The Croatian War of Independence ended with the success of Operation Storm on August 7, 1995. Less than five months later, Bill Hanne found himself part of the Democracy Transition Long Range Management Program and packing for Zagreb. With his background in military intelligence, plus graduate degrees in political geography and education policy and planning, Dr. Hanne brought a unique perspective to the job. Interweaving the political and historical narrative with moving personal stories of a courageous and proud people, Hanne also shows the reader a country of stunning physical beauty and spiritual depth. Today, with Croatia and the Balkans at the crossroads of Western and Middle Eastern cultures, Hanne's observations are more relevant than ever.
The View From First Mountain

William G. Hanne
Acknowledgement:

Thank you to Betsy Hoyt Feinberg for editing and fact-checking my manuscript and to Michael Feinberg for performing miracles in restoring my photographs and producing my book through Book Services.

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Observations Regarding the Church-State Relationship

Biography

Attribution
To Anne, my wife and companion in adventure.
Preface

It was in 1982, thirty years ago, that my wife Anne picked a thick volume from a dusty shelf in an antique store in Frederick, Maryland. The book was well worn but in fairly good condition, considering the date of its printing, 1943. She mentioned that she had heard of both the author and the book and thought it might be worth reading. Considering the sheer size of the book—some 1,181 pages—the asking price of $8.50 seemed to be well worth it, so we purchased it.

The book was Rebecca West’s *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: A Journey through Yugoslavia*. West had traveled throughout Yugoslavia in 1936 and had written her book a year later. It had been fairly well received at the time. But now it was 1982. We were at the start of the resurgence of the arms race between the United States and the Soviet Union and Tito, the Yugoslav President, had been dead for two years. Thus, as far as I was concerned, the book appeared to be of little value other than as an interesting piece to have on your bookshelf—sort of a demonstration of one's catholicity of interests. But I never read it. I just left the book where Anne placed it on the shelf.

In 1996, I began working for MPRI (Military Professional Resources, Inc.) in Croatia, attempting to assist the Croatian government in the reorganization of its Ministry of Defense and armed forces. Being first and foremost a geographer, I took to heart a quote from a 19th Century Russian geographer, Petr Petrovich Semenov-Tian-Shanskii: "...a geographer, without explorations and first-hand observations, can only be a compiler; he cannot be a true scientist or scholar." Accordingly, I traveled as

much as I could, by every means available, and as often as possible. Even daily trips
to and from work turned into "explorations and first-hand observations." In my first
year in Croatia I was able to cover about 70% of the country. During the second year,
having Anne with me, we were able to cover virtually 90% of the country (missing
only Vukovar and its immediate environs, then under a UN mandate).

Now, sixty-two years after West's trip and some sixteen years after our purchase
of the book, I began to read Black Lamb and Grey Falcon. I was struck immediately
by the author's obvious biases (in favor of the Serbs and Yugoslavia) and prejudices
(against Croatians and Roman Catholics) in writing about her observations as she
traveled about Yugoslavia, especially the Croatian countryside, from Krapina to
Dubrovnik. Many books have been written about the Balkan area. Many, if not
most, of these books hold biased or prejudiced views about a particular nationality
or form of government or selected occurrences. Only since the throes of 1990-1996
(and beyond, considering Kosovo), have the bulk of these texts been written by
on-the-scene observers.

The first, and still to many the primus inter pares, post-World War I travelogue
written in English was West's. Interestingly enough, I did not read her work until
I had returned to the United States. However, I found that our travels in Croatia
retraced many of the trips she wrote about some sixty-two years earlier. Her travels
in 1936 lasted a relatively short period of time and were done on a tourist basis; ours
were in 1996-97, covered over ninety percent of Croatia and lasted for nearly two
years. In addition, we lived within the Croatian community, with Croatian neigh-

Throughout my two years in the Republic of Croatia, working as a consultant to
their Ministry of Defense, I maintained a running commentary on my travels from
April 1996 through December 1997. Upon returning to the United States, I initially
left my notes alone, with just Anne's comments and observations made during her
review of the pages. Only some ten years later did I tackle these with the serious
intent of sharing them with others through the printed word.

What follows are our observations of a culture and society both familiar and
yet foreign, of a countryside rich in beauty in some areas and very austere in others,
of an environment that reflects all aspects of its heritage. And where I thought
appropriate, I have used references from other observers, primarily Rebecca West,
attempting to illustrate how some things may have changed.

I considered myself fortunate in not having read West's book before Anne and
I completed our travels, mainly because West's strongly and eloquently expressed
biases and prejudices might have clouded my perception. In contrast to West's visit,
Anne and I were able to live among the Croatians for nearly two full years. Unfor-
Fortunately, we were also privileged to see first-hand man's inhumanity to man in terms of the destruction wrought between 1991 and 1995—from Knin through the Krajina to Krapina—sort of a reverse order of the "progress" of mankind.

This, then, is the written account of our explorations and first-hand experiences. Many individuals, Croatian and American, read various chapters as they were written, starting with the first ones back in 1996, and commented freely on them. To them I owe many thanks as I sincerely appreciate their input, suggestions, criticisms, and rationale. However, true to my personality, I have not always done as they suggested or would have preferred. In addition, erroneous perceptions are not their fault...they are mine!

By the way, West's book still occupies a place on the bookshelf and has been returned to its original role as a dust-catcher. But maybe an inspiring one after all.
The View From First Mountain
Pirovec Gornji  
(First Mountain)  

The View From First Mountain

By the end of my first three weeks in Zagreb in the spring of 1996, I had become fascinated with all that I saw around me, and I understood what compelled some writers to write the stories and music that they did. The music from Caucasian Sketches immediately came to mind. The authors appeared to realize how broad and varied and diverse the world beyond their doorstep really was, as was mine in the Republic of Croatia, and they wanted to share their experiences and impressions, as I do now.

Hopefully my training and education as a geographer and as an intelligence officer—plus my advanced age—will permit me to provide meaningful sketches of what I saw as a simple, but culturally rich, life. And allow me to indulge my ego in assuming that there just might be others who would enjoy sharing these experiences and impressions.

However, the reader is advised to keep three quotations in mind: Henry David Thoreau’s comment that most “…men lead lives of quiet desperation,” and two quotations from Paul Theroux’s Riding the Iron Rooster: By Train Through China: “It is always difficult to make virtuous people interesting…” and “…any travel book revealed more about the traveler than it did about the country.” These three are indeed worth remembering as these sketches from Pirovec Gornji are read.

