

ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC OF BiH<sup>1</sup>  
COMMAND OF THE 28th DIVISION  
Strictly confidential No.04-21/95  
Srebrenica, 5 April '95

Defence of the Republic  
Military secret  
Strictly confidential

Report on the state of the combat morale  
for the month of March, is hereby delivered

Command of the 2nd Corps  
T U Z L A  
=====  
- Department for morale -

#### 1. Morale of our forces

The full restructuring of the 8th OG<sup>2</sup> into the 28th Division of the ARBiH<sup>3</sup> has not been completed yet. Indeed, there has been major progress and the work on it is nearing its end, but it is not completely finished. The 8th OG concluded its work on 20 March and not 1 March '95, as it was stated in the Order of the 2nd Corps of the ARBiH. The 28th Division started operating on 21 March '95. The biggest problem still concerns the 283rd iblbr<sup>4</sup> which is proclaimed as a manoeuvre one. 550 leaders and soldiers from the previous composition joined that unit. The remaining number of the brigade members came from other units of the 28th Division. 380 members of this brigade were deployed in supporting staff units, the 282nd iblbr and the 28th bb<sup>5</sup>. A number of members were put at disposal of the Secretariat for NO<sup>6</sup>, about 50 [of them]. Among them is also the dismissed Commandant of the 283rd iblbr, Major Huso Salihović. Those are his followers who greatly contributed to slowing down the restructuring of the brigade. Now the essential problem in efficient functioning of this brigade lies in it being poorly equipped with armament and MTS<sup>7</sup>. The equipment promised to this brigade by the GŠ<sup>8</sup> of the ARBiH and the 2nd Corps did not arrive during the past month. The Command of the 28th Division was not filled by appropriate personnel, while the former personnel of the 8th OG are executing their tasks, but that is making executing of regular tasks more difficult. Reasons for that lie in the fact that on two occasions the Commandant of the Division and NS<sup>9</sup> of the Division were absent for a longer period of time, and they stayed for a good reason in Žepa, attending a joint meeting with the superior leaders from the 2nd Corps and GŠ of the ARBiH. DIČ<sup>10</sup> was formed completely of supporting staff units. VP<sup>11</sup> Company has not yet been formed even though lists of candidates for filing it were obtained. The problems are connected to the fact that the proposed candidates do not possess any kind of armament, thus this problem too can be connected to the arrival of armament. The second reason is of staff nature, because the units have proposed one part of candidates who, objectively, cannot execute the tasks under the jurisdiction of VP, and a necessary correction of the staffs is in order which slows down the completion of restructuring and thus makes the operating of the 28th division difficult.

There were no b/ds<sup>12</sup> during the past month, although on 4 March '95, due to recklessness of members of the 282nd iblbr that were keeping guard in Jovino brdo [sic] sector, all units had to be urgently mobilised. The mobilisation was carried out in due time and the aggressor was prevented from entering the very important feature of Jovino brdo [sic] near PZT<sup>13</sup> in Podravanje sector, between Žepa and Srebrenica. What happened was that an accidental aggressor patrol in that sector ran into our relaxed guard and on that occasion they took three armaments and a certain amount of ammunition.

Overcoming the biggest part of the problem connected to the restructuring of the 8th OG into a division has created appropriate conditions for finally carrying out the preparations for a new round of training that is to be realised during the month of April.

The plan of taking over b/ds in coordination with other units of the 2nd Corps of ARBiH was made again in detail. The former plan was dismissed due to the reasons stated in earlier reports, [the fact that] it was uncovered to the aggressor by the persons who were recently captured in Serbia while trying to flee for Macedonia. In my personal opinion, the new plan that

<sup>1</sup> Translator's note: Bosnia and Herzegovina

<sup>2</sup> t/n: Operations Group

<sup>3</sup> t/n: Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina

<sup>4</sup> t/n: East Bosnian Light Brigade

<sup>5</sup> t/n: Mountain Battalion

<sup>6</sup> t/n: National Defence

<sup>7</sup> t/n: material and technical equipment

<sup>8</sup> t/n: Main Staff

<sup>9</sup> t/n: Chief of Staff

<sup>10</sup> t/n: Reconnaissance and Sabotage Company

<sup>11</sup> t/n: Military Police

<sup>12</sup> t/n: combat operations

<sup>13</sup> t/n: temporarily occupied territory

envisions the link-up of free territories of Srebrenica and Tuzla is easier to carry out, but the key issue is the defence of the free territory from the aggressor's counter-offensive.

