

T-BOLT Intel Newsletter

VMFA-251 Deployed - Aviano, Italy Operation Deny Flight / Operation Provide Promise

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Back to the Balkans...again

What was Yugoslavia is better known throughout history as the *Balkans*, a Turkish word for *mountains*. The rough and rugged terrain that characterizes the Balkans has been the cross-roads of empires for centuries. The Balkans have been divided and reconstituted numerous times over the years. The history of the Balkans is a fascinating story that could fill volumes. This is just a brief introduction.

As early as the tenth century, the area now known as Bosnia and Herzegovina was divided between the Catholic West and the Orthodox East ruled by the unstable Serbian empire. It was only a matter of time, however, before the Ottoman Turks invaded the Balkans and devastated the Serbians at the Battle of Kosovo. The Turks converted at least some of the population to Islam and the Muslim minority further complicated the religious map of the region. In 1878, Bosnia was turned over to Austria-Hungary, thus depriving the Serbians of what was rightfully theirs. World War I began in Sarajevo when a Serbian terrorist assassinated Austrian Archduke Ferdinand. It wasn't until after the First World War that Yugoslavia was born. In 1941, a German blitzkrieg overran the country and Yugoslavia was partitioned by the Axis powers. 1.8 million Yugoslavs died during WWII. Over half of those deaths, including 400,000 Serbs massacred during ethnic cleansing in Croatia, were the result of the civil war.

The Cold War managed to keep the six republics of Yugoslavia together. Now that the Cold War is over, the Balkan conflict has thawed as well. Ancient hatred has resurfaced, and the Balkan region has come apart at the seams. It is important to keep history in mind when discussing the Balkans. It is difficult for us in the West to understand many of the grudges that motivate the various ethnic factions in Bosnia. As you learn more about what is happening in Bosnia today, try to keep the history in mind.

From the S-2...

The primary mission of intelligence is to provide critical information in a timely manner to support the decision makers and the operators. You may not fall in either of those categories, but it's still important that you stay informed. We're living in the information age and there has never been so much information, both classified and unclassified, available to the intelligence community. Our goal with this newsletter, is to provide you with both useful and "nice to know" information about the situation in Bosnia and the reason we're all here in Aviano.

The T-Bolt Intel shop is made up of personnel from 251, 451, 332, 224, and even a Naval Officer who made his way over here from MAG-31. If you have any questions or anything you'd like to see in the newsletter, let one of us know.



The Ethnic Patchwork of the Former Yugoslavia

What used to be known as Yugoslavia was an attempt to bring together as one nation, six republics and two autonomous regions with a population of 23 million people drawn from five major ethnic groups using two alphabets, practicing three major religions, and speaking four different languages. Obviously, that didn't work out so well. It's easy to see from the map below why Bosnia is at the center of the Balkan conflict. There are three major ethnic groups in Bosnia.

Bosnian Serbs - Serbs are predominately Orthodox Christian. Speak Serbo-Croatian but write it in the Cyrillic alphabet.

Bosnian Croats - Croats are predominately Catholic. Also speak Serbo-Croatian but write it in the Latin alphabet.

Bosnian Muslims - At the center of the struggle for the Bosnia, the Muslims are not truly an ethnic group. They are instead distinguished by their practice of the Muslim religion.

Programs, programs! You can't tell the Serbs from the Croats without a program!

The situation in Bosnia is confusing to say the least. Not only do you have the warring factions, but you also have to keep up with everybody else who has their hand in Bosnia. If you want to follow the continuing saga of Bosnia in the news, here are just some of the major players you'll see:

United Nations Secretary General
 United Nations Special Envoy to Bosnia
 Commander, UN Provisional Forces (UNPROFOR)
 Commander, UNPROFOR, Bosnia-Herzegovina

Bhoutros Bhoutros-Ghali
 Yasushi Akashi
 General Cot
 Lt General Rose

CINCSOUTH
 COMAIRSOUTH
 COMFIVEATAF

Admiral Boorda
 Lt General Ashley
 Maj General Chambers

President, Republic of Serbia
 President, Republic of Croatia

Slobodan Milosevic
 Franjo Tudjman

President, Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina
 President, Serbian Republic of BiH

Alija Izetbegovic
 Radovan Karadzic

(...the Marines of VMFA-251, and a cast of thousands)



Where is Herzegovina anyway?

Bosnia and Herzegovina's name is taken from two provinces that for the past three centuries have had a common historical, economic, and cultural development. The centrally located, nearly landlocked republic covered 20 percent of the total area of the former Yugoslavia. Bosnia makes up four-fifths of this republic and Herzegovina the remainder. The former is a land of mountains with extensive forest cover and valleys. Herzegovina, with the exception of the Neretva Valley is for the most part a stony and dry wilderness. In general, hot summers and cold winters characterize the republic. Higher elevation areas have short, cool summers and long, severe winters.



THREATS TO U.S. PERSONNEL

You should always exercise caution when traveling over-seas or when you are deployed to a foreign country. Fortunately the threats to U.S. military personnel in northern Italy is minimal. Because you are representatives of the United States, however, you always need to be aware of what's going on around you. But don't let that stop you. Venture out, explore the land, and make friends with the natives.

T-BOLT Intel is...

Captain W.H. Osborne
 Ensign J.M. Dahm
 SSGT W.D. Riddle
 SSGT K.L. Cook
 SGT M.J. Grammer
 SGT F.J. Patrick
 LCPL J.D. Johnson
 LCPL P.J. Askew

S-2 Department Head
 Assistant Department Head
 Intel Chief/Senior Analyst
 Imagery Chief
 Watch Chief/Analyst
 Watch Chief/Analyst
 Analyst
 Armorer