WILLIAM G. HANNE, Ph.D.
12 December 1996
12 December 1997
12 September 2015

1. Caucasian Sketches Orchestral Suites composed by Mikhail Ippolitov-Ivanov in 1894 & 1896
The View From First Mountain
Chapter One

Christ has Risen! He has risen indeed!

Easter Sunday Mass started at 6:30 this morning, but the church was packed well before that hour. The bells pealed out five minutes before the start of Mass.

There are a few latecomers, as there always are. I’m usually in that category myself. Not too surprisingly, the latecomers this morning are younger men and women, all arriving singly through the church doors.

The chapel\(^1\) is small, maybe 15 meters by 25 meters, with two small naves toward the back, but the building is in excellent condition. It appears to have been renovated recently, primarily the paint and plaster work on the interior. The tile floor looks original and the wooden benches are quite worn from long use. The benches are free to be moved, with the exception of the pews along the sides. These run parallel to the walls and perpendicular to the altar, reminding one of abbeys where monks file in to sing Matins or Vespers. The other benches are in four groups: two groups with backs and kneelers, one on each side of the center aisle, and two groups without backs or kneelers. *(I wonder, “Are these for the latecomers?”)* One group fills the center aisle and the other group is found at the back of the chapel under the choir loft. Six stylized angels adorn the arched ceiling, three angels per side, each holding some religious symbol: a crown of thorns, a chalice, a host. And each is posed above a waving banner of red, white, and blue: the Croatian national colors.

---

1. The parish name at the time I originally wrote this was unknown to me. But indications were that it might have a name associated with the Blessed Virgin—a stained glass window of her dominated the sanctuary. I later was told that the parish was named in honor of a Saint Mirko, but no one was able to go any farther in terms of providing a definitive English equivalent for Mirko. Some Croatians said it was “Mark,” but others disagreed. Additional research led me via Saint Mirko to Saint Roc, the patron saint for those threatened by the Black Death.
There is apparently a reason for this close relationship between church and state. Just outside the front of this chapel is the burial site of the “Father of the Fatherland,” Ante Starčević (1823-1896), a leader in the movement of Croatian nationalism. There is no separation of church and state in this area.2

The bells peal again at the moment of Consecration. It is common to see older people on the streets or in their yards crossing themselves at the sound of the church bells. As a Roman Catholic myself, schooled in Catholic schools, I find something reassuring and comforting in hearing the familiar Angelus at six in the morning, at noon, and again at six in the evening. I feel a connection with these people.

The congregation at this Mass is mixed in age and gender, but women, especially older women, dominate. They have the look of hardy, but worn women, having seen and endured much and survived.

The area around Šestine, the community where the church is located, is a combination of urban and rural settings: well-maintained small fields perched on the steep sides of First Mountain, Pirovec Gornji,3 and scattered vineyards and orchards, all

---

2. A Croatian reviewer of my manuscript made an interesting and insightful observation about this “church-state” relationship and the culture. I have included Alenka’s comments in the appendix.

3. Originally I thought that Pirovec Gornji meant “First Mountain.” But Alenka, herself an accomplished and award winning writer, corrected me on this point. According to Alenka, Pirovec may be a local term.
squeezed in and around multi-storied houses that have been added to the landscape as Zagreb grew in size. At this time nothing is in bloom or leaf except an occasional daffodil or hyacinth foolish enough to stick its head up only to be snowed on!

The people reflect the rustic nature of the area: industrious, roughhewn, and pragmatic. There is nothing ostentatious about anyone present at this Easter Mass. The concept of Easter finery apparently doesn’t make sense when one will be leaving Mass today to tend to one’s hens and chickens or one’s fields. Nothing here is wasted, not even appearances. I also notice a traditional touch: virtually every older woman is carrying a small woven basket covered with a white cloth. At first I’m not sure what is in the basket, but something in my memory suggests that it might be bread, implying a person’s name...gornji can mean “mountain” but in this case it most likely means “high ground.” I prefer my original interpretation.
The View From First Mountain

a traditional Slavic and European symbol of life. I don’t know where that memory came from because we didn’t have that practice in the Cathedral in Kansas City, Kansas, where I grew up attending and later serving at Mass.

Black is the color. As I mentioned, there is no finery to be seen. Granted, it is a cold day and the coats are long and simple. The old women wear scarves over their heads, the triangular kind, tied under the chin, while the middle-aged and younger don’t wear either hats or scarves. Hair style for these latter women is shorter, but fashionable by current American standards—nothing dowdy at all, a few braids here and there, but colored for the most part and styled.

After subsequently studying these citizens of the area, my impression is that these Croatians are a proud and confident people, people who look you in the eye when they pass you on the street or meet you in church. There’s nothing humble about their bearing. Their work and their attire might be humble, but their bearing is not. It lacks the aloofness of the Teutonic peoples, the superiority of the Frank, and the casualness of the American, three justly proud peoples. It is a look of their own. There is also something familiar about their appearance, the women to a greater degree than the men. They look like the people I grew up with in Kansas City: the Buraks, the Stimacs, the Novaks, the Lipovacs, the Bartolacs, the Kushans. These people are those peoples’ heritage and progenitors…and their future.

There is a choir. I can’t see it from where I am standing. I got here way too late to get a seat. Besides, in a rural parish like this, who knows but that every parishioner has his or her traditional seat at a particular Mass. It was that way when I was growing up: second pillar back on the right hand side, outside aisle. Come hell or High Mass, that’s where Dad always sat. Anyway, the choir is “heavenly,” in that it is either castrati or young children: the pitch is very high and the sound very pretty. Not knowing Croatian, I can’t understand too much. (I learned later that the choir was composed of nuns from a convent across the street.)

The Croats generally do not like to boast about it, but their language is Slavic in origin, and there is more than a passing similarity between spoken Croatian and Russian. It appears to be my lot in life to spend tours in countries that have abandoned their original script and Anglicized it. Vietnam did that with Chinese characters (A Jesuit, a Father Rhodes, was responsible for that little feat.), the Turks did it with their language (Let’s hear it for the Father of Turks, Kemal Mustafa Ataturk!) And now I’m in Croatia where the Slavic tongue has been put into a Latin alphabet—it messes me up something horrible! There are a few words I do remember from my days in Hell (aka Russian language classes at West Point and a year of enforced humility at the Monterey Defense Language Institute), but not enough to make any sense.
Chapter 1 - Christ has Risen! He has risen indeed!

