

MONITOR EXCLUSIVE

# Evidence Indicates Bosnia Massacre



CIA/AP

## Eyewitness report supports charges by US of killings

By David Rohde

Staff writer of the Christian Science Monitor

NOVA KASABA, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

**A**n on-the-spot investigation by The Christian Science Monitor has uncovered strong evidence that a massacre of Bosnian Muslim prisoners took place last month.

A Monitor reporter, traveling without the permission of rebel Bosnian Serbs, looked into charges by American officials that hundreds, perhaps thousands, of Muslims were killed by the Serbs after they overran two UN-protected "safe areas."

The Serbs deny the US charges, which were based on spy satellite photos.

The visit by this reporter was the first by a Western journalist to the sites of the alleged atrocities near the former safe areas of Srebrenica and Zepa. The physical evidence was grim and convincing.

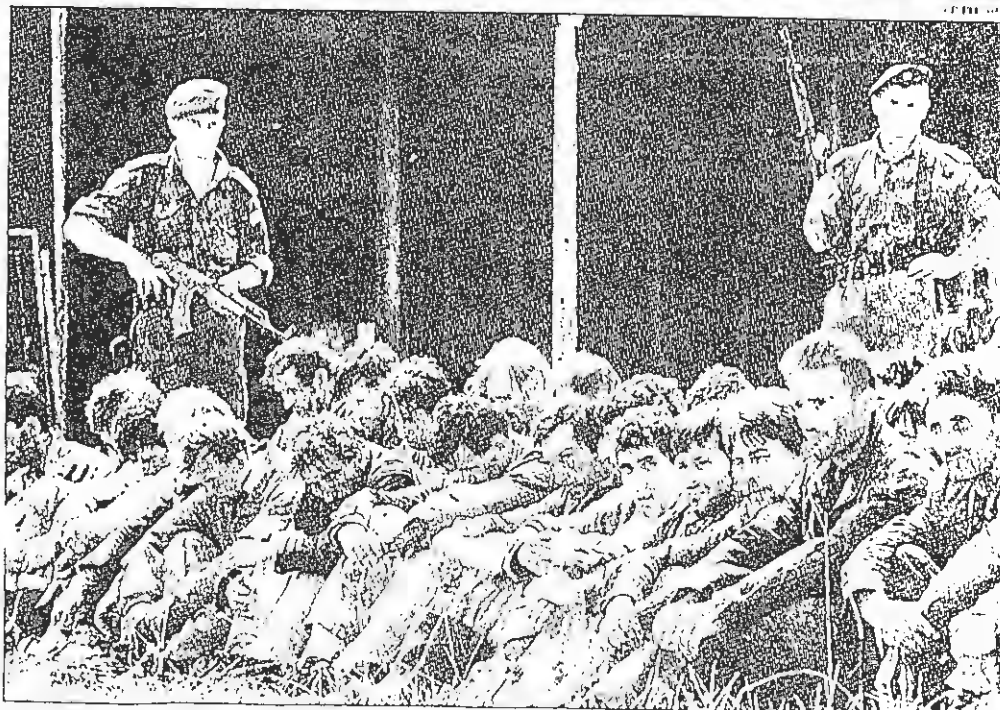
■ At one site shown in the spy photos this reporter saw what appeared to be a decomposing human leg protruding from the freshly turned dirt.

■ Large, empty ammunition boxes littered the open fields where the ground recently had been dug.

■ Diplomas, photos, and other personal effects of Srebrenica Muslims were scattered near the areas of disturbed earth.

■ At a soccer stadium in a nearby town, human teeth, blood, and other evidence indicated large numbers of persons were confined, and perhaps shot.

See **MASSACRE** page 5



**MASS GRAVES:** A CIA satellite photo (top) shows disturbed earth in field near Nova Kasaba, a small village in Serb-held Bosnia. At site marked X, a Monitor reporter found human leg bones. Other evidence, including personal effects, littered nearby sites. At bottom, Bosnian Serb police guard captured Bosnian Muslim soldiers after Srebrenica enclave fell.

# Reporter Sees Evidence of Bosnia Massacre

**MASSACRE** from Page 1

UN officials estimate that 4,000 to 6,000 Muslim men are still missing in the wake of the Srebrenica and Zepa assaults. So far there is little indication that these men are being held prisoner. Dozens of local Bosnian Serb civilians and soldiers, most of them unaware they were speaking to a foreign journalist's translator, said they had heard nothing about a large group of captives from the former enclaves.

According to Bosnian Serb troops, all Muslims captured in the area are being summarily executed. One soldier, reporting to his commanding officers in Nova Kasaba, said a group of more than 300 Muslims who were armed with only 50 guns are still hiding in the hills around the village of Cerska, near Zepa.

The soldier proudly declared that his unit had captured seven of these Muslims last Saturday and killed two. "We're going back to catch the group tomorrow," said the soldier. "We just talk to them and then shoot them."

US officials first made public charges about alleged atrocities by Bosnian Serbs in this area on Aug. 10. In a closed session of the UN Security Council, US ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright said that as many as 2,700 Bosnian Muslims might have been hastily executed and buried in shallow graves.

In a dramatic presentation of evidence, Ms. Albright displayed spy plane and satellite photos of an area in the small farming village of Nova Kasaba, about 14 miles west of Srebrenica. "Before" photos showed prisoners crowded into a soccer field and undisturbed earth in an empty field a half mile away. "After" photos from a few days later show no prisoners and three areas of disturbed earth in outlying fields that resemble mass graves.

In addition, US officials cited the account of an elderly Muslim refugee, who said that he had been one of 600 men held at the Nova Kasaba soccer field. Bosnian Serb soldiers trucked the Muslim men in groups of 20 to a nearby field and machine gunned them, said the refugee, who escaped when he was left for dead among the corpses. The bodies of hundreds of men were then bulldozed into mass graves, according to the refugee's account.

During a reporter's visit to the site this Wednesday, three areas of fresh digging were clearly visible. On the edge of the smallest of the three alleged mass graves, what appeared to be a human femur and tibia surrounded by bits of tattered fabric jutted from rich brown dirt.

One hundred yards from the second-largest grave, handwritten notes from a March 14, 1995, local government meeting in the village of Potocari, located inside the former UN "safe area" of Srebrenica, were found. Twenty feet from the same grave, a 1982 elementary school diploma and what appeared to be washed-out personal photographs of a Muslim youth from the village of Kravice, also near Srebrenica, were found.

Approximately a quarter mile from the three sites, Muslim prayer beads, clothing, and still legible receipts and election ballots from Srebrenica were found.

Two empty ammunition boxes, each of which appeared to hold several hundred rounds, were seen near the three sites. A handful of shell casings was found across the street from one of the sites, but few shell casings were found on the graves themselves. Truck and bulldozer tracks leading to the alleged graves were visible.

The largest alleged grave measured roughly 300 feet by 300 feet, the second 250 feet by 200 feet, and the smallest 100 feet by 50 feet. And about a half mile from the sites, two large piles of fresh earth had been dumped near a small stream.

No guards were posted in the area which consists of homes that were destroyed when the village was captured by the Bosnian Serbs in 1992. One group of soldiers questioned why a car was parked in the area, but moved on.

A second charge of Bosnian Serb atrocities involves the village of Bratunac, 10 miles northwest of the Srebrenica area.

In the first few days after the fall of Srebrenica, residents on the Serb side of the Drina River reported hearing gunfire coming from Bratunac.

According to published accounts, Serbs who crossed into Bratunac during the period were told that Muslims were being executed in the local soccer stadium.

During a visit to the site on Saturday, ev-

**On the edge of one of the three alleged mass graves was what appeared to be a human leg jutting from the dirt.**

idence that prisoners were held, tortured, and possibly killed was found in an abandoned building on the stadium grounds.

Dozens of piles of feces line the floor of the three-room, one-story building, and in two places it appeared that someone or something had been repeatedly rubbed through the waste. Several dozen bullet holes pocked the interior walls, and what appeared to be dried blood stains dotted the floor and one wall.

In an interview with a Serbian magazine at the time, Bosnian Serb military commander Gen. Ratko Mladic said captured men from Srebrenica were being taken to Bratunac for screening as potential war criminals. Bosnian Foreign Minister Muhamed Sacirbey alleged last month that 1,600 prisoners were killed in the stadium.

What occurred in the building is unclear, but the squalid conditions found there fit what captured Muslims from Srebrenica described in published accounts. Several Muslim prisoners have reported being crammed shoulder-to-shoulder into small rooms and being unable to move or go to the bathroom. Others reported torture, including being rubbed in feces.

An attempt to enter Srebrenica itself from Bratunac was blocked by Bosnian Serb police who said special permission from the party of Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic was needed.

Bratunac residents interviewed Saturday said they had seen no traces of Muslim refugees or prisoners in the town since the fall of Srebrenica. No prisoners were held in the soccer stadium either.

After interviewing dozens of Bosnian Serb civilians and soldiers over a 300-mile swath of Serb-held territory in Bosnia, the fate of 4,000 to 6,000 men that UN officials say are still missing from the enclaves remains unclear.

Of the 10,000 believed to be in Srebrenica before its fall, roughly 6,000 are believed to have made it to government lines, leaving 4,000 unaccounted for.

Over 3,000 people, including 1,500 armed men, refused to surrender to the Bosnian Serbs after the July 18 fall of Zepa. Six hundred have crossed into neighboring Serbia, leaving 2,400 people unaccounted for.

Statements by Bosnian Serbs, and limited inspections of Bosnian Serb prisons by the International Red Cross last month, indicate that the 4,000 to 6,000 missing Muslims are not in Bosnian Serb custody. Dozens of soldiers and civilians interviewed gave accurate descriptions of the 30-mile flight of 6,000 Bosnian government soldiers from Srebrenica to government-held Tuzla last month.

But no civilians or soldiers interviewed between the Bosnian Serbs' headquarters in Pale in eastern Bosnia to the city of Banja Luka in western Bosnia said they had even heard rumors of new Muslim prisoners.

Bosnian Serbs vehemently denied that any massacres had occurred and said that once men from Srebrenica were screened for potential war criminals, they were allowed to rejoin their families in government-held territory.

Contradicting this assertion, one Bosnian Serb soldier from the Srebrenica area said over 500 Muslim soldiers were shot by Serb forces after the fall of Srebrenica. He said at least 4,000 Bosnian government soldiers had been captured, and he be-



lieved they were imprisoned somewhere near the town of Bijeljina.

