

The Making of Ethnic Insecurity: A Case Study of the Krajina Serbs

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The author of this essay tries to reveal how political entrepreneurs create insecurity which lead to wars and conflict – by focusing on the case of the Krajina Serbs.

I. Introduction

On 29 June 2004 Milan Babić, the president of the self-declared, but internationally never recognized ‘Republic of the Serbian Krajina’, was found guilty by the United Nations International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Former Yugoslavia since 1991 (ICTY). He was sentenced to 13 years imprisonment¹. He had pleaded guilty “*to persecutions on political, racial, and religious grounds, a crime against humanity ...*”².

In the court’s judgement, Babić’s role in the campaign of persecution was characterized as follows:

*“Babić made ethnically based inflammatory speeches during public events and in the media that added to the atmosphere of fear and hatred amongst Serbs living in Croatia and convinced them that they could only be safe in a state of their own”*³.

*“... and by his speeches and media exposure prepared the ground for the Serb population to accept that their goals could be achieved through acts of persecution”*⁴.

¹ International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Former Yugoslavia since 1991, *Prosecutor vs. Milan Babić*, Case No. IT-03-72.

² *Prosecutor vs. Milan Babić*, para. 10.

³ *Prosecutor vs. Milan Babić*, para. 24g.

⁴ *Prosecutor vs. Milan Babić*, para. 61.

How could this happen? The Croatian Serbs, who constituted 12% (= 600.000) of the total population⁵, had been a traditional stronghold for Tito's Communists. Apart from a great number of Serbs living in Zagreb, they mainly inhabited the area around Knin, Kordun and Banija (at the western and northern border to Bosnia) as well as the regions of Western and Eastern Slavonia (the plains northeast of Zagreb stretching around the borders of north-eastern Bosnia to Vojvodina). But these regions were not exclusively inhabited by Serbs. In the regions of Knin, Kordun and Banija, Serbs constituted around 67%, in Slavonia only 20 to 30%. In total only 61% of all Serbs living in Croatia were settled on the territory of the later 'Republic of the Serbian Krajina'⁶.

The old Četnik strongholds around Knin, Obrovac and Benkovac were especially sensitive to the new nationalistic tones coming from Belgrade, whereas those Serbs living in Lika, Kordun and Banija had a strong Partisan tradition and therefore were (in the beginning) not so prone to Serbian nationalism coming from Belgrade. And it was around Knin that the first Serb demonstrations against the Zagreb government took place on the occasion of the 600th anniversary of the 'Battle of Kosovo Polje' in 1989⁷. Thus in the first multi-party elections of May 1990, most Serbs voted for the former Communists. The landslide victory of Tudjman's HDZ (the Croatian Democratic Union), changed things dramatically. By securing 40% of the votes cast, the HDZ won two thirds of the seats in the Sabor, the Croatian Parliament.

With a future Croat independence in the air - which actually was declared on 25 June 1991 - a spiral of insecurity and fear had started since the elections in May 1990. And the Croats, especially the Tudjman government, bore the risk of a conflict. It seemed to be worth the risk given the dominance they wanted to achieve: The state of the Croats with the Serbs becoming a minority group with minority rights.

⁵ Serbs had lived in Croatia for centuries, when they had fled the Ottoman advance in the Balkans. Here they were welcomed by the Christian Habsburg Emperors, who tried to establish a fortified frontier to meet the Ottoman attacks. This military frontier, the so-called vojna krajina, first was established around Karlovac. As the area was totally depopulated by the wars, new settlers, among them a great number of Orthodox Serbs, were granted free land without manorial obligations and exempted from feudal dues for a certain time in exchange for military service. When Slavonia and Vojvodina were liberated from Ottoman rule at the end of the 17th century, the military frontier was extended eastward, and again a great number of Serbs settled there, side by side with Catholic Croats.

⁶ Holm Sundhaussen, *Der Gegensatz zwischen historischen Rechten und Selbstbestimmungsrechten als Ursache von Konflikten: Kosovo und Krajina im Vergleich*, in Philipp Ther and Holm Sundhaussen (eds), *Nationalitätenkonflikte im 20. Jahrhundert. Ursachen von inter-ethnischer Gewalt im Vergleich* (Forschungen zur osteuropäischen Geschichte, Bd. 59), Wiesbaden, 2001, at pp. 19-35, 20-21.