Along that line, I notice one stained glass window in the church honoring Saints Cyril and Methodius, the two priests who took the Christian faith to the Slavs and developed the written alphabet we now know as Cyrillic. Cyrillic is basically Greek with a few extra letters thrown in to keep things interesting.

The congregation also sings, and heartily. There is nothing hesitant about their participation, although the organist does leave a bit to be desired. I have visions of my own days in choir when a schoolmate would wax enthusiastic on the organ pedals, as this one does, to the point of drowning out the choir and the congregation on an occasional basis. What is most galvanizing is the stirring rendition of the recessional. It’s the American song we know as The Battle Hymn of the Republic! While the words are Croatian, there is no mistaking either the fervor with which it is sung or the melody!

There are men scattered about the church, more towards the back and along the sides. As I understand it from friends who are Catholic and of European background, this is typical. Only as the men grow older (if life lets them grow older) do they come back to the church and participate. Although there are a couple of families scattered about the congregation, this is definitely the geriatric Mass. There are other Sunday Masses at 9:00 and 11:00. Based on who I saw walking up the hill to the next Mass (9:00), those were the young people’s Mass and the family Mass. How interesting! We have the same settling out in the States in terms of who goes when…t’aint cultural at all, apparently.

At the end of Mass, the celebrant comes down with the hyssop and blesses the congregation. The women take the white cloth covers off their baskets and the loaves of bread and rolls are blessed. Considering the sacredness of Easter day, this is indeed a very meaningful celebration. We in America have lost the cultural impact of both bread and the breaking of bread. The symbolism apparently went out the window with the saying “best thing since sliced bread.” But within this culture, bread is a daily, fresh-baked item and is important. It’s more than the staff of life. It has a meaning well beyond that to the point of symbolizing life itself. When you “break bread” with another, you are sharing your sustenance as well.

After Mass many of the women and families visit the cemetery alongside the church. This accounts for the many bouquets of flowers that I saw women holding at Mass. Only later did it dawn on me that women who held a basket usually didn’t have a bouquet of flowers and vice versa. This also explains the preponderance of women at Mass. Their men did not survive.

On a later walk through the cemetery I found many names with dates between 1914 and 1918, 1939 and 1946, and between 1991 and 1995. On the wall of the church itself, facing the rising sun, is a plaque with many names and the dates 1914-1918.
mystery there: Croatia was part of the ill-fated Austro-Hungarian Empire, next door to the long-hated and despised Serbia and its running partner, Russia. Next to Ante Starčević’s memorial is another black marble tablet with the dates 1991-1995, the period of Croatian Independence, the Homeland War, and the military operations to regain the Krajina and Slavonia.

It is not the men who lead lives of quiet desperation, I am now thinking. It is the women, the mothers, the widows, who live the lives of quiet pain. And I can see it in their faces as they stand by the graves on this, the holiest of all mornings of the liturgical year.

In the parent Slavic tongue, the Easter greeting is translated as Christ has risen!

And the response is He has risen indeed!

And so has the hope for this country. I can see it all around me as these people press on with their lives this Easter morning, greeting and hugging one another, touching and sharing something that I as a “stranger in a strange land” can sense but not share...yet.
Chapter Two
Assignment In Zagreb

I have not explained why I was in Zagreb in 1996 and not in southern Arizona with my wife Anne. At the time, I was an employee of Military Professional Resources Incorporated (MPRI). I had been sent to Zagreb to help fulfill their contracts with the Croatian government. I had been assigned to the Democracy Transition/Long Range Management Program (DT/LRMP or LRMP for short). The goal was to ease the transition of Croatia to a functioning member of the community of western nations.

Our team was to develop individual programs within the Croatian Ministry of Defense and the General Staff to assist them in molding their defense structure into one compatible with those of western nations. We were not building another Department of Defense. We were not building another Pentagon. We wanted to avoid the bureaucratic nightmares we had inflicted on ourselves and create a lean, disciplined, effective and efficient national defense structure, one that was affordable and one that would provide the necessary national security for the Republic.

We started our program in January, 1996. I left the scene two years later in December, 1997. What follows is not a “kiss-and-tell” story. I have too much respect for the people with whom I worked in those two years. In addition, the first of my two quotes from Paul Theroux in the introduction applies here, “It is always difficult to make virtuous people interesting.” We may not have always agreed personally or professionally on many topics, but our disagreements were over methods to attain results, not the results themselves.
We worked closely with all levels of the Croatian defense structure, civilian and military. Almost to a person we found them sincere, principled, and dedicated. Virtually all were operating within the bounds dictated by their own personal values and ethics.

What we forgot was the Law of the Four Aces—he who has been dealt four aces does not ask for a re-deal.

My journey to Croatia started when I was teaching cultural geography at Cochise College in 1991. I used the gradual demise of the former Yugoslavia as an example of the roles of language, religion, and heritage in defining a culture. No better example could be found to illustrate that one could be ethnically whatever one claims to be—Bosniac, Serb, or Croat—Muslim, Orthodox, or Catholic—Herzegovinan, Serbian, or Croatian—it makes no difference. For an American, that is hard to accept unless you grew up on the boundary line between two ethnic or racial groups in a major city. I was fortunate to have classmates in high school with Polish, Croatian, Slovenian, Hungarian, Czech, and Slovak backgrounds—but to us, their ethnicity was their own rightful and proper pride, as Alenka Mirkovic-Nadj points out in her comments in the appendix:

“If nationalism means [the] tendency to protect and preserve one’s own culture… then I willingly proclaim myself a nationalist.”

I had spent thirty years being told that I could not go beyond a certain point on the map because of security clearances I possessed or because of a job that I either held currently or one that I had held in the past. I was also bored with what I was doing for a living. So when the opportunity with MPRI came along, I took it for a variety of reasons, all of which I think were good.

The Democracy Transition/Long Range Management Program was to start operations on January 1, the starting date being the first of many seemingly illogical steps. One doesn’t start a project on a national holiday but that’s what the contract stipulated. Legally, the contract was in place and there was one person at work on the contract come New Year’s Day: Mike Lansden.

Mike was the first person hired. He was our Operations Support Coordinator: OPSCO, as he would refer to himself in the future. His job was to provide the administrative support for the eleven-person team brought together to fulfill the following contract requirement:

“…to assist the Croatian Government in developing, organizing, implementing, and sustaining a long term strategic management program. This
Chapter 2 - Assignment In Zagreb

assistance will entail providing the processes, techniques, organization and management structures, decision-making systems, and training needed to initiate, develop, support, and sustain this wide ranging program.”

