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FROM THE ASHES: THE PAST AND FUTURE OF BOSNIA'S CULTURAL HERITAGE

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Barely a decade ago, in March 1992, the people of Bosnia voted for independence. In a national plebiscite, with close to two thirds of the electorate participating, voters cast their ballots almost unanimously in favor of an independent, democratic, and pluralistic Bosnia. As Bosnia's National Assembly met in the capital city of Sarajevo after the vote, more than 100,000 citizens---Muslims, Christians, and others---rallied in front of the Parliament building, holding signs and shouting in unison: "Mi smo za mir!"---"We are for peace!"

The shouts for peace were silenced by gunshots, as Serb nationalist gunmen, concealed on the upper floors of the Holiday Inn across the street, opened fire on the crowd, killing and wounding dozens of people as they ran for cover.

The date was 6 April, 1992. In the days and months that followed, the Serb-led Yugoslav People's Army systematically bombarded Sarajevo from prepared positions on the mountains overlooking the city. Snipers with telescopic sights picked off civilians as they ran down the streets of the capital in search of food, water and shelter. [1]

Thus began the assault on Bosnia-Herzegovina. From the beginning, it was characterized by two features that had little to do with legitimate military objectives:

- The mass expulsion of civilians driven from their homes, robbed, raped and murdered for being of the "wrong" ethnicity and religion, and
- The deliberate targeting and destruction of cultural, religious and historic landmarks by nationalist extremists.

Their targets have included: the National Library in Sarajevo, the Regional Archives in Mostar, local and national museums, the Academy of Music, the National Gallery, entire historic districts, Muslim and Jewish cemeteries, and, above all, the places of worship of the ethnic and religious groups that were singled out for what was euphemistically called “ethnic cleansing.”

Three and a half years of war and “ethnic cleansing” in Bosnia, allowed to proceed unchecked by the international community, turned more than half of the country’s four million people into refugees and cost the lives of more than 100,000 men, women and children. The cultural casualties were no less staggering. More than one thousand of Bosnia’s mosques, hundreds of Catholic churches and scores of Orthodox churches, monasteries, private and public libraries, archives, and museums were shelled, burned, and dynamited, and in many cases even the ruins were removed by nationalist extremists in order to complete the cultural and religious “cleansing” of the land they had seized. [2]

Table I. Destruction of Islamic religious buildings in Bosnia 1992-95			
<i>Building type</i>	<i>Total no. before the war</i>	<i>Total no. destroyed or damaged</i>	<i>Percent destroyed or damaged</i>
Congregational mosques (<i>džamije</i>)	1149	927	80.68 %
Small neighbourhood mosques (<i>mesdžidi</i>)	557	259	46.50 %
Total no. of mosques	1706	1186	69.52 %
Qur’an schools (<i>mektebi</i>)	954	87	9.12 %
Dervish lodges (<i>tekije</i>)	15	9	60.00 %
Mausolea, shrines (<i>turbe</i>)	90	44	48.89 %

Other buildings of Islamic religious endowments (<i>vakufske zgrade</i>)	1425	554	38.88 %
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Based on data from the Institute for Protection of Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina, *A Report on the Devastation of Cultural, Historical and Natural Heritage of the Republic/Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (from April 5, 1992 until September 5, 1995)* (Sarajevo, 1995), supplemented with information from the incidents database of the State Commission for the Documentation of War Crimes on the Territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Drzavna komisija za prikupljanje cinjenica o ratnim zlocinima na podrucju Republike Bosne i Hercegovine), the Islamic Community of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and other sources.

Table II. Destruction of Islamic religious buildings in Bosnia 1992-95

<i>Building type</i>	<i>Total no. before the war</i>	<i>No. damaged/destroyed by Serb extremists</i>		<i>No. damaged/destroyed by Croat extremists</i>	
		<i>damaged/destroyed</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>damaged/destroyed</i>	<i>T</i>
Congregational mosques (<i>džamije</i>)	1149	540/249	789	80/58	138
Small neighbourhood mosques (<i>mesdžidi</i>)	557	175/21	196	43/20	63
Total no. of mosques	1706	715/270	985	123/78	201
Qur'an schools (<i>mektebi</i>)	954	55/14	69	14/4	18
Dervish lodges (<i>tekije</i>)	15	3/4	7	1/1	2
Mausolea, shrines (<i>turbe</i>)	90	34/6	40	3/1	4
Other buildings of Islamic religious endowments (<i>vakufske zgrade</i>)	1425	345/125	470	60/24	84

Although we have been told that it was "ancient hatreds" that fueled this destruction, it is not true. The history that has been destroyed, the buildings, the books, and the historical documents, all spoke eloquently of centuries of pluralism and tolerance in Bosnia. It is this evidence of a successfully shared past that exclusive nationalists have sought to erase.

Since the Middle Ages, Bosnia has been a complex and multifaceted society, where cultural and religious influences from East and West have met and interacted, both with each other and with a rich indigenous tradition.

Alone in medieval Europe, the Kingdom of Bosnia was a place where not one but three Christian churches---Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy and a schismatic local Bosnian Church---existed side by side. While the leaders of all three churches were called upon by medieval Bosnian rulers to witness acts of state, the state did not regularly favor one church over the others. Religious tolerance, or perhaps one might term it a relative detachment from religious affairs, was characteristic of Bosnia for most of the medieval period. As a result, none of the three churches could rely on the steady and exclusive patronage of either the ruling dynasty or of the nobility and all three churches remained organizationally weak, their clergy largely uneducated (these factors later contributed to decisions by a large part of the Bosnian people to abandon Christianity for Islam). Poorly endowed, the churches in medieval Bosnia were in no position to build great cathedrals or impressive monastic establishments. [3]

The kings of Bosnia and the powerful local nobles, on the other hand, built as many as 300 castles to guard their mountainous domains and grew prosperous from the revenue of trading caravans and the precious metals extracted from Bosnia's mines. Aside from a few precious manuscripts and art objects, however, little remains of the rich material culture of the medieval period. What has survived in relative abundance are examples of a distinctively Bosnian art form, the *stećci* (singular: *stećak*): massive medieval gravestones, some in the shape of solid stone sarcophagi, others vertically oriented. Many of the *stećci* are beautifully decorated with figural carvings and incised geometric patterns; often they are grouped in spectacular locations overlooking the countryside. [4]



**[1.] Medieval Bosnian gravestones (*stećci*) at Radimlja, near Stolac in Herzegovina.
(Photo: 2001 András Riedlmayer)**

Islam arrived in Bosnia more than 500 years ago, when the armies of the Ottoman sultans swept across the Balkans and onwards into Hungary. Their advance appeared unstoppable, and many at the time felt that it was directed by the hand of God. Throughout Europe, this was an age of religious ferment and preachers everywhere, among them Martin Luther, saw in the coming of the Ottomans a sign of divine judgment. In Bosnia, many people from all social and religious backgrounds---more than half the population by the 1700s---adopted the triumphant faith of the Islamic conquerors. A distinctive Bosnian Muslim culture took form, with its own architecture, literature, social customs and folklore.[5]



[2.] Traditional Bosnian Muslim gravestones at Jakir, near Glamoč in western Bosnia. The very large headstone in the center marks the grave of Omer Aga Bašić, an 18th-century local Bosnian Muslim notable. (Photo: András Riedlmayer)

Although the vast majority of the new Muslim converts in Bosnia were and remained poor farmers, many Bosnians rose to join the ranks of the Ottoman ruling elite as soldiers, statesmen, Islamic jurists and scholars. Among the most famous of these Bosnian converts was Mehmed Pasha Sokolović (1505-79), who served as grand vizier (chief minister) to three Ottoman sultans, among them the greatest ruler of the age, Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent.

Mehmed Pasha administered an empire that stretched across three continents, from Yemen to Algiers, from Baghdad to the gates of Vienna, and he married Princess Esmahan, Sultan Süleyman's granddaughter. In addition to his accomplishments as a soldier and statesman, Mehmed Pasha was also a generous patron of architecture. Among his many endowments were two great mosques in Istanbul, the imperial capital, designed by the court architect Sinan, and the famous bridge over the Drina that he commissioned as a benefaction for his Bosnian home town of Višegrad.

In turn, the Ottoman sultans and their local governors also embellished Bosnia's towns with splendid mosques and established endowments to build and support libraries, schools, charity

soup kitchens and other pious foundations, around which markets, neighbourhoods and entire new towns grew. [6]

Among these new Ottoman towns in Bosnia were Sarajevo, Banja Luka, and Mostar. Located at strategic river crossings and the intersections of trade routes, they became cultural and commercial centers, thanks to newly built bridges, bazaars, inns for merchants and travelers, and other social service institutions.

The history here is reflected in the buildings: Muslim, Christian and Jewish townspeople lived, worked and worshipped side by side. Standing in the center of Sarajevo's old bazaar is the Gazi Husrev Beg Mosque, founded in 1531 by Bosnia's first native Muslim governor. Within sight of the great mosque stands the Old Orthodox church, built in the same period (before 1539) for the use of Orthodox tradesmen attracted by the city's newly laid-out bazaars.[7] Another Ottoman governor, Sijavuš Pasha, endowed an Islamic pious foundation (*vakuf*) in 1580-81 to erect a large apartment building (*han*) for the poorer members of Sarajevo's Jewish community and granted permission for the construction of the city's first synagogue next to the *han*. [8] A bit to the west is Sarajevo's Roman Catholic cathedral, built in 1889 on the site of an older church, in a part of the old city known in Ottoman times as Latinluk, the Latin (i.e. Roman Catholic) quarter.[9] The mosque, the synagogue, and the Orthodox and Catholic churches are all located close to each other in the city center, within an area of less than half a square kilometer.

