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ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF BiH³
COMMAND OF RV⁴ AND PVO⁵

DEFENCE OF THE REPUBLIC
MILITARY SECRET
STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Strictly confidential No.08/896-1
Zenica, 17 February 1995

F I N A L A N A L Y S I S
OF THE SREBRENICA
AND ŽEPA AIRLIFTS

- GŠ OF THE ARMY OF RBiH⁶
Attn: Brigadier General
Enver Hadžihasanović

Pursuant to your verbal order, we hereby deliver you the analysis of the work of the functioning of the airlifts to Srebrenica, Žepa and Goražde.

Delivered:
Title
AA⁷

Standing in for the Commandant

Colonel Erdin Hrustić

CONTENTS:

- Introduction

- Main tasks of the airlift

- Final analysis of the Srebrenica airlift
 - a. Introduction
 - b. Engagement of forces and equipment
 - c. Conditions in which tasks were executed
 - d. Losses and damages
 - e. Conclusion

Addendum No.1: Overview of flights to Srebrenica.

¹ Translator's note: most likely a typing mistake – it should have been GŠ which is the abbreviation for the Main Staff

² t/n: Command Post

³ t/n: Bosnia and Herzegovina

⁴ t/n: Air Force

⁵ t/n: Anti-Aircraft Defence

⁶ t/n: Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina

⁷ t/n: ad acta

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4. Final analysis of the Žepa airlift
 - a. Introduction
 - b. Engagement of forces and equipment
 - c. Conditions in which tasks were executed
 - d. Losses and damages
 - e. Conclusion

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Addendum No.2: Overview of flights to Žepa.

5. Conclusion

Addendum No.3: R⁸: 1:100,000 map /disposition of enemy PVO front line/
Žepa and Srebrenica.

1. INTRODUCTION

During the time between 27 February 1993 and 7 May 1995, an airlift was maintained from the territories of RBiH to meet the needs of the enclaves, Srebrenica, Žepa, and Goražde. The primary aim of introducing and maintaining the airlift was delivering and providing the equipment for armed combat, evacuation of wounded casualties, the functioning of the bodies of authorities within the enclaves, additional training of the officer corps on the free territories of RBiH and maintaining the communication.

Establishing and maintaining the airlift was of great significance for creating conditions for defending the population and territories when they were completely encircled and blockaded, despite UNPROFOR's presence since it did not fulfil its mandate to protect the civilian population and the territory that was called enclave. The morale of fighters and people has significantly improved, not only due to the delivery of UBS⁹ and MTS¹⁰ but also for the reassurance that they, after all, had not been abandoned and forgotten and that the bodies of the RBiH authorities are determined and ready to do anything for that free part of RBiH territory to be defended and preserved despite all aggressor's efforts to conquer the enclaves, and carry out "ethnic cleansing" using methods of genocide. In the process of realising this aim and fulfilling the tasks of establishing and maintaining the airlift, the members of RV and RVO showed great courage, dedication, and professional skill despite all exacerbating circumstances. Even though the aggressor succeeded in seizing the safe area of Srebrenica and Žepa, with the tacit agreement of the international community and failure to observe the Resolutions of the Security Council, what the members of RV and PVO did enabled for the armed combat to extend and eased the consequences of pulling out civilians and fighters onto the free territories of RBiH.

2. MAIN TASKS OF THE AIRLIFT

Main tasks of establishing and maintaining the airlift were:

- Transport of weapons and military equipment
- Transport of fighters and passengers for various reasons
- Transport of materials that would enable the functioning of military and civilian authorities
- Maintaining communication

⁸ t/n: ratio

⁹ t/n: lethal assets, war material

¹⁰ t/n: material and technical equipment

- Transport of wounded casualties, sick persons, and medical supplies
- Transport of food (salt)

F I N A L A N A L Y S I S

OF THE AIRLIFT FOR THE 2nd CORPS OF THE ARMY OF RBiH AND THE TUZLA-PODRINJE CANTON -- S R E B R E N I C A --

a) INTRODUCTION

An airlift was maintained from the free territory of RBiH during the time between 27 February 1993 and 30 March 1993 to meet the needs of the 2nd Corps and the Tuzla-Podrinje canton in the encircled Srebrenica region. From 31 December 1994 until 7 May 1995, the Srebrenica enclave was supplied via this airlift to Žepa. Before the latest Chetnik offensive, 42,000 people lived in Srebrenica area, of whom around 32,000 of people were from Zvornik, Bratunac, Vlasenica, Višegrad, and Han Pijesak. 20,000 people lived in the town itself, which was [illegible] times more than [illegible] free area of Srebrenica.