MPRI and the Croatian Ministry of Defense had agreed on an eleven-man team as the action agent in terms of meeting this requirement. Mike had been on the job by mid-December drawing together the necessary support and administrative structures. The team would be comprised of the following positions:

- Program Manager
- Strategic Planner (International)
- Resource Manager
- Acquisition Manager
- Logistics/Infrastructure Manager
- Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Intelligence/Information Management (C4I/IM) Manager
- Strategic Plans Expert
- Force Structure Planner
- Force Modernization Planner
- Organizational Professional Development Manager
- Program Support Coordinator

The second to arrive, running ahead of the Blizzard of 1996 in his Yukon 4X4 and pulling his duck boat, was Bob Pantier, who would be the Force Modernization Planner. Bob was coming from California by way of Arkansas with his black Labrador retriever, Bo. They rode the blizzard out in the Colony Inn while the next two guys scheduled to come on board kept getting their flights cancelled because of the blizzard. But at last, on January 10th, Chuck Boyce (Logistics/Infrastructure Manager) and myself (Organizational Professional Development Manager) signed in to the Colony Inn and reported for duty the next day.

The three of us—Bob, Chuck, and myself—looked at each other that first morning in Alexandria, and for some odd reason, still unfathomed and unexplained, bonded. Mike was living in Fredericksburg and commuting to D.C. and the blizzard fouled him up until later in the week. By that time the three of us had figured out what had to be done. No one paid much attention to us because everyone was digging out. We concentrated on the computers first, loaded all the necessary programs, hooked them all up, and tested them: ten Gateway computers and two laptops. Then we looked around to see what was next.

By that time the Program Manager (PM), Major General (US Army Retired) John O. B. Sewall (JOBS), had signed on and was interviewing the remainder of the team. The four of us—Mike, Bob, Chuck, and me—had been handed to John
as a *fait accompli* by corporate HQ. No one could blame JOBS for selecting us. We were not his fault! I’ll go by John’s initials (JOBS) or by PM for Program Manager, because as the plot unfolds, we’ll end up with more “Johns” than Logan Circle in the Washington, D.C. of the 1990's.

Another key player, Bill McCowan, signed on. Bill would be our point-of-contact at MPRI corporate while we were in Croatia. He would handle everything from personal contracts to liaison with various departments in Alexandria. His role was underestimated by most, though also overestimated by a couple of people. Fortunately for us—Bob, Chuck, and me—Bill was included in our circle of close and confidential contacts.

JOBS was very busy. The contract required that the team be hired by January 31\(^{st}\), and the weather had thrown him a ten-day curve. Plus, the terms of the Technical Proposal were stringent: we had two major deliverables to provide to the Ministry of Defense on April 12\(^{th}\):

1. A Concept Paper and briefing on how MPRI was going to accomplish the stated objective.
2. A Strategic Management Comparative Analysis and briefing on how a selected number of other western-oriented nations went about the business of defense.

There were six more deliverables scattered throughout the year:

1. An Assessment of current conditions in the seven functional areas within the Ministry of Defense (MOD) by May 3\(^{rd}\).
2. A Vision and Strategy paper by June 21\(^{st}\).
3. A Functional Area Analysis of the seven major functional areas by August 23\(^{rd}\).
5. A Draft Plan based on the recommendations derived from the Assessment and the Functional Area Analyses by September 6\(^{th}\).
6. A Long Range Management Plan derived from the Draft Plan by December 13\(^{th}\).

None of the eight deliverables were easy, and none were easy to prepare for, because we were also busy hiring the team.
I had the task of writing the Strategic Management Comparative Analysis (SMCA). After listening to our recommendations, JOBS selected seven countries that we ought to look at: Denmark, The Netherlands, Germany, France, Great Britain, Japan, and the United States. Regarding the last, it wasn’t that we wanted Croatia to pattern itself after the U.S. but rather that we were most familiar with our own structure and could use it as a baseline for analysis.

By that time, Charles Schwartzman had been hired as Strategic Planner (International), Johnny Matthews as Force Structure Planner, and Rich Todd as Strategic Plans Expert. The team had grown from four to eight in ten days. And we had received two unlisted team members in the form of Pia Boyce, Chuck’s wife, and Corky, their Husky-Newfoundland mix. The big joke was “leave Chuck where he is; just send us Pia and Corky!”

Next hired were Cliff Engle as C4I/IM Manager, Rick Grube as Acquisition Manager, and Ron Smith as Resource Manager. We made it! Everybody was signed and in operating mode—though barely—by January 31st, 1996! We had met our first legal requirement! And sure enough, a day or two before the 31st, a representative from the Croatian Embassy came over to see who was there working. When this individual noted that only five people appeared to be present and asked where everyone else was, I simply said that they were over at the Army Library in the Pentagon—which they were—doing research on the SMCA. My answer appeared to satisfy him.

Although I’d been assigned to write the SMCA, in reality it was an editing job. I had come up with a clever division of labor which delegated the writing on six of the seven countries to other team members. Charles was tapped by the PM to do the Concept Paper, while I asked Johnny to do the research and initial writing on Denmark, Chuck to do Germany, Cliff to do the U.K. and the U.S. and Rich to do France and The Netherlands. That left me to handle Japan and draw all the pieces together. I did the writing of the overview and the summary chapters, the editing and the final assembly. The teamwork was very efficient.

As we got rolling, a few team members were temporarily hampered by their own personal status. JOBS was in the process of leaving government service at the National Defense University. Charles Schwartzman was also just retiring, as were Rick and Ron. The rest of us had been out of the military for varying lengths of time. Nevertheless, everyone kicked in and started developing his own individual area of expertise.

On February 8th, we had the first of many In-Progress Reviews, henceforth and forever after known as an IPR, an acronym calculated to drive fear into the hearts of grown men and profits into the pockets of pulp paper mill owners! We met our
primary customer, Major General Kresimir Čosic, the Chief of the Military Technical Council, and Dr. Dado Lozancic, his chief assistant on this contract. We laid out what we had already done and what we expected to have accomplished by the respective due dates. We received additional guidance and direction and a better understanding of what the ground rules for operating were to be.