South of Sarajevo lies the city of Mostar, which owes its name (“Bridge-keeper”) and its prosperity to the graceful Ottoman bridge that joins the banks of the Neretva River. When the Ottomans conquered the surrounding region in the late 1400s, Mostar was a modest settlement of 20 households grouped around a medieval tower that guarded a shaky bridge of wooden planks suspended on chains. After the administrative center of Herzegovina was moved to Mostar in 1522, the Ottoman provincial governors, most of them Bosnian Muslims, as well as other prominent local Muslim families made pious endowments that built more than a dozen mosques, as well as schools, markets, and inns, around which the city's new neighborhoods developed. The addition of the soaring stone arch of the Ottoman bridge in 1566 gave the city its defining landmark. By the end of the 16th century, Mostar had grown into the third largest town in Bosnia, a thriving center of commerce and culture. At the height of its prosperity in the late 1600s, the city had 30 mosques, and 7 madrasas (theological schools); the craftsmen

in its bazaars were organized into 30 different guilds according to their specialties. As in Sarajevo, the look in Mostar also bespeaks a long history of intermingled public life, with the Islamic minaret, the Catholic campanile and the steeple of the Orthodox cathedral reaching up from one skyline. [10]



[3.] Mostar skyline before the 1992-1995 war, shared by a clock tower endowed by a 17th-century Bosnian Muslim lady, the minaret of a mosque (18th century), and the steeple of the Serbian Orthodox Cathedral (19th century) on the ridge overlooking the old city. (Photo: 1980 William Remsen, Documentation Center, Aga Khan Program, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University)

The placement of architecture is an intentional, thoughtful, political act. People who cannot abide the sight of each other will not build their houses and the most important monuments of their religious and communal life in the shadows of those of the others. Those who commissioned these buildings and works of art, as well as those who made them, represented a variety of religious traditions and artistic influences. The resulting monuments, manuscripts

and art objects demonstrate the degree to which cultures transformed and acted upon each other in Bosnia.

Thus, a number of mosques in the Herzegovina region, among them a lovely small mosque built in the 17th century by a local Bosnian Muslim family of notables in the village of Plana, near Bileća, have the look of medieval churches, with minarets that resemble rustic Romanesque church steeples.



**[4.] The Avdić Mosque (17th century) in Plana, near Bileća in Herzegovina.
(Photo: Documentation Center, Aga Khan Program, Fine Arts Library, Harvard
University)**

We see another example of cross-cultural influence in a splendid 16th-century cope, a Roman Catholic liturgical vestment in the treasury of a Bosnian Franciscan monastery. The cope is made of silk brocade that is immediately recognizable as a luxury textile in the high Ottoman court style.



[5.] Roman Catholic liturgical vestment made from an Ottoman silk brocade textile, in the treasury of the Franciscan monastery of Zaostrog. Pious legend has it that the vestment was made from a mantle donated to the monastery by the last Bosnian king, Stjepan Tomašević (d. 1463), but the textile dates from at least a century after his death. (Photo: *Franjevci na raskršću kultura i civilizacija: blago franjevačkih samostana Bosne i Hercegovine = Franciscans on the Crossroad of Cultures and Civilizations: The Treasures of the Franciscan Monasteries of Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Zagreb: MGC, Muzejski prostor, 1988).

A Church Slavonic Gospel manuscript, produced in the scriptorium of a Serbian Orthodox monastery at the beginning of the 17th century, has the Cyrillic text of the Christian scriptures framed by bands of illumination that are unmistakably Ottoman and Islamic in inspiration. The illuminator of this manuscript, presumably a Christian monk, was familiar with and must have had access to Islamic books as models.

Finally, we have the example of two little churches in the village of Ljubinja in Herzegovina, one of them Roman Catholic the other Serbian Orthodox, both looking almost exactly alike. One could say that their uncanny resemblance stems from the fact that the area probably had

only one master stonemason, who probably knew only one way to build a church. But more important is the fact that these two churches stood within sight of each other in the same small community for a hundred years or more and that this apparently did not bother either the Serbian Orthodox or the Roman Catholic parishioners



[6.] The Roman Catholic (*top*) and Serbian Orthodox (*bottom*) churches in the village of Ljubinje in eastern Herzegovina. (Photo: Documentation Center, Aga Khan Program, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University).

The remarkable thing about all of the above examples is that they involve items made for religious purposes, for which the symbolic content matters more than it would in objects intended for mundane uses. Yet, those who commissioned these objects, those who made

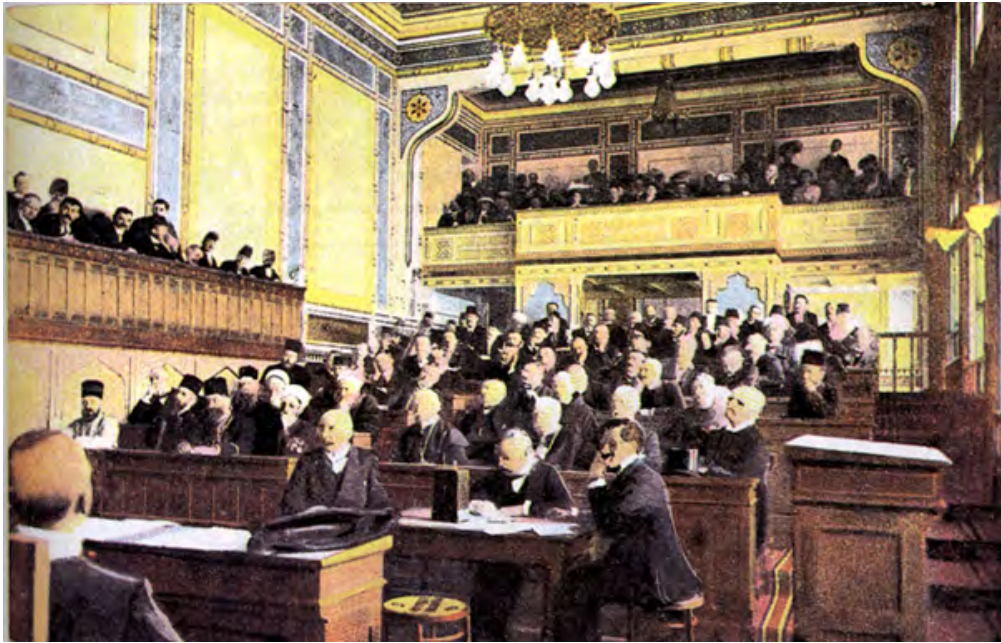
them, and those who used them deliberately chose to reach across religious and cultural boundaries and evidently did not perceive such choices as problematic.

Of course, the fact that different religions and cultural traditions managed to coexist and engage in fruitful interactions in Bosnia should not be taken to imply an absence of hierarchies of status or of periodic frictions and rivalries between individuals and groups. Like other regions of Europe in the early modern era, Ottoman Bosnia had its share of corrupt officials, oppressive landlords and rebellious peasants, bandits, blood-feuds and other sources of social discord. However, the fact of pluralism itself was considered a given. Over the *longue durée*, Bosnians of different religious traditions found ways to live, work and build together.

The "ancient hatreds," then, are for the most part of recent vintage---not the inevitable outcome of a history marked by endless conflict, but conscious creations of the essentialist ideologies of our own troubled times. Before the Gazi Husrev Beg Mosque in Sarajevo was deliberately targeted for shelling by Bosnian Serb artillery in 1992, it had stood unmolested for hundreds of years.

Bosnia's Ottoman centuries came to an abrupt end in the year 1878, when a conference of the European powers met in Berlin and placed the province under Austro-Hungarian administration. The new rulers brought a Viennese taste for the eclectic to their efforts to modernize Bosnia's cities. Erecting new schools, museums and civic institutions they sought to bring their newly acquired territory into the modern age. The buildings and cityscapes that are the most enduring legacy of four decades of Habsburg rule in Bosnia-Herzegovina display a characteristically Bosnian blend of cultural influences.[11]

Among the most handsome monuments of this eclectic era is Sarajevo's beloved Town Hall (Vijećnica in Bosnian), a Moorish-Revival style building erected on the bank of the Miljacka river in the old town center of in the 1890s. In addition to housing the municipal administration, Vijećnica was also where Bosnia's first national parliament was convened on the eve of World War I. After 1918, when Bosnia was absorbed into the newly created Yugoslav state, the building continued to serve as Sarajevo's city hall until the end of World War II. In 1945, the mayor's office was moved out and for the next half century the historic Town Hall became the home of Bosnia's National Library.



[7.] The first Bosnian parliament (Bosanski sabor), meeting in the Vijećnica (Town Hall) of Sarajevo in 1910. (Photo: Historic postcard in the collection of the Documentation Center, Aga Khan Program, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University).



[8.] The same room in the Vijećnica (old Town Hall), being used as the main reading room of the National and University Library of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1980s. (Photo: Documentation Center, Aga Khan Program, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University).

An hour after nightfall on the evening of August 25, 1992, the National Library was bombarded and set on fire by a tightly targeted barrage of incendiary shells, fired by Serb nationalist forces from the heights overlooking the building. The library is located near the center of Sarajevo's old town, at the bottom of a deep valley. According to eyewitnesses, the incendiary shells--- which have little explosive power but are designed to start high-temperature blazes that are difficult to extinguish---were fired at the library from half a dozen different Bosnian Serb Army artillery emplacements on the mountains facing the old town on the east and south sides of the valley. Only the library was hit---surrounding buildings stand intact to this day. Once the library was fully ablaze, the shelling ceased. However, Bosnian Serb Army troops swept the surroundings with heavy machinegun and anti-aircraft cannon fire aimed at street level, in order to keep away the Sarajevo firemen and volunteers trying to save books from the burning building. As the flames started to die down around daybreak, the shelling with incendiary munitions resumed and the building continued to burn for some 15 hours; it smoldered for days thereafter. An estimated 1.5 million volumes were consumed by the flames in this, the largest single incident of deliberate book-burning in modern history.





