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PEACE ON THE SMALL SCREEN: UNPROFOR'S TELEVISION UNIT IN 1994–5 AND THE 'MEDIA WAR' IN FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

Catherine Baker 

Between early 1994 and the end of the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, a team of journalists working for the United Nations peacekeeping mission in former Yugoslavia (UNPROFOR) was in charge of a unique televisual experiment – a documentary film unit known as UNTV, which would produce more than 300 films about reconstruction, displacement and peace, to be broadcast on regular slots agreed with local and national broadcasters throughout the region. Departing from UN peacekeeping's conventional public information output, these films aimed to challenge the ethnonationalist biases that post-Yugoslav state broadcasters employed to varying degrees, and to become a much-needed source of reliable information about conditions on other sides of the front lines. Though UNTV's existence is hardly registered in the literature on television and other media during the Yugoslav wars, archival evidence from UNTV's documents and films casts light on how and why the project began, with interpretations of the dynamics of the conflict which were often closer to those of independent anti-war journalists in the region than UNPROFOR command. The tensions that resulted when this commitment clashed with the politicised ideologies of some post-Yugoslav state broadcasters nevertheless show the limits of this attempt to intervene in former Yugoslavia's so-called 'media war'.

Studies of television during the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s typically follow two tracks: one on post-Yugoslav national broadcasters' ethnopolitical agendas and the independent media that resisted them, and another on foreign correspondents and

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the impact of their reports. Slovenia's and Croatia's public broadcasters, for instance, are widely understood to have played central roles in articulating new national identities for each country and separating the public from past affinities with 'Yugoslavia', to a point that critics have viewed as a politicised process of ethnic homogenisation.¹ The complicity of TV Belgrade (later Radio–Television Serbia (RTS)) in amplifying Slobodan Milošević's messages that Serbs were under threat from other ethnonational reform demands has long been recognised as a key factor in Milošević's rise to power, while Mark Thompson and Dubravka Žarkov have both termed the reciprocal ways in which Serbian and Croatian media narrated current and historic events to cast the other ethnic side as collective aggressors a 'media war' alongside the physical ethnopolitical war.²

Independent print and broadcast journalists dedicated to opposing ethnonationalist manipulations enter this history as a force of resistance to the 'media war', as do journalists at TV Sarajevo (later Radio–Television Bosnia-Herzegovina (RTVBiH)) who through spring 1992 had to shift from appealing for peace onto a war footing of intermittent electricity, transmitters being assailed and citizens (including themselves) living under or fleeing siege conditions.³ Studies of foreign television, meanwhile, highlight both correspondents (re-evaluating their professional ethics at the birth of what one of their number, Martin Bell, termed a 'journalism of attachment') and debates over the content and political impact of their broadcasters' coverage, including the repercussions of the Independent Television News (ITN) reports from the Republika Srpska (RS) concentration camps at Omarska and Trnopolje in August 1992.⁴ Other players in the television history of the Yugoslav wars have received far less attention, though Dona Kolar-Panov's study of the circulation of privately-owned VHS tapes of footage by local broadcasters of war-affected areas circulated through displaced diaspora communities provides an interesting example of grass-roots agency with regards to the televised record as well as rare acknowledgement of these subnational broadcasters' role.⁵

Film and document collections now held at the Imperial War Museum (IWM), however, reveal another participant in the struggle over interpretations of the conflict on the post-Yugoslav airwaves: the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), which began its peacekeeping mission in Croatia in February 1992, then had its mandate progressively extended into Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) in June 1992 and border areas of Macedonia in December 1992.⁶ In early 1994, determination to repair UNPROFOR's credibility among the post-Yugoslav civilian public led UNPROFOR to found a new television production unit, 'UNTV'. While UNPROFOR public information capacity had always included a small film unit, mostly documenting visits by commanders and UN dignitaries, UNTV's team of international producers/camera operators and local technicians had the much more ambitious aim of making informational films about life during the conflict for broadcast on the region's local and national broadcasters – the very institutions which had taken positions in the 'media war'. How the UNTV concept emerged, and how its ideals could clash in practice with the political and ideological commitments of the wartime broadcasters, are revealed through reports and correspondence from UNTV's archives.

These archives consist of the films stored at UNTV's offices in Zagreb until the UN peacekeeping mission in former Yugoslavia closed down at the beginning of 1996 (including UNTV's hundreds of finished films, the rushes for each film, some videos inherited from UNPROFOR's previous film unit, and copies of some videos distributed by other UN agencies), plus nine boxes of UNTV's internal and external correspondence, all saved from disposal by UNTV's chief producer, Roy Head. The UNTV collection was acquired by IWM's then head of film acquisitions, Kay Gladstone, and first assessed and documented for cataloguing by Lucy Maxwell in 2010–11, but had not been used to evaluate UNTV's wider significance in the history of media and peacekeeping during the Yugoslav wars until the author of this article headed a collaborative research network with IWM in 2019–21 to investigate the UNTV collection, funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council. The archived documents in this collection, each produced at a specific moment in the conflict when the wars' outcomes were not yet known, reveal how the concept of UNTV was designed and implemented as hopes for peace rose in 1994, and how its journalists believed television could be used to help bring peace by counteracting the 'media war'.

UNTV, peacekeeping and television in 1994

UNTV's founding in March–April 1994 came as part of the scaling-up of UNPROFOR's public information activities initiated by the new Secretary-General's Special Representative (SRSG) to the peacekeeping force, Yasushi Akashi. Appointed in January 1994, Akashi took office at a time when authorities and the public on all sides of the conflict had lost confidence in the UN. While Radovan Karadžić and the RS entity he controlled in BiH routinely obstructed UNPROFOR and accused it of bias against Serbs, leaders and civilians on the Bosnian government side were deeply disappointed in how little UNPROFOR had done to protect civilians relative to the international community's resources. The Croatian government and media meanwhile believed UNPROFOR should have used its military power to stop the paramilitary occupation of one third of Croatia's territory by the parastate called the Republic of Serb Krajina (RSK), instead of accepting a border between Croatia and the RSK as the so-called confrontation line. With UNPROFOR's credibility weak among all of what the UN reductively, if pragmatically, understood as the conflict's three ethnonational sides, Akashi resolved to improve UNPROFOR's public information and communication, apparently believing that better public information about why UNPROFOR was there would increase UNPROFOR's legitimacy and dispel perceptions of its bias.

A new Division of Information, created in February 1994 under Michael Williams, accordingly gathered together UNPROFOR's existing public information units, including a publications unit producing monthly newsletters, a photography unit, a media analysis team that translated and circulated summaries of local media for UNPROFOR, a radio unit, UNPROFOR's press officers, and a small television unit documenting UNPROFOR activities on film.⁷ The former BBC journalist Roy Head, fresh from helping to establish a radio station for the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) which had become 'the most

popular station in the country' and driven participation in Cambodia's first democratic elections, would become responsible for expanding this with up to 20 international producers and camera operators supported by up to 15 local linguistic, administrative and technical staff.⁸ The 302 films UNTV would produce between June 1994 and January 1996, including 211 features and 91 'video letters' featuring individuals who had been separated from friends and family by the war, represented not only an unprecedented escalation of researching, filming and editing, but also a new direction in UNPROFOR's public information strategy itself. Rather than reporting the activities of UNPROFOR generals and peacekeepers, UNTV sought to show the same films about the conflict's impact on ordinary people to audiences on different ethnonational sides and thus intervene in the post-Yugoslav 'media war'. The archives show UNTV's journalists were deeply conscious of this context.

This little-known but ambitious television unit's establishment in spring and summer 1994 both casts new light on the patchily-researched subject of television in peacekeeping and focuses attention on 1994 as a distinct moment in the Yugoslav wars, now overshadowed by the events of 1995. Peace operations' direct involvement with television in the post-Yugoslav region has not been studied beyond an episode in 1998 when the post-war Stabilization Force (SFOR) in BiH, a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) rather than UN force, seized transmitters in the RS for broadcasting 'propaganda'.⁹ Otherwise, the emphasis has remained on how foreign broadcasters represented peacekeeping, especially when UNPROFOR inaction permitted the genocidal Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) attack on Srebrenica in July 1995 and other atrocities.¹⁰ Research on UN public information worldwide, meanwhile, pays more attention to radio than television – perhaps because of radio being perceived as cheaper and further-reaching in post-conflict settings, as well as general agreement on the success of Radio UNTAC in Cambodia.¹¹ In 1994, however, UNPROFOR's Division of Information chose television, not radio, as its priority medium for stepping up its public information work.

UNPROFOR soon settled on a strategy of persuading local and national broadcasters in Croatia, BiH, Macedonia and Serbia to broadcast UNTV's films, and targeted a wide public audience across ethnonational boundaries, at what initially seemed a moment of optimism for peace – to the extent that UNPROFOR initially even considered further-reaching proposals for creating its own broadcasting infrastructure. Overshadowed by the events of 1995, 1994 has become almost a forgotten year in the conflict's history, for practically all scholars except Marko Attila Hoare, who writes of the military confrontations in the Bihać pocket in autumn 1994 as 'the Bosnian war's forgotten turning point'.¹² UNTV, born in circumstances of optimism, started broadcasting its programmes during a summer and autumn when a VRS ceasefire in Sarajevo allowed international donors to begin planning the reconstruction of the city, and when Croatia and the RSK authorities signed an Economic Agreement as a step towards what became the 'Z-4' peace plan. In spring 1995, VRS threats against UNPROFOR, including the closure of Sarajevo airport and several mass hostage-takings of peacekeepers, would make UNTV's work increasingly difficult, and hopes of a negotiated peace were

shattered by the twin crises of the VRS's genocidal attack on Srebrenica in July 1995 and Croatia's victorious offensives against the RSK in May and August that year – leaving UNTV looking ahead to how life after the impending Dayton Peace Agreement might be while still using its privileged mobility to document evidence of continuing human rights abuses.