On February 17, after enduring a variety of inoculations, we sent a seven-person initial appraisal team to Croatia for three weeks. JOBS headed up the team which included Mike, Rick, Bob, Charles, Ron, and Chuck. Mike was to stay behind in Zagreb when the team returned to the States, so he could organize things in advance of our arrival in April. During this three-week period Cliff returned to Florida for some time at home. Rich Todd and Johnny Matthews remained in Virginia and continued working. I stayed in Virginia for a week and then spent two weeks in Arizona, as it was going to be a long time before I would see my wife Anne again.

The stateside team reunited for work in mid-March—less Mike and Ron (the latter still at home in Stuttgart before joining us in Alexandria). Rick Grube had developed a chapter for the SMCA on the acquisition processes of the seven nations. When Ron arrived he contributed his portion on the programming and budgeting aspects. Charles continued work on the required Concept Paper.

As March drew to a close, planning for the move to Croatia was uppermost in everyone’s minds. We were in daily contact with Mike via fax and telephone, and the housing situation began to take on an ominous hue.

An earlier MPRI team had been provided with very modern western style living with all the conveniences of home. There had been just two men to an apartment in fairly good surroundings. The only missing component were the spouses, except for the three “sponsored” wives of two team members and the Project Manager. (On our team there would be only one sponsored wife—the PM’s.)

We assumed that a similar arrangement would be provided for us, i.e. two men per house or apartment, whichever was rented by the Ministry to meet the Personal Services portion of our individual contracts with MPRI.

Spell assume...slowly.

The contract did not say “two per.” It said “two or more per,” a critical difference! Just the day before we left, we had word that there were three houses rented for the team: two houses with three people per house and one place with four men. Plus the PM’s residence, of course. That was never in the equation.
JOBS asked me to work out a solution to our housing crisis. What ensued illustrated the high caliber of the team. Confronted with a very negative situation of three or four men over fifty sharing the same facilities, men who had risen to the top of their respective fields, quality people who had high expectations and requirements, the situation could have turned sour in nanoseconds. (“The laborer is worth his hire.”) However, through open and candid discussion, we resolved the problem.

I forgot to mention that not only were there ten men involved, but there were also two dogs—Chuck and Pia’s Corky and Bob’s Bo—one a neutered bitch and the other a whole male.

Understandably, some of the team members wanted nothing, absolutely nothing, to do with the dogs. That put Chuck and Bob together for starters. Rich and Cliff, because of their Special Operations background, asked to room together and included Ron in that matrix. Ron had his heart set on a residence that he regarded as the top choice, one of the three-plexes, as we called them. Then Rick and Mike, sharing a common religious and philosophical background, joined forces. That left Charles, who with Mike, was adamant about not sharing a house with a dog, with Mike and Rick.

Having bred and raised dogs, and with two waiting for me at home in Arizona, I had no difficulty with handling either dog if the owner were to be gone for a short
period. So I agreed to room with the two dogs as well as with Chuck and Bob. Thus, Johnny, Mike, Rick, and Charles ended up in the four-plex. Everybody yielded a little and everybody got a little—a great example of the attitude and cooperative spirit of the team. As I told JOBS when I briefed him on the outcome, he had a lot to be proud of in terms of the positive attitude of his team.

The housing issue resolved, all that was left was getting to Croatia. Mid-afternoon Sunday, March 31st, saw us all gathered at MPRI headquarters in Alexandria and boarding the bus for Dulles International Airport.

A few of us did wonder whose sense of humor had us scheduled to arrive in Zagreb on April Fool’s Day. Our personal effects (two hundred pounds per individual) and professional items had gone ahead. Bob and I had done a good imitation of locusts when it came to rounding up administrative items as we cleared out—staplers, scotch tape, folders, index tabs—all seemingly minor stuff, but critical when trying to put a briefing or a paper together. We briefly considered packing the coffeemaker, but fear of “Attila the Hun,” as Nancy, General Vuono’s secretary referred to herself, stopped us from taking it. We only hid it, leaving a sign that she’d see on Monday morning, a sign that said we had taken it with “much appreciation.”

A mounting sense of grand adventure coursed through the team. Rick’s family was there to see us off as was Charles’ wife, Connie, and JOBS’ wife Marti, who was scheduled to join us in June. With all our excess baggage, two dog crates, and office supplies, we most likely filled the cargo space of that Lufthansa 747 with just our own stuff. Last minute phone calls to loved ones in the States had been made, and the time for boarding was now!
Chapter Three
The Essentials of Life: Air, Food, Water, and Shelter

Air…to breathe.

Zagreb in 1996 was a city of approximately 900,000. The total population of the Republic was about 5.5 million, so a little less than 20% of Croatia’s registered citizens lived within the boundaries of the city—and about 80% of the country’s automobiles.

Surprisingly, there didn’t appear to be any significant air pollution during that spring of 1996. There might well have been, but other than an occasional fog of exhaust as a result of a poorly-tuned engine or an engine under labor, the air appeared fairly clear and smelled relatively decent. However, looking out over the city from up the mountain, there was a discernable foggy white haze hovering over the city proper, indicating that there was at least the potential for air pollution.¹

In addition to vehicle exhaust, there was also haze from the large number of wood-burning stoves and furnaces. It seemed as though every house had a large stack of cordwood aging outside. Approximately \( \frac{1}{3} \) of the Croatian population was using wood for cooking and heating. The pizza parlors, roughly one for every three inhabitants, all used wood fired ovens. There were also a large number of bakeries, although because of their size and volume of output, natural gas or oil most likely provided the heat. Our house at Pirovec Gornji 3 was heated by fuel oil. The situation with fuel oil gave us insight into the Balkan Mindset, a term which, eight weeks into the tour, began to take on a unique meaning, as will be explained later.

¹. As time went on we did find that, yes, there was a vast difference between the quality of air in the city—smog—and the fresh air up on the mountain side where we lived, some 500 feet or 150 meters above the city proper.
When we explored the house after Bob, Chuck, and I moved in, we discovered that we had the furnace and the water heater for the duplex in a room on our side of the wall. At the end of the basement hallway, about six to ten feet from the furnace, was another large room, stacked floor-to-ceiling with five-gallon (twenty liter) jugs of fuel oil. The fuel tank for the furnace was outside, so why were there fuel jugs inside the house? To fill the outside fuel tank would require carrying two jugs at a time up two flights of stairs to the second floor where the porch and front door were and then down one flight from the porch to ground level. Was this an example of the Balkan Mindset?