[9a.] The National and University Library of Bosnia-Herzegovina on fire, August 26, 1992, following bombardment by Bosnian Serb forces. [9b.] View of the burned-out interior of the National and University Library, Sarajevo. (Photos: Documentation Center, Aga Khan Program, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University).

A librarian who was there described the scene:

"The fire lasted for days. The sun was obscured by the smoke of books, and all over the city sheets of burned paper, fragile pages of grey ashes, floated down like a dirty black snow. Catching a page you could feel its heat, and for a moment read a fragment of text in a strange kind of black and grey negative, until, as the heat dissipated, the page melted to dust in your hand." [12]

The inferno left the library a gutted shell, its interior filled with rubble and the carbonized remains more than a million books. Before it was burned, the National Library held 155,000 rare books, unique special collections and archives, 478 manuscript codices, more than 600 sets of Bosnian periodicals, the national collection of record of the books, newspapers and

journals published in Bosnia since the mid-19th century, as well as the main research collections of the University of Sarajevo. The books and archives destroyed by the fire included many items recorded nowhere else---irreplaceable documents of centuries of Bosnia's social, cultural and political life. One of the Sarajevo citizens who risked their lives to pass books out of the burning library building told a television camera crew: "We managed to save just a few, very precious books. Everything else burned down. And a lot of our heritage, national history, lay down there in ashes." [13]

Three months before the attack on the National Library, the Serb nationalist gunners' target had been Sarajevo's Oriental Institute, which housed the country's largest collection of Islamic manuscript texts and the former Ottoman provincial archives. It was shelled and burned with all of its contents during the night of May 17, 1992. Like the National Library, the Institute was targeted with incendiary munitions. The Institute was completely burned out and its unique collection was destroyed, while surrounding buildings were left untouched.

The losses included more than 5,200 bound manuscript codices in Arabic, Persian, Ottoman Turkish, and in *arebica* (Bosnian Slavic written in Arabic script), the written record of five centuries of Islamic culture in Bosnia. The Sarajevo Oriental Institute also housed Bosnia's Ottoman-era provincial archive---a quarter million historical documents, almost all of them destroyed in the blaze. It was well-known that the Institute's held a set of nineteenth-century cadastral registers, records of the ownership of land in Bosnia and Herzegovina at the end of Ottoman rule. There was widespread speculation that the Oriental Institute had been targeted in order to destroy the land records.



[10.] Interior of the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo, carpeted with the ashes of burned books and manuscripts, after it was shelled and burned by Serb forces in May 1992. (Photo: Documentation Center, Aga Khan Program, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University).



[11a.] Partially burned Ottoman document from the Oriental Institute’s destroyed archive. [11b.] Pre-war photograph of a page from one of the Oriental Institute’s 5,263 Islamic manuscript codices, a 15th-century astrological treatise, burned in May 1992. (Photo: Documentation Center, Aga Khan Program, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University).

We have evidence that these attacks were not isolated cases of "collateral damage", incidental to the general mayhem of warfare, but part of a deliberate and systematic effort to target cultural heritage. In September 1992, BBC reporter Kate Adie interviewed Serbian gunners on the hillsides overlooking Sarajevo and asked them why they had been shelling the Holiday Inn, the hotel where all of the foreign correspondents were known to stay. The Serbian officer commanding the guns apologized to Ms. Adie, explaining his men had not meant to hit the hotel, but had been aiming at the roof of the National Museum behind it.

The museum was badly damaged during the 3-1/2-year siege. Shells crashed through the roof and the skylights and all of its 300 windows were shot out; shell-holes penetrated the walls of several galleries. Parts of the National Museum's collection that could not be moved to safe storage remained inside the building, exposed to damage from artillery attacks and to decay

from exposure to the elements. Dr. Rizo Sijarić, the museum's director, was killed by a shell burst during Sarajevo's second siege winter (December 10, 1993), while trying to arrange for plastic sheeting from U.N. relief agencies to cover some of the holes in the building. [14]

The catalogue of losses does not stop there. One could mention the destroyed and looted monastery, church and library of the Franciscan Theological Seminary in the Sarajevo suburb of Neđarići; the shelling and partial destruction of the regional archive of Herzegovina in Mostar; the 50,000 volumes lost when the library of the Roman Catholic bishopric of Mostar was set ablaze by the Serb-led Yugoslav army; the burning and bulldozing of the 16th-century Serbian Orthodox monastery of Žitomislić, south of Mostar, by Croat extremists; and similar acts of destruction in hundreds of other Bosnian communities subjected to "ethnic cleansing" by Serb and Croat nationalist forces.

This systematic assault on culture can be explained as an attempt to eliminate the material evidence---books, documents, and works of art---that could remind future generations that people of different ethnic and religious traditions once shared a common heritage and common space in Bosnia. The goal of nationalist extremists is to create a religiously and ethnically "pure" future, based on the premise that coexistence is---and always was---impossible. The continued existence of a heritage that speaks of a history characterized by pluralism and tolerance contradicts this premise, which is why, amidst an ongoing armed conflict, such efforts were invested in destroying the relics of Bosnia's "impure" past.

In addition to transforming the landscape to better accord with the demands of ideology, there is also a practical aspect to the war on culture. While the destruction of a community's cultural and religious institutions and records is, first of all, part of a strategy of intimidation aimed at intimidating driving out members of the targeted group, it also serves a long-term goal. These records were proof that others once lived in that place, that they had historical roots there. By burning the documents, by razing houses of worship and bulldozing graveyards, the nationalists who overran and "cleansed" hundreds of towns and villages in Bosnia were trying to insure themselves against the possibility that the people they expelled and dispossessed might one day return to reclaim their homes and properties.

In a context where ethnic identity is defined by the religious choices made by one's ancestors, it is religious buildings---mosques, churches, monasteries---that serve as the most potent

markers of a community's presence. Thus it is not surprising that the destruction of houses of worship became one of the hallmarks of "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia. [15]

At the conclusion of hostilities at the end of 1995, in the territory seized by Bosnian Serb forces during the war more than 95 percent of all non-Serb residents had been killed or expelled, and out of many hundreds of mosques almost all had been damaged or destroyed. According to one report, citing United Nations officials, at the end of the war in 1996 the sole surviving mosque in what is now the Republika Srpska (Bosnia's Serb entity) was the one

in the village of Baljvine, near Mrkonjićgrad. Although the Bosnian Serbs had expelled Muslims from the village early in the war, when a Serb gang later came to destroy the mosque, the local Serb inhabitants persuaded them to leave the mosque alone, saying it was part of the "local color." [16]

More typical is what happened in Trebinje in eastern Herzegovina on the night of January 27, 1993, where Serb nationalist militiamen celebrated the feast of St. Sava, the medieval founder of the Serbian Orthodox Church, by burning down the town's oldest mosque and expelling thousands of Trebinje's Bosnian Muslim residents:

It burned all night as drunken men in paramilitary uniforms fired machine guns in the air. By morning Trebinje's 500-year old mosque was ashes and a dark-eyed young man, Kemal Bubić, 29, joined thousands of numbed people moving eastward "At that moment everything I had was burned down," he said. "It's not that my family was burned down, but it's my foundation that burned. I was destroyed." [17]

Another small town in Bosnia is Foča on the Drina, east of Sarajevo. In April 1992, Foča was overrun by Serb nationalist militia, who killed or expelled the town's majority Bosnian Muslim population, set up a rape camp for Muslim women in the local sports arena, and set about blowing up and bulldozing Foča's sixteen ancient mosques. Among them was the Aladža Mosque, built in 1557, once one of the loveliest examples of Islamic religious architecture in the Balkans. Hardly a trace remains of it today; the blasted walls were leveled by bulldozer and dumped into the nearby river. Only the faint outlines of the mosque's foundation and a small circle of white marble splinters, the shattered remnants of the ablution fountain, poke through the weeds. "Cleansed" of its mosques and Bosnian Muslims, Foča has been renamed Srbinje ("Serb Town") to celebrate its new ethnically-pure identity. [18]



[12.] The 16th-century Aladža Mosque in the eastern Bosnian town of Foča on the Drina, before the war. (Photo: Documentation Center, Aga Khan Program, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University).



[13.] Cleared site of the Aladža Mosque in Foča after the war. The circle of stones seen in the foreground is what remains of the marble ablution fountain (sadrvan); the outlines of the razed mosque's foundations can still be seen in the grass growing on the site. (Photo: 1996 Lucas Kello. Documentation Center, Aga Khan Program, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University).

On March 13th, 1993, six mosques were blown up in a single night in the Serb-occupied town of Bijeljina in eastern Bosnia. The next day, bulldozers were clearing away the rubble and a long line of trucks and buses stood ready to take away those town's terrified Muslim residents. Two months later, in May 1993, Western reporters visiting the town found grass and trees planted on the leveled sites; it was as if the mosques and Bijeljina's 30,000 Muslims had never been there. [19]

In the northern Bosnian city of Banja Luka, which had been under the control Serb nationalists since before the beginning of the war and where there was no fighting, all of the city's mosques were blown up between April and September 1993. In the center of the city stood the Ferhadija Mosque, built in 1583 by Ferhad Pasha Sokolović, the Ottoman governor of Banja Luka and a cousin of Sultan Süleyman's famous Bosnian grand vizier. In the same way that Gazi Husrev Beg's benefactions had made Sarajevo flourish, it was the endowments founded by Ferhad Pasha and his successors that helped turn Banja Luka from a sleepy village into Bosnia's second city.