But civilians and soldiers in the Bijeljina area said no Muslim prisoners were there except for a few being held in nearby Batkovic. Limited inspections by the ICRC last month of the Batkovic detention center and other prisons in eastern Bosnia resulted in the discovery of only 164 prisoners from Srebrenica and 44 from Zepa.

One possibility is that more Muslims are alive in the hills of eastern Bosnia than believed. Serb soldiers and civilians, a Yugoslav Army soldier, and residents of scattered villages painted menacing pictures of hundreds of armed Muslims still roving the woods around the former safe areas.

Limited fighting, including one brief gunfire exchange in Nova Kasaba Wednesday, were witnessed. Two patrols of a half-dozen men were being conducted outside the town. A larger encampment of about 50 soldiers was observed near Nova Kasaba.

# Bosnia Muslims Were Killed by The Truckload

■ Until now, the world knew little of what happened when Bosnian Serb forces took over the UN-protected Muslim town of Srebrenica in July. But Monitor interviews with nine survivors tell of systematic executions and massive war crimes.

By David Rohde

Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

TUZLA, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

**B**OSNIAN Serb soldiers systematically executed as many as 2,000 Muslim prisoners after taking the UN "safe area" of Srebrenica in July, according to credible eyewitness accounts newly obtained by The Christian Science Monitor.

Nine Muslim men who say they are survivors of mass executions gave separate, corroborating accounts of what could be one of the greatest single war crimes of Bosnia's brutal 3-1/2 year conflict. Executing prisoners is a war crime according to the Geneva Convention.

In interviews that were conducted without the supervision of the Bosnian government, the nine men gave compelling accounts of mass executions in five locations.

A pattern of hundreds of Muslim soldiers and male civilians being taken to the Serb-held villages of Nova Kasaba, Kravica, and Bratunac

— near Srebrenica — on July 13 emerged from the accounts. Last month, the Monitor uncovered evidence that a mass grave containing hundreds of bodies exists in Nova Kasaba.

The largest execution appears to have occurred near Karakaj. Up to 2,000 prisoners were taken from the three villages to a remote location near the Serb-held town, 25 miles northwest of Srebrenica, and executed on July 14, according to the survivors.

Srebrenica, a refugee-packed mining town nestled in the thick forests and rolling hills of eastern



# Muslim Survivors Tell of Executions by Serbs

**BOSNIA** from Page 1

The conquest of the town and subsequent Bosnian Serb "ethnic cleansing" of its 40,000 Muslim residents sparked events that led to a more muscular Clinton administration policy in Bosnia, which soon may bring peace.

Bosnian Serb officials have repeatedly denied that any atrocities were committed by their forces following the fall of Srebrenica, but mounting evidence of widespread executions is again turning Srebrenica into a test of President Clinton's resolve.

Guaranteeing that the Bosnian Serbs allowed access to the sites of the reported executions and that indicted Bosnian Serb war criminals — including Bosnian Serb military commander Gen. Ratko Mladic — are prosecuted could fall victim to the administration's desire to establish any peace in Bosnia before the 1996 election campaign enters full swing.

The nine survivors, four of whom have never been interviewed by a journalist before, paint a chilling picture of a far vaster killing field around Srebrenica than previously imagined:

■ Along with the execution of as many as 2,000 prisoners in Karakaj, hundreds of prisoners were executed in a warehouse in the village of Kravica, according to a survivor. At least three other executions involving 15 to 30 men occurred near the villages of

Kuslat, Zabrde, and Rasica Gai, according to other survivors.

■ Between 300 and 400 elderly and infirm men who were either ordered by Dutch peacekeepers to leave the UN compound at Potocari or prevented from entering it were seized by Bosnian Serb soldiers and later executed in Karakaj on July 14, according to a Karakaj survivor. Surem Huljic, a man who says he was seized with other men in Potocari but survived the massacre by playing dead, believes all the men seized in Potocari were killed.

Another Karakaj survivor, Smail Hodjic, said he was told by several prisoners before the executions began in Karakaj that they had been taken captive by the Bosnian Serbs in Potocari.

■ Two massacre survivors reported seeing Bosnian Serb soldiers driving a UN armored personnel carrier after the fall of Srebrenica. Mevludin Oric, a Karakaj survivor, said a UN APC driven by men in UN uniforms who spoke fluent Serbo-Croatian escorted six buses of Muslim prisoners from the town of Bratunac to Karakaj on the morning of July 14. Oric believes the men were Serbs masquerading as UN soldiers to make prisoners believe that they were headed for a pris-

oner exchange in Karakaj, not a mass execution.

■ Eight of the survivors reported either being robbed, beaten, and tortured themselves or seeing other prisoners beaten or tortured by Bosnian Serb soldiers. More than 50 Muslims, most of whom were prominent political or business figures before the war, were singled out for torture and execution by Bosnian Serb soldiers and civilians on the night of July 13 when thousands of prisoners were held in the towns of Bratunac and Kravica, according to four survivors.

■ General Mladic, who US officials are currently negotiating with, spoke to prisoners or was seen at five sites — Potocari, Bratunac, Nova Kasaba, Kravica, and Karakaj — hours before executions were carried out, according to five survivors. Two Karakaj survivors say they saw Mladic riding in a car on the way to the execution site and getting out of a car at the Karakaj site as the killings occurred.

In separate interviews, the survivors described a similar sequence of events involving Mladic. According to the accounts, the general introduced himself or was introduced by his troops to prisoners. Mladic first

mocked Bosnian government leaders and then promised the prisoners they would not be harmed and would be exchanged for Bosnian Serb prisoners.

Assuming all the accounts are true, the scope of the atrocities, and the logistics needed to carry out the executions, indicates that the decision to execute prisoners was made at the highest levels of the Bosnian Serb leadership. Bosnian Serb commander Mladic and self-styled Bosnian Serb president Radovan Karadzic were indicted by The Hague-based International War Crimes Tribunal in July for atrocities committed earlier in the war.

Officials from the International War Crimes Tribunal would not comment on their ongoing investigation, but seven of the nine alleged survivors said they had been interviewed by tribunal investigators. All, including the five who say they saw Mladic, said their Bosnian Serb guards and executioners made no attempt to hide their identities. All of them also said they are willing to testify before the tribunal.

A senior UN official familiar with the ongoing investigation by the tribunal said a large amount of evidence indicating Mladic's involvement had been amassed by

the tribunal. The official called the figure of nine credible survivors and as many as 2,000 executed accurate.

To test the credibility of the accounts, the men were not told during the interviews that the Monitor recently visited many of the sites they were describing.

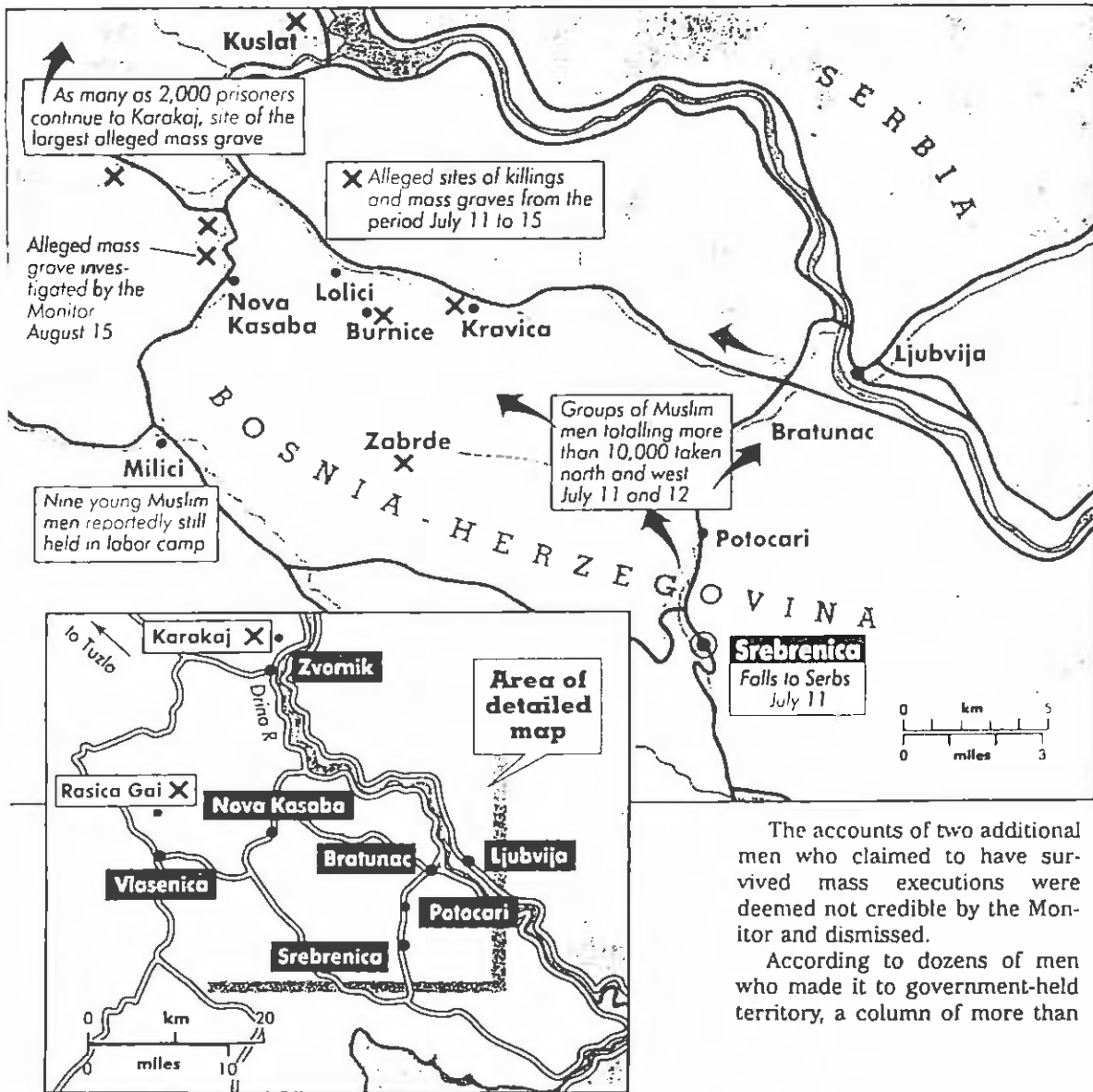
In seamless narratives, the sur-

vivors gave detailed descriptions of locations visited by the Monitor in mid-August — such as a temporary Bosnian Serb troop encampment on a soccer field near the village of Nova Kasaba — while describing the mass executions.

All of the men publicly stated the names of dozens of friends and neighbors they said were killed in the mass executions. The survivors said they were willing to publicly name the victims — at the risk of inflicting grief on dozens of families — because they know they are right.

