After the Italian capitulation, the Mihailović movement no longer represented a serious factor in occupied Yugoslavia with the limited exception of Serbia. As far as the Germans were concerned, the main battleground was still the western half of the country, where Tito's Partisans had seized the initiative and were soon to enjoy full Allied backing. In Nedić's Serbia the Partisans made no effective challenge for almost another year, and the remains of the Mihailović organization constituted at most a rather insignificant potential threat rather than an actual one. In most parts of Yugoslavia the demoralized Chetniks probably could have been destroyed completely by the Germans. Instead, many of them gained a lease on life by transforming themselves into German rather than Italian auxiliary forces and devoting their small strength to almost exclusively anti-Partisan ends.

All this was possible as a result of a certain shift, evident at the end of 1943, in the German attitude toward the Yugoslav resistance. By the end of the year, they finally began to adjust their policies toward the Chetniks and in some instances even brought about a revival of the officers' movements on a local basis. As long as the Partisan threat remained predominant, all projects for anti-Chetnik measures were first
put off and then shelved altogether. In addition, the Allied decision to throw all their weight against the German Winterstellung in southern Italy in November 1943 helped to convince O.K.W. that no major amphibious operation against the western Balkans was imminent. This fact, in conjunction with the tremendous successes of the Red Army in the Ukraine during the second half of 1943, led the Germans to foresee defending themselves in southeastern Europe against the Russians rather than the Anglo-Americans and made any future revival of the Mihailović organization appear out of the question.

Even so, the Germans did not decide to make an arrangement with Mihailović personally but rather sought to pick up the pieces of his organization in order to isolate further Chetnik headquarters from the remaining unit leaders and to win some badly needed native support for the anti-Partisan struggle. The basic thrust of their policies was to exploit the weaknesses and internal divisions of the officers' movement by tying individual armed bands to local German command posts and to convert them into anti-Partisan militia formations or, in the case of Montenegro, into armed detachments loyal to both the Germans and Nedić. Therefore, their growing willingness to arrive at accommodations with Chetnik bands had nothing to do with a “pro-Mihailović” reorientation of policy but was undertaken because they were finally convinced that Mihailović’s influence over the anti-Communist armed formations was nonexistent or negligible.

In many instances, the decision to use Serb nationalist forces against Tito was made by the German field commands immediately after the Italian capitulation and was implemented on the basis of the specific military situation in the area. In western Bosnia, for example, where the Partisan movement was spreading rapidly, many of Djujić’s former troops came to terms with the Germans as early as October. A number of Djujić’s followers had gone over to the Partisans or fled into the hills; those who began collaborating with the Germans could not have numbered more than a few thousand. Djujić’s own rehabilitation was not complete. Although he finally succeeded in having the Germans rescind

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1 As late as October 1943 the German High Command still thought that the invasion of southern Italy was possibly designed to establish a Mediterranean beachhead for later operations in the Balkan Peninsula. See, for instance, KTB/OKW, vol. 3, 2, entry for 1 October 1943; OKW/WFSt/Op.Abt., “N. 662411/43 vom 6.10.43,” 6 October 1943, T-78, roll 329, frame 6285446; John Ehrmann, Grand Strategy (London: Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1956), 5:75, 81, 82.

2 Even Kasche was arguing that their treatment of the Chetniks should be “elastic” because Mihailović no longer posed a real challenge to the Germans and Pavelić. Kasche to Abwehrstelle Belgrad, “N. 46/43 vom 14.10.43,” 14 October 1943, T-501, roll 265, frame 1160.

their order for his arrest, they never trusted him in large-scale anti-Partisan operations and used his troops only to protect the railway lines from Knin to the Adriatic coast. Moreover, they avoided any written agreements with the Chetnik cleric and required all his followers to obtain identification passes from the occupation authorities in order to qualify for their meager dole of arms and munitions. In contrast with his earlier cooperation with the Italians, Djujić was now bargaining from a weak position in order to maintain what little remained of his own authority over a decreasing armed following. His contacts with Mihailović were ineffectual because the Germans had intercepted his radio ties with Chetnik headquarters in September.

Neither Djujić nor the other Bosnian Chetniks who submitted to the strictly controlled arrangements with the Germans had freedom of action. Djujić was forbidden to allow his Dinaric Chetniks to carry out actions in areas populated by Croats. In western Bosnia, the formations of Uroš Drenović needed the close cooperation of nearby German units and were informed at the end of the year that Ustaši officers and administrators would return shortly to the Chetniks' old sphere. In eastern Bosnia, the formerly anti-Axis Chetniks became so demoralized after repeated clashes with the occupation troops and the Partisans that by November at least some unit leaders finally agreed to cooperate with the Germans.

In Montenegro, too, the shift in German policies saved the decimated Chetniks from a total collapse. By November, Lašić was the only leading officer remaining in the field, and his following probably numbered no more than five hundred men. Together with other stragglers, the Montenegrin Chetniks' strength could not have exceeded a thousand; Lašić himself was almost killed by the Partisans near Podgorica, sent an urgent plea to one of his subordinates in November to get help from the Germans, and then reported that his position was menaced by “external and internal...
enemies—that he was “disillusioned with everything” because “everyone [was] fleeing in all directions to save his own skin.”