On the evening of May 6, 1993, as the city's Serbs were celebrating Đurđevdan (the Orthodox feast of Saint George), Banja Luka's remaining Muslim residents huddled in their houses, apprehensive that, as on other such occasions since the start of the war, the celebrations would turn into a pogrom. At around 11 pm, witnesses looking out their windows saw Bosnian Serb Army troops blocking off the streets around two old mosques near the city center, the 410-year-old Ferhadija and the 17th-century Arnaudija Mosque. A short while later, they heard military trucks pulling up in front of the two mosques. After midnight, powerful explosions were heard and by morning both mosques were gone. Of the lovely Arnaudija, nothing remained but a pile of rubble. Next to the empty site of the Ferhadija, the stump of the minaret still stood, but not for long. Despite pleas from the Muslim community to spare the remains, Banja Luka's Bosnian Serb mayor, Predrag Radić, declared the minaret a "hazard to passersby" and ordered the municipal roads department to remove it. Using more explosives and pneumatic drills, the remaining fragments of the ancient stonework were broken up into rubble, which was trucked off to a secret dump site outside the city limits to prevent it from ever being used in rebuilding the mosque. [20]



[14.] The 16th-century Ferhadija Mosque in Banja Luka,, the day after it was blown up by Bosnian Serb Army sappers in May 1993. The stump of the toppled minaret (in the foreground) and the mausoleum of Ferhad Pasha Sokolović (at right) were later also blown up and the rubble removed by the Serb municipal authorities. (Photo: 1993 Aleksander Aco Ravlić. Documentation Center, Aga Khan Program, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University).

By the end of that year all of Banja Luka's remaining Islamic religious sites and eleven Roman Catholic churches in the Banja Luka region had been destroyed. As elsewhere, the destruction of the monuments was also a signal for the expulsion of the people who cherished them---an estimated 550,000 Bosnian Muslims, Catholic Bosnian Croats, Roma (Gypsies) and other non-Serbs who lived in this area of northwestern Bosnia before the war were killed or forced into exile.

In Višegrad, site of the famous old Ottoman bridge on the Drina, they came for the Muslims in August 1992. A British reporter passed through town at the end of the month and interviewed refugees huddled in sheds outside the city limits. "We are ready to run if they come for us again," one Muslim refugee said, as he described how the great bridge had been used night after night as a killing ground by drunken Serb militiamen. "They bulldozed the two mosques in the main street in Višegrad so we wouldn't come back," he said. [21]

In 1993, emboldened by the Western powers' endorsement of ethnic partition, Croat nationalists launched an all-out war to carve an ethnically pure "homeland" out of Herzegovina and parts of central Bosnia. There had been ominous signs the year before, in the first months of the war,

following the the devastating April-June 1992 siege of Mostar by the Serb-led Yugoslav People's Army (JNA), in which most of the city's historic monuments---including 17 of Mostar's 19 mosques and all three of its Roman Catholic churches---had been damaged or destroyed by JNA shelling. [22]

On a high ridge overlooking the old town of Mostar is the great Serbian Orthodox Cathedral (Saborna crkva). The cathedral was built in 1863-1873, during the last years of Ottoman rule. Ottoman Sultan Abdül Aziz himself approved the site for the church and donated 100,000 silver coins for its construction, while the Russian czar sent money for the interior decoration. For more than a century the tall, Serbian Baroque steeple of the Orthodox cathedral had been part of Mostar's skyline---it had survived even the horrors of the second world war, when Croatian fascists had first turned on their non-Croat neighbours.

At the beginning of June 1992, the Serb nationalist forces besieging Mostar were driven out of artillery range. Within days, the city's Serbian Orthodox cathedral was destroyed in a single, enormous explosion in the middle of the night of June 15, 1992. Those responsible clearly wanted no stone left on stone: more than a hundred nearby houses were also damaged in the blast. While no group openly claimed responsibility for the attack, it was widely understood to have been the work of Croat extremists taking vengeance for the JNA's destruction of the city's Catholic churches.



[15.] The blasted ruins of the Serbian Orthodox Cathedral (Saborna crkva) in Mostar, blown up in June 1992 by Croat nationalist extremists. (Photo: June 2001 András Riedlmayer)

During the same month, Croat militias rounded up and expelled or imprisoned Bosnian Serb civilians living in areas under their control. At the end of the summer, Croat nationalist forces began the process of expelling all non-Croats from their self-styled “Croatian Republic of Herceg-Bosna”. First to be “cleansed” was the small town of Prozor, where in October 1992, Croat nationalists shelled the mosque and the surrounding neighborhood, robbed and terrorized the town's 5,000 Muslim inhabitants and sent them fleeing into the mountains as night fell. [23]

By the spring and summer of 1993, "ethnic cleansing" was in full swing throughout the areas designated for Croat nationalist control under the proposed Vance-Owen partition plan for Bosnia, and the old town of Mostar was once again being shelled, this time by Croat forces.

The following is an excerpt from a report issued by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees on 23 August 1993:

In early July [1993], hundreds of draft-age men in Stolac, a predominantly Muslim town, [southeast of Mostar] were reportedly rounded up [by the Bosnian Croat authorities] and detained, probably in [the concentration camps at] Dretelj and Gabela.

The total number of detained civilians from Stolac is believed to be about 1,350. [...] On 1 August, four mosques in Stolac were blown up. That night, witnesses said, military trucks carrying soldiers firing their weapons in the air went through the town terrorizing and rounding up all Muslim women, children and elderly. The cries and screams of women and children could be heard throughout the town as the soldiers looted and destroyed Muslim homes. The soldiers, who wore handkerchiefs, stockings or paint to hide their faces, took the civilians to Blagaj, an area of heavy fighting northwest of Stolac. [24]

The four mosques mentioned in the report are (or were) charming examples of regional architecture, three of them dating from the 1730s, one from the 1600s, built by local craftsmen to the taste of the patrons, well-to-do Muslim Slav families from nearby Mostar. These were not what art historians call great works of art. But for the Muslim residents of Stolac, they embodied their hometown's Islamic past. The extremists who destroyed these monuments are well aware of the vital connection between a community of people and its cultural heritage.

More than a year after the end of the war, in January 1997, United Nations police monitors escorted two busloads of Bosnian Muslim refugees seeking to return to their homes in Stolac. They were turned back on the outskirts of town by a stone-throwing mob organized by the Croat nationalist mayor of Stolac. As the refugees and their UN escorts retreated under a hail of eggs and stones, the mob chanted: "No more Muslims, no more mosques, no more bowing prayers." [25]

A Croat nationalist militiaman, interviewed in Mostar in September 1993, explained to a British reporter why he was trying to destroy the 427-year-old Ottoman bridge: "It is not enough to clean Mostar of the Muslims," he said, "the relics must also be removed." [26]

A Muslim resident of Mostar, interviewed during that summer, was asked why he had stayed on, despite the shelling, the hunger and the other dangers of life under siege: "I'm fighting for the bridge," he said, as if that explained it all. Less than two months later, on November 9, 1993, after hours of concentrated bombardment by a Croatian Army tank firing its cannon at close range, the bridge at Mostar finally collapsed into the river. By an eerie coincidence, the bridge was felled on the 55th anniversary of Kristallnacht, the night when Jewish synagogues

and institutions were smashed and burned throughout Hitler's Great German Reich---that, too, was an integral part of what today is euphemistically called "ethnic cleansing."

Like German Jews in the 1930s, most Bosnian Muslims today are in fact highly secularized. But a people's identity is inextricably linked with the visible symbols of their culture. Once those anchors are gone, the past, like the future, can be recreated by the victors.

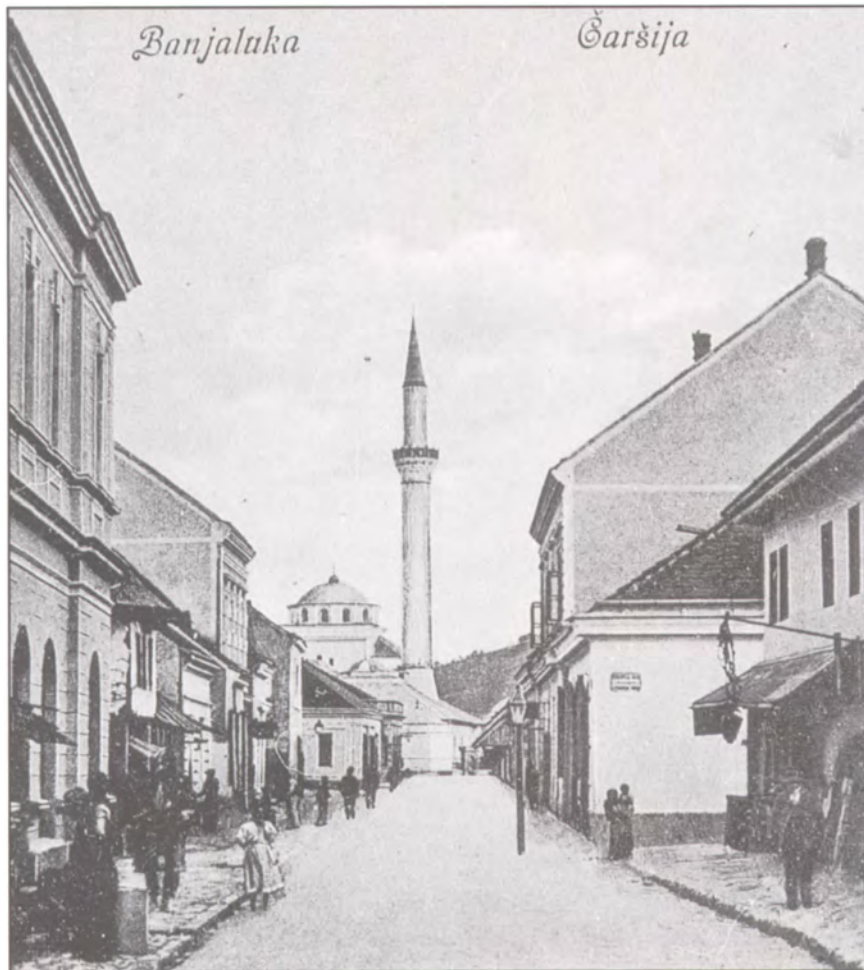
In the Drina river town of Zvornik there were once a dozen mosques; in the 1991 census, 60% of its residents called themselves Muslim Slavs. By the end of 1992 the town was 100% Serb, and by the following spring Branko Grujić, the "cleansed" city's new Serb mayor, was telling foreign visitors: "There never were any mosques in Zvornik." [27]

The historian Eric Hobsbawm has written:

History is the raw material for nationalist or ethnic or fundamentalist ideologies, as poppies are the raw material for heroin addiction [...] If there is no suitable past, it can always be invented. The past legitimizes. The past gives a more glorious background to a present that doesn't have that much to show for itself. [28]

To this, one should also add: before inventing a new past, the old one must first be erased.