⁷ See: Marcus Tanner, *Croatia. A Nation Forged in War*, New Haven – London, 2001, at p. 218-219.

The Croatian Serbs' demands for autonomy (first cultural, then territorial and finally secession) escalated into armed upheavals. Thus in summer 1990 a kind of national mobilization started around Knin, where Milan Babić was mayor at that time. Serb policemen for example denied the authority of the new Croatian government by refusing to wear the new uniforms with the Croatian emblem. By blocking the streets of this area with trees (the so-called 'log-revolution'), the Serbs prevented the Croat forces from entering this territory in order to re-establish law and order. For the first time the Yugoslav Army intervened on behalf of the revolting Serbs by preventing for example Croat helicopters to fly into the area.

After the proclamation in October 1990 of Serb autonomy by a newly created Serb National Council, in February 1991 - five months before Croatia declared its independence from Yugoslavia - the independent 'Serbian Republic Krajina' (= Republika Srpska Krajina/ RSK) was proclaimed, which at that time enclosed the rebellious regions around Knin. Later the self-proclaimed Serb Autonomous Districts (SAO) Western Slavonia and SAO Slavonia, Baranja and Western Srem joined the RSK.

In spring the first fights between Serb militias and Croat police forces, who wanted to re-establish Croat authority, had started in the area of Knin (Plitvice). Finally the uprising was 'exported' to Slavonia (Pakrac). When in May Croatian policemen as well as Serbs were killed after fights in Borovo Selo, near Vukovar at the Danube, war became inevitable. In September 1991, open war between the armed forces of the new state Croatia and Croatian Serbs, who were passively and finally even actively supported by the Yugoslav Army (JNA), was waged. Within a short time the Croatian Serbs had occupied a third of Croatian territory. Vukovar, a multicultural city with a Croat, Serb, Ukrainian, Slovak and Ruthenian population, became the 'sad' symbol of this war: although the Croat population of this East Slavonian town had resisted the siege of Serbian militias which were supported by the JNA, it was finally overrun and flattened in November 1991. Thousands of Croats were forced to leave their homes and to flee. In total, an estimated 330.000 Croats fled the Serb occupied territories; 6.651 deaths were officially counted with another 13.700 'missing'. 210.000 houses had been destroyed⁸. And we all became acquainted with a new term: 'ethnic cleansing'.

In January 1992, a cease-fire was negotiated by the UN. Both parties had agreed on stationing UN-peacekeeping troops (UNPROFOR), but no refugees were allowed to return to their homes or would dare do so. With the end of the Bosnian war in 1995 and dwindling Serbian power, the Croat Army reconquered ('Operations Storm and Flash') the Serb held regions in Krajina and Western Slavonia within two weeks. Now a new stream of refugees was forced

⁸ Tanner, *Croatia. A Nation Forged in War*, at p. 278.

Tim Judah, *The Serbs. History, Myth & the Destruction of Yugoslavia*, Yale Nota Bene, New Haven - London, 2000.

to leave their homes: about 300.000 Serbs fled to Serbia and Bosnia and so far only a few wanted or were able to return home. Only the Serb controlled area of Eastern Slavonia, which, according to the Erdut Agreement, stayed under UN-administration, was peacefully integrated into Croatia in 1998.

Before the Tribunal, Babić had expressed his remorse: “*I come before this Tribunal with a deep sense of shame and remorse. I have allowed myself to take part in the worst kind of persecution of people simply because they were Croats and not Serbs. Innocent people were persecuted; innocent people were evicted forcibly from their houses; and innocent people were killed. Even when I learned what had happened, I kept silent. Even worse, I continued in my office, and I became personally responsible for the inhumane treatment of innocent people*”⁹.

What were the reasons that ‘ordinary people’ like Babić started to persecute their neighbours just because they were Croats? They spoke the same language and had peacefully lived in their villages, hamlets and towns at least since 1945. Was it the different religion? Croats being Roman Catholics, Serbs being Orthodox? However, this was not a war of faiths.

Stuart J. Kaufman identifies three necessary conditions for the likelihood of an ethnic war occurring:

- 1) the existence of myths justifying ethnic hostility;
- 2) the presence of ethnic fears about the survival of a group;
- 3) the opportunity for the ethnic group to mobilise and fight¹⁰.