Evidence about how UNTV was formed and began operations, as seen through its archives, shows not only how achievable its international civilian journalists thought peace might be in 1994, but also surprising connections with the history of independent anti-nationalist media in the region. These included alternative newspapers like Croatia's *Feral tribune*, radio stations like Zagreb's Radio 101, Sarajevo's Radio Zid (Radio Wall) and Belgrade's B92, and the Belgrade television station Studio B – which broadcast UNTV's films when RTS would not.¹³ UNTV's journalists felt they were advancing a peace agenda but did not consider themselves to be producing propaganda, far less psychological operations, even though peacekeeping missions' public information campaigns are produced by militaries to influence public opinion and technically fit that description.¹⁴ Instead, their determination to offer the ex-Yugoslav public an alternative information source to the manipulated narratives coming from nationalist state broadcasters put them in coalition with independent media like Radio Zid, which as the anthropologist Larisa Kurtović argues aimed to be 'an alternative to the state-controlled radio stations, which had been enlisted as the megaphones of political propaganda and charged with the upkeep of "patriotic" morale.'¹⁵ English-language brochures from Radio Zid in UNTV's archives, likely collected before one of their first filming visits to Sarajevo, indicate the unit was familiar with how the station presented itself to foreign media, and one UNTV film made in August 1994 and broadcast on 4 November featured its programme famously made for and by children, 'Šareni zid' ('Colourful wall').¹⁶

Since the conciliatory stance Akashi brought from UNTAC has widely been judged unsuitable for a conflict where decisive military action could have prevented atrocities up to and including Srebrenica, one might question whether UNTV too was an inadequate response to the conflict.¹⁷ Yet the idea of enhancing UNPROFOR's broadcasting capacity had already been mooted before Akashi arrived, and UNTV's interpretation of the conflict was too different from Akashi's to view it just as an extension of his policy: while Akashi sought to placate local armed forces and foreign governments by avoiding violent confrontations even at the cost of civilian lives, UNTV aimed to break the information monopoly of broadcasters waging the 'media war' – a quite different view of what peace was and who peace was for. This objective both gave UNTV's early plans momentum and complicated its relationship with the Croatian broadcaster, which had become dedicated to embedding the state narrative of the conflict into public consciousness.

UNPROFOR turns to TV

UNTV was not UNPROFOR's first ever use of television, since before 1994 the force had already had a unit of two to three international staff, who could hire

camera operators to produce reports on high-ranking officials' visits or publicity-worthy UNPROFOR missions. Indeed, shortly before Akashi arrived, UNPROFOR was already reviewing its public information capacity, comparing itself to other UN missions and NATO, which had joined the intervention in April 1993 when 'Operation Deny Flight' to enforce the 'no-fly zone' over former Yugoslavia began. On 29 November 1993, the UNPROFOR spokesperson Shannon Boyd sent Akashi's predecessor, Thorvald Stoltenberg, an assessment of UNPROFOR's public information work. This remarked that UNPROFOR was fielding one of UN peace-keeping's largest ever public information operations ('larger than Namibia, smaller than Cambodia'), albeit one 'minimally resourced' by external standards.¹⁸ While NATO was expected to bring 80 public information officers to the headquarters it was likely to establish if air strikes enforcing the no-fly zone were approved, for instance, 'UNPROFOR does this with three staff.'¹⁹

Despite the small number of job posts reserved for public information in UNPROFOR's staffing plan, UNPROFOR's television production already appeared on an upswing. The unit now had three professional staff and a basic editing studio, two video cameras, and enough mobility to 'cover [...] operations throughout the mission area.'²⁰ Weekly, it could produce one six-minute feature, one three-minute mission newsreel and one minute-long personal message from a peacekeeper, all combined into a ten-minute package offered to TV stations in Belgrade, Sarajevo, Skopje and Zagreb.²¹ Since UNPROFOR was already making short films for transmission on post-Yugoslav national broadcasters before this UNTV project began, UNTV's ground-breaking nature was not its use of their airwaves but its transformation in content and purpose, and the amount of material it would produce and distribute. Even these earlier packages had already, Boyd indicated, encountered the two main political challenges UNTV would face:

A major obstacle is that many parts of the media in the mission area [former Yugoslavia] are government-controlled. They are used for sophisticated disinformation campaigns. Unprofor is also a target whenever it suits the objectives of any contending party.²²

Relations were particularly difficult with Croatian Radio-Television (HRT), which had 'often tried to censor UNPROFOR broadcasts, and we have always refused.'²³

While UNTV would become the focus of the Division of Information's new strategy, its early planning had actually emphasised radio – since internal documents show that in February–March it first considered solving the impasse of nationalist 'disinformation' by erecting dedicated UNPROFOR radio transmitters, before opting for television as recommended by Roy Head. The notion of 'disinformation', which more reliable and objective 'information' could counter, was used in ways that suggested UNTV's messages would be impartial – though, as Head recognised, UNPROFOR too had its own set of values and narratives with which it wanted the region's public to agree, and its journalists each brought their own professional subjectivities plus their perceptions of media 'modernisation' and democracy to their work. As Mike Alleyne observes, '[t]here is nothing natural about the UN's preferred version of world order', which 'has to

be constructed' and is 'under constant threat of challenge'.²⁴ Such construction and challenge occurs from within as well as from outside.

Suggestions about UNPROFOR broadcasting its own radio rather than relying on having newscasts re-broadcast must already have circulated in late 1993, after more than a year of HRT selectively interfering with newscasts it considered anti-Croatian.²⁵ The defence communications contractor Harris had begun sending UNPROFOR estimates for a radio network that December.²⁶ Harris quoted US\$5.018m in January 1994 for an AM radio broadcast system – which one reader of the quote annotated '!!!'.²⁷ Head first appears in the UNTV documents, very shortly after he must have been appointed, as the author of a memo to Williams comparing radio's and television's effectiveness. Head doubted AM broadcasting would be cost-effective, since Croatian Television (HTV) had found that only 20 per cent of its listeners used AM; the much more popular FM would have 'limited range (c 50 mile radius)' and require 'relay transmitters all over the 4 countries [Croatia, BiH, Serbia and Macedonia], with all sorts of potential political obstacles'. Alternatives would be to bypass states' control over their airwaves by broadcasting AM/FM radio and VHF/UHF terrestrial TV directly into homes via a US Army EC130E communications plane ('not as off the wall as it sounds'), or to relay a daily half-hour TV transmission to national broadcasters.²⁸

Television, indeed, was 'something we [might] wish to think very carefully about' in Head's view, since producing a half-hour of UNPROFOR programming every day would be 'difficult but not impossible' and, he believed, would reach further, again based on recent Croatian media research: even though radio listening had increased in wartime, where television was available 'TV still leads the way'.²⁹ Head recommended presenting the SRSG and donors with costed feasibility scenarios including UNPROFOR AM and FM transmitters, FM transmission from a military aircraft, and sending thirty minutes per day of television to national broadcasters via satellite or VHS. Until superiors decided, he added, 'let's hang on to the 2 extra Betacam cameras currently in the airport warehouse, destined for Somalia ...' – the wisdom of one well-versed in UN procurement bureaucracy.³⁰

Williams's 14 February proposal to Akashi for 'Radio UNPROFOR', informed by UNTAC's experience where radio had 'played a critical role in the success of the May 1993 elections', accordingly recognised television was 'probably the single most important medium' for reaching the post-Yugoslav public, even though Williams himself wrote more about founding a radio station with better reach in rural areas.³¹ One element of UNTV's strategy was already perceptible in Williams's concern that, 'unlike Cambodia', little of UNPROFOR's radio, print and television output was 'in local languages', impeding its ability to correct 'misunderstandings and confusion' about UNPROFOR's mandate (above all the perception that UNPROFOR existed to take any particular side).³² So was UNTV's hope that UNPROFOR broadcasting would 'have a salutary effect in encouraging media pluralism and independent media' in the region, where many independent-minded journalists, sacked on politicised pretexts, would represent a talented and professional pool of local staff.³³ The proposed station would ideally broadcast on UN transmitters or, failing that, on Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), though Williams calculated the latter would bring less control

and more 'ideological baggage' (due to the Radios' associations with US-backed regime change).³⁴ All this tacked closer to Head's proposal than another from Rob Williamson, another journalist in the Division of Information, for an English-language station inspired by Forces radio in post-war West Germany.³⁵