Mišačić had been promising to send reinforcements from Serbia, but Lašić no longer believed him and added that “we hope Nedić sends strong units here to free this part of the country.” As the Chetnik crisis deepened, the unit leaders were turning away from Mišačić and toward the Germans and Serb Quislings. Like Lašić in Montenegro, Drenović’s group in western Bosnia also made an open appeal to Nedić. At the same time Djukić was developing increasingly close ties with the pro-German and quasi-Fascist Ljotić Zbor movement and was sending false reports to Chetnik headquarters in order to circumvent Mišačić’s influence. The Chetniks’ movement toward collaboration in late 1943 was therefore undertaken without Mišačić’s direction and worked to undermine even further the authority of Chetnik headquarters in Serbia.

At the end of the year, especially after the news of the pro-Tito decisions taken at Teheran, the swing to collaboration threatened to become a mass movement. Among Chetniks throughout Yugoslavia rumors circulated that King Peter II was traveling to Moscow to come to terms with Stalin and to dissolve officially the Mišačić organization; Nedić had already reported that Chetnik officers were trying daily to offer their services to the State Guard authorities at Belgrade. This movement received added impetus when the German Foreign Office plenipotentiary for the southeast, Hermann Neubacher, brought the recently captured Djurišić back to Belgrade and sponsored a treaty between a revived, pro-German Montenegrin Chetnik movement and Nedić. Djurišić was ultimately able to rebuild his forces to a strength of about five thousand men, to carry out anti-Partisan operations in southwestern Serbia, the Sandžak, and northern Montenegro; he was promised aid by Nedić’s State Guard. In Serbia several officers, including the important Mišačić agent Captain Kalabić, made local armistices, and some even agreed

10 Lašić to Major Vojović, 25 November 1943, Dokumenti o Izdajstvu Draže Mišačića, no. 87.
15 Boško Kostić, Za Istoriju Naših Dana (Toward a history of our times) (Lille: Jean Lausier, 1949), p. 137.
to place their troops under German command for joint anti-Partisan operations.\textsuperscript{17}

Toward the end of the year, then Nedić and the Germans had at least as much, if not more, influence over the behavior of the remaining Chetniks than Mihailović did. Every recent development, military and diplomatic, seemed to deepen the isolation of Chetnik headquarters in Serbia. At the same time, Tito launched his next major political offensive. He called the AVNOJ congress, at which the Partisans denounced the London government in exile and established their own political organs as the sole legitimate executive and legislative powers in Yugoslavia.\textsuperscript{18} The Allies immediately agreed at Teheran to shift their support to Tito, and on 8 December General Wilson sent a virtual ultimatum to Mihailović, ordering the Chetniks to sabotage two bridges on the Belgrade-Saloniki railway line. When they refused to carry out the action, Churchill used the incident as an excuse for telling King Peter that the Allies had decided to back Tito exclusively and that Mihailović might have to be dismissed from the post of minister of war.\textsuperscript{19} By the middle of December, the British had withdrawn their liaison officers from Chetnik headquarters and instructed them to join the Partisans.

At the beginning of 1944 Chetnik headquarters was all but completely cut off from the remaining handful of officers and civilian formation leaders; Mihailović was deprived of even partial Allied backing and issued bitter reports warning his Serb followers to “expect even stronger attacks on us from the British.”\textsuperscript{20} Lacking any military or diplomatic leverage, Mihailović’s staff decided to shore up their position by making a dramatic domestic political gesture. In an attempt to counter Tito’s pretensions to political command of postwar Yugoslavia and to offer a program which might induce the Allies (more likely the American) to revise their policies, Mihailović met with a group of Serb political figures in mid-December to lay the foundation for a strictly civilian and pro-Chetnik Yugoslav Democratic National Union (Jugoslovenski Demokrat-
ski Narodni Zajednici).\textsuperscript{21} The basic purpose was to broaden the Chetnik movement politically by setting up a program which, although forcefully anti-Communist, was sufficiently “democratic” to appeal to large numbers of Yugoslavs.

Mihailović and the officers were attempting to compete with the Partisans on issues they had long avoided. After attempting steadfastly to subordinate the Chetnik movement to a strictly military leadership, they now tried to create a civilian political arm. Instead of postwar political programs whose major goal was Greater Serbia, they turned to popular and democratic appeals. The result was the convocation of the congress of St. Sava’s Day (which actually met from 12 to 16 January 1944) at the village of Ba in western Serbia.\textsuperscript{22} The former leader of the Social Democrats and a civilian figure of a progressive stripe, Živko Topalović,\textsuperscript{23} was chosen to preside over the meeting, which, according to a German source, was attended by about five thousand armed Chetniks, practically all from Serbia, and by almost three hundred civilian delegates.\textsuperscript{21} Mihailović gave an address in which he repeatedly denied any dictatorial ambitions, and the congress ended approving a resolution which included a commitment of allegiance to both democratic and monarchic principles, an appeal to the Partisans to renounce political activities until the end of the war, and a plan for the creation of an enlarged and federally organized Yugoslavia.