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c) CONDITIONS IN WHICH THE TASKS WERE EXECUTED

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A. FITNESS AND TRAINING LEVEL OF THE FORCES:

The transport helicopters were introduced as part of the ARBiH¹¹ armament on 14 February 1993. The first flight to Srebrenica left on 27 February 1993.

Within 12 days, two (air force) pilots, despite not having flown for a year, were successfully trained to fly at dusk and in daytime.

Considering the fact that until that point, there were no navigation pilots for medium-class transport helicopters Mi-8-T within Tuzla VG¹², the tasks were executed by two young pilots flying light-class multi-purpose helicopters. Four technicians were trained at the same time that the pilots were trained.

In a very short time, the crews began training and were trained for carrying out assigned tasks in good and adverse weather conditions during the daytime (dawn and dusk).

Despite the lack of tools, measuring and control devices, and literature, and having to work in the open air during wintertime, the technical team managed to service and maintain the airworthiness at a level necessary for carrying out the tasks.

B. FLIGHT SECURITY:

All flights of the airlift to Srebrenica were completed with minimum flight security:

- There was no navigation, meteorological or landing (take-off) security at the landing site
- Intelligence support - the flights flew over two front lines on the way to the landing site, and over two front lines on the way back.

The aggressor PVO system opened fire at each flight.

¹¹ t/n: Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina

¹² t/n: Air Force Group

A navigation pilot was slightly injured during one flight. Intelligence received and the actual state observed by the crew did not correspond, which complicated carrying out the tasks.

C. AIRSPACE CONTROL

At the time, as is the case today, ARBiH did not have control over the airspace within RBiH boundaries. All flights were carried out during the UN ban and while the aggressor had complete airspace control in RBiH and absolute superiority in the air.

D. OTHER CONDITIONS

- the tasks were carried out with helicopters that were not intended for those types of tasks (flying over the front line without first disabling the aggressor's PVO system) and with helicopters vital parts of which were not protected against infantry weapons.
- [the helicopters were] forced to land in the Srebrenica sector near the front line
- low level of secrecy while carrying out the tasks
- great mental and physical pressures on the crews
- each new flight was made more difficult by the constant upgrading of the aggressor's PVO

[illegible]) LOSSES AND DAMAGES

During the operating of the airlift:

- 1 helicopter crashed, the crew was slightly injured, the cargo was not destroyed (UBS)
The crash happened on Konjuh mountain, 5 minutes after take-off, due to overloading of the helicopter.
The helicopter was used for spare parts.
- 1 helicopter was slightly damaged after being hit by the enemy during its flight. Navigator pilot was slightly injured.

C O N C L U S I O N :

While the airlift was being maintained, 6 successful landings were carried out.

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covered about 140 square kilometres.¹³ This safe area was in close proximity of the very important corridor of Mali Zvornik-Sarajevo that was used for supplying the Sarajevo-Romanija Corps of the aggressor army. Since the beginning of the aggression on RBiH, the former JNA¹⁴ and paramilitary formations were systematically ethnically cleansing eastern Bosnia of Muslims.

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Srebrenica remained a symbol of defence for a long time. At the beginning of 1993, the Army of RBiH was advancing and at that time Srebrenica had at least some kind of a link. In some places, the Tuzla-Cerska corridor was barely two kilometres wide, but it still existed. The aggressor carried out offensives on Cerska, Konjević Polje, and Srebrenica, additionally mobilised two brigades of Serbia TO¹⁵, activated the Ponikve military airport near Užice, mobilised the Serbian volunteer brigade, while the army of the so-called Yugoslavia mobilised one armoured mechanised brigade and two motorised brigades of the Užice Corps, and positioned long-range

¹³ t/n: the beginning of the 4th page of the original document is cut off, thus the first part of the sentence is not visible