A follow-up memo from Head to Williams on 17 February 'wholeheartedly endorse[d]' the 'Radio UNPROFOR' proposal and offered further thoughts on how to develop radio next.³⁶ These included no longer faxing English-language scripts to national broadcasters' radio stations, which were not using them; focusing Serbian- and Croatian-language scripts on more cooperative city broadcasters like Radio Sarajevo; and spending the next eight weeks setting up UNPROFOR's own radio transmitter (Head rejected the idea of borrowing RFE/RL airtime, since Radio UNTAC's early experiences had shown that obtaining 'interim equipment' for an hour's programming a day would take months of effort).³⁷ Hiring reliable local reporters who could record speech directly into Serbian/Croatian would avoid translation delays. Technical and personnel requirements were more important at this stage than editorial strategy, though Head did recognise '[t]he choice of music we air [...] will be crucial', and suggested 'a specialist local music producer' (rather than Williamson's suggestion of classic country and rock).³⁸ This suggested awareness that reaching the station's key target audiences would require in-depth knowledge of popular music's local sociocultural associations, including which genres (such as 1980s Yugoslav 'new wave' rock) were associated with support for independent media, critical stances towards nationalism and continued friendship across ethnopolitical lines.³⁹

These proposals were reaching UNPROFOR's civilian administration in the aftermath of the Markale marketplace massacre in Sarajevo on 5 February 1994, and shortly before the sixth report of the UN Security Council's human rights rapporteur for former Yugoslavia, where several sections covered constraints on media freedom. One 'primary area of concern' in the report was Serbian media's pattern of 'incitement to national and religious hatred' through 'selective and one-sided' coverage of violence committed by and against Serbs in BiH, including the tendency to cast 'Muslim' violence against Serbs as a continuance of historic "crimes" [...] "against the Serbian people"; it restated the rapporteur's August 1992 recommendation for 'a United Nations information agency, to be based in Belgrade, Zagreb and Sarajevo, with guaranteed access to television and radio, so as to counter the biased misinformation produced by partisan news agencies [in] the former Yugoslavia'.⁴⁰ The report's concerns about media amplifying ethnopolitical polarisation thus fell on ground already being paved. Preparations began to hire BBC World Service technical consultants for preliminary work on the radio station, while Williams began to negotiate the thorny question of office space for the expanded units – as much of a day-to-day logistical frustration for UNTV as contentions with HTV would be a political frustration.⁴¹ As the radio feasibility study began, Head started advancing the project of establishing UNPROFOR as an impartial information source through television.

UNTV's planned programming

The transformation of UNPROFOR's television unit into UNTV began on 3 March 1994 when Head met its existing staff to explore a 'grand strategy' for

television, representing 'good telly, mass audiences... and at a relatively low cost': this would '[i]deally [...] complement our radio station', but could also be 'a cheap alternative'.⁴² 'UN-TV' would take 'a daily slot on Belgrade, Zagreb and Sarajevo TV [i.e. RTS, HTV and RTVBiH], either immediately before or immediately after the 7.30 pm news': these 10–30 minutes, five or seven days a week, would involve a different format of show every weekday, with emphasis on 'formats that neither CNN nor the national TV stations are capable of doing'.⁴³ This urge to attract viewers by offering material that only a team of UNPROFOR-backed international journalists could gather would characterise the whole UNTV project.

While some of these formats became mainstays of UNTV's programming, others could not be realised with the available staffing and political goodwill; all, however, testify to the team's faith that UNTV could let conflicting narratives of the conflict be heard and would command local participants' trust. One proposed format, 'Video Letters', became UNTV's most important element besides direct reportage. These were envisaged as short films, inspired by formats from the BBC's Community Programme Unit on BBC2, which had presented personalised stories about contentious issues through the 'Open Space' strand, introduced 'Video Diaries' in 1990, and was just about to launch 'Video Nation':⁴⁴

Families divided by war send messages to their loved ones via UN-TV. They would speak directly to the camera, but the video would also be filmic, much in the style of the BBC's 'Open Space'. Each video letter is 5 minutes long, and we balance the input of Serb, Croat and Muslim authors [...] no one except UN TV would be *motivated* to use such a format, and no one else would be *trusted*. Our producers' skills would be used to find interesting, sympathetic individuals.⁴⁵

This they did, and one pair of films featuring 'Draga' and 'Nada', a woman displaced from Mostar and her childhood friend still living there (filmed in August 1994 and January 1995), came to stand for how the video letters could show the conflicts' impact on everyday human lives.⁴⁶

Other formats in Head's first proposal foregrounded accountability and analysis. 'Biteback' would have enabled '[v]iewers [...] to interrogate' Akashi, [General Sir Michael] Rose [then UNPROFOR's commander in BiH] or another senior UN official' by sending in questions by post. These would be posed either in a studio or by 'celebrity journalists (household-name newscasters from Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian TV)' who 'would have far greater integrity in the eyes of the audience than a UN journalist' and could '*follow-up evasive responses*, much as David Dimbleby does in the new-look "Question Time" (again using recent BBC practice to create innovation in post-Yugoslav news broadcasting).⁴⁷ This format did persist into the early UNTV films as 'Vox Pops', without the household-name journalists (an early idea to involve Goran Milić, the former head of the 1990–2 pan-Yugoslav broadcaster Yutel whom HTV had snubbed on his return to Zagreb, apparently went no further than another memorandum of Head's in March).⁴⁸ The 'Vox Pops' were not necessarily to the taste of the officials featured – in rushes from one interview with Rose he ends filming early, scowling as if it had been a

waste of time – and appear not to have featured in UNTV broadcasts after 7 September 1994.⁴⁹

The third sample format, ‘Split Screen’ (also ‘modelled on an old BBC Community Programmes Unit idea’), would have seen ‘2 thoughtful journalists’ from opposite sides in the same locality ‘each present[ing] a 10 minute film, analysing the current situation’ (e.g. one Serb and one Croat from Knin); UNTV would set technical requirements and certain editorial restrictions (to avoid ‘libel, incitement to violence, etc.’). By letting the films coexist back-to-back, Head hoped the UN would be seen as ‘not attempt[ing] to arbitrate, but [...] a facilitator of intelligent political debate between neighbours.’⁵⁰ This format would have been most radical of all, requiring unprecedented courage and openness from national broadcasters in allowing competing, thus threatening, ethnonational narratives on screen. Such perspectives would likely have been seen as ‘enemy voices’, which broadcasters typically said would offend the public when explaining why speakers, films and music from the other side of the line had been banned: though a relevant consideration for a public broadcaster, it still contributed to the politicised collectivisation of guilt (transferring guilt from individual and institutional perpetrators of aggression on to all members of the associated ethnic group) against which UNTV would have had to intervene in order to break the hold of the ‘media war’. It is unsurprising ‘Split Screen’ proved most difficult to realise, and it only lived on insofar as UNTV films from divided front-line areas took care to interview inhabitants from each side and let their statements speak for themselves.

These programming proposals did also allow more typical UN public information content such as ‘the ability to make important announcements or “State of the Nation” addresses by Mr Akashi’ (much easier if UNPROFOR had pre-negotiated regular airtime) and promotional spots about the peacekeeping force. Head envisaged these as ‘UNPROFOR “commercials” – 30 second spots with high production values, selling the UNPROFOR mission through smiling-soldiers-missing-their-families-but-here-to-help-Yugoslavia etc.’⁵¹ The phrasing suggested how conventional he thought these were. This ‘explicitly propagandist [i.e. propagandist] material’ was the only element of classic UN public information operations on UNTV (unlike UNPROFOR’s print newsletters, which took this tone throughout the mission), and was minimised behind these more contemporary, in-depth formats, seen as better reflecting serious journalistic practice.

A follow-up ‘TV Masterplan’ Head sent Williams on 19 March indicated that immediate priorities were to meet Akashi and persuade him of ‘the type of programming we propose; the political backup needed to get the time slots we want; and the resources required’; to meet HTV, RTS and RTVBiH with formal proposals immediately, aiming to air two programmes weekly from June 1994 and five programmes weekly from August; recruiting the international journalists; and hiring local researcher–interpreters.⁵² Two then-important steps towards peace, an Agreement for Freedom of Movement in the Sarajevo Area negotiated between the BiH government and the VRS on 17 March and a Croatia–RSK ceasefire on 23 March, might have suggested the time was ripe to advance preparations for UNTV.

The final decision to prioritise television over radio, however, seemed to be technical. By 23 March, the BBC radio consultants had also advised it would take

until at least late October to establish an UNPROFOR radio station, allowing time for UN financial approvals, broadcast clearances from the Croatian/Bosnian/Serbian/Macedonian governments, and at least four months to build transmitters; any delays would push construction into winter and delay completion into spring 1995. Head and Williams therefore concluded 'that television is the immediate, and possibly long-term solution' to UNPROFOR's objective of communicating directly with the post-Yugoslav public, anticipating that 'our impact would be immediate and enormous' if UNPROFOR could transmit 10–15 minutes of programming 5–6 days a week just before the 7.30 pm news.⁵³ In contrast to creating independent radio coverage, once the successor states' governments had agreed to give airtime to the UN, 'we can be on the air in less than a month.'⁵⁴ Television now took the banner of this UNPROFOR team's intervention in the 'media war'.