The fruits of the congress did represent concessions, but several of the proposals were utterly unrealistic, and it is doubtful that the officers were in tune with the radicalized mood of the broad strata of the Yugoslav civilian population. Obviously, the most notable changes in the Chetnik position were the support for democratic political principles and the proposal for a federalized constitutional structure. Against this, though, must be balanced their refusal to moderate their position on

\textsuperscript{22}Aside from the account of the St. Sava Congress provided by its principal organizer Topalović (ibid., pp. 81–87), the only other source which deals with it at length is a report by Neubacher. Deutsche Gesandtschaft Belgrad (Neubacher) to Auswärtig Berlin, “Der Sveti Sava Kongress der DM-Bewegung, 10 February 1943, T-120, roll 2908, frames 6183H/E464519–23.
\textsuperscript{23}Topalović’s own career anticipated both the democratic and the anti-Communist elements of the new Chetnik program. One of the founders of the left-leaning Yugoslav Socialist Workers’ party in 1919, which joined the Third International, Topalović later stood out as one of the chief spokesmen of the party’s reformist wing and was always a strong opponent of the Communists’ revolutionary tactics. Pero Moraća, 	extit{Istoriija Saveza Komunista Jugoslavije} (History of the League of Yugoslav Communists) (Belgrade: Izdavačko Preduzeće Rad, 1966), pp. 17, 22.
\textsuperscript{24}Nedić to Mil. Bfh. Südost, 22 February 1944, T-501, roll 256, frame 881.
the question of monarchy. Moreover, Mihailović's own firm denial that
the officers intended to set up a military dictatorship reveals the con­
siderable and understandable lack of confidence in them on the part of
the civilians. Over the short term, the most significant outcome of the
St. Sava Day congress was Mihailović's forceful refusal, at least for the
time being, to join the drift toward collaboration.

The evidence indicates that Mihailović was at least partially successful
in reasserting himself as the Chetniks' moral leader and that he did
restrain temporarily the collaborationist tendencies among several of his
former followers. By late January a noticeable and rapid deterioration
of relations between the Chetniks and the Quisling formations, Nedić's
Serb State Guard and Ljotić's Volunteer Corps, had set in; some of Mi­
hailović's followers even attempted small-scale disarmament actions and
sabotage activities against Nedić's units. In February the situation in
Serbia deteriorated even more rapidly. The officers' bands in some in­
stances skirmished with Ljotić's troops, seized control of local administra­
tive units, and denounced their treaties with the Germans. Nedić was
concerned enough to write to the German commanding general in
Serbia threatening to resign if immediate action were not taken to curb
Mihailović's growing influence among the Serb people and within the
civil and military administration in Belgrade.

Despite this temporary revival of limited resistance activity, it seems
certain that Mihailović was still interested in long-range goals rather than
risky immediate confrontations with the Germans. Practically all of the
Chetniks over whom he had influence operated in parts of western and
southern Serbia; those formations which were active in early 1944
challenged the Quisling armed formations rather than the Germans.
Mihailović, indeed, could hardly afford an armed struggle with the oc­
cupation forces, since he depended on them to resist Partisan intrusions
into Serbia. He probably counted more on tightening up the Chetnik
organization and preserving munitions to prepare for the seizure of power
in Belgrade when the Germans withdrew from Yugoslavia. According to
intercepted Chetnik radio messages, there is some evidence that in early
March Mihailović tried to make an agreement with officers of the Bul­

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garian occupation units in southern Serbia to ensure their cooperation in the event of a German withdrawal.29

Over the short term, the officers had to preserve somehow their enclave in Serbia. Accordingly, in late March, when the first large Partisan units attempted to force their way across the Drina River, the Chetniks in several instances joined ranks with Nedić and the Germans to stop them.30 The force of military events made some form of collaboration almost a necessity if the Serb Chetniks were to survive, and Mihailović’s anti-Axis appeals of January proved to be of only temporary significance.

By mid-April the Germans were again coming to believe that Mihailović’s estrangement from the British was final. This assessment received added impetus when the Chetnik General Miroslav Trifunović let it be known that the officers were ready to provide fifty thousand troops against Tito in conjunction with the Germans.31 Some of Mihailović’s most important unit leaders, like Keserović, had already sent agents to Nedić’s State Guard headquarters, and in May Ljotić took a first step towards smoothing over the extremely difficult relations with the officers when he conferred personally with General Trifunović at Gornji Milanovac in western Serbia.32

With the constant threat of Partisan raids into Serbia and an impending Soviet drive in the Balkans, all of the leaders of the native anti-Communist forces were thinking increasingly of closing ranks and forgetting past differences. Ljotić negotiated with the Chetnik officers, Nedić suddenly informed the Germans that he was no longer opposed to arrangements with Mihailović’s agents,33 and Mihailović himself, although avoiding active collaboration with the Germans as long as he could, did decide on a hands-off policy toward the occupation troops. In a message to one of his followers in south Serbia, Major Djurić, he summed up the situation by pointing out that

in the actions against Tito’s bans on the Drina the Germans did not touch us. On the contrary many of our commands were helped and enabled to avoid attacks made by the Communists from Bosnia. . . . As we have not sufficient munitions and forces, we cannot carry on fighting on two fronts. At present our most dangerous enemy are the Communists. Therefore, I order that every

30 See the testimony of General Milos Isaković (Bulgarian First Army Corps) in Belgrade on 5 September 1945 in Dokumenti o Izdajstvu Draže Mihailovića, no. 656.
kind of armed action against the occupier’s armed forces cease but the occupier will be attacked by propaganda. 3

The Chetnik leadership as long as it could hovered between resistance and collaboration. Mihailović’s subordinates in Serbia tried to come to terms with Nedić and Ljotić and even cooperated occasionally with the Germans against the Partisans, but Mihailović would go no farther than calling off hostilities against the Germans and officially maintained an anti-Axis stand. As a result most of the officers’ formations received no appreciable aid from the Germans, and the movement remained militarily helpless throughout the summer of 1944. The German command in Belgrade continued to stress that the Chetnik “movement is and remains hostile” and prohibited measures contributing to “even the partial renewal of the Mihailović movement.” Arms deliveries were to be made only “in very small quantities” and “on a purely local basis.” 35

Militarily, the Chetniks survived as a result of a truce with the Germans; politically, Mihailović’s gestures had little impact, and he was reacting to events more than initiating them. In June the Germans failed to annihilate the Partisans in one daring strike, combining raids by motorized units and by about 650 paratroops, at Tito’s headquarters at Drvar, Bosnia. Tito escaped in a Russian plane to Italy and discovered that Churchill had just had Mihailović removed as King Peter’s minister of war. 36 Soon after, the Partisan leader took a major step toward breaking the political deadlock with the émigré government: the British agreed to sponsor the Tito-Subašić agreement, which guaranteed at least significant Communist participation in the postwar government.

