

Basic Thesis this study should try to prove

The Croatian Army has successfully executed the Medak Pocket Operation and thus fortified the Political and Diplomatic (International and external) position of the Republic of Croatia

UN Resolutions have confirmed the Republic of Croatia's sovereignty over all of its territories, the country made its internal affairs more stable, and foreign policy more credible. But some individual actions, some alleged committed crimes have made the thesis of "the equal guilt for the war" possible.

Croatia has followed the strategy (the "mouse bites, the pinching off salients") of returning under its sovereignty "the pink zones" – Miljevac, Maslenica, Peruča, Medak Pocket – but also exerted diplomatic and military pressure to re-integrate its occupied territories. Military actions followed whenever negotiations with rebel Serbs failed; at the same time Croatia pressured UN to make UNPROFOR effective in its mandate. The operation called the Medak Pocket was undertaken in order to lessen the pressure on the town of Gospić and to repel the imminent danger of cutting Croatia in half on the Velebit Mountains (Gospić-Karlobag road). The sources for this thesis/statement are books and memoirs regarding that period of time, especially "Sve Moje Bitke" by General Janko Bobetko, Ministry of Defence documents dealing with the Medak Pocket operation, UN Security Council documents, witness reports and other sources. Serb military documents, confiscated during the "Oluja" operation, speak of an attack on Gospić being planned to commence 15 (fifteen) minutes before the Croatian operation started (Croatian Army Archives – a copy in General Markač's possession). The book by General Milisav Sekulić "Knin je pao u Beogradu" ("Knin capitulated in Belgrade") is a valuable source from the other side.

The planning and the execution of the operation were exemplary – double encirclement, “throwing off” enemy forces on the Velebit Mountains and taking the enemy Serb HQ by surprise. UN forces and the international community were also surprised and both had not evaluated Croatia’s military and diplomatic abilities properly. In spite of the general mobilization done in the so-called Republika Srpska, Serbian counter-attack and terrorist bombardments of cities in Croatia’s interior, Croats held the attained front-line along the river Lika.

The Security Information Service (SIS) conducted the official inquiry on the Medak Pocket operation, under the Ministry of Defense. Analysis has been done on a much later date. The weekly publication “Focus” writes “...It seems that the action was conducted without SIS’ knowledge, which to any person who knows military order, must seem at the very least laughable...” But this truly did occur. The SIS Commissioner at the time did not know the Operation was going to take place. General Bobetko remained tight-lipped and details were only released to a few planning and executive officers. Later developments confirmed its secrecy. The fact is that Croatian military police, which came to Gospić under the direct order of Defense Minister Gojko Šušak and at President Tuđman, were not allowed to perform their investigative duties. An anonymous high-ranking official at the Crime Branch of Croatia’s army military police confirmed this. All of that has cast a doubt on the official version about the Operation. Reports of dissatisfaction, of possible soldiers’ rebelling, the threats they made to high state officials, were covered and those reports on crimes committed were covered up. The successful and, according to the American military attaché, “clean military action”, was thus made dishonourable.

Conclusion: The Croatian Army, by behaving in a modern fashion (according to the NATO doctrine “maneuver and fire”) successfully defeated the enemy and achieved the goals of that small scale military and police operation. Although, after later exerted international community pressure, the Croatian Army had to withdraw. Immediately following the Operation, Croatia gained the favourable UN Security Council Resolution 871 (Resolution by which, without any doubt, its sovereignty is confirmed over all its territories). After the Medak Pocket operation, there were no more doubts about what the new Croatian Army’s abilities were. There was also no doubt about whether decisive Croatian politics were justified.

International Community and UNPROFOR (Canadian – French Military Contingent) having exerted pressure and meddling with the operation; they continued to do so after it was completed in order to protect their national interests; they made up the battle – a larger scale conflict between Canadians and Croats which in fact did not occur.

