

National protection in Slovenia (1976-1991)

Pavle Čelik, M.A. in Sociology, Retired Commander of the Slovene Police

The intervention of the military forces of the Warsaw Pact in the Republic of Czechoslovakia on 1st August 1968, the intrusion of Ustashi terrorists across Slovenia into central Bosnia and Herzegovina in the summer of 1972 and other international events gave rise to the idea of general popular resistance and social self-protection, which became one of the foundations of the Yugoslav security system.

After 1976 Slovenia began to develop a unique security organisation, called national protection. Its regulations defined in detail its organisation, mandates, tasks, equipment, training and other things. An important part of responsibility for its operation was assumed by the national police and territorial defence. National protection units gradually became an indispensable security factor at public performances and gatherings and its tasks included all security situations, including war.

During the efforts of the Slovenian leadership to obtain national independence, relations between Ljubljana and Belgrade became increasingly tense. In the spring of 1990, the Yugoslav People's Army confiscated nearly all arms from the territorial defence and the question arose of how to institute a territorial defence which would be completely under Slovenian authority. National protection was an entirely legitimate force and completely Slovenian, and it was therefore possible in the summer of 1990 for it to become a legitimate foundation for the formation of a tactical structure of national protection, soon transformed into the new Territorial Defence of Slovenia. Since the old national protection force was still preserved, it cooperated with the police and the territorial defence in resisting all kinds of pressures. This was particularly important during the armed intervention of the Yugoslav People's Army in Slovenia in the summer of 1991 and throughout the period until the international recognition of independent Slovenia.

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