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**Clinton's Unilateral Push for Peace in Bosnia:  
A Resolution at All Costs Prior to the 1996 US Election**

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## ABSTRACT

L'agosto 1995 segnò una svolta decisiva nella posizione di politica estera del presidente Bill Clinton e, più in generale, nell'impegno diplomatico degli Stati Uniti (USA) nella guerra in Bosnia. L'analisi ha mostrato che dallo scoppio delle guerre Jugoslave nel 1991, il predecessore di Clinton, George H. W. Bush, si concentrò la sua politica estera prevalentemente su Mosca e il Medio Oriente.<sup>1</sup> Come ha affermato Madeleine Albright: "Inizialmente la crisi è stata vista dagli europei e dagli alti funzionari dell'amministrazione Bush come un problema europeo che dovrebbe e potrebbe essere risolto dall'Europa."<sup>2</sup> Dopo essere entrato in carica, Clinton apparve favorevole ad estendere i limitati livelli di sostegno internazionale che aveva ereditato da Bush e concentrò la sua priorità sull'economia domestica.<sup>3</sup> Due anni e mezzo dopo, tuttavia, gli orribili eventi che ebbero luogo a Srebrenica nel luglio 1995 implicarono un intervento significativo in prima linea nella presidenza di Clinton. Con il discorso di politica estera di Clinton incentrato sugli aiuti umanitari, il passo successivo più logico da fare dopo il genocidio di Srebrenica sembrava quello di un maggiore impegno degli Stati Uniti in Bosnia. Sebbene questa analisi sia in una certa misura accurata, tralascia una ragione più convincente dietro la particolare tempistica di un maggiore coinvolgimento da parte degli Stati Uniti in Bosnia: l'imminente campagna per la rielezione di Clinton nel 1996.

Alla luce delle critiche affrontate a causa della sua incoerenza negli impegni con la propria politica estera a base umanitaria, Clinton aveva bisogno di una grande vittoria in politica

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<sup>1</sup> Per l'analisi della politica estera di George H. W. Bush: Michael Mandelbaum, "The Bush Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 1 (1990): 5-22, Jeffrey A. Engel, "A Better World... but Don't Get Carried Away: The Foreign Policy of George H. W. Bush Twenty Years On," *Diplomatic History* 34, no. 1 (2010): 25-46, Eric A. Miller and Steve A. Yetiv, "The New World Order in Theory and Practice: The Bush Administration's Worldview in Transition," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (2001): 56-68, Michael Hirsh, "George H.W. Bush's Misunderstood Presidency," *Foreign Policy*, December 1, 2018, accesso March 22, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/12/01/george-h-w-bush-misunderstood-presidency-death/>, Ivo H. Daalder and I. M. Destler, "The Foreign Policy Genius of George H. W. Bush: How He Changed the Foreign Policy Process Forever," *Foreign Affairs*, December 4, 2018, accesso March 22, 2021, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-12-04/foreign-policy-genius-george-h-w-bush>, e Hal Brands, *Making the Unipolar Moment: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Rise of the Post-Cold War Order* (Cornell University Press, 2019), chap. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Madeleine Albright, *Madam Secretary: A Memoir* (First Harper Perennial Edition, EPub Edition, January 2013), 410.

<sup>3</sup> Nei primi otto mesi della sua presidenza, Clinton ha tenuto solo quattro importanti discorsi di politica estera, che hanno tutti sottolineato la continuità con le politiche del suo predecessore. Douglas Brinkley, "Democratic Enlargement: The Clinton Doctrine," *Foreign Policy*, no. 106 (1997): 112-13.

estera mentre si preparava per la sua campagna di rielezione della primavera successiva.<sup>4</sup> In un promemoria del NSC dei primi di agosto del 1995 che discuteva le possibili strategie di fine partita della Bosnia, l'ambasciatore degli Stati Uniti alle Nazioni Unite, Madeleine Albright, sottolineò l'importanza di un'America che smettesse di arrancare e invece prendesse l'iniziativa nella risoluzione della crisi o "la Bosnia oscurerà il nostro intero primo mandato."<sup>5</sup>

Quando nel 1994 gli accordi iniziali Comunità europea-Nazioni Unite (CE-ONU) si rivelarono inutili, fu istituito un nuovo gruppo negoziale internazionale, il Gruppo di Contatto.<sup>6</sup> Composto da rappresentanti di Francia, Germania, Russia, Regno Unito e Stati Uniti, ogni paese aveva le proprie ambizioni e riluttanze nell'evoluzione del processo di pace, contribuendo sia alle difficoltà che ai ritardi nello sviluppo di una soluzione unificata alla crisi.<sup>7</sup> Tuttavia, alla fine il piano del Gruppo di Contatto condivise la stessa sorte che era toccata alle precedenti proposte CE-ON, e venne respinto da una o più delle fazioni intransigenti in competizione.<sup>8</sup> Le prospettive apparivano particolarmente fosche nell'estate del 1995. L'escalation di violenza dopo la scadenza del cessate il fuoco del 30 aprile, che l'ex presidente degli Stati Uniti Carter aiutò a mediare a dicembre, portò la guerra a nuovi pericolosi livelli.<sup>9</sup> Con l'erosione della credibilità di UNPROFOR, gli alleati avvertirono che, qualora la situazione fosse rimasta invariata, alla fine avrebbero ritirato le loro forze.<sup>10</sup> Inoltre, all'amministrazione Clinton cominciava ad esserci un crescente consenso sul fatto che il Gruppo di Contatto avesse perso la sua inerzia e, come tale, nuove scelte strategiche iniziarono a dominare le discussioni interne ad alto livello.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Clinton è stato pesantemente criticato per non essere intervenuto nel genocidio ruandese nel 1994. Nelle sue memorie in seguito lo ha definito "uno dei più grandi rimpianti della mia presidenza." Bill Clinton, *My Life* (Hutchinson, 2004) chap. 38, para. 39. Le incoerenze della politica estera di Clinton saranno discusse nel secondo capitolo.

<sup>5</sup> "1995-08-03B, UN Ambassador Memo re Bosnia Endgame Strategy," *Clinton Digital Library*, accesso October 20, 2020, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12511>.

<sup>6</sup> Ivo H. Daalder, *Getting to Dayton: The Making of America's Bosnia Policy* (The Brookings Institution, 1999), 28.

<sup>7</sup> Le posizioni specifiche di ogni paese saranno discusse in dettaglio nel capitolo due.

<sup>8</sup> I serbi bosniaci hanno respinto il piano proposto dal gruppo di contatto nell'autunno 1994: Roger Cohen, "Bosnian Serbs, in Referendum, Reject Peace Plan," *New York Times*, August 30, 1994.

<sup>9</sup> Roger Cohen, "Serbs, Meeting With Carter, Agree to Bosnian Cease-Fire," *New York Times*, December 20, 1994.

<sup>10</sup> UNPROFOR era la Forza di protezione delle Nazioni Unite istituita nel 1992. Per ulteriori informazioni sulla sua creazione e sugli obiettivi: United Nations Security Council resolution 743, *Socialist Federal Rep. of Yugoslavia (21 Feb)*, S/RES/743 (1992) (21 February 1992), accesso October 10, 2020, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/743>. Citazione nel testo: "1995-05-17, NSC Paper re Bosnia Strategic Choices," *Clinton Digital Library*, accesso November 1, 2020, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12462>.

<sup>11</sup> "1995-04-14A, Department of State Paper re Bosnia Going for a Small War," *Clinton Digital Library*, accesso November 1, 2020, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12435>.

Mentre lo sforzo internazionale stava rapidamente collassando e gli Stati Uniti stavano esplorando opzioni alternative, “l’effetto CNN” stava producendo una crescente consapevolezza della crisi in corso nell’opinione pubblica statunitense.<sup>12</sup> Nel giugno 1995 circa il 64% degli americani dichiarò di aver seguito le notizie bosniache abbastanza o molto da vicino.<sup>13</sup> Questo picco arrivava mentre venivano finalizzati i dettagli di OpPLAN 40-104, in cui gli Stati Uniti avevano precedentemente promesso il dispiegamento di 20.000 truppe di terra americane come parte di una forza NATO per assistere con un ritiro delle Nazioni Unite nel caso in cui UNPROFOR avesse avuto bisogno di evacuare.<sup>14</sup> Le truppe americane sul terreno erano l’ultima cosa che Clinton e l’amministrazione volevano; come Albright ha indicato essi erano “determinati a non avere un’altra Somalia.”<sup>15</sup> I sondaggi dell’opinione pubblica hanno mostrato che anche la maggioranza degli americani si era opposta al dispiegamento di soldati statunitensi in Bosnia.<sup>16</sup> In tutto il paese, la prospettiva del coinvolgimento militare degli Stati Uniti stava facendo diversi paragoni con il Vietnam.<sup>17</sup> C’era persino timore all’interno dei più alti livelli dell’amministrazione e al Pentagono della probabilità di un nuovo Vietnam.<sup>18</sup>

Nessun presidente degli Stati Uniti in carica aspira ad essere invischiato in un’iniziativa di politica estera disordinata che coinvolge le vite dei soldati americani, soprattutto, se quella situazione si verifica al culmine della loro campagna di rielezione. Sebbene la decisione di Clinton di passare ad un’azione unilaterale nell’agosto 1995 abbia seguito l’incidente più atroce del conflitto, c’era, in realtà, un altro motivo per questo improvviso cambiamento di politica. Secondo Daalder, Holbrooke e Chollet, in una riunione del gruppo di politica estera del 7 agosto

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<sup>12</sup> “La frase ‘effetto CNN’ racchiude l’idea che la tecnologia delle comunicazioni in tempo reale potrebbe provocare risposte importanti da parte del pubblico nazionale e delle élite politiche agli eventi globali.” Piers Robinson, “The CNN Effect: Can the News Media Drive Foreign Policy?” *Review of International Studies*, vol. 25, no. 2, (1999): 301.

<sup>13</sup> Stephen E. Bennett, Richard S. Flickinger and Staci L. Rhine, “American Public Opinion and the Civil War in Bosnia,” *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 2, no. 4, (1997): 91.

<sup>14</sup> Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War* (Modern Library, 1999), 66.

<sup>15</sup> L’incidente di Black Hawk Down in Somalia nel 1993 ha provocato la morte di 18 soldati americani, oltre a un gran numero di vittime somale. Un’ulteriore descrizione dell’incidente e del ruolo che ha svolto nel plasmare la politica di Clinton in Bosnia sarà discussa nel secondo capitolo. Nella citazione di testo da: Albright, *Madam*, 339.

<sup>16</sup> Vedere: Richard Sobel, “Trends: United States Intervention in Bosnia,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (Summer, 1998): 253-78, e Bennett, Flickinger, and Rhine, “American Public Opinion,” 101.

<sup>17</sup> Vedere: Charles Kupchan, “Beyond Vietnam: Using Force in Bosnia,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 17, 1994, e Gregory Clark, “Opinion: Bosnia After Vietnam: Ignorance, Bad Mistakes,” *New York Times*, May 20, 1994.

<sup>18</sup> Per i conti amministrativi di alto livello della Bosnia paralleli al Vietnam: Albright, *Madam*, 412-13 e 417-18, Holbrooke, *To End*, 216-17, Warren Christopher, *Chances of a Lifetime: A Memoir* (Scribner, 2001), 252, Derek Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords: A Study of American Statecraft* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 14 e 40, e James Pardew, *Peacemakers: American Leadership and the End of Genocide in the Balkans* (The University of Kentucky Press, 2017), chap. 3, sec. 2, para. 5.

1995 l'amministrazione decise di "rompere il culo per ottenere un accordo entro i prossimi mesi."<sup>19</sup> In una delle due strategie principali discusse durante quella riunione, il documento "NSC Bosnia Endgame Strategy" ha specificamente osservato che "sarebbe preferibile affrontare questi problemi quest'anno piuttosto che dover attuare un'operazione di ritiro della NATO disordinata e prolungata nel mezzo della campagna elettorale."<sup>20</sup>

Per comprendere appieno la decisione presa di perseguire un'azione unilaterale, dobbiamo prima guardare agli eventi che sono emersi fino all'agosto 1995. Il primo capitolo esaminerà i ruoli della religione, dell'impero e dell'identità nel formare la diversità etnoculturale e la divisione etnonazionale tra i vari gruppi etnici in Jugoslavia che portano a una rinascita del nazionalismo contemporaneo e delle guerre Jugoslave. Per gli scopi di questo articolo, mi concentrerò sulle tre repubbliche principali e sui gruppi etnici la cui agitazione è stata più direttamente responsabile della guerra in Bosnia: serbi, croati e musulmani.<sup>21</sup> Per questa analisi mi affiderò in gran parte a fonti secondarie della storia dei Balcani da Glenny, Calic, Perica, Connelly, Jelavich, Sabrina Ramet, Velikonja e Woodward. Le fonti primarie consisteranno in interviste televisive, articoli di giornale e rapporti declassificati dagli Stati Uniti. Le crescenti disparità socioeconomiche e regionali hanno formato un altro cuneo che ha ulteriormente diviso le repubbliche, portando ai movimenti indipendentisti del 1990-1992. Nel discutere il ripido declino economico della Jugoslavia negli anni '80, esaminerò i dati fiscali raccolti e interpretati da fonti secondarie Pleština, Horvat, Burg, Anastasakis, Liotta e Woodward, insieme ai documenti della CIA declassificati da fonti primarie preparati dall'Ufficio di Analisi Europea. Il primo capitolo si concluderà con come i referendum sull'indipendenza condotti da Slovenia e Croazia hanno quasi assicurato la discesa della Bosnia nella guerra civile. Le fonti principali includono interviste televisive, articoli di giornale e racconti di prima mano di Glenny. Le fonti secondarie includono ancora molti degli autori di storia dei Balcani menzionati in precedenza.

Il ritorno del genocidio in Europa è stato uno dei primi grandi test per la diplomazia internazionale e statunitense in un mondo dopo la Guerra Fredda.<sup>22</sup> Il secondo capitolo si aprirà

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<sup>19</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 106-10, Holbrook, *To End*, 73-74, e Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 40-42. Nella citazione di testo da: Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 40.

<sup>20</sup> "1995-07-20A, NSC Paper re Bosnia Endgame Strategy," *Clinton Digital Library*, accesso November 3, 2020, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12499>.

<sup>21</sup> Nella SFRY, il termine "musulmano" era una designazione ufficiale di etnia per i musulmani slavi. In questo articolo userò il termine in quel contesto, se non diversamente specificato.

<sup>22</sup> Ian Traynor, "Srebrenica Genocide: Worst Massacre in Europe since the Nazis," *The Guardian*, June 10, 2010.



con un'analisi delle dinamiche della politica estera statunitense nel mondo del dopo Guerra Fredda. Le fonti secondarie includono Brands, Brinkley, Chollet e Goldgeier, Mandelbaum, e Wilentz. Le fonti primarie consistono in articoli di giornale e documenti declassificati negli Stati Uniti. Discuterò quindi l'inizio della guerra in Bosnia in parallelo con la risposta internazionale iniziale guidata dagli accordi CE-ONU e le risoluzioni proposte che vanno dal piano Cutileiro nel febbraio 1992 fino al piano del Gruppo di Contatto nel 1994. Nell'esaminare il fallimento di coalizioni internazionali per mediare un accordo di pace, evidenzierò le diverse ambizioni, obiettivi e riluttanze dei paesi della CE che guidano i negoziati, gli atteggiamenti intransigenti delle fazioni in guerra e le barriere che hanno creato, nonché l'ambivalenza e l'inefficacia delle Nazioni Unite. Infine, esaminerò la posizione e gli obiettivi politici iniziali dell'amministrazione Clinton, la sua partecipazione multilaterale ai negoziati internazionali falliti, il modo in cui la precedente azione di politica estera (o inazione) in Somalia e Ruanda ha influenzato il coinvolgimento e il timore di intraprendere un ruolo più proattivo in gestire la crisi a causa del "pericolo crescente di alienazione Russa da una politica occidentale nei confronti della Serbia."<sup>23</sup> Le fonti primarie includono interviste televisive, articoli di giornali, rapporti delle Nazioni Unite e documenti declassificati dagli Stati Uniti dal 1991 al luglio 1995. Le fonti secondarie includono riviste e pubblicazioni di Burg e Shoup, Caplan, Daalder, Glaurdić, Glenny, Gow, Mandelbaum, Owen, Sabrina Ramet e Woodward.

Il terzo capitolo esaminerà il punto di svolta nell'impegno dell'amministrazione Clinton in Bosnia e il passaggio alla diplomazia unilaterale che seguì dall'agosto al novembre 1995. Attraverso l'analisi dei documenti declassificati degli Stati Uniti, illustrerò che c'era un crescente timore all'interno dell'amministrazione che un conflitto prolungato ostacolerebbe significativamente la candidatura per la rielezione di Clinton. Sottolineerò quindi in dettaglio la svolta unilaterale e la blitzkrieg diplomatica guidata da Holbrooke e dal suo team di diplomazia della navetta, che ha ampiamente aggirato o escluso del tutto la comunità internazionale, concludendosi con i negoziati guidati dagli Stati Uniti perseguiti a Dayton. Fonti primarie fanno molto affidamento su un esame esauriente dei documenti declassificati degli Stati Uniti, memorie

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<sup>23</sup> "1993-01-25, NIC Memo re Serbia and the Russian Problem," *Clinton Digital Library*, accesso October 24, 2020, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12300>.

di Albright, Christopher, Clinton, Holbrooke, Owen, e Pardew, nonché interviste e articoli di giornale. Le fonti secondarie includono Chollet e Daalder.

In conclusione, discuterò alcune delle conseguenze immediate della spinta unilaterale di quattro mesi di Clinton per la pace in Bosnia, culminata nell'accordo raggiunto a Dayton. "Preoccupato che il deterioramento della situazione in Bosnia stia offuscando la sua presidenza," ciò che è iniziato con un incontro nella Camera dei Ministri della Casa Bianca il 7 agosto 1995 tra Clinton e i suoi massimi consiglieri di politica estera si è trasformato nella forza motrice necessaria per porre fine al conflitto.<sup>24</sup> Sebbene l'iniziativa diplomatica sia iniziata come copertura per il vero scopo della strategia selezionata – attuare una strategia di ritiro post-UNPROFOR – la macchina della navetta di Holbrooke alla fine ha raggiunto ciò che era sfuggito agli europei e alla comunità internazionale per più di tre anni.<sup>25</sup> A metà settembre gli sforzi negoziali di Holbrooke, insieme alla combinazione della presa del controllo di Milošević da Pale, Operazione Deliberate Force, e il successo dell'offensiva occidentale da parte delle forze croate e bosniache, hanno portato la prospettiva di una soluzione di pace praticabile in prima linea nella strategia.<sup>26</sup> Nel corso dei due mesi successivi, i negoziati unilaterali di Holbrooke hanno posto le basi per la conferenza di Dayton, Ohio, dove il sipario si aprirà sui peggiori episodi di violenza in Europa in più di mezzo secolo. E mentre la vittoria della politica estera in Bosnia non si è rivelata un grande impulso per la campagna di rielezione di Clinton, forse è stata la cosa più importante, non una responsabilità.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Per maggiori dettagli sulla riunione del 7 agosto 1995: Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 40. Nella citazione di testo: Thomas W. Lippman and Ana Devroy, "Clinton's Policy Evolution," *Washington Post*, September 11, 1995.

<sup>25</sup> Come è stato menzionato da diversi funzionari di alto livello dell'amministrazione, sia prima che dopo Dayton, una delle principali differenze nell'approccio statunitense rispetto alle precedenti iniziative a guida internazionale era l'uso della forza. Fin dall'inizio Clinton fece pressioni per il sollevamento e lo sciopero, con altri funzionari dell'amministrazione come Albright, Lake e Holbrooke che all'epoca sostenevano un intervento più forte. Anche Perry, che inizialmente era contrario a un maggiore impegno nel conflitto, ha rivisto le sue precedenti opinioni dopo l'accordo affermando: "L'operazione Deliberate Force è stato il passo assolutamente cruciale nel portare le parti in guerra al tavolo dei negoziati a Dayton, portando all'accordo di pace," aggiungendo "avremmo dovuto essere pronti a usare o minacciare di usare la forza militare sin dall'inizio." Prima parte della citazione di Perry da: Beale, *Bombs over Bosnia*, 32. Seconda parte della citazione di Perry da: Elaine Sciolino, "The Clinton Record: Foreign Policy; Bosnia Policy Shaped by U.S. Military Role," *New York Times*, July 29, 1996.

<sup>26</sup> I fattori aggiuntivi sopra menzionati, sebbene non prodotti diretti della spinta unilaterale degli Stati Uniti, sono stati tuttavia prodotti indiretti degli sforzi degli Stati Uniti. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 170. Citazione nel testo: Daalder, *Getting*, 134.