But an ethnic war is only likely, if these preconditions lead “*to rising mass hostility, chauvinist mobilisation by leaders making extreme symbolic appeals, and a security dilemma*”¹¹. If only one of these elements is missing, an ethnic war can be avoided. In the Krajina, however, all elements were present, thus war seemed to have been inevitable.

II. The presence of ethnic fears about the survival of a group – security dilemma

In addition to Kaufman’s ‘symbolic politics theory’ another approach seems applicable. Following the emotional approach by Roger D. Petersen, fear can be a main reason for an ethnic attack¹².

⁹ *Prosecutor vs. Milan Babić*, para 83.

¹⁰ Stuart J. Kaufman, *The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 2001, at p. 30-34.

¹¹ Kaufman, *The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War*, at p. 34.

¹² Roger D. Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence. Fear, Hatred, and Resentment in Twentieth-Century Eastern Europe*, Cambridge University Press, 2002, at p. 24.

With the collapse of the post-Tito Yugoslavia to come and the landslide victory of the nationalistic HDZ of Franjo Tuđman in the first free elections in May 1990, Croatian Serbs, and especially their (sometimes self-declared) leaders, got a sense of national marginalization. With Croatian independence aspirations in the air, they feared a rearrangement of ethnic status hierarchies by changing sovereignty relations. This feeling was aggravated by the draft of the new Croatian Constitution which declared Croatia the national state of the Croats and the other nations. By this wording ('others'), Serbs in Croatia were afraid of becoming second class citizens, whereas the Constitution of 1974 had declared Croatia the state of the Croat nation, the Serb nation and the other minorities. Up to this time Serbs in Croatia could rely on their double identity as Yugoslavs and Serbs, with Belgrade the centre of the state and the nation. But after 40 years of Communism, not to speak of the first Yugoslavia, 'Yugoslavs' had no tradition of rule of law, nor any experience nor confidence in legal security.

The defence measures of one group seemed to endanger the other group and vice versa. Ordinary citizens became nationalistic fighters. The nationalistic elites and the paramilitary groups came to instrumentalize this fear of ordinary men for their goals¹³.

III. The existence of myths justifying ethnic hostility

This feeling of insecurity and fear, which had beset the Serbs in Croatia, mainly arose from the symbolic level. Riding on a wave of victory, Tuđman and the HDZ engaged in Croat nationalism and frightened more and more Serbs who increasingly became antagonistic. In his campaign, especially with regard to the wealth of his emigré constituency¹⁴, Tuđman did not show much remorse for the Ustaša victims. He stated that the NDH-state was "*not only a quisling organisation and a Fascist crime, but was also an expression of the Croatian nation's historic desire for an independent homeland*"¹⁵.

With the draft of the new Croat constitution, Serbs got the feeling that another national defeat was dawning. The draft was presented on 28 June 1990, the Vidovdan, the day of Serbia's defeat by the Turks on Kosove Polje in 1389. And especially after 1989, St. Vitus day had become the heyday of Serbian nationalism, when Milošević had gathered one million Serbs on Kosove Polje to celebrate the 600th anniversary of this battle. But this national defeat was only on a symbolic and emotional level, as the new Croat constitution, which finally was enacted in December 1990, in reality had no consequences for the Serbs, neither

¹³ Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence*, at p. 225.

¹⁴ See Laura Silber and Allan Little, *Yugoslavia Death of a Nation*, Penguin Books, New York et al, 1997, at pp. 82-87.

¹⁵ Tanner, *Croatia. A Nation Forged in War*, at p. 223 citing Stipe Mesić, *Kako smo rušili Jugoslaviju*, Zagreb 1992, at p. 8-9.

socially, politically nor culturally¹⁶. The Serb propaganda must have been really happy with this constitution. Now Misloušević and the SDS (Serb Democratic Party) could pretend that the 'young Croatian democracy' was a masked "Agenda to restore the NDH (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*) and cart the Serbs off to another Jasenovac"¹⁷. Very late, in December 1991, when war was almost over, Croatia enacted a Minority Law to ensure the rights of the Serbs, which had been strongly recommended by the European Union.