In Bosnia, this erasure took a quite literal form. Consider, as an example, the city of Banja Luka, where in early 1994, only months after the last of the city's sixteen mosques had been blown up, the city fathers presided over the opening of an exhibition marking the sixty-fifth anniversary of Banja Luka's designation as the regional capital. The exhibition was organized by the regional museum, which had been renamed "The Museum of the Republika Srpska," and featured historical photographs of Banja Luka from the 1920s and 30s and documents of the period. Of the dozens of old photographs displayed in the exhibition, not one showed any trace of a mosque or minaret. Like the "vanishing commissars" airbrushed out of photographs in Stalin's Russia, these major landmarks of Banja Luka's urban landscape had vanished from the photos on display. In the new, "ethnically pure" construction of the past, they had never existed. In fact, they could not have existed---since according to the newly promulgated version of local history, Banja Luka was and always had been a purely Serb city. [29]



[16.] Early-20th-century postcard showing the main market street in Banja Luka, with the Ferhadija Mosque towering in the background. (Historic postcard in the collection of the Documentation Center, Aga Khan Program, Fine Arts Library, Harvard University).

In the worldview of those who organized this exhibition, pluralism is anathema and coexistence is declared to be an impossibility. The past, with its evidence of cultural intermingling and synthesis has to be refashioned to conform to the nationalist paradigm of an apartheid future. That which contradicts the paradigm---people, buildings, works of art, or the written word---has to be removed along with the memory of its existence.

In an effort to fight this assault on memory and to resurrect lost collections of manuscripts and historical documents from the ashes, a group of scholars from Bosnia, Canada and the United States have established the Bosnian Manuscripts Ingathering Project. We were prompted by the realization that although the Oriental Institute and many other manuscript collections in Bosnia are now ashes, a number of the destroyed originals probably still exist in the form of microfilms, photocopies or other facsimiles taken by foreign scholars as part of research

projects or sent abroad as part of exchanges between Bosnian libraries and foreign institutions. By collecting copies of these copies of lost originals and making them available via the Internet, we hope to help our Bosnian colleagues to resurrect at least part of their burned collections in facsimile.

We collect data is by a variety of means, including an interactive website, announcements in scholarly conferences and journals, and by direct approaches to individuals. Our first successful recovery, a haul of ca. 700 pages of recovered copies of manuscripts, came from a retired professor at the University of Toronto, who had brought the copies back from a research trip to Sarajevo nearly 20 years ago. We scanned these and other recovered photocopies onto a CD-ROM, which we delivered to the Oriental Institute in Sarajevo in November 1998. While that represents a mere fraction of what was lost, we are determined to continue. Each item we uncover is one spark of light rescued from the darkness of oblivion and one more way to frustrate the aims of those who tried to destroy Bosnia, its people and their cultural heritage. [30]

Unfortunately, cultural heritage and cultural institutions tend to rank low on the international community's list of priorities for post-war reconstruction. For the United Nations and for most NGOs and intergovernmental agencies, operating in the usual crisis-response mode, the aftermath of genocide in the Balkans is just another "humanitarian crisis" which, paradoxically, reduces those most immediately affected from full human beings to "victims." Stripped of all local specificity (a personal or collective past, cultural characteristics---let alone cultural values or needs), they become indistinguishable from all the other nameless victims of floods, wars and other calamities around the world. What the international agencies, quite rightly, focus on first is people's elemental requirements: shelter, food, medical care. Usually ignored in the process are questions such as: who these people (specifically) are as individuals or as a community, what in fact happened to them, or what they (specifically) might want or need.

What is particularly striking in all this is the reversal of perspectives---the "ethnic cleansers" show a keen understanding of cultural and religious factors: these are the main criteria on which they select their targets (both human and material) for attacks and destruction. The people who have been "cleansed" because of their cultural and religious identity also understand this all too well, which is why, amidst the devastation, they express such concern

for the rebuilding of houses of worship and cultural and educational facilities. Paradoxically, it is those engaged in the "humanitarian response" who prefer to set aside such considerations as "inappropriate to the first phase of reconstruction."

Long after the end of the war, international officials have continued to mostly pay lip service to the need for the reconstruction and protection of Bosnia's war-ravaged cultural and religious heritage. One of the features of 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement is a clause (Annex 8) establishing a Commission to Preserve National Monuments which, along with the Commission on Human Rights (consisting of the Office of the Ombudsman and the Human Rights Chamber), is among the few governmental bodies granted jurisdiction in both the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska, the two entities that together make up post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, more than five years after Dayton, the Commission to Preserve National Monuments remains mired in disputes about procedural issues and, as of this writing, it has yet to undertake any meaningful measures for the protection of Bosnia's cultural heritage.



[17a.] Barbarism is contagious. A broken *stećak*, one of a group of medieval gravestones in the form of large stone crosses carved with designs of human figures, at the village of Gornja Drežnica, in the mountains north of Mostar. These ancient *stećci* have been smashed by a bulldozer and the broken crosses defaced with a crudely-drawn Islamic

crescent-and-star logo (also the symbol of the Bosniak-nationalist SDA party). The same “crescent” graffiti can also be seen defacing a vandalized Roman Catholic church in Donja Drežnica, at the entrance to the Drežnica valley, which was the scene of intense fighting between Croat and Muslim militias in 1993-1994 (Photo: June 2001 András Riedlmayer).



[17b.] Prewar photograph of the medieval *stećci*-crosses at Gornja Drežnica, from a study by Šefik Bešliagić, "Stari krstovi u Drežnici," *Naše starine* 3 (1956), pp. 179-88.

Among the Commission’s meager accomplishments so far has been a tentative agreement on a list of buildings and sites to be designated as “national monuments” (although there is still no consensus on precisely what obligations such a designation might impose on property owners and on the local authorities). One of these designated “national monuments” is the Ferhadija Mosque in Banja Luka, a historic building that no longer exists and whose reconstruction has been persistently blocked by the Serb nationalists who remain in control of the Republika Srpska. The municipal authorities in Banja Luka not only removed the rubble of the Ferhadija and the other demolished mosques, they also deleted the mosques from the city’s master plan. The sites where the mosques once stood have been reserved for public parks and other uses, according to the authorities, who declared reconstruction to be out of the question.

In frustration, the Islamic Community of Bosnia, acting on behalf of the few thousand Muslims who still remain in the Banja Luka and the tens of thousands of exiled Banja Lukan Muslims who want to return, turned to the Human Rights Chamber for redress. In July 1999, the Human Rights Chamber ruled that the Government of the Republika Srpska had denied the right of the Islamic Community to freedom of religion by refusing to allow the reconstruction of mosques destroyed in the war. The Chamber specifically established that the Islamic

Community had property rights to fifteen sites of destroyed mosques and the right to enclose the properties. According to the decision, the Government of the Republika Srpska may not allow other construction on these sites and must issue any construction permits necessary to rebuild mosques on seven of the sites. [31]

Following another year and a half of obstruction by the Bosnian Serb authorities, threats of further legal action, and a great deal of earnest exhortation and cajoling on the part of international officials, on March 19, 2001 the urban planning department of the Banja Luka municipality finally issued the necessary construction permit authorizing the rebuilding of the Ferhadija Mosque.

Although the funds and the plans for the reconstruction were not yet ready, a cornerstone laying ceremony was set for May 7, 2001, the eighth anniversary of the mosque's destruction. The Republika Srpska ministry of the interior and Banja Luka's police chief promised to provide security for the event, the police chief assuring reporters that he expected no problems. However, the ceremony, which was supposed to mark the beginning of reconciliation in Banja Luka, turned into a pogrom instead. As one wire service report described the event,

Up to 2,000 nationalist Serbs rioted Monday to prevent a groundbreaking ceremony for reconstruction of a 16th century mosque in the Serb-run city of Banja Luka. The mob broke through a police cordon protecting international diplomats and some 1,000 former Muslim residents of Banja Luka who arrived to attend the ceremony. The visitors were stoned and beaten, their prayer rugs stolen and burned, the Muslim flag ripped down from the Islamic community building, burned and replaced by a Bosnian Serb flag.