Negotiations with broadcasters

Through April and May, UNTV's rapidly-expanding team made their first pilot programmes while Head and Williams contended with UNPROFOR bureaucracy to facilitate their growth. Head, as chief producer, foresaw seven pairs of international journalists (three for features, two for video letters and one for vox pops), with camera operators shared between them and teams filming and editing in alternate weeks.⁵⁵ Bureaucratic conjuring enabled him and Williams to obtain the necessary extra international posts within UNPROFOR's strict staffing allocations by taking over some border control positions, which (without agreements between belligerent parties about their international borders) 'are liable to lie vacant for some time'.⁵⁶ Since journalists from the region would not have been permitted to cross borders where their nationality was sensitive, mobility required the producers and camera operators to be foreign citizens, though each team needed one 'Serbo-Croat' speaker.⁵⁷ Technicians, editors and most administrators besides the office manager were locally-recruited staff.

UNTV's anticipated schedule was now two ten-minute programmes a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays (as it remained, despite early hopes of scaling up). Vox Pops and Video Letters would alternate on Tuesdays (giving 'one programme per week about ordinary people'), and Thursday films would report the political and social situation in chosen towns: a note on 'Personnel Requirements' observed this would create 'an automatic list of 50–100 stories... and people want to see places [...]. Only we can do this', since only UNTV journalists had UN ID cards and guaranteed access to UNPROFOR transport. Head now planned three pilot programmes to show broadcasters, which his 26 April memorandum to Williams allocated to three key purposes, 'Peace, PR, and the Big Issues' – a fair summary of the plans.⁵⁸ Initially, these would have been badged as distinct enough strands for viewers to distinguish PR material from reportage: recognising the incongruity of publicising everyday UN campaigns during an unstable conflict, Head acknowledged '[n]o one is going to be fooled by us talking nutrition programmes when Gorazde is falling apart' (NATO's first air strikes against VRS artillery positions

around Goražde, one of six 'UN Safe Areas' in BiH, had been called in a fortnight before).

Details of the pilots indicated the range of coverage with which UNTV would introduce itself to broadcasters. The 'PR' programme would contain an introduction from Akashi, then films about rebuilding houses in Pakrac (a town divided between Croatian and RSK control), de-mining along the Croatia/RSK confrontation line in Krajina (UNPROFOR's neutrally-named 'Sector North') with both sides meeting at a bridge under UNPROFOR supervision, and a personal profile of 'a Dutch HGV transport driver' or similar.⁵⁹ The 'Peace' programme would be the video letters: a Bosniak refugee in Bihać writing to her family abroad; a Zagreb actress ('actually a Serb, but not obvious to the viewer') to Bosniak actors she had filmed with in Tuzla; a letter from a Croat youth or couple in Sector North telling relatives in Zagreb they were safe; and some short letters from children in Croatia and BiH.⁶⁰ Both these plans manifested to at least some extent in the early UNTV films: #1 in its 1994 features list, 'Pakrac Reconstruction' (broadcast in UNTV's debut package on 29 July 1994), dealt with rebuilding projects on either side of Pakrac, and #2, 'TRANSBAT Convoy' or 'The Convoy', followed a Dutch transport battalion from the Croatian port of Metković to the eastern Bosnian city of Tuzla (this film, probably made second, was less time-sensitive and only aired on 14 October 1994).⁶¹

Politics weighed heaviest on 'Big Issues', the only pilot for which filming had not begun on 26 April. This was planned either as a short film about a current front-line crisis plus an extended interview with a senior UNPROFOR figure, or as a Croatian journalist putting questions from members of the Croatian public to Akashi. Head saw this film as essential for UNTV's mission, drawing on ideas of public service journalism ('*This is the accountability programme. We face our inquisitors, the people we serve*'), though pragmatically drew political limits around the pressure on Akashi ('I don't think we can allow a Moslem or Serb journalist to savage Akashi at this point', so soon after Goražde).⁶² A further pragmatic choice was to display 'some small bias in the choice of subject matter towards material affecting Croats', since UNTV was then prioritising negotiations with HTV.⁶³ In these negotiations, UNTV's aims of exposing national public to perspectives from the 'other side' clashed directly with HTV's hegemonic control over narratives of the war. UNTV staff's contextual knowledge of the politics of HTV came both via UNPROFOR briefing notes on post-Yugoslav media – some written by Mark Thompson, then an analyst for the Division of Information – and through what Croatian colleagues would have imparted in the informal 'cultural broker' role that peacekeeping missions' locally-recruited staff typically play besides their formal roles.⁶⁴

To supplement national broadcasters' reach, UNTV also approached local broadcasters, with a template letter painting its negotiations with HTV positively. Also dated 26 April, this told prospective partners that '[t]he Croatian authorities have responded with enthusiasm' to UNPROFOR's new emphasis on television, and '[a]fter fruitful discussions with Hrvatska Radio-Televizija (HRT), we are currently producing "pilot" programmes.'⁶⁵ The letter hoped similar agreements with RTS and RTVBiH would follow soon. An extended version of the letter, with the

same date, referred to 'highly productive talks with Mr Antun Vrdoljak, Director General of Hrvatska Radio-Televizija (HRT), and Ms Maria [Marija] Nemčić, Director of Programmes', making it 'likely that we will broadcast a daily 10 minute programme immediately after the 7.30 pm news on HRT.'⁶⁶ This optimism followed a meeting between Williams, Head and Vrdoljak on 8 April and a follow-up meeting between Williams, Head and Nemčić on 12 April (where Nemčić 'expressed her openness for collaboration' and asked for sample programmes).⁶⁷ On 12 May Head told Nemčić the three pilots were 'halfway completed', probably ready in two weeks, and inviting her to nominate a Croatian journalist to interview Akashi for the third.⁶⁸ Vrdoljak as well as Nemčić seemed ready to cooperate at this stage, and HTV reported on air that Vrdoljak had met Williams and praised UNPROFOR for replacing 'the language of the army' (UNPROFOR's previous, more militarised public information content) with 'real people of media' and 'the language of people who want to help, who want to explain.'⁶⁹ UNTV's civilian journalists (then) seemed ostensibly more welcome at HTV, but required some explaining even to UNPROFOR's own troops, whom the force commander had to remind that UNPROFOR TV journalists and photographers were civilian members of the mission and exempt from standard media clearance procedures.⁷⁰

In May and June, UNTV kept producing the pilots, and negotiating with other strategically-important broadcasters. Head's covering note to pilot programme transcripts for the UN television unit in New York indicated RTVBiH had agreed to broadcast UNTV programmes 'twice a week at primetime from the beginning of July' (though this date would be pushed back, for unrecorded reasons).⁷¹ Macedonian Radio–Television (MRT) similarly agreed, and the first UNTV team visited Skopje on 26 June–6 July. A British Army captain named Richard Bramford at the UN Military Observers' liaison office in Pale helped Head, Williams and UNPROFOR's Sarajevo spokesperson Claire Grimes discuss access to the RS with a team including Radovan Karadžić, the RS president, himself.⁷² Reporting from the RS would require improved communication between the Pale and UNPROFOR Sarajevo press offices, access for UNTV journalists travelling from Sarajevo, better communication between Pale and UNPROFOR HQ in Zagreb, and an interpreter from the Military Observers' office in Pale since Sarajevo interpreters could not travel there. Head still thought Karadžić's authorities were 'actively encouraging us to make films on their territory' at the end of June,⁷³ but this apparent readiness to cooperate was (typically) capriciously withdrawn, and UNTV would continue not to have access to VRS-controlled territory – unlike in the RSK.

The first UNTV package, containing 'Pakrac Reconstruction', the 'Timka' video letter (by a Croat refugee in Cazin) and three 'Vox Pops', aired on RTVBiH and a number of local broadcasters on 29 July 1994.⁷⁴ UN planes transported UNTV's tapes from UNPROFOR HQ in Zagreb to its headquarters in Sarajevo, plus the Skopje and Belgrade headquarters once MRT and Belgrade's independent Studio B had agreed to show the films. (Studio B bravely became 'the only Belgrade channel to broadcast uncensored reports from the battlefields of Bosnia', or at least reports not subject to Milošević's censorship – among them UNTV's

films.⁷⁵) Reaching local broadcasters, meanwhile, usually involved sending tapes along UNPROFOR supply lines from Split to the UNPROFOR public information officers (PIOs) in particular sectors or battalions in nearby towns, who hand-delivered tapes to broadcasters' offices. Broadcasters in the two divided sides of Mostar, for instance, received UNTV tapes via the PIO of the Spanish UNPROFOR battalion there, and TV Cazin and TV Bihać received theirs via the French battalion.⁷⁶

These local broadcasters all had their own political and pragmatic agendas for cooperating with UNTV, and bringing viewers up-to-date information from places they could not reach was only one of them. TV Jablanica's director, for instance, 'felt very strongly about the need for *Bosnian* language' when meeting Bramford in October 1994, suggesting he wanted UNPROFOR to endorse demands to recognise Bosnian as a third language alongside Serbian and Croatian. Editors and managers could attempt to sell technical services to UNTV, while their informal connections with UNPROFOR liaisons allowed them to obtain desirable equipment such as MTV decoders or even basic necessities like paper and spare video tapes.⁷⁷

With Bosnian and Macedonian state television on board, and accepting that UNTV would not be popular with broadcasters under Milošević's and Karadžić's control, UNTV's most glaring gap in coverage as launch date approached was in Croatia, where HTV had still not agreed to show the films despite its earlier encouragement. Head reached out to one private regional station in Slavonia, Slavenska Televizija, as a stopgap.⁷⁸ He also offered the tapes to Slovenian national TV, though '[u]nfortunately at this point we have only a Croatian version of the programme' – unlikely to have appealed to a broadcaster so keen to distinguish Slovenia from 'Serbo-Croatian' Yugoslavia).⁷⁹ For the discontinuous RSK-occupied territory with its capital in Knin, Head sent feeler messages to the minister of information, Borivoj Rašuo, and the editors-in-chief at TV Krajina and TV Beli Manastir.⁸⁰ Internal distribution memoranda from the turn of July–August 1994 indicated how quickly agreements were being made and sometimes breaking down: 'Please note that we are now broadcasting in Macedonia' (sending English-language scripts alongside the English- and Croatian-language tapes for subtitling into Macedonian), though 'No tapes should be sent any more to Pale. Sadly, that seems to be out of the question until further notice' (as, indeed, it remained).⁸¹ Yet at that stage there was still no agreement with HTV, a broadcaster which at the start of the war had striven to get international media on its side.