Mihailović’s response to his exclusion from the London government was to set up his own shadow administration, the Committee of Experts (Odbor Stručnjaka) in early July; it issued a denunciation of the Subašić “government” for its support of Communism and Croat separatism. 37 In late July the Odbor called a plenary session of the Central National Committee, originally established in the fall of 1941 at Ravna Gora, and at the meeting Subašić was called upon to resign.

In rejecting the London émigré government’s compromise with Tito, Mihailović placed the Serb Chetniks in a position where they were almost forced to make common cause militarily with the Germans. In mid-July, a week after the formation of the Subašić government (7 July 1944), one of Mihailović’s chief aides, Neško Nedić, held talks with the

37 Ibid., p. 310.
head of the German South-East High Command, General Felber, in which he pledged that the Chetniks had broken completely with the British and requested arms and munitions for use exclusively against the Partisans. So forceful was Lieutenant Nedić's anti-British tirade that Felber reported to O.K.W. his "personal impression that this time the Chetniks' offer definitely should be taken seriously." 38

General Felber's views were, however, not shared by Hitler. In late August, in fact, shortly after the Soviet liberation of Rumania, Hitler responded to the appeals of van Weichs of Army Group "F" for military collaboration with Mihailović; he approved weapons and munitions supplies to Chetnik groups only "for use in small tactical operations." 39

In any event, the military situation was hopeless for both the Germans and Mihailović, for Army Group "F" could at best manage only a temporary holding action against a Soviet invasion from Rumania and Bulgaria, and the Chetniks had to defend Serbia from a Partisan invasion from Bosnia without any reliable allies except a few of Nedić's and Ljotić's weak units.

Faced with the Partisan invasion of Serbia, Mihailović's headquarters continued to search for any possible ally. By mid-August rumors were circulating in Belgrade that the Chetniks had already lost over a thousand men against the Partisans in south Serbia, 40 and new efforts were made to get help from Nedic and Ljotic. 41 Mihailović's agent, Captain Predrag Raković, contacted Kostić and succeeded in inducing Nedić to agree to the immediate delivery of ten thousand rifles and twenty thousand uniforms, but before the month was over the Chetnik military position had completely disintegrated and word reached Belgrade that the Partisans had surrounded the troops of one of the leading officers, Major Keserović. 42

In order to improve their chances of getting badly needed arms from Nedić and the Germans, Chetnik headquarters in the last week of August forbad the troops to attack German supply vehicles. 13 After all the countless turns and shifts of Mihailović's strategy, however, the German re-

41 Plenča, Medjunarodni Odnosi, p. 311; Kostić, Za Istoriiju Naših Dana, pp. 155-56.
sponse was still divided. While Felber and Neubacher favored collabora-
tion, Hitler, according to Ribbentrop, continued to be suspicious of
"the real designs of Mihailović," and in Belgrade the German police
intensified their hunt for Chetnik sympathizers, arresting about four
hundred in one day alone.

With the Germans about to commence their slow withdrawal from the
Balkans and Soviet and Partisan troops preparing for a march on Bel-
grade from the east and west, respectively, one may well ask what was
sustaining Mihailović’s hopes. By then it was evident that he could not
depend on any appreciable support from the Germans, and the Chetniks’
decaying prospects depended on holding their own somehow in Serbia
against Tito and on the Red Army remaining out of Yugoslavia. There
is, in fact, some evidence that Mihailović thought the Allies, especially
the Americans, were exerting their influence to prevent a Russian occupa-
tion of Belgrade.

Out of desperation as much as anything else, the Chetniks hoped for
some sort of spheres of influence arrangement between the Allies and
the Russians in which American opposition to Stalin’s supposed designs
in the Balkans would override the earlier British support for Tito and
compel the Russians to accept a “mixed” political settlement in Yugo-
slavia. According to the British Colonel Bailey, the royal Yugoslav am-
bassador to Washington, the ferociously pro-Chetnik Konstantine Fotich,
had been encouraging Mihailović since early 1944 to think he could
play off the United States against the English. Apparently, by the late
summer of 1944 American “policies” regarding the resistance movements
in Yugoslavia were so vague and poorly coordinated that Mihailović
seized on every hint of a dramatic anti-Communist Allied political and/or
military intervention in Yugoslav affairs. Moreover, because Eisenhower’s
headquarters would have nothing to do with military operations in the
Balkans, American activities there were confined exclusively to air and
O.S.S. intelligence operations. This last fact is significant, for it was
almost certainly the activities of American intelligence in Yugoslavia

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44 Ribbentrop to Neubacher, “N. 1905 vom 31.8.44,” 31 August 1944, T-120, roll 780,
frame 371737.
45 Gerena Affari Consolari in Belgrado to Ministero degli Affari Esteri, “N. 1303/789
46 O.K.W. ordered Army Group “E” to prepare for withdrawing its units from
Greece on 1 September.
47 Ambassador to Yugoslav government in exile (Macreagh) to secretary of state,
21 February 1944, FRUS (1944), vol. 4: (Europe), p. 1349.
48 According to Robert Murphy’s account, Roosevelt’s view of the situation in Yugo-
slavia immediately before the Cairo conference (November 1943) was that “we [the
Americans] should build a wall around those two fellows [Tito and Mihailović] and
let them fight it out, [then] we could do business with the winner.” Diplomat among
which sustained Mihailović’s expectations of an about-face in Allied policies in southeastern Europe.