We wondered about that until Pia, Chuck’s wife, arrived. She is of Italian heritage and had lived in southern Europe for a good number of years. She explained that the storage of fuel oil in the basement was to handle periods of shortages. “Nothing mysterious about it at all,” Pia pronounced. So you could say Balkan Mindset and be correct, but in a different way than we had at first imagined. There was a tendency to overlook the fact that Croatia had just finished a five-year period of war, with independence declared in 1990 and the ensuing struggle with the Bosnian Serbs. In 1991, the Serbs had taken about one-third of the country—the Krajina and Slavonia. The occupation of the Krajina had placed the Serbs within rocket range of Zagreb.

Before Operation Storm had kicked off in August, 1995, regaining the Krajina for Croatia, the Bosnian Serbs had rocketed Zagreb, killing about 30 people, including a good number of children at a hospital about a kilometer from the main square. The square on that day in May had been the Serbs’ obvious target, since the rocketing came at noon when it would have been filled with the maximum number of people. So up to a month or two before our arrival, there was a mindset here that focused on survival. And that meant stockpiling resources that one needed—like fuel oil.

This was an object lesson to me. There is damned little I have ever done without in my life. I always know when it’s Ash Wednesday or Good Friday (fast and abstinence). I remember my Boy Scout Order of the Arrow ordeal at Camp Naish (I had worked on a limited diet for one whole day!) But here “doing without” was such a common occurrence that people automatically took provisions to adjust for those periods.

So, all things considered, the air is good to breathe!
Chapter 3 - The Essentials of Life: Air, Food, Water, and Shelter

Water...to drink.

The line “Don’t drink the water,” from satirist Tom Lehrer’s 1965 song Pollution, doesn’t play here. There are no problems at all with the water, no need to filter, treat, or otherwise fiddle with the water supply. None of us experienced any problems with the water, other than the obvious calcification of coffee makers, water pipes, and the like. Of course, the better part of the water was consumed in one of two forms. The first was as a vehicle for diluting the formaldehyde that comprises the low-cost pivo we were drinking. (It is truly amazing how the recipe for the Vietnamese beer, Ba-mui-ba, and its Turkish equivalent, Efes, made their way to Croatia). And the second was as a transport system for caffeine in coffee.

The source of water in Zagreb, according to the locals, was the mountain we lived on. The mountain Slejme (including an area called Medvedgrad—City of Bears) appears to be a major limestone dome overlain with a layer of limestone, so the aquifer would be the limestone that runs from the mountain to the Sava River south of town. One Croatian I worked with noted that the water table in the area is always high. That makes sense because the Sava is a mature river, running across a floodplain of largely alluvial and clay soils. A high water table is to be expected.

The rains of April had carried into May. It was like Washington weather, dry during the week and rainy on weekends. As the weather warmed up, it was like magic—everything came out at once! The horse chestnut trees blossomed and leafed out at the same time, and the grass grew a yard tall overnight. However, it was not until mid-May before the women started putting their seedlings in. By late May, the snow peas and other kitchen garden crops started showing signs of taking off.

So there was plenty of clean water for man, beast, vegetation...and pivo.

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Food...to sustain the body.

The Knights of the Round Table had an easier task than ours. They were only searching for the Holy Grail. We, on the other hand, were turning over every stone looking for a bad meal. Many of us had served in less-than-desirable locations, the ones where they tell you not to ask what you are eating and not to go into the kitchen. Zagreb was not one of them! The food was delicious. We ate cheap meals for four or five kuna (less than a dollar), some at the hundred-to-two-hundred kuna level (twenty to forty dollars), and many in between. All were good, all were enjoyable. Vegetable salads usually came with only one dressing, oil and vinegar, and beef came cooked—no scale of rare to well-done. But it was done well, meaning it was cooked to taste.
Pizza came in a variety of forms, none of them what we were familiar with through Pizza Hut or other chains. The dough was very thin, but well-cooked. The sauce was also thin, but very tasty. There were limited amounts of cheese unless you specifically asked for a cheese pizza. Pizza Hut, however, couldn’t make it in Zagreb; there are too many pizza places keyed to local tastes and flavor. If all else fails, a worker can always open a pizza place and make some money! The price for a 20-inch pizza was about 28 Hku (kuna)—less than five dollars—and it was baked in a wood-fired pizza oven right there in the wall in front of you. On any given night, we saw families and people of all ages enjoying an evening out at the local pizza restaurant.

The higher class restaurants followed the European custom of separate courses with the appetizer, the salad, the soup, and the main course being served one at a time. If you ate out at a nice restaurant, the meal was an all-night affair. The waiters ensured that you were not rushed—and they sure weren’t! Obtaining the bill could be a bit of a chore. There seemed to be a desire to keep you there longer on the possibility that you might relent and order more: more drinks, more dessert, or more caffè.
This leads me to an aside that has nothing to do with the “essentials of life.” It is the Croatian concept of time. It took a little getting used to. There didn’t seem to be a rush about anything at all—except on the streets and when behind the wheel of a car. There is something to be said for that. Children get to be children longer. There is no real rush for them to grow up. Kids seemed to like holding their parent’s hand when walking on the street. It was slightly touching to see a boy or girl about eight or nine skipping down the street beside one of the parents, holding hands and just chattering away, with the parent as enthralled in the conversation as the child. The youngsters at the opera were noisy in the halls and on the stairs—as children that age would be—but once the music started, not a word! There was time for the things that really count, like family and friends.

Getting the menu often took some time, no rush on anything, even paying customers! We quickly learned that there was no such thing as a “quick bite to eat” before the opera or a show. You had to plan for it, take your time—and expect your time to be taken. Once served, the food was good and there was always plenty of it. We never did find that bad meal we were looking for!
A roof over your head…to keep you dry and secure.

Most housing in the city consisted of vast towers of apartments in Early Socialist Style. Our American concept of suburbia would have a hard time getting off the ground here. Not that people don’t want a house of their own. They do, and those who do own their own place, no matter how small, are regarded with envy by others. It is a matter of infrastructure, ranging from providing water to taking sewage away. Large flats of apartments save space, keep the city compact, permit a mass transit system, hold down on inner city parking: one could keep right on going with the many advantages of apartments.