The second problem is connected to the fact that a large number of soldiers can still use that physical link-up and leave this free territory to join some other units in other parts of the free territory. Reasons for that lie in the fact that during the past three years, the members of ARBiH in these areas have been so very physically and mentally exhausted that they cannot stand further isolation from their families and the free territory of RBiH. In my opinion, this is one of the key facts that must be paid attention to most seriously in order to avoid unwanted consequences. The fact that on the free territory of Srebrenica it is impossible for the economic recovery to take root, that the social life is difficult, and especially [the fact that] the institutional government system is having difficulty taking root, all support my warning.

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After a longer hassle on forming the forward department of military court, all hopes for it taking root are at last lost. The problem lies in resolving the staff issue, but with some corrections, that problem could have been solved as well.

During the past month, the Correctional department in Srebrenica was broken into by the Commandant of the 28th bb, *Senior Lieutenant*<sup>14</sup> Ejub Golić, and he released PK<sup>15</sup> for Logistics of the 28th bb, Nezir Merdžić, against whom KP<sup>16</sup> is conducted. Another prisoner of KPO<sup>17</sup> also broke free, one accused of some of the most severe KDs<sup>18</sup> of murder, as well as attempted murder. The prisoners were returned to custody, but problems of another nature arose. All workers of the Lower Court in Srebrenica went on a 15-days long strike as a sign of protest. Security Organs of the 2nd Corps of the Army of BiH were acquainted with the problem, and the *Senior Lieutenant* Ejub Golić was summoned to the 2nd Corps. However, the situation is very complicated; Tuzla CSB again started the KP against the *Senior Lieutenant* Ejub Golić, such as murder. The basic assumption is that the *Senior Lieutenant* Ejub Golić will be held in Tuzla and then surrendered to the prosecution. In that case, there was an open implication by one part of the members of the 28th bb stating they would leave the free territory and go to Tuzla together with the armament. The fact that he is an exceptional fighter who has greatly contributed the armed combat is indisputable, but the fact is also that when drunk he has the tendency to commit KDs of most severe nature.

In the area of the free territory, problems that are very hard to solve happen also, and they have a negative influence on b/m<sup>19</sup>. Strikes of hospital and school workers happen often, requesting compensations from the humanitarian aid. Last month, a fire broke out in the building of former DP<sup>20</sup> GP<sup>21</sup> Radnik, Srebrenica, the best built and preserved building. The two-storey building burned down. In addition to the expensive inventory, the invaluable material was also burned. The Command of the 284th iblbr Srebrenica was located in that building. The entire archive and inventory of the unit were burned. Among other things, the best made one-room museum, which was a true masterpiece, also burned. As a historian by profession, I was proud of that one-room museum. It should be noted that this brigade consists of former units of I CO<sup>22</sup>, the 114th IBB<sup>23</sup> K. Polje<sup>24</sup> and VI Kamenica Division, and that its entire archive was already on fire once and that it was restored with great difficulty. The archive and inventory of Bratunac municipality was burned in the same building. According to SJB release, the fire started from the room of the president of the municipal Transitional Council of Bratunac. About 40 families who were residing in the building lost a roof over their heads, and the apartment belonging to our PK for Command Post that was located in the neighbouring block of flats, also completely burned down. There are many consequences of this fire. The command of the 28th Division was supposed to move to that building, and the 284th iblbr to its location. Now the Command of the 28th Division does not have an adequate space for work and cannot fill the command of the division with personnel because it does not have a work space. The 284th iblbr Brigade [sic] was left without any rooms it could use, and is currently using a room of 9 m<sup>2</sup> in which the editorial of *Naši ratni dani*<sup>25</sup> newspaper is also

