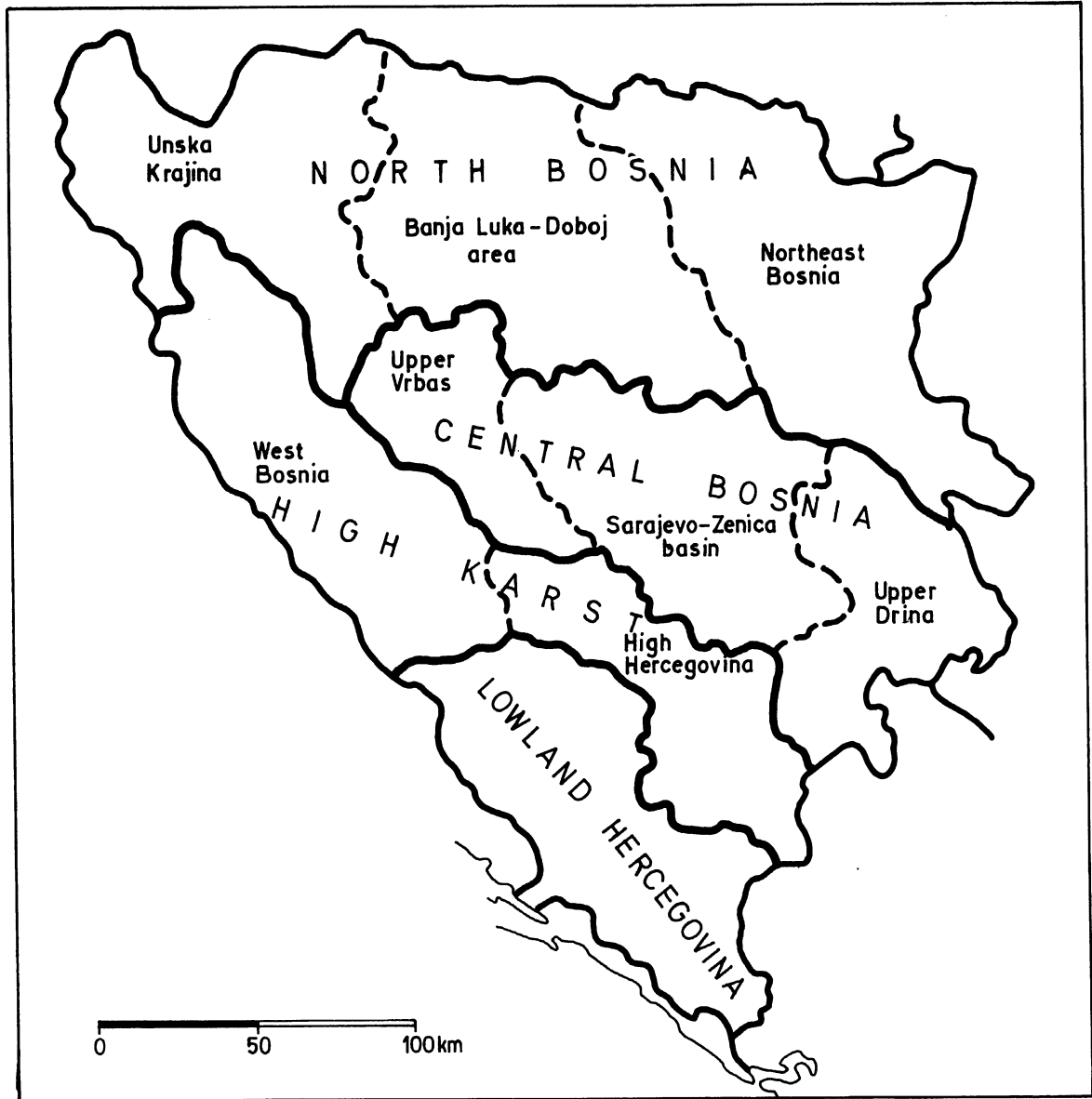


Figure 2 Regional centres



North Bosnia is highly dependent upon the Slavonian communications corridor in Croatia. The Sava river, although a state boundary for centuries, is not a wide barrier. Moreover, as a navigable river, it actually binds rather than divides the Slavonian and Northern Bosnian lowlands into a geographical whole. A number of twin towns which have developed on opposite sides of its banks are testimony to this fact (examples include Bosanski Brod and Slavonski Brod, Bosanski Šamac and Slavonski Šamac, Bosanska Gradiška and Stara Gradiška etc). Due to the direction of flow of the Sava's tributaries, large areas of Bosnia are naturally orientated towards Croatia. Along the Vrbas valley the Banja Luka region opens onto the Croatian lowlands. Further to the east, the Bosna river valley connects Doboj and the whole of Central Bosnia to the Slavonian corridor. The Tinja river performs a similar function for the Tuzla region.

Western Bosnia, with the Una river as its backbone, is also functionally dependent on Croatia. Similarly, the Neretva river valley connects Mostar and Herzegovina with the Croatian coast (Figure 2).

There is no such mutuality on the Bosnian border with Serbia and Montenegro. Bosnia is neither significant for them in terms of transit, nor does it depend on their own main corridors. Hence, while Bosnian-Croatian mutuality is based upon geographical elements, any eventual Bosnian-Serbian unit would be based solely upon a forced political solution or military conquest.

2.2 A brief history

The core area of today's Bosnia-Herzegovina is medieval Bosnia, which was located near the source of the Bosna river; "Little Land Bosnia" was the name given to it by Porphyrogenitus but the original small territory later expanded (Banac 1984).

There are two elements to medieval Bosnia's state-preserving regional consciousness. First, it was a land subject to influences from its powerful neighbours, Croatia and Serbia. When the political situation in the region was unsettled, Bosnian rulers often took advantage of the circumstances to expand their territory. However, more often than not, Bosnia found itself in a geopolitical stranglehold. The second element was the growth of religious individuality. The Church of Bosnia (*ecclesia Bosnensis*), a schismatic sect, spread quickly and was widely accepted. Additionally, it received support from the nobility, which made it a powerful source of internal cohesion.

Territorial expansion in the 13th and 14th centuries led to a fragmentation of Bosnia's homogeneity, as both Catholic and Orthodox subjects were acquired. After the death of King Tvrtko I (ruler from 1353-1391 and possibly the greatest of the Bosnian rulers), central power weakened and particularism increased. When the Turks threatened Bosnia after conquering Serbia, the king and dynasts looked for support from Catholic countries, notably Hungary. They also supported the Franciscans in Bosnia who were originally sent there to drive back the Church of Bosnia. Although Franciscans quickly identified themselves with Bosnia, it was too late for efficient anti-Ottoman resistance and in 1463 Bosnia "*fell down without a word*", as it was written in old chronicles. However, the territory of present-day Western Bosnia, lying to the west of the Vrbas river, was successfully defended for another century as part of Croatia.

Following the Ottoman conquest many followers of the Church of Bosnia accepted Islam and a new chapter in Bosnia's history began. Ironically, the traditions of the Bosnian state were kept alive by the Franciscans who stayed to minister to the few Catholics who had not fled before the Turks.

Within the Ottoman Empire, Bosnia held an important position. As a frontier country of the empire, Bosnia was geostrategically a vital Ottoman acquisition. But the Turks did not need to colonise it with settlers from Anatolia because Islam was largely accepted by the Bosnian Slavic population. As a result, Bosnia retained a certain amount of autonomy and thus the continuity of Bosnian regionalism was preserved.

During the period of Ottoman conquest the existing national composition was complicated still further. A part of the indigenous Slavic population sincerely accepted Islam and on that basis developed a specific culture and identity. Despite their clear religious affiliation to Islam, Bosnian Muslims never considered themselves to be Turks. On the contrary, there is much documentary evidence to suggest that they continued to celebrate their Croatian or (more rarely) Serbian heritage.

Under Turkish rule, Bosnian Catholics maintained links with Croatia but also considered themselves to be the successors of medieval Bosnia. With this background, when modern nation-states began to form in the nineteenth century, they found themselves in the Croatian corpus but with a strong Bosnian regional affiliation. The Ottoman rulers trusted them less than the Orthodox population because they always considered Catholics as potential allies of hostile Catholic countries. As a result, the Catholics were periodically put under strong pressure which led to emigration and demographic decline. The scale of this emigration can be illustrated by the fact that in 1723 the Holy Seat forbade further Catholic emigration from Bosnia.

The Orthodox church was more secure. In the pre-Ottoman period there were only a few Orthodox in the easternmost areas of the country but, under Ottoman rule the church's influence spread throughout Bosnia. A greater degree of Ottoman tolerance of the Orthodox population is understandable because in Bosnia the Orthodox Church was under the jurisdiction of the Peć Patriarchy, itself under Ottoman rule and control. On the other hand, due to the spirit of the Orthodox church, the spread of religion was accompanied by the spread of a Serbian national consciousness.

During the Ottoman period the boundaries of today's Bosnia-Herzegovina were delimited in several stages, starting with the Karlowitz (*Srijemski Karlovci*) Peace Treaty in 1699. Basically, Ottoman and later Austro-Hungarian Bosnia consisted of several historical units or regions. The Croatian scholar Vjekoslav Klaić, writing about the geography of Bosnia in 1878, saw it as consisting of four main parts: Bosnia proper, Turkish Croatia (Croatia Turcica, the then common name for today's Bosnian *krajina*, or 'borderland'), Herzegovina, and Old Serbia (the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, later simply Sanjak, today a part of Serbia).

When Austria-Hungary won the right to occupy Bosnia in 1878, Serbia protested because it considered Bosnia to be one of its lands. This was not only because of the relatively large number of Orthodox living there, but also because Serbia considered the Muslim population to be 'Islamised' Serbs. Having itself been under Turkish rule for centuries (since 1389), Serbia was strongly anti-Muslim. Even after Bosnia was annexed by Austria-Hungary in 1908, Serbia refused to withdraw its claims. Finally, on 28 June 1914 in Sarajevo, a Serbian

nationalist assassinated Archduke Ferdinand, heir to the throne of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The chain reaction of ultimatums and mobilizations that followed led to the start of World War I in early August.

After World War I, Bosnia-Herzegovina entered the newly founded Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Before the Union Act of 1 December 1918, it had been a part of the State of the Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, which was established after the secession of former Austro-Hungarian provinces inhabited by the South Slavonic peoples. This short-lived state which covered today's Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Vojvodina, was organised on federal principles, with representatives of each province at the Zagreb National Council and national governments in each province.

The Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, was a centralist state which did not formally recognise autonomy in its constituent units, especially not in Bosnia. The Axis conquest of Yugoslavia in 1941 was followed by the creation of Independent State of Croatia (NDH) sponsored by Germany and Italy. This version of a Greater Croatia included the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina but it did not prove a durable proposition. When Yugoslavia reappeared after the Second World War on a federal basis, Bosnia-Herzegovina, with its historic boundaries intact, became one of six constituent republics. Because of its ethnic structure it was also the only tripartitely-defined republic. Along with Croats and Serbs, Bosnian Muslims were also recognised as a constituent people. After a period of biased census classifications, from the mid-1960s the Muslims were finally recognised as a nation, their name identifying their religious affiliation as well as their national one.

As the most fragile unit of federal Yugoslavia, Bosnia was tightly controlled by the League of Communists. National institutions were forbidden until the late 1980's when, as elsewhere in Yugoslavia, they proliferated. In the multiparty elections of 1990, national parties won but could not find a way to reorganise the country and at the same time maintain its integrity. Many partition proposals were to follow, with little more success.

The history of Bosnia is perhaps the most complex of the former Yugoslav republics. Aside from short periods of self-rule in the Middle Ages, Bosnia has traditionally been part of other empires or states: the Kingdom of Croatia, the Ottoman Empire, Austria-Hungary, NDH and Yugoslavia. Although it always retained some degree of autonomy or self-government, it has never been a sovereign state in the modern sense and therefore has little experience or tradition upon which to draw when attempting to resolve its complex national composition. Even when Bosnia received international recognition in the 1990s, its three communities were unable to agree on a mode of organisation satisfactory to all sides.

The first national party to be founded was the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) on 26 May 1990 at the Holiday Inn in Sarajevo. Alija Izetbegović, a former political prisoner, was elected as its president. According to its founders, the party was defined as an "*association of citizens belonging to the Muslim historical circle*". In Serbian newspapers it was called the 'Yugoslav Muslim Party', partly because there is a branch at Sanjak in Serbia and partly by way of analogy with the 'Yugoslav Muslim Organisation', which was the name of the leading Muslim party in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia.

The Bosnian Serbs founded their party on 12 July 1990 at Skenderija Hall, Sarajevo. They took the same name as the Serbs in Croatia had done, namely the Serbian Democratic Party

(SDS). This choice of name symbolised the similarities in the political programmes of the two parties. Radovan Karadžić, a Montenegro-born psychiatrist and amateur poet, was elected president.

Finally, the Croats founded their party on 18 August, also at Skenderija Hall. They took the same name as the party which won the elections in Croatia, the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), but also added "*of Bosnia-Herzegovina*" (HDZ BiH), thereby becoming the only party to include the name of the country in its formal title. Davor Perinović, a physician, was elected president.

The subsequent elections took place in two ballots, on 18 November and 2 December 1990. The turnout was 77.4%. There were also a number of other parties at the elections, but the three national parties dominated the elections (Figure 3).

Table 1: Elections for the Bosnia-Herzegovinan Parliament, 1990.

Party	Number of seats		
	House of citizens	House of municipalities	Total
SDA	43	43	86
HDZ	21	24	45
SDS	34	36	70
Other parties ³	32	6	38

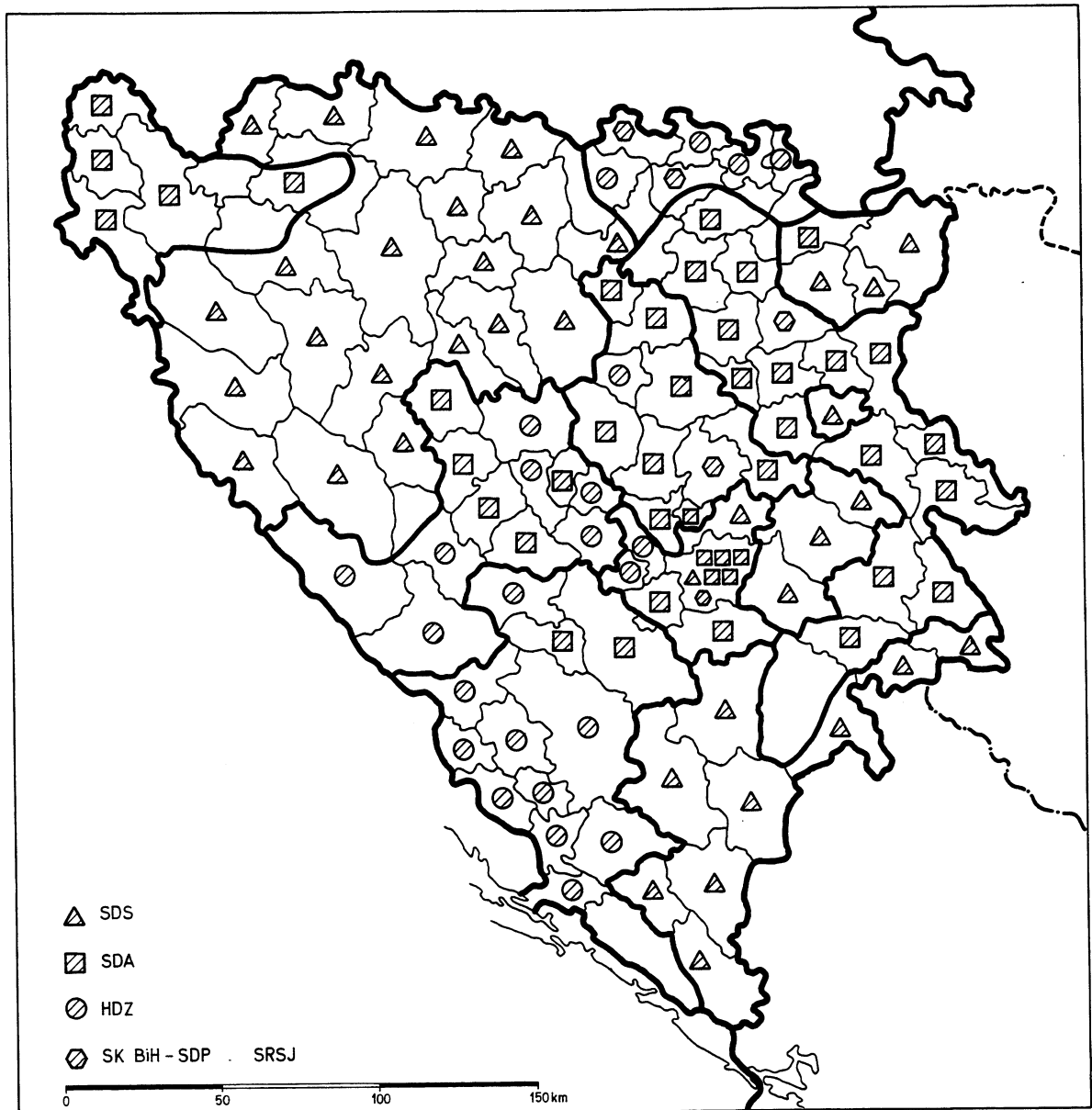
The ethnic balance of elected representatives, regardless of party affiliation was as follows: Muslims 99, Serbs 83, Croats 50, Yugoslavs 7.

For the Presidency, each national community was allowed two representatives, with one representative for the remaining population. Among the Muslim candidates, Fikret Abdić (47.3% of the vote) and Alija Izetbegović (39.8%), both from the SDA list, were elected. The Serbian (SDS) winners were Biljana Plavšić (26.0%) and Nikola Koljević (25.2%), and from the Croat candidates of the HDZ, Stjepan Kljuić (21.4%) and Franjo Boras (18.9%) came out on top. Ejup Ganić of the SDA, who stood as a 'Yugoslav', was elected as the representative of the 'other citizens' group with 32.1% of vote.

The parliament had not long been assembled before it began to resemble a dead-end street. The Serbs boycotted most important constitutional discussions and therefore blocked the passage of essential reforms. The Muslims and Croats were generally more co-operative and took similar positions on many questions. The central dispute between the Serbs and the other two communities was that the Serbs rejected Bosnia-Herzegovina's secession from Yugoslavia. The independence of Croatia and Slovenia left Bosnia with a terrible choice: staying with Serbia (and Montenegro) or declaring an independent state. For the Croats, already frustrated by Serbian aggression towards Croatia, the answer was obvious. The Muslims joined them (although not without hesitation) but the Serbs would not take part in any parliamentary activity which might strengthen Bosnian sovereignty. By the end of 1991 the Serbs had left the parliament and, on 9 January 1992 in Sarajevo, proclaimed their own 'Parliament of the Serb people in Bosnia-Herzegovina'.

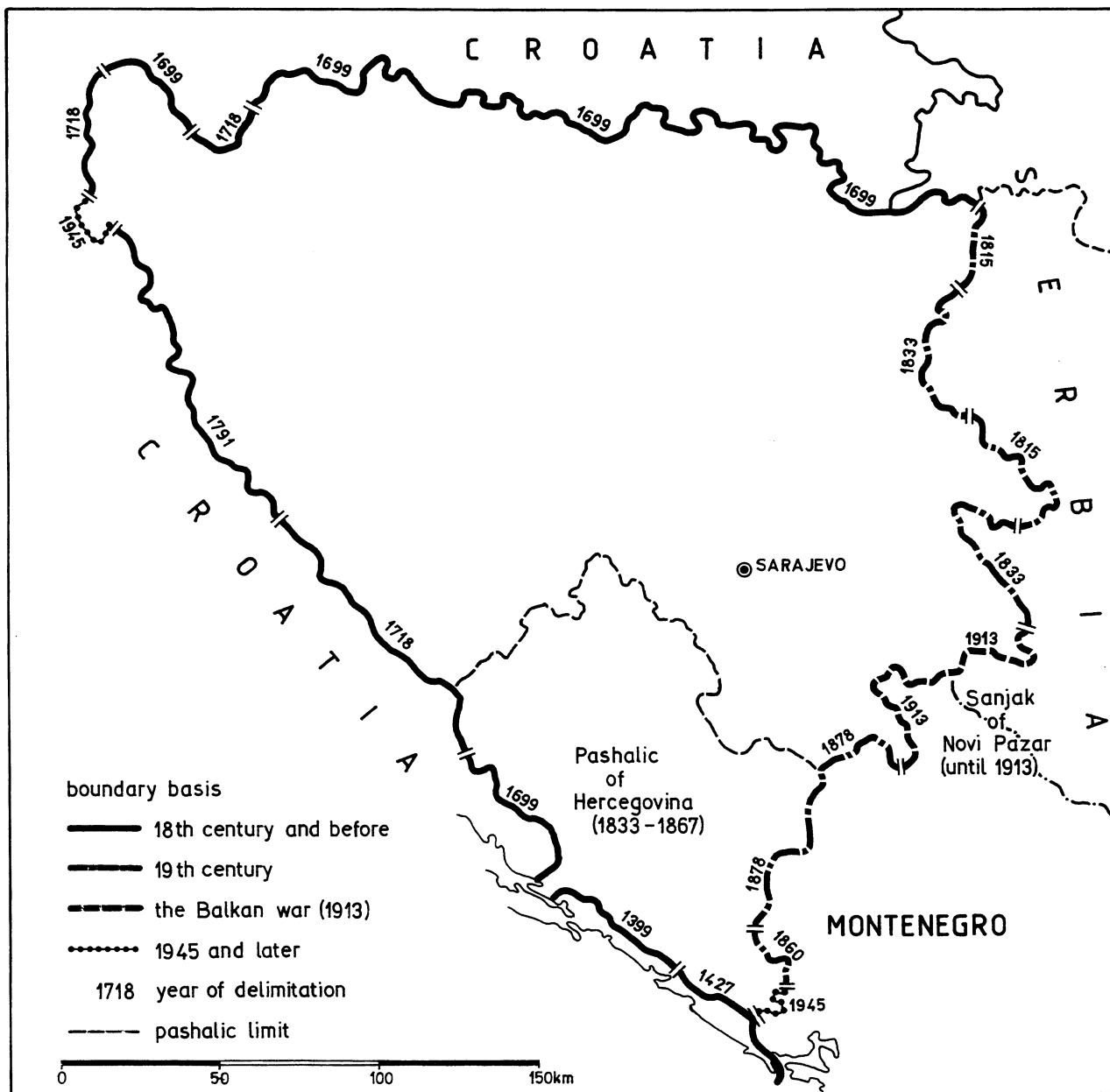
³ mostly reformed League of Communists and Union of Yugoslav reform forces; also small national parties: Muslim-Bosnian Organization (2 seats) and Serbian Revival Movement (1 seat). Source: *Oslobodenje*, Sarajevo 5/12/1990

Figure 3 Elections: winning parties by municipality



Source: *Oslobodenje*

Figure 4 Historical boundaries



When a referendum on the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina was announced the Serbs refused to take part. The referendum, which was the European Community's condition for recognition, was held on 29 February and 1 March 1992. 63.7% of the electorate voted, of which 99.4% voted for independence from 'Yugoslavia' (which actually no longer existed). The result highlighted the ethnic division in Bosnia, with Muslims and Croats voting for independence and the Serbs boycotting the referendum almost entirely. Soon thereafter, the Serbs started the war against other two communities with the aim of joining Greater Serbia.

2.3 Boundaries

The present Bosnian boundaries are inherited from the Ottoman period (Figure 4). When Bosnia-Herzegovina was founded in 1945 as one of republics of the Yugoslav federation, these historical boundaries served as a basis for its delimitation (Klemenčić 1991, 331-337).

The Bosnia-Croatia boundary was the longest republican boundary in the former Yugoslavia. In general, it followed the line of the old boundaries between the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian empires, and between Venetian-controlled Dalmatia and the Ottoman empire that existed during the 18th and 19th centuries (Englefield 1991, 11). The current boundary runs from the confluence of the rivers Drina and Sava, along the Sava and Una rivers, and then along the watershed of the Plješevica mountains to the south. The boundary divides the Dalmatian coast from the Bosnian hinterland, reaching the Adriatic coast at Neum-Klek and providing a narrow exit to the sea for Bosnia-Herzegovina. The northern part of the boundary along the Sava and Una rivers corresponds to the boundary first established in 1699 by the Treaty of Karlowitz (*Srijemski Karlovci*) between the Hapsburg and Ottoman empires. Following minor changes at the beginning of the 18th century, the border was confirmed by the Treaty of Svistov in 1791. This boundary line remained the border between the Hapsburg and Ottoman empires during the 19th century and subsequently became a provincial boundary when Bosnia came under the protection of Vienna following the Congress of Berlin. In 1945, almost the same line was used to divide the Yugoslav republics of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Minor changes were made near Bihać to the advantage of Bosnia.

The boundary between Bosnia and Croatia in the Dalmatian sector is based on that defined during the early 18th century as a boundary between Venetian and Ottoman territories in the region. Boundary changes in 1699 and 1718 were caused by the territorial expansion of Venice into the coastal hinterland, with the present boundary line being based on the boundary developments completed in 1718. South of the town of Neum, the boundary between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina is based on the boundary of the former Republic of Dubrovnik, which dates from the 14th and 15th centuries. The small neck of Bosnian territory extending to the Adriatic coast around the town of Neum is a legacy of the Treaty of Karlowitz, which referred to two strips of territory which divided the Republic of Dubrovnik from Venetian-held territories. One strip, that of Klek-Neum, was taken into account in boundary delimitation between republics but the other, at Sutorina in the Bay of Kotor, did not re-emerge.

The Bosnia-Serbia boundary follows the line established in the 19th century between the then Ottoman-possessed Bosnia and the independent principality of Serbia. The boundary remained unchanged after the Congress of Berlin in 1878 when Bosnia effectively came under the influence of Austria-Hungary while Serbia was recognised as an independent state. After the Balkan wars of 1912-13 and the expansion of Serbia into the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, the southern sector of the boundary was delimited.