None of the men the survivors say died in the executions has been accounted for by the International Committee of the Red Cross, which has recorded names of men imprisoned by Bosnian Serbs and taken to Serb territory.

The survivors and more than 100 Srebrenica men who made it to government-held territory were interviewed over a two-week period in and around the government-held city of Tuzla in northern Bosnia last month.



10,000 men – approximately half of whom were armed – left Srebrenica on the evening of July 11 and headed west.

The group, many of whom were civilians, hoped to sneak through 60 miles of Bosnian Serb-held hills, forests, and farmland to arrive in government-held central Bosnia.

A Serb ambush on July 12 near Kamenica killed several hundred and split the column roughly in half, the men said. Chaos ensued, with small groups of men wandering the forests, caught in a box between wide asphalt roads to the north and west patrolled by Bosnian Serbs in armored personnel carriers and Serb troops occupying the Srebrenica area to the east and south.

To make it to government-held territory, the men from Srebrenica had to cross the asphalt road to the west, which runs between the Bosnian-Serb held villages of Konjevic Polje and Milici. Many of them never did.

Approximately 4,000 men, the first section of the column, began crossing into government-held territory near Kladanj on July 16. An estimated 1,500 others have arrived in government-held territory in August and September, and as many as 800 Muslim men – including some from the fallen UN safe area of Zepa – have crossed into Serbia, according to Bosnian government and Red Cross officials.

But with only a few hundred men believed to be still hiding in the woods and the Serbs blocking access to the area, the whereabouts of the remaining 3,700 is unknown, UN officials say.

### Revenge as motive

The Bosnian Serbs actions appear to have been motivated in part by revenge. In 1992, Muslim forces under the command of Nasir Oric systematically burned Serb villages and killed civilians in raids around Srebrenica. During the Monitor's tour of the area in August, Bosnian Serb soldiers expressed contempt for Srebrenica Muslims and accused them of attacking civilians.

In schools around government-held Tuzla that have been turned into refugee centers, few men can be seen. Women plead for information regarding missing husbands, sons, and fathers.

The family of one of the Muslim survivors, who asked to be called the common Muslim name of "Haris" because he feared retribution against missing relatives illustrated how many men are missing. Haris's only brother, his brother-in-law, three of his uncles, and three of his cousins are missing. In his wife's family, he only brother and 23 other relatives are missing.

The accounts of two additional men who claimed to have survived mass executions were deemed not credible by the Monitor and dismissed.

According to dozens of men who made it to government-held territory, a column of more than



An African success story — Benin charges ahead **6**  
 Broadway shows — Women take center stage **10**  
 Young blacks in justice system — Rate is rising **12**

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## Eyewitnesses Confirm Massacres in Bosnia

By David Rohde

Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

TUZLA, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

A FIELD just outside the Bosnian Serb-held farming village of Nova Kasaba is a mass grave holding the bodies of hundreds of Muslim men from the fallen United Nations "safe area" of Srebrenica, according to eyewitness accounts newly obtained by The Christian Science Monitor.

The new evidence — combined with a decomposed human leg and documents from Srebrenica found at

the site by the Monitor on Aug. 16 — confirms Clinton administration allegations that Muslim prisoners were gathered on a nearby soccer field, addressed by Bosnian Serb military commander Gen. Ratko Mladic, and executed on July 14 or 15.

### UPDATE

Senior UN officials close to The Hague-based International War Crimes Tribunal say indictments for war crimes following the fall of Srebrenica, possibly involving General Mladic, could be issued within weeks. The officials also confirmed that the findings of a Monitor investigation

See **EVIDENCE** Page 7

# Eyewitnesses Confirm Massacres by Serbs

## EVIDENCE from Page 1

Investigation, which concluded that more than 2,000 Muslim prisoners were executed and at least four mass graves exist around Srebrenica, are accurate.

Along with the mass grave in Nova Kasaba, three other mass graves exist around Srebrenica, according to Muslim men who arrived recently in government-held territory. In their first interview with a journalist, six men gave detailed descriptions of a grave near the village of Cerska, one man described a grave near Burnice, and three others a grave site at Karakaj.

The senior UN officials say an overwhelming amount of physical evidence of what could be the single largest war crime in Europe since World War II lies along a 20-mile network of roads in eastern Bosnia. But with the Bosnian Serbs saying the graves are filled with Muslims who died in combat, exhuming the bodies to examine how the men died is crucial.

Zagreb-based UN officials are concerned that if more leverage is not brought to bear on the Bosnian Serbs by the Clinton administration, the execution of thousands of Muslims could go unpunished. In the two months

since US Ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright made a dramatic and unusual presentation of classified US spy-satellite photos to the UN Security Council and accused Mladic of "extraordinary cruelty," US officials have not publicly raised the issue.

UN officials in Zagreb warn that the Clinton administration is following a policy based more on political expediency than pursuing justice.

And the senior UN officials close to the Tribunal say that two months after Ms. Albright's presentation, the US government still has not turned over all of the photos it has of the Srebrenica area.

In August, senior US officials said they had more satellite photos that showed other graves, which along with the Nova Kasaba site could hold between 2,000 and 2,700 bodies.

### US interest has waned

UN officials have long accused the Clinton administration of releasing the Nova Kasaba photos to deflect criticism from its tacit approval of the Croatian Army's forced removal of 150,000 Serbs from the formerly Serb-held Kra-

jina region of Croatia in early August. The issue of Srebrenica has been dropped, they say, because it no longer fits the administration's agenda.

The issue of war crimes is a crucial one for the Bosnian government and could scuttle the US-brokered peace talks. The Muslim-led Bosnian government is demanding that accused war criminals be turned over to the Tribunal, and access to what the human rights group Amnesty International says are 143 mass graves in Serb territory, be part of any peace agreement.

But without US backing, the demand is unlikely to be met. UN officials predict that the Clinton administration will try to ignore the issue as it hammers out a de facto partition of the country.

Mladic and Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic have both been indicted by the International War Crimes Tribunal. Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, a man who critics say should also be indicted as a war criminal and has the power to turn over Mladic and Karadzic, is refusing to cooperate with the Tribunal.

The Bosnian Serbs deny that any mass executions occurred following the fall of Srebrenica, and

human rights groups, and investigators from the Tribunal have been denied access to the area.

The Nova Kasaba grave, which is large enough to hold 600 to 800 bodies, lies at the center of a killing zone created by Bosnian Serb forces as they hunted down more than 10,000 Muslim men from Srebrenica, only half of

**Senior UN officials close to the Tribunal say that two months after Ambassador Albright's presentation to the UN, the US still has not turned over all of the photos it has of the Srebrenica area.**

whom were armed, who tried to sneak through 60 miles of Serb territory to government-held central Bosnia.

The grave is located along a four-mile stretch of asphalt road between the villages of Nova Kasaba to Konjevic Polje that Muslims had to cross to make it to government-held territory. Thousands of them never did.

The Bosnian Serbs placed armored personnel carriers and patrols all along the picturesque road, which follows the meandering Jadar River and lies in a small

valley. Muslims easily could be seen trying to cross farm fields and clearings around dozens of burned Muslim homes.

New evidence, obtained through interviews with nine men who say they survived mass executions and others who arrived from Srebrenica over the last three weeks, confirms that the site is a mass grave. The evidence includes:

■ Smail Hodjic, and another man taken to another location after Mladic spoke at the Nova Kasaba soccer field, say dozens of friends, relatives, and acquaintances from Srebrenica that they saw on the field on July 12 and 13 are now missing and presumed dead. The two men, who both survived a later mass execution near the town of Karakaj, say hundreds of men held at the soccer field were executed and buried in the nearby grave.

Both men who say they were at the soccer field gave correct, detailed descriptions of the soccer field, which was visited by the Monitor in August.

The men also accurately described the way prisoners and their Bosnian Serb guards were configured on the field according to the US spy-satellite photo taken on July 12 or 13. But US analysts estimated that there were only 600 prisoners in the field, not the 1,000 to 1,500 the two men say.

In separate interviews, both described Mladic addressing the prisoners at around 3 p.m. Mladic derided Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic, told the prisoners

they would not be harmed, and said they would soon be returned to their families.

According to a report released by UN investigators on Aug. 22, a peacekeeper and a woman from Srebrenica transiting the Nova Kasaba area saw hundreds of prisoners in the soccer field.

On the following day, July 15, another UN peacekeeper reported seeing shoes and rucksacks of

100 men on the soccer field and a tractor pulling a cart with corpses on it. Closer to the grave site, he saw another row of shoes, 20 to 40 people, and a truck carrying corpses, as well as an excavator.

■ Another credible eyewitness, who was hiding in the woods in the area on July 14 and 15, reports seeing 40 Muslim prisoners being tortured and executed one mile north of the grave site. A truck was loaded with bodies and drove south toward the grave.

■ Two documents found at the grave site by the Monitor last month have been identified by relatives and friends as belonging to two men from Srebrenica who are missing and presumed dead.

Dervis Smajic, the brother of Murat Smajic, a man whose 1982 elementary school certificate of merit was found only 50 feet from one of the mass graves, gasped when he was shown the document. "He was carrying it with him for identification," stammered Mr. Smajic, who stared blankly at the certificate then quietly faded into a crowd of soldiers. "My father and I were separated from him in an ambush."

Photographs washed out by rain with handwritten Muslim names written on the back were found at the grave site, next to the certificate. Smajic, before being

told that photographs had been found, stated that his brother was carrying family photos.

The other document found at the grave site, a piece of paper with handwritten notes on it found 200 feet from one of the graves, was identified by soldiers from the Srebrenica enclave as belonging to Mehmed Vejzovic, a man who is also missing.

The paper contains handwritten

notes from a March 14, 1995, community meeting in the village of Potocari inside the former Srebrenica "safe area." In another section of the paper are notes on how to load and use various weapons. Vejzovic, the soldiers said, was involved in civil defense in Potocari.

■ Survivors of the execution also said a large number of prisoners were held overnight in the village of Bratunac on July 13. A small building on the grounds of the Bratunac soccer field filled with human feces, blood stains, bullet-pocked walls, and indications of torture discovered by the Monitor in August was only a few hundred yards from where prisoners were kept, according to the survivors. Small groups of men were taken away during the night, according to the survivors, and never returned.

■ Rejha Gabeljic, a Muslim woman who crossed into government-held territory on Sep. 10, said that she had been released, but that nine Muslim men are being held in a forced labor camp in Milici.

There was no way to confirm her report. Bosnian Serbs interviewed by the Monitor in the Srebrenica area in August denied that Muslim prisoners were being held.