<sup>27</sup> Winston sottolinea questa filosofia osservando che nella politica presidenziale dell'ultima metà del ventesimo secolo la politica estera raramente ha vinto un'elezione presidenziale, ma ne ha perse alcune. Winston, "Foreign Policy: The 'Stealth' Issue of the 1996 Campaign?" 285. Citazione nel testo: Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure*, 109.

## INTRODUCTION

“By 1995, the United States had become, by default and by virtue of its unique superpower status, the only hope for restoring a semblance of order and humanity to the Balkans.”

Warren Christopher

Former US Secretary of State 1993-1997

*Chances of a Lifetime* (p. 252)

August 1995 marked a stark turning point in President Bill Clinton’s foreign policy stance and overall United States (US) diplomatic engagement in the Bosnian War. Analysis has shown that from the outbreak of the Yugoslav Wars in 1991, Clinton’s predecessor, George H. W. Bush, focused higher foreign policy priority on Moscow and the Middle East.<sup>1</sup> As Madeleine Albright stated: “Initially the crisis was viewed by Europeans and the senior Bush administration officials as a European problem that should and could be settled by Europe.”<sup>2</sup> After taking office, Clinton seemed content in extending the limited levels of international support he inherited from Bush and focused his priority on the domestic economy.<sup>3</sup> Two and a half years later however, the horrific events that took place at Srebrenica in July 1995 brought the need for significant and meaningful intervention to the forefront of Clinton’s presidency. The Srebrenica Massacre, which saw between seven to eight thousand unarmed Muslim men and boys slaughtered at the hands of Bosnian Serb General Ratko Mladić and his men, marked the most atrocious act of

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<sup>1</sup> For analysis of George H. W. Bush’s foreign policy, see: Michael Mandelbaum, “The Bush Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 1 (1990): 5-22, Jeffrey A. Engel, “A Better World... but Don't Get Carried Away: The Foreign Policy of George H. W. Bush Twenty Years On,” *Diplomatic History* 34, no. 1 (2010): 25-46, Eric A. Miller and Steve A. Yetiv, “The New World Order in Theory and Practice: The Bush Administration's Worldview in Transition,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 31, no. 1 (2001): 56-68, Michael Hirsh, “George H.W. Bush’s Misunderstood Presidency,” *Foreign Policy*, December 1, 2018, accessed March 22, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/12/01/george-h-w-bush-misunderstood-presidency-death/>, Ivo H. Daalder and I. M. Destler, “The Foreign Policy Genius of George H. W. Bush: How He Changed the Foreign Policy Process Forever,” *Foreign Affairs*, December 4, 2018, accessed March 22, 2021, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2018-12-04/foreign-policy-genius-george-h-w-bush>, and Hal Brands, *Making the Unipolar Moment: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Rise of the Post-Cold War Order* (Cornell University Press, 2019), chap. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Madeline Albright, *Madam Secretary: A Memoir* (First Harper Perennial Edition, Epub Edition, January 2013), 410.

<sup>3</sup> In the first eight months of his presidency, Clinton only made four major foreign policy speeches, all of which stressed continuity with his predecessor’s policies. Douglas Brinkley, “Democratic Enlargement: The Clinton Doctrine,” *Foreign Policy*, no. 106 (1997): 112-13.

violence committed on European soil since the end of World War II.<sup>4</sup> With Clinton's foreign policy discourse being humanitarian-centric, an increased US engagement in Bosnia following the genocide at Srebrenica seemed a logical next step.<sup>5</sup> While this analysis is indeed accurate to an extent, it conveniently overshadows a more compelling reason behind the particular timing of increased engagement; Clinton's upcoming 1996 re-election campaign.

Having recently faced criticism for his inconsistency in commitments to his humanitarian-based foreign policy, Clinton was in need of a big foreign policy win while preparing for his re-election campaign the following spring.<sup>6</sup> In an early August 1995 NSC memo discussing possible Bosnia endgame strategies, the US Ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, stressed the importance that America stop muddling along and instead take the lead in resolving the crisis or "Bosnia will overshadow our entire first term."<sup>7</sup>

By 1994 the initial European Community-United Nations (EC-UN) arrangements had proven futile and a new international negotiating team, the Contact Group, was established.<sup>8</sup> Consisting of representatives from France, Germany, Russia, UK, and the US, each country had its own ambitions and reluctances in the evolving peace process, contributing both difficulty and delays in developing a unified solution to the crisis.<sup>9</sup> Ultimately, the Contact Group plan shared the same fate that befell the previous EC-UN proposals and was rejected by one or more of the intransigent competing factions.<sup>10</sup> Prospects looked particularly bleak going into the summer of 1995. The escalation of violence following the expiration of the 30 April ceasefire that former US President Carter helped broker in December brought the war to perilous new heights.<sup>11</sup> With the eroding credibility of UNPROFOR, allies began to indicate that should the situation remain

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<sup>4</sup> Angelina Theodorou, "How Bosnian Muslims View Christians 20 Years after Srebrenica Massacre," Pew Research Center, July 10, 2015, accessed September 22, 2020, [www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/07/10/how-bosnian-muslims-view-christians-20-years-after-srebrenica-massacre-2](http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/07/10/how-bosnian-muslims-view-christians-20-years-after-srebrenica-massacre-2).

<sup>5</sup> For a sharp critique of Clinton's humanitarian-centric foreign policy, see: Michael Mandelbaum, "Foreign Policy as Social Work," *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 1 (1996): 16-32.

<sup>6</sup> Clinton was heavily criticized for failure to intervene in the Rwandan genocide in 1994. In his memoir he later called it "one of the greatest regrets of my presidency." Bill Clinton, *My Life* (Hutchinson, 2004) chap. 38, para. 39. Inconsistencies of Clinton's foreign policy will be discussed in chapter two.

<sup>7</sup> "1995-08-03B, UN Ambassador Memo re Bosnia Endgame Strategy," *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed October 20, 2020, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12511>.

<sup>8</sup> Ivo Daalder, *Getting to Dayton: The Making of America's Bosnia Policy* (The Brookings Institution, 1999) 28.

<sup>9</sup> Each country's specific positions within the Contact Group will be discussed in detail in chapter two.

<sup>10</sup> The Bosnian Serbs rejected the proposed Contact Group plan in fall 1994. See: Roger Cohen, "Bosnian Serbs, in Referendum, Reject Peace Plan," *New York Times*, August 30, 1994.

<sup>11</sup> Roger Cohen, "Serbs, Meeting With Carter, Agree to Bosnian Cease-Fire," *New York Times*, December 20, 1994.

unchanged, they would ultimately withdraw their forces.<sup>12</sup> There was also a growing consensus in the Clinton administration that the Contact Group had lost its inertia, and as such, new strategic choices began to dominate internal high level discussions.<sup>13</sup>

As the international effort was rapidly collapsing and the US was exploring alternate options, the “CNN effect” was producing a growing awareness of the ongoing crisis in US public opinion.<sup>14</sup> By June 1995 some 64 percent of Americans indicated they either followed the Bosnian news stories fairly or very closely.<sup>15</sup> This peak comes as the details of OpPLAN 40-104 were being finalized, in which the US had previously pledged the deployment of 20,000 American ground troops as part of a NATO force to assist with a UN withdrawal should UNPROFOR need to evacuate.<sup>16</sup> American troops on the ground was the last thing Clinton and the administration wanted, as Albright indicated they were “determined not have another Somalia.”<sup>17</sup> Public opinion polls showed that the majority of Americans also opposed the deployment of US soldiers in Bosnia.<sup>18</sup> Around the country, the prospect of US military involvement was drawing several comparisons to Vietnam.<sup>19</sup> There was even fear within the highest levels of the administration and at the Pentagon of the likelihood of a new Vietnam.<sup>20</sup> In his memoir, then Secretary of State Warren Christopher discusses this internal apprehension

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<sup>12</sup> UNPROFOR was the United Nations Protection Force established in 1992. For more information on its creation and objectives see: United Nations Security Council resolution 743, *Socialist Federal Rep. of Yugoslavia (21 Feb)*, S/RES/743 (1992) (21 February 1992), accessed October 10, 2020, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/743>. In text citation: “1995-05-17, NSC Paper re Bosnia Strategic Choices,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed November 1, 2020, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12462>.

<sup>13</sup> “1995-04-14A, Department of State Paper re Bosnia Going for a Small War,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed November 1, 2020, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12435>.

<sup>14</sup> “The phrase ‘CNN effect’ encapsulated the idea that real-time communications technology could provoke major responses from domestic audiences and political elites to global events.” Piers Robinson, “The CNN Effect: Can the News Media Drive Foreign Policy?” *Review of International Studies*, vol. 25, no. 2, (1999): 301.

<sup>15</sup> Stephen E. Bennett, Richard S. Flickinger and Staci L. Rhine, “American Public Opinion and the Civil War in Bosnia,” *Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics* 2, no. 4, (1997): 91.

<sup>16</sup> Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War* (Modern Library, 1999), 66.

<sup>17</sup> The Black Hawk Down incident in Somalia in 1993 resulted in the death of 18 American soldiers. Further description of the incident and the role it played in shaping Clinton’s policy in Bosnia will be discussed in chapter two. In text quotation from: Albright, *Madam*, 339.

<sup>18</sup> See: Richard Sobel, “Trends: United States Intervention in Bosnia,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 62, no. 2 (Summer, 1998): 253-78, and Bennett, Flickinger, and Rhine, “American Public Opinion,” 101.

<sup>19</sup> See: Charles Kupchan, “Beyond Vietnam: Using Force in Bosnia,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 17, 1994, and Gregory Clark, “Opinion: Bosnia After Vietnam: Ignorance, Bad Mistakes,” *New York Times*, May 20, 1994.

<sup>20</sup> For high-level administration accounts of Bosnia parallels to Vietnam, see: Albright, *Madam*, 412-13 and 417-18, Holbrooke, *To End*, 216-17, Warren Christopher, *Chances of a Lifetime: A Memoir* (Scribner, 2001), 252, Derek Chollet, *The Road to the Dayton Accords: A Study of American Statecraft* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 14 and 40, and James Pardew, *Peacemakers: American Leadership and the End of Genocide in the Balkans* (The University of Kentucky Press, 2017), chap. 3, sec. 2, para. 5.

writing: “That the Balkans had the look and feel of a Vietnam-like quagmire did not help to stiffen spines in our government, especially since General Colin Powell and other top Pentagon officials had been personally involved in the Vietnam conflict.”<sup>21</sup>

No sitting US president aspires to be entangled in a messy foreign policy initiative involving the lives of American soldiers, above all, if that situation occurs at the height of their re-election campaign. Although Clinton’s decision to move towards unilateral action in August 1995 followed the most atrocious incident of the conflict, there was indeed another motive for this sudden change in policy. According to Daalder, Holbrooke, and Chollet at a 7 August 1995 Foreign Policy Group meeting, the administration decided to “bust our ass to get a settlement within the next few months.”<sup>22</sup> In one of the two main strategies discussed during that meeting, the “NSC Bosnia Endgame Strategy” paper specifically noted that “it would be preferable to face these issues this year rather than having to implement a messy and protracted NATO withdrawal operation in the middle of the election campaign.”<sup>23</sup>

In order to fully understand the decision made to pursue unilateral action, we must first look at the events that transpired leading up to August 1995. Chapter one will examine the roles of religion, empire, and identity in forming the ethnocultural diversity and ethnonational division between the various ethnic groups in Yugoslavia that lead to a resurgence of contemporary nationalism(s) and the Yugoslav Wars. For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on the three primary republics and ethnic groups whose agitation was most directly responsible for the war in Bosnia: the Serbs, the Croats, and the Muslims.<sup>24</sup> For this analysis I will rely largely on secondary sources of Balkan history from Calic, Connelly, Glenny, Jelavich, Perica, Sabrina Ramet, Velikonja, and Woodward. Primary sources will consist of television interviews, newspaper articles and US declassified reports. Increasing socio-economic and regional disparities formed another wedge that further divided the republics, leading to the independence movements of 1990-1992. In discussing the steep economic decline of Yugoslavia over the 1980s, I will examine fiscal data collected and interpreted from secondary sources Anastasakis,

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<sup>21</sup> Christopher, *Chances*, 252.

<sup>22</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 106-10, Holbrook, *To End*, 73-74, and Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 40-42. In text quote from: Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 40.

<sup>23</sup> “1995-07-20A, NSC Paper re Bosnia Endgame Strategy,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed November 3, 2020, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12499>.

<sup>24</sup> In the SFRY, the term “Muslim” was an official designation of ethnicity for Slavic Muslims. Throughout this paper I will use the term in that context, unless otherwise noted.

Burg, Horvat, Liotta, Pleština, and Woodward as well as primary source declassified CIA documents prepared by the Office of European Analysis. Chapter one will conclude with how the independence referendums pursued by Slovenia and Croatia all but secured Bosnia's fate; the country was left in a dreadful situation with 3 damning options, all of which would likely result in war: (1) remain in Yugoslavia under a dominant Serbian authority, (2) accept territorial division along ethnic lines proposed by Croatian President Franjo Tudjman and Serbian President Slobodan Milošević, or (3) declare independence.<sup>25</sup> Primary sources include television interviews, newspaper articles, and firsthand accounts from Glenny. Secondary sources again include several of the previously mentioned Balkan history authors.

The return of genocide to Europe was one of the first major tests for international and US diplomacy in a post-Cold War world.<sup>26</sup> Chapter two will open with an analysis of the dynamics of US foreign policy in the post-Cold War world. Secondary sources include Brands, Brinkley, Chollet and Goldgeier, Mandelbaum, and Wilentz. Primary sources consist of newspaper articles and US declassified documents. I will then discuss the onset of the war in Bosnia in parallel with the initial international response led by EC-UN arrangements and the proposed resolutions ranging from the Cutileiro Plan in February 1992 up through the Contact Group plan in 1994. In examining the failure of international coalitions to broker a peace deal, I will highlight the varying ambitions, objectives and reluctances from the EC countries leading the negotiations, the uncompromising attitudes of the warring factions and the barriers they created, as well as the ambivalence and ineffectiveness of the UN. Lastly, I will look at the Clinton administration's initial policy stance and objectives, its multilateral participation in the failed international negotiations, how previous foreign policy action (or inaction) in Somalia and Rwanda influenced involvement, and the apprehension of undertaking a more proactive role in managing the crisis due to "the growing danger of Russian alienation from a Western policy towards Serbia."<sup>27</sup> Primary sources include Albright, Christopher, Clinton, Owen, television interviews, newspaper articles, UN reports, and US declassified documents from 1991-July 1995. Secondary sources

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<sup>25</sup> Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia: The Third Balkan War* (Penguin Books, 1996), 143.

<sup>26</sup> Ian Traynor, "Srebrenica Genocide: Worst Massacre in Europe since the Nazis," *The Guardian*, June 10, 2010.

<sup>27</sup> "1993-01-25, NIC Memo re Serbia and the Russian Problem," *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed October 24, 2020, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12300>.

include journals, and publications from Burg and Shoup, Caplan, Daalder, Glaurdić, Glenny, Gow, Mandelbaum, Sabrina Ramet, and Woodward.

Chapter three will examine the turning point in the Clinton administration's engagement in Bosnia, and the shift to unilateral diplomacy that followed from August-November 1995. Through the analysis of US declassified documents, I will illustrate there was a growing fear within the administration that a prolonged conflict would significantly hamper Clinton's re-election bid. I will then highlight in detail the unilateral turn and diplomatic blitzkrieg led by Holbrooke and his shuttle diplomacy team, which largely circumvented or excluded the international community entirely, concluding with the US-led negotiations pursued at Dayton. Primary sources rely heavily on an exhaustive examination of US declassified documents, memoirs from Albright, Bildt, Christopher, Clinton, Holbrooke, Owen, and Pardew, as well as interviews, and newspaper articles. Secondary sources include Chollet, and Daalder.

In conclusion, I will discuss some of the immediate consequences of the unilateral push that ended in the signing of the Dayton Agreement, effectively ending the war. Additionally, I will examine how Clinton's Bosnia policy was ultimately perceived by the American public leading up to the 1996 presidential election.



## CHAPTER ONE:

### The Resurgence of Nationalism(s) and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia

“Anybody who doubts the deeply nationalist aspect of this war  
has clearly never been anywhere near the battlegrounds.”

Misha Glenny

*The Fall of Yugoslavia* (p. 91)

#### **1. Religion and Empire: The Historical Origins of Ethnocultural Diversity and Ethnonational Division in the Balkans**

In order to understand the complex construct of ethnocultural diversity and ethnonational division in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, it is imperative to acquaint oneself with the unique demographics of the former country, which can be summarized in this popular Yugoslav expression: Yugoslavia was a country with six republics, five nations, four languages, three religions, two alphabets, and one Yugoslav – Tito.<sup>1</sup> This profound diversification arose from more than two thousand years of transitive religious and imperial rule. Forged under a plurality of empires, these diverse religious and cultural identities would later converge into nationalist identities.<sup>2</sup> Although over time greater supranational identities, such as pan-Slavism, communism, or Yugoslavism were pursued with degrees of marginal success, the underlying tensions were ever only temporarily suppressed. While the formation of Yugoslavia by Josip Broz Tito at the end of World War II brought an extended period of peace, prosperity, and uniformity to the region at heights previously unseen, the growing ethnocultural division and

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<sup>1</sup> For brevity, I will refer to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia simply as Yugoslavia throughout the remainder of this paper, unless otherwise noted. There are several variations of this expression with various endings such as “one dinar,” “one system,” and “one brotherhood.” The above is from: Gary K. Bertsch, “Ethnicity and Politics in Socialist Yugoslavia,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 433, (1977): 92.

<sup>2</sup> As mentioned previously in the introduction, I will focus primarily on Bosnia, Serbia, and Croatia, and the three ethnic groups directly responsible for the war in Bosnia: the Serbs, the Croats, and the Muslims.

socio-economic decline after his death sparked a resurgence of nationalism(s) in the 1980s, ultimately leading to the onset of the Yugoslav Wars and the dissolution of Yugoslavia in 1992.<sup>3</sup>

Although Tito sought to build a nation based on a secular south-Slavic identity, the identities manifested amongst the people of the Balkans over more than two thousand years of religious and imperial rule were impossible to entirely dispel. In his book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Benedict Anderson surmises that within the cultural roots of nationalism lay two relevant cultural systems: the religious community and the dynastic realm.<sup>4</sup> These two cultural systems are the genesis of the diverse ethnocultural roots that would later converge into divisive ethnonationalist identities. The particular geographic placement of the Balkan peninsula, at the cultural crossroads of the Old World, explains in part the longstanding impacts of religion and empire on the region.<sup>5</sup> With no natural land barriers to Central Europe and open access to the Mediterranean and Black Seas, the peninsula functioned as a natural bridge between two continents.<sup>6</sup> Early patterns of exploration, migration, and the reign of several historical empires created a geographic concentration of ethnic diversity in the Balkans unlike any other in Europe.<sup>7</sup> Classical Greek culture developed along the southern peninsula as early as the ninth or eighth century BCE, and the empire created by Alexander the Great in the fourth century BCE witnessed the spread and dominance of Hellenistic language and culture throughout the Balkans and Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>8</sup>

In the first century CE the peninsula fell under control of the Roman Empire, and after the imperial capital was moved to Byzantium in 330 CE, Christianity shortly thereafter became the official religion.<sup>9</sup> With the decline of the Western Roman Empire in 395 CE, the peninsula was divided into two – the western region remaining under Rome and the eastern half ruled by

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<sup>3</sup> For a comprehensive collection with analytical perspective on the predominant scholarly debates surrounding the breakup of Yugoslavia, see: Sabrina P. Ramet, *Thinking about Yugoslavia: Scholarly Debates about the Yugoslav Breakup and the Wars in Bosnia and Kosovo* (Cambridge University Press, 2005).

<sup>4</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Revised Edition, Verso, 2006), 12.

<sup>5</sup> Ivo Banac, “Foreword: The Politics of Cultural Diversity in Former Yugoslavia,” in: Sabrina P. Ramet, *Balkan Babel: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia from the Death of Tito to the Fall of Milosevic* (Westview Press, 2002), xii.

<sup>6</sup> Marie-Janine Calic, *The Great Cauldron: A History of Southeastern Europe*, trans. Elizabeth Janik (Harvard University Press, 2019), 11.

<sup>7</sup> Bertsch, “Ethnicity and Politics,” 93.

<sup>8</sup> See: N. G. L. Hammond, “Alexander’s Campaign in Illyria,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 94 (1974): 66-87.

<sup>9</sup> Byzantium, later renamed Constantinople, is modern day Istanbul. For more on the origins of Christianity in the Balkans, see: Adrian Fortescue, “Christianity in the Balkans,” *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review* 5, no. 17 (1916): 1-21.