Much of the Bosnia-Montenegro boundary follows the line delimited by the 1878 Congress of Berlin between Bosnia and newly recognised Montenegro. The northern part of the line is based on changes following the Balkan wars when Montenegro expanded into the Sanjak of Novi Pazar. The historical boundary line is not preserved in the southernmost sector. Both Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian Herzegovina had a narrow exit to the sea (the so-called Sutorina strip) at the Bay of Kotor. Although this strip was created in the same way as the one at Neum-Klek, in 1945 it was assigned to Montenegro.

Yugoslav constitutional provisions for boundaries were quite clear. By the Constitution of 1974, which was formally still valid until its final breakdown in 1991, Yugoslavia was defined as a state composed of republics (Article 1), a republic being defined as "*a state based on the sovereignty of its people*" (Article 3). Boundaries were the subject of Article 5 of the Constitution: "*The territory of a republic cannot be changed without the agreement of the republic, and the territory of an autonomous province without the agreement of the autonomous province.... The boundary between republics can only be changed on the basis of their mutual agreement, and in the case of autonomous provinces on the basis of its agreement.*" Similar provisions were included in the constitutions of all the republics.

As the boundary issues created by the disintegration of Yugoslavia (Klemenčić 1993) were not solved by inter-republic negotiations, the international community intervened. At the Peace Conference on Yugoslavia which began in the autumn of 1991 under the auspices of the EC, a special arbitration commission was formed, consisting of experts from EC countries, and chaired by the Frenchman Robert Badinter. Four main principles for delimitation between former republics were set out in the Commission's document entitled 'Opinion No. 3':

1. All external boundaries of former Yugoslavia "*must be respected*";
2. The boundaries between republics "*can only be changed on the basis of free and mutual agreement*";
3. In the absence of such an agreement "*the former boundaries become boundaries protected by international law*" following the principle of *uti possidetis iuris*;
4. The "*alteration of existing boundaries by force is not capable of producing legal effects*".

Also of importance is Opinion No. 2, in which the arbitration commission answered the question put forward by Serbia about the status of Serb ethnic community in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. It stated that the right to self-determination of Serbs outside Serbia "*must not involve changes to existing boundaries*". Serb communities in these two republics were therefore given directions to regulate their rights within them. In January 1992, as a result of the views and opinions of the arbitration commission, all EC members as well as other countries recognised the republics of Slovenia and Croatia, and later Bosnia-Herzegovina "*within the boundaries as existed before the beginning of confrontation in June last year*".

2.4 Changes in administrative-territorial divisions

Following the Viennese war (1683-99) the Bosnian *pashalic* or *vilayet*, due to the provisions of the 1699 Karlowitz Treaty, was reduced in area in the north, west and south to the present-

Figure 5 Changes in administrative divisions 1912-1931

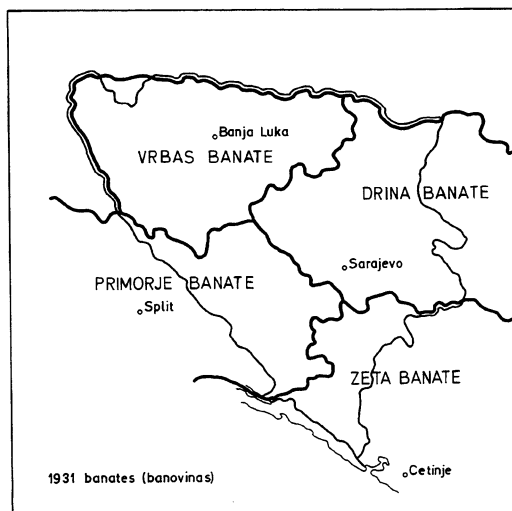
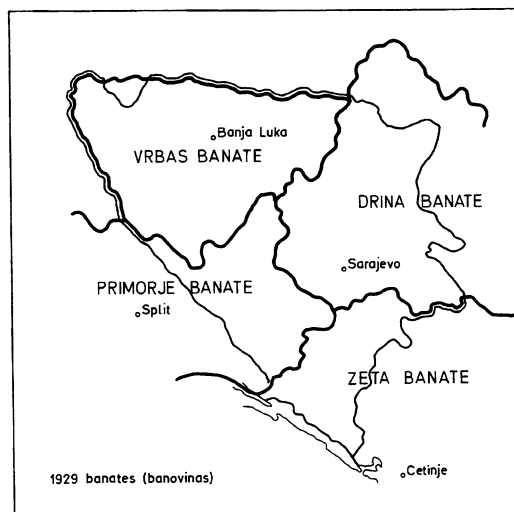
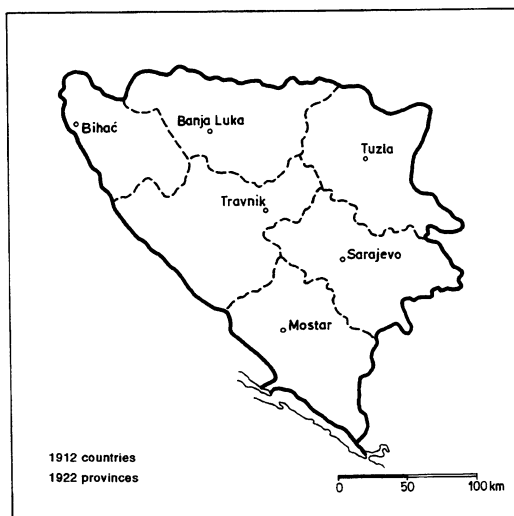
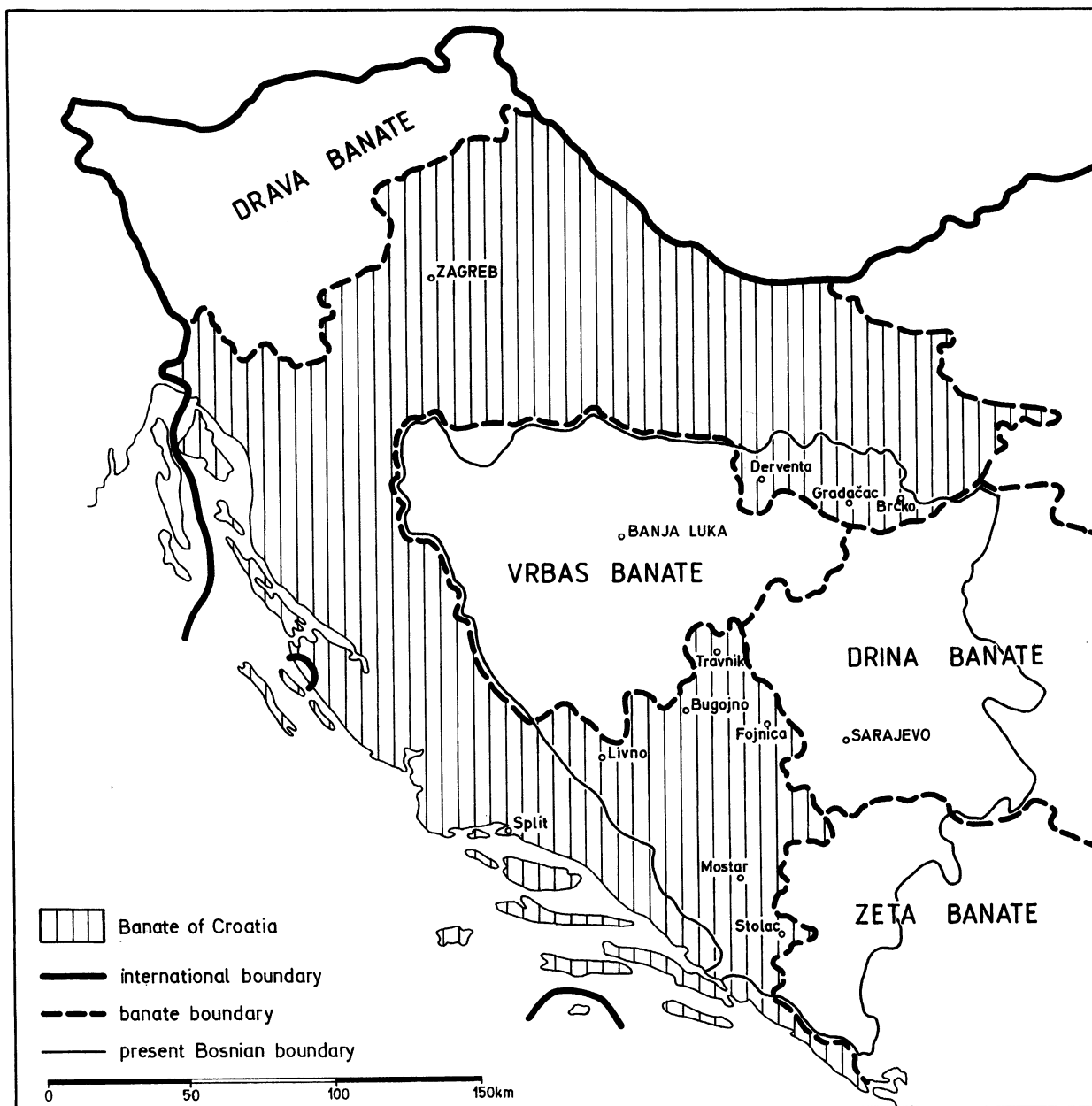


Figure 6 The Banate of Croatia 1939



day limits of Bosnia. As elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire, the pashalic was divided into *sanjaks* (administrative-military territorial units) and *qadilics* (judicial districts). The seat of the *pasha* or *beylerbey* was transferred in 1703 from Sarajevo to Travnik because Sarajevo was destroyed by fire in the war; it was not transferred back until 1850. There were five sanjaks (Bosnia, Herzegovina, Zvornik, Bihać and Klis) and 38 qadilics. In 1833 the sanjak of Herzegovina was set up as a separate pashalic. Administrative reform was carried out in 1850 in order to strengthen central government. Sanjaks were replaced by *kaimakamlics* (counties) and *mudirluks* (districts). The Bosnian pashalic consisted of six kaimakamlics: Sarajevo, Travnik, Banja Luka, Bihać, Tuzla, and Novi Pazar (now in Serbia); while the Herzegovinian vilayet had three kaimakamlics: Mostar, Trebinje and Prijepolje (also now in Serbia). The last administrative reform was accomplished in 1867. The vilayets of Bosnia and Herzegovina were joined into one unit – the Vilayet of Bosnia – which was divided into seven sanjaks: Sarajevo, Travnik, Bihać, Banja Luka, Zvornik, Herzegovina, and Novi Pazar, which after 1878 became a part of newly founded Vilayet of Kosovo.

In 1912 Austria-Hungary carried out an internal reorganisation and Bosnia-Herzegovina was divided into six *okružje* (counties) consisting of *kotar* (districts). The county seats were at Banja Luka, Bihać, Tuzla, Travnik, Sarajevo and Mostar (Figure 5).

Since the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes did not reorganise before 1922, each constituent part kept its previous administrative-territorial boundaries until then. When it came, the reorganisation had no effect on the area of the Bosnia-Herzegovina units, except for the redefinition of *okružje* as *oblasti* (provinces).

More significant changes came in 1929 following the accession of the autocratic king Alexander (of the Serbian Karadjordjević dynasty). He changed the name of the kingdom to Yugoslavia and divided it into nine *banovinas* (banates). The limits of the banates were not drawn according to boundaries of historical lands (Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, Montenegro etc.) but rather in order to produce an Orthodox (i.e. Serbian) majority wherever possible. The territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina was divided into four banates: Drina (with its main seat in Sarajevo), Vrbas (Banja Luka), Zeta (Cetinje) and Primorje (Split). Bosnia-Herzegovina was therefore divided into three banates with an Orthodox (Serbian and Montenegrin) majority and one with Catholic (Croat) majority. The limits of the banates were slightly modified in 1931 but there were no significant changes. The revisions between 1912 and 1931 are shown in Figure 5.

Real partition came in 1939 on the basis of general Croat-Serb agreement, known as the Cvetković-Maček agreement, and the creation of the *de facto* autonomous Banate of Croatia. This Croatian unit included two Croat-dominated banates (Sava and Primorje) and Croat-dominated districts from neighbouring banates. Beside the part of the Bosnia-Herzegovina territory already belonging to the Primorje (Littoral) banate, the Banate of Croatia was assigned some other Bosnian areas, namely the districts of Derventa and Gradačac from Vrbas banate and the districts of Brčko, Fojnica and Travnik from the Drina banate. As a result of this delimitation, Croatia was assigned the area of Posavina in the north of Bosnia, a rather large area comprising Western and part of Eastern Herzegovina and parts of Central Bosnia to the south (Figure 6). This was a negotiated division, although it was carried out without Muslims playing an active role because they were not recognised as a people at that time. Although the Banate of Croatia lasted only two years – it disappeared along with the Kingdom of Yugoslavia itself in 1941 – the division left many traces and the boundaries of

the Banate of Croatia have been considered to mark the limits of the Croatian area in Bosnia-Herzegovina ever since.

During World War II the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina was an integral part of the Independent State of Croatia sponsored by the Axis powers in 1941 after the occupation of Yugoslavia. Bosnia-Herzegovina re-emerged in 1945 when a federal Yugoslavia was established on the basis of the anti-fascist movement during the war. Until the 1960's, as elsewhere in Yugoslavia, the territorial division of Bosnia-Herzegovina was subject to frequent change. In the mid-1960s a division into municipalities or communes (*općina*) was introduced and, with minor alterations, lasted until the current war. On the eve of the current war Bosnia-Herzegovina consisted of 99 municipalities plus an additional ten municipalities in the Greater Sarajevo area, comprising not only the city but also a rather large hinterland (Figure 7).

2.5 Basic demographic indicators

According to an Ottoman census (supported by the estimates of the Austrian statistician G. Thoemmel), in 1851 there were 1,021,772 inhabitants in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Austro-Hungarian census of 1879 registered 1,051,485 inhabitants. Since then the censuses have been more frequent and comprehensive and the data are more precise. Censuses in Bosnia-Herzegovina were organised by Austria-Hungary in 1885, 1895 and 1910, by the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1921 and 1931, and by federal Yugoslavia in 1948, 1953, 1961, 1971, and 1981. The census also took place in 1991 but only preliminary results were reported.

Table 2: Bosnia-Herzegovinan population 1885-1991

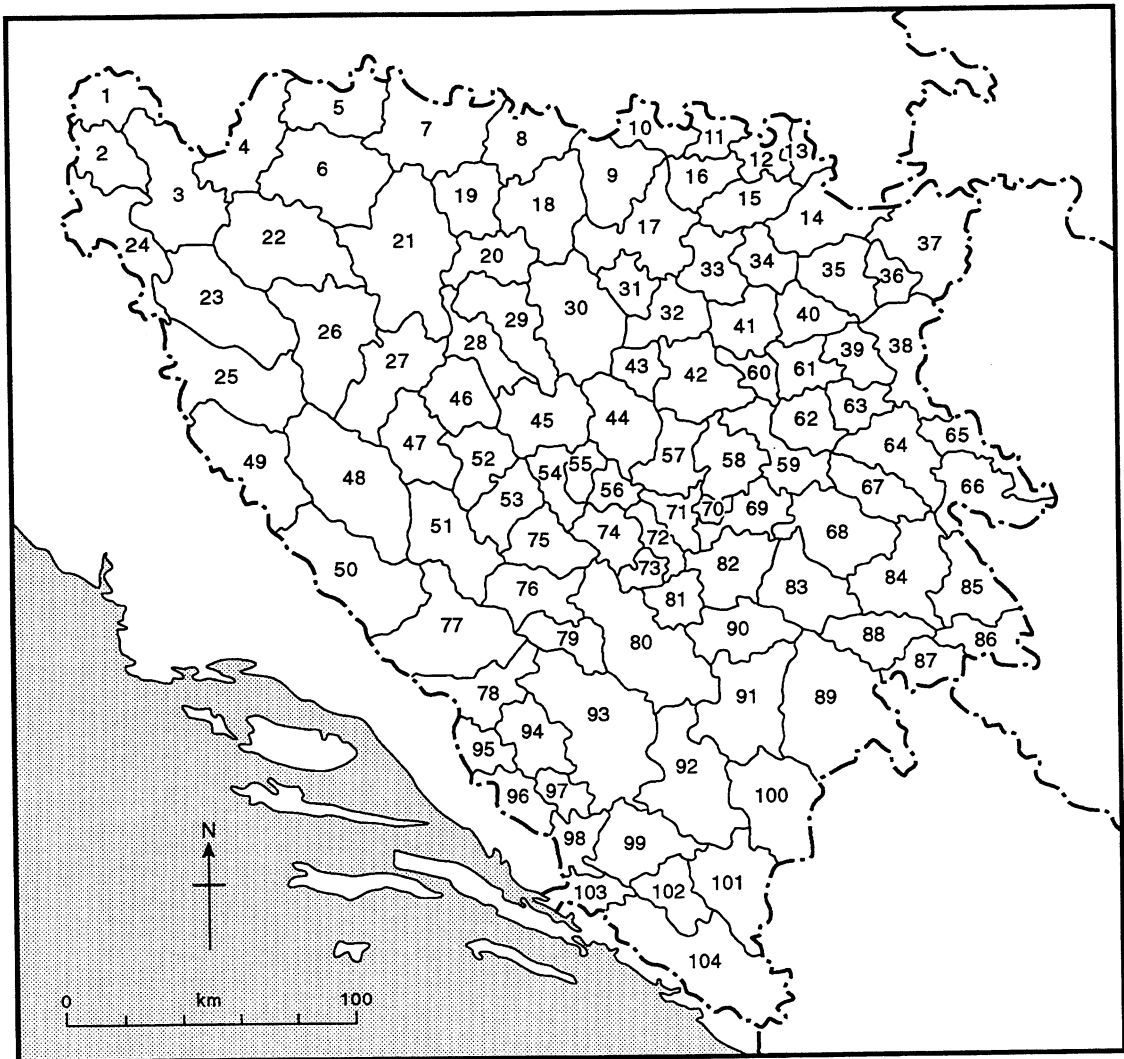
Census year	Total population	Annual increase or decrease rate	Ethnic structure ⁴			
			Croats	Muslims	Serbs	Others
1885	1,336,091	—	265,788	492,710	571,250	6,343
1895	1,568,092	+1.6	334,142	548,632	673,246	12,072
1910	1,898,044	+1.2	434,061	612,137	825,418	26,428
1921	1,890,440	-0.04	443,914	588,247	829,162	29,117
1931	2,323,555	+2.1	549,579	717,599	1,030,498	25,879
1948	2,565,277	+0.6	614,123	788,403	1,136,116	26,635
1953	2,847,459	+2.1	654,229	891,800	1,264,372	37,058
1961	3,277,948	+1.8	711,665	842,248 ⁵	1,406,057	317,978 ⁵
1971	3,746,111	+1.3	772,491	1,482,430	1,393,148	98,042
1981	4,124,256	+1.0	758,136	1,629,924	1,320,644	415,552 ⁶
1991	4,364,574	+0.6	755,895	1,905,829	1,369,258	333,592 ⁷

⁴ From 1876 to 1931, data for ethnic structure were derived from religious structure. Ethnic structure has been recorded from 1948

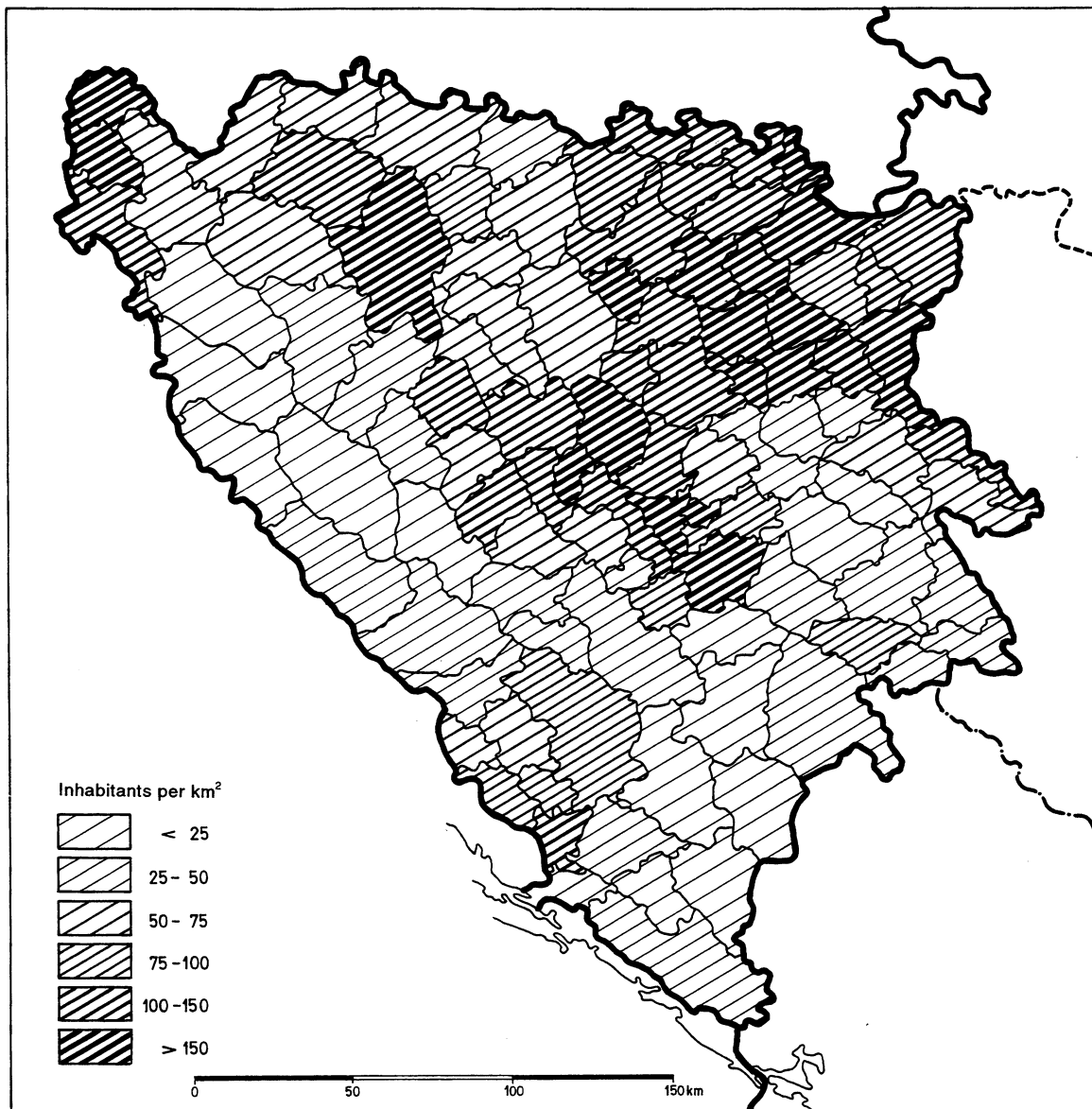
⁵ Due to changes in census methodology, some Muslims were recorded as 'undeclared Yugoslavs' and in the table are shown as 'others'

⁶ Total includes 326,280 Yugoslavs ⁷ Total includes 239,815 Yugoslavs

Figure 7 Bosnian municipalities 1991



1 Velika Kladusa	27 Mrkonjić Grad	53 Bugojno	79 Jablanica
2 Cazin	28 Skender Vakuf	54 Novi Travnik	80 Konjic
3 Bosanska Krupa	29 Kotor Varoš	55 Vitez	81 Hadžići
4 Bosanski Novi	30 Teslić	56 Busovača	82 Sarajevo
5 Bosanska Dubica	31 Tešanj	57 Kakanj	83 Pale
6 Prijedor	32 Maglaj	58 Vareš	84 Rogatica
7 Bosanka Gradiska	33 Gračanica	59 Olovo	85 Višegrad
8 Srbac	34 Srebrenik	60 Banovici	86 Rudo
9 Derвента	35 Lopare	61 Zivinice	87 Čajniče
10 Bosanski Brod	36 Ugljevik	62 Kladovo	88 Goražde
11 Odžak	37 Bijeljina	63 Šekovići	89 Foča
12 Bosanski Šamac	38 Zvornik	64 Vlasenica	90 Trnovo
13 Orašje	39 Kalesija	65 Bratunac	91 Kalinovik
14 Brčko	40 Tuzla	66 Srebrenica	92 Nevesinje
15 Gradačac	41 Lukavac	67 Han Pijesak	93 Mostar
16 Modriča	42 Zavidovići	68 Sokolac	94 Široki Brijeg
17 Doboј	43 Žepče	69 Ilijaš	95 Grude
18 Prnjavor	44 Zenica	70 Breza	96 Ljubuški
19 Laktaši	45 Travnik	71 Visoko	97 Čitluk
20 Čelinac	46 Jajce	72 Kiseljak	98 Čapljina
21 Banja Luka	47 Šipovo	73 Kreševo	99 Stolac
22 Sanski Most	48 Glamoč	74 Fojnica	100 Gacko
23 Bosanski Petrovac	49 Bosanska Grahovo	75 Gornji Vakuf	101 Bileća
24 Bihać	50 Livno	76 Prozor	102 Ljubinje
25 Drvar	51 Kupres	77 Tomislavgrad	103 Neum
26 Ključ	52 Donji Vakuf	78 Posušje	104 Trebinje

Figure 8 Population density by municipality

Source: 1991 census

Census figures show an almost continuous increase in population size. The only intercensus period showing a decrease is 1910-1921 reflecting the demographic losses associated with World War I. The negative impact of losses during World War II resulted in a minimal growth rate between 1931 and 1948.

Compared to other former Yugoslav republics, Bosnia-Herzegovina has always exhibited high population growth rates. For example, between 1948 and 1991 the share of the Bosnian population in the total Yugoslav population increased from 16.3% to 18.4%.

Population growth in Bosnia-Herzegovina has been caused primarily by high natural growth rates over the last hundred years as a consequence of a stable death-rate and a relatively high birth-rate. On the other hand, Bosnia-Herzegovina has also been a fertile ground for emigration and it has been considered to be the most 'emigrant' of the republics of former Yugoslavia (Mežnarić 1993, 23). The principal emigrant destinations were Croatia and Vojvodina, with some emigrations to Serbia. Migrations to Western Europe also took place (in the form of 'guest workers'). In the period from 1948-81 population decrease due to migration was equivalent to 26.7% of the natural increase.