UNTV and Croatian perceptions of UNPROFOR

Despite UNTV's first optimistic negotiations with HTV, the wider context of HTV's and the Croatian government's hostility to UNPROFOR made reaching any formal agreement a steep uphill path. Just before Williams first met Vrdoljak, a HTV political panel show on 29 March 1994 had strongly criticised UNPROFOR's presence in Croatia. Its host took a sharply anti-UNPROFOR editorial line, and panellists were divided between moderates who preferred co-operating with UNPROFOR and others advocating a military resolution to the occupation of one-third of Croatia's territory by the RSK – namely, abandoning the negotiated-

ceasefires route, withdrawing consent for UN peacekeeping and taking unilateral military action to recapture the occupied territories.⁸² This would indeed occur: the US military aid Croatia was to receive in return for signing the Washington Agreements of January 1994 with the BiH government strengthened Croatia's position to choose a military resolution instead, and another year of tension between Croatia and UNPROFOR culminated in May and August 1995 with Croatia's 'Flash' and 'Storm' offensives against the RSK. President Franjo Tuđman's continued threats to withdraw UNPROFOR's mandate, and evict UNPROFOR's main HQ from Zagreb, dogged UNPROFOR's work throughout 1994 and early 1995.

Such hostility had arisen by 1994 because not only the Croatian government but also many of the Croatian public expected UNPROFOR to use its military power to intervene against Serbian aggression, just as Croatian politicians and media had appealed to the international community to do in summer 1991 when the war began.⁸³ UNPROFOR's mandate of impartiality seemed from these Croatian perspectives to implicitly take the Serbian side. Zagreb vox pops in UNTV's twelfth programme on 7 September 1994 (the last containing any) put this opinion directly to Akashi, who replied with (probably disappointingly conciliatory) hopes that a ceasefire and economic agreement would usher in a long-term Croatia/RSK peace deal.⁸⁴ Passers-by defaced dusty UNPROFOR vehicles outdoors frequently enough that UNTV's production manager had to remind staff 'we need to make sure that we keep the vehicles clean' because '[m]essages like "SERBPROFOR" do not look impressive glistening in the back window of our cars', while in the Publications Unit locally-recruited female staff credited in *UNPROFOR News* received so many threatening phone-calls that their manager had to consider removing them from the masthead.⁸⁵ Individuals in Tuđman's government reputedly chafed at the Croatian state being made subservient to foreign officials and commanders, especially those from the Global South, to such an extent they were rumoured to have demanded that a reorganised UN peacekeeping force in Croatia should not contain African or Asian troops.⁸⁶

Giving UNPROFOR access to HTV would thus have sat uncomfortably with what had been the broadcaster's politicised mission ever since Tuđman had won Croatia's April–May 1990 multi-party elections and installed an ideological ally, the writer Hrvoje Hitrec, as HRT's first director. This mission entailed not only supporting Tuđman's preferred narrative of the conflict but also distancing the Croatian nation from its three chief opposites in Tuđman's vision of Croatian nationhood: Serbdom, state socialism, and Yugoslavia. Such discursive strategies pervaded news broadcasting and even entertainment, where editors contributed to HRT's (re)definition of Croatian national identity by promoting successive attempts to create a specifically 'Croatian'-sounding (not 'eastern' or 'Balkan') popular music and removing songs with Serbian/Yugoslav associations from music libraries.⁸⁷ Vrdoljak, Hitrec's successor and a renowned film director, had famously described HRT's function as to be 'a cathedral of the Croatian spirit'; Thompson characterises him as an 'extrovert, authoritarian personality' and 'a pillar of the ruling HDZ [Croatian Democratic Union]'.⁸⁸ Nemčić, then in her early thirties and HTV's youngest ever programming director, represented a less ideological current in Croatian broadcasting and was respected for her professionalism, but

still had to work within a structure devised to lend Tuđman's government ideological and political support by shaping what content the Croatian public had mass national access to (or not) in everyday life.

Besides resentment that UNPROFOR refused to allow Croatian journalists across the 'confrontation line' to report from the RSK, HTV's chief complaint against UNTV (like Tuđman's against UNPROFOR itself) is likely to have been that the UN's professed impartiality required it to recognise the Croatian state and the RSK's occupying authorities as equal parties, as if both had equivalent legitimacy and sovereignty. Croatian officials consistently objected to any language implying the RSK had statehood, since it lacked international recognition and had captured its territory by force – or, in Croatian terms, aggression, committed by Serb Democratic Party (SDS) paramilitaries and the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA).

Perhaps UNTV's most serious political crisis thus occurred before its programmes had even aired, in July 1994 when the Croatian news weekly *Globus* reported on a letter from UNTV to Rašuo in Knin which had purportedly been addressed to the 'Republic of Serb Krajina', thus seeming to imply UNPROFOR was recognising the RSK as a sovereign state. Hrvoje Šarinić, the Croatian government's liaison with UNPROFOR, immediately denounced 'the Editor-in-chief of the UN television' to Akashi for writing and offering cooperation to the information minister of 'Republic of Serbian Krajina'.⁸⁹ Šarinić called this:

completely contrary to the all relevant UN resolutions and the positions of the whole international community [...] Such attitude and acts ... are provoking the justified discontent and antagonism among all citizens of the Republic of Croatia. Therefore, the demonstrations of [Croatian] refugees against UNPROFOR, which are at present taking place, are not to be wondered at.⁹⁰

Globus had, for its part, constructed a conspiracy theory around the terminological slip and the fact UNPROFOR had a television unit: its headline (as translated at UNPROFOR HQ) read 'UNPROFOR IS SECRETLY ESTABLISHING ITS TV STATION WHOSE MANAGER IS TREATING KRAJINA AS AN INDEPENDENT STATE!', and the article began 'UN Protection Forces in Croatia are establishing their own TV network with the headquarters in Zagreb, Ilica 207!'⁹¹ The article claimed Williams had been recruiting journalists for it for some months, on 'condition, which is presumably supposed to guarantee objectivity, [...] that they were not born on the territory of former Yugoslavia', and with 'salaries [...] very high even for Western standards.'⁹² The managing editor of HTV's Information Service, Tomislav Marčinko (described by Thompson as 'Vrdoljak's right hand in the television centre'), was quoted as saying that HTV had previously broadcast some features by UNPROFOR reporters on a programme called *Big Blue*, aimed at UNPROFOR personnel, but that thereafter HTV had not been able to accept the programming UNTV offered it: 'We refused to broadcast them because of their pronounced pro-Serb standpoints. I was not the only one to find that their programmes were representing the Serb side in a particularly irritating way.'⁹³ The article added that the head of the Croatian government's office for relations with UNPROFOR, Milivoj Tomaš, and the state inspector for

telecommunications, Miro Belužić, had not been told UNPROFOR planned to begin broadcasting. It did quote Tomaš saying he had '[r]ecently' spoken to Head 'about the possibility of filming TV features on persons living on the free territory of Croatia and then broadcasting them as "peace messages"' (the video letters); Tomaš had seen two, 'one interview with a woman from Karlovac who has close relatives "on the other side" and an interview with an English teacher, a refugee from Sarajevo [...] they were about ten minutes long and there was nothing unfair about them so I had no objections'.⁹⁴ This would have been most *Globus* readers' first knowledge of UNTV, and would likely have suggested UNPROFOR was planning a parallel broadcasting network rather than negotiating airtime on existing national and local broadcasters. That more ambitious plan, though floated internally in February and March, was clearly not the preferred option by early April when Williams and Vrdoljak first met, and the fact that Vrdoljak himself had ostensibly welcomed cooperation then was nowhere in *Globus*'s report.