Constantinople.<sup>10</sup> During the sixth century, a massive migration of Slav tribes settled across the peninsula.<sup>11</sup> As the Slavs intermingled with the existing population, absorption of an old ancient culture by the new migrant culture resulted in a new habitus, which contemporary observers would identify as “Slavic.”<sup>12</sup>

The long rising tensions between the Roman Church in Rome and the Byzantine Church in Constantinople peaked with the Great Schism of 1054 and the split of Christianity into two factions: The Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church.<sup>13</sup> This division resulted in the first important foundational split in Christian religious association amongst the people of the Balkans. The peoples in the north western region of the peninsula chose to remain under the Roman Patriarchate, while the southern and eastern inhabitants would follow the Patriarchs of Constantinople.<sup>14</sup>

During the Christianization of the Balkans, both before and after the schism, ethnocultural tribal identities previously defined by the church began subconsciously forming into ethnonational identities centering around the conjunction of church and state.<sup>15</sup> In the early 900s, King Tomislav of Croatia had sought to make the Croatian church more liturgically monolithic and organizationally unified; he allied with the Pope and the Bishop of Split, asserting the primacy of the bishop in Croatia and banning the continued use of Old Slavic Glagolitic liturgy in favor of Latin.<sup>16</sup> This alignment illustrates the ideology and progression in the evolution of a Catholic Croatia. The Zagreb diocese was later erected in 1093-1094.<sup>17</sup> Similar religious distinctions began taking place in other parts of the region. In 1219, the Serbian Church obtained recognition as an autocephalous member of Orthodoxy, and Orthodoxy became the

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<sup>10</sup> See: Jan Willem Drijvers, “The Divisio Regni of 364: The End of Unity?” in *East and West in the Roman Empire of the Fourth Century: An End to Unity?*, ed. Dijkstra Roald, Van Poppel Sanne, and Sloopjes Daniëlle (Brill, 2015): 82-96.

<sup>11</sup> Mark Mazower, *The Balkans: A Short History* (Modern Library, 2002), 95.

<sup>12</sup> The Slavs integrated with the descendants of Illyrian, Roman, Goth, and Avar cultures across the peninsula, whereas those who migrated further south became Hellenized. Calic, *The Great*, 17-18.

<sup>13</sup> For more detailed information on the division of Christianity and jurisdictions of the Roman Patriarchate and Byzantine Patriarchate in the Balkans, see: Fortescue, “Christianity in the Balkans,” 1-21.

<sup>14</sup> More specifics on religious affiliations of the Balkan people are greatly detailed in: Vjekoslav Perica, *Balkan Idols: Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslav States* (Oxford University Press, 2002).

<sup>15</sup> Pedro Ramet, “Religion and Nationalism in Yugoslavia,” in *Religion and Nationalism in Soviet and East European Politics*, ed. Pedro Ramet (Duke University Press, 1989), 302.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 303.

<sup>17</sup> More information on the origins of the Zagreb Diocese can be found at: Archdiocese of Zagreb, “Establishing the Diocese,” accessed December 9, 2020, <http://www.zg-nadbiskupija.hr/archdiocese>.

badge of Serbdom.<sup>18</sup> The church, ethnic community, and state grew concurrently, and by 1346 an Orthodox medieval Serbian state took shape.<sup>19</sup> The religious associations between church and state provided the foundations for erecting and preserving ethnonationalist identities over the subsequent centuries under imperial rule. While later under Ottoman occupation, the Serbian Orthodox Church would act as the protectorate of Serbian culture and tradition, while simultaneously fostering education and resentment of the occupation.<sup>20</sup> Serbian clergy actively participated in the uprisings and wars, becoming something of a warrior-church, seeking the preservation of ethnic identity and the restoration of nationhood.<sup>21</sup> The church itself later became a leader for Serbian nationalist expressionism, advocating vociferously for the use of Cyrillic.<sup>22</sup> One of the most prominent reformers of the Serbian language, Vuk Karadžić, further bonded religion with nationalism when he declared that Serbs were not only the greatest people on the planet but that Jesus and his apostles were in fact Serbs.<sup>23</sup> Likewise, the Croatian Catholic Church routinely safeguarded the religious values and traditions that were tantamount to Croat national identity.<sup>24</sup> The Catholic Church's direct involvement in forging religion with Croatian nationalism occurred later in similar fashion, primarily in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>25</sup>

These early ethnonational religious convergences created hostilities between the cleaved Christian factions, culminating with the Sacking of Constantinople in 1204 at the end of the Fourth Crusade.<sup>26</sup> This crisis further splintered unified rule on the peninsula, resulting in a patchwork of small principalities.<sup>27</sup> This fragmentation would later be exploited by a Turkic tribe known as the Ottomans, who had formed a growing state in Western Anatolia.<sup>28</sup> At the end of

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<sup>18</sup> More on life under Ottoman occupation will be discussed later in the chapter. In text citation: Ramet, "Religion and Nationalism," 303.

<sup>19</sup> Perica, *Balkan Idols*, 7.

<sup>20</sup> Ramet, "Religion and Nationalism," 302-05.

<sup>21</sup> Perica, *Balkan Idols*, 7.

<sup>22</sup> Ramet, "Religion and Nationalism," 312.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 304-05.

<sup>24</sup> Calic, *The Great*, 95.

<sup>25</sup> Ties between religion and Croatian nationalism will be discussed later in the chapter. In text citation: Ramet, "Religion and Nationalism," 305.

<sup>26</sup> For more, see: Jonathan Phillips, *The Fourth Crusade: And the Sack of Constantinople* (Random House, 2011).

<sup>27</sup> Calic, *The Great*, 38-40.

<sup>28</sup> Anatolia is the peninsula in Western Asia that makes up the majority of modern-day Turkey. For more on the origins of the Ottoman empire, see: Colin Imber, *The Ottoman Empire, 1300-1650: The Structure of Power* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

the thirteenth century, a Turkish migration took place across the eastern frontier.<sup>29</sup> By 1300, Turkish migration to Western Anatolia had changed the primary demographic from Greek to Turk, and a series of Turkish principalities soon displaced Byzantine rule.<sup>30</sup>

## 2. Imperial Influence

In 1352, the Ottomans conquered their first European territory on the Gallipoli peninsula.<sup>31</sup> Soon after, Ottoman realms in Europe began to expand rapidly, and by 1389 raids had reached the medieval Serbian Kingdom.<sup>32</sup> The ensuing Battle of Kosovo Polje, between Serbian Prince Lazar and Ottoman Sultan Murad, would emerge as a vital point in Balkan history and become a cornerstone of modern Serbian national mythology.<sup>33</sup> Both sides suffered heavy losses, including the deaths of both Prince Lazar and Sultan Murad. Reliable interpretations of the actual battle are scarce, but most historical accounts suggest the Ottomans held the field, with the Serbian defeat presented as the catalyst in the gradual fall of the medieval Serbian Kingdom.<sup>34</sup>

The Ottomans continued their successful conquest of the Balkan peninsula. “Subsequent efforts of the pope, the Hungarian kings, and individual Western princes to subdue the Ottomans all ended in failure.”<sup>35</sup> By the 1440s Bosnia had split into two territories, with the northern part embracing Catholicism and turning towards the Hungarian-Polish Kingdom for support, while the Bogomil south yielded loyalty to the sultan.<sup>36</sup> The Bosnian Church, which functioned under a Christian autonomy that was neither Catholic nor Orthodox, weakened substantially as the nobility turned over to Catholicism, which further facilitated the penetration of Islamic culture and faith as Bosnia fell to the Ottomans in 1463.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>32</sup> Misha Glenny, *The Balkans: Nationalism, War, and the Great Powers, 1804-2012* (House of Anansi Press Inc., 2012), 11.

<sup>33</sup> In 1346, Serb Emperor Stephen Dusan the Mighty founded the Serbian Orthodox Church in Ipek, what is today Kosovo. This Battle of Kosovo and the Kosovo Myth will later be analyzed in relation to the resurgence of Serbian nationalism in 1987. Perica, *Balkan Idols*, 7. In text citation: Glenny, *The Balkans*, 11.

<sup>34</sup> See: Imber, *The Ottoman*, 13, Calic, *The Great*, 44, and Glenny, *The Balkans*, 11.

<sup>35</sup> Calic, *The Great*, 45.

<sup>36</sup> Bogomilism was a dualist sect founded by the Bulgarian priest Bogomil, during the Middle Ages. For more information on Bogomilism, see: Janko Lavrin, “The Bogomils and Bogomilism,” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 8, no. 23 (1929): 269-83. In text citation: Calic, *The Great*, 45.

<sup>37</sup> Ramet, “Religion and Nationalism,” 303.

As Ottoman occupation grew, another great imperial power, the Tsardom of Russia, would assert its influence in the region. After the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans in 1453, Moscow became a self-appointed “Third Rome,” declaring itself protectorate of the Orthodox Church in Eastern Europe.<sup>38</sup> Russia’s interest and involvement in the region would intensify in parallel with the advancement of pan-Slavism. The development of a common Slavic language and uniting all Slavs under the Tsardom of Russia was proposed to Moscow by the Croatian Catholic Priest, Juraj Križanić, in 1659.<sup>39</sup> What began as a countermeasure to the threat of Islam later became an opportunity for imperial expansion. Over the subsequent centuries, the Russian Empire took part in numerous and vigorous attempts to annex territory, defend, integrate and support the Orthodox populations in the Balkans, resulting in a series of military engagements in the region from 1806 through World War I.<sup>40</sup>

With the Ottoman encroachment at the start of the sixteenth century, the Croats elected to join the Habsburg Monarchy in 1527.<sup>41</sup> The Habsburg army was successful in stopping the Ottoman invasion in 1593 on Croatian soil, and a military frontier was established.<sup>42</sup> While Croatia did concede large national territories to the Ottomans, the allegiance with the Habsburg Empire prevented the administrative portion of Croatia from ever falling under Ottoman rule.<sup>43</sup> Absorption into the Habsburg Empire reinforced strong religious, cultural, linguistic, and economic ties with the imperial lands in Central and Western Europe.<sup>44</sup>

The conquest and occupation by the Ottomans from the fourteenth to twentieth century created even greater levels of religious and ethnic diversity.<sup>45</sup> During Ottoman rule, many

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<sup>38</sup> For more on Russia, the Orthodox Church, and the political and theological idea of Moscow as a “Third Rome”, see: John Meyendorff, *Rome, Constantinople, Moscow: Historical and Theological Studies* (St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1996).

<sup>39</sup> There is perhaps a slight irony in the sense that Juraj Križanić was Catholic. For more on Križanić and the origins of pan-Slavism, see: Michael B. Petrovich, “Juraj Krizanic: A Precursor of Pan-Slavism (CA. 1618-83),” *American Slavic and East European Review* 6, no. 3/4, (1947): 75-92. In text citation: Calic, *The Great*, 95.

<sup>40</sup> The leader of the first Serbian uprising, Karadjordje, forged an alliance with St. Petersburg and was almost entirely dependent upon Russian troops in his rebellion against the Ottomans from 1806-1812. Glenny, *The Balkans*, 15-16. Further Russian engagement in the region will be discussed throughout the chapter.

<sup>41</sup> With few exceptions, from 1438-1806, a member of the Habsburg family sat atop the throne of the Holy Roman Empire. Martin Mutschlechner, “A Diversity of Confessions,” *Der Erste Weltkrieg*, June 7, 2014, accessed November 18, 2020, <https://ww1.habsburger.net/en/chapters/diversity-confessions>.

<sup>42</sup> Croatia, along with Hungary, became the vanguard and defender of Central Europe. Dragutin Pavličević, “A Review of the Historical Development of the Republic of Croatia,” *GeoJournal* 38, no. 4 (1996): 382-84.

<sup>43</sup> Croatia lost all but its core territories around Zagreb, Karlovac, and Varaždin. Calic, *The Great*, 79.

<sup>44</sup> Croatia, and Slovenia to the north, would cement their alliance and remain part of this power bloc as it transformed into the Austrian Empire, and later the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

<sup>45</sup> See: Mirsad Kriještorac, “Imposing Particular Identities: The Balkans as a Meeting Place of Ethnicities and Religions,” *Insight Turkey* 20, no. 3 (2018): 241-64.

Eurasian Muslims immigrated to the Balkans, but perhaps more noteworthy in the context of twentieth century Balkan nationalism, a number of the Slavic imperial subjects converted to Islam.<sup>46</sup> Although the Ottoman state saw a “responsibility to tolerate and protect nonbelievers in the conquered territories,” nonbelievers were still subject to numerous discriminations.<sup>47</sup> Unsanctioned religious persecution occasionally took place, and other publicly humiliating prohibitions distinguished Muslims from non-Muslims.<sup>48</sup> Non-Muslims were also given inferior legal status and had to pay higher taxes and rents, making everyday life particularly burdensome for the subjugated non-Muslim peasants.<sup>49</sup> The balance of relations created by the Ottomans between Muslims and the subordinate non-Muslims could be summarized as “separate and protected, but unequal.”<sup>50</sup> There were however significant advantages for non-Muslims who converted. These new-believers could become prominent landowners, urban craftsmen, had the right to bear arms, could acquire hereditary estates, and even achieve political office.<sup>51</sup> Initially, conversions most frequently occurred in the larger cities, but by the height of the empire in the mid 1500s, Islamization spread quickly through the countryside, especially in religiously diverse lands like Bosnia.<sup>52</sup> Local narratives suggest between 50 percent to 90 percent of the populations in Bosnia, Sandžak, Kosovo, and Albania changed faiths to Islam.<sup>53</sup> The converted Slavs were branded as traitors, sentiments most strongly and commonly expressed by Serbs, who pejoratively referred to Muslims as “Turks.”<sup>54</sup>

As the ages of Enlightenment and Revolution challenged the status quo of divine or hierarchical rule in the eighteenth century, the conscious idea of the sovereign nation was born.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Some cases of mass conversion took place in Bosnia, believed to be a result of a weakening Catholic and Orthodox influence in the region. For more information on the Islamization of the Balkans see: Zachary T. Irwin, “The Fate of Islam in the Balkans: A Comparison of Four State Policies,” in *Religion and Nationalism in Soviet and East European Politics*, ed. Pedro Ramet (Duke University Press, 1989), 378-407.

<sup>47</sup> Calic, *The Great*, 89.

<sup>48</sup> Non-Muslims often had to carry out disparaging tasks that were viewed as beneath Muslims. They were also forbidden from wearing the color green and had to comply with dress codes denoting their religious affiliation. Denis Lacorne, *The Limits of Tolerance: Enlightenment Values and Religious Fanaticism*, trans. C. Jon Delogu and Robin Emlein, (Columbia University Press, 2019), 71.

<sup>49</sup> Calic, *The Great*, 89.

<sup>50</sup> Lacorne, *The Limits*, 71.

<sup>51</sup> See: Glenny, *The Balkans*, 72, Imber, *The Ottoman*, 2, and Irwin, “The Fate of Islam,” 380.

<sup>52</sup> This is of particular significance, as we shall see later, with the creation of Bosnia-Herzegovina as the lone multi-ethnic republic of Yugoslavia in 1946. Calic, *The Great*, 88.

<sup>53</sup> See: Jacek Duda, “Islamic Community in Serbia,” in *Muslims in Poland and Eastern Europe: Widening the European Discourse on Islam*, ed. Katarzyna Gorak-Sosnowska (University of Warsaw, 2011), 327-36.

<sup>54</sup> Thomas S. Szayna and Michele Zanini, “The Yugoslav Retrospective Case,” in *Identifying Potential Ethnic Conflict: Application of a Process Model*, ed. Thomas S. Szayna (Rand Corporation, 2000), 95.

<sup>55</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 7.

The success of the American and French Revolutions sent shockwaves around the world, providing inspiration and hope for the colonized constituents of imperial or monarchical rule. The subjugated peasants of the Ottoman Empire certainly took notice, and the religious imprints that had shaped ethnocultural identities consciously converged into ethnonational identities.<sup>56</sup> Serbia led the charge, becoming the first territory to engage the Ottomans in a battle for independence. The Serbian Revolution consisted of two separate uprisings between 1804-1815, marking the first time a Christian population had taken up arms against the Sublime Porte.<sup>57</sup>

At the same time, the region as a whole was thrust into the broader context of the Napoleonic Wars. In 1809, Napoleon created the Illyrian Provinces from territory ceded by Austria, which comprised parts of Slovenia, parts of Croatia, parts of the military frontier, and Dalmatia.<sup>58</sup> Although the provinces were shortly absorbed back into the Austrian Empire in 1813, the mark left by a brief interlude of French rule was immense.<sup>59</sup> Under the influence of the French Revolution, a national renewal took place within Croatia from 1830-1848, usually referred to as the Illyrian Movement.<sup>60</sup> During this time the Croats standardized their literary language and alphabet, established newspapers and national institutions, and ceased to use Latin.<sup>61</sup> In 1835, Ljudevit Gaj, one of the most prominent figures of the Illyrian Movement, adopted the dialect *štokavština* for use in his newspapers, meaning both the Croat and Serb national movements had adopted roughly the same dialect for their literary language.<sup>62</sup> Although birthed from a Croatian national revival, using the name “Illyrian,” as opposed to “Croatian,” was meant to be supranational and pan-Slavic. While parts of the movement were accepted by the Slovenes, it was largely rejected by the Serbs, who would only accept a Serbian name and the idea of an independent Serbia (and later a Greater Serbia).<sup>63</sup> Here we begin to see manifestations from multiple cultural and civilizational influences appear in Croatian nationalism as it oscillated between two extremes: “the first, pan-Slav, pro-Serb (or rather pro-Yugoslav), would

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<sup>56</sup> Calic, *The Great*, 90.

<sup>57</sup> The Sublime Porte, also known as the High Porte, Ottoman Porte, or simply Porte, was the central government of the Ottoman Empire located in modern day Istanbul. For more details on the Serbian uprisings, see: Glenny, *The Balkans*, chap. 1.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 41-42

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> Pavličević, “A Review,” 384.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> While adopting roughly the same literary dialect, Gaj developed a Latin script whereas Karadžić chose Cyrillic. In text citation: Glenny, *The Balkans*, 43.

<sup>63</sup> Pavličević, “A Review,” 384.



periodically give way to its pro-Austrian, anti-Serb and central European alter ego.”<sup>64</sup> Meanwhile, whereas the Serbian uprisings did not result in national independence, they were able to achieve increased levels of autonomy combined with a strategy of pan-Slavic Serbian expansionism.<sup>65</sup> The plan was simultaneously federalist and centralist, contradicting in the sense it sought a pan-Slavic unity paralleled by a nationalist and irredentist Serbian hegemony.<sup>66</sup>

Increasing foreign debt caused further decay of the Ottoman state in the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>67</sup> The decision in 1875 by the Porte to raise taxes on the provinces to cover outstanding foreign loans was met with near-universal outrage across the Balkans, subsequently spawning a series of uprisings and wars.<sup>68</sup> This period, from 1875-1878, known as The Great Eastern Crisis, would ultimately result in new territorial divisions and allegiances.<sup>69</sup> The Treaty of Berlin in 1878 saw statesmen of Europe’s major powers determine the boundaries, constitutions, sovereigns, and even citizenships of four new nations: Bulgaria, Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia.<sup>70</sup> In the interests of balance, the occupation and administration of Bosnia-Herzegovina was granted to Austria-Hungary, even though a plurality of its inhabitants were Orthodox South Slavs.<sup>71</sup> This was a forceful blow to Serbia, as they considered the lands of Bosnia part of their national heritage.<sup>72</sup>

The Austro-Hungarian Empire’s occupation would leave its own religious imprint on Bosnia. Talks between the administration and the Vatican in 1880 resulted in the creation of the archbishopric and Metropolitan See of Vrhbosna and the bishoprics of Mostar and Banja Luka.<sup>73</sup> Austro-Hungarian authorities also advocated for the construction of Catholic churches and monasteries, and for the first two decades of occupational administration, the Catholic Church

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<sup>64</sup> Glenny, *The Balkans*, 43.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Calic, *The Great*, 317-18.

<sup>68</sup> Marie-Janine Calic, *A History of Yugoslavia*, trans. Dona Geyer (Purdue University Press, 2019), 25.

<sup>69</sup> For a comprehensive and detailed account of the crisis, see: Mihailo D. Stojanovic, *The Great Powers and the Balkans, 1875-1878* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).

<sup>70</sup> John Connelly, *From Peoples into Nations: A History of Eastern Europe* (Princeton University Press, 2020), 210.

<sup>71</sup> The European powers giving Bosnia-Herzegovina to Serbia would create a powerful pan-Slav outpost, in union with the Russian Empire, in the region. *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> This decision would have a lasting impact, fueling Serb ethnonational irredentism up through the Yugoslav Wars of the 1990s. Barbara Jelavich, *History of the Balkans, Vol. 2: Twentieth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1983), 28.