Movement within Bosnia-Herzegovina has also been widespread. For example, according to the 1971 census only six out of 106 Bosnian municipalities could be identified as centres of immigration (Novo Sarajevo, Sarajevo-Ilidža, Mostar, Tuzla, Zenica, Bugojno; Markotić, 1980). The other 100 municipalities would more accurately be described as 'emigrational'. The re-distribution of population has continued, intensifying differences in the structural characteristics of the population as well as producing great variations in population density.

Figure 8 shows population density of the municipalities in 1991. The extremes are Kalinovik with only 6.4 inhabitants per sq km and Tuzla with 429.5. In general terms, the northern region is more densely populated than the south. Within the northern region, the eastern half is more densely populated than the west. If Bosnia-Herzegovina is divided into four, the northeastern quarter is the most densely populated followed by the northwestern sector, while the southeastern and southwestern quarters are sparsely populated. An area with over 100 inhabitants per sq km follows the Bosna river valley south to Sarajevo, covering the Lašva river valley and parts of the Vrbas river valley. Other densely populated areas include the Cazin-Bihać and Prijedor-Banja Luka regions and, to a lesser extent, the lower Neretva river valley.

For the partition of Bosnia, population density has a greater significance than as a simple demographic indicator, as there are notable correlations between population density and ethnic structure. Generally, municipalities with a Muslim majority are densely populated. On the other hand, most Serb-dominated areas are sparsely populated: out of 14 municipalities with a population density of less than 25 per sq km, 12 were Serb-dominated. As in many other respects, the Croats lie between the other two communities. There are both densely populated Croat municipalities, for example in Posavina, and sparsely populated municipalities such as those in the high Karst regions.

2.6 The three communities

There are three communities in Bosnia: Muslim, Serb and Croat. The first census which specifically recorded ethnic structure was in 1948, but changes in ethnic structure can be

traced quite accurately from the middle of 19th century if religious confession is taken as indicator. In Bosnia-Herzegovina religion has always been synonymous with ethnicity. If anything, in everyday life and speech religious affiliation has always been the most common indicator of identity. Therefore, the Orthodox are Serbs, the Catholics are Croats and Muslims (by religion) constitute the third community, the Muslims (ethnic).⁸

According to data from contemporary Turkish sources, in 1851 Bosnia consisted of 43.6% Orthodox (Serbs), 35.8% Muslims and 19.4% Catholics. Over time the proportions have changed: the proportion of Muslims has increased, at the expense of Serbs and Croats. According to the 1991 census (preliminary results), there were 43.7% Muslims, 31.4% Serbs and 17.3% Croats. The rest of population consisted of small groups of many other nationalities or those who did not declare ethnic (or national) affiliation; among them the most numerous were the 'Yugoslavs', totalling 5.5% of total population. This category consisted mainly of people of mixed ethnic origin or those who wanted to express their political preference, many of whom were subsequently forced by the war to side with one of the three Bosnian communities.

The Bosnian Muslims are the most numerous community today. Their ethnic origin has always been disputed between the Croats and Serbs. Both sides have claimed that today's Muslims were originally (depending on perspective) Croats or Serbs who were 'Islamised' under Ottoman rule. Although, in the author's opinion, the Croatian argument perhaps has more historical validity, neither case is relevant to the contemporary situation. For on the basis of a long-established Islamic tradition, Bosnian Muslims are undoubtedly a separate cultural and political entity or community. On the other hand, even during the Ottoman period they had never considered themselves to be the same as the Turks. Few Bosnian Muslims ever knew the Turkish language and they were careful to distinguish themselves from the few ethnic Turkish Ottoman officials.

In the Kingdom of Yugoslavia the Muslim community was looked upon with disfavour by the Belgrade authorities and no national recognition was offered. The second, federal Yugoslavian government was also unsure how to treat them and, until the 1971 census, the categories concerning Muslims varied significantly. In the 1948 census, some of them declared as Croats and some as Serbs, but most of them were placed within the 'nationality not declared – Muslims' category. In the following censuses most of the Muslims incline towards 'nationality not declared – Yugoslavs' (1953) or 'ethnic group -Muslim' and 'nationally not declared Yugoslavs' (1961) categories. In the 1971 census a 'nationality - Muslim' category was finally introduced and they achieved equality with the other nations in Yugoslavia (Croats, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Serbs, Slovenians).

During the 20th century the Muslim population has increased steadily, in contrast with the Serbs and Croats, whose numbers have fluctuated markedly. Natural increase was the highest among the Muslims and they had proportionally the lowest share among the emigrants from Bosnia. Consequently the proportion of Muslims increased (1981: 39.6%, 1991: 43.7%) to the extent that, according to some pre-war estimates, it could reach 50% by 2001.

For the Muslims Bosnia was an indivisible country. Since Bosnian Croats were traditionally linked with Croatia and Bosnian Serbs with Serbia, the Muslims considered themselves to be the most interested party in Bosnia's future.

⁸ At the time of writing, it is becoming increasingly common for Muslims to refer to themselves as 'Bosnians'

Within Yugoslavia there was only one numerically significant Muslim community outside Bosnia. Muslims in Sanjak, a former Ottoman possession and borderland divided between Serbia and Montenegro in 1913, numbered some 215,000 according to the 1991 census and therefore accounted for more than 10% of the Muslim population in Yugoslavia.

The Bosnian Croats were considered a separate community due to the care and influence of Catholic church. The Franciscans were particularly good at accommodating their mission to unfavourable conditions during the Ottoman period. The 'uncles', as they were traditionally called among the people, were the spiritual and sometimes the practical leaders of the Bosnian Croats. Largely as a result of their efforts, the Croats, despite large-scale and ongoing emigration from Bosnia, not only preserved their existence but also developed a special sense of identification with Bosnia. Franciscan monasteries in Fojnica, Kreševo and Kraljeva Sutjeska (all in Central Bosnia), around seven centuries old, are precious relics of Bosnian history. The Catholic archbishopric of Sarajevo is called *Vrhbosanska* after *Vrhbosna* (Peak of Bosnia) which was the name of Sarajevo before the Ottoman conquest. The province of the Franciscans in Bosnia is called *Bosnia Argentina* (Bosnia the Silver) which recalls the first Franciscan monastery built in Srebrenica (*srebro* = silver).

Although they maintained links with Croatia, the Bosnian Croats always retained a Bosnian identity. Only some of the Croats living in Western Herzegovina, adjacent to Croatia, displayed separatist tendencies. This region was one of the most homogeneous Croat-populated areas in the whole of former Yugoslavia, and the Croats living there objected to the separation of their homes from Croatia proper by an international boundary.

Since the elections in 1990 the policy of Croatian leaders in Bosnia-Herzegovina has been greatly affected by the often conflicting interests and aims of Croats living in Bosnia and those living in Herzegovina. The former, although the more numerous of the two, were mixed with and surrounded by the other two national communities. This geographical reality made them strong supporters of Bosnian integrity, recognising that this was their only chance of survival. They did, however, favour a reorganisation of Bosnia in order to enhance their national rights. The Croats from Herzegovina, on the other hand, favoured more radical solutions, including a substantial degree of autonomy or even secession as a final solution. However, encouraged by their Catholic clergy, the vast majority of Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina voted for sovereignty in the 1992 referendum.

In medieval Bosnia the Orthodox Christian population was small. Only in eastern Bosnia was their presence registered in historical documents. But during the large migrations that accompanied the Ottoman conquest, a large number of Orthodox spread throughout Bosnia, especially into the western part which had formerly belonged to Croatia. Most of them were Vlachs, nomadic Balkan herdsmen, serving in the Ottoman border forces. Since they were all under the patronage of Serbian Patriarchate of Peć (in Kosovo), over time they acquired a Serb national consciousness. During the 19th century the Serb ethnic community in Bosnia was encouraged by the example of Serbia liberating itself from the Ottoman Empire. Although Serbia received international recognition at the 1878 Berlin Congress, the expansionists were not satisfied. They demanded the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina and were strongly opposed to the Austro-Hungarian presence there, especially after its annexation in 1907. The protests reached a dramatic climax when nationalists belonging to the Serbian-sponsored organization *Mlada Bosna* (Young Bosnia) assassinated Archduke Franz-Ferdinand, triggering World War I.

There is no question about the right of the Serbs to take a full and equal part in discussions about the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, their desire for unification with Serbia has created enormous problems. At the beginning of the 20th century they were numerically the largest community and there are still some almost completely Serb-populated areas in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Yet few Bosnian Serbs supported sovereignty and territorial integrity for the country. When they realized that it would not be possible to keep the whole country united with the remnants of Yugoslavia, they turned to the military option. The former federal army (JNA) was a strong Serbian weapon confronting the other two communities. Before the war it made possible a *de facto* division of Bosnia-Herzegovina by creating a system of self-proclaimed Serbian Autonomous Regions (SAR's). During the war they occupied additional territories and enforced the policy of 'ethnic cleansing'. Only then did they declare themselves ready for negotiations based on a 'land-for-peace' formula.

In terms of ethnic structure Bosnia-Herzegovina was a unique case among the Yugoslav republics. All the other republics were seen as the home of one of the constitutive peoples. Although none of the republics could be described as ethnically pure, all the others had one obvious majority community – a situation common in Central and East European countries. But Bosnia was an exception, with its tripartite status defined in its constitution. Besides the Muslims for whom Bosnia-Herzegovina was the only home republic, Bosnian Croats and Serbs were also constitutive peoples.

The existing situation was questioned by Serbia. On the grounds of the existence of the Serbs outside Serbia, the territorial integrity of other republics and their right to independence was denied by Serbia. Yet the problem of minorities in Serbia (Albanians, Hungarians, Muslims, Croats) was dismissed as an internal issue although Serbia, after Bosnia-Herzegovina was the least homogeneous of the Former Yugoslav republics. While claiming a large Serbian diaspora outside Serbia, the Serbs neglected the fact that 22% of Croats live beyond the internationally-recognised borders of Croatia and 18.5% of all Muslims outside Bosnia-Herzegovina. Also relevant is the fact that the Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina were already a constitutional people and not a minority. Therefore, negotiations should have focussed on the re-organization of Bosnia rather than its dissolution.

2.7 Territorial distribution

According to census figures, the ethnic distribution in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1991 was as follows : Muslims 1,905,829 (43.6%), Serbs 1,369,258 (31.4%), and Croats 755,829 (17.3%). Of the remaining 333,592 inhabitants, 239,845 were nationally undeclared 'Yugoslavs'. The most striking feature of these figures was a significant increase in the proportion of Muslims in the ten years since the previous census (in 1981 Muslims accounted for 39.5% of the population). The absolute number of the Serbs also increased but their relative share actually decreased slightly. The Croat community decreased both numerically and relatively.

At the municipality level the Muslims were the majority group in 44 municipalities: in 31 municipalities they accounted for more than 50% of the population and they were the most numerous single group in the remaining 13 municipalities. There were 34 Serb-dominated municipalities: 29 with more than 50% Serbs and five with Serbs as the single largest group but less than 50%. Croats were the largest group in 20 municipalities, 14 of which contained at least 50% Croats. The Greater Sarajevo area consisted of an additional ten municipalities in

which the Muslims were generally the majority group but two municipalities had Serb majorities (Pale and Ilijaš).

Between the 1981 and 1991 censuses, the number of municipalities in which there was a Muslim majority increased by three. In Mostar they overcame a previous Croat majority, while in Doboj and Prijedor they replaced former Serb majorities. In addition, in Derventa, the former Croatian majority was superseded in 1991 by a Serbian majority. Therefore, during the intercensus period Muslims 'gained' three municipalities, Serbs 'gained' one and 'lost' two while Croats 'lost' two. Despite these changes, the general ethnic distribution did not change significantly and could not be considered a good basis for partition (Figure 9) without taking other criteria into account.

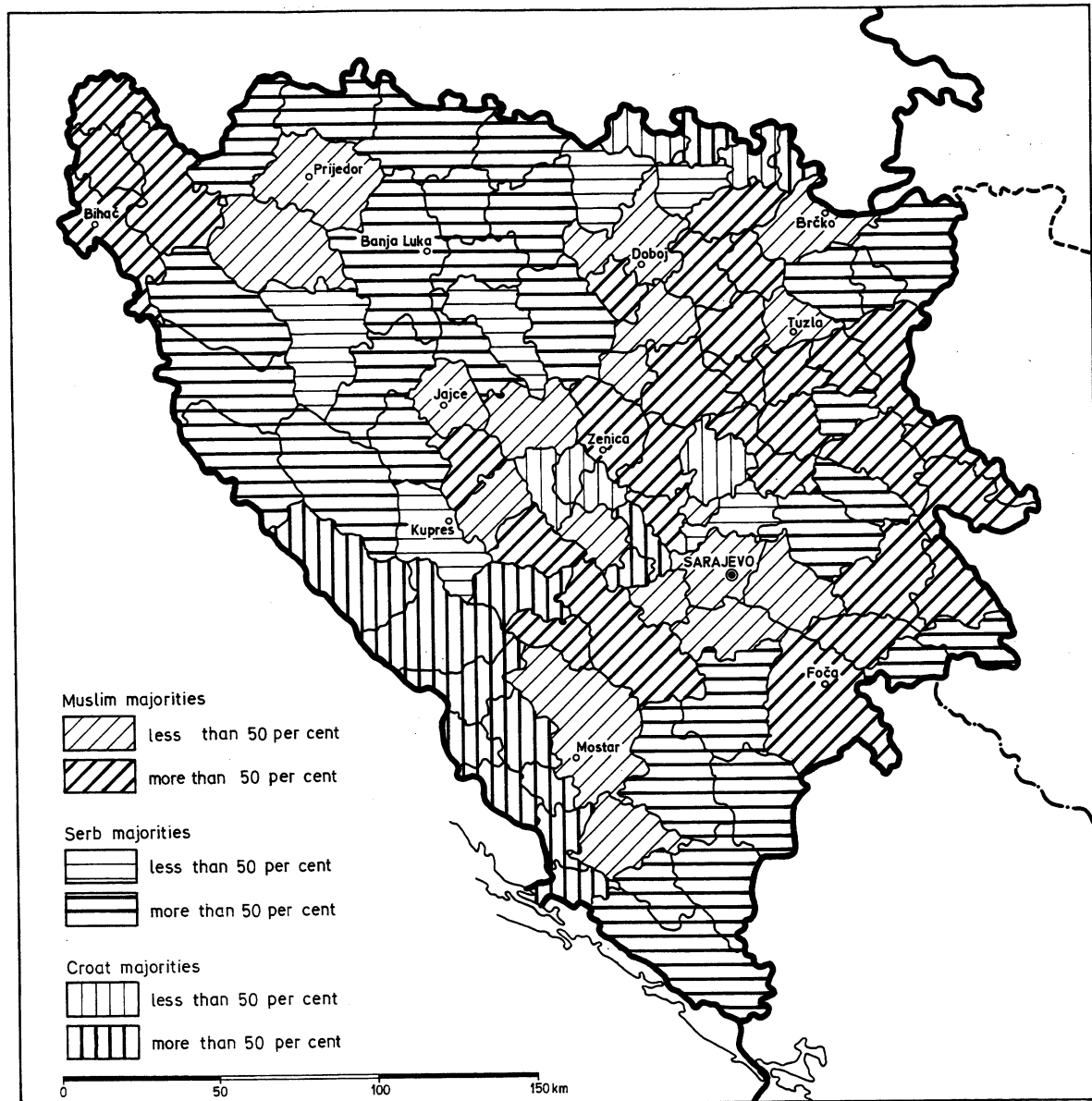
Of the Serb-dominated areas, two have direct contact with Serbia or Montenegro: the one in northeastern Bosnia known as the Semberija region and a second area in Eastern Herzegovina. The largest Serb-dominated area in terms of both territory and population, the one in the Bosnian krajina with Banja Luka as a centre, had no direct contact either with Serbia or with the other Serb-dominated areas in Bosnia. However, it did have contact with Serb-dominated areas within Croatia, a situation with important geopolitical consequences. A key issue from the Serb viewpoint was how to connect the three areas with each other and with Serbia. Therefore, the main aim of the Serb war effort was to ensure a link between Semberija and Bosnian krajina and another one along the Drina river between Semberija and Eastern Herzegovina, a strategy that was implemented in 1992. The vital territorial issue was the so-called corridor through the Croat and Muslim-dominated area in Posavina. The viability of other gains in the name of Greater Serbia depended enormously on the capture of that corridor.

It is also important to stress that among Serb-dominated municipalities in Bosnia, many also contained significant numbers of Muslims and Croats. These were the areas in which ethnic cleansing was first carried out. When the Serb military took control they first expelled non-Serbs – mainly Muslims – from the Bosnian krajina and the Drina river areas. Following this, they concentrated most of their military forces on the corridor and succeeded in occupying and enlarging it.

The municipalities with Serb majorities were home to 50.1% of all Bosnian Serbs. To increase this proportion the Serbs occupied many municipalities with non-Serb majorities. The fact that 11.5% of these Serbs lived within Greater Sarajevo helps explain why Serb forces also occupied a part of the capital and later insisted on the partition of the city between themselves and the Muslims.

Municipalities with Croat majorities could also be grouped into three recognisable areas, two directly bordering the Republic of Croatia and a third without direct contact. The first of these Croat-dominated areas was Posavina in Northern Bosnia which was strategically important because it allowed for the control of several bridges across the Sava river and a potential Serbian corridor. The largest Croat-dominated area was Western Herzegovina, mostly on the right bank of Neretva river, containing Bosnia's only exit to the sea at Neum-Klek. This area was the most ethnically homogeneous in the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The third group of Croat dominated municipalities was located in an enclave in Central Bosnia. Isolated from all three groups was the municipality of Vareš to the north of Sarajevo. In the early part of the 20th century Croat dominated areas in Posavina and Central Bosnia were both larger than they are today but, due to emigration and administrative restructuring,

Figure 9 Ethnic structure by municipality



Source: 1991 census

the Croats majority has shrunk. The biggest disadvantage for Croats with regard to their distribution was that only 41% of them lived within Croat-dominated municipalities. For this reason, partition maps based on the majority principle were generally unfavourable to the Croats because of the large numbers of Croats living outside the titular units. Moreover, some of the most important sites for Bosnian Croats, such as the monasteries in Fojnica, Kreševo, Kraljeva Sutjeska (near Kakanj) and Guča Gora as well as the historical towns of Jajce, Travnik, and Bugojno were either within Muslim-dominated areas or in the Croatian enclaves in Central Bosnia.

The Muslims were concentrated in Central, Northern and, to a lesser extent, Eastern Bosnia. Separate from this rather homogeneous Muslim area was a group of municipalities in Western Bosnia comprising the extremely homogeneous Muslim area of Cazin-Bihać and the municipalities of Prijedor and Sanski which also contained significant numbers of Serbs. Over 80% of all Bosnian Muslims lived in these generally densely-populated municipalities, representing the highest concentration of the three communities.

Taken together, the Muslim and Croat areas formed a large homogeneous strip across Bosnia-Herzegovina with the Bosna and Neretva river valleys acting as 'backbones'. If they had stuck together and defended and controlled this territory, the Serbs would have been split into isolated units. For the Serbs, it was vital to break this backbone wherever possible. The terrain is generally hostile everywhere except for in Posavina, so that area was essential for the viability and stability of the whole country.

2.8 Political options of the communities

For the Croats, three main options plus several suboptions could be identified in the period before the war. Traditionalists always saw Bosnia-Herzegovina as somehow connected with Croatia. Generally they pictured a union between Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina either in the form of a federation or a confederation, with a minority considering Bosnia as an integral part of Greater Croatia. A second option was Bosnia-Herzegovina as a state. This also included two sub-options: Bosnia as a state sub-divided into units with a high degree of self-government (probably the most popular choice among Croats); or Bosnia as a unitary state without national territorial units. The partition of Bosnia between Croatia and Serbia was the third option. Although originally unpopular among Croats, events have made this appear a realistic alternative.

Among the main options for the Serbs were Bosnia as part of a unitary Yugoslavia or Bosnia within Greater Serbia – although, apart from the name there was no essential difference between the two. The third option was the partition of Bosnia-Herzegovina but only if most of the territory would be in the Serbian sector. The Serbs were prepared to offer Western Herzegovina to the Croats and some were also ready to recognise the the Muslims' right to several municipalities in Central Bosnia, but an integral Bosnia as a sovereign state was not considered to be an option among the Serbs.

Among the Muslims, very different options were considered. Few of them supported the idea of Bosnia existing as one of the remnants of Yugoslavia, either as some kind of federal unit by itself or joined with Sanjak. The counter-option to this was Bosnia-Herzegovina in confederation with Croatia or as a part of (Greater) Croatia. The most popular option among

Muslims was Bosnia-Herzegovina as a sovereign state. Some preferred to see it as unitary civil state, while others wanted it to be Muslim-dominated.

If all the options of the three communities are summarised in a table, a significant distribution can be identified:

1. Bosnia-Herzegovina as a sovereign state was really only an option for most of the Muslims and some Croats; the Croats favoured a cantonized state and the Muslims a unitary one. This option was not acceptable to the Serbs.
2. For the Serbs the greatest 'concession' was the partition of Bosnia. Other options were more openly along the 'Greater-Serbia' line.
3. Partition was possible for the Croats and Serbs but the Muslims did not favour it at all.
4. The Muslim options were the least homogeneous; some of them were obviously pro-Croat and some of them pro-Yugoslav (but not pro-Serbia).

The most important fact is that none of the recorded options was supported by all three sides. This demonstrates quite clearly why no proposed solution has been accepted by representatives of all three sides.

Table 3: Options of the Bosnian Communities concerning the future organization of Bosnia-Herzegovina before the war.

		Croats	Muslims	Serbs
Bosnia-Herzegovina with Croatia	Part of Croatia	✓	✓	
	Confederation	✓	✓	
Bosnia-Herzegovina as a sovereign state	Cantonised	✓		
	Unitary	✓	✓	
	Muslim-dominated		✓	
Partition of Bosnia-Herzegovina		✓		✓
Bosnia-Herzegovina in Yugoslavia			✓	✓
Bosnia-Herzegovina in Greater Serbia				✓

3. Partition maps

3.1 First maps

The first partition maps to be widely-discussed in public appeared in Spring 1991, after the presidents of Croatia and Serbia met twice for semi-secret talks. These meetings were followed by meetings of Serbian and Croatian experts. The meetings were held at a time of great tension between the Croats and Serbs in Croatia, but there were also rumours that the two sides discussed the partition of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Although these rumours have never subsequently been fully proved, the bitter aftertaste remains. Croatia's President Tudjman has frequently been criticised in Croatia for taking part in talks with President Milošević, and the Muslims cannot help but be suspicious of a Croat-Serb deal for Bosnia's partition.

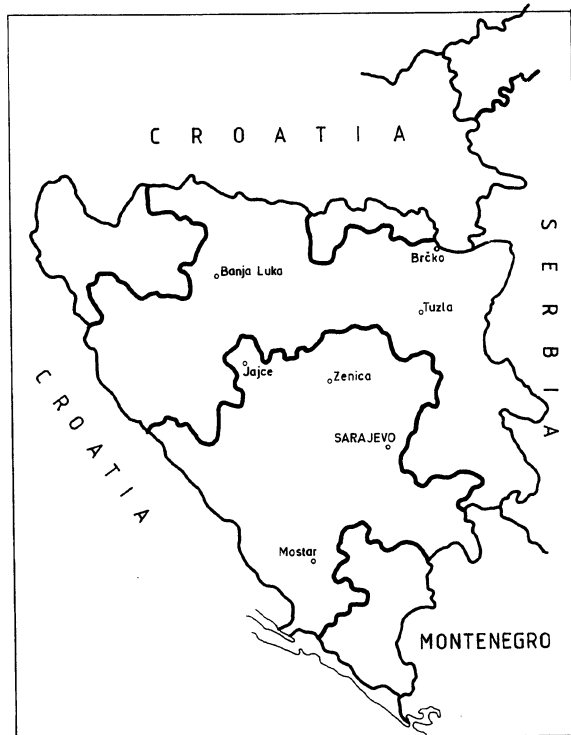
It is possible that the Croatian leadership did consider schemes for dividing Bosnia with the Serbs, but not as a primary aim. It is also possible that talks were held between experts but there was clearly very little agreement. Simply put, the political climate at the time was generally unfavourable for such talks because all eyes were focussed on the rebellion of the Serbs in Croatia and the JNA military intervention in Croatia.

Nevertheless, partition maps began to appear in public. The Croatian weekly *Globus* published them first in June 1991, and several times thereafter. Two versions were said to have been discussed. The first version (Figure 10.1) was based on the 1939 Croat-Serb agreement when the Banate of Croatia was established. In fact, the proposed delimitation was almost identical to that in 1939. Croatia would gain Posavina in the north of Bosnia and Western Herzegovina together with parts of Central Bosnia in the south. The new element was that the Bihać-Cazin area was also proposed to become part of Croatia. The rest of Bosnia-Herzegovina was proposed as Serbian territory. Altogether the proposed Croatian gains covered 32.1% of Bosnian territory and included 31.8% of its population. The ethnic structure of the population that would join Croatia (according to the 1981 census) was: Croats 38.1%, Muslims 37.9% and Serbs 16.5%.

Another alleged version of partition was what could be described as a Croatian maximalist claim (Figure 10.2). Croatian gains would include the whole of Central Bosnia together with the Muslim-dominated municipalities including Sarajevo. Parts of Eastern Bosnia (Foča and Goražde) were also included. The Bihać-Cazin area was enlarged to include the municipalities of Bosanski Novi, Prijedor and Sanski Most. Only the gains at Posavina were smaller because this version proposed Brčko, Gradačac and Modriča as Serbian gains. The Croatian share of territory according to this proposal was 47.5%. The territory contained 53.8% of the Bosnian population (1981 census), with the following ethnic distribution: Muslims 41.9%, Croats 25.9%, Serbs 21.6%. Moreover, this version also proposed changes to the Croatia-Serbia boundary to the advantage of Croatia: northern Bačka, part of the autonomous province of Vojvodina, would be ceded to Croatia because of the non-Serb (Croat and Hungarian) majorities living there.