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SPECIAL REPORT

## A Cautionary Tale for US Before It Enters Bosnia

**Americans may soon embark on a mission improbable. This report of how Dutch peacekeepers failed to prevent a July massacre of Muslims tells why.**

By David Rohde  
Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

THE HAGUE

THE last thing on Pvt. Ynse Schellens's mind on July 9 was peacekeeping and protecting Muslim civilians from attack by the Bosnian Serb army.

Caught between warring factions, the Dutch soldier and his fellow UN peacekeepers were eager to abandon Observation Post Kilo, a hilltop compound in Srebrenica, a town the UN declared as a "safe area."

The lightly armed Dutch force had endured three days of Serb shelling. The day before, angry Muslims defending

the enclave had killed a Dutch peacekeeper when he abandoned a UN post to the Serbs.

As a Bosnian Serb officer warily walked up to his post in the late afternoon, Private Schellens and the other peacekeepers felt a sense of relief.

"Ready to go?" the Bosnian Serb officer asked.

"Yeah, we're ready," shouted the Dutch soldiers.

Two days later, Srebrenica fell, and 400 Dutch soldiers stood by as about 800 mostly elderly Muslim civilians were rounded up and later killed, according to witnesses.

The passivity of the Dutch peacekeepers and their UN commanders in this massacre shows that, after five years of trying new ways of peacekeeping in the post-cold-war era, the international community is still far from getting it right.

With American troops poised to enforce peace in Bosnia, the US insists its mission will be different.

But the Srebrenica debacle shows it's not easy for trained killers to act as dispassionate mediators in Bosnia.

See BOSNIA Page 8

# A Bosnian Peacekeeping Mission Gone Awry

**BOSNIA** from Page 1

But UN officials warn that soldiers, trained to think in terms of black and white, victor and vanquished, often become frustrated in Bosnia and sympathize with the stronger, more professionally organized Bosnian Serb army, according to civilian UN officials.

Four Dutch soldiers, in interviews this month in the Netherlands, say they hated some of the Muslim men they were supposed to be protecting. Those feelings are only scratch the surface of smoldering anti-Muslim sentiment among UN troops throughout Bosnia that American troops could soon feel.

The downward spiral of Srebrenica's peacekeepers began long before Private Schellens gave up his post. It has roots in the UN's ill-defined notion of peacekeeping in Bosnia.

In the spring of 1993, after Serb troops nearly took refugee-packed Srebrenica, the UN Security Council declared Srebrenica and five other Muslim cities demilitarized "safe areas" to be protected by UN troops. The former mining town, made up of chalets nestled in a valley, had swelled from a prewar population of 5,000 to 42,000.

But when UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali requested 34,000 UN troops to man the safe areas, no nations were willing to contribute the troops to carry out the ambitious plan.

West European leaders faltered, wary of domestic opinion opposed to having their soldiers sucked into a violent, protracted Balkans war. And the US refused to send

Mr. Boutros-Ghali submitted a new request — sarcastically known at UN headquarters in Zagreb as "safe-havens lite." The Security Council eventually authorized 7,300 troops. In the end, only 3,500 troops were deployed.

## Serb ruse

Two years later, UN officials were confident that a Serb offensive launched against Srebrenica on July 3 was designed only to gain control of a road that ran through the safe area and led to a Bosnian Serb-controlled bauxite mine.

On July 6, that assumption began to unravel. Two Bosnian Serb shells slammed into the sandbag wall of one Dutch post, Foxtrot. Dutch commander Lt. Col. Ton Karremans requested that NATO carry out a "close air support" strike on nearby Bosnian Serb targets.

But Col. Charles Brantz, UN commander for northeastern Bosnia, did not forward the request to his headquarters in Zagreb, Croatia, because he had not received a proper target list.

Over the next two days, fighting intensified. At 1:43 p.m. on July 8, three Bosnian Serb tank rounds slammed into the wall of Foxtrot, causing severe damage. And an old dynamic in Bosnia peacekeeping came into play again.

Muslim soldiers, who often positioned themselves near Dutch observation posts, fired on the Serbs, drawing retaliatory fire that would come dangerously close to the peacekeepers, Dutch soldiers said.

Dutch commanders also had themselves

to blame for the deteriorating situation at Foxtrot, according to Sgt. Johan Bos, a Dutch anti-tank unit commander. The post was equipped with one of the unit's five working, American-made, TOW antitank missile launchers, but was unable to use it.

The battalion's TOW launchers, equipped with night-vision targeting sites, were placed in different locations to monitor troops' movements along the enclave's perimeter. Because they take so long to reload, at least two of the TOWs should be deployed close to each other, according to Sergeant Bos.

Fifteen minutes after the rounds hit Foxtrot, a Bosnian Serb tank drove over the Muslim trench and stopped about 100 yards in front of the post. Bosnian Serb soldiers ordered the Dutch to leave.

As the Dutch fled, Muslim soldiers furious at the UN for not firing at the Serbs, killed a Dutch peacekeeper, Raviv van Renssen. (In later interviews, Muslim commanders said that the Serbs had killed Renssen.)

The next day Dutch observation posts,

including Schellan's, began falling like dominoes. Two Dutch armored personnel carriers and their crews were captured by the Serbs. The Dutch were despondent and put up no resistance.

One reason for the Dutch surrender was that Bosnian Serbs had blocked resupply convoys for weeks. The peacekeepers ate their last fresh food on May 5 and were living off rations. For weeks, soldiers had

been forced to make day-long walks, or used horses and mules, to carry supplies.

In the end, being a Bosnian Serb hostage was paradise compared with being a peacekeeper. "The Serbs treated me very well. We could take a shower if we wanted," Schellens recalls. "We could play

soccer and basketball. Three meals a day. Cigarettes and beer. It was OK."

## Dutch force weakened

The Dutch battalion was also well below strength militarily. In April, it shrank from roughly 650 soldiers to 400 soldiers when the Bosnian Serbs refused to allow 190 peacekeepers who went on vacation back into the enclave.

When the Dutch first tried to enter Srebrenica, the Serbs forced them to change their armored personnel carriers from being equipped with 22-mm cannons to lighter 50-caliber machine guns.

At the end of May, commander Karremans sent out a letter informing his UN

superiors that he had not been resupplied since Feb. 18, his troops had 16 percent of the ammunition they needed, and he was unable to carry out his mission.

His UN superiors, confronted with similar shortages in the other five surrounded enclaves and unwilling to confront the Serbs over the issue, bet that the Serbs would never call their bluff.

Karremans was sure NATO airstrikes, as a last resort, could halt the Serbs' advance in Srebrenica. But with so many observation posts falling, he was unsure where the main Serb attack was coming from. The enclave's UN military observers (UNMOs) – different from the Dutch peacekeepers – had abandoned their offices on July 8 and retreated to the nearby Dutch base in Potocari.

#### **Commander in the dark**

Two Bosnian translators were left in the UNMO office in the town. Their superiors continued to file reports without informing UN commanders that they had abandoned their post. As the Bosnian Serb attack intensified on July 8, Karremans was essentially blind to what was happening around Srebrenica.

On July 9, a list of possible Bosnian Serb targets for NATO airstrikes finally arrived in UN headquarters in Zagreb, but Bosnian Serb tanks were already five miles into the enclave and only one mile south of Srebrenica. But UN commanders in Zagreb still believed the Serbs were not interested in taking the entire enclave.

*Continued on next page*



*STANDING BY: A Dutch soldier guards Muslim women from Srebrenica after the town fell to Bosnian Serb forces last July. Dutch peacekeeping troops in Bosnia are accused of abandoning their posts as Muslim civilians gathered around them for protection in both Srebrenica and Potocari. The debacle led to a massacre of Muslim men*

## SPECIAL REPORT

Continued from previous page

UN Commander Bernard Janvier ordered the Dutch to create a "blocking position" to prevent the Serbs from entering the town. He demanded that the Serbs halt their advance, free all Dutch hostages, and withdraw their forces to the enclave's perimeter. If the Dutch position was attacked, General Janvier warned, NATO close air support would be used.

### Blocking position set up

Karremans thought the blocking position was foolish, but ordered six Dutch APCs with more than 30 soldiers to set up a visible, but difficult to defend, blocking position on the main road a half mile south of Srebrenica.

As the blocking position was established on July 10, the mood was relaxed, according to Cpl. Hans Berkers, the driver of one of the APCs. But in the early afternoon, Bosnian Serb shells hit, sending Corporal Berkers and others scrambling.

At 6 p.m., Serb infantrymen were seen advancing toward the position. The Dutch fired 50-caliber machine guns at the Serbs, halting the advance.

Despite the pleas of his advisers, Janvier turned down three requests for close air support sent by Karremans over the course of the day. Janvier said that the blocking position — that he himself had ordered — was too close to the Serbs to risk

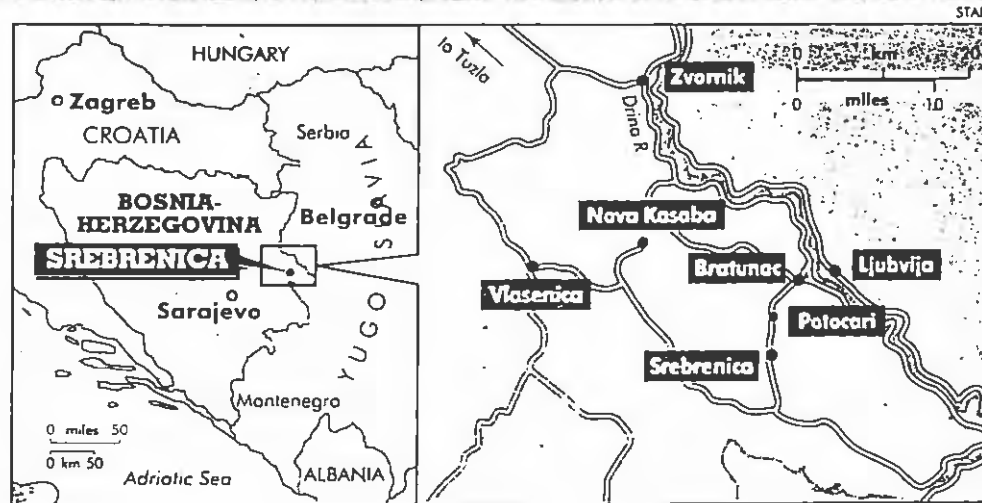
an airstrike, according to Col. Harm De Jonge, a senior UN adviser in Zagreb.

As night fell, the Dutch received reports that the Serbs were advancing to the east of the blocking position. Muslim troops were supposed to guard the peacekeepers' flank. But the Dutch, not trusting the Muslims, withdrew.