To further insult the Muslims, the mob chased a pig into the park where the mosque once stood, slaughtered it, and hung its head in front of the Islamic community building, where about 250 people, including the diplomatic corps and former Muslim residents, hid from the mob. [32]

The mob surrounded the building for six hours, breaking all the windows and screaming "Kill the Turks [i.e. the Muslims]." Among those trapped inside were the U.S., Canadian, British,

and Swedish ambassadors to Bosnia, and Jacques Klein, head of the UN Mission in Bosnia. To their credit, the diplomats refused offers of safe passage until all of the Bosnian Muslims in the building had been evacuated to safety. More than 30 people were injured in the Banja Luka pogrom; Murat Badić, a 61-year-old Bosnian Muslim who had come pray at the ceremony, was beaten unconscious and subsequently died of his injuries.

In the days after the incident, it became clear that the riot in Banja Luka, and a similar anti-Muslim mob action to stop the reconstruction of a mosque in Trebinje two days earlier, had been carefully prepared. The Banja Luka municipal public works department had reportedly dumped truckloads of rocks near the site of the mosque the night before the event, as ammunition for the rioters. In an effort to placate international officials after the riot, the Republika Srpska's Minister of Education sacked the principals of six secondary schools in Banja Luka who had released their pupils from classes to allow them to take part in the "protest." [33]

After the initial wave of expressions of outrage, some officials suggested that projects for the rebuilding of mosques and churches that were destroyed during the war ought to be postponed---perhaps indefinitely---because such buildings may be perceived as "provocative" (presumably by those who destroyed them in the first place).

However, after many years of pandering to such sensitivities, the time has come for the international community to face reality. There has to be a recognition among policy makers that cultural rights, religious freedom, and the right of refugees to return to their pre-war homes are inextricably linked with each other. The protection and reconstruction of religious and cultural heritage damaged or destroyed in the 1992-95 "ethnic cleansing" of Bosnia is not a frill to be dispensed with or a "sensitive matter" better left untouched. It is central to the issue of restoring multiculturalism and a civil society in postwar Bosnia. Without guarantees of cultural security, including the rebuilding of destroyed houses of worship and cultural institutions, hundreds of thousands of Bosnians will never have the confidence to return to the communities from which they were expelled.

How can and should we respond to these attacks against culture? First, we have to reassert and act on our own belief that there are principles of decency and international legality that are worth defending. This means doing everything in our power to make sure that those who have

violated laws protecting cultural property are indeed punished and not rewarded for their deeds. In addition to supporting criminal prosecutions of those responsible, the international community should make a concerted effort to ensure some measure of restitution. In Bosnia, Kosovo and other post-conflict situations, it is vital that effective steps be taken to make certain that reconstruction projects will not be held hostage by bureaucratic obstruction or mob violence.

The restoration of damaged or destroyed cultural heritage is not a matter that can be safely ignored, left to the victims to sort out, or hopefully put up for adoption by interested NGOs. As the postwar experience in the Balkans has amply demonstrated, most of the NGOs active in the aftermath of war and “ethnic cleansing” are neither interested in nor well qualified for undertaking such projects. The NGOs’ lack of experience in dealing with heritage, combined in some cases with aggressive sectarian agendas, can do more harm than good, compounding and completing the destruction wrought by the “ethnic cleansers” and causing further divisions in the community.

However, in general, international aid agencies and non-sectarian organizations concerned with heritage protection have tended to shy away from projects that involve religious structures, in the mistaken belief that the reconstruction of houses of worship is a “sensitive issue,” which it is best to avoid or postpone for the sake of postwar reconciliation. In this, they ignore the key role that such projects can play in promoting the return of minority refugees, which is one of the principal goals of the international community in post-Dayton Bosnia. By keeping their distance from such projects, these secular organizations have also left the field open to sectarian sponsors, among them Islamic fundamentalist aid agencies from the Arab world that have their own radical agendas and have little interest either in the preservation of heritage or in the promotion of interreligious and inter-communal harmony in Bosnia. [34]

Among the many negative consequences of the fragmented political arrangements imposed on Bosnia by the framework of the Dayton Agreement is that the institutions that used to be supported at the national level, including those involved in the protection of cultural heritage, have been left orphaned, without adequate support or legal mandate. However, at the local level, where regulatory authority now resides, there is a serious shortage of expertise and resources for dealing with the cultural catastrophe wrought by the war. In addition to funding

for specific projects, there is a need for training in proper methods of assessment and in current methods and approaches to the conservation of war-damaged monuments. The local authorities also need support in drafting and effectively enforcing standards and regulations to stop the ongoing destruction of important buildings and heritage sites that survived the war only to fall victim to uncontrolled postwar development.

One of the most important ways in which governmental and international agencies can promote the work of cultural reconstruction is through sponsoring programs for professional education and technical and material assistance that can help build up the capability of the local institutions in Bosnia. For some years to come, the need for an international presence and for international assistance will continue. But ultimately, it will be these institutions and the new generation of Bosnian architects and heritage experts who will be responsible for ensuring that their country's rich multicultural past will remain as a legacy and a lesson for future generations of Bosnians.

NOTES:

[1] On the vote for independence, see Daniel Kofman, "Self-determination in a Multi-ethnic State: Bosnians, Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs," in: Dzemal Sokolovic and Florian Bieber, eds., *Reconstructing Multi-ethnic Societies: The Case of Bosnia-Herzegovina*. (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2001), pp. 31-61. For a day-by-day account and analysis of the siege of Sarajevo through February 29, 1994, see: *Final Report of the United Nations Commission of Experts Established Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 780 (1992), Annex VI, Part I: Study of the Battle and Siege of Sarajevo*, United Nations Security Council Doc. S/1994/674/Add.2 (Vol. II), 27 May 1994; also available on line at http://www.icty.org/x/file/About/OTP/un_commission_of_experts_report1994_en.pdf et seq. For the impact on the Bosnian capital's cultural heritage and institutions as of 1994, see: *Cultural Institutions and Monuments in Sarajevo*, ed. by Aida Čengić and Ferida Duraković (Budapest: Open Society Institute, 1994, [1995]); and the catalogue of a 1993-94 exhibition organized by the Society of Architects of Sarajevo to document the destruction of their city, *Urbicide--Sarajevo = Sarajevo, une ville blessée* (Bordeaux: Arc en rêve, Centre d'architecture; Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, [1994]).

[2] Council of Europe. Committee on Culture and Education, *Information Reports on the Destruction by War of the Cultural Heritage in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, 1993-97), nos. 1-10 = Assembly Documents nos. 6756, 6869, 6904, 6989 + addendum, 6999, 7070, 7133, 7308, 7341, 7674, 7740; András Riedlmayer, "Erasing the Past: The Destruction of Libraries and Archives in Bosnia-Herzegovina," *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin* 29 i (July 1995), pp. 7-11; Vesna Blazina, "Mémoricide ou la purification culturelle: la guerre et les bibliothèques de Croatie et de Bosnie-Herzégovine," *Documentation et bibliothèques* 42 (1996), pp. 149-64; Alain-Charles Lefèvre, "Bosnie et Croatie: un désastre culturel sans précédent," *Archéologia* no. 328 (Nov. 1996), pp. 26-35.

[3] The remains of no more than about two dozen medieval churches have been recorded in Bosnia. The most monumental among these still standing is the Gothic belfry of St. Luke's Church (built 1461-65) in Jajce. Some scholars, such as Srećko Džaja, *Konfessionalität und Nationalität Bosniens und der Herzegowina: voremanzipatorische Phase 1463-1804*. Südosteuropäische Arbeiten, 80 (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1984), pp. 159-165, have argued that, since medieval written sources mention additional churches and monastic establishments, the fact that so few ruins have survived is entirely attributable to destruction and neglect during the Ottoman period and the ravages of time. However, given that more than a century of archaeological investigations have failed to uncover more substantial remains of monumental church buildings from the Middle Ages in Bosnia (in contrast to some other regions of the Balkans), it may be safer to conclude that one reason why the churches and monasteries (*hize*) mentioned in the sources have not left more of a trace in the archaeological record is that most of them must have been quite modest structures.

[4] On medieval Bosnian art and its deployment in support of modern discourses on Bosnian identity, see Marian Wenzel, *Ornamental Motifs on Tombstones from Medieval Bosnia and Surrounding Regions = Ukrasni motivi na stećcima* (Sarajevo: Veselin Masleša, 1965), and Idem, "Bosnian History and Austro-Hungarian Policy: The Zemaljski Muzej, Sarajevo, and the Bogomil Romance," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 12 (1993), pp. 127-42; the complex history of Bosnia's cultural heritage is presented in a study by Ivan Lovrenović, *Unutarinja zemlja: kratki pregled kulturne povijesti Bosne i Hercegovine* [The Inner Land: A Brief Survey of the Cultural History of Bosnia and Herzegovina] (Zagreb: Durieux, 1998). Lovrenović's argument is summed

up by Milenko Jergović, in a review article in *Bosnia Report* (London) n.s. 4 (June/July 1998): "Bosnia's cultural and civilizational identity forms a unity in its meanings, but its image is expressly that of a mosaic. No element of the mosaic was formed on its own or can today represent the whole." An English translation of this work was recently published under the title, *Bosnia: A Cultural History* (London: Saqi Books; New York: New York University Press, 2001)

[5] The best survey in English of Bosnian society and culture in the Ottoman era is Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History*, rev. ed. (New York: New York University Press, 1996), chapters 4-10; the richness and complexity of the artistic heritage produced in this period is well illustrated in *The Art Treasures of Bosnia and Herzegovina*, ed. Mirza Filipović et al. (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1987).

[6] On the great Islamic foundations (*vakufi*) that built Sarajevo, see Nijazija Kostović, *Sarajevo između dobrotvorstva i zla* [Sarajevo between philanthropy and evil times] 2nd enl. ed. (Sarajevo: El-Kalem, 1998); for the role of *vakuf* in the development of Mostar, see Hivzija Hasandedić, *Mostarski vakufi i njihovi vakifi* [The Islamic foundations of Mostar and their founders] (Mostar: Odbor Islamske zajednice, 2000). Amir Pašić, *Islamic Architecture in Bosnia and Hercegovina*, transl. by Midhat Ridjanović (Istanbul: Research Centre for Islamic History, Art, and Culture, 1994).