In many ways, both partition proposals, especially the second one, were so favourable to the Croats that it is hardly credible that they formed the basis of serious talks with the Serbs. Moreover, the Serb position was that the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina (except, perhaps, for Western Herzegovina) should be included in a Greater Serbia. Therefore, the Spring 1991 Croat-Serb partition plans should be taken with a pinch of salt.

Figure 10 Early partition maps



Source: *Globus* 10/6/1991

Soon thereafter, in June 1991, the first Muslim-drawn map appeared. It was published in *Bosanski pogledi*, a short-lived bi-weekly magazine financed by Adil Zulfikarpašić, a former Muslim emigrant and, since 1990, the leader of a small Muslim party known as the Muslim-Bosnian Organization (MBO). It was the first published proposal of a re-organization of the country along largely ethnic-majority lines, an arrangement more commonly known as 'cantonisation'.

Zulfikarpašić's magazine proposed three ethnic cantons, each consisting of several separated areas (Figure 11). The proposed cantons were based mainly on the preliminary 1991 census results, which were published at the same time. The Serb cantons included three areas, the largest in the Bosanska krajina and two smaller parts in Eastern Herzegovina (including the Muslim majority municipality of Foča) and in Semberija. The Croat canton consisted of two parts: Posavina (6 municipalities) and those parts of Western Herzegovina with a clearly-recognised Croat ethnic core, along with Mostar. Croat-dominated municipalities in Central Bosnia, as well as the Serb dominated municipalities in Eastern Bosnia were proposed to form part of the Muslim canton, the idea being to create as large a Muslim canton as possible in Bosnia proper without Croat or Serb enclaves in it. The second part of the Muslim canton was proposed for Western Bosnia with all Muslim-majority municipalities.

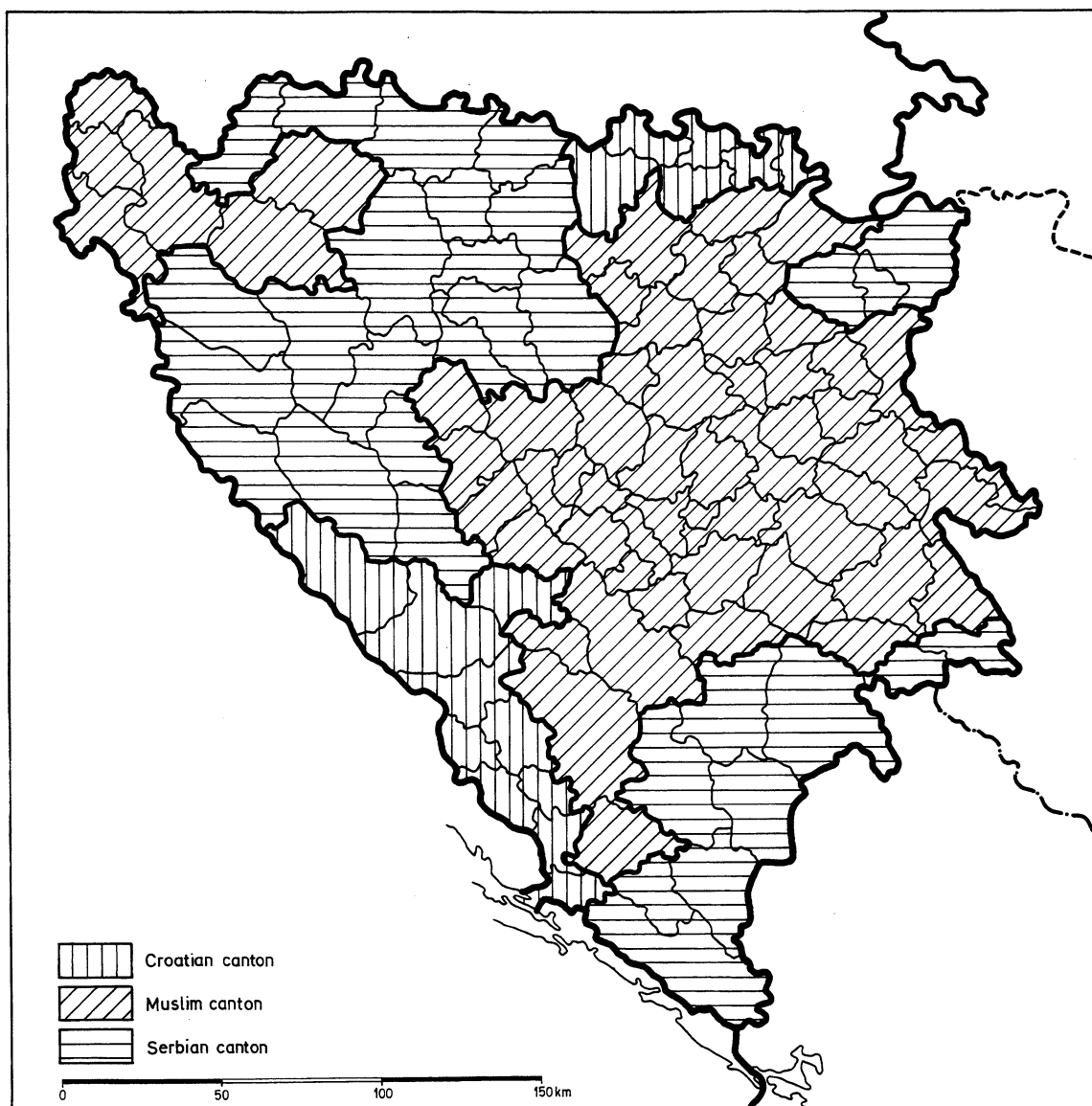
3.2 Serbian Autonomous Regions

The first real steps towards the partition of Bosnia are well known. Following the scenario already tried and tested in Croatia, the Serbs started implementing their plans in Spring 1991. At first they constituted so-called Serbian National Councils in all municipalities with either Serb majorities or large non-majority communities. Wherever they were dissatisfied with the legal procedure within local government they turned to the local national council and boycotted established legal bodies. As a second stage they proclaimed 'Unions of Municipalities' as territorial cores for their future statelet. Step-by-step, the former unions were enlarged with additional municipalities, leading towards the third stage, namely Serbian Autonomous Regions (SAR's). When the war in Bosnia started the process was concluded through ethnic cleansing based on superior military power. The SAR's, formerly discontinuous, were connected by force into a single unit without consideration for prewar ethnic distributions, geographical features, the interests of other two communities, or any other reasonable principle.

The first Unions of Municipalities were proclaimed in Spring 1991 under the pretext of a "*new regional organization*". The first was the Union of Municipalities of the Bosnian krajina, proclaimed on 10 April 1991 (*Politika* 11/4/1991). According to its statute this union included municipalities of Banja Luka, Bosanska Gradiška, Čelinac, Kotor Varoš, Laktaši, Prnjavor, Skender Vakuf, Srbac, Ključ, Bosanska Dubica, Bosanski Novi, Bosanski Petrovac, Titov Drvar, Mrkonjić Grad, Sanski Most, Bosansko Grahovo, Glamoč, Prijedor, Kupres and Šipovo, with the seat in Banja Luka. The main bodies in the Unions were councils for the fields of politics, economics, ecology and, significantly, defence.

Since some municipalities had only slight Serb majorities and others did not have Serb majorities at all, their legal local governments voted against joining the Union. In Spring 1991 such opposition was registered in Prijedor, Skender Vakuf and Kupres.

Figure 11 The first Muslim proposal



Source: *Bosanski pogledi* 25/6/1991

After the establishment of the Bosnian krajina Union, other Unions were proclaimed in Eastern Herzegovina on 27 May, in the Ozren region (between Doboj and Tuzla) also in May and in Romanija region (near Sarajevo, including Pale) in June.

By Autumn 1991 the Unions, having been enlarged and organizationally strengthened, were ready for the third stage. The Unions were replaced by 'Autonomous Regions' over which central government in Sarajevo had no real influence or control. On the basis of the former unions five SAR's were proclaimed (Figure 12).

The SAR of Eastern Herzegovina was proclaimed on 12 September. It contained the Serb-majority municipalities of Trebinje, Ljubinje, Bileća, Gacko, Nevesinje and Kalinovik. The Muslim majority municipality of Foča separated those municipalities from two other Serb majority municipalities, Čajniče and Rudo which were also considered to be an integral part of the SAR. Of 98,722 inhabitants, 69.9% were Serbs, while Muslims accounted for 24.1%.

The Bosnian krajina SAR – the largest – came into being on 16 September. It covered 12,945 sq km and contained 757,148 inhabitants, of which 61.0% were Serbs. A day later Romanija SAR was proclaimed, consisting of three municipalities and covering an area of 1,620 sq km. Of 37,489 inhabitants, Serbs accounted for 67.1%. A few days after this the fourth SAR of Semberija was proclaimed at Bijeljina. It consisted of three municipalities and covered 1,362 sq km. The Serbs totalled 58.1% of the overall population of 154,837.

Generally, the municipalities which entered SAR's were Serb dominated. However, there were a few exceptions (Prijeđor, Kotor Varoš) and many of those that were Serb-dominated had significant Muslim minorities. But the plans for a Greater Serbia did not stop there. On 5 November 1991 the fifth SAR was proclaimed. It was based on the former Municipality Union of Ozren in Northern Bosnia but the proclaimed territory encompassed a much larger area. A number of Croat- or Muslim-majority municipalities were included. The SAR of Northern Bosnia was proposed as a territory of 5,913 sq km with 781,823 inhabitants. The proportion of Serbs was not higher than 27.3% of the population. The most numerous group was the Muslims with 45.1%, with Croats comprising 20.6%. In municipalities like Tešanj and Živinice, the Serb share was as low as 6.4%.

A second difference between SAR Northern Bosnia and the previous four SAR's was the effective control of local government. In the first four, the Serbs had already consolidated control and did not share power with the other two communities. In Northern Bosnia legal bodies elected in 1990 were still functioning.

Taken together, the five SAR's covered 27,014 sq km or 52.8% of Bosnia-Herzegovina. According to the 1991 census this territory contained 1,830,039 inhabitants. Of this figure, 46.9% were Serbs, a total which amounted to 65.4% of Serbs living in Bosnia.

On 9 January 1992 the Serbs completed the creation of their statelet in Bosnia. In Sarajevo the 'Assembly of the Serbs' passed a motion by which the Republic of the Bosnia-Herzegovinan Serb People was proclaimed. Much of the territory claimed by this 'republic' was brought under Serb control soon after the war broke out.

Figure 12 Serbian Autonomous Regions in autumn 1991



Sources: *Vjesnik, Politika*

3.3 Croatian communities

Between 2 and 6 October 1991, during the attacks on Dubrovnik and the surrounding coastal area in Croatia, the JNA entered Croat-populated villages around Ravno, administratively part of the Trebinje municipality. The JNA troops expelled the population, and burned down their houses. This event represented a clear indication of Serb intentions.

Soon after the attack on Ravno, two Croat communities in Bosnia were proclaimed. It is clear that they represented an answer to the SAR's, spurred on by the events at Ravno. It was never stated clearly whether the Croats considered these to be communities in a strict territorial sense. However, they did stress that Croatian communities (HC) did not deny the sovereignty of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a republic or state and that the communities were a temporary form of self-organization.

The first of the two communities (Figure 13) was HC Bosanska Posavina, proclaimed on 12 November 1991. The seat of HC, comprising 361,000 inhabitants according to the 1991 census, was located at Bosanski Brod. The shares of ethnic communities within the HC Bosanska Posavina was: Croats 35.7%, Muslims 29.0% and Serbs 27.8%.

On 18 November another HC was proclaimed. It included all Croat-majority municipalities in Herzegovina and Central Bosnia as well as municipalities in which the Croats were not a majority but were still represented in significant numbers. This larger HC was called Herceg-Bosnia, a popular and traditional variant of the name Bosnia-Herzegovina, often used not only by Croats but also by Muslims. HC Herceg-Bosnia had a total population of 868,000 inhabitants, of which the Croats accounted for 48.0%, Muslims 34.3% and the Serbs 12.1%. The two HC's together embraced 72% of all Croats living in Bosnia-Herzegovina and 21% of all Muslims.

It is worth noting that, following the proclamation of HC's, local Muslims co-operated with the Croats in local government. To a certain extent, therefore, the HC's represented a coalition against Greater-Serbian threats. In July 1992, the HC's were united into a single unit. This action came as a consequence of a three-month Serbian military offensive and was accompanied by a statement that the area should once again be an integral part of Bosnia.

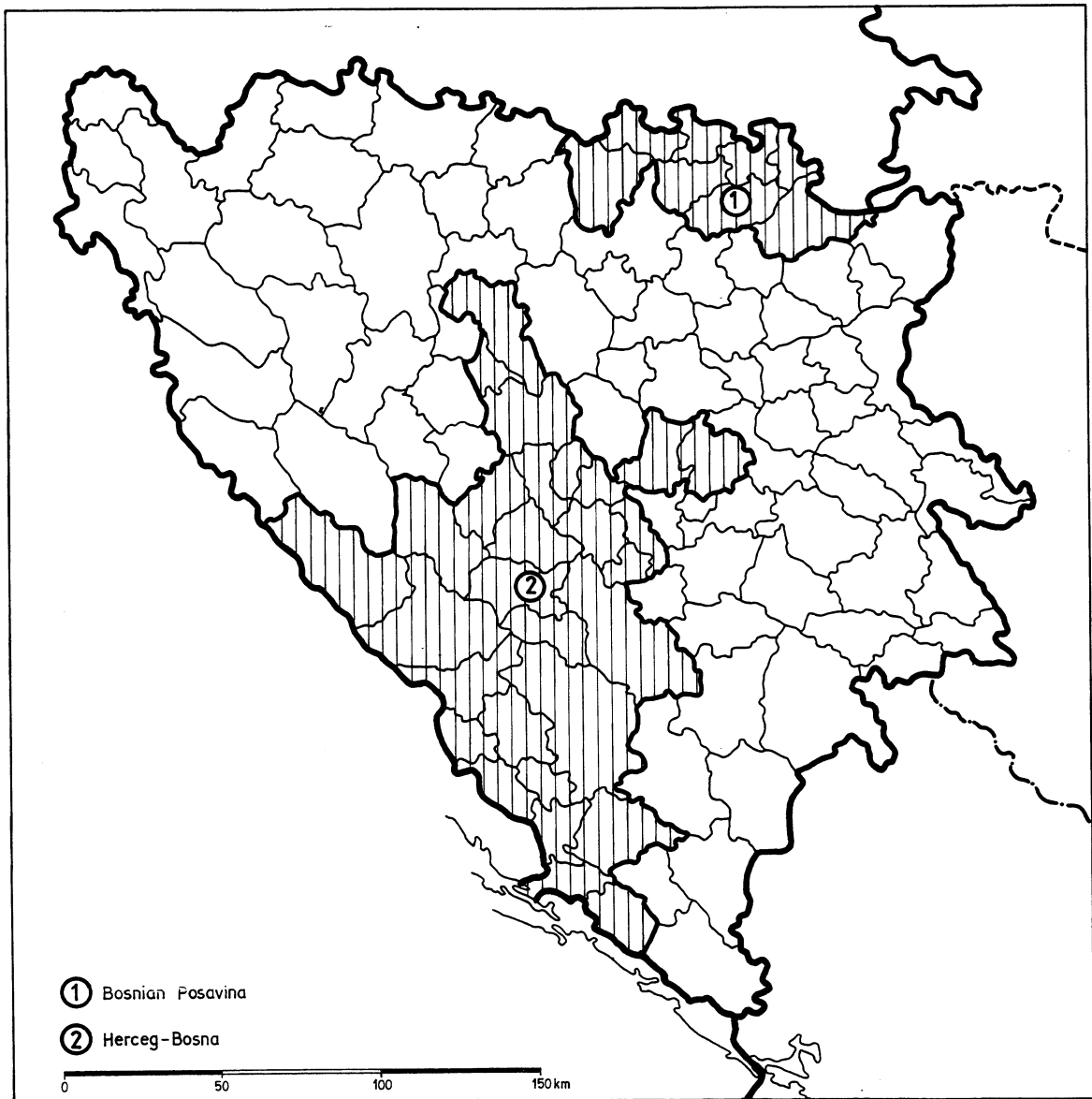
If a map of SAR's is superimposed on a map of the HC's, two key points are readily apparent:

1. there was not much territory 'left' for the Muslims; moreover, what little remained free consisted of fragmented enclaves; and
2. there was overlap in several areas: Posavina was claimed by both sides as well as Kupres, Kotor Varoš and part of Skender Vakuf municipality; the Croat inclusion of the Ravno area in HC also produced an overlap with part of Trebinje municipality.

3.4 The first EC proposal

After the proclamation of the SAR's and HC's and before the first EC proposal, the possibility of a regionalisation of Bosnia-Herzegovina was explored by a working group of spatial planners in Sarajevo near the end of 1991. The map they produced is shown in Figure 14.

Figure 13 Croatian communities in Bosnia



Source: *Vjesnik*

Figure 14 Proposal based on functional regions



Source: *Nedjeljna Dalmacija* 28/10/1992

The idea was to re-organise Bosnia-Herzegovina according to functional regions centred on large towns. The only exception was region No. 7, which could best be described as a functional 'grey zone'. The region of the capital Sarajevo was limited to the greater city area. Two areas, one in region No. 2 and another in region No. 3 fell under the influence of at least two centres reflecting the authors' belief that different solutions might be possible in those areas. The proposed regionalization elicited little public attention.

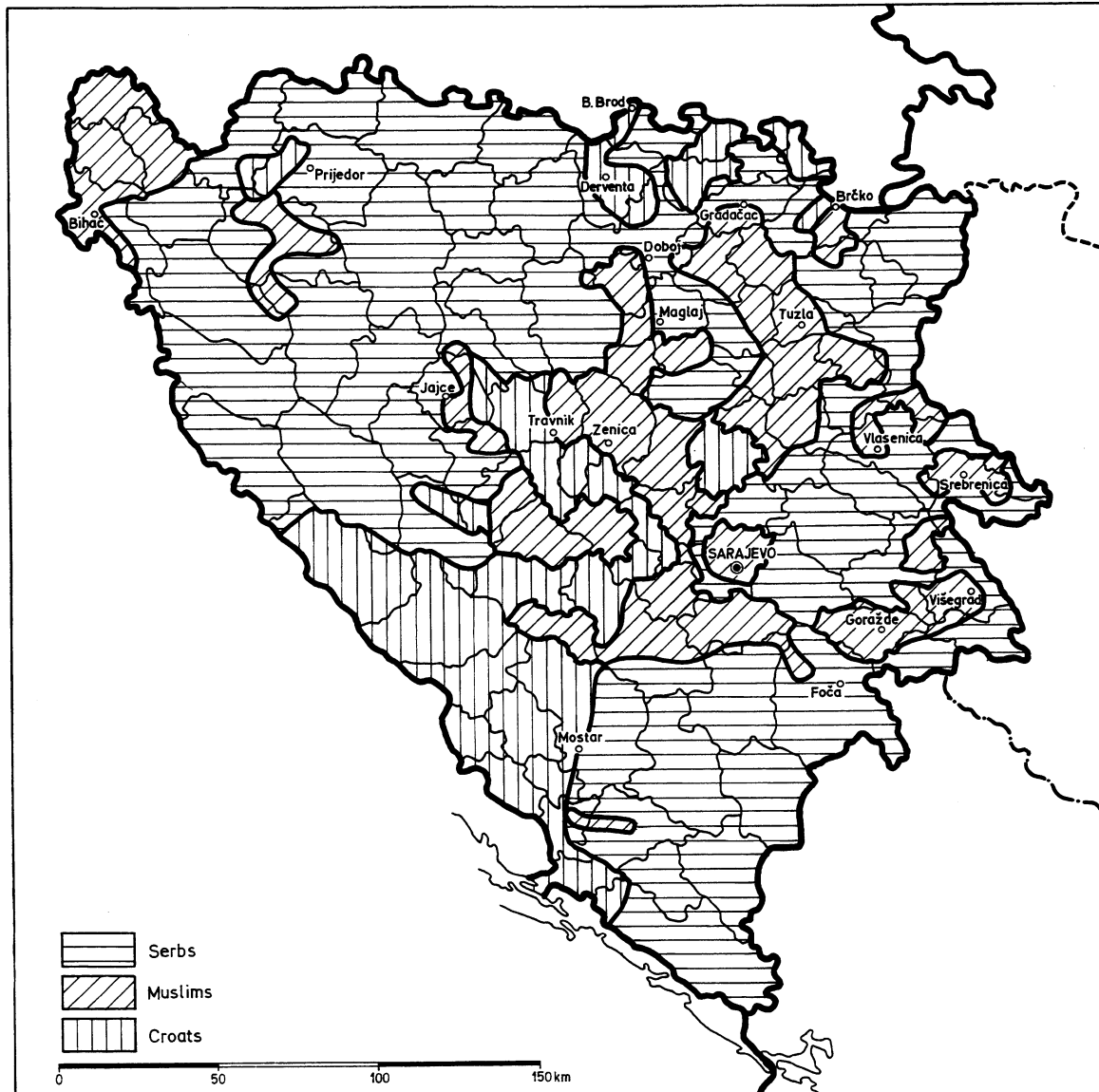
A new series of partition maps was produced in February and March 1992. Since the crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina blew up, international mediators had been trying to organise negotiations between three communities. The negotiations were finally organised under the auspices of an EC peace conference. As Portugal held the EC presidency at the time, negotiations were coordinated and chaired by the Portuguese foreign affairs minister Jose Cutiliero. Several sessions were held: in Sarajevo (13 February), Lisbon (21 February), Sarajevo (27 February), Brussels (7 and 8 March), Sarajevo (16 March), Brussels (30 and 31 March) and finally Lisbon (25 May). However, this round of negotiations failed to bring any progress and, in the meantime, full-scale war broke out in Bosnia.

The key document of Cutiliero's proposal was published on 9 March. The 'Statement upon principles for a new constitutional organization of Bosnia-Herzegovina' described Bosnia as a state within its previously defined borders but consisting of constituent units defined along ethnic lines plus various economic, geographic and other criteria. A special working group for delimitation was proposed. Cutiliero suggested the map showing the 1991 census results as a starting point (Figure 9). According to the 'Cutiliero map', the constituent units or cantons of a particular ethnic community should comprise all the municipalities with a majority of that community without taking territorial aspects into account. According to this proposal the Muslim unit would cover 43.7% of territory, on which 82.4% of the total Muslim population of Bosnia-Herzegovina lived. The Serb unit would gain 43.8% of territory containing 50.1% of the total Serb population. The remaining 12.5% was proposed for the Croat unit, an area which contained 41.0% of total Croat population.

Neither the Statement nor the map was fully accepted by any of the three parties. The Serbian side rejected the Cutiliero plan, announcing that they wanted a looser confederation of 'independent' states in Bosnia. They insisted on separate governments, currency, armies and police. Moreover, Cutiliero's map fell far short of Serbian territorial claims. For the Croats the proposal was acceptable in terms of constitutional provisions but unacceptable in terms of the map it produced. The Muslims, meanwhile, were not in favour of any kind of cantonisation, fearing it to be simply a euphemism for partition.

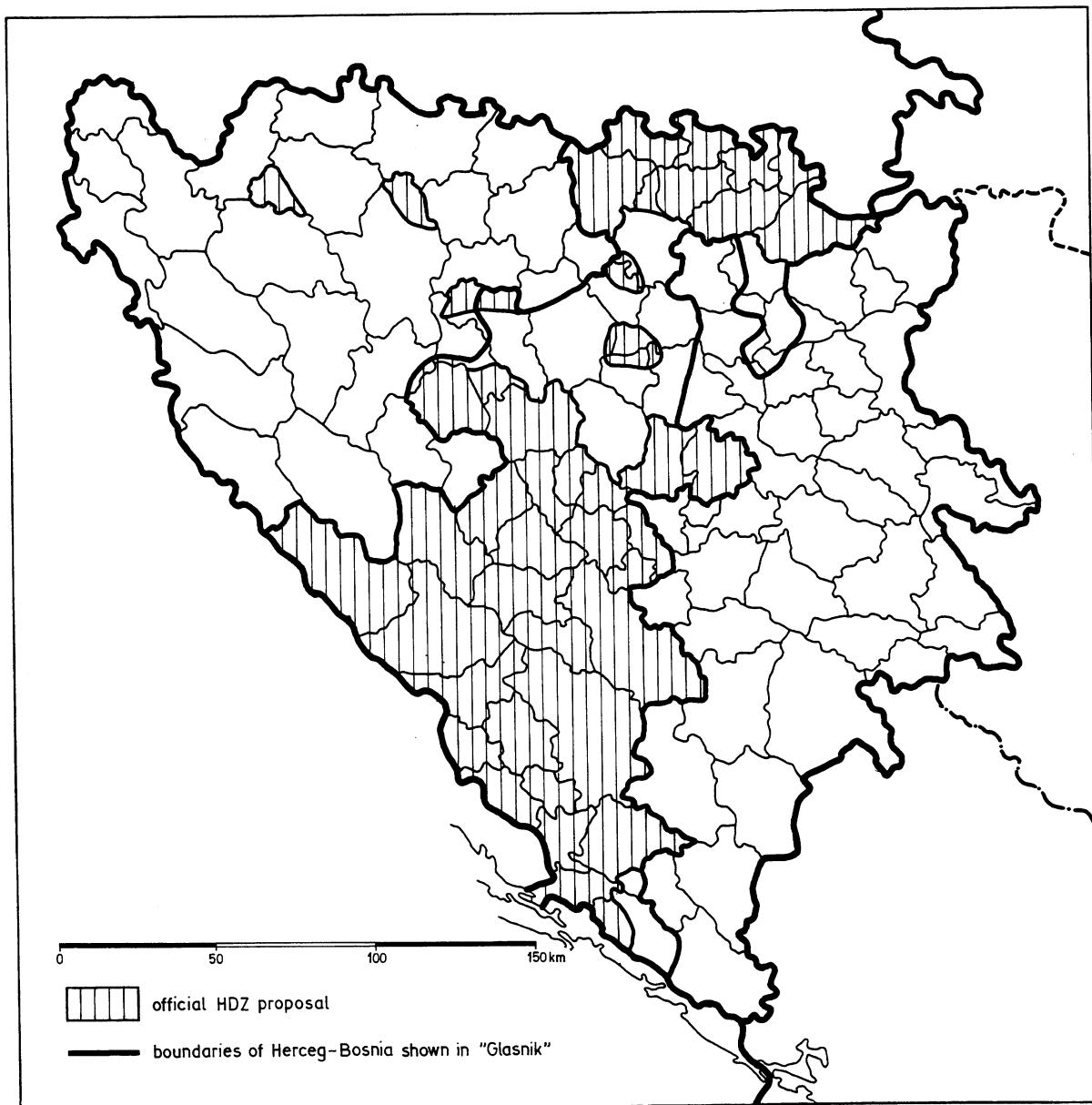
In the course of the negotiations several alternative maps surfaced. The Serb leader Karadžić came to the negotiations with a map showing precisely-demarcated ethnic units (Figure 15). In effect, this map started with the already proclaimed SAR's and connected them by means of territorial corridors into a whole, leaving the Muslim and Croat units split into a number of isolated islands or enclaves. The Serb unit would control most of Bosnia's outer boundaries, it would be widely connected with Serbia proper, and also with the territories in the Republic of Croatia occupied by the Serbs. The Serbs also proposed the partition of Sarajevo with the Muslims, and the partition of Mostar with the Croats. Finally, they proposed a number of transportation corridors and routes within the Serb unit while other routes, important for the Croats and Muslims, would be blocked by the Serb territory. The map was, of course, completely unacceptable to the other two communities. Even Cutiliero told Karadžić that the map was unacceptable.