<sup>14</sup> t/n: this is not a literal translation of the rank since a word for the above-stated rank does not exist in English - it is a military rank in the Bosniak army between the ranks of Lieutenant and Captain

<sup>15</sup> t/n: Assistant Commandant

<sup>16</sup> t/n: criminal procedure

<sup>17</sup> t/n: Correctional department

<sup>18</sup> t/n: criminal offence

<sup>19</sup> t/n: combat morale

<sup>20</sup> t/n: state owned enterprise

<sup>21</sup> t/n: construction company

<sup>22</sup> t/n: unknown abbreviation, it most likely refers to the 1st Corps

<sup>23</sup> t/n: Independent Mountain Battalion

<sup>24</sup> t/n: this refers to Konjević Polje

<sup>25</sup> t/n: literal translation of the newspaper name would be *Our War Days*

working. About 40 families whose family members were killed got the decision that they would move to renovated houses in the settlement of Efendići, but the families who were living in the building that was caught in the fire had to have been placed there. Bratunac municipality also lost its working premises, and it is temporarily located in the rooms intended for the Command Post.

On 2 April '95, this area was caught in another disaster caused by flood from the melting snow. The Križevica River, which was directed through the town through sewers, flooded one part of the apartments and caused significant damage on parts of streets. This was contributed to by the poorly organised municipal authorities who allowed private mini-power stations to be constructed on the sewers.

Those dams prevented the reception of the swelling waters and caused great damages. Fire and flood had an extremely negative influence on the mood of the people, and members of ARBiH were also affected by it, and findings that they were a product of subjective weakness further feed the ideas of those who are promoting the idea that they should only be searching for a way to leave this free territory.

Political life is getting complicated. In the Transitional Municipal Council of Srebrenica, there is still an obstruction which is led by an MP from the Assembly of RBiH, Ibran Mustafić, but the Council is managing to make decisions legally. The situation became complicated in the Transitional Municipal Council of Bratunac. The obstruction led by the former president of Bratunac SDA<sup>26</sup>, Mirsad Kavazbašić, is still not participating in the work of the Council. Bratunac SDA is not even succeeding in bringing a sufficient number of MP's to the Council sessions, thus the last two sessions were not held due to absence of quorum. Fights between the most responsible people in Bratunac municipality contributed to this the most. In fact, on one side, the municipal mayor of Bratunac, Zajko Alić, and the secretary of Bratunac municipality, Rešid Sinanović, and on the other, president of the Transitional Municipal Council for Bratunac, Bego Mustafić, had such a great fight that they paralysed the work of all bodies of Bratunac municipality.

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This chaos is quite contributed to by the passive work of the Bratunac SDA secretary, Džemail Bećirović, who is at the high post of PK for Morale in the 284th iblbr, and in practice he is just working on creating conditions for leaving the free territory, and by now he has tried to leave the free territory on multiple occasions.

The morale of the fighters and mood of the people are positively influenced by the finding that the military and civilian delegation from Srebrenica are to meet with the superior commands in Tuzla and Sarajevo, as well as with the bodies of highest cantonal and state authority. The mood of the people and army is negatively influenced by the finding that the civilian delegation should stay in Tuzla and not come back, allegedly to perform some tasks in the Commission for Srebrenica with headquarters in Tuzla. Such rumours support the observation that there is no strong will of the most responsible [persons] from the authority to save the free territory but only to take care of their own concerns and interests, and the obstruction supports the morale for disrupting the organised work in the ARBiH and local authority. During the previous period, the social status was kept at borderline minimum. We managed to help all members of the 28th Division by distributing each 3 kg flour, 50 g salt, the RBiH, the children of killed fighters were given appropriate gift packages. A certain amount of food staples was distributed to the most affected families of killed fighters, as a one-time assistance. The most affected members of ARBiH were given a certain amount of ovens, cast iron stoves, sponge mattresses, blankets, and beds. A number of closes relatives of killed fighters were hired on the posts for dividing the UNHCR goods. Those movements are positive, but they are not enough and they cause discontent.

