

= Split Agreement =

The Split Agreement or Split Declaration ( Bosnian and Croatian : Splitski sporazum or Splitska deklaracija ) was a mutual defence agreement between Croatia , the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina , signed in Split , Croatia on 22 July 1995 . It called on the Croatian Army ( HV ) to intervene militarily in Bosnia and Herzegovina , primarily in relieving the siege of Biha? .

The Split Agreement was a turning point in the Bosnian War as well as an important factor in the Croatian War of Independence . It led to a large @-@ scale deployment of the HV in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the capture of strategic positions in Operation Summer ' 95 . This in turn allowed the quick capture of Knin , the capital of the Republic of Serbian Krajina ( RSK ) , and the lifting of the siege of Biha? soon thereafter , during Operation Storm . Subsequent HV offensives in Bosnia and Herzegovina , supported by the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina ( ARBiH ) and the Croatian Defence Council ( HVO ) , as well as NATO air campaign in Bosnia and Herzegovina , shifted the military balance in the Bosnian War , contributing to the start of peace talks , leading to the Dayton Agreement .

= = Background = =

In November 1994 , the Siege of Biha? entered a critical stage as the Army of the Republika Srpska ( VRS ) ? the Bosnian Serb military ? and forces of the Republic of Serbian Krajina ( RSK ) ( an unrecognized state established following the Serb insurrection in Croatia ) came close to capturing the Bosnian town . Biha? was a UN @-@ designated " safe area " , controlled by the 5th Corps of the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina ( ARBiH ) , supported by the Croatian Defence Council ( HVO ) ? the main military force of the Bosnian Croats . It was thought that the capture of Biha? by Serb forces would escalate the war and worsen a growing rift between the United States , France and the United Kingdom , with the U.S. and European powers advocating different approaches to preservation of the area . In addition , it was feared that Biha? would turn into the worst humanitarian disaster of the war . Furthermore , denying Biha? to the RSK or Republika Srpska was strategically important to Croatia , which was fighting the Croatian War of Independence against the RSK . The Chief of the Croatian General Staff Janko Bobetko thought that the possible fall of Biha? would represent the end of Croatia 's war effort . It was considered that if the area were captured by Serb forces , it would allow for the consolidation of the territory held by Serb forces in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina , as well as redeployment of RSK and VRS troops to reinforce other areas .

In a meeting of the Croatian and US Governments and military officials held on 29 November 1994 , the Croatian representatives proposed an attack on Serb @-@ held territory from Livno in Bosnia and Herzegovina , in order to draw off part of the forces besieging Biha? and to prevent its capture by the Serbs . The U.S. officials gave no response to the proposal and Operation Winter ' 94 was ordered the same day . Besides contributing to the defence of Biha? , the attack advanced positions held by the HV and the HVO nearer to supply routes vital to the RSK .

The meeting was one in a series held in Zagreb and Washington , D.C. following the March 1994 Washington Agreement . The agreement ended the Croat ? Bosniak War , re @-@ allied the ARBiH and the HVO against the VRS and provided Croatia with US military advisors from the Military Professional Resources Incorporated ( MPRI ) . MPRI was hired because a UN arms embargo was still in place , ostensibly to prepare the HV for NATO Partnership for Peace programme participation . The organization trained HV officers and personnel for 14 weeks from January to April 1995 . It was also speculated that the MPRI also provided doctrinal advice , scenario planning and US government satellite information to Croatia . MPRI and Croatian officials dismissed such speculation . In November 1994 , the US unilaterally ended the arms embargo against Bosnia and Herzegovina , in effect allowing the HV to supply itself as arms shipments entered through Croatia . The US involvement reflected a new military strategy endorsed by President Bill Clinton since February 1993 .

= = Call for Croatian intervention = =

On 17 July , the militaries of the RSK and the VRS started a fresh effort to capture Bihać by expanding on gains made during Operation Spider . The offensive , codenamed Operation Sword ' 95 , aimed to capture Cazinska a transportation route hub , situated in the centre of the ARBiH / HVO controlled Bihać pocket . The attack was spearheaded by the RSK Special Units Corps and supported by the " Pauk " ( Spider ) operational group of the Autonomous Province of Western Bosnia ( APWB ) forces who had been RSK allies since 1993 , advancing from the northwest , with the RSK 39th Banija Corps from the northeast and the VRS 2nd Krajina Corps from the southeast . The effort was also supported by about 500 Yugoslav Army special forces and Veljko Rašatović Arkan 's Serb Volunteer Guard for a total of about 19 ,000 attacking or sector holding troops arrayed against the ARBiH 5th Corps . By 21 July , the RSK troops managed a 7 kilometre ( 4 .3 mi ) breakthrough , but failed to sever the Bihać - Cazinska road . A renewed push by the RSK and APWB troops four days later brought their forces within 5 kilometres ( 3 .1 miles ) of Cazinska and put them in control or in favourable positions to strike several key passes and dominant points of the battlefield by 26 July . The ARBiH 5th Corps was left in a critical defensive situation , dependent on outside help .