Figure 15 The Serb proposal of March 1992



Sources: *Vjesnik* 14/3/1992, *Novosti* 18/3/1992

Figure 16 The HDZ proposal of March 1992 and the maximal Herceg-Bosnia claim



Sources: *Večernji list* 12/3/1992, *Glasnik* 16/3/1992

Figure 17 The Bosnian government cantonisation proposal of August 1992

Source: *Nedjeljna Dalmacija* 28/10/1992

With regard to a future constitutional system the Bosnian Croat ideal lay between Serbian secessionism and Muslim centralism, and the Statement came quite close to their goal. The map proposed by Cutiliero, however, was a long way from what they considered to be Croatian territory in Bosnia. Their representatives at the negotiations were strongly criticised after the map was published. This is perhaps not surprising considering that, according to the proposal, the Croatian share of the territory amounted to only 12%, which meant that 59% of Croats would remain outside the Croatian titular unit within Bosnia. The protests provoked the representatives of the Croats to publish their map illustrating Croatian claims at the negotiations. It was clear that this counter-proposal was not worked out in the same kind of detail that the Serbian claim was. The map (Figure 16) did not show a comprehensive delimitation but only the areas they intended to include in the Croatian unit. According to the proposal, the Croat canton would gain around 35% of Bosnian territory. Both HC's were included and there were also several additional smaller enclaves comprising parts of Sanski Most/Prijedor, Banja Luka, Kotor Varoš, Žepče/Zavidovići and Vareš municipalities. One of the negotiators at the time, Vlado Šantić, subsequently stated that:

"The Croats will not be a minority in some areas. I especially stress that a Croatian unit will be formed in the municipality of Žepče. Croatian municipalities will be also established within Banja Luka and Zenica - there are more than 20,000 or 30,000 Croats living there" (Večernji list 26/3/92)

A number of alternative delimitation proposals for the cantonisation of Bosnia appeared during this round of negotiations. One of them was drawn on the map published by the weekly *Glasnik* in Zagreb. The borders of the "united Croatian territory within Bosnia" (Figure 16) probably represent the maximal Croat claim. Although it was not originally drawn on the map, one can suppose that the territory to west of Croatian unit would be the Serbian unit, and the territory to the east the Muslim unit. The proposal can be criticized for its territorial distribution, but it is still significant from a geopolitical point of view. It clearly illustrated the greatest fear of the Croats, namely the unification of Serb territory into one unit directly adjacent to Serbia proper. This led the proposal's author to suggest two buffers between Serbia and the Serbian unit in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Moreover, the Croatian unit together with the Republic of Croatia would totally encircle the Serbian unit. This proposal was basically a response to what the Serbian representatives had proposed in their map. The main difference between the two was that the first (Serbian) was official and backed by military power while the counter-proposal was strictly private in origin.

3.5 Non-ethnic cantons

Following Cutiliero's mechanical division based on the crudest calculation of ethnic majorities, and the counterproposals of the Croats and Serbs which were insensitive towards other communities, the official peace process reached an impasse. Meanwhile, in Bosnia the war started at the beginning of April and soon spread throughout the country. During 1992 there were two warring sides. The Bosnian Serbs, well-armed and supported by Serbia, started to realise their prewar objectives on the ground. On the other side there was Croat-Muslim alliance, firm in some places but extremely fragile in others.

Two maps proposed in August 1992 remain as a proof of that alliance. The first one was proposed by the Bosnian government and took the form of a cantonisation into four cantons (Figure 17). The proposed cantons were actually the functional regions of the four biggest

towns in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Banja Luka as a gravitational centre for Western Bosnia, Tuzla as a centre for Northern (Northeastern) Bosnia, Sarajevo as a centre for Central and Eastern Bosnia and Mostar as a centre for Herzegovina. Although ethnic distribution did not matter in this proposal, it is possible to see the Banja Luka region as a mainly Serb-dominated canton, the Tuzla and Sarajevo regions as predominantly Muslim cantons, and the Mostar region as a Croat-dominated canton.

A similar proposal was announced soon after at Međugorje, a famous Catholic pilgrimage site in Western Herzegovina, by a joint HDZ-SDA working group. The Međugorje map also proposed four constitutive units or regions but was more detailed as subdivisions into counties or districts were also proposed (Figure 18).

There were some differences between the Međugorje map and the government proposal. The border between the Banja Luka and Tuzla regions was the same, and the border between the Tuzla and Sarajevo regions was almost the same in both proposals. Between the Sarajevo and Mostar regions the border was the same in the eastern part but it diverged in the western part. This was also true for the border between the Banja Luka and Mostar regions. The differences came in the allocation of Central Bosnia. The Međugorje map included all of the Lašva and Vrbas areas in the Mostar region, while the governmental proposal included the Lašva region into Sarajevo unit and the Vrbas region in the Banja Luka unit.

If ethnic considerations are taken into account, the HDZ-SDA map offered the same distribution: a Serb majority in the Banja Luka region, Muslim majorities in the Tuzla and Sarajevo regions and a Croat majority in the Mostar region. Of more interest was the distribution of majorities at the subregional level: within the Serb-dominated region there was a Muslim majority in Bihać county; within the Muslim-dominated Tuzla region there was a Serb majority in Bijeljina county; finally, within the Croat-dominated Mostar region there was a Muslim majority in Travnik county and a Serb majority in Trebinje county. The cartographers clearly did not worry unduly about achieving ethnic homogeneity in each canton. Mariofil Ljubić, member of the HDZ-SDA group and vice-president of the legal Bosnia-Herzegovina Parliament stated that:

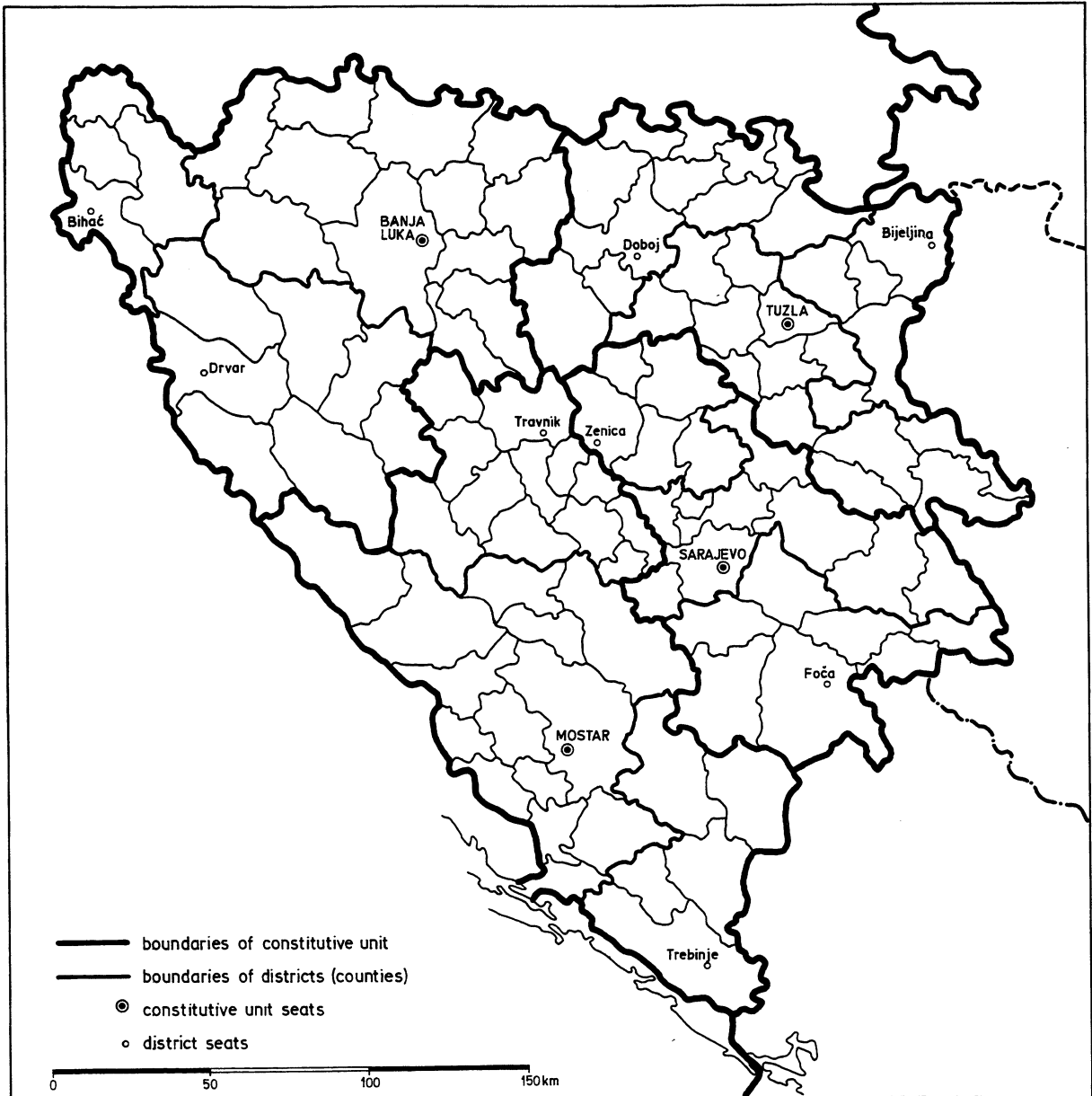
"During the territorialization of the constitutive units we had taken into account economic, ethnic, historical, transportational and other principles. We have also proposed subregions within constitutive units which might have an ethnic basis. This pattern follows the principle by which state authorities should be based on parity representation of the three communities" (Vjesnik 9/9/92)

Asked why the representatives of the Serbs had not taken part, he answered:

"The role of SDS is clear and there is no need to comment on it. We have organised the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina within its internationally justified boundaries as our homeland. The SDS has not done the same".

The Međugorje map was a joint proposal, prepared by the representatives of two Bosnian communities; this was its main difference to many other maps. Unfortunately, it was not supported by the most powerful wings of the two parties concerned. Neither the Muslim-dominated Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina nor the then-official Bosnian Croat leader, Mate Boban, supported it. The Serbs did not even comment on it. While the Croats and Muslims were

Figure 18 The joint HDZ-SDA cantonisation proposal of August 1992



Source: *Nedjeljna Dalmacija* 28/10/1992

trying to hold together the remnants of their alliance (and therefore of Bosnia-Herzegovina itself), the Serbs were advancing on the ground.

3.6 Ethnic cleansing

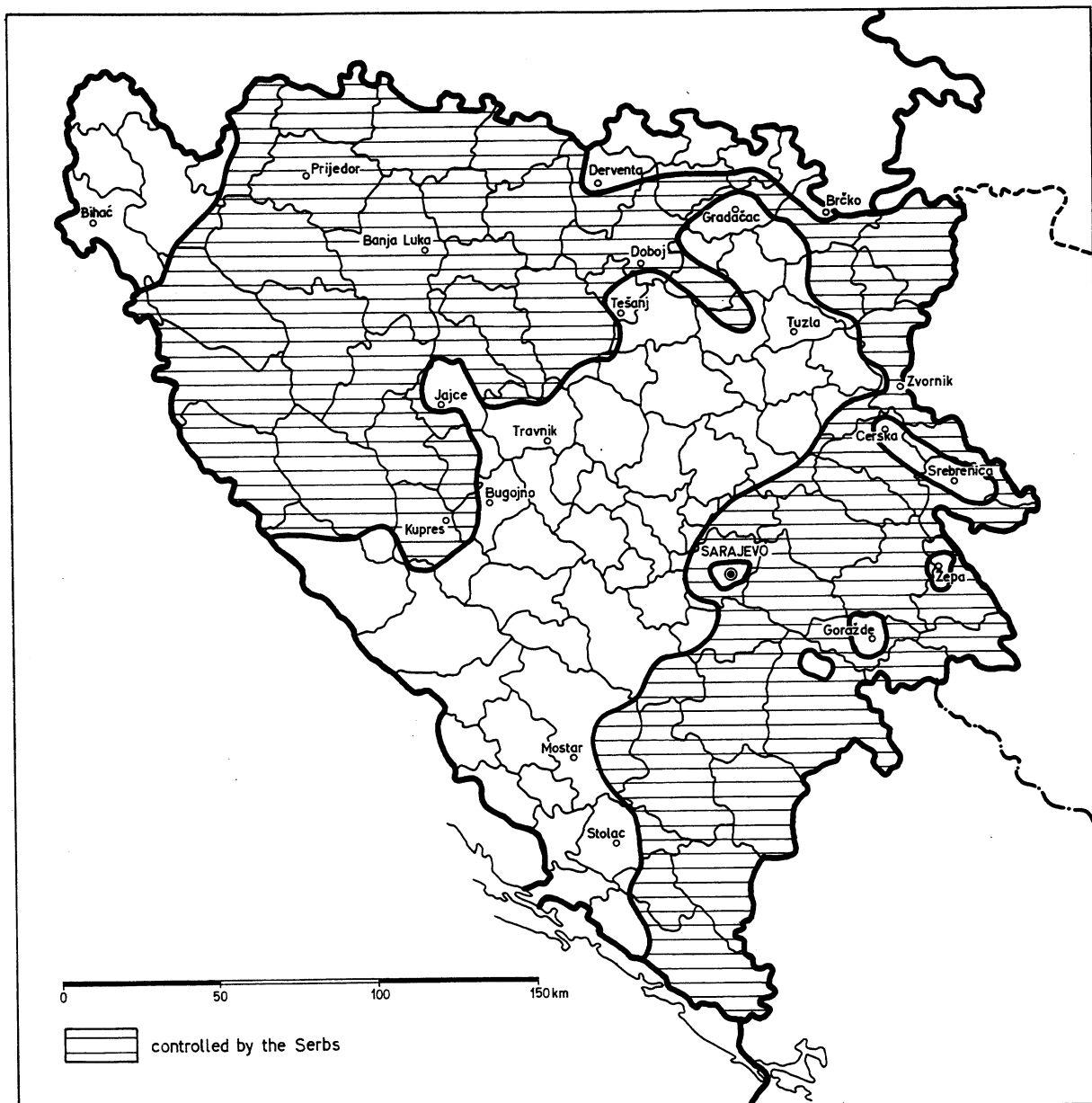
While these two communities were trying to produce a map acceptable to all sides, the Serbs were realising their version of the map on the ground. Their thesis was that over 60% of Bosnian territory belonged to them. This claim has never been justified but that has not prevented them from operating according to its terms and concentrating on its realisation. The strongest Serbian argument was military power. Freed from duty in Croatia and Slovenia, federal troops were soon being redeployed in Bosnia as part of the Serb forces there under general Ratko Mladić. When the war broke out the Serbs already controlled a great part of the territories they claimed.

In May 1992, the UN Security Council ordered the JNA to withdraw from Bosnia. The leadership of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (proclaimed on 27 April 1992 by Serbia and Montenegro) formally stated on 5 May that all units under their control had withdrawn and, ironically, called the Bosnian communities to reach agreement over the control of "*units consisting of Bosnia-Herzegovinan citizens*". However, these units consisted entirely of Serbs, and therefore the Serbs inherited almost the entire JNA legacy in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The JNA was simply transformed into an army of the Bosnian Serbs. With such a strong military force, the Serbs easily won control over most of Bosnia at the very beginning of the war.

The Muslims were not ready for the war and were largely incapable of defending themselves but the Croatian Defence Council (HVO) fought back and during the spring and summer of 1992 HVO troops were quite successful in defending Herzegovina, parts of Central Bosnia and Posavina. At this time, local Muslims joined HVO troops in many places. Probably the biggest success of the HVO was the defence of Mostar, Herzegovina's capital and most important town. Initially, Mostar was a divided town, with the HVO controlling the right bank of the Neretva river and the Serbs controlling the left bank. After heavy fighting, the HVO liberated the whole town and pushed the Serbs towards Eastern Herzegovina. Until Autumn 1992 there were also HVO successes in Posavina, where they almost cut the corridor linking Serbia with the Bosnian krajina region. This was a vital link for the Serbs, not only in terms of logistics, but also because it was the most sensitive and fragile part of the whole conception of a Greater Serbia. The situation on the ground as it was at the beginning of summer 1992 is shown in Figure 19.

To ensure control over claimed territories, the Serbs initiated the process of ethnic cleansing. This brutal policy had already been implemented in the Serbian occupied territories in Croatia. In Bosnia it was applied on an even greater scale. The majority of victims were Muslims. Almost unarmed, they offered little resistance as the Serbs expelled them from territory in Western, Northern and Eastern Bosnia. Many of them were brutally killed; others were sent to concentration camps or simply expelled. Clearly, the aim of the Serbs was to change the prewar ethnic distribution because they claimed many territories with Muslim or (in Posavina) Croat majorities. Crimes were committed in many places but, although UNPROFOR was deployed in Bosnia, the UN and EC did not react firmly enough and the Serbs quickly realised that the threats were empty. Even the economic sanctions against Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) which were agreed by the Security Council on 30 May 1992 failed to change the

Figure 19 Military front lines in June 1992



Source: *Globus* 3/7/1992

situation on the ground. It took a long time before the sanctions started to work. Meanwhile the Serbs carried on with the ethnic cleansing.

Although there was a lot of crime, destruction and suffering throughout Bosnia, for the media Sarajevo became a prevailing symbol of the tragedy. The capital was encircled by the Serbs from the very beginning of the war. Serbian artillery located in the mountains surrounding the city shelled it almost daily for months, in spite of the presence of UNPROFOR. The siege of Sarajevo became a major theme among the world's media but no action was taken to break it. When, in August 1992, the Security Council called on Belgrade to lift the siege, Serbian President Milošević answered that he had no control over the Bosnian Serbs.

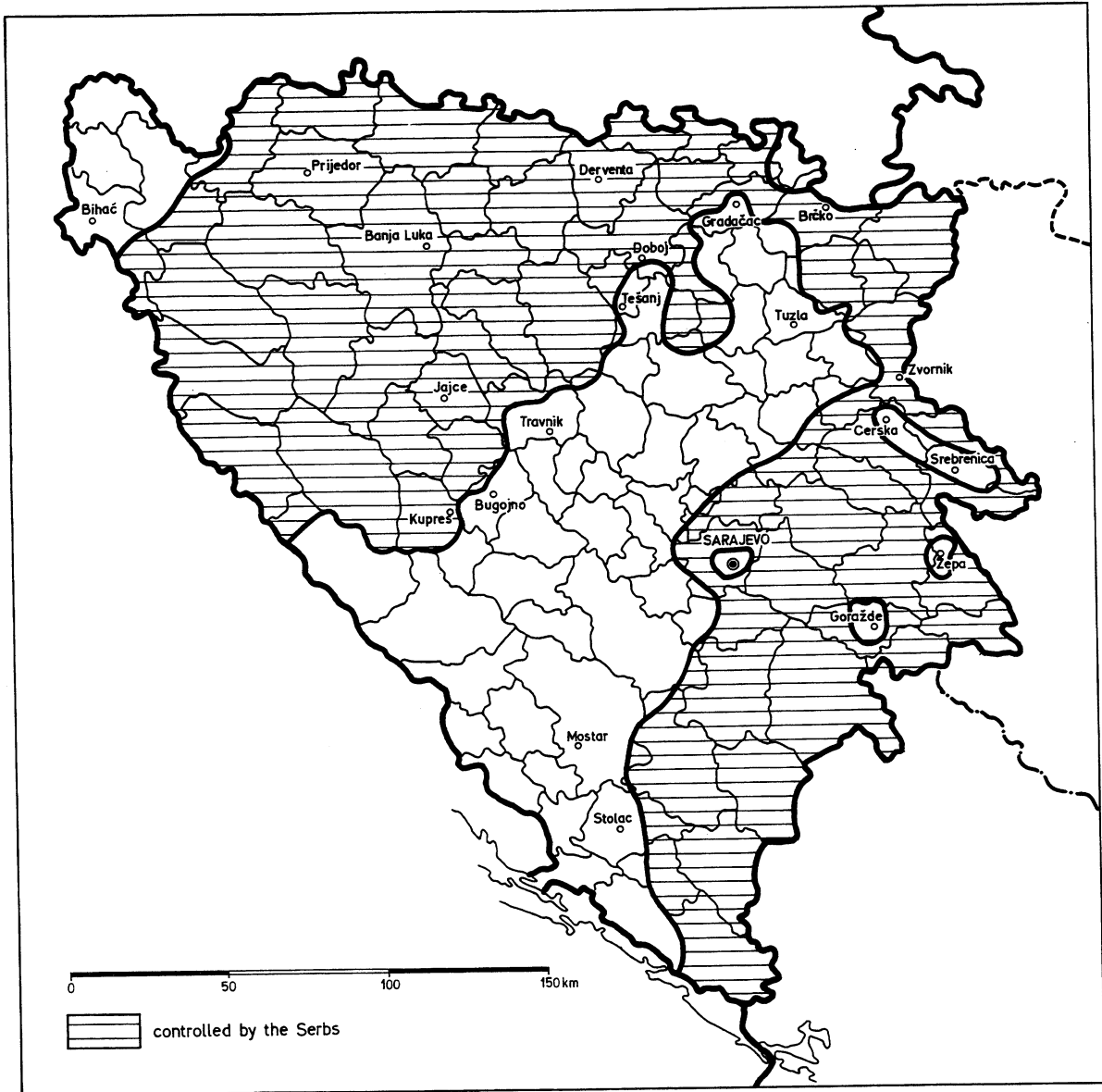
During the autumn of 1992 the Serbs increased their advantage on the ground. After Bosanski Brod was captured on 6 October by the Serbs, the situation in Posavina changed to the advantage of the Serbs (Figure 20). Since they already controlled Derventa and Bosanski Šamac, their corridor was no longer endangered and a main aim of the Serbs was achieved. In Eastern Bosnia, also of great strategic importance to the Serbs, there were only a few Muslim enclaves at Srebrenica, Cerska, Žepa and Goražde. In Central Bosnia they succeeded in breaking the defence of Jajce and the medieval Bosnian capital fell on 29 October. By winter, instead of the 62% or 64% of territory which had previously been claimed, the Serbs effectively controlled some 70% and their war aims had generally been achieved.