In the eyes of the Serbs, Croat nationalism had culminated in the re-introduction of the Sahovica, the traditional, century-old Croat chess-board flag. For the Croats the Sahovica was the symbol of the century-old dream of Croat independence and statehood, for the Serbs of Croatia, however, it was the bloody symbol of the Ustaša-State of World War II¹⁸. After the collapse of the Yugoslav Kingdom and the German occupation in 1941 a fascist German puppet state, the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) was installed by the Nazis. This so-called Ustaša-State, which incorporated large parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina, aimed at creating an ethnically 'clean' Croatia. Thus hundreds of thousands of Serbs were expelled, others were forced to convert to the Catholic faith, but above all, thousands were murdered, many in the notorious concentration camp Jasenovac. In an atmosphere so full of fear and probably even hate, the impression of the picture showing Tudjman kissing the Sahovica, the hated symbol of the Ustaša state, must have been horrifying for many Serbs.

Since the middle of the 1980s a Serb-Croat propaganda war on the figure of victims of that time was waged. Thus whereas the Serbs pretended that in Jasenovac alone 500.000 to 700.000 Serbs had been murdered, Tudjman, a historian himself, always strongly minimized the number of deaths in Jasenovac¹⁹. The latest independent research estimates that around 600.000 people fell victim to the war on the territory of the Ustaša-State and less than 100.000 people were killed in Jasenovac²⁰.

¹⁶ See Sundhaussen, *Der Gegensatz zwischen historischen Rechten und Selbstbestimmungsrechten*, at pp. 19-35.

¹⁷ Tanner, *Croatia. A Nation Forged in War*, at p. 231.

¹⁸ 'Ustaša' meaning insurgent, rebellious. The movement was founded by Ante Pavelić in reaction to the royal dictatorship (1929), aiming at the foundation of a Great Croatian State.

Holm Sundhaussen, *Ustaše*, in E. Hösch, K. Nehring and H. Sundhaussen (eds), *Lexikon zur Geschichte Südosteuropas*, Böhlau UTB, Wien-Köln-Weimar, 2004, at p. 718 cont.

¹⁹ In 1978 Tudjman had given an interview to an Croatian emigré newspaper (*Hrvatska Država*), where he stated that during the war in all camps 60.000 people (Serbs, Gypsies and Croats) had lost their lives: "... that is a huge and terrible number and a crime ... but I am against this number being multiplied 10 times to 600.000 in Jasenovac alone, solely and only to exaggerate the collective and permanent guilt of the Croatian people." Tanner, *Croatia. A Nation Forged in War*, at p. 205.

²⁰ Hansgerd Göckenjan, *Unabhängiger Staat Kroatien*, in: *Lexikon zur Geschichte Südosteuropas*, at p. 707 cont.

Since 1989, the Serb population increasingly was exposed to a nationalistic media bombardment, with the Ustaša time and the atrocities committed against Serbs becoming the prime topic. For months the Serbian TV stations, especially in Serbia proper, over and over had played documentaries about the Croatian Ustaša-regime and the genocide it had committed on the Serbian population. Thus above all, the myth of the Ustaša and Jasenovac were the key in the Croatian-Serb drama of the 1990s. But it was not only the media. In the notorious ‘Memorandum’ of the Serbian Academy of Sciences of 1986 which had castigated the alleged genocide of Serbians in Kosovo, it also stated that “*but for the period of the existence of the NDH, Serbs in Croatia have never been as threatened as they are now*”²¹.

The anti-Croat-propaganda was successful. The Krajina Serbs could not withstand it: Serbs were beset by a feeling of (ethnic) insecurity vis-à-vis Croats and Croatia. Manipulated by the Serb media, the Krajina Serbs were driven by fear, be it from imagination or reality. The Serb newspapers had “*fanned the flames of hysteria about a new Ustashe government in Zagreb*”²².

In his trial at the ICTY, Babić presented himself as a victim of this media campaign. He stated that “*... during the events, and in particular at the beginning of his political career, he was strongly influenced, and misled by Serbian propaganda, which repeatedly referred to an imminent threat of genocide by the Croatian regime against the Serbs in Croatia, thus creating an atmosphere of hatred and fear of the Croats*”²³.

Even the Prosecution asserted that Babić: “*only became radicalised through moves of the political leaderships both in Belgrade and Zagreb and a large-scale and sophisticated Serbian media campaign to revive peoples’ old fears and insecurities, leading to separation of communities along ethnic lines and resulting in violence of the dominant ethnic group against others*”²⁴.