“The forgotten Canadian battle”, “The greatest Canadian battle after the Korean war”, or “The Canadian non-existing battle” proved that an effort was made to try and “freeze” the military/political situation in Croatia. (Sources: “Tested Mettle” and “Chances for Peace”, Canadian sources and documents, reports of witnesses, UNPROFOR documents, accounts from “the other, opposing side” that the battle never took place – General Milisav Sekulić. The document from Croatia’s Ministry of Defense - spokesperson’s statement published in the weekly “Nacional” on December 10th 2002). There were skirmishes, but they also occurred between the Canadians and the Serb side. An example of this is an ambush on Canadian troops on September 9th in Medak by Serb soldiers. Serbian and Canadian soldiers mingled, their outposts were no less than 50 metres apart. Serbs provoked Croats so Canadians had to negotiate with the Serbs in order to make them stop such activities. When Canadian troops returned fire, when they started firing on Croatian positions, it happened after a days long firefight between Croatian and Serbian forces. At night, it was very difficult to differentiate between a Serb and a Canadian. All the more so because in front of the Canadian outposts enemy patrols often clashed (“Chances for Peace”). The Croats were highly suspicious of the Canadians, (the Western Slavonia experience), having witnessed the arrogant and violent behavior of the Canadian contingent. But Canadians were also hostile towards the Croats (“They preferred the Serbs, the Croats they didn’t like.” – Jim Calvin). Incidents, justice that was imposed, prejudices against “...fucking Croatia, bastards...”, “The Croats remembered us because of our decision to use force against them in the Medak Pocket.” All of it was underlined by the Canadian pressure (the will to enter the Medak Pocket sooner than it was agreed upon). There were also existing Canadian reasons – the Somalia scandal, covered up by the military’s top brass; and the peacekeeping duties, for which no personnel, hardware or money was provided. Strong military and political pressure had been used in order to prove equal blame on the warring factions in crime. (Serbs weren’t the only “bad guys”, Croats were caught red-handed in “ethnic cleansing”). There are indications that “special operations” were undertaken to undermine Croatia’s Army and Croatia itself, as similar “mischief” was planned against Croats in Bosnia in 1994 (“Tested Mettle” – Sir Michael Rose’s

idea). Members of the SAS were also present with the Canadian troops in the Medak Pocket ("Tested Mettle"). UNPROFOR's General Jean Cot to Lieutenant Colonel Calvin - "ŠtheĆ UN by withdrawing loses its credibility; the peace should be imposed by force." UNPROFOR therefore suddenly turned into a decisive force, ready to take risks, no matter what "big mistakes" were committed in the process. There were also indications of France and Great Britain threatening Croatia with air strikes in the "offensive" to expel Croats from the Medak Pocket.

It was inadvertently admitted that: "This wasn't exactly a battle by Western standards, where enemy lines are attacked by barrage and maneuver. Canadians skirmished with Croats on 20 separate occasions. "There were bullet exchanges from one and the other side, but there were no casualties - the direct conflict was avoided writes the French publication "Le Monde." "Le Quotidien de Paris" writes: "...it seemed that the Croatian Army has systematically fired upon UN forces stationed along the line of fire in order to make them re-deploy..." In only one UN document – SITREPORT (UNPROFOR Situation UNPROFOR on September 16th 1993) it states that Croatian forces have at 22.15 hours engaged Canadian forces who then returned fire.

Ten Croatian soldiers in all were killed during the whole operation – from the beginning on September 9th until the Croatian withdrawal on September 17th at 18.00 hours. Where are the 27 bodies of Croatian soldiers killed by Canadian bullets? At Rijeka hospital, a pathology post-mortem was done on the bodies of serbian soldiers killed in Medak operation. I,ve put a question wheather fallen Croatian soldiers were also treted in the same hospital but there were no answer yet. If a single 5.56 caliber bullet used by Canadians was found in their bodies it would be proof for Canadian version,if not -Canadians are not telling us the truth?!!