¹⁴ t/n: Yugoslav People's Army

¹⁵ t/n: Territorial Defence

artillery at four forward posts in Serbia: Banja Koviljača, Mali Zvornik, Ljubovija, and Bajina Bašta. Cerska and Konjević polje were seized, and the Chetnik forces approached Srebrenica. The fighters and the people of Srebrenica were determined not to allow the Chetniks to enter the town. Around 1000 fighters were defending the line, and 5000 unarmed civilians turned on the Chetniks, and they together managed to prevent the Chetniks from entering the town and slaughtering the people. On 15 April 1993, General Morillon entered Srebrenica. The demilitarised zone of Srebrenica was established on 19 April 1993. Even though the zone was declared a safe and demilitarised area, the Chetniks were constantly endangering it through sabotage attacks, preventing convoys of food and medical supplies from entering, and continuously carrying out propaganda activities. The Canadian battalion, which was later replaced by a Dutch battalion, did not fulfil the mandate as provided for in UN Resolutions 824 and 836. Due to UNPROFOR's hesitancy, the aggressor started the attacks at the beginning of June [illegible], only for it to start a general offensive on the safe area of Srebrenica at the beginning of July. The fighters and one part of the people of Srebrenica headed for a breakthrough towards the free territory of RBiH where a major part of them, with superhuman efforts, managed to break through towards Tuzla and Kladanj. The Chetniks seized the "safe area" of Srebrenica committing an unheard of genocide of the Muslim population.

b) ENGAGEMENT OF FORCES AND EQUIPMENT

In the period between 27 February 1993 and 30 March 1993, the airlift was operated by the forces and with the equipment of the Army of RBiH with engagement of crews from Tuzla VG. Planning, organisation, preparation, and control of the airlift were carried out by the Command of Tuzla VG via RV and PVO Administration that had been given the original task by ŠVK¹⁶.

2 medium-class transport helicopters Mi-8-T were engaged in maintaining the airlift.

On 10 March 1995, one helicopter crashed. The helicopter was destroyed, the crew slightly injured, and the cargo undamaged.

The following were engaged the airlift for Srebrenica:

- Air force (helicopter) pilots - 2
- Navigation pilots - 2
- Flight mechanics - 4

The airlift for Srebrenica was maintained for 33 days. In average, flight for Srebrenica were attempted every three days, and were successful every fifth day. It should be noted that only four pilots of the ARBiH were carrying out that task.

A total of 17 combat missions were carried out (one flight out, and a second flight back). Out of a total of 10 attempts to depart for Srebrenica, the crews succeeded in executing the mission 6 times, and four times the mission was not carried out due to the following reasons:

- One helicopter crash
- On one occasion, the mission was aborted due to intense aggressor PVO
- On two occasions, the mission was aborted due to bad weather conditions in the landing sector.

A total of 5 t of MTS and 10 t of UBS were transported to Srebrenica, and 20 wounded casualties and 29 passengers were evacuated.

¹⁶ t/n: Staff of the Supreme Command

c) CONDITIONS IN WHICH THE TASKS WERE
EXECUTED

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During the operation of the airlift, 6 landings were successfully executed in daytime which was very unfavourable in terms of flight security. Maintaining the airlift justified the purpose of its organising, because a certain amount of UBS and MTS were delivered, passengers transported for various reasons, and the wounded casualties evacuated. To a certain extent, maintaining the airlift enabled Srebrenica's fighters to prevent a quick breakthrough, capturing, and genocide of Muslims, and enabled the government structures to continue the political fight for the declaring of the zone around Srebrenica a safe area, which it never fully was due to ignoring the UN Resolutions and not observing mandates.

Note: The airlift to Žepa was also used to supply the Srebrenica zone, and it can be considered an extension of the airlift for Srebrenica. The airlift to Žepa was presented separately.

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F I N A L A N A L Y S I S

OF THE AIRLIFT FOR THE 1st / 2nd CORPS
OF THE ARMY OF RBH AND THE TUZLA - PODRINJE CANTON
-- Ž E P A --

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a) INTRODUCTION

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An airlift was maintained for the "safe area" of Žepa during the time between 31 December 1994 and 7 May 1995. The airlift was maintained until a helicopter crash in which the entire crew and nine passengers died. The zone of Žepa was in complete encirclement and was in a similar situation to the Srebrenica zone. The zone was defended by just one brigade, the 185th lbr¹⁷ Žepa. The front line was over 40 km long. The brigade was equipped with about 30% of infantry

¹⁷ t/n: Light Brigade

weapons, 2 60 mm MB¹⁸, 1 82 mm MB, 6 zolja¹⁹, and only 20,000 7.62 mm bullets.

Declaring this zone a safe area did not stop the aggressor from carrying out actions against it. With the interruption [in the delivery] of humanitarian aid, UNPROFOR not fulfilling its mandate, and enemy's preparations to seize the zone of Žepa, driving out, and genocide of Muslims, the primary issue was how to protect the people.

It was necessary to deliver UBS and MTS, establish a communication system, ensure the functioning of military and civilian authorities, and to lift the morale of fighters and the population of the Žepa zone.