Tensions between the Dutch and Muslim soldiers had been simmering for months. In later interviews, the Dutch blame the Muslims for putting up no resistance to the Serbs, and Muslim commanders blame the Dutch for barring them from using two Muslim tanks in UN storage.

### Waiting for NATO airstrikes

After the Dutch blocking position was abandoned, word arrived that a massive NATO airstrike, involving 40 airplanes hitting 20 Bosnian Serb targets, would be carried out the following morning.



airstrike was carried out.

Dutch Defense Minister Joris Voorst called UN Special Envoy Yasushi Akashi and asked that the airstrikes be halted to save the Dutch peacekeepers' lives. Akashi had already canceled the strike to protect the UN hostages.

Immediately after the airstrikes were called off, the Dutch compound in Srebrenica, surrounded by 10,000 terrified civilians seeking help, was abandoned. Serb shells rained down on the town, wrecked Dutch trucks and APCs, and killed Dutch drivers, including Berkers, admitted running away with Bosnian civilians as they drove through throngs of civilians fleeing to the main base in Potocari. Video shot by Dutch soldiers shows UN trucks arriving in Potocari with civilians clinging to every inch of the vehicles.

At 4 p.m. the Serbs entered the abandoned Dutch compound in Srebrenica.

At midnight the Dutch deputy commander, Maj. Robert Franken, met with Muslim leaders in Srebrenica to tell them of the coming airstrikes. But when the sun rose on July 11, thick fog covered Srebrenica, preventing airstrikes.

When the weather began to clear, Berkers was ordered to drive his APC up a hill overlooking Serb positions. Karremans's sixth request for a NATO strike had been approved. Four Dutch F-16s were on their way to Srebrenica.

Inside Berkers's APC, an air controller focused a bomb-guiding device equipped with a laser on a Serb tank below. Overhead, the female pilot of a Dutch F-16 released two bombs. Berkers saw the tank jump five feet in the air.

Within minutes, Bosnian Serb commander Gen. Ratko Mladic threatened to kill all 30 of the Dutch hostages he held if another

### **The Mladic 'pig' show**

That evening, Dutch commanding officer Karremans and other UN officers were summoned by Serb commander Mladic to a nearby hotel to negotiate the fate of the 25,000 to 30,000 Muslim civilians huddled in and around the UN base in Potocari.

When they arrived at the hotel, they saw a Serb soldier cut a pig's throat. As the pig died, Mladic told the Dutch commander: "You have to be able to stand this before we can talk."

Over the next two days, Dutch soldiers witnessed the execution of one Muslim man and found nine dead Muslims near their base in Potocari, but did little as more than 800 elderly Muslim civilians were separated from their families and taken away.

Surem Huljic, a Muslim man who says he was one of the men taken away in Potocari, believes all of the men were killed in a mass execution in the nearby village of Karakaj.

The nine bodies were videotaped and photographed by the Dutch. But the videotape was later destroyed by Dutch soldiers under orders from an officer because it also had video of one of the unit's forward air controllers. Dutch officials say the film from the still camera was accidentally destroyed in a military film-processing lab.

Peacekeeper Berkers saw 2,000 Muslim prisoners under Serb guard on a soccer field in the nearby village of Nova Kasaba on July 13. The following day, Schellens, Sgt. Warner Ceelen, and 15 other Dutch soldiers saw dozens of dead bodies on the road, a dump truck full of bodies, and an excavator digging an apparent mass grave near the soccer field. US spy photos show an apparent mass grave at the same location, and a decomposed human leg and documents from Srebrenica were discovered there by the Monitor in August.

temporarily lost.

Dutch press reports also later revealed that deputy Commander Franken signed an agreement with the Bosnian Serbs on July 17 stating that the Muslim evacuation was conducted properly and no war crimes were committed.

Following protests from the Dutch parliament, the Dutch Defense Ministry launched a wide-ranging investigation of its troops' conduct in Srebrenica. It promised to announce its findings by the end of October.

### **Lessons learned?**

UN officials warn that if the Dutch, who underwent three months of specialized peacekeeper training before going to Bosnia, crack under the pressure of experimental 1990s peacekeeping, American troops also could.

Suddenly thrust into the brutality of the conflict, few Dutch peacekeepers probably imagined that the Bosnian Serbs would execute the hundreds of civilian Muslim men who were rounded up outside the UN base. But it's unclear how many of them would have cared.

"I think there's no way you can prepare somebody to go to war. It's a strange world there," says Schellens who now teaches mentally handicapped children for a living. "The Muslims stole from the posts and they shot one of us. Hating is a big word, but they were no friends of mine."

But after the Dutch withdrew on July 21, Dutch commanders said they had no evidence of war crimes being committed, and Karremans said the Serb "militarily correct operation" was carried out in "the right way."

### **What the Dutch really knew**

In a series of damaging revelations in August and September, Dutch journalists discovered that a list of 239 Muslim men who were inside the Dutch compound in Potocari was drawn up by a Muslim translator to protect the men when they were ordered to leave by Karremans. All 239 are now missing and presumed dead.

The list was faxed to UN headquarters in Zagreb, and deputy Dutch commander Franken carried a copy out of Potocari in his underwear, according to Dutch officials. But UN officials say they never received a copy of the list, and the Dutch government now says the list was



grazing rights — patriots attacked on two fronts 4  
 Military overflights — Rural residents up in arms 10  
 Churches on-line — Word spreads on the Web 13

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## Serbia Held Responsible For Massacre Of Bosnians

**President Slobodan Milosevic, who will be in Ohio next week for US-backed peace talks, may be behind a major war crime.**

By David Rohde  
 Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

TUZLA, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

**O**FFICERS from Serbia participated in the attack on the UN-declared "safe area" of Srebrenica, according to credible eyewitness accounts obtained by the Monitor. And senior Western diplomats and UN officials say Serbian

### SPECIAL REPORT

President Slobodan Milosevic is responsible for the attack and the subsequent executions of thousands of Muslim civilians.

Muslim witnesses say that an officer from Serbia was directing the roundup of Muslim prisoners in the village of Konjevic Polje, and that a Serb officer captured by Muslim forces was following orders issued from the Serbian capital, Belgrade.

"[The Serb officer] said they were under orders from Belgrade not to allow any men to escape from Srebrenica," says Bosnian soldier Dzemat Malovic.

See **MILOSEVIC** Page 7

# Serbia Chief Held Responsible For July Massacre of Muslims

**MILOSEVIC** from Page 1

"All Muslim men were to be captured or killed," said Mr. Malovic, one of three Bosnian soldiers who say they spoke to and looked at identity papers of the captured Serbian captain.

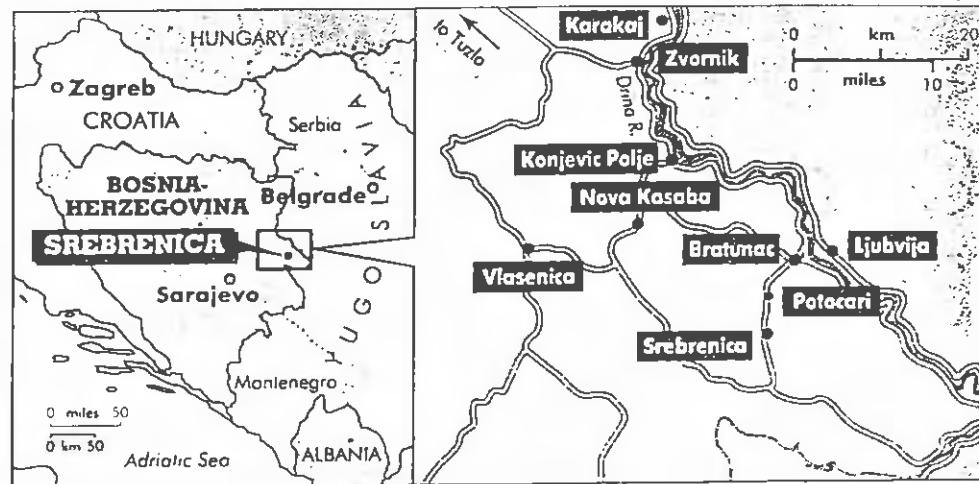
In a separate interview, a Muslim officer confirmed that the Serbian officer had been captured. The Serbian officer's whereabouts are unknown, and he may have been killed later by Muslim forces.

Western diplomats have long suspected that the Bosnian Serb attack on Srebrenica in mid-July was approved by Belgrade, but

the government of President Slobodan Milosevic has vehemently denied it.

Mr. Milosevic's involvement would be an embarrassment for the Clinton administration, eager to portray Milosevic - who will be attending peace talks in Ohio next week - as a peacemaker in the Balkans, not a war criminal.

"Whether by commission or omission, [Milosevic] is responsible, no question," says a senior UN military official based in Zagreb, Croatia. "He had plenty of sources on the ground there. He had to know what was happening, and either approved of it or did nothing to stop it."



A senior Western diplomat in Zagreb also says Milosevic is responsible for what is quickly emerging as one of the darkest hours of Bosnia's 3-1/2 year conflict.

"I have no doubt he directly approved or tacitly approved of the taking of Srebrenica," the diplomat says. "Whether Milosevic knew [about the executions] or not, he knows what kind of man [Bosnian Serb Army commander Gen. Ratko] Mladic is and how he operates."

## Reports of mass executions

Over 2,000 Muslim men were executed by Bosnian Serb forces following the fall of Srebrenica, according to nine survivors interviewed by the Monitor last month.

War-crimes investigators now have evidence that as many as 3,000 to 4,000 men were executed by the Bosnian Serbs, according to a senior UN offi-



cial close to the investigation. "Wait until everything comes out," he says. "Then, people will understand how big this is."

The UN official close to the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague said mass graves ring the area around Srebrenica, and confirmed the existence of a new set of United States spy photos showing a new group of apparent mass graves near the village of Karakaj, as reported by the Boston Globe on Oct. 3.

The photos confirm the accounts of five men interviewed by the Monitor who say over 2,000 Muslim prisoners were executed near the town of Karakaj on July 18. The photos may be the basis for new indictments against General Mladic expected to be issued by the Tribunal.

Bosnian Serb officials have said that mass graves in the village of Nova Kasaba captured in US spy photos and visited by the Monitor in August contain the bodies of Muslim soldiers who were killed in combat and not executed.

But the Karakaj site is too far from the route that Muslim men would have followed to escape from Srebrenica, according to the UN official.