[7] Boris Nilević, "O postanku stare pravoslavne crkve u Sarajevu" [On the origin of the Old Orthodox Church in Sarajevo], *Prilozi historiji Sarajeva: radovi sa Znanstvenog simpozija "Pola milenija Sarajeva", održanog 19. do 21. marta 1993. godine*, ed. Dževad Juzbašić (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, Orijentalni institut, 1997), pp. 61-65. According to Nilević, some sources suggest the existence of a local Orthodox Christian community predating the building of Sarajevo's Old Orthodox Church, and he concludes that they must have had a pre-existing house of worship; that may be so, but the fact remains that this particular church was erected following the Ottoman conquest. This was part of a broader pattern: of the many historic Orthodox churches and monasteries dating from before 1900 found today in Bosnia, virtually all were built during the Ottoman period. On Orthodox Christian art produced in Bosnia under Ottoman rule, see also Svetlana Rakić, *Serbian Icons from Bosnia-Herzegovina: Sixteenth to Eighteenth Century* (New York: A. Pankovich Publishers, 2000). On Islamic influences on Orthodox Christian art in Bosnia, see Zagorka Janc, "Islamski elementi u srpskoj knjiži," [Islamic elements in the Serbian book] *Zbornik Muzeja primenjene umetnosti*, 5 (1959), pp. 27-43, and Andrej Andrejević, "Prilog proučavanju Islamske uticaja na umetnost XVI. i XVII. veka kod Srba u Sarajevu i Bosni," [A

contribution to the study of Islamic influences on the art of the Serbs of Sarajevo and Bosnia in the 16th and 17th centuries] *Prilozi za proučavanje istorije Sarajeva*, 1 (1963), pp. 51-57.

[8] For the early history of Sarajevo's Spanish-Jewish community and of the city's first synagogue, see Moritz Levy, *Die Sephardim in Bosnien: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Juden auf der Balkanhalbinsel* (Sarajevo, 1911; reprt. Graz: Wieser Verlag, 1996), pp. 11-22, 134. Sijavuš Pasha's grant of permission for the building of a synagogue next to the new *han* was, technically, a violation of Islamic law---which allows the repair and reconstruction of pre-existing non-Muslim houses of worship, but not the erection of new ones where none had stood before. What makes this bending of the sacred law all the more remarkable is that the property was entangled with not one but two Islamic pious foundations: the *vakuf* of Gazi Husrev Beg, which owned the land underneath the buildings, and that of Sijavuš Pasha. For the history of Sijavuš Pasha's foundation and of the great *han* that he built for the Jews of Sarajevo (which they called El Cortijo, the "Great Courtyard," in Judaeo-Spanish), see Alija Bejtić, "Sijavus-pasina दौरa," *Prilozi za proučavanje istorije Sarajeva*, 2 (1966), pp. 61-102.

[9] For the history of the Catholic community in sixteenth-century Sarajevo, see Fra Ljubo Lucić, "Franjevačka prisutnost u Sarajevu" [The Franciscan presence in Sarajevo], *Prilozi historiji Sarajeva: radovi sa Znanstvenog simpozija "Pola milenija Sarajeva", održanog 19. do 21. marta 1993. godine*, ed. Dzevad Juzbasic (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, Orijentalni institut, 1997), pp. 239-60; on Roman Catholic art and culture in Bosnia under Ottoman rule, see *Franjevci na raskršću kultura i civilizacija: blago franjevačkih samostana Bosne i Hercegovine = Franciscans on the Crossroad of Cultures and Civilizations: The Treasures of the Franciscan Monasteries of Bosnia and Herzegovina*. Ed. Jasmina Dautčehajić Avdagić et al. (Zagreb: MGC, Muzejski prostor, 1988).

[10] Amir Pašić, *The Old Bridge (Stari Most) in Mostar* (Istanbul: Research Centre for Islamic History, Art, and Culture, 1995).

[11] Ibrahim Krzović, *Arhitektura Bosne i Hercegovine 1878-1918* [Architecture of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1878-1918] (Sarajevo: Umjetnička galerija Bosne i Hercegovine, 1987); Borislav Spasojević, *Arhitektura štambenih palata austrougarskog perioda u Sarajevu* [Architecture of residences and mansions of the Austro-Hungarian period in Sarajevo], 2nd ed. (Sarajevo: Rabić, 1999).

[12] Eyewitness account by Kemal Bakaršić, at the time chief librarian of Bosnia's National Museum (Zemaljski muzej), in "The Libraries of Sarajevo and the Book That Saved Our Lives," *The New Combat: A Journal of Reason and Resistance*, 3 (Autumn 1994), pp. 13-15. On the burning of the National Library, the Oriental Institute, and other libraries and archives and the role these attacks played in the process of "ethnic cleansing," see also: András Riedlmayer, "Convivencia under Fire: Genocide and Book-burning in Bosnia," *The Holocaust and the Book: Destruction and Preservation*, ed. Jonathan Rose (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), pp. 267-91.

[13] Account of the attack on the library and the ensuing fire based on: reports filed from the scene by Kurt Schork, "Sarajevo's Much-loved Old Town Hall Ablaze," Reuters Library Report, 26 August 1992, and John Pomfret, "Battles for Sarajevo Intensify as Bosnian Peace Conference Opens," Associated Press, 26 August 1992; personal interviews with library workers, fire fighters and other eyewitnesses; unedited footage from TV BiH; quote from volunteer rescue worker aired on ABC News, 13 January 1993.

[14] Kate Adie's interview cited in "Bosnia's Written History in Flames? The Major Libraries and Archives Reported Destroyed," *The Art Newspaper* (London), vol. 3 no. 21 (October 1992), p. 1; for damage to the National Museum, see Rizo Sijarić, "Update on the Zemaljski Muzej, Sarajevo," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 12 (1993), pp. 195-99; Marian Wenzel, "Obituary: Dr. Rizo Sijarić, Director of the Zemaljski Muzej, Sarajevo. Killed in Sarajevo, 10 December 1993," *Museum Management and Curatorship* 13 (1994), pp. 79-80.

[15] On the fatal nexus between ethnicity, religion and genocide during the 1992-95 Bosnian war, see Michael A. Sells, *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia*, rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); a Bosnian edition was published under the title, *Iznevjereni most: religija i genocid u Bosni*, transl. by Zoran Mutic (Sarajevo: Sedam, 2002).

[16] Jolyon Naegele, "Banja Luka's Mufti Tells Of 'Four Years Of Horror'," *RFE/RL Weekday Magazine*, September 6, 1996; the report is available online at <http://www.rferl.org/features/1996/09/f.ru.96090616572638.asp>.

[17] Dusko Doder, "On Serb Holy Day, Hellfire for Foes," *The Boston Globe*, February 10, 1993.

[18] On the destruction of Foča's Bosnian Muslim community and of the monuments that testified to more than 500 years of Muslim history and culture in Foča, see Faruk Muftić, *Foča: 1470-1996* (Sarajevo: Šahinpašić, 1997); Šemso Tucaković, *Aladža džamija: ubijeni monument* [The Aladža Mosque: a murdered monument] (Sarajevo: Institut za istraživanje zločina protiv čovječnosti i međunarodnog prava, 1998); Denis Bašić [et al.] "History, Culture and Destruction of Foča" (website)

<https://web.archive.org/web/20050205103142/http://www.haverford.edu/relg/sells/foca/foca.html>

<https://web.archive.org/web/20050209210210/http://www.haverford.edu/relg/sells/foca/foca2.html>

[19] U.S. Department of State. *Supplemental United States Submission of Information to The United Nations Security Council In Accordance with Paragraph 5 of Resolution 771 (1992) and Paragraph 1 of Resolution 780 (1992): [Eighth Report] June 16, 1993*, posted on the Web at

<https://web.archive.org/web/20050211072530/http://www.haverford.edu/relg/sells/reports/8thC.html>.

The expulsion of Bosnian Muslim civilians from Bijeljina during the war, and the continued abuses Muslim returnees have met with since Dayton, are described in the May 2000 Human Rights Watch report, *Unfinished Business: The Return of Refugees and Displaced Persons to Bijeljina* <http://www.hrw.org/reports/2000/bosnia/>

[20] Based on eyewitness accounts of the destruction, including that of Bedrudin Gušić, who had the unenviable task of serving as the elected chairman of the Committee of the Islamic Community in Banja Luka from May 1992 until November 1994. Mr Gušić's account was published in Bosnian in the Sarajevo daily *Oslobođenje*, March 16-23, 1995; an English translation is posted on line at

<https://web.archive.org/web/20050406235828/http://www.haverford.edu/relg/sells/banjaluka/gusic1.html>

and

<https://web.archive.org/web/20050211064424/http://www.haverford.edu/relg/sells/banjaluka/gusic2.html>

The removal of the remains of the mosques was witnessed by Frank Westerman, who reported on the Bosnian war for the Amsterdam daily *NRC Handelsblad*; his account of the destruction and his interview with Banja Luka's Serb nationalist wartime mayor, Predrag Radić, appears in Westerman's book, *De Brug over de Tara* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Atlas, 1994), pp. 7-13; my English translation of Westerman's interview with Radić is posted at <https://listserv.buffalo.edu/cgi-bin/wa?A2=JUSTWATCH-L;c5647e15.0605>. The destruction of Roman Catholic churches in Banja Luka and elsewhere in Bosnia and Herzegovina is documented in *Raspeta crkva u Bosni i Hercegovini: uništavanje katoličkih sakralnih objekata u Bosni i Hercegovini (1991.-1996)*, ed. Ilija Živković (Banja Luka, Mostar, Sarajevo: Hrvatska matica iseljenika Bosne i Hercegovine; Zagreb: Hrvatski informativni centar, 1997).