3.7 The Vance-Owen plan

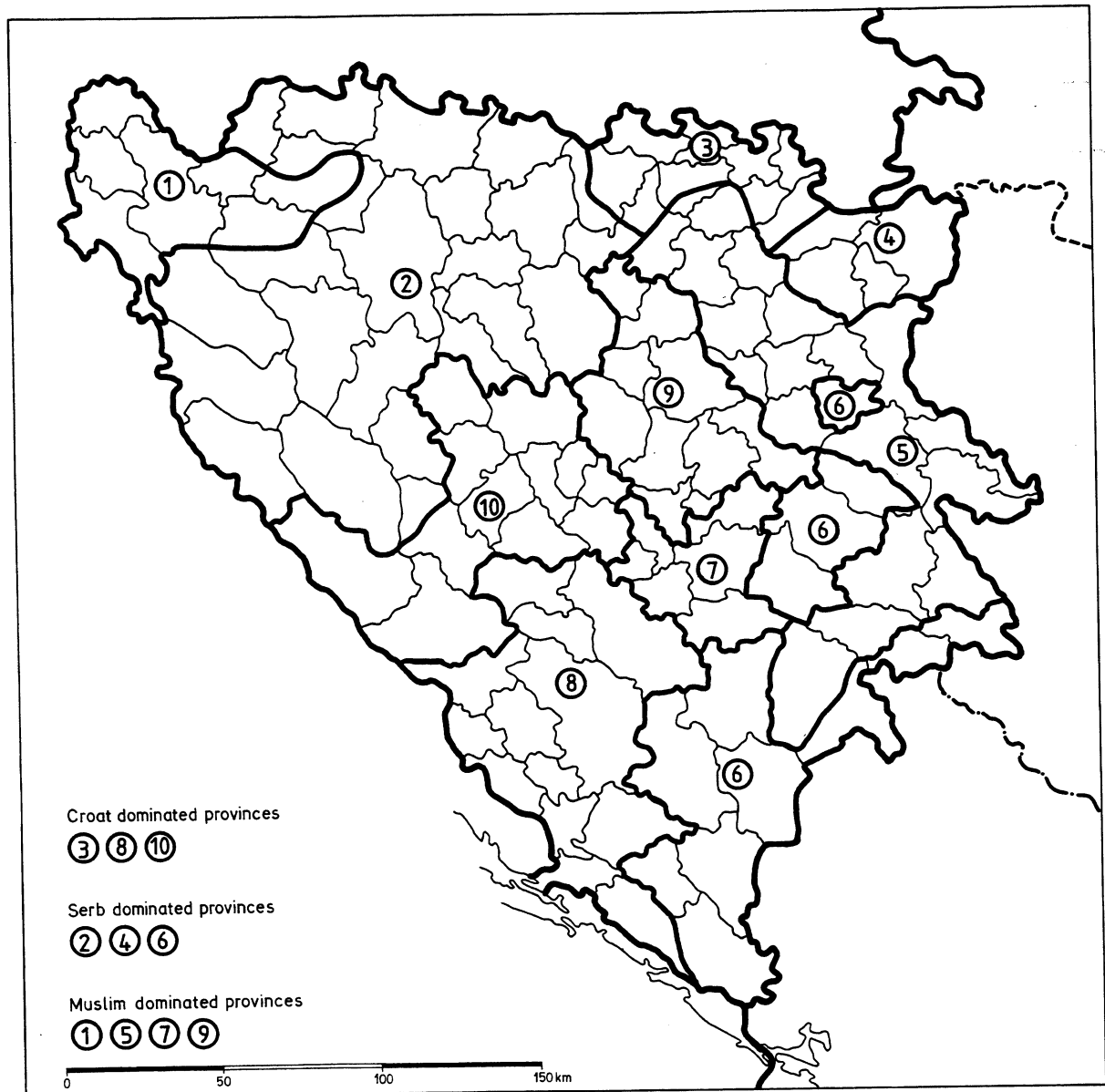
Following abortive negotiations in the spring and at the London Conference in August, international mediators abandoned Cutiliero's plan for cantonisation and, during the autumn of 1992, they looked for new solution. A new plan was drafted by the co-chairmen of the UN/EC- sponsored Bosnian peace talks, Cyrus Vance and Lord David Owen. They worked on a plan which would establish a decentralised state made up of seven to twelve provinces within Bosnia's international borders. A conference on the former Yugoslavia (under the auspices of the EC) would be responsible for ensuring an ethnic balance, for integrating the police and army, and also for upholding human rights. However, the map was the most critical issue. By the end of 1992 the first, unofficial version of the Vance-Owen map appeared. In this draft, eleven regions were proposed. At the same time, quite similar divisions were also debated by others. Drago Stipac, a Croatian politician (President of the Croatian Peasants Party, HSS), who originated from Bosnia and was known as an expert on Bosnia, sought division into ten regions, namely Bihać, Bosnian krajina, Travnik, Western Herzegovina, Eastern Herzegovina, Central Bosnia, Posavina, Northern Bosnia, Usora-Doboj, and Romanija. Although his map was not published it is known that the Serbs would be the majority in four regions, and the Croats and Muslims in three apiece. It is important to stress that Stipac was a strong supporter of the Croat-Muslim alliance, and therefore counted them as a single negotiating party. The idea of ten regions was also supported at that time by Muslim politicians Muhamed Filipović and Adil Zulfikarpašić.

The Vance-Owen plan was finally announced and offered to three communities on 2 January 1993 in Geneva. The plan was based on a document entitled 'A Constitutional Framework for Bosnia-Herzegovina' and proposed a division into nine provinces plus the capital Sarajevo, which was also given provincial status. According to the Constitutional Framework, Bosnia was envisaged as a decentralised state in which most government functions would be carried out at provincial level. However, the provinces would not hold sovereignty. A constitutional

Figure 20 Military front lines in November 1992



Source: *Globus* 6/11/1992

Figure 21 The Vance-Owen proposal of January 1993

court, controlled by representatives of the international community, was proposed as a body responsible for disputes between provinces and central government. Each Bosnian community would provide three members to form the presidency or central government.

With regard to provincial delimitation, Lord Owen said that the provinces were created according to ethnic, geographical, historical, transportational and economic principles (Figure 21). Although it was not mentioned in the Constitutional Framework, all sides judged provinces in light of their ethnic composition.

Table 4: The Vance-Owen provinces: ethnic structure⁹

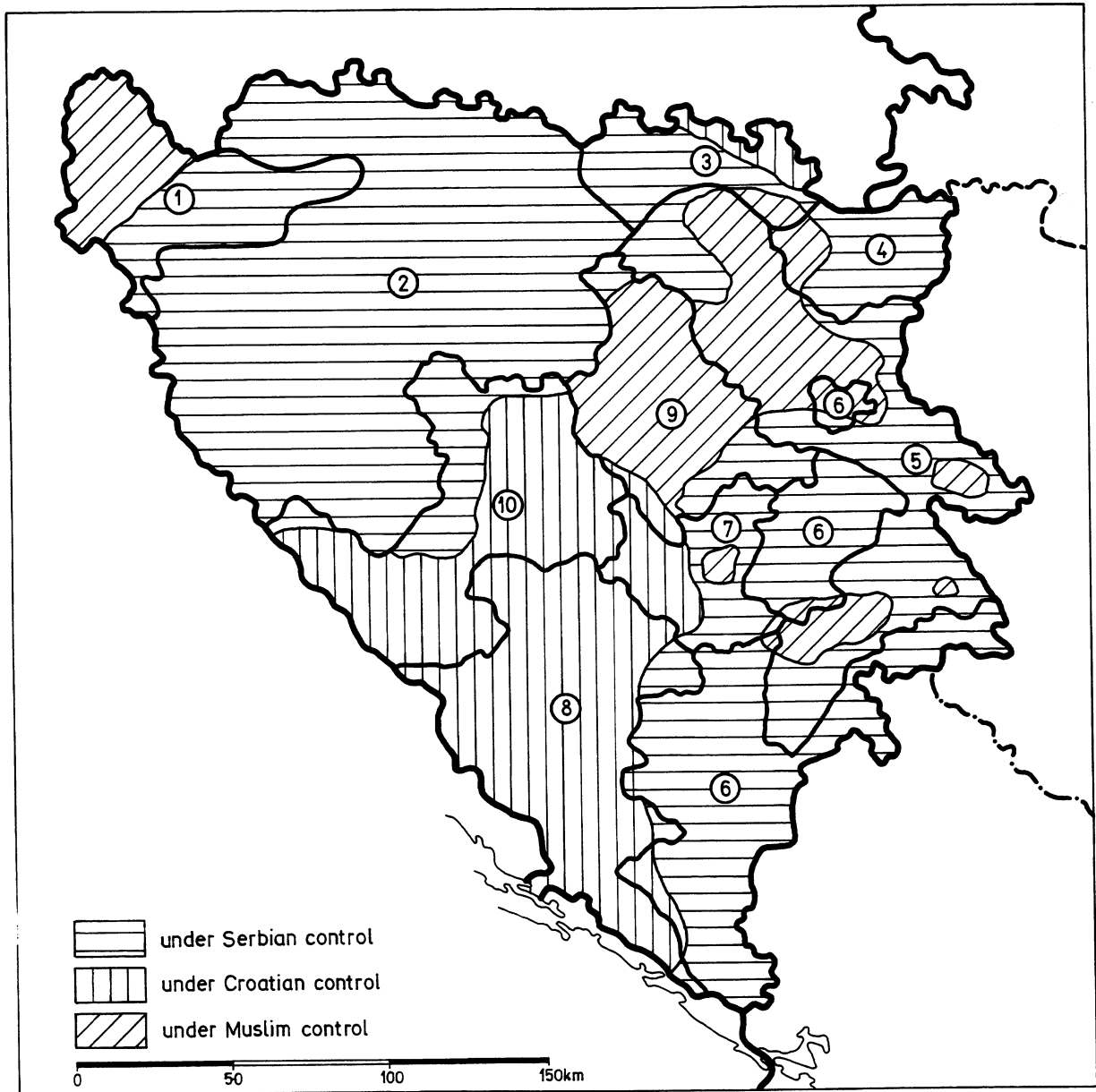
Province	Area (sq km)	Population	Muslims	Croats	Serbs
1. Bihać	3,300	345,000	75.0%	5.0%	12.0%
2. Banja Luka	13,000	800,000	17.0%	10.0%	65.0%
3. Posavina	2,000	240,000	12.0%	50.0%	32.0%
4. Bijeljina	1,600	180,000	34.0%	1.0%	60.0%
5. Tuzla	8,000	815,000	66.0%	4.2%	24.6%
6. Nevesinje	7,000	146,000	24.1%	0.5%	70.7%
7. Sarajevo	1,800	540,000	49.2%	9.6%	27.2%
8. Mostar	6,000	355,000	28.8%	54.2%	11.1%
9. Zenica	3,400	475,000	58.3%	18.0%	15.6%
10. Travnik	5,500	384,000	38.0%	43.6%	13.0%

The figures presented in the table show that each community would have been in a majority in three provinces. Sarajevo, with its special status, appeared to be a *de facto* fourth Muslim-dominated province. The majorities were expressed differently from province to province. The most homogeneous was province No. 1 with a 75% Muslim population. The least homogeneous was province No. 10 with the largest single group being the Croats (43.6%). In terms of the distribution of territory, Serb-majority provinces together accounted for 42.3% of Bosnia-Herzegovinan territory, Muslim-dominated provinces plus Sarajevo encompassed 32.3%, with the remaining 25.4% being Croat-dominated. Within the Serb-dominated provinces there were 52.8% of all Bosnian Serbs; Muslim-dominated provinces encompassed 56.1% of all Bosnian Muslims; and 63.4% of Bosnian Croats fell within Croat-dominated provinces. If Sarajevo is counted as a Muslim province, then 70.1% of Muslims were included in the four Muslim provinces.

The Vance-Owen plan was received differently by the leaders of the three communities. Representatives of the Croats were satisfied and accepted the plan immediately. There were few Croat enclaves outside the three provinces with Croatian majorities. The map was more favourable to them than the one proposed in March 1992 by Cutiliero. The Muslims were not satisfied because they did not consider a division into provinces to be an option at all. In theory, delimitation was acceptable with some corrections but, at that time, they still adhered to the principle of a centralized Bosnian state. The Serbs hesitated before giving an answer. Fair delimitation was not their aim because they already controlled and had 'cleansed' much larger areas than they would receive under the plan (Figure 22). But they still needed a good

⁹ author's estimates according to the 1991 census

Figure 22 The Vance-Owen proposal and the situation on the ground



excuse for refusing the plan, and so they avoided giving a direct answer. Muslim discontent provided an excuse not to respond and Karadžić left the Muslims to be the first side opposing to plan.

During January and February there was much discussion about the plan, and about the map in particular. International mediators put pressure on the community leaders to accept the plan. The Muslims complained that the plan constituted an acceptance and endorsement of ethnic cleansing. The Serbs insisted on concessions over the 'corridor' in Posavina. As usually they produced vast amounts of propaganda to justify this aim and the co-chairmen allowed the adjustment. The Croats appeared to support the Vance-Owen map. Statistically, the Croat majorities were weak and to govern the so-called Croat provinces they needed the co-operation of the second largest community, i.e. the Muslims. But the Croats lacked sufficient caution and patience, and they failed to take the chance which was offered to them by the plan. Some of the leaders began to behave as if they were the only ruling community in 'their' three provinces, which proved to be the last straw for an already weak alliance. The first Croat-Muslim conflicts were reported in January 1993 from Gornji Vakuf. Soon there were conflicts between the two communities throughout Central Bosnia.

Although professing to aim for a centralistic, non-ethnically organised Bosnia, the Muslims also had their partition maps. The one published in the magazine *Ljiljan* was obviously a division map representing Muslim wishes (Figure 23). Instead of the 3+3+3 (and Sarajevo) formula, the map offered a 6+2+2 formula, with the advantage, naturally, to the Muslims. Two provinces, those with centres in Banja Luka and Trebinje, would have Serb majorities. Of great significance was the delimitation of the Croat provinces. If the map is compared with the Vance-Owen map, one can see that all the areas in which Croats and Muslims started to fight each other (Travnik, Novi Travnik, Vitez, Busovača, Bugojno, Gornji Vakuf) and which were included in Croat dominated provinces on the Vance-Owen map, were here included in a Muslim-dominated province centred on Zenica. Also of interest was the solution proposed for the Posavina region. On the Vance-Owen map the area was included in a Croat province, although the Serbs also claimed it as corridor. According to the Muslim proposal, the area would be included in a larger province with its seat in Doboj which would be neither Croat nor Serb but would have a Muslim majority. The *Ljiljan* map seemed to substantiate the widespread suspicion that the Muslims always had their own unit as a second option.

For a brief period it seemed that negotiations based on Vance-Owen plan might be accelerated when Izetbegović finally signed the plan on 25 March 1993. Before that the map was adjusted to accommodate the Muslim claim around Sarajevo and they were promised that Sarajevo would be considered as a Muslim province. The Croats agreed and it seemed that the Bosnian Serbs were finally isolated.

The international community strengthened its pressure on the Serbs to sign the plan and join the peace process. At the beginning of April a 'no-fly' zone was introduced, including NATO control of all the flights above Bosnia-Herzegovina. The idea was to neutralize Serbian air superiority. The introduction of the no-fly zone was soon followed by further sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro, approved by the UN Security Council on 26th April (Resolution 820). Under such pressure, Bosnian Serb leader Karadžić went to Athens and on 2 May signed all three parts of the Vance-Owen plan subject to ratification by the self-proclaimed 'parliament' of Bosnian Serbs. The parliament was summoned at Pale near Sarajevo on 5 May. Although international mediators had great expectations and hoped that the Serbs would finally accept the plan, the parliament refused to ratify Karadžić's signature

Figure 23 The Muslim revision of the Vance-Owen proposal

Source: *Ljiljan* 15/2/1992

and instead called for a referendum of Bosnian Serbs to vote on the plan. The referendum was held on 15 and 16 May, with two questions:

1. Do you support an independent Serbian Republic, including its right to integrate with other nations and states?
2. Do you support The Vance-Owen plan?

The turnout was reported to be 92%; 96% of those who voted rejected the Vance-Owen plan and the same percentage voted for independence.

While the Serbs were buying time, Croat-Muslim conflicts developed in Central Bosnia (Travnik, Vitez, Zenica) and Northern Herzegovina (Konjic). After heavy fighting spread to Mostar, the two former allies agreed to hold talks in Međugorje. The leaders of the two communities, Izetbegović and Boban, signed an agreement to stop further conflicts and to begin implementation of the Vance-Owen plan wherever it was possible. However, the agreement came to nothing as conflict between the two sides continued, and gradually intensified.

At the international level, a new event was the summit meeting of US State Secretary Warren Christopher and the Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom, France, Russia and Spain held in May. The result was a 13-point resolution which shed no light on the Bosnian tragedy. They agreed to continue humanitarian aid, sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro, the no-fly zone, and supported the establishment of an international tribunal for war crimes, as well as a French initiative for so-called 'safe zones' for Bosnian Muslims under international control. Safe zones were approved in UN resolutions 824 and 836 on 6 May and 4 June. Sarajevo, Srebrenica, Gorazde, Zepa, Bihać and Tuzla were established as safe zones but no precise plan of action was announced and it was not long before the flimsiness of the initiative was exposed. The Serb attack on Gorazde in April 1994 is only one example of violations of safe zones which went unpunished.

After the summit in Washington it was obvious that the Vance-Owen plan was dead. The world powers showed neither enough understanding nor firm will to solve the problem and the pressure on the Bosnian Serbs and Serbia did not last long. After defining and then isolating the aggressor, the military threats were not fulfilled.

In the aftermath of Washington there was little chance for maintaining Bosnian integrity. Some 70% of the territory was under Serb control. There were six safe areas or 'bantustans', overpopulated by resident and displaced Muslims and encircled by Serb artillery. Finally, there were some Croat-controlled areas disputed by the Muslims, leading to fighting and slaughter on both sides. Instead of punishing the side which started the war and those on all sides responsible for atrocities, the world decided to wait and see which side was going to win and, perhaps, to recognise its victory.

3.8 The Owen-Stoltenberg plan

While the Vance-Owen plan offered a base on which to build, it seemed that international mediators altered their principles. Instead of insisting on principles such as the integrity of Bosnia, internal division based on the pre-war demographic situation, and non-acceptance of

war gains and ethnic cleansing, they turned to a plan with opposite premises. The new plan tended towards confirmation of the *de facto* situation.

The new plan, drawn up by Lord Owen and the former Norwegian Foreign Secretary Thorwald Stoltenberg, envisaged the partitioning of Bosnia-Herzegovina into three ethnically homogeneous mini-states in a loose confederation. To achieve this, a series of complex territorial swaps and concessions would be required to satisfy various demands, particularly the Serbian requirement that non-contiguous Serb areas should be linked.

The plan has faced stiff opposition from the Muslims but one Muslim leader, Fikret Abdić, has given it his support, allegedly having been promised that the Muslims would be granted a corridor to the town of Bihać if he brokered an agreement.

On 24 June 1993 in Geneva, Bosnia's Serb and Croat leaders announced that agreement had been reached on a three-way division of Bosnia. A new set of constitutional principles was agreed which replaced the Vance-Owen plan's 'decentralised state' with a 'confederation' ruled by a nine-member council with three representatives from each group and with key posts such as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister rotating. The principles document also stated that: "*The three republics shall not enter into agreements with foreign states...if it can damage the interests of the other republics.*"

On 27 July a new round of negotiations was opened in Geneva. The Bosnian Serbs and Croats supported the proposal of the co-chairmen for a new "Union" of three ethnic republics within the country. On 30 July the Muslim leader Izetbegović also accepted the Union proposal but from 2 August he boycotted the talks, linking his attendance with the withdrawal of Serbian forces from the mountains of Igman and Bjelašnica.

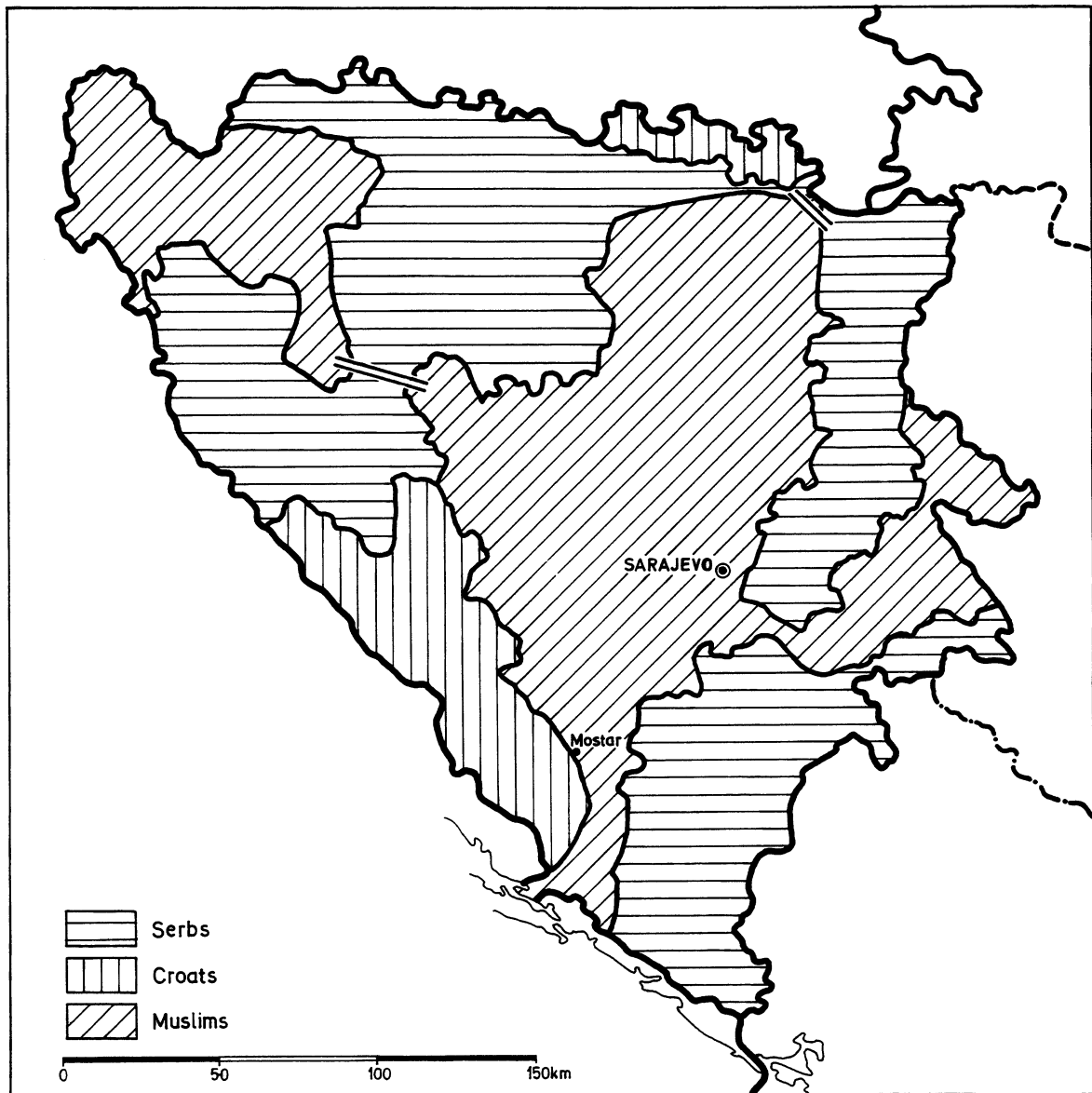
Before any agreement was reached, counter-proposal maps began to appear. The German daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* published a Muslim-proposed map (Figure 24) which sought the inclusion of all Muslim-dominated territories according to the 1991 census. The map made no provision for Croat enclaves in Central Bosnia and it also included a Muslim exit to the Sava river in the north and an exit to the sea in south. Several principles were mixed: that of ethnic majority, but also that of war gains (Central Bosnia) and the viability of the Muslim unit (to justify the claims regarding exits). The proposed territorial distribution was roughly 44% Muslims, 46% Serbs, and 10% Croats.

Another proposal was reported to have been agreed upon by the Serbs and Croats. The Muslim unit would be much smaller and would include access to the Sava river at Brčko but not access to the sea. According to this proposal the territorial distribution would be Serbs 53.8%, Muslims 23.8%, Croats 22.4% (Figure 25).

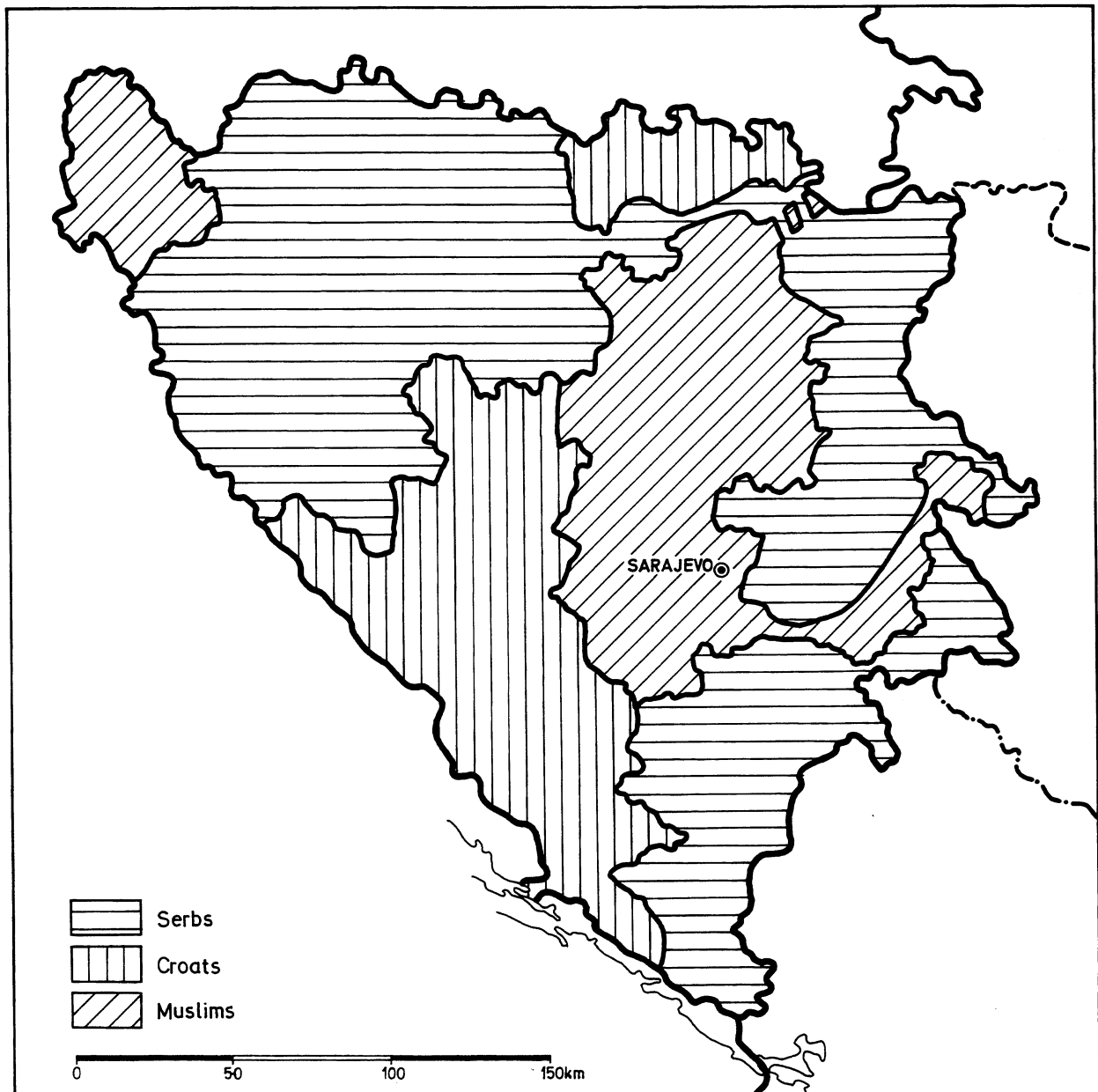
If the two proposals are superimposed, one can clearly see which territories were disputed and which were clearly considered as belonging one particular side. For the Serbs at least 44.5% of the territory was undisputed, for the Muslims 20.5% and for the Croats 8.8%. If Sarajevo is omitted, some 23% of the territory was disputed: 11% between the Muslims and Croats, 9.5% between the Muslims and Serbs and 2.5% between the Croats and Serbs. Disputes were to be solved through the mediation of the co-chairmen.