But this historic trauma has never been healed, there was no historic research on this topic, not to speak of reconciliation. Until the 1980s, the history of the inter-ethnic war of the 1940s was not a topic at all, neither for the professional historians nor for the population. ‘Bratstvo i Jedinstvo’ (brotherhood and unity) had been the main ideology of Tito- and post-Tito-Yugoslavia, thus aiming to secure a peaceful ethnic coexistence of the ethnic groups. In Communist Yugoslavia Serbs and Croats had lived relatively peacefully side by side until the 1980s. The national question, especially the Serb-Croat conflict which had plagued the Yugoslav Kingdom and eventually led to the Ustaša atrocities during World War II, was declared solved by Tito. Any nationalistic expression therefore had been firmly suppressed by Tito, such as the Croatian Spring of

²¹ Tanner, *Croatia. A Nation Forged in War*, at p. 212.

²² Tanner, *Croatia. A Nation Forged in War*, at p. 231.

²³ *Prosecutor vs. Milan Babić*, para. 24g.

²⁴ *Prosecutor vs. Milan Babić*, para. 90.

1971. The ethnic question was put into the historic refrigerator by the Communist system, where it waited to be defrosted in the 1990s. Another myth, officially nursed by the Communist Party was the myth of the victorious Partisan liberation struggle. By this myth, that has been nourished in schools ever since the war, generations of young Yugoslavs of all ethnic groups became acquainted with the pathos of war, whereas the civic ethnic wars which went parallel to the 'heroic' (Partisan) liberation struggle were never made a central theme in the official historiography. A 'vacuum of memory' (Höpken)²⁵, of official memory, was produced which waited to be filled by nationalistic ideas in the late 1980s. Thus it was the private memories of the atrocities (committed by all nations) which were kept alive in 'oral history'. By keeping alive the official myth of the brave Partisan struggle, the Communists also kept alive the other wars, the ethnic wars during World War II. Croats and Serbs therefore had a 'terrifying oral history' of violence²⁶; memories of old scores waiting to be settled. Almost any Serb family in Croatia had its story of atrocities suffered during the Ustaša-regime. But how could this turn into fighting with mass killings? There must also be the opportunity for ethnic groups to mobilise and fight. This opportunity was given by the support of Milošević and the JNA.

IV. The opportunity for the ethnic group to mobilise and fight

After the elections in May 1990 and with the dissolution of Yugoslavia in progress, the SDS rapidly extended its organizational net in the Serbian populated areas. So-called 'Mitings' were organised with hundreds of participants, sometimes thousands. Serbs were emotionalized by national pathos and myths²⁷. Thus, when Babić announced the birth of the Serbian National Council, 120.000 Serbs gathered²⁸.

With the dissolution of Communist Yugoslavia in progress, the 'new' Croatia, not yet independent but on its way to freeing itself from Belgrade centralism, was too weak to establish law and order in the rebellious Serb regions. All attempts by the Croat police forces to disarm the Serbs failed. On the contrary, the arming of the Serbs, strongly supported by the JNA, advanced. In addition, when open fighting started, the Serbs were supported by the Yugoslav Army, first passively by preventing the Croat forces to enter Serb held territory,

²⁵ Wolfgang Höpken, *War, Memory and Education in a Fragmented Society: The Case of Yugoslavia*, in *East European Politics and Societies*, vol. 13, no. 1, Winter 1999, at p. 202.

²⁶ Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence*, at p. 72.

²⁷ Hannes Grandits and Carolin Leutloff, *Diskurse, Akteure, Gewalt – Betrachtungen zur Organisation von Kriegseskalation am Beispiel der Krajina in Kroatien 1990/91*, in Wolfgang Höpken and Michael Riekenberg (eds), *Politische und ethnische Gewalt in Südosteuropa und Lateinamerika*, Böhlau, Köln-Weimar-Wien 2001, at pp. 227-259, 233 cont.

²⁸ Tanner, *Croatia. A Nation Forged in War*, at p. 232.

and finally even by open armed action with weapons, infrastructure, and even soldiers.