As the situation around Bihać deteriorated for the ARBiH , the government of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina realized that it could not hold the area on its own and asked Croatia for military intervention . ARBiH Chief of Staff Rasim Delić appealed to the HV and the HVO to assist the ARBiH 5th Corps on 20 July , proposing HV attacks towards Bosansko Grahovo , Knin and Vojnić . His plea was supported by President of Turkey Süleyman Demirel when he met Croatian President Franjo Tuđman in the Brijuni Islands the next day .

This led to signing of the Split Agreement - a mutual defence agreement - by Tuđman and the President of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina , Alija Izetbegović in Split on 22 July , permitting large scale deployments of the HV in Bosnia and Herzegovina . Besides Tuđman and Izetbegović , the agreement was signed by President of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Krešimir Zubak , and the Prime Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina Haris Silajdžić . It was mediated by Demirel . The agreement specifically stated that Croatia requested urgent military aid , especially for the Bihać area , and that the parties to the agreement intended to coordinate their military activities . The full title of the Split Agreement , or Split Declaration , is Declaration on implementation of the Washington Agreement , joint defence against Serb aggression and achievement of a political solution in accordance with the efforts of the international community ( Deklaracija o oživotvorenju Sporazuma iz Washingtona , zajedničkoj obrani od srpske agresije i postizanju političkog rješenja sukladno naporima međunarodne zajednice ) . The US Ambassador to Croatia , Peter Galbraith , and a German ambassador , representing the European Union , were present at the signing ceremony .

= = Aftermath = =

The agreement provided the HV with the opportunity to extend its territorial gains from Operation Winter ' 94 by advancing from the Livanjsko field . The move was expected to relieve pressure on the ARBiH 5th Corps defending Bihać , while positioning the HV in a more favourable position to strike Knin , the RSK capital . The HV and HVO responded quickly through Operation Summer ' 95 ( Ljeto ' 95 ) . The offensive , commanded by HV Lieutenant General Ante Gotovina , succeeded in capturing Bosansko Grahovo and Glamoč on 28 - 29 July . The attack drew off some RSK units away from Bihać , but not as many as expected at the outset of the operation . Nevertheless , the offensive put the HV in an excellent position , as it isolated Knin from Republika Srpska and FR Yugoslavia , and led to the capture of Bosansko Grahovo and Glamoč , which sat astride the only direct route between the two .

Regardless of the limited scope of Operation Summer ' 95 , the Split Agreement became a fundamental instrument to change the overall strategic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina where

Bosnian Serbs had had the upper hand since the beginning of the Bosnian war , as well as in Croatia , where the front lines had been largely static since the 1992 Sarajevo armistice . As Operation Summer ' 95 concluded , the RSK and Republika Srpska changed their priority from smashing the Bihać pocket to fending off a possible Croatian offensive to capture Knin ( advancing from the recently gained territory in Bosnia and Herzegovina ) . RSK leaders Milan Martić and Mile Mrkić agreed with UN Special Representative Yasushi Akashi to withdraw from the Bihać area on 30 July , hoping the move would contribute to averting the Croatian attack . Albeit , the attack materialized days later as Operation Storm , a decisive victory to the HV in the Croatian War of Independence .

Success of Operation Storm also represented a strategic victory in the Bosnian War as it lifted the siege of Bihać , and allowed Croatian and Bosnian leaderships to plan a full @-@ scale military intervention in the VRS @-@ held Banja Luka area , based on the Split Agreement ? aimed at creating a new balance of power in Bosnia and Herzegovina , a buffer zone along the Croatian border , and contributing to the resolution of the war . In September 1995 , the intervention came about as Operation Mistral 2 , supported by the ARBiH offensive Operation Sana , combined with a NATO air campaign in Bosnia and Herzegovina . The offensives broke the VRS defences and captured large swathes of territory . The feat was repeated in Operation Southern Move ( Operacija Južni potez ) carried out in October , advancing within 25 kilometres ( 16 miles ) of Banja Luka , and contributing to the start of peace talks that would result in the Dayton Agreement soon thereafter . Overall , deployment of the HV based on the Split Agreement , proved decisive in the defeat of the VRS in the Bosnian War .