Firstly, on 18 August, agreement was reached on the future status of Sarajevo. The three sides accepted a 'free city' status for Sarajevo, under the interim control of the UN. The territory of

Figure 24 The Muslim proposal of August 1993



Source: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 17/8/1993

Figure 25 The Serb-Croat proposal of August 1993

Source: Vjesnik 19/8/1993

the proposed Sarajevo district would consist of nine pre-war municipalities. The mandate of the UN would last for two years. Negotiations were suspended on 20 August and the three sides were given the package with the co-chairmen's plan for the 'Union of the Republics', including the partition map. National leaders were given ten days to discuss the proposal with their respective communities.

The package which received general agreement consisted of five integral parts: an agreement on the constitutional principles of the future union; a military agreement; a preliminary agreement between the Republic of Croatia and the Union of Bosnia-Herzegovina on the implementation of the 1965 convention on transit for landlocked countries; and a set of maps.

According to the map proposed in Geneva, the distribution of territory would be: Serbs 53%, Muslims 30%, Croats 17% (Figure 26). Special agreements with the Republic of Croatia would guarantee free transit for the Muslim republic to the Croatian seaports of Rijeka and Ploče. In return, the Republic of Croatia would be guaranteed free transit on several roads and railways through Bosnia. Within Bosnia-Herzegovina a number of free transportation corridors were proposed, along with access to the river-port at Brčko across Serbian territory for the Muslim republic. Although the co-chairmen stressed that the proposal was a compromise, it clearly confirmed Serbian territorial war gains. Most of the ethnically 'cleansed' areas, originally populated predominantly by Muslims or Croats, were allocated to the Serbian republic.

Table 5: Distributions according to Owen-Stoltenberg proposal.

	Territorial distribution (%)	Resident outside titular republic (%)
Muslims	30 (incl. Sarajevo)	35
Serbs	53	35
Croats	17	53

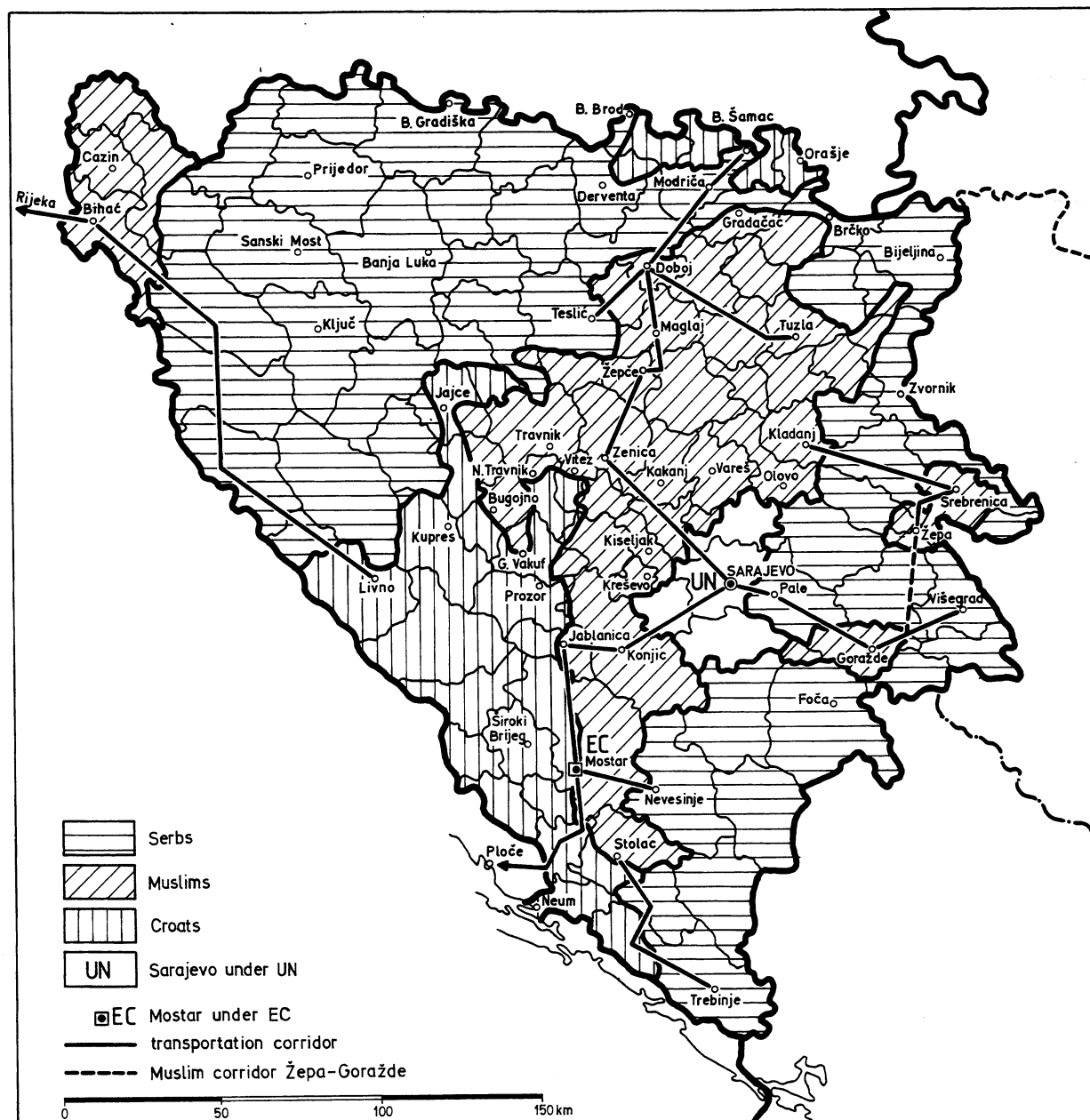
Since they were the only side able to trade 'land for peace', the Serbs were the only side to be satisfied by this compromise. Asked what the plan might bring to his republic, Radovan Karadžić answered:

*"The Serbian Republic will have more rights than anyone of the former Yugoslav republics. It will have internationally verified state borders. The status of the Serbian people in this region will, for the first time, be regulated by international law. The term 'so-called' will no longer be applied to the Serbian Republic.... We have made some concessions regarding Kupres and Donji Vakuf in order to gain territories in Posavina.... We cannot hold 64% of the territory, or rather we could do so for another 30 years, but those would be 30 years of war."*¹⁰

During the break in the Geneva conference, on 28 August at Grude in Western Herzegovina, the 'Croatian Republic of Herceg-Bosnia' was proclaimed as a "republic of the Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina" in light of the Owen-Stoltenberg package. It was stated that boundaries would be defined by the negotiations with the other two communities. The Croats, although

¹⁰ *Politika* 20/8/1993

Figure 26 The Owen-Stoltenberg proposal of August 1993



Sources: *Večernji list* 23/8/1993, *Politika* 24/8/1993

generally accepting the proposal, also had some objections concerning the proposed boundaries.

The leaders were summoned to Geneva again on 31 August. The Croats and Serbs accepted the package while the Muslims asked for significant changes to the map. Based on the prewar ethnic distribution, they claimed territories in Eastern and Western Bosnia from the Serbs. Since the proposed Muslim Republic would be landlocked, they also claimed an exit to the sea at Neum, even though it is within a predominantly Croat area. The Muslims seemed to be dissatisfied with the offered free zones at the Croatian ports of Ploče and Rijeka.

Soon after the unsuccessful sessions in August, two bilateral agreements were signed in Geneva. First, on 14 September, Croatian President Tudjman and Bosnian President Izetbegović signed a joint declaration. The two parties agreed to stop all hostilities between the Bosnia-Herzegovina (Muslim) Army and the HVO, to disband prison camps on both sides and to secure the free transit of humanitarian convoys. It was also stated that joint commissions (Croat-Muslim) would be set up for both the protection of human rights and the territorial delimitation of the Croat and Muslim units within Bosnia-Herzegovina (including Muslim access to the sea). In addition, commissions were also proposed to deal with the question of Bosnian refugees in Croatia and for improving relations between Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Republic of Croatia. Both presidents stated that:

"This agreement should help to stop conflicts between Bosnian Croats and Muslims as well as the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina in general. We think that there are no more obstructions between the Croats and Muslims. All open questions will be negotiated." (Večernji list 15/9/1994)

After the Declaration it seemed that, in spite of conflicts on the ground, the former Croat-Muslim alliance in Bosnia-Herzegovina was renewed or at least was given one more chance, but only a few days later, on 16 September, a new agreement was signed between the Bosnian Serbs and Muslims. Alija Izetbegović and Momčilo Krajišnik, representative of the Serbs, also agreed to stop hostilities, to free all prisoners and ensure transit for humanitarian convoys and to negotiate all territorial disputes. But, surprisingly, they made one step more. In their declaration they included the provision that two years after reaching a territorial delimitation acceptable to all sides, each republic within the Union could organise a referendum of its citizens to decide whether they wanted to stay within Bosnia-Herzegovina. In case of the Union's disintegration, the Muslim unit would inherit the international sovereign rights of Bosnia-Herzegovina, including UN membership. By signing this agreement it appeared that the Bosnian Muslims were yielding to eventual Serbian succession.

3.9 Access to the sea

Following the Geneva talks, the Bosnia-Herzegovina peace package continued to evolve through further consultations. The most important negotiations were held on British aircraft-carrier *Invincible* in the Adriatic on 20 September 1993. The package from *Invincible* was not signed but it was reported to be generally accepted by all sides.

The general agreement on the Union of the Bosnia-Herzegovina republics was accompanied by seven appendices concerning Constitutional agreement, military and cease-fire agreements, previous Croat-Muslim and Serb-Muslim agreements, and preliminary agreement between the

Union of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Republic of Croatia on access to the sea based on the 1965 Convention on transit rights for landlocked countries.

The map discussed in Geneva was not changed significantly. The Muslim republic was offered a strip of territory along the left bank of the Neretva river up to the point at which its future river-port was proposed, a concession which met with the agreement of the Croats. For their part, the Serbs offered additional territories around Goražde to connect the Muslim enclave with another one around Srebrenica and Žepa.

Access to the sea appeared to be the most important and controversial issue at that stage. The Muslims insisted on an exit to the coast with that part of coast to fall under the sovereignty of the Muslim republic. The Croats offered access but did not want to give an exit. This question was not simply a dispute between Bosnian Croats and Muslims: it also fell within the interests of the Republic of Croatia.

A narrow exit to the Adriatic coast around town of Neum, comprising the Klek peninsula, was inherited from the 1700 delimitation of the area. In order to avoid direct contact with the Venetian Republic, the independent Republic of Dubrovnik relinquished this territory to the Ottoman Empire as a buffer zone. A similar zone, known as Sutorina, was formed in the Bay of Kotor for the same purpose.

In 1945, when the Yugoslav republics were delimited, the Neum-Klek strip appeared as Bosnia-Herzegovinan territory, cutting the Croatian coast into two parts. The Sutorina strip was assigned to Montenegro, which also came into possession of the Bay of Kotor.

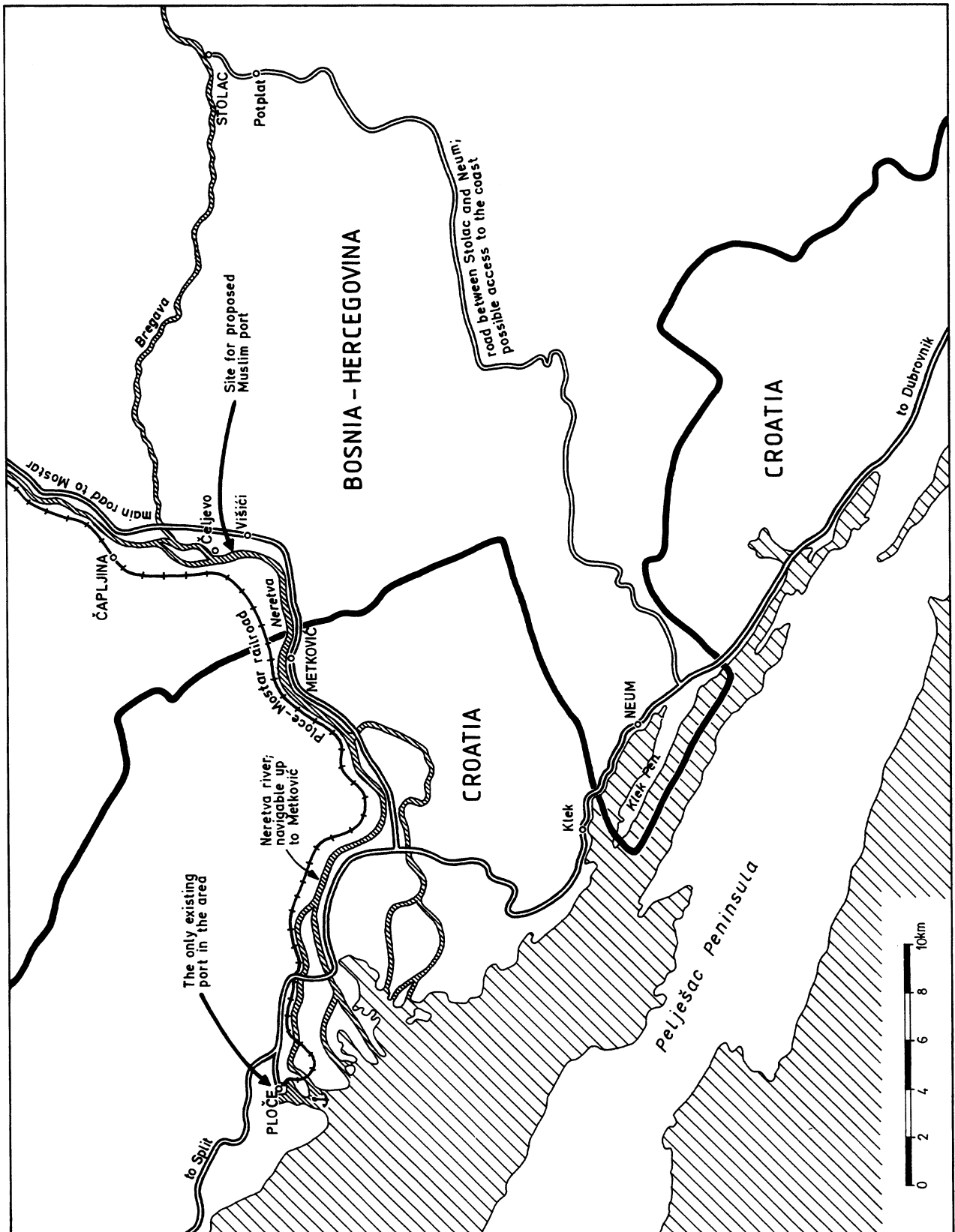
The Neum-Klek strip was therefore retained as a relic from the past, but there were no port facilities there. A Bosnian trade port was built after World War II on Croatian territory at Ploče at the mouth of the Neretva river. The port was later connected by railway with Mostar and Sarajevo (Figure 27).

The disadvantage for Croatia of territorial discontinuity was made up for by the fact that the whole area was homogeneously populated by Croats. Under such circumstances Croatia did not consider the existence of the corridor as a handicap. For Croatia it was acceptable to see Neum-Klek in a future union as a part of the Croat unit but it was not acceptable to see it under Muslim control, as this would disrupt the territorial integrity of the Republic of Croatia. Given that Neum-Klek was not attractive as a port, the Muslim claim appeared to be something of a blackmailing one, because Croatia was ready to make wide-ranging concessions at both Ploče and the port of Rijeka on the Northern Adriatic. Clearly, the Muslims were taking advantage of widespread verbal international support and they pressed the Croatian side hard on the Neum-Klek issue.

According to Haris Silajdžić (*Globus* 24/9/1993), a Muslim negotiator, several possibilities were discussed. The first one was sovereign territory for the Muslim republic on the uninhabited Klek peninsula which would be connected by the road across the Bosnian Croat territory with the Muslim republic in the hinterland. The second possibility was a lease contract for part of the port at Ploče for 99 years. A third option was a new river port for the Muslim republic on the Neretva river between Višići and Čeljevo.

The Serbs also pressed for concessions from Croatia. During the talks on *Invincible* they stated that they had right to one third of Neum as a joint Bosnia-Herzegovina territory. But

Figure 27 Map showing the position of Neum



instead of insisting on gains there, they were ready to give it up in exchange for an exit to the sea at the southernmost part of the Croatian coast beside the boundary with Montenegro including the well-known Prevlaka peninsula.

3.10 The autonomous province of Western Bosnia

On 27 September 1993 at Velika Kladuša the autonomous province of Western Bosnia was proclaimed. Fikret Abdić, one of two Muslim representatives in the 1990 Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina was reported to have been chosen as president.

The AP Western Bosnia covered the territory of Velika Kladuša, Cazin, Bihać and Bosanska Krupa municipalities, all together some 2,150 sq km. The population was estimated to be around 300,000 inhabitants, including 60,000 expelled persons. The majority of the population is Muslim (approximately 80%). The proclamation of autonomy came after series of quarrels among the Bosnian Muslim leadership, particularly between local leader Fikret Abdić and Bosnian President Alija Izetbegović.

This part of Bosnia had the highest degree of Muslim homogeneity but no direct contact with other Muslim-controlled areas. Traditionally, the local Muslims were economically oriented toward neighbouring Croatia. Without breaking that relationship they also collaborated with the Serbs during the war and therefore succeeded in staying relatively untouched by the conflict. However, the Serbs did occupy some parts of the formerly Muslim-majority area.

The proclamation of autonomy was not welcomed by the Muslim leadership in Sarajevo. Soon afterwards fighting broke out in the region between followers of Fikret Abdić and forces loyal to Sarajevo. On the other hand Abdić, effectively controlling only the municipality of Velika Kladuša, reached separate peace agreements with the Bosnian Croats (even though the AP Western Bosnia's territory does not border directly on to Croat controlled areas) and with the Bosnian Serbs, the region's effective neighbours.

3.11 Croat-Muslim conflict

Until Spring 1993 it was possible to describe the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina as a joint defence by the Muslims and Croats against the Serbs. Whilst the Croat-Muslim alliance could never be described as very firm, it did function. Troops of the HVO and the Army of Bosnia-Herzegovina (mostly Muslims) fought together and there were high-level talks about integration. It is difficult to explain how that alliance was broken. Instead of becoming the basis for increasing co-operation, the Vance-Owen plan provoked conflicts between Croats and Muslims. The conflicts multiplied almost daily and since the late spring of 1993 the Bosnian tragedy has taken on the nature of a civil war in which each side is fighting with different aims.

From a territorial and military viewpoint, the Muslims were the winners during 1993. They captured most of the formerly HVO-controlled territories in Central Bosnia. HVO losses included the towns of Travnik, Fojnica, Gornji Vakuf and Bugojno. HVO troops, together with Croatian civilians, were also expelled from the Zenica and Kakanj areas. Mostar, the site of the biggest victory against the Serbs in 1992, became a divided town systematically ruined by shelling from both sides. The Muslims therefore succeeded in widening the territory under

their control but some areas stayed under HVO control as enclaves (Figure 28). During the autumn and winter of 1993 these were the focus of heavy fighting. On 3 November, the HVO withdrew from the Vareš enclave but other enclaves continued to be defended. To defend some of them, such as Žepče or Kiseljak-Kreševo, the HVO had to collaborate with its former enemies, the Serbs. On the other hand, in the remnants of the Posavina region, Croats and Muslims were still fighting side by side, and the same held true in the enclaved Usora region and the Tuzla region.

The confusion was advantageous to the Serbs. Satisfied with their territorial gains, they adapted their behaviour to local conditions. In some places they traded arms with Muslims, while in others they helped the Croats. Croat-Muslim conflicts also pushed the Croatian negotiating position closer to that of the Serbs. As a result, international community sympathy for the Croats waned. Croats were perceived more as aggressors like the Serbs than as victims along with the Muslims.

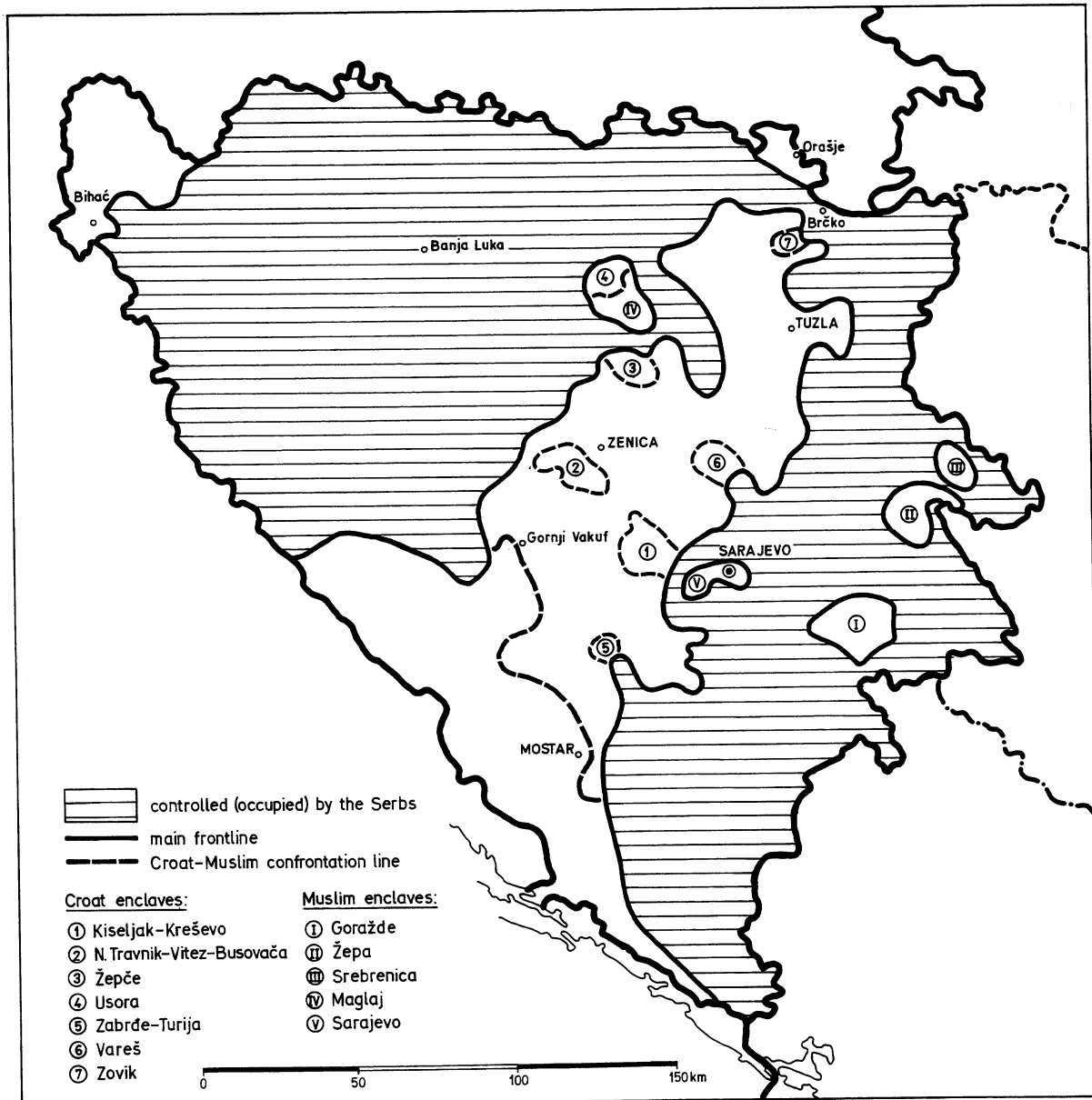
The Croats did little to improve their unpopular position. For example, they started implementing the Vance-Owen plan before the Muslims agreed to it. They also forgot that in three provinces proposed by the plan to be Croat-dominated, the Muslim presence was also significant, an example of the lack of sensitivity shown by some Croat leaders towards the Muslim position. The international standing of the Croats was also undermined by the concentration camps, atrocities against the Muslims and, finally, from the destruction of the old bridge in Mostar, undoubtedly one of the most poignant symbols of the Bosnian conflict. The result was disastrous: while they were losing territory in Bosnia, they also shifted from being perceived as victims to being viewed as aggressors in diplomatic eyes. Moreover, the Bosnian Croat's worsening position also affected the Republic of Croatia, which had to accept additional waves of refugees from Bosnia and endure international criticism over errors and omissions in its Bosnian policy. In the end a combination of military losses, thousands of refugees, a weak negotiating position, mounting international pressure and the threat of sanctions caused deep divisions between the Croats in Bosnia as well as in Croatia proper. Official Croatian state policy was strongly criticised by most opposition parties in Croatia and also by representatives of the Catholic church headed by the Archbishop of Sarajevo and the heads of the Bosnian and Herzegovian Franciscans.

Bosnian Army (i.e. Muslim) forces advanced on the ground in Central Bosnia and finally become the only 'Bosnians' in the eyes of most outsiders. Taking advantage of the poor reputation of the Croats they extended the scope of their claims in the negotiations for an exit to the sea. But on the whole the Croat-Muslim conflicts were not fruitful for either side. The Muslim offensive against Croatian enclaves was nothing short of a form of ethnic cleansing and had absolutely no effect in terms of advancing the frontline against the Serbs. Expelling Croats from Travnik and Vareš did not help solve the problems of their own enclaves of Srebrenica and Žepa and other Muslim territories already cleansed by the Serbs. In losing the alliance with the Croats, the Muslims also lost the chance for an integral Bosnian state. It was impossible to promote such an idea without having at least one more Bosnian community on the same side and with a similar standpoint.