The task concerning the housing of families of the killed are still on units' backs, and the Command Post cannot transfer that task to the Secretariat for Veteran and Invalid Issues, because it has not yet completely rooted itself even though it was recently formed. The accidental and deliberate oversights when hiring persons in international organisations and filling out new [positions] with their candidates who are not within the categories of RVI<sup>27</sup> and families of killed are an extremely negative factor for the morale. The municipal authorities are losing their reputation in the eyes of the people and army more and more, [which can be seen from] the observation that the entire wartime they are trying to avoid classifying the population when distributing the humanitarian aid into [the category of] population that possesses property for producing food, the residents from the category of domestic population who do not possess property for producing food, and the displaced persons. That is an absurd that is completely unclear. To illustrate, members of ARBiH from the order of the most affected

<sup>26</sup> t/n: Muslim-dominated party called Party of Democratic Action

<sup>27</sup> t/n: War Military Invalids

population state that they cannot fight hungry, and the municipal workers are giving them the same as they do those who have enough to sell. Or the fact that seed potatoes are handed out 1 kg per capita. That way both those who have none and those who have 2000 kg and sell them on the market [get the same amount], for which we have textual evidence.

The objectively difficult problems in the free territory, and especially [problems] such as these, the subjective oversights are used by the obstruction that also adds magnified lies and then difficult problems arise in the functioning of the government and that is then transferred to RiK<sup>28</sup> in the ARBiH.

Even though a return of 16 Officers from ROŠ<sup>29</sup> in Zenica is expected, which will greatly help the military-qualitative competency of the members of ARBiH, in my opinion there is a need for Officers from other units of the 2nd Corps, mainly those who possess larger military knowledge. We have at our disposal only three Officers from the former JNA and all three of them have the military rank of Second Lieutenant and no working experience. The personnel refreshment consisting of a few Officers would help new knowledge to be acquired and thus efficiency of carrying out b/ds would be improved.

The fighters being well informed is what is maintaining the combat morale, and the successes on Vlašić and Majeвица contributed to a visible improvement in morale. The recent arrival of a VHS tape from the ceremony in the 2nd Corps of ARBiH, dated 2 February '95, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Muslim Podrinjska Brigade gave additional motives and belief in our Army. The video material was screened twice for each member of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division, except for the 285<sup>th</sup> iblbr Žepa. There is a need for such informing on organised and equipped units of ARBiH. The negative observation lies in the fact that the ranking of leaders in the units had not yet happened, with the exception of 43 leaders, even though the adequate forms had been sent to the 2<sup>nd</sup> corps of ARBiH. This is making the RiK system difficult. In the following text, we shall state the most characteristic parts of extracts from reports of units within the 28<sup>th</sup> Division:

a) The 280th iblbr Potočari

The same as until now, during the time of the truce, the state hasn't changed because the aggressor is constantly carrying out provocations without any cause.

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The restructuring of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division, as well as our units, has not yet been completed, which is causing us difficulties in the organisational sense as well as in the Body for Morale. We believe that it should all be accelerated so each body could carry out its tasks. Lack of footwear is still causing great problems [and] discontent. New successes of the ARBiH have a positive effect on our fighters' b/m.

b) The 281st iblbr Sućeska

Soldiers and leaders of the 281st iblbr who are holding a front 19 km in length are unwavering in their intent to defend the territories that are under their control. In hope that they will soon transfer from defensive to offensive b/ds, the morale of the fighters is high, and is even better due to the successes of our Army on Majeвица and Vlašić. We can rightfully conclude that b/m of this brigade is between good and very good.

c) The 282nd iblbr Srebrenica

The b/m state in our units is getting better in comparison to the last month. In order for the unit's b/m to elevate to a higher level, we require as good as possible logistic support and better equipment, along with all the structures on the level of our municipality. The ratio between our forces' b/m state in comparison to the forces of A/V<sup>30</sup> is much stronger and better. The distribution of food staples to members of units, especially the families of killed fighters, influenced the fighters' b/m positively. They are dissatisfied because they only got 13 workplaces for hiring the families of killed fighters on the posts for distributing the humanitarian aid. They believe that the municipal authorities have a negative influence by lowering the number of hiring from the category of families of killed fighters. They are appealing for that not to happen again when hiring in UNPROFOR starts.

d) The 283rd iblbr Srebrenica

The previous period is characteristic due to the fact that a lot of work has been done on the restructuring of the Command and basic units within the brigade. When choosing the members for the manoeuvre brigade, the principle used was that of volunteering and v/s<sup>31</sup>, i.e. the psychological and physical readiness for individual and successful carrying out all b/ds. The work on forming the basic units of the command and brigade is entirely in its final phase.