The head of O.S.S., General William ("Wild Bill") Donovan, as early as January 1944 made clear his desire to preserve a flexible policy in Yugoslavia when he rejected a British request that American officers be sent at once to Tito’s headquarters. Soon after an O.S.S. officer proposed sending to Mihailović “a purely and confessedly intelligence officer,” and when Donovan suggested the same idea to Hull, Roosevelt approved immediately. Marine Corps Captain W. R. Mansfield arrived at Chetnik headquarters in March for the purpose, as Donovan explained it in a note of 31 March, of “infiltrating agents into Austria and Germany.” He soon transmitted to Donovan’s staff at Capri, Italy, a personal letter from Mihailović addressed to Eisenhower. Whatever the contents of this letter, Eisenhower’s response was not very encouraging. Although he promised Donovan that “the proper staff sections will comb [it] for everything they can get,” he felt compelled to add that “I should not attempt to answer directly the letter from General Mihailović.”

American intelligence operations with Chetnik headquarters in Serbia had at least two immediate and obvious goals: to secure the evacuation of several American pilots who had been shot down over Yugoslavia and retrieved by Mihailović’s followers, and to use the Chetnik sanctuaries and their contacts with Belgrade to gain information on German plans in the Balkans. Aside from these aims, it appears certain that Donovan and the State Department representative for Mediterranean affairs, Robert Murphy, also hoped that the mission would maintain permanent contact with Mihailović and facilitate a later and decisive American political gesture in Yugoslavia. However, despite a certain anti-Tito mood in Washington, about which Hull hinted in July when he complained about the British “insistence on giving Tito politically and militarily a free hand for all Yugoslavia,” Donovan’s and Murphy’s persistent efforts to influence their superiors got nowhere.

O.S.S., then, acting independently, continued to pursue operations in

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49 Memorandum of the assistant secretary of state (Berle), 26 January 1944, (1944), vol. 4: (Europe), p. 1339–40.
50 Ambassador to Yugoslav government in exile (Macreagh) to Hull, 21 February 1944, ibid., pp. 1349–50.
51 Donovan to Hull, 2 March 1944, ibid., p. 1350, n. 53; memorandum prepared for mission to London of under secretary of state (Stettinius), 2 March 1944, ibid., pp. 1353–54.
53 Secretary of state to counsellor of mission at Algiers, 8 July 1944, FRUS (1944), vol. 4: (Europe), p. 1387.
54 Murphy, Diplomat among Warriors, p. 221.
Yugoslavia, and by the end of the summer its activities were obviously anti-Partisan. On 27 and 28 August, when Mihailović was sending out feelers for a more formal truce with the Germans, Colonel Robert H. McDowell, a former professor of Balkan history at the University of Michigan, arrived at Chetnik headquarters. According to Mihailović's testimony at his trial in 1946, McDowell told him that the Americans were not interested in his fighting the Germans and would prefer that he remain with his people.\textsuperscript{55}

One might dismiss this statement as a clumsy effort by Mihailović, made during his final plea, to shift the blame for his actions to others were it not for the fact that there is reason to believe that McDowell did encourage the officers to think they had American backing for the pursuit of anti-Partisan projects. There is even strong evidence to suggest that McDowell led Mihailović to believe that the Russians would not enter Yugoslavia and that Mihailović took this as proof that at least part of the country would fall in the non-Communist "sphere." With that sort of external support, the Chetniks could make one last deal with the Germans, before they left the Balkans, in order to gain the upper hand in Serbia.

In early September Neubacher, who had good contacts with several Chetniks, reported that Mihailović, "with the full support of a small American staff who have arrived only recently, will fight against us [the Germans] under absolutely no circumstances" and that "the Americans have told him that Soviet Russia would be breaking the Teheran accords if they cross the Danube."\textsuperscript{56} Next, Neubacher heard that the officers had been told by a certain colonel on Mihailović's staff, "a special agent of Roosevelt," that they could count on an "Anglo-American intervention" in the event of a Russian invasion of Serbia.\textsuperscript{57} The officers made no secret of their calculations, and one of Mihailović's agents in Belgrade soon told Neubacher that they were sure "that in the last phase of the war, the Anglo-Americans would decide the fate of Serbia."\textsuperscript{58} When Mihailović held an urgent meeting of his officers on 6 September he told them that the Red Army would not cross the Danube, for it would lead to a break with the Allies, and authorized the distribution of leaflets which asserted that the British and Americans had decided to cut off all

\textsuperscript{55} Maclean, \textit{Disputed Barricades}, p. 324; Plenča, \textit{Medjunarodni Odnosi}, p. 312.
\textsuperscript{56} Neubacher to Ritter, "N. 1864 vom 1.9.44," 1 September 1944, \textit{T-120}, roll 780, frames 371731–32.
\textsuperscript{57} Neubacher to Ritter, "N. 1868 vom 2.9.44," 2 September 1944, \textit{T-120}, roll 780, frame 371729.
\textsuperscript{58} Neubacher to Ritter, "N. 1882 vom 3.9.44," 3 September 1944, \textit{T-120}, roll 780, frame 371726.
aid to Tito and were presently disarming Communist resistance groups in France and Italy.\(^5^9\)

Only two days earlier, on 4 September, Neubacher felt ready to act and, judging that his “trump card [was] anti-Communism” and that the officers could not afford a simultaneous fight against the Germans and the Partisans, gave approval to “joint actions with the Chetniks.”\(^6^0\) The next day Mihailović instructed his subordinates to avoid conflicts with the Germans.\(^6^1\) For the moment the way seemed clear for a collaboration between Chetnik headquarters and the Germans which, if born of mutual desperation and wild miscalculations, was collaboration nonetheless.

