

## **Courtside: Milosevic Trial**

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By Chris Stephen in The Hague (TU No. 290, 18-22 November, 2002)

The witness, identified only as C-061, was a former senior member of the government of Republika Srpska Krajina, RSK, a breakaway Serb region of Croatia.

This is not the first time these kinds of allegations have been made, but observers said that never before had testimony contained such detail or been made by such an apparently senior figure.

In five days of testimony, C-061 said he believed Milosevic used the police, secret services, army and media to ensure that Croatia's ethnic Serbs would rebel as soon as it declared independence from Yugoslavia in 1991.

The witness said he had had 30 meetings and ten phone calls with Milosevic, who once boasted that he controlled the key Belgrade media outlets.

He said Milosevic, at the time president of Serbia, Yugoslavia's dominant republic, had two chains of command: the first went through the Yugoslav national army to territorial defence units made up of local Krajina Serbs; the second went through the Serbian security service, run by Milosevic cronies Jovica Stanisic and his deputy Franko Simatovic.

The second command chain passed down to police units, including Milan Martic, police chief of Knin, the main Serb town in Krajina, as well as to Serb paramilitary units.

C-061 said Milosevic controlled both, because he was the key political figure in Belgrade, and had also moved members of his SDS party into important government jobs to cement his control of the state.

The witness said the operation began in 1990, the year before Croatia and Slovenia declared independence.

In the summer of 1990, he said the media and the police in Knin whipped up hatred and fear and gave out false reports about Croatian government moves to send security forces to take control of the area.

As a result, said the witness, frightened local Serbs threw log barricades across the roads - the so-called Log Revolution.

C-061 said that when Croatia cut state funding to Knin as a result of the latter, the Yugoslav national bank - which he claims Milosevic had unofficial control of - stepped in to make payments.

He said from 1991 until RSK collapsed in August 1995, payments were made by the Yugoslav national bank, often by cash courier, to keep the RSK solvent.

Next, Stanistic's agents moved to head-off moves by moderate Serbs to build bridges with Croat leaders.

In 1991, when Croatia declared independence, Milosevic used the army to "clean" ethnic Croats out of Serb-held areas.

First, said the witness, territorial, police and paramilitary units would attack Croat villages, which were then looted after their residents had fled.

He said he believed Milosevic must have known of this because Stanistic was personally present organising it.

He said he was aware of a private meeting between Milosevic and the late Croatian president Franjo Tudjman in 1991, where they agreed to divide Bosnia-Herzegovina between Croatia and Yugoslavia.

Prosecutors persuaded the judges to add two more days of testimony for the witness to the three already booked, and in return agreed to drop 14 other witnesses - whose testimony was then deemed unnecessary.

In court, tapes of phone calls between Milosevic and former Bosnian Serb president Radovan Karadzic were also played, in which Milosevic said, "It is a good thing that the JNA [Yugoslav army] has been given a lesson in Slovenia, because it makes them realise that there is no hope [of preserving Yugoslavia in its original form]."

Chris Stephen is IWPR's tribunal project manager.

**Location:** Serbia  
Croatia  
Bosnia and  
Herzegovina

**Focus:** International Criminal Tribunal for the former  
Yugoslavia

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