Globus's article caused consternation within the Division of Information, with Williams writing to all units' heads on 6 July to emphasise 'that all correspondence with national and local authorities should be cleared and signed by me before it is sent out. You will be aware that there is great sensitivity with regard to communications addressed to Governments, whether or not they are internationally recognized' (alluding to de facto entities like the RSK).⁹⁵ A press briefing he gave the next day explained that *Globus* had not published the final version but 'a draft' which had:

never [been] delivered to the local Serb authorities in Knin [...] Regrettably, there was an oversight in the draft, namely the reference to the "Republika Srpska Krajina". No such reference was made on the letter that was delivered to the authorities in Knin.⁹⁶

Williams clarified that UNPROFOR had made '[a] series of films [...] addressing humanitarian issues in particular' since he and Akashi had arrived, and 'hoped that towards the end of July, broadcasting of programmes would begin on Croatian television, initially twice a week in the evenings'; an investigation into the 'breach of security' through which *Globus* had obtained the draft was underway (though the UNTV documents do not record its outcome).⁹⁷

This controversy rippled out to the Sector PIOs, with Alun Roberts (PIO for Sector South, the southern part of Krajina) faxing Williams the next day regarding the 'urgency of problems surrounding correspondence from Roy to local authorities during May'.⁹⁸ Roberts's fax, with copies of the draft and final letters Head had forwarded him on 24 May, stated that the drafts' references to the RSK had 'obviously' been deleted before dispatch of the final versions, which had just been addressed to the Minister of Information, Knin, and TV Krajina, Knin; since the letterhead on the translated and sent versions had differed from that on Head's draft, the *Globus* copy's letterhead would indicate whether or not the leak had been from the Zagreb side. Roberts suggested '[a] strong argument could be made that the copy published was a draft, formulated by a new – young staff member, which was never actually sent. And that the real correspondence was corrected prior to submission to the local authorities on a different letter head, which was indeed the case.'⁹⁹

A week later, UNPROFOR was still fielding the repercussions. Williams wrote a letter of reply to *Globus*'s editor Denis Kuljis, explaining UNPROFOR was 'trying to rectify previous shortcomings and encourage a dialogue with the peoples of the Mission area, including the Croatian public', hence 'seeking to expand our information output in local languages including Croatian.'¹⁰⁰ Rather than being 'engaged in secret broadcasting plans', Williams emphasised, UNPROFOR had 'made a number of television programmes which we hope to broadcast in the near future in Croatia, Bosnia and FYROM' to 'explain UNPROFOR's role and mandate to the public and others.' He added that 'we have had a number of successful meetings with Croatian television (HRT) and hope to start broadcasting these programmes at the end of this month', thus to 'contribute to the peace process in Croatia itself'; for this reason UNPROFOR had contacted 'the local authorities in Knin', though 'I regret to report that we have not had any favourable response [...] or held any discussions with them.'¹⁰¹ The article caused further embarrassment when an UNPROFOR press monitoring report from Belgrade mentioned the Serbian tabloid *Večernje novosti* had reported on the *Globus* article and that Rašuo had been able to claim UNPROFOR had been 'respecting the political reality' (in his words) by writing 'RSK'.¹⁰²

UNPROFOR's clarifications were not enough for one woman living in Senj who had filmed a video letter for UNTV in June, and wrote to Head on 11 July to withdraw her contribution because, having just read what must have been the *Globus* article, she did not want her interview shown on other broadcasters including the RSK's; she had thought when agreeing to take part that UNTV had Croatian governmental approval.¹⁰³ Whether this represented patriotic side-taking and/or a move to avoid feared retribution for being perceived to have taken 'the Serbs' side', the affair had certainly dissuaded at least one individual from cooperating with the unit (though the tape remained in UNTV's video library and is still in the IWM archives). This episode illustrated the stakes of language in the communication practices of peace-keeping missions in former Yugoslavia, where choosing one place-name over another or using grammatical details from one or other variant of what had been 'Serbo-Croatian' was likely to be read as UNPROFOR standing with the relevant side.¹⁰⁴ It may also have contributed to HTV not joining RTVBiH in broadcasting the first UNTV programmes later that month, though even without this incident Vrdoljak's HTV would have had strong reasons to demur.

UNTV's image in the Croatian media was partially repaired with much more sympathetic coverage from the state-owned broadsheet *Vjesnik* in November 1994.¹⁰⁵ *Vjesnik*'s interview with Head allowed him to affirm three main purposes of UNTV: 'to ensure information from areas the national television [broadcaster] has no access to', such as 'the Sectors' (the RSK) for a Croatian audience, where UNTV journalists' access had enabled them to ask Croats living in an occupied village under UN protection whether they felt safe (some had answered yes, some no); to fulfil UNPROFOR's belief 'that television, as the most powerful media in Croatia and Bosnia can begin to build bridges between those regions', through the video letters; and to televise Akashi's responses to questions from the public. Attempting to correct perceptions of UNPROFOR's alleged bias towards the RSK, Head emphasised '[w]e are not giving the program[s] to the Knin TV nor the TV

in Beli Manastir', because it would be 'inappropriate' to do so while they were not being regularly shown on HTV' (implicitly acknowledging the Croatian state's primacy over access to information on its territory). This was a much more sympathetic presentation of UNTV than in *Globus*, even with Head having to apologise for 'inappropriate[ly]' political questions a UNTV journalist had asked the musician David Byrne when he came to perform in Zagreb.¹⁰⁶

UNTV's access to HTV remained governed by the Croatian authorities' deteriorating relationship with UNPROFOR writ large, including Tuđman's threat to revoke UNPROFOR's mandate altogether in January 1995, resulting in a somewhat cosmetic reorganisation of the force in Croatia as the UN Confidence Restoration Operation (UNCRO).¹⁰⁷ HTV still broadcast occasional UNTV films on its *Slikom na sliku* (*Frame by Frame*) programme (containing news reports from foreign broadcasters), allowing it to distance UNTV's editorial line from its own, though records in the UNTV collection are patchy about what was shown when. The appointment of Ivan Parać as HRT's new director-general, however, warmed HTV's relationship with UNTV in February 1995. Head's overtures to Parać, stating that 'UNTV's aim is simply to allow information to travel across confrontation lines' and reminding him that UNTV could access 'the UNPAs' ('UN Protected Areas', or RSK-occupied territory) whereas HRT could not, were returned, and by late March HTV showed one UNTV film every Monday night on its magazine programmes about foreign affairs and BiH.¹⁰⁸ This was not quite the regular access to 'suitable radio broadcasting frequencies and television broadcasting slots at no cost to the United Nations' that the UN Security Council resolution establishing UNCRO had demanded, as Akashi had to remind Šarinić in April, but a better compromise than had been possible with Vrdoljak's HRT.¹⁰⁹

Relations with HTV shifted again in August 1995 after Croatia's 'Oluja' offensive against the RSK displaced more than 200,000 Serb civilians, and particularly after a UNTV team discovered evidence of recent human rights abuses against Serbs while filming in Krajina. Head sent the resultant film, 'Krajina on Fire', to CNN with an urgent covering note, and successfully had it broadcast on *CNN World Report*.¹¹⁰ HTV's evening news reported on the broadcast with commentary complaining that American media had been covering 'the alleged burning down of the Serbian houses in the newly-liberated territory of Croatia' instead of threats to Croats in Vojvodina, Banja Luka and Dubrovnik, and included the interior minister Ivan Jarnjak stating 'you know, with [a] camera you can do anything ... It doesn't show the real situation in the field.'¹¹¹ A panel show discussing foreign media coverage of 'Oluja' also aired the film in full.¹¹² Sadly, any correspondence between HTV and UNTV/UNPROFOR about this film, and another documenting human rights abuses in the village of Grubori also sent to CNN, was not kept in UNTV's files – though UNTV did receive a reprimand from the UN's Department of Public Information (DPI) in New York for dealing directly with CNN and subverting the DPI's neutral promotional agenda.¹¹³ The clash between a journalistic ethic of documenting and publicising the facts and a UN institutional ethic of conciliation was sharpest for UNTV in this stage of the conflict, exemplifying a tension that structured UNTV's relationship with higher-level UN peace-keeping in former Yugoslavia.

Conclusion

UNTV's origins and what became of its plans in practice, as far as its surviving documents can show, suggest that, far from being able to stop the 'media war', the institutions most implicated in that war consistently buffeted its attempts. Such were the limits of relying on television as a means of communication when access to airwaves was under state or para-state control – a material consequence of classic UN peacekeeping's principle that peacekeeping forces are only present with the belligerents' consent. Formats that modelled democratic notions of journalism and accountability and required the active support of senior UNPROFOR figures and/or local journalists were hardest to realise, compared to what UNTV's own journalists could achieve with UNPROFOR flights, vehicles, IDs and PIOs facilitating their mobility. Its most distinctive films, the video letters, could perhaps reach furthest because, as first-person testimonies about personal relationships, they rarely referred to politics directly – though then had to struggle harder to avoid constructing the decontextualized 'universal humanitarian subject' of sentimental reporting on displacement.¹¹⁴ Some video letters did quietly offer alternatives to the idea that society in the region was composed of three inherently antagonistic ethnic groups, such as Draga's reflection on how '[p]eople who come from other places [in Yugoslavia]' had undermined multi-ethnic coexistence among neighbours in Mostar, but this was perhaps the limit of UNTV's intervention in the 'media war'.¹¹⁵

The asymmetries of power involved in using UNPROFOR resources and BBC programming innovation to intervene in the 'media war' do deserve questioning, since critical scholarship on peacekeeping/peacebuilding exposes the structural inequalities and paternalistic assumptions behind post-Cold-War international peacebuilders' faith that Western liberal models of governance would be appropriate and successful for post-conflict societies like the Yugoslav successor states.¹¹⁶ In the Yugoslav wars, critics also argue, that model included a reductive picture of conflict resolution which compressed politics to a triangular relationship between three equally (un)deserving ethnic groups, with no space for minorities or alternative political identities that were not defined within this ethnic triangle.¹¹⁷ Yet the case of UNTV exemplifies how, as anthropologists studying post-conflict peacebuilding in BiH have found, the so-called 'international community' was no monolith but 'a heterogeneous composite of [...] tensions, hierarchies and contradictions'.¹¹⁸ UNPROFOR leaders and commanders espoused the frame of a conflict between "three" warring "factions" and trusted that negotiating an ethno-territorial settlement between them would bring peace.¹¹⁹ UNTV's archives, however, show the UNTV team conceived 'peace' as rooting out the dynamics of manipulation and disinformation that had facilitated the conflict, that is, breaking the dominance of the 'ethnic triangle' frame in public minds altogether. This framework aligned with local independent journalism more than with many of their UNPROFOR superiors.