<sup>73</sup> Vrhbosna was the medieval name for a region whose eponymous settlement would eventually become part of Sarajevo. Mitja Velikonja, *Religious Separation and Political Intolerance in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, trans. Rang’ichi Ng’inja, (Texas A&M University Press, 2003), 127.

tried to systematically build a Croatian national consciousness among the population.<sup>74</sup> However, the Austro-Hungarians noticed early on the difficulties of crafting internal cohesion in Bosnia. While the Catholics welcomed the presence of Austro-Hungarian imperial armies as liberators, they were often met with violent resistance by Muslim or Orthodox militias who desired self-rule.<sup>75</sup> Soon, Bosnia's Orthodox population began promulgating ideas of Serb identity, producing ethnonationalist claims that people of one ethnicity should have their own state, or in their case, be absorbed into a Greater Serbia.<sup>76</sup> Around the same time, the Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks) began forging their own indigenous ethnonational identity.<sup>77</sup> Up until the nineteenth century, religious affiliation had been the de facto substitute for nationhood within the Ottoman Empire.<sup>78</sup> With unique ties to the land, and no external great power to support their nationalist efforts, Bosniaks relied on language, a common sense of history, and national symbols to construct their national identity.<sup>79</sup> The emerging Serb, Croat, and Bosnian religious and nationalist sentiments produced a change, or redistribution, in the religious demography and geographic settlement of Bosnia. Catholics from other parts of Austria-Hungary immigrated into Bosnia, increasing the Catholic population of the country, while Muslims who were scattered around the country consolidated to form areas where they would comprise the majority.<sup>80</sup>

### 3. Identity and Nationalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

The turn of the century saw a series of developments that further fortified external great power allegiances. The weak national leadership of Serbian King Alexander Obrenović ended in a successful military coup in June 1903.<sup>81</sup> Obrenović's assassination resulted in the ascension of Peter Karadjordjević, who formed a new government with strong ties to France and Russia, in

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>75</sup> Connelly, *From Peoples*, 221.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 222.

<sup>77</sup> The governor of Bosnia, Austro-Hungarian minister of finance and Hungarian nobleman Benjamin Kállay, actually theorized that Bosnians shared a profound national identity dating back to the early Middle Ages. Connelly, *From Peoples*, 223.

<sup>78</sup> Velikonja, *Religious Separation*, 117.

<sup>79</sup> Of significant importance in the contributions to constructing a national identity, Bosniaks were the regional driving force of culture, administration, and commerce under Ottoman rule in and around the Bosnian territories. Connelly, *From Peoples*, 223.

<sup>80</sup> Velikonja, *Religious Separation*, 126.

<sup>81</sup> Mazower, *The Balkans*, 166.

lieu of Central Europe.<sup>82</sup> With Russia still in recovery from defeat in the Russo-Japanese War, and the Young Turk Revolution gaining momentum among the Ottomans, the Austro-Hungarian Empire saw an opportunity to expand its empire and officially annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1908.<sup>83</sup> Believing these actions to be a direct challenge to their sovereignty, Serbia was enraged, especially as rumors swirled that perhaps they as well would be drawn into the Dual Monarchy's Balkan sphere of influence, or even worse, territorially incorporated.<sup>84</sup> Russia interpreted Austria-Hungary's actions as overtly aggressive, and further encouraged the growing pro-Russian, anti-Austrian sentiment in Serbia.<sup>85</sup> The increasing antagonization would propel the great powers towards full scale conflict in 1914.<sup>86</sup>

The Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 facilitated the beginning of the end to Ottoman rule on the Balkan peninsula.<sup>87</sup> The First Balkan War in 1912 fostered an alliance of the Christian Balkan nations who wished to advance their nationalist agendas by expanding into territories of the destabilizing Ottoman regime.<sup>88</sup> With the preexisting fragile state of the Ottoman Empire, a Balkan Allies victory proved relatively easy. Fearing geopolitical turbulence from the inevitable collapse of an empire, the great powers rushed in to broker an end to the conflict with the Treaty of London in May 1913.<sup>89</sup> Serbia had conquered Vardar Macedonia, Kosovo, and the Sandžak, increasing its national territory by 81 percent.<sup>90</sup> However, the territorial regions created by the great powers resulted in an independent Albania, much to the dismay of Serbia, who had long sought access to the Adriatic Sea.<sup>91</sup> After the partitioning, Serbia and Greece declined to cede Macedonian land their forces were occupying as promised to Bulgaria in the allied agreement.<sup>92</sup> Infuriated, Bulgaria attacked its allies, initiating the Second Balkan War.<sup>93</sup> After Bulgaria's

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<sup>82</sup> Jelavich, *History Vol. 2*, 33.

<sup>83</sup> See: Andreas Rose, *Between Empire and Continent: British Foreign Policy before the First World War*, trans. Rona Johnston, (Berghahn Books, 2019), chap. 9.

<sup>84</sup> Glenny, *The Balkans*, 289.

<sup>85</sup> See: Rose, *Between Empire*, chap. 9.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 405.

<sup>87</sup> For a detailed account of the Balkan Wars, see: Richard C. Hall, *The Balkan Wars, 1912-1913: A Prelude to the First World War*, (Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2002).

<sup>88</sup> The League of Balkans was created through a series of treaties and agreements signed between Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece, and Montenegro. Jelavich, *History Vol. 2*, 97.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>90</sup> Calic, *The Great*, 377.

<sup>91</sup> The major supporters of an independent Albania were Austria-Hungary and Italy. Austria-Hungary had already taken preventative measures in limiting Serbian expansion by annexing Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Italy sought to retain its monopoly on the Adriatic Sea. Jelavich, *History Vol. 2*, 99.

<sup>92</sup> Connelly, *From Peoples*, 316.

<sup>93</sup> Hall, *The Balkan Wars*, 107.

crushing defeat, Bulgaria reverted its stance to resemble that of the Central European powers and their anti-Serb policy.<sup>94</sup> Subsequently, Serbia found themselves militarily isolated in the region against Austria-Hungary. Perhaps more significantly, this proved terribly consequential for Russia. With Serbia as its sole Slavic-satellite in the region, Russia had no alternative but to back Serbia against Austria-Hungary when the July Crisis of 1914 broke out, and according to Hall, ultimately dragged an unprepared and ill-equipped Russia into World War I.<sup>95</sup>

By spring of 1914, Austria-Hungary had decided that a military defeat of the Serbs was necessary to prevent losing control of the Slavs under its monarchy.<sup>96</sup> The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand by the Bosnian Serb, Gavrilo Princip, on 28 June 1914, provided the empire just that opportunity.<sup>97</sup> Princip was a part of the Young Bosnia revolutionary movement, and the assassination was organized in connection with a secret military society known as the Black Hand, who also sought a Yugoslavist, pan-Serb agenda.<sup>98</sup> Austria demanded an investigation, issuing an ultimatum that challenged Serbian sovereignty, making it impossible for Serbia to accept.<sup>99</sup> The Serbian rejection of the ultimatum led Austria-Hungary to declare war in late July 1914.<sup>100</sup> The following day Russia mobilized its forces in support of Serbia, and shortly thereafter Germany declared war on Russia.<sup>101</sup> By the end of August, Europe and the great powers found themselves engaged in a major war with origins emanating from the Balkan national unification movements.<sup>102</sup>

Upon conclusion of World War I with the Treaty of Versailles, the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was constituted.<sup>103</sup> Many questions however surrounded the creation of this new entity; there were no clear borders or constitution, and it was unclear as to whether the former South-Slav Habsburg territories would simply be absorbed under Serbian supremacy or if

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<sup>94</sup> Connelly, *From Peoples*, 316.

<sup>95</sup> Hall, *The Balkan Wars*, 104-06.

<sup>96</sup> Calic, *The Great Cauldron*, 393.

<sup>97</sup> June 28<sup>th</sup> is the Serbian national holiday, *Vidovdan*, commemorating the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. Mazower, *The Balkans*, 40.

<sup>98</sup> Jelavich, *History Vol. 2*, 111-12.

<sup>99</sup> Connelly, *From Peoples*, 321.

<sup>100</sup> Glenny, *The Balkans*, 310.

<sup>101</sup> Germany simultaneously declared war on France, launching an early August invasion of Belgium and France. Germany, being a so-called *verspätete Nationen* (late-coming nation), sought to create an empire of its own with its imperialist *Weltpolitik* (world politics) policy, in addition to stamping out Russia's allies. This determination to be a great imperial power directly threatened Great Britain, who declared war on Germany once they attacked France. Glenny, *The Balkans*, 308-12.

<sup>102</sup> Jelavich, *History Vol. 2*, 114.

<sup>103</sup> Mazower, *The Balkans*, 182.

they would all have equal constitutional weight.<sup>104</sup> Serbia sought to impose its idea of a centralized state, while politicians from Croatia, Bosnia, and Slovenia proposed a more federalized state with balanced economic and political power.<sup>105</sup> The Kingdom of Yugoslavia, as it became officially called after 1929, emerged as perhaps the most complex country in Europe in terms of ethnic and religious structure, and cultural and economic diversity.<sup>106</sup> Although the idea of a united South-Slav state was supposed to encourage cohesion, most of the kingdom's peoples had already established separate nationalist identities as Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Bosnians, and Macedonians, and thus resisted absorption into a new South-Slav nation.<sup>107</sup> Curiously and of relevance to the future divisions, the Croat and Slovene politicians who asked Belgrade for admittance into the kingdom in 1919 did so without the popular support of their own populace.<sup>108</sup>

Internal administrative struggles within the kingdom, particularly between the Serbs and Croats, began almost immediately. The Serbs, who had lived in an independent and unitary state for decades prior to World War I, resented Croatian obstruction and saw their complex confederal solutions as distasteful byproducts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire.<sup>109</sup> Serbia perceived itself as the liberator of South Slavs from imperial oppression, and felt that due to its tremendous suffering and sacrifice it should receive financial reparations.<sup>110</sup> However, the “Croats and Slovenes complained that their wealth was being diverted and drained to poorer sections of Yugoslavia and that it simply disappeared in a quagmire of corruption.”<sup>111</sup> These early claims of economic exploitation impeded the formation of a Yugoslav national identity, as Croats and Slovenes increasingly felt their right to self-determination was being denied by “foreigners.”<sup>112</sup>

When Stepjan Radić, leader of the Croatian People's Peasant Party and bulwark of Serbian hegemony in Yugoslavia, was shot and killed by Punisa Racić, a Serbian Radical Party

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<sup>104</sup> Glenny, *The Balkans*, 366.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> See: Dragan Bakic, “The Great War and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia: The Legacy of an Enduring Conflict,” *Balkanica*, no. 49 (2018): 157–58.

<sup>107</sup> Calic, *The Great*, 403.

<sup>108</sup> Connelly, *From Peoples*, 345.

<sup>109</sup> Bakic, “The Great War,” 159.

<sup>110</sup> Jelavich, *History Vol. 2*, 152.

<sup>111</sup> Precisely these same economic accusations and inequities would continue throughout the life cycle of Yugoslavia, ultimately playing a primary role in the country's dissolution in the early 1990s. Growing regional economic inequalities and abuses will be discussed in detail later in the chapter. In text citation: Connelly, *From Peoples*, 349.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

member, during a 1928 Belgrade parliamentary session, King Alexander of Serbia abolished the parliament and installed a royal dictatorship.<sup>113</sup> The assassination, banning of political parties, dissolution of parliament, and the aggressive royal assertion towards an integral Yugoslav national identity that followed would reignite Croatian nationalism at a time when fascist movements were spreading throughout Europe.<sup>114</sup>

#### 4. Balkan Fascism

At the onset of World War II, Hitler sought to incorporate the Balkan countries into his Tripartite Pact due to their particular strategic geographic positioning.<sup>115</sup> Serbian generals opposed the throne's decision to sign the pact and staged a coup on 27 March 1941.<sup>116</sup> Hitler ordered an air attack, and within a month Yugoslavia was conquered and partitioned among the Axis Powers.<sup>117</sup> While the lines of division under Axis rule would be short lived, the lingering impact (like all conquering powers before them), would remain. Italian-ruled Albania would be granted Kosovo, and Serbia would become first responsibility of Germany.<sup>118</sup> An Independent State of Croatia was formed, and although alleged to be independent, it was divided under two separate spheres of influence between Germany and Italy.<sup>119</sup> The territories of Bosnia-Herzegovina were also absorbed by the new state, a long-time goal of Croatian nationalists.<sup>120</sup> However, the new ethnic diversity of the state complicated matters. Only half of the state's 6.5 million inhabitants were

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<sup>113</sup> Calic, *The Great*, 408.

<sup>114</sup> For more on the rise of fascism in Croatia, see: Mark Biondich, "'We Were Defending the State': Nationalism, Myth, and Memory in Twentieth-Century Croatia," in *Ideologies and National Identities: The Case of Twentieth-Century Southeastern Europe*, eds. John R. Lampe and Mark Mazower (Central European University Press, 2004), 55-61. In text citation: Glenny, *The Balkans*, 401.

<sup>115</sup> Calic, *The Great*, 453.

<sup>116</sup> After King Alexander was assassinated in 1934, he was succeeded by his 11-year-old son Peter, and a regency was set up under his uncle, Prince Paul. Paul declared the accession to the pact and was deposed by the generals, who declared Peter of age. Glenny, *The Balkans*, 474.

<sup>117</sup> Calic, *The Great*, 454.

<sup>118</sup> After Italy's capitulation in 1943, there would be a great debate about the future of Kosovo. The Kosovo National Liberation Council first met in 1944 and adopted a motion to be reunited with Albania. However, in Autumn of 1944, Serbian units of the Yugoslav army "liberated" Kosovo while met with armed resistance from the Kosovar Albanians. In 1945, Kosovo was absorbed back into Yugoslavia by acclamation under martial law, without any type of election or referendum. For more information, see: Anton Bebler, "The Serbia-Kosovo Conflict," in *Frozen Conflicts in Europe*, ed. Anton Bebler (Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2015), 151-70. In text citation: Jelavich, *History Vol. 2*, 261-62.

<sup>119</sup> Calic, *The Great*, 454-55.

<sup>120</sup> Jelavich, *History Vol. 2*, 263.

actually Croatian, with 1.9 million Orthodox Serbs and some 700,000 Muslims.<sup>121</sup> Mussolini chose Ante Pavelić to run the puppet government, and thus began the reign of the fascist ultranationalist Ustaše regime.<sup>122</sup> According to the historian Mark Biondich, “The defining characteristics of the Ustaše movement were anti-Serbianism, anti-Communism, and its cult of Croatian statehood.”<sup>123</sup> Pavelić’s fascist and racist ideology was inspired by the old ethnonationalist Serb-hater Ante Starčević, and Pavelić set about to inspire a new Croatian nationalism of superiority over the despised Slavo-Serbs.<sup>124</sup> Shortly after taking power, the Ustaše regime set out on a horrific persecution of Serbs, Jews, Gypsies, Communists, and Croat opposition members.<sup>125</sup> The aim, and coinciding with Hitler’s ambitions, was to create an ethnically pure Croatian territory. “Accounts of the atrocities rivaled one another in their brutality: in some places Serbs were burned alive in churches and barns, in others they were butchered and thrown into rivers and ravines.”<sup>126</sup> In the summer of 1942, the Ustaše led forces surrounded the city of Kozara, captured and slaughtered roughly 10,000 Serb refugees and Partizans, including 4,000 children, in one of the most hideous acts committed by the regime.<sup>127</sup> The Ustaše also followed in the footsteps of their Nazi-parent state, creating concentration camps throughout the region. The largest camp was the Jasenovac complex, a string of five camps along the Sava River in Slavonia, whose facilities were grim even by Nazi standards.<sup>128</sup> Croatian political police and Ustaše militia regularly terrorized, tortured, and killed prisoners at will, with estimates of 77,000-99,000 people murdered at the camps between 1941-1945.<sup>129</sup>

Concurrently, and consistent with previous Croatian nationalist movements, forced conversions of Serbs to Catholicism took place by the hundreds of thousands.<sup>130</sup> Under the belief

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Pavelić was exiled from the kingdom in 1929 and lived in Italy, periodically supporting Mussolini’s fascist regime, until his return to the Independent State of Croatia in 1941. Ibid., 264.

<sup>123</sup> Biondich, “We Were,” 60.

<sup>124</sup> Connelly, *From Peoples*, 428.

<sup>125</sup> Pavličević, “A Review,” 386.

<sup>126</sup> Connelly, *From Peoples*, 452.

<sup>127</sup> The atrocities in Kozara (now a part of Bosnia), were carried out by the Ustaše alongside German, Italian, and Hungarian armies. The Partizans were a group of communist resistance fighters led by Josip Broz Tito, who as internationalists, were fighting for the motherland of socialism. Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia: The Third Balkan War* (Third Edition, Penguin Books, 1996), 80-81, and Connelly, *From Peoples*, 455-56.

<sup>128</sup> The facilities were grossly inadequate, lacking proper shelter and sanitation, and prisoners received minimal food. Glenny, *The Fall*, 81.

<sup>129</sup> United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington D.C., “Holocaust Encyclopedia: Jasenovac,” accessed December 18, 2020, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/jasenovac>.

<sup>130</sup> Connelly, *From Peoples*, 453.

that Serbs were just “apostate Croats,” some 200,000-300,000 Orthodox Serbs were forced to convert to Catholicism, or be expelled, even exterminated.<sup>131</sup> These mass conversions were part of an unholy alliance formed between the Catholic Church and the fascist state, with the *Katolički tjednik* (Catholic Weekly) asserting, “It is our desire that this Croatian state be a Catholic state.”<sup>132</sup> Interestingly enough, Bosniaks were given somewhat of a free pass by the dreadful regime. There was a belief that Bosniaks were actually Croats of Muslim faith and deemed racially valuable.<sup>133</sup> Bosniaks even joined forces with the Croats, wearing state issued uniforms in attacks against the Serbs.<sup>134</sup> Given their penchant for persecution, the Ustaše quickly began to lose the support of the people with their ruthless and amoral character.<sup>135</sup>

In addition to the Partizans, a second resistance movement took up arms against the Ustaše regime. The Chetniks emerged as individual bands of guerilla forces at the village level, predominantly in largely Serb populated areas, whose convictions arose from the biological survival of the Serb race.<sup>136</sup> In retaliation against the brutal Ustaše regime, the Chetniks declared that these disputed territories be “cleansed of all national minorities and non-national elements.”<sup>137</sup> They participated in similar gruesome atrocities to the Ustaše, depopulating entire stretches of territory, terrorizing Croat civilians, and burning down entire Muslim villages.<sup>138</sup>

After the war, the horrors committed by the Ustaše, and by the Chetniks, would be relativized, exaggerated, and mythologized by both sides. The Croats justified their actions by stating that since the war was fought on Croatian territory, they were defending their right of self-determination, and all acts (no matter how brutal), were carried out in self-defense against a Serb enemy that aspired to “the annihilation of the Croat nation and Croatian homeland.”<sup>139</sup> Excessive violence was contextualized as a necessary retaliation in response to the Serb atrocities committed against Croat civilians. Similarly, the Serbs used the same logic in

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<sup>131</sup> Jelavich, *History Vol. 2*, 265.

<sup>132</sup> Calic, *The Great*, 458.

<sup>133</sup> Connelly, *From Peoples*, 452-54.

<sup>134</sup> Jelavich, *History Vol. 2*, 264, and Connelly, *From Peoples*, 454.

<sup>135</sup> Ante Pavelić’s Ustaše Party had previously been marginal spectators (at best) to government, performing appallingly at the polls under free elections prior to 1941. Connelly, *From Peoples*, 454. In text citation: Pavličević, “A Review,” 386.

<sup>136</sup> The term *chetnik* recalled to memory bands of armed Serbian units that organized to fight oppression under Ottoman rule. Jelavich, *History Vol. 2*, 267. In text citation: Glenny, *The Balkans*, 489.

<sup>137</sup> Calic, *The Great*, 458.

<sup>138</sup> Muslims were targeted as carriers of ancient “Turkish” oppression. Connelly, *From Peoples*, 455.

<sup>139</sup> Biondich, “We Were,” 67.



rationalizing their barbaric actions.<sup>140</sup> Additionally, Chetniks were guided by the ideology of recreating Yugoslavia under Serb hegemony and ridding the land of non-nationals well-served this purpose.<sup>141</sup>

Both groups also grossly exaggerated the brutality and casualties suffered, in a deliberate effort to besmirch and demonize the other.<sup>142</sup> From these justifications and exaggerations, certain mythologies were born. During the later Cold War era, the émigré Croat political right's appeals to the West emphasized how they fought communism in an effort to achieve democracy and independence, conveniently omitting the horrific massacres by the Ustaše.<sup>143</sup> The atrocities committed at Jasenovac went unmentioned, but recounts of the Croat massacre by Partizans at Bleiburg were widely shared to promulgate Croat suffering.<sup>144</sup> The myth that the deaths at Bleiburg somehow magically cleansed Croats of the sins committed by the Ustaše became widespread, providing a basis for their own claims of a "Croatian holocaust" at the hands of the Serbs.<sup>145</sup>

Similarly, the Serbian Orthodox Church would mythologize the events at Jasenovac, emphasizing the Serbian genocide at the hands of the Croats. At the onset of the Yugoslav Wars, Patriarch Paul used the myth to foment nationalist sentiment:

Nothing can be worse than Jasenovac, where during four years of war, 700,000 people were killed... Jasenovac is the scene of the most important horrors committed against the Serbs, the place of... their annihilation, their extermination, their execution, their torture, where they suffered under a blood lust, the like of which could not be paralleled by the antichrist himself... This is the new crucifixion of Christ. This is the sin of sins.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> The Chetniks claimed they banded out of necessity to protect and defend Serb villagers from extermination. Connelly, *From Peoples*, 454.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 454-55.