<sup>28</sup> t/n: Command and Control

<sup>29</sup> t/n: unknown abbreviation, most likely should have been OŠ meaning District Staff

<sup>30</sup> t/n: abbreviation unknown, probably refers to the aggressor army or aggressor soldiers

<sup>31</sup> t/n: combat readiness

Lack of MTS<sup>32</sup> of better quality and the absence of the Commandant of the Brigade have largely slowed down the started activities. Fighters and leaders reacted in a positive and ready manner to the elevated security measures that are being carried out with the aim of better protection of the 28th Division's z/o, due to the possible attack that the aggressor could undertake by carrying out b/ds as a revenge for failures it suffered in other sectors. The fighters' b/m was positively influenced by the improvement of the social state, and especially awarding DM200 to each of the families of killed fighters. As a negative factor they mentioned the distributing of gift packets on the occasion of Ramadan Bajram only to the children of killed fighters, and not to children [illegible]. The distribution of parcels in stages to the families of killed fighters causes resentment of those who are not on the lists; attempts of "forging" statements on killings in the armed forces of ARBiH is common and that has a negative influence on the real members of ARBiH, as do the unsolved social categorization of population by the competent bodies of authority, unfinished process of ranking the leader personnel, lack of clothes, footwear, and poor nutrition.

f) The 28<sup>th</sup> bb Srebrenica

Lately here have been mass complaints by the members of the 28<sup>th</sup> bb because the locals have been driving out refugees from their [locals'] houses. Lack of food and footwear are the biggest problems. Even under these conditions, members of the 28<sup>th</sup> bb are carrying out their obligations within z/o<sup>33</sup>.

g) The 285<sup>th</sup> LB<sup>34</sup> Žepa

The report was not delivered from unknown reasons. According to other sources, the 285<sup>th</sup> iblbr carried out the order on restructuring one company into the 283rd iblbr which is proclaimed a manoeuvre one. It separates one amount of flour and gives it to the most affected members of other units. It constantly scouts the enemy movements and reports on them to the superior. It sent a group of members, led by Chief for ARJ<sup>35</sup> PVO<sup>36</sup>, to Srebrenica for training. The people and the army do not exhibit the desire to leave the free territory. There are problems in the Rik system due to a simple reason of placing completely illiterate personnel in positions of great responsibility. I believe that even PK for Morale in the 285<sup>th</sup> iblbr *Senior Captain*<sup>37</sup> Nazif Podžić is not deliberately obstructing the [carrying out of his] obligations towards the Department for Morale in the 28<sup>th</sup> Division, but instead he cannot carry them out because he finished only primary [school], *carries out his tasks*<sup>38</sup>.

2. Morale of the aggressor

The aggressor is not giving up on the idea to finish the occupation of middle Podrinje. The obstacle to that lies in the free territory in z/o of the 28<sup>th</sup> Division. For those reasons, it carried out all possible preparations for the spring offensive and, as it states, definite take-over of areas in eastern Bosnia.

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It has been carrying out preparations during the entire winter period. It took control of the feature of Osoje /tt<sup>39</sup> 581/, additionally burrowed and fortified. First, it brought armament and MTS from Serbia by helicopters. It has constantly propagated that in all variants of the solution for BiH crisis, Srebrenica would be Serb, with the aim of discouraging members of ARBiH. It negotiated with the UNPROFOR with the aim of allegedly evacuating the civilians and transporting them with busses.