To a large degree, these illusions resulted from a double game Tito himself was playing with the western Allies and the Russians. Murphy, for example, was convinced after his talks with the Partisan leader in Italy on 31 August that “the Russians would not enter Serbia but would confine their activities along the Danube into Hungary, leaving Marshall Tito to deal with Serbian matters.”\(^6^2\) As late as 23 September, less than a week before the first Soviet units attacked the Germans in Serbia from Bulgaria, Maclean thought that Tito, who had left for Romania on the previous day, “would endeavor to persuade the Russians not to enter Yugoslavia.”\(^6^3\) Despite his statements to Maclean, Tito succeeded during his trip to Romania in working out the details for the supply of ten Partisan divisions and, more important, for the “Belgrade action,” a Red Army invasion of Serbia.\(^6^4\) On September 28, when the advance units of the Third Ukranian Front’s 57th Army entered Yugoslavia, the Chetniks’ desperate strategy fell apart completely. Shortly before this, Tito’s troops overran the main body of Chetniks in western Serbia, came close to capturing Mihailović, and, according to some reports, seized his archives.\(^6^5\)

By the end of September, the Partisan breakthrough in Serbia was complete, Mihailović’s weak units were totally scattered, and Neubacher

\(^5^9\) Kostić, *Za Istoriju Naših Dana*, p. 165.


\(^6^1\) Plenč, *Međunarodni Odnosi*, p. 312.

\(^6^2\) Memorandum by U.S. political adviser on staff of supreme Allied commander, Mediterranean theater (Murphy), to assistant chief of Division of Southern European Affairs (Cannon), 8 September 1944, *FRUS (1944)*, vol. 4: (Europe), p. 1404.

\(^6^3\) U.S. political adviser on staff of supreme Allied commander, Mediterranean theater (Kirk), to Hull, 23 September 1944, *ibid.*, pp. 1410–11.


\(^6^5\) U.S. political adviser on staff of supreme Allied commander, Mediterranean theater (Kirk), to secretary of state, 16 September 1944, *FRUS (1944)*, vol. 4: (Europe), pp. 1407–8. According to Kostić (*Za Istoriju Naših Dana*, p. 165), Mihailović owed his narrow escape to the support provided by one of Ljotić’s Volunteer Corps detachments.
had lost all contact with Chetnik headquarters. On 26 September a group of political figures on Mihailović's staff sent an appeal to the Allies through McDowell calling for help to stop the Bolshevik threat in Serbia, but, by this time, the American attitude was irrelevant, and the final collapse of the Chetnik movement was beginning.

The hoped-for Allied intervention took the form, of course, of Churchill's famous "percentage deal" with Stalin on 9 October in which influence in Yugoslavia was vaguely sorted out on a fifty-fifty basis while Tito and the Russians pushed ahead toward Belgrade. The British and Americans were relying basically on the power of persuasion to stop or modify the civil war in Serbia; Churchill justified his arrangement with the Russians by the argument that the accord was intended to "produce a joint and friendly policy towards Marshal Tito, while ensuring that weapons furnished to him are used against the common Nazi foe rather than for internal purposes." By 20 October, however, Belgrade had been liberated, and Tito soon felt secure enough to complain bitterly to Maclean about Colonel McDowell for "representing himself, or in any event . . . permitting himself to be represented as [the] official representative of [the] Govt. of the United States sanctioned by [the] Allied High Command on whose behalf H[ead] Q[quarters] promised support to Mihailović." At the end of October O.S.S. was assuring Washington that McDowell had been trying to get out of Yugoslavia for "over a month . . . [but had] met with many difficulties due to [the] increased tempo of fighting there."

The spheres of influence arrangement bore no relation to military realities, and American "support" for Mihailović evaporated as quickly as it had appeared. The Chetniks were routed in their last bastion, and a number of the rank and file went over to the Partisans. In November Donovan's staff, which had nourished so many of the officers' illusions, rejected a British request that they evacuate Mihailović on the grounds that "serious complications" would obviously result from such an action.

During the rapid swirl of military events in the fall of 1944 virtually all the isolated and weak Chetnik formations which did not pass over to

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69 The quotation is from Maclean's report to General Wilson, in U.S. political adviser on staff of supreme Allied commander, Mediterranean theater, to secretary of state, 3 October 1944, FRUS (1944), vol. 4: (Europe), pp. 1415-16.
70 See the remarks in Minasian, Osvobozhdienie, pp. 419-20.
71 U.S. political adviser on staff of supreme Allied commander, Mediterranean theater, to secretary of state, 15 November 1944, FRUS (1944), vol. 4: (Europe), p. 1422.
the Partisans remained in the woods or disintegrated completely. Some
of them skirmished with the rear of withdrawing German units, but
many remained close to Nedić's State Guard troops and avoided any
military operations. With the loss of Serbia apparent to practically
everyone, their only remaining options were to move their troops to the
west toward the Adriatic or give up the fight altogether and join the
German march to Slovenia and ultimately to Italy or Austria. Signifi-
cantly enough, both options were based on the premise that the British
and Americans were not prepared to sacrifice the anti-Tito cause com-
pletely and were willing to launch an amphibious operation against the
Adriatic coast—or at least to thrust into northwestern Yugoslavia to save
the Chetniks and various Quisling groups from Partisan vengeance.