<sup>142</sup> Croats postulate some 50,000 deaths occurred at Jasenovac, while Serbs contest the number could be as high as one million. As previously mentioned earlier in the chapter, the Holocaust Museum puts the official estimate between 77,000-99,000. Biondich, "We Were," 68.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>144</sup> An estimated 20,000-30,000 Croats soldiers, administrators, and civilians were killed by Partizan soldiers at Bleiburg while trying to escape to Austria. For more information on the atrocities committed by both sides, see: David Bruce MacDonald, *Balkan Holocaust?: Serbian and Croatian Victim-centered Propaganda and the War in Yugoslavia* (Manchester University Press, 2002) chap. 6.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.

<sup>146</sup> MacDonald, *Balkan Holocaust?* 162-63.

As World War II drew to a close, the triumphs of Tito and the Partizans left them with a clear advantage over any potential political opponent.<sup>147</sup> In November 1945 elections were held, a constitutional assembly met, the monarchy was abolished, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was proclaimed.<sup>148</sup> “All political power was concentrated in the Politburo of the CPY under the leadership of Tito, who was simultaneously the head of the Yugoslav government.”<sup>149</sup> In an attempt to heal ethnonationalist animosities, Tito set about creating an official supranational postwar identity. This identity, constructed alongside assistance of Slovenian Partizan and Yugoslav ideologue Edvard Kardelj, was “constructed more on negative considerations of who ‘We’ are not and who ‘We’ ought not to be than on positive identification with who ‘We’ are and who ‘We’ ought to be.”<sup>150</sup> This ideology of “who we are not,” was born through great attempts at differentiating Yugoslav communism from communism in the Soviet Union.<sup>151</sup> The idea was to invent an original interpretation of Yugoslav Marxism, the “Yugoslav way to socialism,” that would replace diverging ethnonationalist identities.<sup>152</sup>

Although a complex and lofty objective from the onset, in the decades following the war Tito’s new supranational Yugoslav identity was in fact superficially successful.<sup>153</sup> While the deep and divisive ethnocultural and ethnonational identities that had formed under a prolonged history of religion and empire momentarily hibernated under the blanket of brotherhood and unity, they were not eternally extinguished. This became evident as conditions in the country deteriorated promptly after Tito’s death in 1980. Whatever supranational identity and community had been formed under his leadership began to rapidly erode. Increasing political and socio-economic instability saw the delicate cohesion of the federation he had created dissolve in an awakening of forces once again aligned with ethnonational divisions.

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<sup>147</sup> Jelavich, *History Vol. 2*, 270.

<sup>148</sup> The elections and consensus for a multinational Federal Republic of Yugoslavia were far from free, fair and universal. Estimates conclude that nearly 200,000 people were prevented from voting due to cooperation or affiliation with the occupational forces. Slovenia and Croatia were also deeply divided towards re-assembling as a federation. For more details, see: Calic, *A History*, 59-65.

<sup>149</sup> CPY is an acronym for the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. After 1952 it became known as the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY). *Ibid.*, 165.

<sup>150</sup> Dejan Jovic, “Communist Yugoslavia and its ‘Others’,” in *Ideologies and National Identities*, 277.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 280-81.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 280.

<sup>153</sup> For more information on multinational stability in Yugoslavia under a communal Yugoslav identity, see: Steven L. Burg and Michael L. Berbaum. “Community, Integration, and Stability in Multinational Yugoslavia,” *The American Political Science Review* 83, no. 2 (1989): 535-54.

## 5. Regional Disparities

While the vast ethnocultural differences played a major role in polarizing the republics of Yugoslavia socially and culturally, tensions were increasingly exacerbated by the country's growing economic and regional disparities. Not surprisingly, the country's initial basis for economic development became as equally complex as its demography. After World War II, copying the Soviet blueprint failed to produce the intended results in Yugoslavia, so Tito chose to break from Stalin and embark on his own independent form of socialism in 1948.<sup>154</sup> Like all other war-torn countries in Europe, the first step was rebuilding and laying the foundation for future development. A series of socialist reconstruction programs in the postwar period from 1946-1958 consisted of radical agrarian reform, nationalizations of capital industry, transport, mining, banking, and wholesale and retail trade.<sup>155</sup> That same period also brought some rather surprising opportunities. Upon abandoning Stalin and the "family of brotherly parties" for anti-Sovietism, geopolitics found Yugoslavia a serendipitous partner in the West.<sup>156</sup> As early as 1949, in an effort to keep Tito and his defiantly non-Soviet satellite state afloat, Yugoslavia began receiving aid from the United States, within the context that an independent and stable Yugoslavia was in the best security interests of the North Atlantic to counter possible Soviet aggression.<sup>157</sup> Relations continued to formalize with the West, and in 1951 US President Harry Truman suspended most favored nation status with all communist countries, except Yugoslavia.<sup>158</sup> Over the subsequent years, western foreign aid freely flowed to Yugoslavia with the American share totaling US\$1.2 billion by 1955, of which only US\$55 million was to be

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<sup>154</sup> Branko Horvat, "Yugoslav Economic Policy in the Post-War Period: Problems, Ideas, Institutional Developments," *The American Economic Review* 61, no. 3 (1971): 75.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>156</sup> The attack by the Cominform countries forced Yugoslavs to reconsider their ideological positions, which gave rise to a Yugoslav version of socialism. *Ibid.*, 75. For a detailed account of the Tito-Stalin split, see: Ivo Banac, *With Stalin Against Tito: Cominformist Splits in Yugoslav Communism* (Cornell University Press, 2018).

<sup>157</sup> For more on the intriguing relationship between the US and Yugoslavia in the greater context of the Cold War, see: Lorraine M. Lees, *Keeping Tito Afloat: The United States, Yugoslavia and the Cold War* (Penn State University Press, 1997).

<sup>158</sup> Yugoslavia's unique international position allowed it to enjoy provisional membership or observer status in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). See: William H. Cooper, "The Jackson-Vanik Amendment and Candidate Countries for WTO Accession: Issues for Congress," Congressional Research Service, July 26, 2012, accessed November 28, 2020, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS22398.pdf>, and Dennison I. Rusinow, "Yugoslav Development Between East and West," *Journal of International Affairs* 19, no. 2 (1965): 181-93.

repaid.<sup>159</sup> The influx of capital brought about new plans for development and investment as trade became channeled towards the West.<sup>160</sup> Adapting to its new international stature, a revised economic system based on decentralization, or self-management, was erected in favor of central planning in 1952.<sup>161</sup> “The worker’s self-management system was meant, in its purest conception, to provide the opposite of a Soviet-type dominance over the worker.”<sup>162</sup> It was also intentionally distinctive from the western capitalist model. Self-management was an alternative model of economic planning intended to reshape the relationship between the state and the economic system, providing a “third way” between the existing capitalist and socialist models.<sup>163</sup> This bridged system established a structure of collective participation and codetermination, leaving the decision-making process in the hands of the shop workers and local workers’ councils, in lieu of the political center.<sup>164</sup> Workers could democratically elect their own councils, who were in turn directly responsible for all activities of the firm’s management including but not limited to accounting practices, regulatory initiatives, stock ownership, and the redistribution of profits after taxes.<sup>165</sup> After Stalin’s death in 1953, a rapprochement of Yugoslavia with the Soviet Union was reached in 1955, resulting in the materialization of a crucial new export market.<sup>166</sup> Partnerships with both blocs put Yugoslavia in a very unique position that led to significant economic benefits in the imminent reconstruction, and subsequent modernization phase(s).<sup>167</sup>

The “New Economic System” produced astounding results over its inaugural eight-year period from 1952-1960.<sup>168</sup> Yugoslavia experienced the largest growth rates in the world, with per capita GNP expanding at an annual rate of 8.5 percent.<sup>169</sup> This decentralized self-management

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<sup>159</sup> Dijana Pleština, *Regional Development in Communist Yugoslavia: Success, Failure, and Consequences* (Routledge, 2019), chap. 4.

<sup>160</sup> Calic, *A History*, 178.

<sup>161</sup> For a detailed analysis on the economic dimensions of self-management, see: Jaroslav Vanek, *The Participatory economy: an evolutionary hypothesis and a strategy for development* (Cornell University Press, 1971).

<sup>162</sup> P.H. Liotta, “Paradigm Lost: Yugoslav Self-Management and the Economics of Disaster,” *Balkanologie* V, no. 1-2 (2001): 3.

<sup>163</sup> Benedetto Zaccaria, “Learning from Yugoslavia?: Western Europe and the Myth of Self-Management (1968–1975),” in *Planning in Cold War Europe: Competition, Cooperation, Circulations (1950s-1970s)*, ed. Christian Michel, Kott Sandrine, and Matějka Ondřej (De Gruyter, 2018), 213.

<sup>164</sup> Glenny, *The Balkans*, 575.

<sup>165</sup> Liotta, “Paradigm Lost,” 4.

<sup>166</sup> Susan L. Woodward, *Socialist Unemployment: The Political Economy of Yugoslavia, 1945-1990* (Cornell University Press, 1995), 241.

<sup>167</sup> The early economic benefits of aligning with both blocs would come back to haunt Yugoslavia during the debt crisis of the 1980s, after undertaking massive loans from both the East and West. Glenny, *The Balkans*, 919.

<sup>168</sup> Horvat, “Yugoslav Economic Policy,” 77.

<sup>169</sup> Agricultural and industrial output equally boomed annually with rates of 8.9 percent and 13.4 percent, respectively. Ibid.

system also brought significant power and autonomy to the individual republics, as the labor-managed firms and worker-owned enterprises became key micro-power centers and decision-making bodies.<sup>170</sup> While the economic boom increased the standard of living in many regions, this micro-economic autonomy also began to escalate previously existing regional disparities.<sup>171</sup> This was particularly problematic for a key reason: from the onset of the new socialist regime, reducing the existing disparities among the republics and regions had been a professed and high priority goal.<sup>172</sup> In 1946, President of the Economic Council and Chairman of the Federal Planning Commission, Boris Kidrić, specifically recognized and addressed the problem of regional disparities and the unevenness of development as a primary challenge to the present economic development of the country.<sup>173</sup> Perceived to be the fastest road to a unified egalitarian society, a strategy of simultaneous investment in both the developed republics and regions (DRs) and the lesser developed republics and regions (LDRs) was adopted.<sup>174</sup> Rather than an immediate and re-distributional general levelling, the idea was that rapid industrialization would allow the DRs to continue to develop while the LDRs would ultimately make a “revolutionary jump” to equalization.<sup>175</sup> Accelerating development in the LDRs continued to be one of the regime’s priorities after central planning was abandoned for market socialism in the reforms of 1952. Unfortunately, over the course of the 1950s these revolutionary developmental jumps toward regional egalitarianism never materialized.<sup>176</sup> Instead, the disparities between the LDRs and DRs widened significantly.<sup>177</sup>

At first glance, the primary reasons behind this failure were neither mysterious nor coincidental. From 1952-1960, disproportionate levels of investment began to favor the DRs.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>170</sup> See: Adam Bennett “Macroeconomic Stability and Enterprise Self-Management in Yugoslavia: An Impossible Marriage,” in *The Legacy of Yugoslavia: Politics, Economics and Society in the Modern Balkans*, eds. Othon Anastasakis, Adam Bennett, David Madden and Adis Merdzanovic (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020).

<sup>171</sup> A comprehensive account of growing regional disparities from 1946-1990 can be found in: Pleština, *Regional Development*.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid.*, chap. 2.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>175</sup> This policy of simultaneous equal investment in both the DRs and the LDRs actually remained official policy on development into the 1980s. *Ibid.*

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>177</sup> Skilled labor sectors, primarily in the industrialized north, had advantages their governments fought to protect, while the majority of raw material exports (unskilled labor) came from the lesser developed regions. See: Woodward, *Socialist*, 93-95.

<sup>178</sup> See: Pleština, *Regional Development*, chap. 2.

In a 1990 interview, Kidrić's successor, Svetozar Vukmanović-Tempo, directly contradicted the regime's public stance of prioritizing faster development in the LDRs:

I wasn't interested in how a specific republic would fare. I was interested in how the Yugoslav economy (as a whole) would fare. Therefore, with the accumulation, the government, I mean the banks, would give money to those firms that would give the fastest effects. In that process, Slovenia fared the best.<sup>179</sup>

Since the government was relying on immediate returns, distribution of publicly allocated resources went primarily to increasing productivity in pre-existing industrialized plants.<sup>180</sup> According to Pleština and Woodward, geopolitics provides some explanation for the uneven investment that took place from 1950-1955.<sup>181</sup> Given its resource scarcity and in order to make Yugoslavia more independent, secure, and competitive as a whole within the international arena, focus shifted from regional equalization to capital accumulation.<sup>182</sup> Therefore, investments which maximized output and greater returns occurred frequently at the expense of development in the LDRs. A large amount of resources was also dedicated to the armaments industry in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia.<sup>183</sup> Slovenia, which was already the richest and most industrialized republic, received almost four times the amount of investment as the poorest region, Kosovo, because it could produce three times as much.<sup>184</sup>

Gaps in per capita gross social product and relative republic productivity continued to widen in tandem with the disproportional investment rates.<sup>185</sup> Croatia and Slovenia consistently outpaced the other republics and regions across most economic indices, as Bosnia, Montenegro, Macedonia, and especially Kosovo increasingly lagged well behind with high rates of unemployment.<sup>186</sup> A significant factor contributing to this situation arose from the fact that the

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<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Woodward, *Socialist*, 94.

<sup>181</sup> At this time, national independence was defined in terms of military threats to a country's territories, and in Yugoslavia the capital needed to rapidly industrialize was in short supply. Ibid., 164. In text citation: Pleština, *Regional Development*, chap. 2.

<sup>182</sup> Pleština, *Regional Development*, chap. 2.

<sup>183</sup> The locations of Bosnia and Serbia for the production and storage of national armaments would have impactful consequences during the Bosnian War in the 1990s. Calic, *A History*, 183.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> See: Anastasakis et al., *The Legacy of Yugoslavia*, chap. 7, and Pleština, *Regional Development*, chap. 2.

<sup>186</sup> Ramet, *Thinking about Yugoslavia*, 55-56.

employees across the nations' self-managed enterprises did not all share the same levels of education, knowledge, or experience, therefore strategic decisions involving the best long-term interests of the company were not always realized.<sup>187</sup> Over time this stalled the advance, or modernization, of the industrial sectors in these republics and regions, leading to reduced competitiveness in both the domestic and foreign markets.<sup>188</sup> By the early 1960s, investment and consumption began to outpace production, which fueled domestic inflation and an external trade deficit.<sup>189</sup> The LDRs further fell behind and contested the unfair fiscal allocation of resources to the DRs, which they viewed as depriving them of much needed investment, that resulted in a continuous underpricing of their chief products: raw materials and agricultural goods.<sup>190</sup> As inflation rose, self-management enterprises used what profits they made to raise workers' wages, or to expand retail service sectors, in lieu of reinvesting within the company.<sup>191</sup> The rationale for this use of profits originated from the misguided psychological perception that, while most Yugoslavs were better off than they had been at any time since the end of the war, they were not as well off as they should be.<sup>192</sup> Raising individual wages to sustain the current standard of living, and then in turn raising prices to offset the wage increase (with little or no regard to production), created a debilitating cycle.<sup>193</sup>

This led to a series of radical economic reforms in the early 1960s aimed at curbing the growing economic disparities. The Yugoslav regime incorporated certain assurances into the constitution that it was the duty of the DRs to aid in the development of the LDRs.<sup>194</sup> A development fund with guaranteed investments, grants-in-aid, and an exchange in expertise was established.<sup>195</sup> These grants-in-aid were an attempt at a rapid solution, conceptualized in an effort to rapidly equalize living conditions in the LDRs by establishing the same facilities and access to

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<sup>187</sup> See: Drazen Marjanac, "Economic Aspects of the Breakup of Yugoslavia," *Proceedings of the Faculty of Economics in East Sarajevo*, no. 11 (2015): 83-92.

<sup>188</sup> For more details surrounding the shortcomings of self-management, see: Saul Estrin, "Yugoslavia: The Case of Self-Managing Market Socialism," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 5, no. 4 (Fall 1991): 187-94.

<sup>189</sup> Pleština, *Regional Development*, chap. 3.

<sup>190</sup> This also acted to discourage production of arguably the federations' most needed commodities. Woodward, *Socialist*, 94.

<sup>191</sup> This was particularly problematic in the LDRs. Marjanac, "Economic Aspects," 86.

<sup>192</sup> For a contemporaneous analysis of this misguided perception, see: Fred Warner Neal, "Yugoslavia at the Crossroads," *The Atlantic Monthly*, December 1962.

<sup>193</sup> Marjanac, "Economic Aspects," 86.

<sup>194</sup> Pleština, *Regional Development*, chap. 3.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*

education, health care, and social services available in the DRs.<sup>196</sup> However, the LDRs constantly complained that these measures implemented by the federation were inadequate, and that the DRs were frequently late with their payments.<sup>197</sup> The DRs also contested the measures, but from a different perspective, proclaiming their own growth was being inhibited and that funds sent to the LDRs were often spent carelessly.<sup>198</sup> Attempts to politically solve this growing dilemma resulted in a revival of ethnonationalist arguments advocating for or against increased economic liberalization amongst the republics.<sup>199</sup>

In 1964, the deficit on balance of trade reached a postwar record of US\$435 million.<sup>200</sup> The new message from the industrial West was that structural adjustments must be made; the IMF, World Bank, and the USA would continue to support Yugoslav development, but moving forward it would now be through returnable credits on favorable terms.<sup>201</sup> The economic reforms of 1965 would be the most sweeping since the inception of Tito's communism.<sup>202</sup> But according to Dyker, "in seeking to decentralize and marketize investment finance, it opened a Pandora's box of regional complications."<sup>203</sup> The reconcentration of financial power established a range of new institutions, primarily in Belgrade, which further propelled regional complaints of inequality and exploitation at the hands of the political center.<sup>204</sup>

## 6. Socio-Economic Decline

As the 1960s drew to a close, the regional economies were subjected to additional strains by a wave of urban migration. By 1967, 2.5 million Yugoslavs had left the countryside for the cities.<sup>205</sup> With an increasingly older peasant population, productivity slumped in the LDRs, resulting in lower tax revenues and a decrease in social services.<sup>206</sup> Additionally many of the

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<sup>196</sup> See: Horvat, "Yugoslav Economic Policy," 82-87.

<sup>197</sup> Ramet, *Thinking about Yugoslavia*, 55-56.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>199</sup> Pleština, *Regional Development*, chap. 3.

<sup>200</sup> David A. Dyker, "Yugoslavia—a Peripheral Tragedy," *Journal of Interdisciplinary Economics* 4, no. 3 (April 1992): 284.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>202</sup> For a complete account of the 1965 reforms, see: Stella Margold, "Yugoslavia's New Economic Reforms," *The American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 26, no. 1 (1967): 65-77.

<sup>203</sup> Dyker, "Yugoslavia," 285.

<sup>204</sup> These reforms led to a political crisis, particularly in Croatia, resulting in the Croatian Spring in 1970. *Ibid.*

<sup>205</sup> Glenny, *The Balkans*, 588.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*



migrants that moved to the urban areas faced stereotypical economic migrant discrimination: they were marginalized by locals, treated as outsiders, regarded as second class citizens, and constantly reminded of their inferiority.<sup>207</sup> Mutual antipathy grew as a new urban sophistication further widened the social gap between the rural and urban communities.<sup>208</sup>

By the end of the 1960s Yugoslavia had faced and weathered various domestic crises that had ethnonationalist manifestations, but Pleština viewed the Croatian Crisis of 1970-1971 to be the first viable threat to the delicate harmony of the federation.<sup>209</sup> The 1960s ended with a pair of young and energetic reformists, Savka Dabčević-Kučar and Miko Tripalo, at the helm of the League of Communists of Croatia.<sup>210</sup> Fighting for more individual freedom, freedom of the press, and political and economic autonomy, a cultural and political renaissance swept across Croatia; a phenomena that would later become known as the Croatian Spring.<sup>211</sup> Even with the series of further decentralized reforms that took place in 1965, exporters were still obliged to surrender the majority of their foreign exchange proceeds to the National Bank in Belgrade.<sup>212</sup> By 1969, Croatia was bringing in more than half of the country's foreign currency, yet only being redistributed roughly 16 percent of what it contributed.<sup>213</sup> Compounded by the economic reforms of 1965, Croatia viewed this as part of a larger pattern of exploitation, echoing tired grievances of unfair fiscal distribution among the republics and regions.<sup>214</sup>

External factors from the changing global environment in the 1970s produced even more serious tensions in the federal-republic relationship.<sup>215</sup> Rapid economic growth was still naively viewed as the most effective means to promote development in the LDRs, minimize

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<sup>207</sup> Susan L. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (The Brookings Institution, 1995), 45.