Mevludin Oric, a survivor of the Karakaj execution, said in an interview that one of the officers directing the roundup of pris-

oners in Konjevic Polje was a 40- to 45-year-old officer from Serbia. Mr. Oric is considered by war-crimes investigators to be one of their most credible witnesses. The Serbian officer was not present at the later execution, Oric added.

Who gave the order to execute thousands of prisoners remains unknown

But evidence of Milosevic's involvement in Srebrenica has been mounting for months, and it is not known if Mladic would execute such a large number of men without at least the tacit approval of Serbian leaders in Belgrade.

Mladic, who eyewitnesses interviewed by the Monitor said was at Karakaj and three other executions sites during or just before executions began, had been visiting Belgrade regularly for weeks prior to the attack.

 Dutch peacekeepers reported seeing mem-

bers of paramilitary groups from Serbia, and Muslims say they saw Belgrade-based paramilitary leader Zeljko "Arkan" Raznjajevic in Srebrenica.

The Washington Post reported seeing Muslim soldiers driving a jeep with Yugoslav Army license plates on July 17. The Muslims said they had captured the jeep from forces involved in the attack on Srebrenica.

New York Newsday reported on Aug. 12 that Western intelligence officials captured radio intercepts of Yugoslav Army chief Gen. Momcilo Perisic, directing Mladic on how to attack Srebrenica during the offensive.

### **Serb denials**

Yugoslav officials have strenuously denied the accounts, but the Yugoslav Army and Arkan are believed to be tightly controlled by Milosevic, who holds an iron grip over Serbia's military.

Despite the growing evidence, Srebrenica survivors remain skeptical that Milosevic - whom the Clinton administration is depending on to force the Bosnian Serbs to agree to a peace deal - will be tied to or punished for Europe's worst massacre since World War II.

"It all depends on the politicians," Malovic says. "They could punish them, or reward them, for doing this."

## Dutch UN Peacekeepers Questioned as US, NATO Prep for Bosnia Mission

**A**S US soldiers train in Germany for a new NATO peacekeeping effort in Bosnia, questions about the conduct of Dutch peacekeepers in the fallen UN "safe area" of Srebrenica are multiplying.

Muslim refugees are directly contradicting Dutch government accounts of what happened following the fall of the eastern enclave to Bosnian Serb forces in July.

The Muslims say Dutch peacekeepers laughed as the town's residents begged for help, joked with Bosnian Serb soldiers, and initially dismissed reports that Muslim civilians outside the Dutch UN base were being executed by the Serbs.

Human rights groups have criticized the UN and the Dutch peacekeepers for not safeguarding about 30,000 women, children, and elderly men who fled to the UN compound inside the safe area. About 800 elderly and infirm Muslim men were rounded up outside the UN compound by Bosnian Serbs and most are missing and presumed dead.

"I was protesting because I was being separated from my family, but the Dutch men just laughed and didn't do anything," says Hurem Suljic, one of about 800 men taken away from the main UN base. "I thought everything was going to be under UN protection and escort."

Mr. Suljic says all of the mostly elderly men taken by the Serbs died two days later at a mass execution he survived in the nearby town of Karakaj. Other Muslims accuse the Dutch deputy commander in Srebrenica, Maj. Robert Franken, of initially dismissing allegations of killings despite shots ringing out around the compound and eyewitness accounts of bodies being found.

### Cries for help

One woman, who acted as a representative for the Muslims gathered around the UN compound, burst into the Dutch base shouting that the Serbs had killed nine of the hundreds of Muslim men they crammed into a small house outside the base for questioning on July 12. The woman later tried to hang herself, according to eyewitnesses.

"I heard [Franken] say we should not talk about that [nonsense]," says Hasan Nuhanovic, a local UN translator, "because we can't prove it."

The bodies were later found by the Dutch, but a videotape they made was destroyed for security reasons and photographs were accidentally destroyed, Dutch officials say.

After the nine bodies had been

nished by the Dutch, and about 500 men outside the compound taken away by the Serbs, the Dutch ordered 300 Muslim men in their base to leave on July 13, according to eyewitnesses and statements from UN Military Observers.

Two hundred thirty-nine of the men in the compound agreed to have their names put on a list so the UN could keep track of them. Franken faxed the list to the UN and showed it to Serb officers, telling the Muslim men it was "all I can do," and "I think the Serbs will think twice before they do something to these people."

The father of UN translator Nuhanovic kissed Franken as he left the Dutch compound in an attempt to show Serb soldiers outside that he was close to the UN troops.

According to refugees, the Serbs severely beat him after he left the compound. Nuhanovic's father, mother, and a brother who left the compound are all missing.

The Dutch commander, Lt. Col. Ton Karremans, was under orders from his UN command to "take all reasonable measures to protect refugees and civilians," but Colonel Karremans said that was "not possible" because his soldiers were outmanned and outgunned by the Serbs.

### Serb threats

The Bosnian Serbs, who had already shelled the Dutch compound in Srebrenica town during the fight, threatened to shell the compound in nearby Potocari if the Dutch resisted, according to Dutch officials and Muslim eyewitnesses.

Muslim eyewitnesses, contradicting statements by the Dutch government, say many of the UN peacekeepers in Srebrenica were disarmed by Bosnian Serb soldiers. Dutch officials say the peacekeepers kept their weapons and did all they could.

Bosnian Serb soldiers were allowed in the Dutch compound hospital and ordered seven wounded Muslim soldiers be evacuated separately from the other patients. The seven were never seen again.

Hamdija Fezic, a local leader, says the Dutch could have done more, but cared little about the Muslims. "They came to Srebrenica to earn money," says Mr. Fezic, who escaped through the woods. "They were not interested in the people in Srebrenica."

UN translator Nuhanovic says the Dutch should have demanded that the evacuation be supervised by the International Committee of the Red Cross. "The Dutch knew very well something was going to happen to those men. They sent them to their deaths," Nuhanovic says.



Token transit — N.Y., L.A. test fairness of fare hikes 4  
American crafts — Elegant art from 1920 to 1945 10  
Beatles producer — George Martin looks back 13

# THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR

BOSTON - THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1995

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## Exposing Europe's Worst Massacre Since the Holocaust



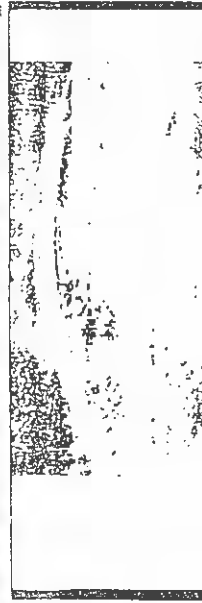
THE WASH. POST/STEVE HILL

■ Bosnian Serb leaders Gen. Ratko Mladic (left) and Radovan Karadzic have been indicted for war crimes. Mladic was seen near the July massacres of Srebrenica Muslims.



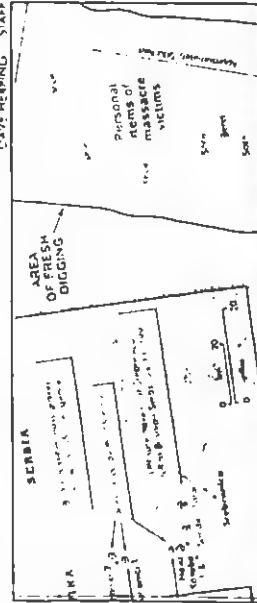
AP Wire

■ Thousands of Muslims fled the UN 'safe area' of Srebrenica in mid-July after it fell to Bosnian Serbs. Some refugees reached safety (left). Nine survivors told the Monitor of the massacre of thousands of male civilians by Bosnian Serbs in nearby villages, such as Sahanici.



AP

■ A spy photo of mass grave sites was released by the US in August. The US Monitor used the spy photo information to visit grave sites.



THE WASH. POST/STEVE HILL

■ A map of the Sahanici grave site illustrates the evidence of the massacre found by the Monitor. About 1,000 Muslims were believed killed at this site alone.

**MAP, PAGE 7.**



THE WASH. POST/STEVE HILL

■ Found at Sahanici grave: two handkerchiefs, a comb. Also found nearby was a gym used to hold victims that a survivor sketched on a reporter's notebook.

# Graves Found That Confirm Bosnia Massacre

By David Rohde

Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

**F**ROM 100 yards away, the freshly turned earth of the field appeared to be covered with hazardous dots. Five feet away, the dots became empty shoes, shattered eyeglasses, and decaying clothing.

In the woods nearby, three canes and a crutch jutted from a maldeserving heap of more than 100 windbreakers, sweatshirts, and leather jackets. No evidence of battles having been fought was found.

The forlorn debris and areas of fresh digging, discovered by the Monitor on Oct. 29, are the most specific and convincing evidence yet that Bosnian Serb forces massacred thousands of Muslim civilians — including the elderly and crippled — after the fall of the UN "safe area" of Srebrenica.

Bosnian Serbs say no massacres occurred and the graves are filled with Muslim soldiers killed in combat. But the crutch that was found is something no combatant would lean on. The three wooden canes are supports no soldiers would need.

The Monitor has visited four of six possible mass grave sites identified by US spy planes and satellites around the fallen Muslim enclave of Srebrenica. At

### Into Bosnia's Killing Fields

Series starts tomorrow on how Monitor reporter David Rohde was captured and released by Bosnian Serbs.

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

## Six Possible Grave Sites Identified By US Intelligence Agencies

### Tatar

US intelligence agencies say they have evidence that the Bosnian Serbs may be exhuming a possible mass grave near the village of Tatar. Last month aerial photos showed heavy machinery exhuming bodies from the grave and reburying them 100 yards away. Intelligence officials suspect Bosnian Serbs may be pouring chemicals on the bodies to destroy evidence.