The first plan, calling for a Chetnik exodus to Montenegro, Herzego-
vina, and Dalmatia, could succeed only in the event of an Allied show of
force, carried out for anti-Partisan ends, along the Adriatic. It is revealing
that several factions in the officers' camp, even including some persons
who were disgruntled over Mihailović's leadership, continued to believe
that an about-face in Allied policies toward the Yugoslav resistance was
imminent. In Herzegovina, for example, Colonel Lukačević, who left
Yugoslavia for Cairo in early 1944 and returned later to set up an anti-
Axis Chetnik group free of Mihailović's authority, expected a British
landing near Dubrovnik in September. Kostić, too, relates that when he
urged some of the officers to retreat to Slovenia along with the Volun-
tee Corps troops, he met strong opposition on the grounds that it would
be wiser to move toward Dalmatia and Montenegro in order to act in
conjunction with the Allied landing. German intelligence reports sug-
gest that Mihailović and the coterie of officers at his headquarters were
thus deceived until very late in the war.

Despite all the evidence to the contrary, there were signs toward the
end of 1944 that sudden and dramatic shifts of Soviet and Anglo-American
spheres of influence in the Balkans would leave the officers with a foothold
in Yugoslavia, and Mihailović refused to capitulate. In part these expecta-
tions must have derived from the fact that by 12 November the last Red
Army units had withdrawn from Yugoslav territory. There is also some

72 For example, in parts of western Serbia or in the area east of Sarajevo. Minasian,
Osvoboždenie, p. 420; Erich Schmidt-Richberg, Der Endkampf auf dem Balkan
73 See the interesting article by Radoje Pajović, "Formiranje Četničke Nezavisne
Grupe Nacionalnog Otpora" (The formation of the Chetnik Independent Group of
74 Kostić, Za Istoriju Naših Dana, p. 173.
75 See for instance the South-East High Command's "final report," Chef der Mil-
76 Tomasevich, "Yugoslavia during the Second World War," p. 106.
reason to believe that Churchill’s decisive intervention in Greece in December stiffened the officers’ resolve to carry on the anti-Partisan struggle in the hope of Allied support. Djurisić, for example, was so impressed by British actions in Athens that he told one of Ljotić’s delegates that he was considering a march through Albania to Greece to join with the English and Greek monarchist forces. Finally, when news of the Churchill-Stalin “spheres” arrangement of October leaked out, some Chetniks thought its implementation would nullify Tito’s earlier military victories. Thus Topalović wrote Mihailović from Italy on 3 November that “the governments of Great Britain and the Soviet Union have agreed to divide up Yugoslavia 50–50,” which meant that “Tito will probably be given the upper hand in Croatia while we get Serbia east of the Drina River.”

By the end of 1944, however, when the Yugoslav “front” ran roughly from the Adriatic opposite Herzegovina to the Drava in the north, the Germans were no longer able to absorb the brunt of Partisan military pressures in the southern and eastern parts of the country, and the officers’ bands were forced to move steadily north and west. The officers in Serbia had an extremely difficult time carrying out the evacuation; at the end of the year, in fact, German Army Group “E” refused an appeal from Mihailović’s aide, General Trifunović, to allow the bands to cross the Drina into Bosnia. By about mid-January, though, Mihailović had reached the area north of Sarajevo with a few thousand troops under his immediate command, but the retreating Germans still had orders to disarm the bands and resist their efforts to continue into central Bosnia.

In order to prepare the way for as free a passage to the northwest as possible, Ljotić, Jevdjević, and Rupnik, the leader of the Slovene Quisling forces, all moved to Ljubljana, where they attempted for weeks to persuade the Germans and Ustaši to agree to let a large number of Mihailović’s troops into Croatia and Slovenia. In November and December Pop Đujić was also urgently appealing for official permission for his battered Dinaric group to take refuge in Istria. The Germans in Zagreb, especially Kasche, proved intransigent, and Ljotić had to go to Vienna personally in mid-December to speak to Neubacher before winning approval for the northward passage of the Dinaric Chetniks. Đujić’s six

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87 Kostić, Za Istoriju Naših Dana, p. 200.
89 Plenča (Medjunarodni Odnosi, pp. 261–62) found this letter in the Archives of the Military-Historical Institute at Belgrade.
88 Schmidt-Richberg, Der Endkampf, p. 83.
81 Kostić, Za Istoriju Naših Dana, p. 185.
thousand or so typhus-ridden followers made a slow journey to the Slov­
vene coast, lost hundreds of men to the reprisals of nearby Ustaši, and in January were disarmed by the Germans. Djurišić, now without any effective military strength, arrived at Ljubljana on 28 December to confer with the other Serb civilian anti-Communist leaders.