<sup>208</sup> Glenny, *The Balkans*, 588.

<sup>209</sup> Pleština, *Regional Development*, chap. 4.

<sup>210</sup> Glenny, *The Balkans*, 589-90

<sup>211</sup> This renaissance was also regarded as Croatian cultural nationalism. For more on the Croatian Spring, see: Marcus Tanner, *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War* (Yale University Press, 2001), 184-202. In text citation: Glenny, *The Balkans*, 589-90.

<sup>212</sup> Horvat, "Yugoslav Economic Policy," 122.

<sup>213</sup> Pleština, *Regional Development*, chap. 4.

<sup>214</sup> Croatian exploitation at the hands of Serbs extended beyond economics. During the Croatian Spring, Tripalo contested that in addition to the unfair fiscal allocation, Serbs (who only accounted for 15 percent of the population in Croatia), held roughly 40 percent of Party posts, and a disproportional percentage of posts in the army, police, and secret police. Tanner, *Croatia*, 195. In text citation: Pleština, *Regional Development*, chap. 4.

<sup>215</sup> The oil shocks of 1974 and 1978-79, the subsequent global recession, the recycling of petrodollars and extensive borrowing from both the East and the West, and the Volcker shock were but a few external factors that compounded internal economic and fiscal mismanagement leading to the severe economic crisis of the 1980s. Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 40.

unemployment, narrow the income disparities, and increase living standards.<sup>216</sup> Rather than lowering its domestic spending and consumption, Yugoslavia, like many other developing countries at the time, relied on heavy external borrowing to sustain its unbalanced economic growth strategy.<sup>217</sup> Yugoslavia's external debt rose from US\$2 billion in 1970, to US\$14 billion in 1979, expanding to US\$18 billion in 1980.<sup>218</sup> Over this period of mounting external debt, further debates and tensions surfaced concerning the economic roles and responsibilities of the republics and regions relative to the central role as managed from Belgrade.<sup>219</sup>

The adoption of a new constitution in 1974 attempted to remedy the growing economic crisis and placate regional-nationalist sentiment.<sup>220</sup> Under the new constitution, Yugoslavia transformed from a federation more towards a confederation, as powers would now be delegated from the republics to the center, rather than the other way around.<sup>221</sup> But as demand for Yugoslav exports to Western markets had shifted from higher to lower value-added products, revenues and investment also shifted regionally.<sup>222</sup> Many ordinary people across the federation, unaware of the reasons behind these changes, began to cultivate political strife as their economic fortunes suddenly declined.<sup>223</sup> This problem became particularly debilitating in the late 1970s and 1980s during periods of inflation, as the redistribution of enterprise profits under self-management saw wages begin to rise faster than production, particularly across the LDRs.<sup>224</sup>

By the end of 1982, Yugoslavia's external debt had ballooned to roughly US\$20 billion.<sup>225</sup> The decision to return to the IMF to service its foreign debt introduced new neoliberal economic reforms and greater austerity measures.<sup>226</sup> The reforms imposed on Belgrade by the global financial institutions ultimately led to the collapse of the industrial sector and the

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<sup>216</sup> Pleština, *Regional Development*, chap. 4.

<sup>217</sup> Woodward, *Socialist*, 225.

<sup>218</sup> See: Milica Uvalic, "What Happened to the Yugoslav Economic Model?" in *The Legacy of Yugoslavia: Politics, Economics and Society in the Modern Balkans*.

<sup>219</sup> See: Woodward, *Socialist*, 225-30.

<sup>220</sup> Dyker, "Yugoslavia," 285.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 48.

<sup>223</sup> The delay of the revised law on labor relations until 1976 also caused a stir when it finally went into effect, with several managers revolting and insisting they be given greater flexibility. Woodward, *Socialist*, 280. In text citation: Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 48.

<sup>224</sup> Pleština, *Regional Development*, chap. 4.

<sup>225</sup> Dyker, "Yugoslavia," 286.

<sup>226</sup> Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 48-49.

dismantling of the Yugoslav welfare state.<sup>227</sup> Food subsidies were cut in 1982, prices for food, fuel, and transportation increased by one third in 1983, and two rounds of currency devaluation – along with the decision to allow the currency to float – cut the value of the dinar by 90 percent from 1979-1985.<sup>228</sup> In the industrial sector, the decades long failure of workers’ councils to appropriately reinvest profits back into the infrastructure of their firms had finally reached a critical point. Through the new restrictive policies, the innovation or technology transfers needed to make exports more competitive globally was absent, as much of the equipment or technology needed to modernize was foreign owned.<sup>229</sup> Suddenly, basic employment became an issue. For years under the self-management system, layoffs were virtually unknown, and during the 1970s Yugoslavia even subsidized loss-makers to maintain jobs, with some 10 percent of the labor force employed in loss-making firms.<sup>230</sup> Under the new round of austere measures firms showing losses were now obliged to lay workers off, which sustained high levels of unemployment in the LDRs over the course of the decade.<sup>231</sup>

In addition to growing unemployment, inflation rates began to explode.<sup>232</sup> The lax financial discipline of the late 1970s and ineffective central monetary policies supporting self-management’s profit redistribution ultimately created four-digit hyperinflation in 1989.<sup>233</sup> In the first half of the decade, living standards had already begun to erode. From 1979 to 1984, as inflation increased, real personal income fell 34 percent, pensions declined 40 percent, and the population living below the poverty line increased from 17 to 25 percent.<sup>234</sup> What social services remained, such as education, health, and housing, were not equipped to manage the rising demands of social needs.<sup>235</sup> Further exacerbating this problem was the growing regional economic polarization. Personal income in Macedonia was less than half of that in Slovenia, and

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<sup>227</sup> Michel Chossudovsky, “Dismantling Former Yugoslavia, Recolonising Bosnia,” *Development in Practice* 7, no. 4 (1997): 376.

<sup>228</sup> Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 51.

<sup>229</sup> For more on the economic reforms of the early 1980s and their effects on Yugoslav industrial exports, see: David A. Dyker, *Yugoslavia: Socialism, Development and Debt* (Routledge, 2011), 238-84.

<sup>230</sup> Estrin, “Yugoslavia,” 193.

<sup>231</sup> Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 51.

<sup>232</sup> Marjanac, “Economic Aspects,” 88.

<sup>233</sup> Estrin, “Yugoslavia,” 191.

<sup>234</sup> Duško Sekulić, Garth Massey and Randy Hodson, “Ethnic intolerance and ethnic conflict in the dissolution of Yugoslavia,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 29, no. 5 (2006): 804, and Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 52.

<sup>235</sup> Liotta, “Paradigm Lost,” 6.

while unemployment in Serbia sat at 17 percent respectively, it rose above 50 percent in Kosovo, accentuated by a rise in so-called “peasant” households.<sup>236</sup>

Central authorities tried to combat inflation with a series of wage freezes, credit limits, price controls, higher interest rates, and exchange rate adjustments, but the effects were marginal at best.<sup>237</sup> The harsh measures stripped the workers of their powers and created social unrest across the country. With wages frozen and inflation soaring, the final years of the 1980s saw a rapid rise in work stoppages – an essential Yugoslav euphemism for strike.<sup>238</sup> Workers’ frustrations with the central government turned into regional grievances with the central government. As Chossudovsky points out, “secessionist tendencies that were drawing strength from social and ethnic divisions gained impetus precisely during a period of brutal impoverishment of the Yugoslav population.”<sup>239</sup> Workers unions began aligning with nationalist allegiances, leading to regional and ethnic rivalries and serious political disagreements about the way to deal with the country’s burgeoning economic crisis.<sup>240</sup>

The consequences of prolonged economic malfeasance evolved into full scale ethnonational political fragmentation by the end of the 1980s. This ethnonationalist discourse gave rise to political leaders like Slobodan Milošević in Serbia, who took advantage of the swelling nationalist rhetoric for personal political gain. With the causes of the debt crisis imbedded in the decentralized political structure and Yugoslavia’s unique workers’ self-management system, the socio-economic decline of the 1980s underscored the growing regional disparities, ultimately bringing the country to a state of desperation.<sup>241</sup> Increased regional polarization and political instability ensued, ethnic divisions were redrawn, and the resurgence of nationalist sentiments amplified the desire for more autonomy, later translating into movements towards complete independence. While internal and external economic factors, culminating in the harsh economic reforms of the 1980s, most certainly pushed Yugoslavia along the path to dissolution, the resurgence of nationalism(s) ensured the republics would not divorce amicably.

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<sup>236</sup> See: Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 64, and Liotta, “Paradigm Lost,” 7.

<sup>237</sup> For more details on the measures to combat inflation, see: Anastasakis et al., *The Legacy of Yugoslavia*, chap. 7.

<sup>238</sup> In 1986 there were 851 work stoppages involving 88,860 workers, which rose to 1,262 work stoppages (196,000 workers) in 1987. The number again rose to 1,720 in 1988, involving 388,000 workers, and by 1990 the number had risen close to 2,000 involving almost half a million workers. Liotta, “Paradigm Lost,” 6.

<sup>239</sup> Chossudovsky, “Dismantling,” 376.

<sup>240</sup> “Yugoslavia: Key Questions and Answers on the Debt Crisis,” *Central Intelligence Agency Digital Library*, published January 1, 1984, accessed December 2, 2020, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/cia-rdp84s00895r000200080005-6>, and Liotta, “Paradigm Lost,” 6.

<sup>241</sup> Detailed accounts are provided in: “Yugoslavia,” *CIA Digital Library*, and Pleština, *Regional Development*.

## 7. The Resurgence of Nationalism(s)

For nearly four decades after the end of WWII, Yugoslavia appeared to be a remarkable success story.<sup>242</sup> Tito had established a harmony and collective pride amongst a people who had spent the majority of history engaged in bloody civil conflict.<sup>243</sup> Under his policy of “brotherhood and unity,” any hint of nationalism displayed by Serbs, Croats, Muslims, Macedonians, or Slovenes, was crushed.<sup>244</sup> However, the delicate balance Tito wielded began to rapidly unravel in the years of political and economic instability following his death in 1980.<sup>245</sup>

In the early 1980s, Yugoslavia began sliding into the most serious economic, political and socio-psychological crisis of its existence.<sup>246</sup> As the situation continued to deteriorate over the following years, social unrest increased substantially. Divisions started forming across the diverse nation, as arguments for more pluralism or “recentralization” rattled a weakening central government.<sup>247</sup> In 1981, a group of Croatian nationalists, including Franjo Tudjman, were convicted of spreading propaganda abroad that Croats were being discriminated and exploited at the hands of the Serb Yugoslav leaders.<sup>248</sup> A month later, student protests in Pristina sparked civil unrest, with Kosovo Albanians calling for the formation of a Kosovar Republic.<sup>249</sup> The demonstrations turned violent, and protestors destroyed a wing of the Serbian Orthodox Patriarchate Church in Pec.<sup>250</sup> These events thrust Kosovo back into the spotlight of a centuries old ethnonationalist feud. The Serbian Orthodox Church was quick to remind Serbians of Kosovo’s significance in ethnocultural and ethnonational Serb identity, comparing Kosovo’s importance for Serbs with the importance of Jerusalem’s to Jews.<sup>251</sup> Further ethnonationalisms resurfaced in 1983, when Alija Izetbegović and twelve others were imprisoned in Sarajevo on accounts of Islamism, which represented attacks on the principle of “brotherhood and unity.”<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> *The Death of Yugoslavia*, episode 1, “Enter Nationalism,” produced by Norma Percy, Brian Lapping and Nicholas Fraser, aired September 3, 1995, BBC, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vDADy9b2IBM>.

<sup>243</sup> Glenny, *The Balkans*, 574.

<sup>244</sup> *The Death of Yugoslavia*, “Enter Nationalism,” BBC.

<sup>245</sup> See: Sabrina P. Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 3-21.

<sup>246</sup> Calic, *A History*, 252.

<sup>247</sup> Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 26-27.

<sup>248</sup> Calic, *A History*, 255.

<sup>249</sup> Ramet, “Religion and Nationalism,” 316.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Izetbegović had written a manifesto titled “Islamic Declaration,” calling for an Islamic renewal. He and the others were charged and convicted of spreading propaganda in favor of a pan-Islamic state. Calic, *A History*, 255.

These political trials and events inadvertently turned the reawakening of nationalist tendencies into clever reasons for expanding civil rights, democracy and free speech.<sup>253</sup>

An ethnic feud in Kosovo between Serb nationalists and Albanian Kosovars in 1987 would be the catalyst for the contemporary revival of nationalisms. Serbs, who comprised a minority in the region, reiterated historical mythologies of being driven from the region at the hands of the Albanian Muslim majority.<sup>254</sup> Ivan Stambolić, then president of Serbia, sent in his right-hand man to diffuse the situation. However, rather than restore civility, this trusted advisor, Slobodan Milošević, would exploit the resurgence of Serbian nationalism in his personal quest for power.<sup>255</sup>

In the days following his visit, Milošević's defense of Serb nationals in Kosovo was broadcast repeatedly across Serbian state-run television.<sup>256</sup> The extensive news coverage and domestic reception pushed a nationalist demand to the top of the Serbian agenda, revealing most profoundly for the first time in forty years the frightening complexity of Yugoslavia's ethnic composition.<sup>257</sup> Milošević's tactical call for justice of the Kosovo Serbs quickly made him a folk hero, "reputed to be the rare honest politician willing to speak the truth, no matter how politically incorrect."<sup>258</sup> Using his newfound stardom, upon his return to Belgrade he condemned present Serbian communist party leadership and swiftly called together a vote ousting the surprised Stambolić.<sup>259</sup> The overwhelming victory left Milošević at the head of a newly launched crusade by Serbia to take control of Yugoslavia.<sup>260</sup> In order to assert Serbian hegemony, Milošević set his sights on Kosovo, Vojvodina and Montenegro.<sup>261</sup> From the fall of 1988 to the spring of 1989, successful anti-bureaucratic revolutions were staged by Belgrade, and the respective leaders of these regions and republics were replaced with Milošević loyalists, giving him four out of the

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<sup>253</sup> Ibid.

<sup>254</sup> *The Death of Yugoslavia*, "Enter Nationalism," BBC.

<sup>255</sup> Connelly, *From Peoples*, 749.

<sup>256</sup> *The Death of Yugoslavia*, "Enter Nationalism," BBC.

<sup>257</sup> Glenny, *The Fall*, 32.

<sup>258</sup> Connelly, *From Peoples*, 749.

<sup>259</sup> This internal coup was essentially a political assassination of his longtime friend and mentor, Stambolić. Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 26.

<sup>260</sup> Mass rallies were assembled where Serbians vented their angers and frustrations in support of Milošević's coercive nationalist rhetoric. Glenny, *The Balkans*, 627. In text citation: *The Death of Yugoslavia*, "Enter Nationalism," BBC.

<sup>261</sup> Since the Federal Presidency of Yugoslavia's collective leadership had eight leaders – made up of a representative from each of the six republics and two autonomous regions – in order to legitimize and advance his nationalist agenda, Milošević pursued political restructuring in order to gain a majority vote(s).

eight votes in the Federal Presidency.<sup>262</sup> Milošević put his power to the test, when in February 1989, a group of miners went on strike in Kosovo demanding the return to power of the Kosovo Albanian leader, Azem Vllasi.<sup>263</sup> Milošević called on the Yugoslav State Council to grant him emergency powers in Kosovo, and the next day tanks from the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) rolled into Kosovo to crush this dissent.<sup>264</sup> A few weeks later, Belgrade's occupation became official; the Serbian People's Assembly adopted new constitutional agreements that effectively dismantled Kosovo's autonomy, leaving the region under direct rule of Serbia.<sup>265</sup> President of the League of Communists of Slovenia, Milan Kučan, quickly took notice that Serbia's unilateral actions were not only defying Yugoslavia's constitution, but garnering national military support.<sup>266</sup> Foreshadowing the fearful implications this could have on Slovenia and the rest of Yugoslavia, Kučan and the Slovenian Assembly made changes to the 1974 constitution in order to pursue "disassociation" with Belgrade and the confederacy, setting the course for eventual secession and independence.<sup>267</sup> As expected, Milošević and Serbia viewed this act as treasonous towards a unified Yugoslavia. On 20 January 1990, Milošević called an extraordinary congress of the Yugoslav Communist Party in an effort to thwart the rebellious Slovenes.<sup>268</sup> Kučan sought partnership with Yugoslavia's second largest republic, Croatia, who's delegates took particular notice of the bullyish Serbian tactics of the quorum. Unable to reach a compromise, Kučan and the Slovene delegates announced their departure from the party and walked out of the assembly.<sup>269</sup> During the brief recess to follow, Ivica Račan informed Milošević that Croatia would not accept a Yugoslav Party without the Slovenes.<sup>270</sup> Moments later the Croatian delegation followed the Slovenes out the door, and the Yugoslav Crisis was underway.<sup>271</sup>

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<sup>262</sup> Glenny, *The Balkans*, 628.

<sup>263</sup> Vllasi had been removed in November of 1988 and replaced with Milošević loyalists. *The Death of Yugoslavia*, "Enter Nationalism," BBC.

<sup>264</sup> After being urged by Milošević, a massive crowd of Serbs chanting for law and order to be restored in Kosovo had gathered outside the Belgrade parliament building awaiting the decision from the Yugoslav President, Bosnian national Raif Dizdarević. Milošević delivered an ultimatum to Dizdarević, stating "if you don't grant us the powers we want, we won't be responsible for the actions of the crowd." After trying to reason with the crowd, Dizdarević was forced to concede to Milošević's demands. Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> Bebler, "The Serbia-Kosovo," 156.

<sup>266</sup> *The Death of Yugoslavia*, "Enter Nationalism," BBC.

<sup>267</sup> Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 111-12.

<sup>268</sup> *The Death of Yugoslavia*, "Enter Nationalism," BBC.

<sup>269</sup> Ibid.

<sup>270</sup> Ivica Račan was the leader of the Croat delegation. Ibid.

<sup>271</sup> During an interview in the BBC documentary, Milošević insists it was in fact these events that started the crisis. Ibid.

Despite Milošević's determination to prevent the Yugoslav Federation from transforming into a loose association of sovereign states, Slovenia and Croatia began defiantly taking strides towards independence. In the spring of 1990, Slovenia and Croatia each held their first ever democratic, multi-party elections.<sup>272</sup> In response to the rise in Serbian nationalism, the Croatian and Slovenian people elected parties and candidates that championed independence.<sup>273</sup> In Slovenia, the anticommunist alliance (DEMOS) defeated the reform communists handily, and Kučan was elected president in a landslide.<sup>274</sup> The plurality voting system in Croatia concluded with Franjo Tudjman and his Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) winning 58 percent of the seats in the three chambers of parliament, with a commanding 67.5 percent of seats in the lower house.<sup>275</sup> After assuming the presidency, Tudjman and his team promptly drafted a constitution calling Croatia the "sovereign state of the Croatian nation," and when the constitution passed later that year, any Serbs living within Croatia were officially demoted from constituent nation to "national minority."<sup>276</sup> Consequently, the age-old Croat-Serb feud was thrust back into the national spotlight. Following Tudjman's victory, Milošević repeatedly expressed the opinion that it was the right of all Serbs to live in a single state.<sup>277</sup> Hinting towards possible irredentism, he stated that Croatia could leave the federation but without the regions inhabited by the 600,000 Serb minorities.<sup>278</sup>

The Serbs in Croatia, about 12 percent of the population, would exacerbate the situation tremendously.<sup>279</sup> The memories of atrocities and persecution at the hands of the Ustaše were not forgotten, and "Tudjman's embrace of the checkerboard flag was like waving a Nazi swastika in their faces."<sup>280</sup> In Knin, the mostly Serb police force refused to accept the authority of Tudjman's

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<sup>272</sup> Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, "April and May 1990 Elections in Slovenia and Croatia," April 1, 1990, accessed January 2, 2021, <https://www.csce.gov/international-impact/publications/april-and-may-1990-elections-slovenia-and-croatia?page=17>.

<sup>273</sup> Calic, *A History*, 287.

<sup>274</sup> Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 55.

<sup>275</sup> The lower house was the most powerful of the three chambers. Calic, *A History*, 287.

<sup>276</sup> Connelly, *From Peoples*, 751.

<sup>277</sup> Glenny, *The Fall*, 36.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>279</sup> Connelly, *From Peoples*, 751.