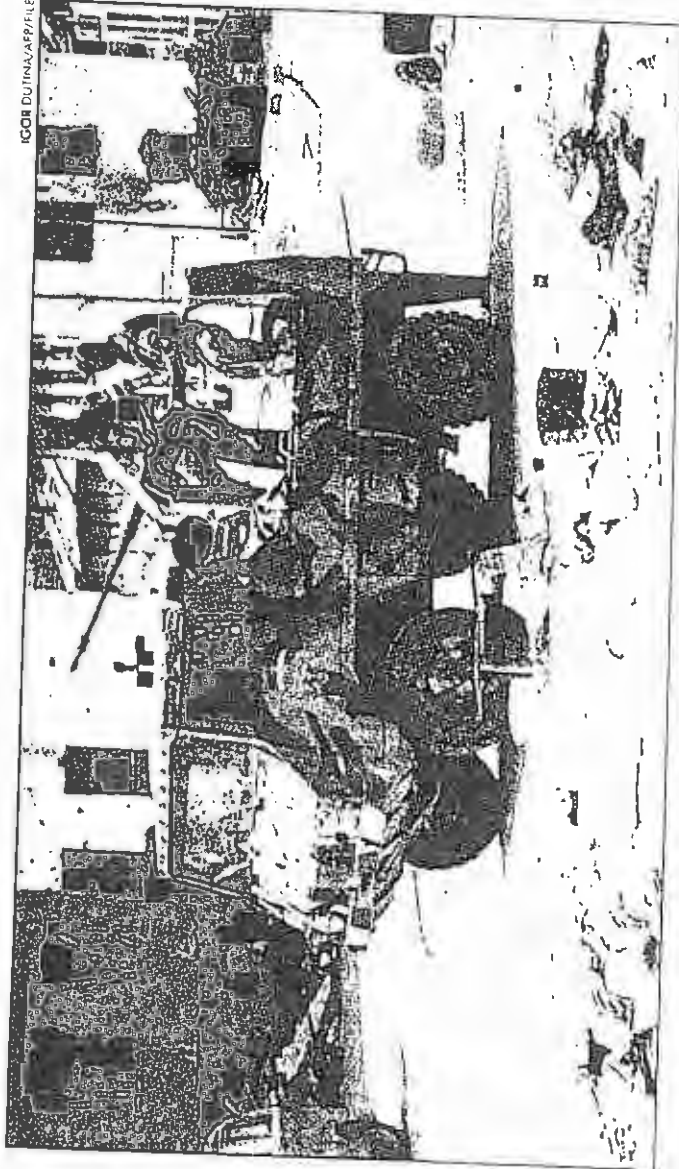
The grave is the largest of the six mass graves around Srebrenica. It is about 4 miles from a warehouse where a massacre survivor, Hakija Husejnovic, says as many as 2,000 Muslim prisoners were executed. The grave has not been visited by the Monitor and is an irregularly shaped trench 75 to 125 feet long covering 2,125 square feet, according to intelligence officials.

Mr. Husejnovic, who played dead and later escaped, said trucks loaded with corpses from the warehouse drove in the direction of Tatar.

### Sandici

Another apparent mass grave exists near the village of Sandici, which is only 1.2 miles from the warehouse mentioned by Husejnovic. An eyewitness interviewed by the Monitor in September, who requested anonymity, said he saw a dump truck full of decomposed bodies coming from the direction of the warehouse and dumping them into a mass grave in the Sandici area in August.

### Nova Kasaba No. 1



ICOR DUTINA/AP/FILE

**SREBRENICA:** Bosnian Serb soldiers patrol Srebrenica five days after taking the UN "safe area" July 11, forcing 40,000 Muslims to flee and leading to the massacre of thousands of Muslim men. Bosnian Serb leaders deny the massacres took place. They accuse a Muslim forces of launching Srebrenica raids from Serb civilians in new by villages on or the last two years. In 1992 battles, Bosnian Serbs say Muslims killed over 1,300 Serb civilians.

# New Graves, Execution Site Found in Bosnia

**MASSACRE** from Page 1

each site, human remains, documents from Srebrenica, Muslim identity cards, personal photos with Muslim names on them, or civilian clothing have been found (List of grave sites, left).

Europe's worst massacre of civilians since World War II was apparently carried out with brutal efficiency on the nights of July 14, 15, and 16, as nine survivors interviewed by the Monitor in September say it did. Bosnian Serb military commander Gen. Ratko Mladic, whom eyewitnesses place at this and three other execution sites, apparently ordered the cold-blooded executions of as many as 5,000 Muslim prisoners.

The United States has said it will not sign any peace agreement that would allow

## Into Bosnia's Killing Fields

Monitor reporter David Rohde drove into Bosnian Serb territory looking for further evidence of massacres. He ended up in custody, convicted and jailed, his own life in danger.



STAFF

**A 3-PART SERIES BEGINS TOMORROW**

The complete text and graphics of the Monitor's recent Bosnia coverage are available on the World Wide Web at:

<http://freerange.com/csmonitor>

the Bosnian Serbs have already tried to destroy evidence at one of the mass graves last month and could be tampering with others now.

The US has had the photographic evidence of six graves around Srebrenica since late July and US agents may have visited the sites to confirm that they are not the result of agriculture or construction work, according to intelligence officials. US officials estimate that six graves are large enough to hold up to 2,700 bodies.

The Bosnian Serb authorities have repeatedly refused to grant the UN, tribunal investigators, and journalists free access to the area around Srebrenica since the enclave fell. Using pinpoint locations obtained from US-based intelligence sources, the Monitor visited the Sahanici area for three hours on Oct. 29 without the permission of Bosnian Serb authorities.

This correspondent changed the date of issue on a Bosnian Serb press accreditation from 19/12/94 to 29/10/95 and used it to pass through Bosnian Serb checkpoints and reach the area. This correspondent was arrested at the execution site by Bosnian Serb police, stripped of all documents and photos taken of the area, accused of espionage, and jailed for 10 days.

Up to now, reports of the massacres have been primarily based on survivor accounts that could not be independently confirmed. But the evidence found in the Sahanici area corroborates the accounts of five Muslim men who say they survived the execution of as many as 2,000 men from Srebrenica.

The school, the railroad tracks, and the earthen dam that five survivors described were found in the area around Sahanici. Two mass graves found near a school are exactly where three of the survivors say they should be. Ten miles away at the Red Mud Dam, two human femurs were found on a gravel plateau that two survivors say was an execution site.

Bosnian Serb police and civilians vehemently deny that any massacres took place after the fall of Srebrenica and say they are willing to grant access to the area. Any mass graves that exist are filled with Muslim soldiers fleeing Srebrenica who were killed as they tried to fight their way to safety.

US officials estimate that six graves are large enough to hold up to 2,700 bodies.

a comprehensive peace in the Balkans.

The new evidence found in Sahanici also may give the US added leverage to force Mr. Milosevic to finally come through on long-running promises to grant war crimes investigators access to mass graves around Srebrenica. Since the peace talks began, Milosevic has twice promised to grant free access to the sites, but failed to deliver.

But time may be running out. US intelligence officials announced last week that

General Mladic or "President" Radovan Karadzic to remain in power, and insists they must be turned over to the war crimes tribunal. Mladic and Mr. Karadzic have reportedly agreed to leave office, but only if they receive immunity from prosecution.

The new evidence found at Sahanici could increase pressure on Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, who says he was unaware of the massacres, to oust his erstwhile allies, Mladic and Karadzic. The future of the two indicted war criminals is a key issue in US-led talks in Ohio aimed at

Visited by the Monitor Aug. 16.

An apparent human leg bone was found jutting from a patch of fresh dirt near the main grave.

### **Nova Kasaba No. 2**

Visited by the Monitor Aug. 16. A diploma from a Muslim man and notes from a town meeting inside the Srebrenica safe area were found 100 feet from the grave. The two Nova Kasaba graves are large enough to hold approximately 600 bodies, according to US intelligence officials.

### **Sahanici No. 1**

Visited by the Monitor Oct. 29. The site consists of a main grave and a smaller grave, which appear large enough to hold about 800 bodies. (See diagram facing page.)

### **Sahanici No. 2**

Also visited by the Monitor Oct. 29. Two human femurs were seen on a gravel plateau adjacent to an earthen dam that survivors say was an execution site. The Monitor reporter was arrested at the site by Bosnian Serb police before a thorough search for a mass grave could be conducted.

## Key Events Leading Up To the Srebrenica Massacres

**1980:** Communist dictator Josip Broz Tito died, leaving a power vacuum and sowing the seeds for Yugoslavia's disintegration.

**1991:** Slovenia and Croatia were the first former Yugoslav republics to secede.

**1992:** In January, Bosnian Serb leaders revolted against a decision by Muslims and Croats for Bosnia to secede from Yugoslavia. In March, the Bosnian Serb rebels launched a massive campaign of murder and forced evictions in eastern Bosnia.

were herded into three enclaves in eastern Bosnia: Srebrenica, Zepa, and Gorazde.

**1993:** In May, the UN declared the three enclaves, and three other Muslim towns "safe areas" and promised UN peace-keeping troops would protect them.