By early 1945, then, the Chetniks were splitting into two groups, with the major civilian figures, Djurišić and Jevdjević, in Slovenia and most of the remaining officers in eastern Bosnia. The most important of the Bosnian officers was Djurišić, whose following consisted of about seven thousand troops and a few thousand civilian refugees; with him were Ostojić and Račić, neither of whom had any following at all. By February, after Djurišić's Montenegrins had arrived in the vicinity of the other Chetnik formations in eastern Bosnia, Mihailović had a force of some twenty to twenty-five thousand, including armed troops, stragglers, and civilian refugees, under his nominal command. With disaster approaching, however, he lost whatever remained of his moral authority over the Chetniks, and in the movement's final weeks there was a bitter falling out between the officers.

Djurišić was convinced that the only realistic course of action was an immediate retreat to Slovenia, and he began sending radio messages to Djurišić that he negotiate the Montenegrins' safe passage to the northwest through Nedić and Ljotić. Toward the end of the month Djurišić organized a meeting of the unit leaders, which Mihailović apparently did not attend, and won general approval for a strategy of capitulation and retreat. The Montenegrin leader's proposals stimulated a movement among the officers to desert the fight in the interior of the country and join forces with the civilian group at Ljubljana. Ljotić encouraged this trend in March by sending a delegation, headed by Kostić and the original chief figure in the Belgrade puppet administration, Milan Acimović, to Mihailović's headquarters to convince the officers to throw in their

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84 Several of the Montenegrin Chetniks withdrew alongside and as auxiliary detachments of the German columns. This is evident from an eyewitness account of at least one American pilot; he was shot down in July 1944 and was retrieved by the Chetniks. (Major) James M. Inks, Eight Bailed Out (New York: W. W. Norton, 1954), pp. 85ff.
87 Milan Basta, Rat posle Rata (The war after the war) (Zagreb: Novinarska Izdavačka Kuća Stvarnost, 1963), p. 125.
lot with the rapidly growing collection of Serb and Slovene anti-Communist forces gathering in Slovenia.  

In order to present the “Slovene variant” in the most optimistic light, Kostić told Mihailović and his leading collaborators, Keserović, Kalabić, Račić, and Bacovic, that Ljotić was working out a plan to use a combined force of some twenty-five thousand Serb-Slovene fighters and Mihailović’s twenty-five thousand troops as the basis for attempting a coup in Ljubljana, mobilizing thirty thousand more men, and securing Allied support. The goal was to keep Tito and the Russians out of the area long enough for King Peter to return to Slovenia.

Mihailović did not reject Ljotić’s plan openly and even sent warm letters to Djujić and Jevdjević in Ljubljana, but he did refuse to move his own men to Slovenia. This, however, was enough to exacerbate further what was essentially a personal feud between Djurišić and Mihailović and brought about the final disintegration of the officers’ movement. By early spring almost all the officers except Mihailović favored Djurišić’s plan, and in late March they succeeded in establishing radio contact with the Ljotić-Djujić-Jevdjević group.  

In early April Djurišić’s followers broke openly with Mihailović and began their march toward Slovenia.

While Djurišić was negotiating with Pavelić for permission to move into the area just south of the Sava River, Mihailović was trying to restrain the massive exodus; he argued to Ljotić that there was “a considerable breakdown in the Communist ranks, especially in Serbia” and that they should not give up the struggle against Tito. At this point, the more isolated and hopeless Mihailović’s position became, the more extreme were his calculations. Although he probably had no more than ten thousand followers, he informed Ljotić that he would return to Serbia and radioed Djujić on 11 April that his troops would join a popular uprising there against the Partisans. Some evidence suggests that Mihailović had been planning a return to Serbia throughout early 1945. An intelligence report of the Ustaši High Command, dated 25 April 1945, explained that one of the reasons for the break between the Montenegrins and Chetnik headquarters was the fact that Djurišić was “opposed to the idea of participating in a march back to Serbia to start a national uprising.”  

Mihailović’s plan was, of course, suicidal, but as events turned out the
schemes of the civilian collaborators and Djurišić were just as hopeless. At the end of the war, in fact, it was only a matter of who—the British, Ustaši, or Partisans—would dispose of each remaining Chetnik group. Djurišić, after setting out with approximately ten thousand followers, attempted to negotiate free passage through Croatia to Slovenia with the aid of the Montenegrin federalist Sekula Drlijević, but quickly ran into trouble with the Ustaši government. They were even attacked by Ustaši troops, but most must have survived because the British refused asylum to eight thousand left in Carinthia and sent them back to Maribor. There they were either "disarmed easily," according to the Titoist version, or all murdered, as the former Nedić officer Karapandžić would have it.

Perhaps one thousand of Djurišić's Chetniks and about five hundred of Jevdjević's troops somehow made it into Austria, but at the end of May the British moved them, along with thousands of Serb Volunteers, Slovene Homeguardsmen, and all sorts of collaborationist formations, back to Yugoslavia. As for the rest of the leaders, several simply disappeared, probably shot by the Partisans; others were later captured, tried, and executed; still others were able to save themselves by slipping into the Allied occupation zone. Ljotić, the last of the civilian ringleaders, was killed in an automobile accident in late April; Jevdjević, however, made his way to Italy and was fortunate enough to be removed by the British to Salerno.

Mihailović, of course, remained in eastern Bosnia until the close of the war and then, as planned, began to move his men back toward Serbia. Around mid-May most of his following was destroyed in the area near the sources of the Drina and Neretva rivers. Mihailović escaped and was not captured until almost a year later, in March 1946. He was tried and convicted for high treason in Belgrade and was executed on 26 July 1946.

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95 Ibid., p. 129.
96 Ibid., p. 133.