UNTV's archives show less of how this team, largely composed of Anglophone youth and travel journalists and central European foreign correspondents with local language competence, adjusted to working for a peacekeeping mission during a rapidly-changing war. Glimpses of this everyday dimension appear in annotations, informal memos and handwritten notes but do not offer the insights peacekeeping historians typically gain from memoir or oral history (including an

interview Head recorded for IWM in 2011).¹²⁰ Even without this, however, they document what would in any case have been the remarkable endeavour of UN peacekeeping's then most extensive use of television. UNTV's unexpected bridges between BBC community programming and post-Yugoslav independent journalists' anti-nationalist ethos are even more remarkable within a mission widely condemned for inaction and over-investment in ethnopolitical balances of power, yet the vagaries of its relationship with state broadcasters indicate the limits of its attempted intervention in the 'media war'.

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11. E.g. Lina Marie Holguin, 'The Media in Modern Peacekeeping', *Peace Review* 10, no. 4 (1998): 639–45; Dan Lindley, 'Untapped Power?: the Status of UN Information Operations', *International Peacekeeping* 11, no. 4 (2004): 608–24; Mark Alleyne, 'Manufacturing Peace Through International Communication Policies: United Nations Public Information Strategy in Guatemala 1996–2004', *Communication, Culture and Critique* 1 (2008): 163–78; Michelle Betz and Helene Papper, 'UN Peacekeeping Radio: the Way Forward', in *Communication and Peace: Mapping an Emerging Field*, ed. Julia Hoffmann and Virgil Hawkins (London: Routledge, 2015), 163–79.
12. Marko Attila Hoare, 'The Bosnian War's Forgotten Turning Point: the Bihać Crisis of Autumn 1994', *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 24, no. 1 (2011): 88–114.
13. On Radio Zid, see Larisa Kurtović, 'The Paradoxes of Wartime "Freedom": Alternative Culture During the Siege of Sarajevo', in *Resisting the Evil: (Post-)Yugoslav Anti-War Contention*, ed. Bojan Bilić and Vesna Janković (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2012), 197–224.
14. Alleyne, 'Manufacturing Peace', 168.

15. Kurtović, 'Paradoxes', 203.
16. 'Radio Zid', UNT 414, Film Collection, Imperial War Museum (IWM)). Further 'UNT' references are from this collection.
17. On Akashi and Srebrenica, see Hamza Karčić, 'Commemorating Srebrenica: Introduction to the Special Issue', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 35, no. 3 (2015): 329–33, 329.
18. Memorandum from Shannon Boyd to Thorvald Stoltenberg, November 29, 1993, Box 20791d ('Michael Williams – Radio File'), Document Collection, IWM. Further archival document references are from this collection.
19. 'UNPROFOR Public Information Overview Assessment', [November 1993], Box 20791d ('Michael Williams – Radio File').
20. 'UNPROFOR Public Information Overview Assessment'.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Alleyne, 'Manufacturing Peace', 169.
25. See Thompson, *Forging War*, 166.
26. Fax from Nancy Sette to Michael Clark, December 15, 1993, Box 20791.d ('Roy: Radio: Consultancy').
27. Memorandum from Gianfranco Longo to Shannon Boyd, January 19, 1994, Box 20791.d ('Roy: Radio: Consultancy').
28. Memorandum from Roy Head (RH) to Michael Williams (MW), 'Two Proposals for Immediate Action', Box 20791.d ('Roy: Radio: Status Reports').
29. 'Two Proposals'.
30. Ibid.
31. Memorandum from MW to Yasushi Akashi, 'Radio UNPROFOR', February 14, 1994, Box 20791.d ('Michael Williams – Radio File'), 1.
32. 'Radio UNPROFOR', 1.
33. Ibid., 3.
34. 'Radio UNPROFOR', 2. See Monroe Price, 'Public Diplomacy and the Transformation of International Broadcasting', *Cardozo Arts and Entertainment Law Journal* 21 (2003): 51–86, 55.
35. Memorandum from Rob Williamson to MW, 'Proposal for an UNPROFOR Radio Broadcasting Station', February 11, 1994, Box 20791.d ('Michael Williams – Radio File'),
36. Memorandum from RH to MW, 'Radio UNPROFOR – What Is To Be Done?', February 17, 1994, Box 20791.d ('Michael Williams – Radio File'), 1.
37. 'What Is To Be Done?', 2.
38. Ibid., 4.
39. See Eric D. Gordy, *The Culture of Power in Serbia: Milošević and the Destruction of Alternatives* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999).
40. Tadeusz Mazowiecki, 'Situation of Human Rights in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia: Sixth Periodic Report', E/CN.4/1994/110, February 21, 1994, Box 20791.b ('Human Rights'), 21, 52.
41. Memorandum from RH to W. J. Baldie, March 1, 1994, Box 20791.d ('Roy: Radio: Consultancy'); fax from Alan Taylor to RH, March 2, 1994, Box

- 20791.d ('Roy: Radio: Consultancy'); memo from MW to W. J. Baldie, March 16, 1994, Box 20791.f ('TV Unit: Immediate Plans').
42. Memorandum from RH to MW, 'Television as a Key Player in our Information Strategy', March 3, 1994, Box 20791.f ('Roy: TV File: L-T Strategy'), 1.
43. 'Television as a Key Player', 1.
44. Giles Oakley and Peter Lee-Wright, 'Opening Doors: the BBC's Community Programme Unit 1973–2002', *History Workshop Journal* 82 (2016): 213–34. Hinting at the circuits of exchange between Yugoslav wars coverage and BBC community programming, the 1994 *Video Nation Shorts* were inspired by BBC2's two-minute *Sarajevo: a Street Under Siege* features, shown before *Newsnight* in autumn 1993; Oakley and Lee-Wright, 'Opening Doors', 229.
45. 'Television as a Key Player', 1 (emphasis original).
46. 'Draga', UNT 206; 'Nada – Response', UNT 571; Andy Johnstone, 'United Nations Television in the Former Yugoslavia', manuscript, De Montfort University, 12.
47. 'Television as a Key Player', 2 (emphasis original).
48. Memorandum from RH to MW, 'TV Masterplan: Priorities and Action Needed', March 19, 1994, Box 20791.e ('Roy: Budget'). On Yutel, see Ljubica Spaskovska, 'Landscapes of Resistance, Hope and Loss: Yugoslav Supra-Nationalism and Anti-Nationalism', in *Resisting the Evil*, ed. Bilić and Janković, 37–61, 56–7. On Milić, see Thompson, *Forging War*, 16–19.
49. 'Vox Pops (Unedited Rushes)', July 1994, UNT 403X; 'Transmissions', January 6, 1995, Box 20791.d ('Distribution').
50. 'Television as a Key Player', 1–2.
51. 'Television as a Key Player', 2.
52. 'TV Masterplan'.
53. Memo from MW (drafted by RH) to Yasushi Akashi, 'Immediate Possibilities for Television', March 23, 1994, Box 20791.f ('Roy: TV File: L-T Strategy'), 1.
54. 'Immediate Possibilities', 2.
55. 'Personnel Requirements', Box 20791.f ('Roy: TV File: L-T Strategy'), 2.
56. Memorandum from MW to W. J. Baldie, May 5, 1994, Box 20791.e ('Roy: Budget').
57. 'Personnel Requirements', 2.
58. Memorandum from RH to MW, 'Pilot Programmes', April 26, 1994, Box 20791.f ('TV Unit: Immediate Plans'), 1.
59. Naming the four RSK-occupied areas after compass-points avoided siding with either Croatian or RSK territorial claims.
60. 'Pilot Programmes', 3.
61. 'Pakrac Reconstruction', UNT 295; 'TRANSBAT Convoy', UNT 305; 'Transmission'.
62. 'Pilot Programmes', 4.
63. *Ibid.*, 1.
64. Clippings with commentary by Mark Thompson, Box 20791.e ('Media'). On locally-recruited staff as cultural brokers, see Michael Kelly and Catherine