The old city block layout is interesting. On any given block in the city proper, there is a four or five story structure that borders the sidewalk on all four sides of the block. (Above five floors you would most likely need an elevator) Going in a straight line from the center of the cobblestone street into the center of the block, you first encounter the roadway where most cars function, then the tram rails next to the curb and a “no traffic” or “no parking” sign. Public transportation has the absolute right-of-way over private transportation, whether automobile or pedestrian. The tram line is right next to the curb so the passenger can step off the tram right onto the sidewalk—stays out of mud puddles that way. Makes sense, doesn’t it?

Wait a minute! If the tram line is next to the curb, and the traffic is in the middle of the street, where do the cars park? On the sidewalk, of course. To walk down side streets in Zagreb is like walking through a parking lot, in and around cars parked parallel to the road on the sidewalk. It is a bit of a problem because the sidewalk is bounded by the curb and tram line on one side and the front of the building on the other. At times there isn’t enough maneuvering room to walk two abreast.
Each building, seen from above, makes up a square. In the middle of each side there is a sally-port, an entrance for cars or pedestrians to pass into the center of the square. The square block is literally a square four-to-five-story building with an open center. The buildings themselves are not deep, accommodating one hallway with rooms off either side. The upper floors are usually apartments. I have seen many scenes reminiscent of the famous oil of the young girl leaning out of the window with her *duenna* in the background. Today it might be an old woman leaning on the pillow or the bed linens that are being aired, watching the traffic go by and keeping tabs on things. Or it might be a young girl chattering away with friends on the street, or an old man, possibly lost in the memories of an earlier love.

The first floor on the street side and on the interior courtyard side will have small businesses from store-fronts that in many cases are no more that twelve feet wide by twenty feet deep: a hair dresser, a tie store, a jewelry store, an umbrella store, usually a one-kind-of-thing store with limited selection and space. And often, the store will be a *bistro* or a pizza parlor or a coffee bar: places where people can mingle and talk for long periods of time over food or drink. No one is ever in a rush.

Housing in the old part of the city was ugly—no getting around it. The apartment buildings are all gray or brown stucco over brick or concrete blocks, streaked with drainage marks, chunks of stucco falling off and exposing the brick underneath,
The View From First Mountain

well-worn and poorly cared for over the years. What you glimpse of the interior of an apartment in passing by, though, is something else: plants and flowers, crisp lace curtains, comfortable looking places even with the Grand Rapids Horrible style furniture that is the rage here. Housekeepers in Croatia are as meticulous as their Teutonic cousins farther north and west. They take great pride in their homes, at least in the parts over which they have control.

Novi Zagreb—New Zagreb—is along the lines of the Socialist model: fourteen-to-eighteen-story high-rises, one right after the other. These structures dominate the south bank of the Sava. I was never inside one, but I have heard that the interiors of the apartments clearly show the individuality of the occupants, as well as care taken in maintenance.

Nama, originally the state-owned chain, was the dominant department store in the city. The central city store was five floors high and had just about anything you might want, including groceries and a post office. It was the equivalent of American-style one-stop shopping.

When one’s command of Croatian is limited to very few phrases, shopping can be an interesting experience. How do you say, “Do you have this in my size?” When my wife Anne joined me later, we found that a scratch pad, Anne’s sketching ability, patience, and a sense of humor all helped. We were always able to get what we needed, from Dr. Scholl’s foot pads to signs alerting people that there was a dog in the yard. A cooperative attitude on the other side of the counter helped. In 1996, there were still some grocery stores similar to the type I grew up with in the 1940’s. You tell the clerk what you want and she gets it off the shelf or out of the bin. We learned to look for the prefix “samo” which is “self”—meaning self service. We could get virtually anything in the larger supermarkets scattered around town, sometimes at prices lower than the trg or small market offered, and you could pick it out yourself, not something the babushkas in the Dolac—the main food market in Zagreb—would always allow you to do.

Housing in the rural areas and outer areas of the city was eclectic. There was a little bit of everything. Homes were built to last, with concrete floors and pillars and tile blocks in between floor and ceiling and between the pillars, all covered by stucco and finished off in a pleasing way. Even so, these will eventually age. Housing developments with one-third acre lots and houses all lined up didn’t exist. Here a house has been put up wherever it would fit. Apparently people worry about access or parking later. Individual homes are built to last two or three generations. I don’t really think the real estate field is a growth industry around here, even today.

Zagreb is in an earthquake zone. I felt a couple in the first six months. The city was seriously damaged in the early 1800’s by a massive quake, and some are felt every
year. The construction of homes in 1996 was not at all what we were accustomed to in North America. Corner posts were concrete pillars and about every six feet there was another concrete pillar. The empty space between was filled in with a brick sort of like our concrete block—about 12x12x4 inches. Window frames were poured concrete and the floors were poured concrete, reinforced. I couldn't understand why this was the standard, because concrete and brick, the way it was being used in Croatia, is not adaptable to quakes. There is no flexibility for either the P wave or the S wave (the up and down or shimmy) of an earthquake, whereas our post and beam construction has that flexibility.²

I figured there might be two reasons for the style of construction: “we've always done it this way” and/or there was a shortage of wood. When discussing this with one of our interpreters, he provided a different perspective. Born and raised in Canada, Vlad’s parents were still in Vancouver. Like many others, he came “home” to fight for Croatian independence in 1991 and stayed. He’s now married to a native Croatian and has a daughter.

Vlad pointed out that when a person had the money for a piece of property and a house, he expected that not only would he live in that house for the rest of his life, but he would pass it on to his children, and they in turn would pass that same

². One of the fastest growing industries in Japan is housing construction based on the American style. It seems that the only houses left standing after the last major quakes were those built the American way.
house on to their children. In other words, the house and yard were viewed as something permanent. Vlad had recently returned from his first visit to Canada since 1991 and had only himself begun to realize how transient the western world was, compared to the European world and how impermanent our housing is, compared to the type of housing many inhabit in Old Zagreb, where many buildings date back to the 1800’s. So there was also a cultural, value-laden reason for the style of construction—not just a resource-based motivation.

It would be interesting to see the land deeds, based on the layout of some of the yards I walked past. Property descriptions and surveys of property lines must be quite complex. We are so accustomed to straight lines and all the buildings being right on the street. Apparently the Township and Range method of dividing the land in the United States carried over into our neighborhoods. In Zagreb one can find houses virtually in another house’s backyard with access up a flight of stairs—*stube* in Croatian. The length and steepness of the *stube* make Bisbee, Arizona, look flat in comparison. Or access might be up a winding alley—*put* in the local language. In the valley areas of the city near where we lived the first year, there could be as many as four houses going up the side of the valley, one poised above the other, connected on the side of the property by a flight of as many as two hundred and fifty steps. (Yes, I counted ‘em!) There didn’t seem to be any visible struggles over
where the property line was. Everyone seemed to know where the lines were and accept them.