CONCLUSION: There are strong indications that the international community, (Great Britain and France using their political representatives on the ground – Owen, Cot, Calvin, the Canadians, Intelligence and their Special Services), imposed their interpretation of the military and political situation in Croatia to the rest of the world and achieved equating guilt on all sides and prolonging the existence of a Republika Srpska, and therefore the existence of Yugoslavia. Accordingly, that "battle" initially did not have the meaning it acquired later. This was due to political reasons alone. As Canadian public opinion was already disgusted by the behaviour of Canadian soldiers in Somalia (torture and murder), the Canadian authorities at first covered up the number of wounded in their peacekeeping operations around the world. The Canadian Military command hushed up an insignificant skirmish

between Croatian and Canadian soldiers, that took place when Canadians retook Croatian positions in order to, a year later, under the pressure of veterans, transform it into a battle.

After the official investigation was done on “Harmony” – ROTO 2 Operation (the code name for the UNPROFOR Canadian contingent operation in the former Yugoslavia, one of Canada’s many peacekeeping operations), it was discovered that many former “blue helmets” were suffering from stress, PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) and malignant diseases. These were allegedly developed after contaminated bauxite was used in Croatia to build the Canadian defence lines. After years of denial by Canadian authorities and constant requests for reparations by Canadian soldiers this became the question of the utmost importance, to which Canadian politicians and the Army had to answer. So the skirmish has become a heroic Canadian battle against Croatian troops, artillery and three-fold stronger forces. The Canadians repelled the attack and were consequently victorious over the Croatians. According to Deputy minister of Croatian ministry of Defence (taken from minutes from a conversation between the Canadian Ambassador and him) the Canadian side wanted to send an investigating team to Croatia which would freely and independently of Croatian authorities investigate whether Canadian soldiers were infected by radio-active soil in Croatia. After the Deputy Minister refused to discuss the matter in a way which would jeopardize Croatian sovereignty, the Canadian Ambassador in diplomatic words threatened revenge – political damage Canada could inflict upon Croatia. It appears that the battle that did not take place reappeared in questionnaires Croatians must answer in order to apply for a Canadian travel Visa: “Did you take part in Croatia’s Homeland war?” This could very well be the political damage the Canadian Ambassador threatened. Other examples substantiating this are the refusal to issue a travel Visa to the former health and defence Minister Andrija Hebrang, to the former Director of HIS, Miroslav Tuđman, and many other Croatian citizens, soldiers in Homeland war, who were supposed to travel to Canada.

The crime

Though one cannot deny the existence of victims killed, there is doubt about whether they were killed outside the theatre of operations. The tally of victims also varies: from a few dozen to more than one hundred (as in Croatian General Bobetko’s indictment). There is a possibility that those victims were simply attributed to being killed by Croats. The Serb Army and UN claim that the majority of people were not killed in combat. The Serbian source

“Veritas’s” numbers mismatch those of the Croatian Helsinki Board. There is proof that some alleged victims of the Oluja Operation are alive while some of the living were listed as dead. There is also the possibility that some people were victims of infighting between Serb forces. There is a case of this during the night of September 9th 1993 in Medak. The “people’s defence” concept is based on arming all people – civilians and the army. Civilians mixed together with the army. Documents exist wherein weapons were said to have been handed to civilians. A female civilian named “Danica” was found with a mortar and a machine-gun for example. Documents issued in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and found with the deceased, question the validity about the victims on the Serbian side, and therefore also question the responsibility for causing those deaths – commanding responsibility instead of personal responsibility.

The international community and ICTY rely on Sava Štrbac and “Veritas” – the purpose of which is the criminalization of Croatia’s Homeland war and Croatia itself. The serious political consequences that should be drawn from this are the re-establishment of Republika Srpska’s legality and the punishment of the Republic of Croatia by narrowing or withholding its sovereignty and condemning it “to die in long agony”.

Conclusion:

“All the available data about the victims should be gathered, victims should be identified either as combatants or as civilians, with the exact description of military activities noted. The truth needs to be established as comprehensively as possible using official Croatian documents, the Croatian Helsinki Board, the UN, “Veritas” and the ICTY.

Bibliography and Annex to the Analysis

- UN documents, Canadian analysis, Croatian and Serbian sources
- ICTY documents
- Public sources
- Foreign and Croatian press, the electronic media
- Maps
- Photographs