All these actions fitted perfectly into Milošević's Greater Serbian plans. After Milošević himself had given up all hopes for a united Yugoslavia to survive, the Serb regions of Croatia neighbouring the Serb populated regions of Bosnia Hercegovina became of strategic importance for his plans of a Greater Serbia. Thus starting with August 1990, a parallel institutional structure was established in Krajina which answered directly to Slobodan Milošević. It was comprised of members of the Ministry of Interior of Serbia, the State Security Service of Serbia, the SDS of Croatia and policemen in the Serbian municipalities in Croatia. "*Through the parallel structure, Milošević manufactured incidents, which provoked reaction and fear among the Serbs, including Milan Babić, and intensified intervention by the Croatian police. This spiralled up into intolerance, violence, and eventually war*"²⁹. But there were also provocations on the Croat side like in Borovo Selo in East Slavonia, where radical Croats fired rockets on the town. Although this incident only caused property damages, it radicalised the atmosphere. When the frightened Serb population asked for help, the Serb ultra nationalistic Vojislav Šešelj sent his volunteer militia, which finally got involved in fights with Croatian policemen and killed 12 Croats³⁰.

V. The role of the elites

Chauvinistic leaders, 'ethnic entrepreneurs', played an important role in the Serb-Croat conflict on both sides. According to the emotion-based approach of Petersen, the structural changes accompanying the collapse of Yugoslavia, the rearrangement of ethnic status hierarchies by changing sovereignty relations, the composition of the police and political positions, can lead towards resentment and therefore ethnic violence³¹. In the Croat/Serb case, the Serbs traditionally were overrepresented in the Croat Police since Communist times, which was a constant grievance for the Croats. Now the Croat government started to build up a new Special Police with only Croats filling the ranks. With the Serb elites fearing a loss of influence and power in the new Croat 'national state', it was their resentment which triggered the fear of the masses, by appealing to the group and to solidarity³².

Moderate Serb leaders, who were negotiating with the Croat government in 1990, increasingly were sidelined by nationalistic hardliners. Babić was such a case of an ambitious ethnic entrepreneur. An ordinary dentist by profession, Babić first became mayor of the little town of Knin. By and by he expanded his

²⁹ *Prosecutor v. Milan Babić*, Case No. IT-03-72-I, Factual Statement, Case No. IT-03-72-I, para. 16.

³⁰ Grandits, *Diskurse, Akteure, Gewalt*, at pp. 253 cont.

³¹ Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence*, at pp. 25, 225-231.

³² Petersen, *Understanding Ethnic Violence*, at pp. 229-231.

political influence by means of the so-called Knin-Initiative and was supported by Belgrade and Milošević. He became President of the Serbian National Council, President of the Executive Council of the so-called 'Serbian Autonomous District Krajina', later President of the 'Republic of Serbian Krajina' (RSK) and finally Prime Minister of the RSK³³. In an interview for the investigators of the Prosecution of the ICTY, Babić characterized himself as follows: "*Maybe I could describe it as ethno-selfishness and that's probably what I also became – an ethno egoist, a person who exclusively wanted to see to the interests of people to which I belonged and that my emotions and feelings decreased and I became less sensitive and I neglected the interests and the suffering of other peoples, at that time the Croatian people*"³⁴.

VI. Conclusions

The structural changes of the dissolution process of Yugoslavia triggered a spiral of insecurity and fear. All governmental restraints became weak and unsure, especially in the ethnic relations, where the majority-minority-relationship was newly organized. Thus the Croatian Serbs of the Krajina and Slavonia got the feeling of political and ethnical marginalization. In an atmosphere of distrust and hate even the survival of the ethnic group seemed endangered. This and a number of further preconditions like the existence of myths justifying ethnic hostility, and the opportunity for the ethnic group to mobilise and fight led to mass hostility. But especially in the case of the Krajina and Slavonian Serbs, both sides, the Serbs as well as the Croats are to blame for this spiral of insecurity. Croat nationalism in the wake of the elections and the national independence to come, triggered Serb reaction. Negotiations came too late and were torpedoed by nationalistic elites on both sides. And it was especially the chauvinist elites who spurred this spiral of insecurity to foster their political goals. Croatia, the state of the Croats versus Greater Serbia, including all Serbs on the territory of (former) Yugoslavia became the political mottos.

³³ *Prosecutor v. Milan Babić*, Indictment, para. 3.

³⁴ *Prosecutor v. Milan Babić*, para. 70.