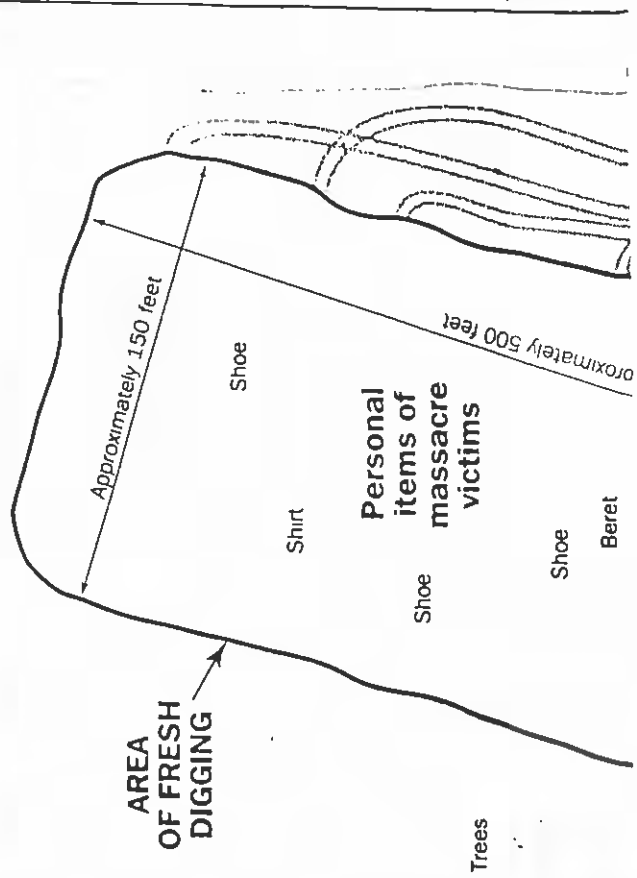
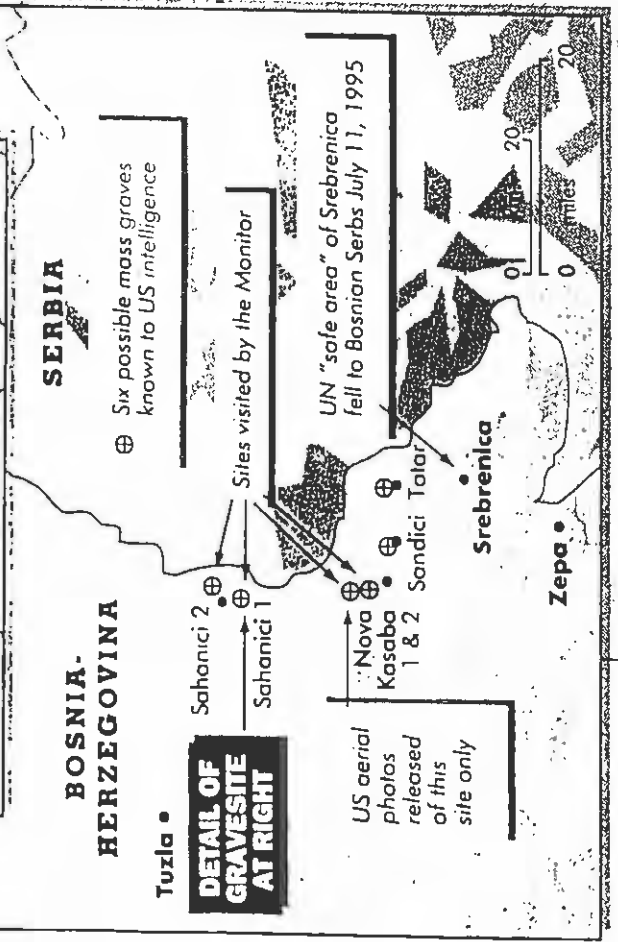
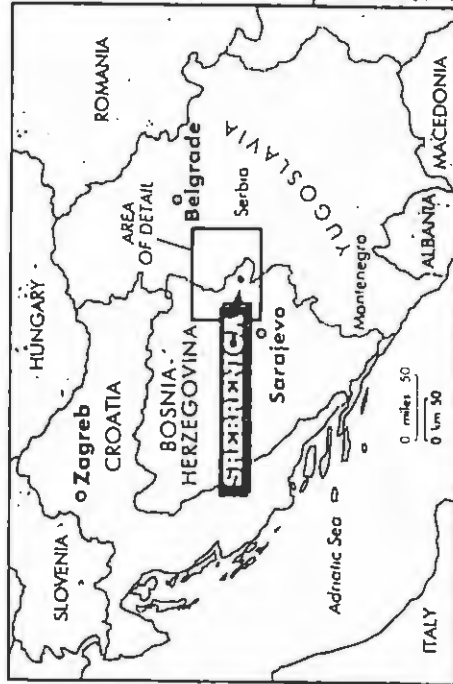
**1995:** As pressure for peace talks mounted in July, Bosnian Serb forces tried to take as much territory as possible and attacked Srebrenica, forcing 40,000 Muslims to flee. As many as 2,000 captured Muslim men were executed.

INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

# Mass Graves at Sahanici

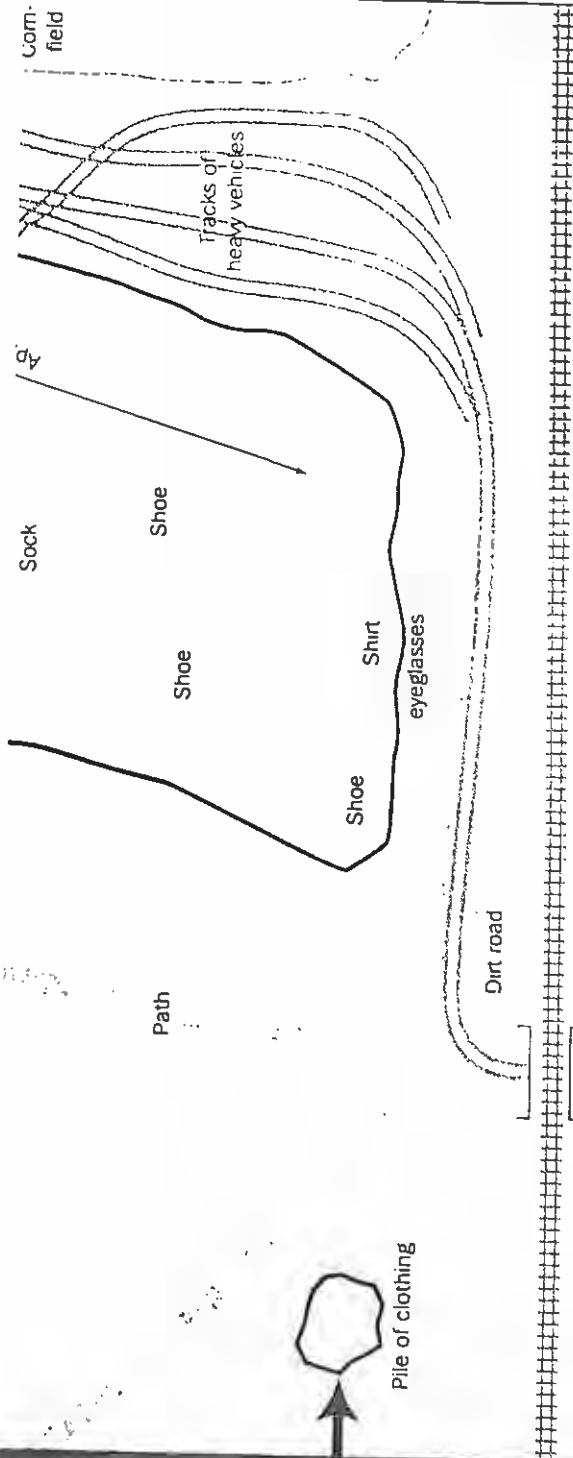
The Monitor found dozens of civilian items scattered across two areas of fresh digging in the Serb-held village of Sahanici. The site, and a nearby school, exactly matched the descriptions given by three Muslim men who say they survived a July 14 mass execution of more than 1,000 men captured by Bosnian Serb forces after the fall of Srebrenica.

GRAPHIC BY DAVE HERBING - STAFF PHOTO BY MELANIE STEINSON-FREEMAN - STAFF





**A pile of civilian jackets with no bullet holes in them contained one ID from Srebrenica, three canes, one crutch, photographs of Muslims, several bags of sugar, and two handkerchiefs and a comb (shown in picture above). This evidence contradicts Bosnian Serb claims that Muslims buried in the area were soldiers killed in battle.**



'Around 15 of us were blindfolded and put in a van outside the school. We drove for two or three minutes and crossed the railway line. The soldiers forced us to line up. I took my cousin's hand and he said, "They're going to shoot us." I said, "No you're crazy, they're not." As the shooting started, my cousin cried out when he was hit and squeezed my hand. He fell partly on top of me, and I played dead. The van kept coming back with more prisoners for hours.... They were also shooting prisoners in a field 200 yards away.... A machine started digging a grave, and I was terrified I would be buried alive....'

- Mevludin Oric, massacre survivor

## INVESTIGATIVE REPORT

# More Graves Found That Confirm Bosnia Massacre

Continued from Page 6

government-held central Bosnia. Any human remains, documents, or clothes found in the area are either from Muslims who fought their way through the area this summer, they claim, or from heavy fighting that occurred there when war broke out in 1992.

In a possible explanation for what may have motivated the massacres, Bosnian Serbs bitterly accused Srebrenica's Muslim military commander, Nasir Oric, of massacring some 1,300 Serb civilians in fighting in the area in 1992. UN officials say Mr. Oric, who played a videotape of murdered Serb civilians to Western reporters in 1994, did launch a handful of subsequent raids from the theoretically demilitarized UN "safe area" of Srebrenica.

But the clothes, documents, and digging at the two sites, which are 10 to 15 miles from the main escape route used by fleeing Muslims and appeared to be no more than a few months old, were overwhelming evidence that civilians were massacred:

## PIECING TOGETHER THE MASSACRES

**Aug. 18, 1995:** The Monitor reports on an Aug. 16 visit to mass graves near the Bosnian Serb-held village of Nova Kosoba. A human leg and documents from Srebrenica are found.

**Oct. 2:** Nine credible survivors of mass executions interviewed say at least 2,000 Muslim prisoners were executed by Bosnian Serb forces after the fall of Srebrenica. Survivors say they saw Bosnian Serb commander Gen. Ratko Mladic at four of the sites.

**Oct. 24:** In interviews, UN officials and Western diplomats say Serbian

■ Three canes, a crutch, and some 100 civilian jackets were found in a large pile 100 feet from the two mass graves, indicating that civilians, elderly, and the handicapped were among those executed.

■ An identity card from the Muslim safe area of Srebrenica, an identity card with a Muslim name on it, and personal photos with Muslim names – including one from a young girl who had written "I love you, Meho" on the back of a small portrait – were found in the jackets.

■ The smaller of the two graves near the Sahanici school reeked of rotting flesh.

■ Thirty to 40 shoes, a pair of pants, a shirt, a blue civilian beret, socks, and shattered eyeglasses still in their case were found scattered across the top of the graves.

■ The two graves near the Sahanici school are adjacent to rail-

President Slobodan Milosevic probably knew of the Srebrenica massacres, but failed to stop them. Muslims report that officers from Serbia participated in the attack on Srebrenica.

**Nov. 16:** On an Oct. 29 visit to two mass graves and an execution site near Sahanici, human remains, civilian clothing, and documents from Srebrenica with Muslim names on them are found.

road tracks and a paved road and are in two adjacent fields – details that match the descriptions of three men who say they survived a massacre there.

■ The layout of a school a half mile from the graves perfectly matches the descriptions of survivors who say that more than 1,000 Muslim prisoners, including elderly men taken from outside the main UN base in Srebrenica, were gathered before they were executed. Adding credibility to the survivors' accounts, Bosnian Serb police, who

confiscated pictures the Monitor took of the school where massacre survivors say they saw Bosnian Serb commander Mladic, said the school is a military installation.

At the second site, evidence of another mass execution was found. Two human femurs were seen on a gravel plateau. A bucket loader had removed a half-dozen scoops of dirt from a nearby hill, possibly using it to bury bodies.

The layout of the dam, the existence of the gravel plateau where the bones were seen, and a nearby drainage ditch, exactly

matches the description of two Muslims who say 500 to 1,000 Muslims were massacred there.

Four months after the fall of Srebrenica, the International Committee of the Red Cross says that 8,500 men from Srebrenica are still unaccounted for. At least 3,000 of those men were last seen in Bosnian Serb custody, according to eyewitnesses.

US officials estimate that as many as 6,000 Muslims were executed by the Serbs. War crimes investigators estimate that 4,000 to 6,000 Muslims were massacred.

Each of the six potential graves matches the description of a massacre survivor, a witness of an execution, or a witness of a mass burial interviewed by the Monitor.

A final, accurate accounting of the Srebrenica massacres will only come if Sahanici and the other five sites are dredged for the truth.