Under those conditions, the airlift was established, effect of which was to enable a defence that lasted for half a year, and finally, in July '95, to enable the fighters and one part of the population to pull out to the free territories of Olovo, Kladanj, and Tuzla.

b) ENGAGEMENT OF FORCES AND EQUIPMENT

The airlift was organised during the period between 31 December 1995 and 7 May 1995 using the forces and equipment of the Army of RBiH with engagement of helicopters and crews from the RV and PVO of ARBiH.

The original order was given by Kakanj ŠVK (later on GŠ ARBiH) that obtained the assets for transport (UBS, MTS, and so on) via GLOC²⁰ and supplied the list of passengers that were to be taken to and from Žepa. The primary unit for the completion of the mission was Strhe Zenica and later the 2nd vbr²¹, with engagement of pilots from the Command of RV and PVO and the 1st vbr.

The command of RV and PVO ensured the maintenance of the lines of communication and engagement and engagement of the Command of the 185th lbr Žepa on handling the helicopters during their landings. Major Dževad Brugulja, who was formerly a pilot on Mi-8, should especially be mentioned as with his experience he enabled successful landings and coordination of RV and PVO of the 185th lbr for maintaining the airlift.

The types of helicopters used for executing the tasks were Mi 8 MTV, Mi-17, and Mi-8 AMT.

Participation of of the flyer group in the airlift:

- Air force pilots.....8
- Navigation pilots (navigators)....6
- Flight mechanics.....8

Hours of flight carried out	: 10.25
Amount of GM1 fuel used	: approximately 8,200 l
Transported into Žepa	: UBS - 17 t

Transported from Žepa: 46 passengers
5 wounded casualties

RST-Icom IC-A21 aviation transceiver radio was used for maintaining the communication between the helicopters and Žepa VON²².

c) CONDITIONS IN WHICH THE TASKS WERE EXECUTED:

Flights to Žepa started in conditions of total encirclement and blockade in every manner, even in [the delivery of] humanitarian food aid.

¹⁸ t/n: mortar

¹⁹ t/n: a zolja is a handheld rocket launcher designed in the former Yugoslavia

²⁰ t/n: Main Logistic Centre

²¹ t/n: Aviation Brigade

²² t/n: air force navigation officer

The aggressor established firm lines in the zone of responsibility of the 1st and the 2nd Corps along the axis from Sarajevo to Tuzla, with strong PVO and a communication line from the front end to the very borders of the Žepa zone. The VOJIN²³ system, with its centre on Jahorina, necessitated low-level flying above the mountainous terrain. The crews were not fully trained to perform momentary flights at night that included landing with a loaded helicopter on confident space at above 1500m high. The aggressor was intensively deploying PVO so as to prevent the airlift.

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one could not get a permit for that kind of flight.²⁴ There was the constant danger possibility that the enemy, despite that ban, would intercept flights on its territory with planes or helicopters even at the very landing point. Yet, despite everything, the pilots' great determination to help the people and fighters of Žepa had a positive effect of maintaining the airlift.

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Main conditions in which the tasks were executed:

- Insufficiently training of crews
- Lack of terrestrial navigational equipment
- High density of enemy PVO equipment along the front line, lack of information about the enemy behind the lines on the occupied territory
- Unprotected helicopter (not armoured and without decoy flares)
- All missions were carried out at night to reduce the possibility of being spotted and hit
- Flights were carried out in very low altitudes
- Moonlight was the source of light
- The enemy was in constant readiness to take down and destroy helicopters
- Helicopter was loaded with cargo
- High landing altitude - 1480 m
- Narrow landing terrain
- There was only one safe direction for landing
- The crews used JPS-100 navigation equipment that only partly helped them to navigate accurately
- Intense psychological pressure on the pilots to carry out the missions in all conditions
- The search and rescue service could not have been organised in night conditions
- Inadequate treatment and life conditions of pilots and flight technicians carried out the missions.

(pilots were required to carry out the most difficult task which could be asked of a medium-class transport helicopter pilot, who up to that point had been treated as a combatant in the rear)

The death of the crew on the last flight significantly affected the pilots.

It is important to mention that in that period the enemy succeeded in establishing a very strong PVO system. In 80% [of cases] attacks were recorded.

During one flight, due to damage the helicopter had to remain in Žepa (at the Igrišnik heliport) so that the technical crew, which was sent to Žepa by helicopter, could repair the damage.