[21] Maggie O'Kane, "Then they set the house on fire and everyone inside was screaming ... I was the only one who got out," *The Guardian* (London), August 20, 1992; Alec Russell, "Serbs pursue survivors of 'ethnic cleansing'," *The Daily Telegraph* (London), August 20, 1992.

[22] The systematic destruction of the historic center of Mostar and its architectural monuments during the April-June 1992 JNA siege was documented by the Mostar Society of Architects (Društvo arhitekata Mostar) and published in an illustrated exhibition catalogue, *Mostar '92: urbicid*, ed. Ivanka Ribarević-Nikolić and Željko Jurić (Mostar: Hrvatsko vijeće obrane općine Mostar, 1992).

[23] On the destruction of Serbian Orthodox sacred sites during the 1992-95 war by Croat and Bosnian Muslim extremists, see Slobodan Mileusnić, *Duhovni genocid: pregled porušenih, oštećenih i obesvećenih crkava, manastira i drugih crkvenih objekata u ratu 1991-1995 = Spiritual Genocide: A Survey of Destroyed, Damaged, and Desecrated Churches, Monasteries, and Other Church Buildings during the War 1991-1995*, 3rd ed. (Belgrade: Muzej srpske pravoslavne crkve, 1997); and Michael Sells and András Riedlmayer, "Zitomislici (1566-1992): Meaning, History, and Tragic End" (essay and online exhibition) at <https://web.archive.org/web/20010114144200/http://www.haverford.edu/relg/sells/zitomislici/zitomislici.html> and <https://web.archive.org/web/20050408025056/http://www.haverford.edu/relg/sells/zitomislici/zitomislicirenewal.htm>. On the Oct.1992 "ethnic cleansing" of Prozor by Croat nationalist

militiamen, see Ed Vulliamy, *Seasons in Hell: Understanding Bosnia's War* (London, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), pp. 221-34; John Burns, "Croats Wield the Guns in 'Cleansed' Town," *New York Times*, October 30, 1993.

[24] UNHCR Press Release REF/1034; on the destruction of cultural heritage in Stolac, see also Matej Vipotnik, "Searching for Bosnia's Lost Cultural Treasures," *Berserkistan* [on-line newspaper], (July 30, 1996), <http://linder.com/berserk/culture.html>, and the documentation compiled by the Presidency-in-exile of the Municipality of Stolac, *Crimes in Stolac Municipality, 1992-1994* (Sarajevo: Did, 1996), pp. 45-54, also available online at <https://web.archive.org/web/20051031182731/http://www.haverford.edu/relg/sells/stolac/StolacDocuments.htm>

[25] "Bosnian Croats Block Return of Muslims," (Reuters, Feb 2, 1997); four years later, an investigation revealed that remarkably little had changed in Stolac: Nick Thorpe, "Croat Town Now a Criminal Haven: SAS Investigator Asks Why Gangsters And Ethnic Warriors Live Freely in Stolac, Bosnia," *The Guardian* (London) May 2, 2001, on line at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/international/story/0,3604,481599,00.html>

[26] Robert Block, "Croatian Death Squad Talks Tough around the Pooltable," *The Independent* (London), September 6, 1993. Since the end of the war, the stones of the historic bridge have been recovered from the riverbed---the bridge is being rebuilt as part of an international project sponsored by UNESCO; see Jerrilynn Dodds, "Bridge over the Neretva," *Archaeology* 51 i (Jan.-Feb. 1998), pp. 48-53. For updates, see the website of the Center for Peace and Multiethnic Cooperation Mostar (Centar za mir i multietničku saradnju Mostar) <http://www.centarzamir.org.ba/eng/sm.html>

[27] Branko Grujić interviewed by Carol J. Williams, "Serbs Stay Their Ground on Muslim Lands: Conquering Warlords Bend History and Reality in an Attempt to Justify Their Spoils," *Los Angeles Times*, March 28, 1993; Laura Silber, "Serb Mayor Confident in Bosnian Town Where Mosques Are Rubble: Voters Go to Polls in Referendum on Peace Plan," *Financial Times* (London), May 17, 1993; Roger Cohen, "In a Town Cleansed of Muslims, Serb Church Will Crown the Deed," *New York Times*, March 7, 1994.

[28] Eric Hobsbawm, "Debunking Ethnic Myths," *Open Society News* (Winter 1994), pp. 1, 10-11, p. 10, condensed from a lecture delivered at Central European University, Budapest, at the opening of the 1993-94 academic year; a longer version was published, under the title "Outside and Inside History," in Hobsbawm's collection of essays, *On History* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1997), pp. 1-9.

[29] The 1994 exhibition is described by the Banja Luka local historian Aleksander Aco Ravlić, who was not himself a Muslim but was outraged at the destruction of his native city's heritage, in his book, *Banjalučka Ferhadija: ljepotica koji su ubili* [The Ferhadija of Banja Luka: A Murdered Beauty] (Rijeka: AARiS, 1996), p. 57, English summary p. 172. For other examples of the use of retouched photographs to "correct" an ideologically unacceptable past, see David King, *The Commissar Vanishes: The Falsification of Photographs and Art in Stalin's Russia* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1997).

[30] The Bosnian Manuscripts Ingathering Project was established in 1994 by Amila Buturovic (York University), András Riedlmayer (Harvard University), and Irvin Cemil Schick (Harvard University); the recovered pages are being scanned and posted on the Internet by Prof. Kemal Bakaršić and his students in the Department of Comparative Literature and Librarianship at the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo. For more information, see the Ingathering Project's Web sites at <https://web.archive.org/web/20110206140005/http://www.openbook.ba/bmss/> and <https://web.archive.org/web/20160307035718/http://kakarigi.net/manu/ingather.htm>

[31] The Human Rights Chamber's decision in the Banja Luka case, delivered on June 11, 1999, is available online at <http://www.hrc.ba/database/decisions/CH96-29%20Islamic%20Community%20Admissibility%20and%20Merits%20E.pdf>.

Sites of destroyed mosques in towns throughout the Bosnian Serb entity have also been rezoned for other uses, as a means of preventing their reconstruction. In Bijeljina, the sites of the town's leveled mosques have been used as flea markets, parking lots, and sites for shops and kiosks. In a letter dated July 7, 1999, the Serb-controlled municipality refused permission for the rebuilding of the historic Atik Mosque in the center of Bijeljina. The reason cited was that the urban plan for that part of town had changed and that now a theater was planned for that site. François Perez, at the time the Office of the High Representative's Special Envoy in Bijeljina, astonishingly, backed the Bosnian Serb municipal authorities, terming the request to

rebuild the mosque “too extreme,” and suggesting that “maybe in time, a mosque could be built in the periphery of town.” (Human Rights Watch interview with François Perez, Bijeljina, September 28, 1999, cited in http://www.hrw.org/reports/2000/bosnia/Bosn005-06.htm#P1218_278606)

[32] Aida Cerkez-Robinson, “Muslim leader urges restraint following attack ,” *The Associated Press* (May 8, 2001).

[33] For a report on the mob attack in Trebinje, in which one international official was beaten severely enough to require medical treatment, see “Serbs Block Bosnia Mosque Ceremony” *BBC News*, May 6, 2001

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/world/europe/newsid_1315000/1315262.stm On the advance preparations for the anti-Muslim riot in Banja Luka, see Ivan Lovrenovic, “Erupcija ubiljačkog šovinizma u BiH’ [Eruption of murderous chauvinism in Bosnia], *Feral Tribune* (Split) no. 817, May 14, 2001; an English summary was posted on the OHR website, at

https://web.archive.org/web/20020121033021/http://www.ohr.int/ohr-dept/preso/bh-media-rep/round-ups/default.asp?content_id=498#6. The Croat nationalist extremists in Stolac have

also continually tried to block efforts by Muslim returnees to rebuild even one of the town’s four destroyed mosques, reportedly telling the mufti of Mostar, “If you start building a mosque, we will build a [Catholic] church on its cornerstone;” reported in *Ljiljan* (Sarajevo), May 27, 2001; English translation available on line at

https://web.archive.org/web/20010914105532/http://www.tfeagle.army.mil/tfeno/Feature_Story.asp?Article=12638. Nevertheless, reconstruction of the 16th-century Careva džamija

(Emperor's Mosque) in the center of Stolac is now going forward, despite the repeated efforts of local Croat extremists, and of Dr. Ratkoć, the Catholic bishop of Mostar-Duvno and a militant Croat nationalist, to obstruct the project.

[34] More than 156 of the mosques that have been repaired, rebuilt or newly constructed in Bosnia since the war have been sponsored by Islamic relief agencies from Saudi Arabia, which have used their financial clout in order to promote the intolerant, Islamic fundamentalist missionary agenda of the Saudi-based Wahhabi sect. Stephen Schwartz, “Islamic Fundamentalism in the Balkans,” *Partisan Review* (July 2000), pp. 421-26; Saïd Zulficar, “Alerte aux iconoclastes!” *Al-Ahram Hebdo* (February, 28, 2001), available online at <http://archnet.org/publications/3494>; Jolyon Naegele, “Saudi Wahhabi Aid Workers Bulldoze

Balkan Monuments,” *RFE/RL Weekday Magazine* (August 4, 2000), online at <https://web.archive.org/web/20040510033101/http://www.rferl.org/specials/yugoslavia/monuments/>.