<sup>280</sup> The checkerboard flag was a national symbol used by the Ustaše regime during the Independent State of Croatia from 1941-1945. *The Death of Yugoslavia*, episode 2, "The Road to War," produced by Norma Percy, Brian Lapping and Nicholas Fraser, aired September 10, 1995, BBC, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YcZvQxoTzdQ&t=41s>.



newly elected government.<sup>281</sup> Milan Babić, the Serb President of the Municipal Assembly of Knin, called on Belgrade for assistance, which Milošević was happy to oblige, and Knin soon became the center of the Serbian rebellion in Croatia.<sup>282</sup> Weapons originally earmarked for the JNA were soon rerouted, and by fall of 1990 Serb militias had expelled the Croatian police, taken control of the region, and installed roadblocks and checkpoints, in an insurrection known as the “Log Revolution.”<sup>283</sup> The defiant Croatian Serbs set up a Serbian National Council with the sole purpose of working towards Serbian territorial autonomy in Croatia, and in September 1990, the *Republika Srpska Krajina* was born.<sup>284</sup>

According to Calic, this was a huge blow for Tudjman, who had been elected on the pledge to deliver Croatian statehood.<sup>285</sup> After confronting Belgrade, it was clear Tudjman would receive no federal support, militarily or otherwise, to counter the rebellious Serbs.<sup>286</sup> After the confiscations of their Territorial Defense Weaponry by the JNA, Croatia and Slovenia sought to arm themselves independently with the assistance of foreign sources.<sup>287</sup> They began illegally smuggling in armaments across the Hungarian-Croatian border, which Belgrade interpreted as an attempt to construct a rival national army.<sup>288</sup> When Belgrade slapped Croatia with an ultimatum to surrender their illegal arms, Croatian Prime Minister Stipe Mesić responded with threats of secession and UN intervention, should the JNA try to disarm them by force.<sup>289</sup>

As tensions continued to mount between Belgrade and Zagreb, nationalist parties also started forming across the border in Bosnia. Bosnia, a truly multiethnic republic, saw the rise of ethnonational identities rapidly supplant any Bosnian national identity. Soon Bosnians began

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<sup>281</sup> Knin, located in the Vojna Krajina, is the geographic area which formed the historical borders between the empires of Christendom and Islam, and between the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox faiths. Glenny, *The Fall*, 6. In text citation: *The Death of Yugoslavia*, “The Road to War,” BBC.

<sup>282</sup> Babić would later become the first president of the self-proclaimed Serb autonomous region and proto-state, *Republika Srpska Krajina*. Glenny provides some background on, and an intriguing account of meeting, Babić in: Glenny, *The Fall*, 14-19.

<sup>283</sup> The rebellious Serbs cut down trees to create roadblocks, hence the name “Log Revolution.” Connelly, *From Peoples*, 751.

<sup>284</sup> In August and September of 1990, the Serbian National Council held an illegal referendum where almost all 567,000 Serbs living in Croatia unanimously voted for autonomy. Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 58.

<sup>285</sup> Calic, *A History*, 287.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid.

<sup>287</sup> Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 60.

<sup>288</sup> *The Death of Yugoslavia*, “The Road to War,” BBC.

<sup>289</sup> This ultimatum was interpreted as meaning the surrender of arms accumulated by militias under government authority, therefore applying to Croatia and Slovenia, but not to the armed militia forces of Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia. Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 60. In text citation: *The Death of Yugoslavia*, “The Road to War,” BBC.

referring to themselves more explicitly as Bosnian Serb, Bosnian Croat, or Muslim.<sup>290</sup> The elections in November and December of 1990 reinforced this notion and were dominated by three ethnically affiliated parties: the Muslim Party of Democratic Action (SDA) won 87 seats, the Serbian Democratic Party (SDS) 71, and the Croatian HDZ-BiH 44.<sup>291</sup> Alija Izetbegović, a Bosnian Muslim, and leader of the SDA was elected Bosnian president.<sup>292</sup> Izetbegović and the SDA campaigned for Muslim unity, and used religious rituals to foment the nationalist feelings of a largely secularized Muslim population.<sup>293</sup> In the 1981 census, Muslims comprised roughly 40 percent of Bosnia's population, and ever since the end of World War II had been slowly cultivating their own ethnonationalist Muslim identity, successfully converting from a national minority to a constituent nation in 1971.<sup>294</sup>

With 32 percent Serb and 18 percent Croat minority populations, the importance of a tri-national parity in Bosnian government was paramount.<sup>295</sup> Equal representation meant that any constitutional changes, such as a decision to seek independence, must be agreed upon by all sides.<sup>296</sup> As political hostilities continued to rise, so did the parties' animosity and ethnonationalist rhetoric. In the Eastern Bosnian town of Srebrenica, SDS members drove through town brandishing weapons in front of Muslims giving the three-fingered Serb salute.<sup>297</sup> In Potočari, supporters of the SDA waved green flags in the faces of SDS campaign members chanting, "We want weapons! We want weapons!"<sup>298</sup> The multiethnic republic of Bosnia was unraveling at a frightening pace, setting the stage for what would be the bloodiest battles of the upcoming ethnic wars.<sup>299</sup>

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<sup>290</sup> "The Serbs and the Croats later dropped the auxiliary word Bosnian." Glenny, *The Fall*, 143.

<sup>291</sup> Nationalist parties also formed in Macedonia, and the pro-Serb socialist parties retained power in Serbia and Montenegro. Calic, *A History*, 287.

<sup>292</sup> Izetbegović was a deeply religious man, and since the publication of his "Islamic Declaration" back in 1970 had been regarded as an Islamic fundamentalist by Serb nationalists. Connelly, *From Peoples*, 751

<sup>293</sup> Izetbegović and the SDA aspired to mobilize Muslims in the Sandžak, calling for the region to be granted special autonomous status. Calic, *A History*, 288.

<sup>294</sup> The 1981 census is regarded as the last reliable census of Yugoslavia, as Szayna and Zanini suggest the census held in early 1991 was likely skewed by ethnic biases. Additionally, from 1971 onwards in Yugoslavia, the term Muslim (when used in official discourse), had ethnic rather than religious connotations. Szayna and Zanini, "The Yugoslav Retrospective Case," 129. In text citation: Glenny, *The Fall*, 141.

<sup>295</sup> See: Szayna and Zanini, "The Yugoslav Retrospective Case," 130, and Glenny, *The Fall*, 141.

<sup>296</sup> Glenny, *The Fall*, 141-42.

<sup>297</sup> Calic, *A History*, 289.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid.

<sup>299</sup> Dawa Norbu, "The Serbian Hegemony, Ethnic Heterogeneity and Yugoslav Break-Up," *Economic and Political Weekly* 34, no. 19 (1999): 836.

Even after overwhelmingly passing a referendum for independence in December 1990, Slovenia, along with Croatia, Macedonia, and Bosnia, were still willing to consider alternative measures to retain a confederacy, but Serbia and Montenegro remained vehemently opposed, instead pushing for recentralization.<sup>300</sup> With the future of the federal republic slipping further into uncertainty, a series of events in March 1991 marked a pivotal point of no return.<sup>301</sup> Massive student-led demonstrations took to the streets in Belgrade on 9-10 March 1991, protesting Milošević's propagandic manipulation of state television and calling for his resignation.<sup>302</sup> Serbian police attacked the largely peaceful protestors, and an emergency vote was scheduled to send in the JNA to restore order.<sup>303</sup> Two days following the successful mobilization of the JNA in Belgrade, a Yugoslav State Council meeting was called to vote on whether the state of emergency reached in Belgrade should be extended to Croatia.<sup>304</sup> When the vote did not pass, a visibly livid Milošević went on national television to announce his unilateral plans, stating: "Yugoslavia is in the final phase of its agony," and that Serbia, "would no longer obey the presidency," adding it would, "arm the Serbian people so they are not left defenseless against the Croats."<sup>305</sup> Meanwhile, Tudjman publicly flaunted the buildup of his forces over the coming weeks, declaring in a speech: "We know that the Croat nation will rise as one, if we have to defend our sovereignty."<sup>306</sup> Many Serbs in Croatia feared the rearmament would again result in violent persecution, drawing parallels between Germany's recent reunification and Croatia's bid for independence as the coming of the Fourth Reich.<sup>307</sup> This sentiment was reiterated by Bosnian Serb General, Ratko Mladić, who stated to journalist Misha Glenny in early 1991 that "Munich is being repeated all over and this time at the expense of the Serbs. But we will not roll over."<sup>308</sup>

As Milošević slowly accepted Yugoslavia's fate, it became apparent his intentions were not to salvage a unified federal republic, but rather create a Greater Serbia that would include

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<sup>300</sup> For more information on the Slovenian referendum for independence, see: Brenda Fowler, "Slovenes Vote Decisively for Independence From Yugoslavia," *The New York Times*, December 24, 1990. In text citation: Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 61.

<sup>301</sup> Glenny, *The Balkans*, 631.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid.

<sup>303</sup> *The Death of Yugoslavia*, "The Road to War," BBC.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

<sup>305</sup> Quotations from: Tanner, *Croatia*, 243.

<sup>306</sup> *The Death of Yugoslavia*, "The Road to War," BBC.

<sup>307</sup> Glenny, *The Fall*, 27.

<sup>308</sup> For Glenny's recount of his meeting with Mladić, see: Glenny, *The Fall*, 26-29.

Serb minorities in Bosnia and Croatia.<sup>309</sup> He, and the Serbian President of Yugoslavia's collective state presidency, Borisav Jović, secretly decided to change tactics in order to provoke a war with Croatia which would then justify military measures for annexing ethnic Serb majority territories.<sup>310</sup> Jović later declared: "Serbian people in Croatia and Bosnia can be taken away from Yugoslavia only by war... Should Slovenia and Croatia secede... the state of war will be introduced!"<sup>311</sup> As Mesić attested, by the end of spring 1991 the cascade was initiated:

If Slovenia were to leave Yugoslavia, there would be no question of Croatia staying. But if Slovenia and Croatia were to leave, Gligorov and Izetbegović had made it clear that Bosnia and Macedonia would not remain. And if Croatia and Bosnia were to leave, Milošević, Babić and Karadžić, had made it clear there was no question of those republics taking their Serb minorities with them.<sup>312</sup>

## **8. From Brotherhood to Fratricide**

By this time, war was inevitable. After repeated skirmishes between Serb separatists and local Croat police, the first major violent incident came in the Eastern Slavonian city of Borovo Selo.<sup>313</sup> Twelve Croat policemen and three Serb civilians were killed, in what many Croats would insist marked the beginning of the war.<sup>314</sup> Three of the Croat bodies returned by the Serbs had been badly mutilated, and the photographs shown by the Croatian press further flamed ethnonationalist divisions, providing a stark reminder to both Croats and Serbs alike of the abominable atrocities that had occurred by the Chetniks and Ustaše during World War II.<sup>315</sup> The

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<sup>309</sup> Milošević and Tudjman even held a secret meeting on 30 March 1991 in Karadjordjevo to discuss the partitioning of Bosnia along ethnic lines. Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 63. In text citation: Mazower, *The Balkans*, 219.

<sup>310</sup> Full details of the plan, along with blocking Croat Stipe Mesić from assuming the office of the Yugoslav presidency, internal JNA opinions, and disposition of forces are chronicled in: *The Death of Yugoslavia*, "The Road to War," BBC.

<sup>311</sup> Stipe Mesić, *The Demise of Yugoslavia: A Political Memoir*, trans. Milena Benini (Central European University Press, 2004), 75.

<sup>312</sup> Kiro Gligorov was the first president of Macedonia. Tanner, *Croatia*, 239.

<sup>313</sup> Borovo Selo is a small city in Croatia along the eastern border of Serbia. The region was known to be especially hostile towards the HDZ, and the incident resulted in a total breakdown of trust between Serbs and Croats, clearing the way for what would ultimately become one of the bloodiest battlegrounds of the entire conflict. Glenn, *The Fall*, 75.

<sup>314</sup> Some have also speculated that the Croat police were sent in as sacrificial lambs as a preface to justify driving the Serbs out. *Ibid.*, 75-77.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

incident on 2 May 1991, prompted Tudjman to abandon Croatia's non-confrontational policy with the JNA, along with all hopes of restructuring Yugoslavia as a league of sovereign republics.<sup>316</sup> On 19 May 1991, Croatia moved forward with a referendum on independence that passed overwhelming.<sup>317</sup> Then on 25 June 1991, both Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence.<sup>318</sup> The Serbs living in Croatia not only suffered injured pride, but there was a palpable fear of a return to historic injustices to living as defined minorities in a "national state of the Croats."<sup>319</sup> Milošević was quick to declare the secession illegal, and two days later the JNA's Fifth Army rolled tanks and military personnel across the borders into Croatia and Slovenia.<sup>320</sup>

The fighting in Slovenia lasted only ten days. The JNA intervention in Slovenia was poorly planned, badly executed and abandoned after little more than a week of fighting.<sup>321</sup> The European Community stepped in to broker a deal and the Brioni Accord was signed on 7 July 1991.<sup>322</sup> Milošević returned his attention to Croatia and their large Serb populations. The Serb nationalists in Croatia, who had already seized power in a dozen villages, sought to link up and expel the Croats to create a Serb mini state with the intent of joining a new Serbian controlled Yugoslavia.<sup>323</sup> The JNA was sent by Belgrade to protect the Krajina Serbs, under the command of Mladić, who ordered the JNA into action, and for the first time it was actively fighting for the Serb cause.<sup>324</sup> The army continued its offensive in the region, seizing Croat towns one after the other, and by December 1991, the JNA and Serb nationalist militias had conquered a third of the Croatian territory.<sup>325</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> Tanner, *Croatia*, 248.

<sup>317</sup> 94 percent voted in favor of independence, although balloting was not held in Serb-dominated towns. Chuck Sudetic, "Croatia Votes for Sovereignty and Confederation," *The New York Times*, May 20, 1991.

<sup>318</sup> Chuck Sudetic, "2 Yugoslav States Vote Independence to Press Demands," *The New York Times*, June 26, 1991.

<sup>319</sup> Calic, *A History*, 291.

<sup>320</sup> Tanner, *Croatia*, 249-50.

<sup>321</sup> The JNA sustained heavier casualties than the Slovenes, and after a week had not succeeded in reclaiming any of the border posts, which was their primary objective. For more information on the Ten-Day War in Slovenia, see: Reneo Lukic and Allen Lynch, *Europe from the Balkans to the Urals: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union* (SIPRI, 1996), chap. 9.

<sup>322</sup> For a compact summary of the accord, see: John Tagliabue, "Yugoslavs Agree to a Compromise on Border Posts," *The New York Times*, July 8, 1991.

<sup>323</sup> *The Death of Yugoslavia*, episode 3, "Wars of Independence," produced by Norma Percy, Brian Lapping and Nicholas Fraser, aired September 17, 1995, BBC, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6zTmgxW490>.

<sup>324</sup> Mladić would later lead the Bosnian Serb forces in Bosnia. *The Death of Yugoslavia*, "Wars of Independence," BBC.

<sup>325</sup> For more details on the war in Croatia from 1991-1995, see: Tanner, *Croatia*, chap. 17-19. In text citation: Lukic and Lynch, *Europe*, 185.

Croatia and Slovenia's pursuit of independence all but sealed Bosnia's fate.<sup>326</sup> By the start of 1992, the pressure on the three communities in Bosnia to join the fight along ethnonationalist lines was mounting.<sup>327</sup> As Yugoslavia collapsed, Izetbegović and the Bosniaks felt increasingly threatened by Milošević and Serbia. With Slovenia and Croatia's independence having been internationally recognized, Izetbegović set Bosnia on a similar course to leave Yugoslavia.<sup>328</sup> However, his failure to recognize that the Bosnian Serb population would mobilize behind their leader, Radovan Karadžić, was a mistake.<sup>329</sup> In parliament, Karadžić issued a stern nationalist warning to Izetbegović: "I warn you. You'll drag Bosnia down to hell. You Muslims aren't ready for war – you could face extinction."<sup>330</sup> With the Muslims and Croats wanting out, Izetbegović called for a referendum for independence in March 1992, which passed with 62.7 percent of the vote.<sup>331</sup> Local skirmishes quickly broke out in Sarajevo and across the country, with the SDA and SDS erecting roadblocks, checkpoints and barricades, in a duel to establish territorial supremacy.<sup>332</sup> By 8 April 1992, the European Community and the US had recognized an independent Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>333</sup> This was immediately followed by an unofficial declaration of independence by the Bosnian Serbs, and the swift deployment of some 95,000 JNA troops into the newly proclaimed *Republika Srpska* to protect the Bosnian Serbs, just as it had been done the previous year for the Croatian Serbs in Croatia.<sup>334</sup> Karadžić and his forces, led by Mladić, had substantial military superiority thanks to logistical support from the JNA and political support from Milošević.<sup>335</sup> After declaring independence, the Bosnian Serb

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<sup>326</sup> Bosnia had never existed as an independent state, and had always required a greater authority, such as the Ottomans, Austrians, or the Yugoslav state, to ensure the survival and cohesion of its multiethnic (later multinational), inhabitants. Glenny, *The Fall*, 144.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>328</sup> For initial recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, see: John Tagliabue, "European Ties for Slovenia and Croatia," *New York Times*, December 17, 1991. For Bosnia's initial, and reluctant, steps, see: Chuck Sudetic, "Bosnia Fears Its Next in Yugoslav Civil Strife," *New York Times*, December 28, 1991.

<sup>329</sup> The failure to adequately consider how independence would affect the minority Serb population was also a mistake made by Tudjman in Croatia. *The Death of Yugoslavia*, "Wars of Independence," BBC.

<sup>330</sup> *The Death of Yugoslavia*, episode 4, "The Gates of Hell," produced by Norma Percy, Brian Lapping and Nicholas Fraser, aired September 24, 1995, BBC, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=udgvKd-oVxs>.

<sup>331</sup> Bosnia declared independence on 6 April 1992. For contemporaneous accounts of the referendum and declaration, see: Chuck Sudetic, "Turnout in Bosnia Signals Independence." *New York Times*, March 2, 1992, and Chuck Sudetic, "Ethnic Clashes Increase in Bosnia As Europe Recognition Vote Nears," *New York Times*, April 6, 1992. In text citation: Velikonja, *Religious Separation*, 237-38.

<sup>332</sup> See: Calic, *A History*, 301, and Sudetic, "Ethnic Clashes Increase in Bosnia As Europe Recognition Vote Nears."

<sup>333</sup> See: David Binder, "U.S. Recognizes 3 Yugoslav Republics as Independent," *The New York Times*, April 8, 1992, and David Hoffman, "U.S. Recognizes 3 Ex-Yugoslav States," *Washington Post*, April 8, 1992.

<sup>334</sup> Norbu, "The Serbian Hegemony," 837.

<sup>335</sup> Glenny, *The Balkans*, 644.

forces “launched an assault and first overran eastern Bosnia along the Drina River, the northern Posavina corridor, eastern Herzegovina, and Bosnian Krajina, thereby creating a territorial bridge between Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Croatia.”<sup>336</sup> It was not long before Serb forces had established control over 70 percent of all Bosnian territory.<sup>337</sup> Mladić subsequently began ordering the expulsion of non-Serbs from the territories they had conquered, and the brutal policy of ‘ethnic cleansing’ had begun.<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> Calic, *A History*, 302.

<sup>337</sup> Norbu, “The Serbian Hegemony,” 837

<sup>338</sup> Calic, *A History*, 302.

## CHAPTER TWO:

### US and International Diplomacy in the Post-Cold War World

“Nothing is simple in the Balkans. History pervades everything and the complexities confound even the most careful study.”

Lord David Owen

*Balkan Odyssey* (p. 1)

#### **1. Dynamics of US Foreign Policy in a Post-Cold War World**

The global collapse of communism in the late 1980s and early 1990s created a dynamic new geopolitical landscape. For more than forty years, the “Cold War” had been the preeminent driving factor in international relations. The bipolar world order that emerged after WWII saw allegiances form around the competing ideologies of capitalism and communism.<sup>1</sup> Political pacts, economic unions, and military alliances were shaped by this underlying narrative. Decisions or actions by one bloc invoked a response or reaction from the other. Such was the nature of global affairs over the second half of the twentieth century. A plethora of internal and external factors facilitated the fall of communism, but what surfaced after the Revolutions of 1989 and the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 reshaped the geopolitical landscape and ushered in a new era of foreign relations and international diplomacy.<sup>2</sup>

The international system that emerged was described by Krauthammer as “the moment of unipolarity.”<sup>3</sup> The United States found itself as the sole world superpower, enjoying a position of

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<sup>1</sup> For more on the hegemonic pursuits of the US and the USSR during the Cold War, see: Melvyn P. Leffler, “Cold War and Global Hegemony, 1945-1991,” *OAH Magazine of History* 19, no. 2 (2005): 65-72, Fred Halliday, “The New Cold War,” *Bulletin of Peace Proposals* 14, no. 2 (1983): 125-29, and Joseph M. Siracusa, “Reflections On The Cold War,” *Australasian Journal of American Studies* 28, no. 2 (2009): 1-16. For more complete accounts of the Cold War, see: John Lamberton Harper, *The Cold War* (Oxford University Press, 2011), and John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War* (Penguin Books, 2007).