I found it entertaining to walk early in the morning, at 5:15, when the sun was just beginning to break over the horizon, and all the cats are returning from running their traps. Some are safely ensconced on their steps, waiting for a door to open. Our butcher's bob-tailed cat squeezes in between the glass door and the metal security door and just waits. Other cats are discussing the night's activities, sitting on their haunches at a safe distance, while yet others are in an obvious stand-off, broken only by my passing by. Typically one cat breaks and disappears, leaving the other on the field. Dogs are now accustomed to my passing and only watch. The newspaper guy is making his delivery to the corner newsstand (no door-to-door delivery here.) The bakers, the meat market suppliers, and various other drivers are all dropping off their goods. City and village are beginning to wake up and take action on the new day.

The "grandmothers" in their black shawls, dresses, and shoes are either out in the yard or on their way to church. There's a church within a half-mile of every house. The twenty-something crowd is getting its act together and is beginning to leave for work as I am getting back to the house about at 6:15. Their Yugos (originally “homemade” in the former Yugoslavia [read: Serbia]), Ladas (Russian), Fiats (Italian), Peugeots (French), Mercedes, BMWs, and Audis are put-putting down these narrow roads. (While we were winning the cultural war, the Germans had already won the automobile war.) Because Zagrebians drive with abandon, you've got to keep your wits about you, your ears open, and be looking for a place to jump as you walk these narrow by-ways!

There is usually a farmer on his tractor headed out to a field nearby. I have seen no cattle or swine in fields, but plenty of chickens and plenty of turkeys (other than the ones I work with). There's an occasional tractor with a load of huge logs coming down from the forest area, headed for a sawmill somewhere in the area. Swine and the milk cow are kept in the farmyard and fed there. Unlike Arizona, there's no open range activity. Down from our house on Pirovec Gornji are three large porkers—maybe in December the proper tense will be “were” and their number will have dwindled in preparation for the holidays. The yard the pigs are in is quite small, maybe nine by fifteen feet, but you don’t know the pigs are there until the breeze shifts!

Grass is scythed in the fields and brought into the farmyards, often on the tops of the women's heads. It is a common sight to see a woman walking down the street, a scythe in one hand and a rake in the other while balancing a bundle of freshly cut grass twice as wide as she is on top of her head. “Look, Ma! No hands!”

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And a church in which to pray.

There was a church in every community and generally within every twelve-block area of the city. There were a few non-Catholic churches in town. I saw one Serbian Orthodox and one Greek Orthodox church in downtown Zagreb, and there was a mosque in Novi Zagreb (New Zagreb) south of the Sava River. But for the most part, the churches were Roman Catholic with scads of nuns in the area, very obvious because they were usually in the Pre-Vatican II religious garb, not the secular attire so common now in the States. Most of the church buildings date back about a hundred years but were in relatively good condition and services were well attended. God was still alive and well in this area.

Thus we have the basic needs fairly well covered. Maslow’s first level of his Hierarchy of Needs—the basic physiological needs—are being met. And in a very acceptable manner. Life in Zagreb is very interesting indeed.
Appendix

Observations Regarding the Church-State Relationship

By Alenka Mirkovic-Nadj

Alenka Mirkovic-Nadj is a member of the Transition Management Office within the Ministry of Defense. She is also a veteran of the siege of Vukovar, a radio correspondent during that siege, and an award-winning author. Based on her proven abilities and talents, I asked her if she might be interested in reading my personal journal and if she had the time and interest, comment on it.

Always be wary of asking for something—you just might get it. And Alenka did carefully review my material and she did provide me with a wealth of information, correcting many of the mistakes that I had made in history and in fact. There were other points of discussion though that were not so easily resolved and they usually boiled down to the matter of perception. These I alluded to in my very first footnote—to some who have read this, what I have said is in blatant error, but to me it is a matter of perception…”any travel book reveals more about the traveler…”

Alenka’s comments about church-state relations and the history of Croatia are of such significance that I have included them as she wrote them out for me.

In this particular case, your observation might be accurate. But in general, things are not as simple as that. Church was, in a last 50 years, basically, the only place one could see and experience some forms of specifically Croatian culture. It is not just a matter of national colors but also the language and traditions, one of which you saw at Easter mass. As a child of socialism and proclaimed “brotherhood and unity,” I
had to deal with a lot of strange questions most of which could be summed up in one: why the expression of my (meaning Croatian, because Croatia was where I was living) language, history and traditions always (except in church) sounds so unpopular and suspicious, why is it automatically gets the negative sound, why “Croatian” always have to be a synonym for “Ustasha”…or “nationalism?”

If nationalism means tendency to protect and preserve one’s own culture (or the existence of entire nation, as in 1991) then I willingly proclaim myself a nationalist. If it means disrespect for other cultures, hatred, or “holy wars” that is not my kind of game (if not for any other, more philosophical reasons, than because I had a taste of that kind of medicine). I am afraid that most of westerners do not see the difference between those “two nationalism’s.”

As about today’s relation between Church and the State, that’s the totally different pair of shoes…and demand totally different conversation.
A graduate of West Point, Dr. William G. Hanne retired as a Colonel from the United States Army after nearly thirty years of service, during which time he completed two tours of duty in Vietnam and served in both Germany and Turkey. Holding an M.S. in Geography from the University of Illinois and a Ph.D. in Education Policy, Planning, and Administration from the University of Maryland, Dr. Hanne was also Assistant Professor in Geographic Research at West Point. Dr. Hanne currently teaches Russian history and political geography as a volunteer for the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute program under the auspices of the University of Arizona.
The View From First Mountain
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CROATIA

The Croatian War of Independence ended with the success of Operation Storm on August 7, 1995. Less than five months later, Bill Hanne found himself part of the Democracy Transition Long Range Management Program and packing for Zagreb. With his background in military intelligence, plus graduate degrees in political geography and education policy and planning, Dr. Hanne brought a unique perspective to the job. Interweaving the political and historical narrative with moving personal stories of a courageous and proud people, Hanne also shows the reader a country of stunning physical beauty and spiritual depth. Today, with Croatia and the Balkans at the crossroads of Western and Middle Eastern cultures, Hanne’s observations are more relevant than ever.