The task was completed successfully.

d) LOSS AND DAMAGES:

²³ t/n: Air Surveillance, Warning, and Guidance

²⁴ t/n: the beginning of the 8th page of the original document is cut off, thus the first part of the sentence is not visible

During the maintaining of the airlift in the period between 31 December and 7 May 1995, the following happened:

- Crash in which the crew (3 members) and 9 passengers died, and 10 passengers were injured. The helicopter was destroyed - remained at Igrišnik in the Žepa zone.
- On 5 occasions, helicopter was damaged by being hit by infantry fire
- On 1 occasion, due to damage, the helicopter did not return according to plan, but instead a technical crew had to be sent by a helicopter to repair it on the scene and after that it successfully returned. /This operation was carried out better than the rescue of the American pilot!/

Thanks to the crews - their individual preparation and courage, there were no greater losses and damage.

C O N C L U S I O N :

In the period between 31 December 1995 and 7 May 1995, certain results in transporting UBS, MTS, and passengers were achieved through maintaining the airlift, which also significantly increased b/g²⁵ of the 185th lbr Žepa and the psychological state and morale both of the fighters and the civilian population, and increased the defence capabilities of the Žepa safe area, which later on made possible for the fighters and people from the Žepa zone to be pulled out to the free territories of Olovo, Kladanj, and Tuzla, and also eased the consequences of the genocide which was prepared and carried out against the Muslim population from this area.

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Note: A certain quantity of the transported equipment was taken over by the Command of the 28th Division Srebrenica, and this data may be used for the assessment of aid to the Srebrenica "safe area".
We did not have precise data on the type of UBS and MTS, and other materials.

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Analysis of the airlift to Goražde is presented only in the form of a chart in Addendum No.3.

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Addendum No. 1: Flights to Srebrenica

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No.	Date	Flight/ Duration	Transported		Flight success, [enemy] action
			Out	Back	
1	27 February 1993	2/1.15	2.5 t MTS	-	action

²⁵ t/m: combat readiness

2	27 February 1993	2/1.15	2.5 t MTS	-	action	
3	8 March 1993	1/0.30	2.5 t UBS	2.5 t UBS	No action due to NMU (bad weather conditions ²⁶)	
4	8 March 1993	1/0.30	2.5 t UBS	2.5 t UBS		
5	10 March 1993	3/2.15	2.5 t UBS	-	action	
6	10 March 1993	1/0.05	2.5 t UBS	2.5 t UB[S]	Helicopter crash	
7	12 March 1993	2/1.30	2.5 t UBS	15 wounded casualties	action	
8	20 March 1993	2/1.15	2.5 t UBS	19 passengers	action	
9	24 March 1993	1/0.35	2.5 t UBS	2.5 t UBS	Helicopter damaged Mission aborted (Pilot slightly injured)	
10	30 March 1993	2/1.15	2.5 t UBS	10 passengers 5 wounded casualties	action	
T O T A L		17/10.25	10 t UBS 20 t UBS	10 t UBS 20 wounded casualties 29 passengers	6	
					10 t UBS	5 t MTS

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Addendum No.2: Flights to Žepa

No.	Date	Flight/ Duration	Transported		Flight success, [enemy] action
			Out	/ Back	
1	31 December 1994	2/1.10	3 t UBS	-	[circled number: 1]
2	10 January 1995	2/1.10	2 t UBS 1 t MTS	-	[circled number: 1]
3	6 February 1995	2/1.10	3 t UBS	3 passengers	[circled number: 1] action
4	11 February 1995	2/1.15	2.5 t UBS	16 passengers	[circled number: 1] action
5	16 February 1995	1/0.35	3 t UBS	-	[circled number: 1] action - helicopter damaged and grounded in Žepa until 22 February 1995
	22 February 1995	1/0.25	-	5 wounded casualties	Return from Žepa Action
6	22 February 1995	2/1.10	2 t MTS 4 passengers	4 passengers	[circled number: 1]
7	19 April 1995	2/1.00	3.5 t UBS	23 passengers	[circled number: 1]
8	21 April 1995	2/1.00	3 t MTS	-	[circled number: 1] action
9	30 April 1995	2/1.00	3.5 t UBS	-	[circled number: 1] action helicopter damaged
10	7 May 1995	1/0.30	MTS=0.5 t UBS 22 passengers	-	helicopter crash helicopter destroyed at landing point PVO action

²⁶ t/n: in source language the abbreviation NMU stands for bad weather conditions, which was explained in the brackets

T O T A L	17/925	6 t MTS 17 T UBS 26 passengers	46 passengers 5 wounded casualties	9 successful 1 unsuccessful (crash) Actions on 7 occasions
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