

Civilian Policing in Peacekeeping Operations – *John Evans*

"Grbavica, Bosnia-Herzegovina: A lock of Sudeta Mehanovic's hair was stuck to the ceiling of her apartment. Blood was its glue. Blood in the pattern of roses also splattered the wall around a chair where the 65-year-old woman spent her last hours, screaming for help. Somebody shot her in the head at close range last Tuesday night after spending several hours beating her to a point somewhere between life and death, and ransacking the place.

Horrible murders can happen in any urban area. But Mrs. Mehanovic's killing is being seen in a larger context: as a symbol of the failure, thus far, of a UN police force and the NATO-led peace mission in Bosnia to provide security as Serb-held suburbs of Sarajevo revert to Serb police. NATO spokesman insisted there is nothing their formidably armed units around Sarajevo can do to protect people like Mrs. Mehanovic. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation is not a police force, the spokesmen say.

Officers from the UN International Police Task Force, which has 41 men from eight countries in Grbavica, say they can do little to stop the tide of violence. They have come to Bosnia without weapons and without a mandate to halt crime, only to observe and monitor it.

In Grbavica, the sole station for the international police is on a hill nearly a mile outside of town, and most people do not have cars. Officers there Friday said they did not hear Mrs. Mehanovic's screams. Nor does the station have any working telephones. Besides, the officers said, they do not go out at night. It's dangerous out there, one said."

International Herald Tribune, November 3rd, 1996

- __ The preceding quote illustrates the failure of the UN "Peacekeeping" force to be able to protect the citizenry in a post conflict situation.
- __ There needs to be a re-implementation of communications, and, more importantly, domestic, civilian police forces.
- __ Canada has been involved in peacekeeping forces since the time of Lester Pearson.
- __ The civilian police forces are not the military police, they are your police 'down the road'.
- __ The RCMP has contributed greatly to the peacekeeping police forces and so did, although to a lesser degree, other police forces in Canada.
- They face extraordinary challenges acting as police monitors in the post conflict situations.
- __ The civilian police that are supplied by the UN (referred to as CIVPOL) require certain qualifications ranging from 6 years of experience to being able to drive a car;
- There is a great range of experience across those police coming from other countries.
- __ In most situations, the police monitors are unarmed and have no mandate to arrest:
- __ Haiti is an exception. The UN monitors are armed as there was no police