It stopped UNHCR convoys for the people, forbade delivering of food and oil products to the UN representatives in order to weaken their potential resistance. It signed a false truce. After the Serb authorities arrested the persons who tried to leave the free territory with the aim of reaching Macedonia via Serbia, it got all the information on the plan on linking up the free territories Srebrenica and Tuzla. Before the truce expired, and as usual in March when the people are most exhausted from the winter and hunger, it prepared an offensive. On 4 March '95, it tried to take over the feature of Jovino Brdo in Podravanje sector from which the passage through PTZ between Žepa and Srebrenica is controlled. Immediately after that, it carried out all preparations for taking of Stublić above Žepa and thus prevented the Žepa-Srebrenica communication, and then took a suitable position for preventing the landing of our helicopters in Igrišnik. From Skelani across Osmači, it brought new war equipment /tanks,

<sup>32</sup> t/n: material and technical equipment

<sup>33</sup> t/n: zone of responsibility

<sup>34</sup> t/n: Light Brigade

<sup>35</sup> t/n: Artillery Rocket Units

<sup>36</sup> t/n: Anti-Aircraft Defence

<sup>37</sup> t/n: this is not a literal translation of the rank since a word for the above-stated rank does not exist in English - it is a military rank in the Bosniak army between the ranks of Captain and Major

<sup>38</sup> t/n: end of the sentence does not make sense in the original text, thus it was translated literally

<sup>39</sup> t/n: trig point

OTs<sup>40</sup>, howitzers, MBs<sup>41</sup>/ to its p/l<sup>s</sup><sup>42</sup> in Pribičeac<sup>43</sup> [sic], Kvarc, Šarampov, Bukova Glava, Lubničko brdo [sic], and Jasenova. From Bratunac, it strengthened its p/l in Zalazje, Čauš, Zvijezda, and Zagoni. By [adding] manpower, it reinforced the control over Ravni Buljim considering the possibility of our forces breaching through PTZ, through Hajdučko groblje towards K. Polje. From the direction of Milići, it brought new equipment and manpower to the known features of Rogač, Bešići, Gunjaci, Bračan, Milića brdo [sic], and took control over the feature of Osoje on the demarcation line. It used the arrival of a few helicopters to Žepa as a sufficient reason for justifying its offensive on Srebrenica. It acquainted the UNPROFOR with the arrival of helicopters and on its own initiative declared the agreement with d/z<sup>44</sup> Srebrenica and Žepa invalid. UNPROFOR from the HOLBAT order knew of all that. Recently they themselves confessed that 7 vehicles were stolen from them in Sokolac, and as always are stating that they do not know whose forces did it, the Serb or the Bosniak. When on 4 March '95, the aggressor side succeeded to temporarily take control over one of our trenches in Jovino brdo and capture the three APs<sup>45</sup> that were left behind, they immediately met with the UNPROFOR in Kiprovo and showed them the spoils. UNPROFOR and the aggressor still have a wired connection on the demarcation line. Our forces constantly cut those connections, but UNPROFOR keeps setting them. According to some intelligence information, the offensive operations of the aggressor on d/z Žepa and Srebrenica should have started on 25 March '95. However, they changed that plan because of the disaster that happened to them on Vlašić and Majeвица. From the information obtained [via] RI<sup>46</sup>, we have established that in all bigger places in PZT in z/o of the so-called Drina Corps, on 25 March '95, meetings of army and police were held in which was decided that all the manpower ready for Srebrenica was to be engaged in defending Majeвица and Vlašić. Such meetings were certainly held in Kravica and Bratunac, and we suppose that they were also held in Skelani, Milići, and Vlasenica. The aggressor did not withdraw its equipment around Srebrenica because it is not giving up on the intended plan to start an offensive against it. It even continued bringing BOVs<sup>47</sup> around Srebrenica from insides of smaller units within the so-called Drina Corps, from Milići, Derventa, Skelani, and Bratunac. For the help in war equipment for Majeвица and Vlašić, he again addressed Milošević and mother Serbia.

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<sup>40</sup> t/n: armoured personnel carrier

<sup>41</sup> t/n: mortars

<sup>42</sup> t/n: starting line

<sup>43</sup> t/n: this refers to Pribičevac

<sup>44</sup> t/n: unknown abbreviation, probably demilitarised zone

<sup>45</sup> t/n: automatic rifle

<sup>46</sup> t/n: Radio Reconnaissance

<sup>47</sup> t/n: armed combat vehicle