- Baker, *Interpreting the Peace: Peace Operations, Conflict and Language in Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 164–9. This was not the same journalist who became BBC Director-General in 2004–12.
65. RH, 'United Nations Television', April 26, 1994, Box 20791.h ('UNTV: Detailed Info. Sheet').
 66. Ibid.
 67. Letter from MW to Antun Vrdoljak, April 21, 1994, Box 20791.d ('Roy: TV: HTV'). An incomplete draft of the same letter (Box 20791.d ('Roy: TV: HTV')) gave more ideas about possible weekly strands, including a young people's programme, "video letters" from individuals who are separated from family and friends', and a strand for refugee issues: perhaps these would have filled out the five-days-per-week schedule.
 68. Letter from RH to Maria Nemčić, May 12, 1994, Box 20791.d ('Roy: TV: HTV').
 69. Memorandum from MW to RH, 'What They Said About Us on HTV', [c. April 8, 1994], Box 20791.d ('Roy: TV: HTV').
 70. Memorandum from force commander to all UNPROFOR military personnel, April 27, 1994, Box 20791.e (unlabelled brown wallet).
 71. Fax from RH to Steve Whitehouse, [May/June 1994], Box 20791.c ('UNTV–New York Communications').
 72. Letter from Richard Bramford to RH, June 20, 1994, Box 20791.d ('TV Stations'). Bramford later left the Army and joined UNTV himself.
 73. RH to MW, 'Monthly Report on TV Unit', July 1, 1994, Box 20791.f ('TV Unit: Immediate Plans').
 74. 'Transmissions'.
 75. Romana Dobnikar-Seruga, 'In Peace as in War', *Index on Censorship* 4 (1996): 18–21, 19.
 76. Memorandum from Richard Bramford to RH, 'Preliminary Distribution Recce for UNTV Programmes in Bosnia – Sector South-West and Sector North-East', October 10, 1994, Box 20791.d ('TV Stations'), 1; Memorandum from RH to production manager, programme producers, Dajana and Tomislav, 'Distribution (2): Ammendment', [late July 1994], Box 20791.f ('Roy: Radio: Maps: Geog').
 77. 'Preliminary Distribution Recce', 2; fax from Andy Burrige to RH, August 3, 1995, Box 20791.d ('Distribution'); memorandum from Richard Bramford to RH and Caroline Hopkins, 'Distribution of UNTV Programmes in Bosnia', November 4, 1994, Box 20791.d ('TV Stations'), emphasis original. UNTV recorded Serbian-language and Croatian-language versions of its films, but demands to recognise Bosnian as a separate language were only just emerging: see Robert D. Greenberg, *Language and Identity in the Balkans: Serbo-Croatian and its Disintegration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 135–58.
 78. Letter from RH to Dario Topić, July 28, 1994, Box 20791.d ('TV Stations').
 79. Letter from RH to Janez Lomberger, July 28, 1994, Box 20791.d ('TV Stations'). On Slovenian television's language policy, see Volčič, "Machine".
 80. Letter from RH to Borivoj Rašuo, May 24, 1994, Box 20791.d ('TV Stations'); letter from RH to Dubravka Kenić, May 24, 1994, Box 20791.d

- (‘TV Stations’); letter from RH to Marko Mrđa, May 24, 1994, Box 20791.d (‘Sector East TV’).
81. Memorandum from RH to production manager, programme producers, Dajana and Tomislav, ‘Distribution (3): Further Addition’, Box 20791.f (‘Roy: Radio: Maps: Geog’); ‘Distribution (2): Ammendment’.
 82. Dubravka Dostal, ‘Croatian TV: the “TV Parliament” Program: Tuesday, 29 March, 1994’, Box 20791.d (‘Roy: TV: HTV’).
 83. Ivana Polić, “‘Stop the War in the Name of Children’: Children and Nation Building Through Croatian Patriotic Music (1991–1992)”, *Contemporary Southeastern Europe* 6, no. 2 (2019): 38–56, 43–6, http://www.contemporarysee.org/sites/default/files/papers/polic_croatian_patriotic_music.pdf (accessed May 27, 2020).
 84. ‘UNTV Programme No. 12’, September 7, 1994, UNT 443.
 85. Memo from Whit[ney Taylor] to TV unit staff, ‘Cars’, July 13, 1994, Box 20791.f (‘Roy: Radio: Maps: Geog’); memorandum from Marc McEvoy to MW, ‘Monthly Report’, October 31, 1994, Box 20791.f (‘UNHCR’).
 86. Brendan O’Shea, *The Modern Yugoslav Conflict 1991–1995: Perception, Deception and Dishonesty* (London: Routledge, 2005), 145.
 87. See Catherine Baker, *Sounds of the Borderland: Popular Music, War and Nationalism in Croatia since 1991* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010).
 88. Sharon Fisher, *Political Change in Post-Communist Slovakia and Croatia: from Nationalist to Europeanist* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 114; Thompson, *Forging War*, 154–5. Tuđman founded HDZ in June 1989.
 89. Letter from Hrvoje Šarinić to Yasushi Akashi, July 5, 1994, Box 20791.d (‘TV Krajina’). The English translation called Rašuo’s post ‘Minister of Finance’, but the Croatian-language letter read ‘Ministar informacije’ (Minister of Information).
 90. Šarinić to Akashi, July 5, 1994.
 91. ‘Scandalous!’, July 8, 1994, Box 20791.d (‘TV Krajina’), 1. Ilica 207 was UNPROFOR HQ’s street address.
 92. ‘Scandalous!’, 2.
 93. Thompson, *Forging War*, 155; ‘Scandalous!’, 2.
 94. ‘Scandalous!’, 3.
 95. Memorandum from MW to Patricia Marchisio, Yuriy Chizhik, Simo Vaaitainen, Marc McEvoy, RH, Jeff Heyman and Paul Risley, ‘Correspondence with Authorities’, July 6, 1994, Box 20791.d (‘TV Krajina’).
 96. UNPROFOR Press and Information, ‘Press Briefing, HQ Zagreb – Thursday, 7 July 94’, July 7, 1994, Box 20791.d (‘TV Krajina’).
 97. ‘Press Briefing’.
 98. Fax from Alun Roberts to MW, July 8, 1994, Box 20791.d (‘TV Krajina’); fax from RH to Alun Roberts, May 24, 1994, Box 20791.d (‘TV Krajina’), forwarding the letters to Kenić and Rašuo.
 99. Roberts to MW, July 8, 1994.
 100. Letter from MW to Denis Kuljiš, July 11, 1994, Box 20791.d (‘TV Krajina’).
 101. MW to Kuljiš, July 11, 1994.

102. [Extract from UNPROFOR Civil Affairs Belgrade press monitoring], July 13, 1994, Box 20791.d ('TV Krajina').
103. Letter from K— P— to RH, July 11, 1994, Box 20791.f (miscellaneous).
104. Louise Askew, 'Clinging to a Barbed Wire Fence: the Language Policy of the International Community in Bosnia-Herzegovina since 1995' (PhD diss., University of Nottingham, 2011), 203–16.
105. Ivančica Knapić, 'Televizija opasnog življenja', *Vjesnik*, November 11, 1994, Box 20791.d (blue UNPROFOR folder).
106. The journalist had apparently asked why Byrne was not also performing in Belgrade, and what Byrne thought about Serbian music cassettes illicitly being sold in Zagreb – a well-known way in which Croatian listeners remained in community with Serbian musical culture, even though Croatian record shops had taken Serbian music off sale when war broke out (see Baker, *Sounds of the Borderland*, 178).
107. Darya Pushkina, 'Towards Successful Peace-Keeping: Remembering Croatia', *Cooperation and Conflict* 39, no. 4 (2004): 393–415, 407.
108. Letter from RH to Ivan Parać, February 7, 1995, Box 20791.d ('Roy: TV: HTV'); Letter from Ivan Parać to RH, February 22, 1995, Box 20791.d ('Roy: TV: HTV'); memorandum from RH to MW, 'Monthly Report on Television Unit', [c. March 31, 1995], Box 20179.c ('Roy: UN Reports'), 1.
109. UNSCR 981, 'Establishment of the UN Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia (UNCRO)', March 31, 1995, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/doc/981> (accessed May 22, 2020); Letter from MW to Ivan Parać, April 10, 1995, Box 20791.d ('Roy: TV: HTV').
110. Fax from RH to Octavia Nasr, [August 1995], Box 20791.d ('CNN').
111. 'Dnevnik (7.30 pm TV News) – August 17', August 17, 1995, Box 20791.d ('CNN').
112. 'Media Aspects of Operation Storm – Broadcast 29/8/95', [c. August 29, 1995], Box 20791.d ('CNN').
113. Faxes from François Giuliani to RH, August 23/30, 1995, Box 20791.d ('CNN').
114. See Liisa H. Malkki, 'Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization', *Cultural Anthropology* 11, no. 3 (1996): 377–404, 378.
115. 'Draga'.
116. E.g. David Chandler, *Bosnia: Faking Democracy after Dayton*, 2nd ed. (London: Pluto, 2000); Stefanie Kappler and Oliver Richmond, 'Peacebuilding and Culture in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Resistance or Emancipation?', *Security Dialogue* 42, no. 3 (2011): 261–78; Séverine Autesserre, *Peaceland: Conflict Resolution and the Everyday Politics of International Intervention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
117. David Campbell, 'Apartheid Cartography: the Political Anthropology and Spatial Effects of International Diplomacy in Bosnia', *Political Geography* 18 (1999): 395–435, 400; see also Brendan Simms, *Unfinest Hour: Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia* (London: Allen Lane, 2001).

118. Kimberley Coles, *Democratic Designs: International Intervention and Electoral Practices in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007), 39.
119. Gerard Toal and Carl T. Dahlman, *Bosnia Remade: Ethnic Cleansing and its Reversal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 149.
120. Roy Head, interview with Lucy Maxwell, 2011, IWM Sound Archive 33284.

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