3.12 Various initiatives

The end of the 1993 and very beginning of 1994 failed to generate any new map proposals. Instead, the Owen-Stoltenberg map from August 1993 served as a basis for new initiatives.

Figure 28 Front lines and enclaves in November 1993

Source: *Globus*, UNPROFOR

The original version of this map, although never accepted by all the warring parties, was revised several times but was not replaced by any completely new proposal. The first of several peace initiatives was introduced by Croatian president Tudjman, which was announced on 2 November 1993. There were three main aspects to it: United Nations Protected Areas in Croatia; Bosnia; and relations between the republics of the former Yugoslavia.

For Bosnia, Tudjman proposed a new session of the Geneva conference starting from the existing agreements, with international sanctions to be imposed on those not accepting the agreements. Disputed boundaries, according to Tudjman's proposal, should be settled by bilateral negotiation. If a solution could not be reached, final decision should be made by a neutral arbitrator. He also recommended that the three communities should guarantee free passage to humanitarian convoys. For a realisation of the peace plan in Bosnia he suggested that UNPROFOR should be replaced by NATO. Military force should be deployed against those who would prevent humanitarian convoys or in any other way work against peace efforts.

On 7 November the foreign affairs ministers of Germany and France, Klaus Kinkel and Alain Juppe, made a proposal to other EU ministers and the co-chairmen of the Conference on former Yugoslavia. As priorities they stressed humanitarian aid to Bosnia-Herzegovina, a solution to the Bosnian question based on the Geneva package (August 1993), and a *modus vivendi* for Croatian territories under UN control. Regarding the future reorganization of Bosnia, they favoured solutions that maintained the integrity of the state. They intended to put pressure on the Serbs to give a further 3-4% of the territory to the Muslims than was proposed on the Geneva map. Once this was achieved, sanctions against Serbia could be lifted, although the lifting of sanctions would also be related to Serbian efforts towards finding a *modus vivendi* for Serb-occupied areas in Croatia. They also stressed the need for autonomy for Albanians in Kosovo and internationally-supervised minority rights in Sanjak and Vojvodina.

The Kinkel-Juppe initiative was discussed and generally accepted by the Council of Ministers in Luxembourg on 22 November. The EU initiative was presented to the Bosnian parties accompanied by the presidents of Croatia and Serbia at a meeting held from 29 November until 2 December 1993 in Geneva. No progress was made because the Serbs refused to negotiate over the possibility of a larger Muslim unit. Moreover, they made a claim for partitioning Sarajevo between the Muslims and Serbs on a 2:1 ratio to reflect the situation on the ground. It should be mentioned that in August, they had accepted and signed a solution for Sarajevo which strictly insisted on non-division, two-year UN control and prospective Muslim control. The Serbs were ready to give up claims on Sarajevo only if they received Muslim enclaves in Eastern Bosnia (Žepa, Srebrenica, Goražde) in return.

A new session was held on 21 December in Geneva and was continued in Brussels over the following two days. During this session the Serbs and Croats agreed upon a joint proposal of limits for a Muslim republic by which it would have 33.3% of Bosnia-Herzegovina territory. This proportion had already been agreed at the *Invincible* meeting and was generally accepted by the Muslims. Compared to the Owen-Stoltenberg map, both sides were making concessions to the Muslims, although only the Serbs had been called to do so by the mediators. It seemed that the Croats had agreed to cede Jajce and Donji Vakuf to the Muslims in order to get guarantees from the Serbs that Croatian unit would not contain less than 17.5% of Bosnia-Herzegovina territory. The Muslims rejected this proposal with the explanation that the territory offered was not what they wanted. Lord Owen said:

"The Serbs and Croats fulfilled the first condition, i.e. they compiled a map with 33.3% of Bosnia-Herzegovinan territory forming a republic with a Muslim majority. It is not surprising that part of the land is not where the Muslims would like it, but it is still a map which offers them 33.3%. For the first time we are discussing a map which gives as much territory as the Muslim leadership considers to be a minimum.... The Serbs also guaranteed that the Croats will not get less than 17.5%. They also said that if analysis shows a shortage of territory somewhere, they will compensate the Muslims up to 33.3%". (Vjesnik 23/12/1993)

On 10 January 1994 a delegation from the Republic of Croatia and the Bosnian Croats (for the first time the main negotiator was Mile Akmadžić instead of Mate Boban) met in Bonn, Germany, with the Muslim delegation. The meeting was sponsored by German minister Klaus Kinkel. At the meeting Tudjman proposed to the Muslims a detailed 'contract' dealing with future Croat-Muslim relations in Bosnia. After an absolute cease-fire, Herceg-Bosnia and the Bosnian-Muslim Republic would delimit their territories in such a way that 33.3% of Bosnia-Herzegovinan territory would belong to the Muslims and 17.5% to the Croats. Disputed questions, including access to the sea for the Bosnian-Muslim Republic, would be solved through negotiations. The city of Mostar, capital of Herceg-Bosnia, would stay under EU control for two years. The return of refugees and displaced persons would be secured.

In chapter 4 the contract dealt with the case of the dissolution of Bosnia-Herzegovina. If the Serbian Republic seceded from the Union, it would automatically mean the end of Union and the Muslim republic would inherit the former Bosnia-Herzegovinan membership of the UN. In such a case Herceg-Bosnia would have a right to unite with the Republic of Croatia. After that the Bosnian-Muslim Republic and Republic of Croatia, as sovereign states, would form a union (confederation) on the basis of mutual interests and co-operation.

The territory requested for Herceg-Bosnia was a modified version of the Owen-Stoltenberg map. In northern Bosnia four Croat-dominated municipalities, together with parts of Derventa, Doboj and Modriča municipalities, were included. Herceg-Bosnia's mainland was proposed with Vitez, Novi Travnik and Busovača municipalities but without Kreševo and Kiseljak. The municipality of Bugojno was also included but Jajce and Donji Vakuf were excluded, clearly offered in exchange. With regard to access to the sea, the map proposed giving the left bank of the Neretva river to the Muslims in accordance with preliminary solutions discussed on *Invincible*. The Muslims did not answer the proposal immediately and it soon became obvious that they were not ready to accept it as it stood.

3.13 Back to cantonisation

A fresh approach to the question of delimitation was the map presented by the Council of Bosnia-Herzegovina Croats summoned on 6 February 1994 in Sarajevo. This was a meeting of the representatives of the Croats from all parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina not in agreement with the proposals of Herceg-Bosnia and Mate Boban. The key figure was Ivo Komšić, a member of Muslim-dominated Presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina and president of newly formed Croatian Peasant Party (HSS) of Bosnia-Herzegovina. He challenged official Croat representatives: "*nobody has a right to divide our homeland and to negotiate on that basis in our name*". The return of all refugees, the territorial and institutional integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina, modern regionalism and decentralism as well as the neutralization of all 'greater-stateism' in Bosnia-Herzegovina were the main principles of Komšić's programme and map.

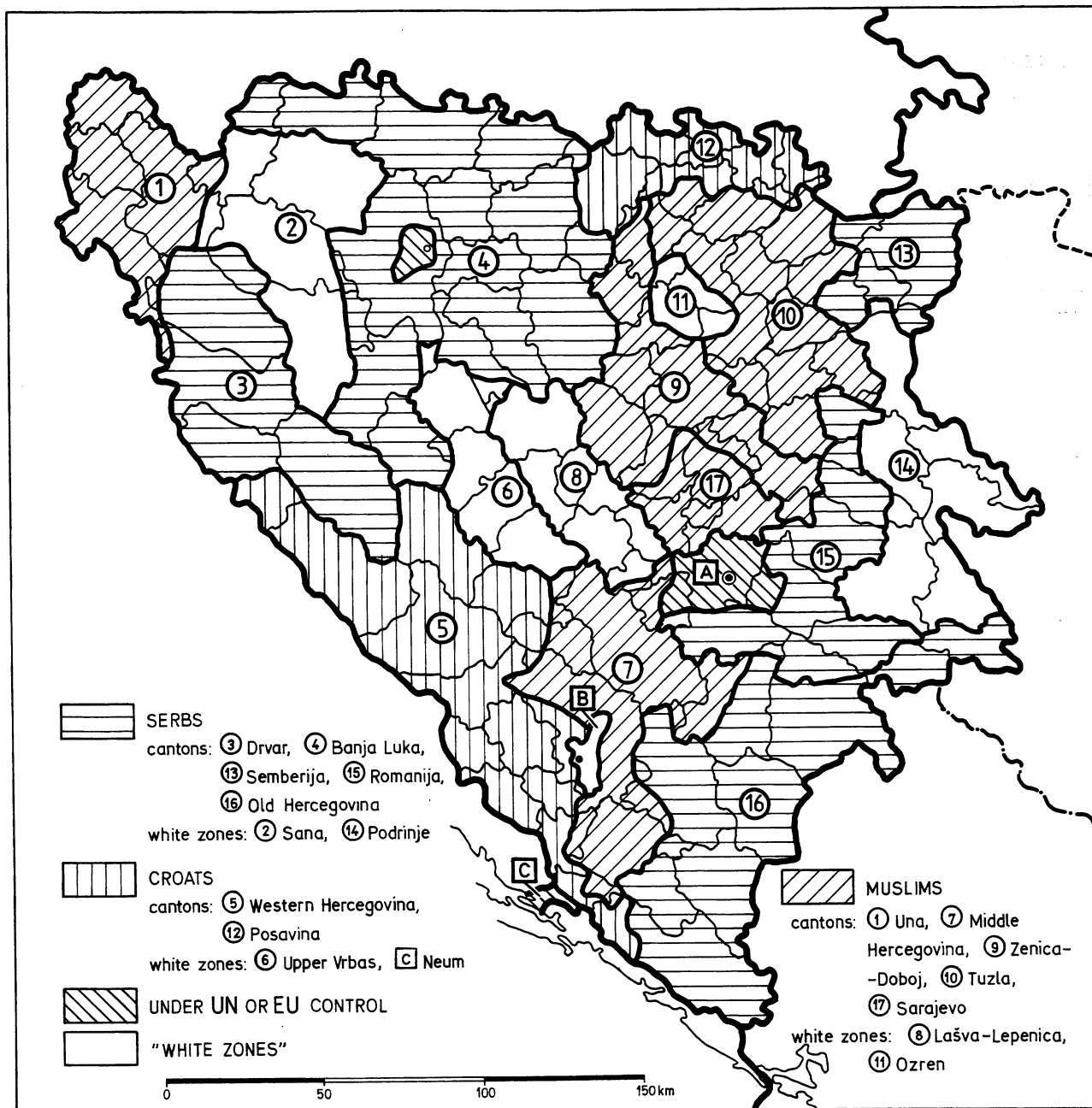
Komšić also reaffirmed the concept of cantonisation or regionalization (Figure 29). His map proposed that Bosnia-Herzegovina be divided into 16 cantons, three zones with special status (Sarajevo, Mostar, Banja Luka) and one with functional status (Neum). In eleven cantons there would be a clear majority of one community while five cantons would have no distinctive majority (the so-called 'white zones'). The proposal also included two modes of union. According to the first, union would consist of cantons, while the other one depended on the results of Geneva talks and proposed an additional level: cantons would form three republics and the republics would form the union of Bosnia-Herzegovina but, contrary to the Owen-Stoltenberg plan, the republics would not be based on ethnic homogeneity. Besides the ethnic cantons, each republic would include two white zones with a mixed and mainly non-titular majority. Political power would be distributed on three levels, that of union, republics and cantons. *"We consider the proposal to be a rightful and reasonable one. Now, it will be obvious who claims what in Bosnia. Serbian aggressors started this war in order to gain a homogeneous and compact territory, but it appeared to be impossible"* said Komšić (*Globus*, 11 February 1994).

This proposal was undoubtedly a breath of fresh air in the claustrophobic chaos of Bosnia. However, the key issue was how to force the Serbs to accept it since it would prevent them from controlling their 'corridor' and a large area in Eastern Bosnia.

Although it seemed that Komšić's proposal would be one more in a sequence of many fruitless attempts, it became a real possibility during February. After the massacre in Sarajevo's market on 5 February when 68 civilians were killed with one mortar shell, the international community changed its approach to Bosnia. The Bosnian Serbs were given an ultimatum by NATO to withdraw from their positions around the city. The ultimatum was made in conjunction with the UN and was based on its previous resolutions, especially the one concerning safe zones. For the first time the ultimatum was serious and, after some hesitation, the Bosnian Serbs started to co-operate. By 20 February they withdrew most of their artillery or left it under the control of UNPROFOR. The international alliance was led for the first time in Bosnia by the United States. Russia also took part in the operation. Russian troops from the UNPROFOR contingent were relocated from Sector East in Croatia to the Sarajevo area. While the Serbs were pressed by a military ultimatum, the other two parties came under diplomatic pressure to reach an agreement and to renew their former alliance. Their representatives Haris Silajdžić, Bosnian prime minister, and Mate Granić, foreign affairs minister of the Republic of Croatia, met first in Frankfurt on 19 February and again in Washington on 26 February under US sponsorship. While they were negotiating in Washington, NATO aircraft struck within the no-fly zone on 28 February and shot down four Serbian airplanes after they had attacked Novi Travnik in Central Bosnia. Finally, on 1 March 1994 in Washington, an agreement was reached between Muslims and Croats concerning a Muslim (Bosnian)-Croat federation of Bosnian territories with both Muslim and Croatian majorities.

Cantons were proposed as the basic units of the Federation. Delimitation was not discussed at that stage but a joint working group was set up soon after in the US Embassy in Vienna to work on a proposal for a new constitution, including delimitation. The Washington package also included agreements between the Bosnia-Herzegovinan Federation and the Republic of Croatia. The intention was to solve one of the key territorial issues, i.e. access to the sea. The Bosnia-Herzegovina Federation would rent part of the port facilities at Ploče for 99 years and Croatia would be guaranteed free transit across Neum municipality. The fourth document from the package was a preliminary agreement about principles for future confederation

Figure 29 Komšić's proposal of February 1994



Source: original document from the Council of Bosnia-Herzegovinan Croats

between Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Republic of Croatia. All documents were negotiated and signed without the Serbs but it was planned to offer all of them to the Serbs.

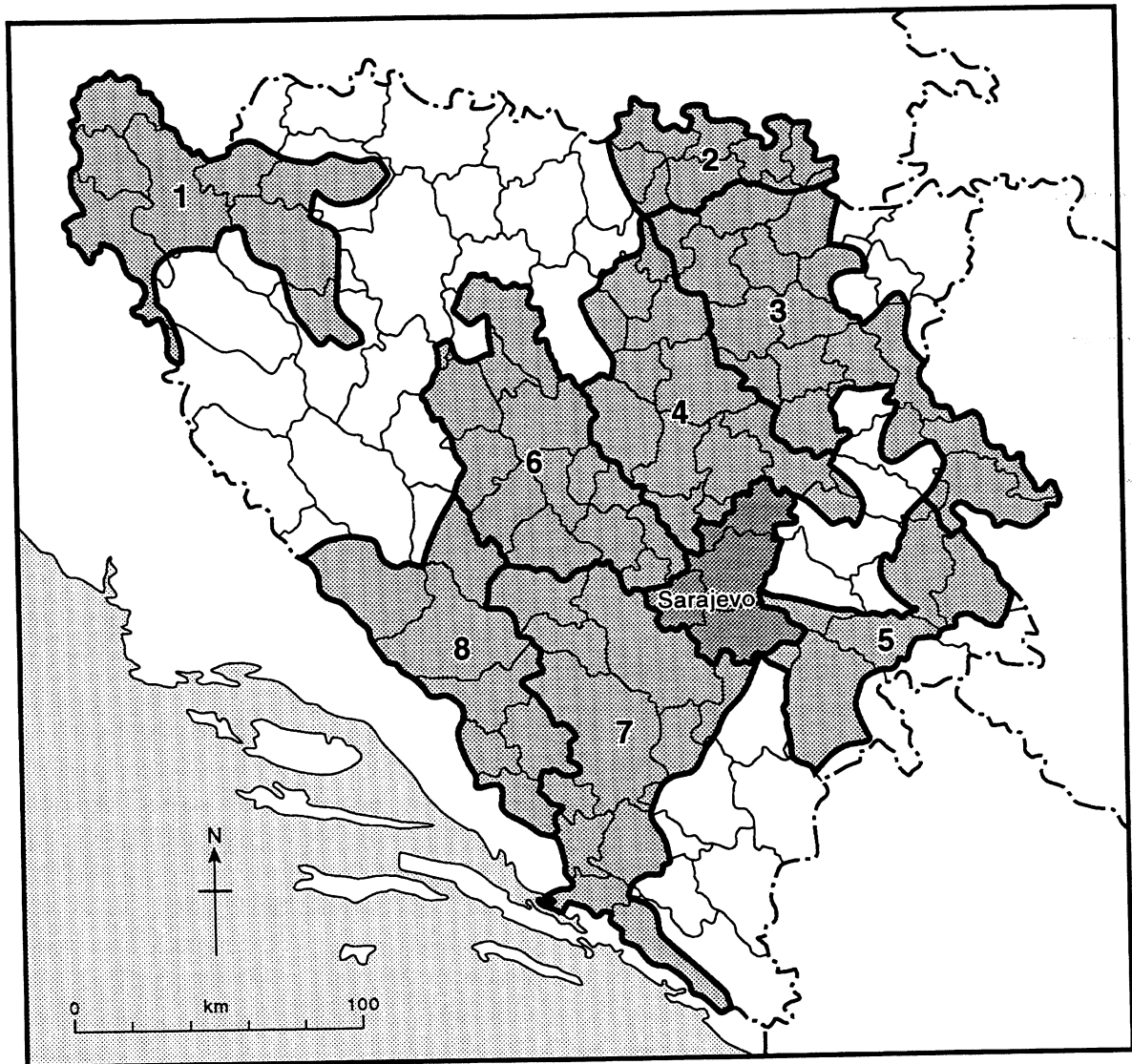
During March 1994 Croatian and Bosnian experts drafted a new constitution and other documents of federation. An agreement and new constitution were ratified by the Bosnian parliament in Sarajevo on 29 and 30 March. The parliament summoned for that occasion consisted of the Muslim and Croat representatives legally elected in 1990. The map proposal was finally agreed during negotiations held in the US embassy in Vienna from 7 to 11 May. The proposed federation consisted of eight cantons plus Sarajevo as a capital district (Figure 30) It was based on areas with Croat and Serb majorities in the 1991 census and proposed 58% of the territory for the Federation and the remaining 42% for the Serbs. According to 1991 census data, the Federation would encompass 2,843,889 inhabitants, of which 52.1% were Muslims, 24.1% Croats, 16.9% Serbs and 6.9% others (mostly 'Yugoslavs').

The biggest problems encountered related to a delimitation of cantons in Central Bosnia and the Neretva river valley, including the town of Mostar, which would be acceptable to both Croats and Muslims; both areas had been the cause of major Croat-Muslim conflict during 1993. A compromise was found in forming two cantons (numbers 6 and 7) designed to create parity between the two communities at the local government level. The Croats also made a significant concession in allowing Neum to be included in canton 7. Therefore, only two of the proposed cantons (numbers 2 and 8) had Croat majorities, while the Muslims were the dominant group in four cantons.

With regard to the Serbs, the proposal took little account of realities on the ground and much of the 70% of Bosnian territory controlled by the Serbs was included in various Federation cantons. This reflected a principle of nonrecognition of Serbian aggression and ethnic cleansing. However, the difficulty of realising this principle on the ground quickly became clear at a meeting on 13 May in Geneva between US, Russian, British, German, Belgian and Greek foreign ministers to "*co-ordinate joint strategy towards resolution of the conflict in Bosnia*", at which a territorial compromise was suggested based on a 51:49 distribution between the Federation and the Serbs. This distribution involved concessions to the Serbs which were intended to encourage them to join the peace process but which also gave the impression that Serbian aggression was being rewarded. Moreover, despite the fact that the US President's special envoy Charles Redman had been intimately involved in the drafting of the Croat-Muslim proposal, the US was now supporting a different proposal – a state of affairs which clearly illustrated confusion and division in the international community on a scale which would make implementation of the Federation proposal almost impossible.

Nevertheless, the Croat-Muslim agreements could have long-lasting effects and if they are realised the situation would change completely. But whether the documents really were the turning point, only time will tell. US sponsorship over that stage of peace process certainly impressed the Muslims and Croats, but under what conditions can the Serbs be encouraged to join the process? If they do not enter the Federation, what would be the status of territories under their control? Can they secede legally from Bosnia-Herzegovina and join Serbia? What is the real role of Russia? Will it act on Serbia's behalf or will it try to convince the Serbs to give up the idea of a Greater-Serbia? Is there an agreement between the two superpowers that each will influence one of the Bosnian groups or could this mark the beginning of a new conflict on a much higher level than that of Bosnia itself? These and many other questions remain open and will continue to challenge those seeking peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Figure 30 The Croat-Muslim Federation proposal of May 1994



No.	Provisional name	Proposed Seat	Local government (predominantly)
1	West Bosnia	Bihać	Muslim
2	Bosnian Posavina	Bosanski Brod	Croat
3		Tuzla	Muslim
4		Zenica	Muslim
5		Goražde	Muslim
6	Central Bosnia	Travnik	Croat - Muslim parity
7	Neretva	Mostar	Croat - Muslim parity
8	West Herzegovina	?	Croat
	Sarajevo	Sarajevo	Muslim

Source: *Večernji list* 16/5/94

4. Conclusions

The maps discussed can be divided into two main groups. The first group consists of 'division maps', that is maps proposing various types of internal reorganisation in Bosnia. These maps show regional divisions, often termed 'cantonisation'. The intention of these proposals was to promote decentralisation while maintaining Bosnia's international boundaries and integrity. Although they were often based on ethnic principles, the division maps did not contemplate a dissolution of the country. Such maps were proposed twice by the European Community (the Cutiliero and Vance-Owen proposals) and several times by the Croats, the latest of which was Komsic's proposal of February 1994. The joint Croat-Muslim proposal from Meotugorje (August 1992) also belongs in this group. The division proposals tend not to recognise the results of military conquest and ethnic cleansing.

The second group consists of partition maps. More or less openly, these maps propose delimitations resulting in the dissolution of Bosnia. The Owen-Stoltenberg proposal belongs to this group, along with all the variant maps drawn in connection with it. The idea of a partitioned Bosnia was most strongly supported by the Serbs; indeed, while the other two communities have generally pledged to maintain Bosnia's integrity, the Serbs have been unwilling to talk in terms of any kind of unitary Bosnia, let alone Bosnia as a sovereign state. By establishing and organising SAR's during 1991, they secured what they perceived to be a minimum territory before any armed conflict began, and then began to appropriate larger areas by means of brutal but highly effective tactics, in particular the systematic expulsion of non-Serbs from the SAR's and other Serb-occupied areas. This so-called ethnic cleansing had a dual effect: first, it changed the ethnic structure of Serb-controlled areas to the Serbs' advantage; and second, the expelled population served to disrupt the ethnic balance elsewhere and generate tensions between the other two communities. It could therefore be argued that the partition of Bosnia, which seems to be the most likely result of the conflict, was effectively secured when the Serbs proclaimed their first Autonomous Regions. In this scenario, the Croats and Muslims are effectively minor players, fighting only to hold on to what the Serbs have not already taken. Their position worsened still further when it became apparent that the international community might legitimise war gains through negotiations. If more than 50% of Bosnian territory is ceded to the Serbs, there will simply not be enough space for the Croats and Muslims. Nevertheless, the revised Vance-Owen plan clearly showed that aggression could be profitable and that *fait accompli* could well become the key principle of delimitation. The subsequent Owen-Stoltenberg map was based on existing front lines and therefore also served to legitimise territorial war gains.

The federation agreement between Croats and Muslims represented a significant step forward, enabling the two communities to clarify their position on two basic issues: 1) the status of the Bosnian Serbs and the territory they control; and 2) the delimitation between a Croat-Muslim Bosnia and Serb-controlled areas. However, the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina remains unclear because, without Serbian participation, the agreement can only be seen as a solution for part of the country. It is clear that a centralised, unitary Bosnia is no longer possible. Cantonisation has already been agreed upon by the Muslims and Croats, and the Serbs can join – or perhaps be forced to join by NATO. A new delimitation will be necessary either way but it will not be easily attained and a number of new maps can be expected.

Table 6: Chronology of important events and territorial proposals 1990-94

Event	Date	Notes	Figure
Elections for Parliament and presidency	18/11/90 and 2/12/90	End of "socialist" period	3
Census	31/3/91	Statistical basis for subsequent division and partition proposals	8, 9
Self-organisation of the Serbs	Spring-Autumn 1991	<i>De facto</i> secession of the Bosnian Serbs	9
Proclamation of independence in Croatia and Slovenia	25/6/91	End of Yugoslavia; beginning of Greater-Serbian aggression	
Proclamation of Croatian communities in Bosnia	November 1991	Provoked by activity of Bosnian Serbs; basis for later Croat-Muslim conflicts	13
Referendum on independence	29/2/92 and 1/3/92	Legal basis for sovereignty and international recognition of Bosnia-Herzegovina; trigger for Bosnian Serb proclamation of formal secession	
Cutiliero's proposal	March 1992	Beginning of international mediation; the first abortive proposal; accepted by none of the communities	9 (15, 16)
Beginning of the war	April 1992	Greater-Serbian occupation	19, 20
Medugorje (HDZ/SDA) proposal	August 1992	Abortive attempt at cantonization; proposed jointly by groups of Muslims and Croats	18
Vance-Owen proposal	January 1993	Second abortive international proposal; accepted only by the Croats; Croat-Muslim conflicts followed	21 (22, 23)
Owen-Stoltenberg proposal	August 1993	Third abortive international proposal; indirectly sanctioned partition of the country; formally accepted by the Croats and Serbs, opposed by the Muslims	26
Croat-Muslim agreement	February-April 1994	Effective peace process between the two sides backed by the U.S.A	30

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