<sup>2</sup> For analysis on the fall of communism and its international consequences, see: Stephen Kotkin, “1991 and the Russian Revolution: Sources, Conceptual Categories, Analytical Frameworks,” *The Journal of Modern History* 70, no. 2 (1998): 384-425, Silvio Pons, “Western Communists, Mikhail Gorbachev and the 1989 Revolutions,” *Contemporary European History* 18, no. 3 (2009): 349-62, Archie Brown, *The Rise and Fall of Communism* (HarperCollins, 2009), Stephen White, *Communism and its Collapse* (Routledge, 2000), Ben Fowkes, *Rise and Fall of Communism in Eastern Europe* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 1995), and G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton University Press, 2019).

<sup>3</sup> Krauthammer writes that the bipolar world of Moscow and Washington is now dead, and the multipolar world to which we are heading, involving Berlin, Tokyo, Beijing, Brussels, Washington, and Moscow, has not yet arrived. “But the instant in which we are living is a moment of unipolarity.” See: Charles Krauthammer, “The Unipolar



power, influence and global stewardship as privileged as ever before.<sup>4</sup> Steering the ship was US President George H.W. Bush, who when elected in 1988, brought to office an impressive resume of intelligence work and diplomacy at a time when global events were rapidly changing.<sup>5</sup> As vice president under President Ronald Reagan from 1980-1988, Bush had been part of an administration that prioritized the survival of Yugoslavia. Not only was Yugoslavia an obstacle to Soviet expansion and hegemony in Southern Europe, but it also served as a reminder to the Soviet satellites in Eastern Europe and other countries around the world teetering between capitalism and communism of the advantages and benefits of friendly relations with the West.<sup>6</sup> The US had long been generous with economic aid, most recently facilitating economic support through international financial institutions to assist with Yugoslavia's mounting external debt in the 1980s.<sup>7</sup> Military cooperation, along with an arms transfer policy to ensure Yugoslavia was substantially equipped to legitimately defend itself, was established with NSDD-5.<sup>8</sup> The US also strongly encouraged its Western European Allies to undertake similar policies, emphasizing the importance of a territorially and nationally united Yugoslavia as in the best interests of the West.<sup>9</sup>

However, the demise of the Soviet Union greatly reduced Yugoslavia's importance to the US. During Bush's first year in office, between July-December 1989, Poland, Hungary, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania ousted their communist leaders in a wave of

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Moment," *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 1 (1990): 23-33, and Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," *Washington Post*, July 20, 1990.

<sup>4</sup> For more on US unipolarity, see: Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment," 23-33, Ikenberry, *After Victory*, chap. 7, Kenneth N. Waltz, "Structural Realism after the Cold War," *International Security* 25, no. 1 (2000): 5-41, Hal Brands, *Making the Unipolar Moment: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Rise of the Post-Cold War Order* (Cornell University Press, 2019), chap. 6, Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier, *America Between the Wars: 11/9 to 9/11; The Misunderstood Years between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the Start of the War on Terror* (PublicAffairs, 2008), chap. 1, Michael Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure: America and the World since the End of the Cold War* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 14-18, Michael Mastanduno, "Preserving the Unipolar Moment: Realist Theories and U.S. Grand Strategy after the Cold War," *International Security* 21, no. 4 (1997): 49-88, Robert B. Zoellick, "A Republican Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 1 (2000): 64, and Robert Jervis, "Unipolarity: A Structural Perspective," *World Politics* 61, no. 1 (2009): 188-213.

<sup>5</sup> Sean Wilentz, *The Age of Reagan: A History, 1974-2008* (HarperCollins, 2008), 290.

<sup>6</sup> For a compact and precise account of Yugoslavia's importance to the West during the Cold War, see: Warren Zimmerman "Yugoslavia: 1989-1996," in *U.S. and Russian Policymaking With Respect to the Use of Force*, ed. Jeremy R. Azrael and Emil A. Payin (RAND Corporation, 1996), 177-79.

<sup>7</sup> See examples discussed in chapter one. See also: "NSDD 133 United States Policy towards Yugoslavia," *National Archives Catalog*, March 14, 1984, accessed January 10, 2021, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/6879731>.

<sup>8</sup> NSDD is an abbreviation for National Security Decision Directive. For arms transfer policy under Reagan, see: "NSDD 5 Conventional Arms Transfer Policy," *National Archives Catalog*, July 8, 1981, accessed January 10, 2021, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/6879606>.

<sup>9</sup> See: "NSDD 133 United States Policy towards Yugoslavia."

anti-communist revolutions.<sup>10</sup> Suddenly, “the greatest geopolitical windfall in the history of American foreign policy fell into George Bush’s lap.”<sup>11</sup> The revolutions were astonishing in how quickly and peacefully they unfolded, and “for the fact that virtually no one had accurately forecasted them in advance.”<sup>12</sup> This watershed moment in geopolitical affairs was beyond fortuitous for the US.<sup>13</sup> The new governments of the former Soviet bloc countries swiftly declared a commitment to democratic politics and market economics.<sup>14</sup> As Soviet troops began withdrawing from Europe, the West emerged victorious in its decades long ideological battle, all without firing a single shot.<sup>15</sup>

The dynamics of 1989 accentuated the fundamental changes taking place around the world. Left with unmatched diplomacy and military prowess, Bush however, an adroit political thinker with a storied career in international affairs as Director of the CIA and Ambassador to the UN, exercised caution and reserved behavior in the wake of this new transformative period.<sup>16</sup> For this, he was heavily criticized by many in Congress as lacking imagination and boldness.<sup>17</sup> But Bush didn’t need to publicly flaunt America’s newly achieved and undisputed preeminence; democracy and markets were surging ahead generating unprecedented prosperity with the US at the forefront. Instead, he and his advisors took a more calculated approach, slowly crafting a new shape to the global order.<sup>18</sup>

The metamorphosis of the geopolitical landscape prompted a reconfiguration in US foreign policy. Bush and his team, led by Secretary of State James Baker, National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, and Deputy National Security Advisor Robert Gates, presented a National Security Strategy based on cooperation, multilateral engagement and “America’s role as an alliance leader in the international community.”<sup>19</sup> But above all, this new world order was the

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<sup>10</sup> Violence was used to overthrow the regime in Romania, but for the most part the rest of the revolutions occurred through campaigns of peaceful civil resistance. For more on the revolutions, see: Adam Roberts, *Civil Resistance in the East European and Soviet Revolutions*, (The Albert Einstein Institution, 1991).

<sup>11</sup> See: Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between*, 1-2, and Brands, *Making*, 274-98. In text quote from: Michael Mandelbaum, “The Bush Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs* 70, no. 1 (1990): 5.

<sup>12</sup> Brands, *Making*, 276.

<sup>13</sup> See: Mastanduno, “Preserving,” 49-88, Jervis, “Unipolarity,” 188-213, and Carl Cavanagh Hodge, “Atlanticism and Pax Americana 1989-2004,” *International Journal* 60, no. 1 (2004): 151-70.

<sup>14</sup> Mandelbaum, “The Bush,” 5.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between*, 1-2.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> See: Miller and Yetiv, “The New World Order,” 57-59, and Zoellick, “A Republican,” 63-64.

<sup>19</sup> Greg R. Brown, *Learning to Leave: The Preeminence of Disengagement in US Military Strategy*, Report, Air University Press (2008): 61-62.

administration's prudent effort to manage international change in a manner most effective to US interests.<sup>20</sup>

The year following the revolutions in Eastern Europe saw this new agenda unfold across two distinct arenas. The first was German reunification, which unfolded from March-October 1990 and provided an opportunity for international diplomacy in the political arena.<sup>21</sup> While the thought of a powerful and independent Germany produced historically-based concerns from Thatcher and Mitterrand in Britain and France, as well as from some commentators in the US, the Bush administration would play a critical role by declining to place obstacles in the path of Germany's right to self-determination.<sup>22</sup> Such a declaration would have discredited the notion of peoples' entitlement to choose their own political arrangements and set a hypocritical standard in the face of the newly independent Eastern European countries.<sup>23</sup> When the GDR ratified measures for reunification, the US envisaged a reunified Germany firmly anchored in an American-led security community, and waged a successful diplomatic campaign in obtaining European support on this issue over the course of the "two plus four" negotiations.<sup>24</sup> Bush capitalized on the situation by establishing a rapport through personal one-on-one diplomacy with Gorbachev, securing Soviet acquiescence to a reunified Germany remaining in NATO without a corresponding role for former Warsaw Pact troops.<sup>25</sup> This rapport further led to discussions for a conventional arms control agreement, illustrating to all that the former superpower adversaries were capable (and willing) of working cooperatively towards a new global era.<sup>26</sup>

The second arena materialized when Saddam Hussein and his Iraqi forces invaded Kuwait in August 1990, triggering the first global military crisis in the dawn of the new post-

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<sup>20</sup> Brands, *Making*, 279.

<sup>21</sup> See: Jeffrey A. Engel, "Bush, Germany, and the Power of Time: How History Makes History," *Diplomatic History* 37, no. 4 (2013): 639-63.

<sup>22</sup> Mandelbaum, "The Bush," 8-9.

<sup>23</sup> There was also trepidation that blocking reunification would stir similar resentments of unequal treatment that Hitler exploited in the 1930s. *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>24</sup> The "two plus four" negotiations took place between East Germany - the German Democratic Republic (GDR), and West Germany - the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), the United States, Britain, France and the Soviet Union. The collective nature of the negotiations was also of particular importance in establishing reconciliation between Germany and Russia, which had long held historically conflicting interests in Europe. *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>25</sup> For more on Bush's German reunification policy strategy involving NATO, see: Frank Costigliola, "An 'Arm around the Shoulder': The United States, NATO and German Reunification, 1989-90," *Contemporary European History* 3, no. 1 (1994): 87-110. In text citation: Wilentz, *The Age*, 296.

<sup>26</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between*, 2.

Cold War world order. Fearing passivity would lead to chaos in the oil-rich Gulf region, Washington used this opportunity as a catalyst for multilateral international cooperation to emerging global security threats.<sup>27</sup> The Gulf War resulted in a wide multinational coalition, with over fifty countries contributing in some capacity.<sup>28</sup> Perhaps more importantly, for the first time since WWII, the US and the Soviet Union found themselves fighting on the same side. Both Bush and Gorbachev saw the importance of establishing such a precedent for future crises, further demonstrating the remarkable possibilities that could be achieved through cooperation rather than competition.<sup>29</sup> The Soviet-American cooperation also created a prominent avenue for more effective United Nations diplomacy. The UN Security Council, long paralyzed by the contrasting ideologies of its two strongest members, was finally able to step outside of its Cold War shadow.<sup>30</sup> The near-unanimous adoption of UNSCR 660, condemning the invasion and demanding the immediate withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait, established new and optimistic parameters for the prospect of international joint diplomacy.<sup>31</sup> The successful military campaign by the US-led coalition also demonstrated to the world that military power was still the most effective measure of last resort in global affairs.<sup>32</sup> The US was without question the most advanced military power, and the swift and triumphant victory in the gulf unequivocally confirmed the US as the sole and indispensable guarantor of post-Cold War world security and leadership.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Brands, *Making*, 302.

<sup>28</sup> Patricia A. Weitsman, "Wartime Alliances versus Coalition Warfare: How Institutional Structure Matters in the Multilateral Prosecution of Wars," *Strategic Studies Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (2010): 118.

<sup>29</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between*, 3.

<sup>30</sup> Mandelbaum, "The Bush," 11.

<sup>31</sup> The vote was fourteen 14-0 in favor, as Yemen did not participate in the voting. For more, see: United Nations Security Council resolution 660, *Iraq-Kuwait (2 Aug)*, S/RES/660 (1990) (2 August 1990), accessed January 11, 2021, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/660>.

<sup>32</sup> This same ideology would be reiterated by many in the Clinton administration regarding the success the NATO air campaign had in bringing the Bosnian Serbs to the negotiating table in 1995. More on this topic will be discussed in chapter three.

<sup>33</sup> Brands, *Making*, 316.

## 2. Clintonian Idealism

For more than forty years the driving forces behind US foreign policy had been military strength and security, and “containment.”<sup>34</sup> When President Bill Clinton assumed office in January 1993, he brought with him a redefined vision of the US role in world affairs. Clinton, the first full-term president of the post-Cold War era, crafted his foreign policy agenda to align with the shifting tides.<sup>35</sup> “Democratic enlargement,” or The Clinton Doctrine, was an elastic foreign policy approach that sought to use market-based democracies as the global standard to promote wealth, stabilization, and security. The blueprint consisted of four key concepts: (1) strengthening the community of market-based democracies, (2) fostering and consolidating new democracies and market economies wherever possible, (3) countering the aggression, and supporting the liberalization of states hostile to democracy, (4) helping democracy and market economies take root in regions of greatest humanitarian concern.<sup>36</sup> It was perhaps not surprising, that a candidate whose campaign centered on “the economy, stupid,” would have a foreign policy agenda heavily promoting geoeconomics.<sup>37</sup> Anthony Lake, who served as Clinton’s National Security Advisor from 1993-1997, underscored the fundamentals of the policy as the natural successor to Cold War foreign policy in a 1993 speech at Johns Hopkins University:

Throughout the Cold War, we contained a global threat to market democracies;  
now we should seek to enlarge their reach, particularly in places of special

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<sup>34</sup> See: Richard Saull, “American foreign policy during the Cold War,” in *US Foreign Policy*, eds. Michael Cox and Douglas Stokes (Oxford University Press, 2012), 63-67.

<sup>35</sup> For analysis of Clinton’s foreign policy vision, see: Douglas Brinkley, “Democratic Enlargement: The Clinton Doctrine,” *Foreign Policy*, no. 106, (1997): 110-27, Linda B. Miller, “The Clinton Years: Reinventing US Foreign Policy?” *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-)* 70, no. 4 (1994): 621-34, Strobe Talbott, “Democracy and the National Interest,” *Foreign Affairs* 75, no. 6 (1996): 47-63, Kathryn M. Olson “Democratic Enlargement’s Value Hierarchy and Rhetorical Forms: An Analysis of Clinton’s Use of a Post-Cold War Symbolic Frame to Justify Military Interventions,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34, no. 2 (2004): 307-40, Aubrey W. Jewett and Marc D. Turetzky, “Stability and Change in President Clinton’s Foreign Policy Beliefs, 1993-96,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (1998): 638-65, FP Editors, “Think Again: Clinton’s Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Policy*, November 19, 2009, accessed September 24, 2020, [www.foreignpolicy.com/2009/11/19/think-again-clintons-foreign-policy](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/2009/11/19/think-again-clintons-foreign-policy), and Thomas L. Friedman, “Theory vs. Practice; Clinton’s Stated Foreign Policy Turns Into More Modest ‘Self-Containment’,” *New York Times*, October 1, 1993,

<sup>36</sup> Brinkley, “Democratic Enlargement,” 116.

<sup>37</sup> “It’s the economy, stupid,” was a quip by Clinton strategist James Carville in 1992 when asked what the primary focus of the next US president should be. The quote became somewhat synonymous with many of Clinton’s first-term policy agendas. Quote taken from: Michael Kelly, “The 1992 Campaign: The Democrats -- Clinton and Bush Compete to Be Champion of Change; Democrat Fights Perception of Bush Gain,” *New York Times*, October 31, 1992.

significance to us. The successor to a doctrine of containment must be a strategy of enlargement—enlargement of the world’s free community of market democracies.<sup>38</sup>

From the onset of his presidency, Clinton’s enlargement based foreign policy was routinely criticized as lacking a coherent vision, particularly in relation to Bush’s new world order.<sup>39</sup> Even Clinton himself knew he lacked the depth and breadth of experience Bush had brought to foreign relations.<sup>40</sup> In his memoir, *My Life*, Clinton alludes to the notion that he was not nearly as well versed in foreign policy as domestic affairs, leading in part to his selection of Tennessee Senator Al Gore as a vice presidential running mate in 1992.<sup>41</sup> Due to the massive federal budget deficit created during the Reagan and Bush administrations, Clinton’s primary focus was the economy.<sup>42</sup> Compelled to reduce spending and balance the budget, Clinton used enlargement to tie domestic growth, US exports, and global free trade into his foreign policy agenda.<sup>43</sup> The policy’s inextricable links to domestic renewal even drew offense from Clinton’s own cabinet. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who preferred old-fashioned diplomacy, described enlargement as trade policy masquerading as foreign policy.<sup>44</sup> In Clinton’s defense, with the fall of the Soviet Union and the threat of communism dissipating across the globe, the objective of US foreign relations was no longer as definitively black and white.<sup>45</sup> Rather than

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<sup>38</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between*, 68-69.

<sup>39</sup> See: Zoellick, “A Republican,” 63-64, Olson, “Democratic Enlargement’s,” 308-10, Richard N. Haass, “Fatal Distraction: Bill Clinton’s Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Policy*, no. 108 (1997): 112-23, and Moisés Naím, “Clinton’s Foreign Policy: A Victim of Globalization?” *Foreign Policy*, no. 109 (1997): 34-45.

<sup>40</sup> As such, Clinton sought to create a catchy, single word slogan for his foreign policy vision akin to Kennan’s “containment,” which became known as the “Kennan sweepstakes.” See: Brinkley, “Democratic Enlargement,” 114-16, and Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between*, 65-71.

<sup>41</sup> Clinton hints at a lack of expertise beyond “a good grasp of the major foreign policy issues.” Clinton, *My Life*, chap. 27, para. 58-59.

<sup>42</sup> A byproduct of the supply-side economics of the 1980s, at the time Clinton took office in 1992, the national debt was US\$4 trillion and budget shortfalls were running US\$290 billion annually. Wilentz, *The Age*, 327, and Clinton, *My Life*, chap. 29, para. 53-54.

<sup>43</sup> For more on Clinton turning foreign policy into a domestic agenda, see: David Winston, “Foreign Policy: The ‘Stealth’ Issue of the 1996 Campaign?” *The Brown Journal of World Affairs* 3, no. 1 (1996): 286. In text citation: Brinkley, “Democratic Enlargement,” 117.

<sup>44</sup> In a 1991 speech, Clinton himself stated that, “Foreign and domestic policy are inseparable in today’s world.” Richard Wang, “Reshaping US Foreign Policy For The Twenty-First Century,” *Harvard International Review* 36, no. 2 (2014): 54. In text citation: Brinkley, “Democratic Enlargement,” 121.

<sup>45</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier write that with the end of the Cold War, Clinton and the Democrats could “sketch a new vision for America around the concept of spreading freedom and democracy,” rather than focusing on the traditional ideological concerns pertaining to national security. Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between*, 30. Mandelbaum adds that Clinton’s foreign policy upper echelon was “populated by individuals who had had reservations about some

continuing to use unparalleled military strength to dictate foreign policy, Clinton chose the weight of the market, promoting geoeconomics over geopolitics.<sup>46</sup> First-term initiatives such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) and formalizing the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) were designed precisely to solidify this process.<sup>47</sup>

The absence of a clear security threat and a reflexive address, US foreign policy found itself for the first time in almost half a century in more of an improvisational mode.<sup>48</sup> In reality, enlargement's primary aims were geared towards areas of particular US strategic or economic interest, rejecting the notion that the US was universally duty-bound to defend constitutional democracy and human rights everywhere.<sup>49</sup> Instead, determinations for policy implementation would be handled on a case-by-case basis; a process that elicited criticisms for the resolutions behind action or inaction, particularly when they involved military deployment.<sup>50</sup> When Clinton assumed office in January of 1993, he inherited several ongoing military engagements abroad.<sup>51</sup> Since the national security aspects of his foreign policy were ambivalent in the early stages, Clinton initially stressed continuity with his predecessor's policies.<sup>52</sup> But as his own foreign policy evolved, his administration adopted measures which recast several of these military engagements as humanitarian interventions.<sup>53</sup> While Bush and his team had held more tightly to the Cold War "realism" policy approach, Clinton's expansive approach conformed more closely to "idealism."<sup>54</sup> The recasting of these engagements quickly came under scrutiny as they seemingly contradicted the key component of "US strategic and economic interests." While

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features of America's Cold War foreign policy," particularly the moral aspect(s) surrounding the Vietnam War, and for this (among other reasons), they chose a flexible humanitarian-based foreign policy. Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure*, 82.

<sup>46</sup> See: Brinkley, "Democratic Enlargement," 110-27, Miller, "The Clinton Years," 621-34, and Annika E. Poppe, *Whither To, Obama?: U.S. Democracy Promotion after the Cold War*, Report, Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (2010): 10-12.

<sup>47</sup> Bush had completed the preliminary NAFTA negotiations with Canada and Mexico shortly before leaving office. Wilentz, *The Age*, 334-35. In text citation: Brands, *Making*, 197.

<sup>48</sup> Clinton's improvisational, or ad hoc, foreign policy will be discussed later in the chapter.

<sup>49</sup> Brinkley, "Democratic Enlargement," 116.

<sup>50</sup> More on Clinton's ambivalence of deploying troops will be discussed later in the chapter. For a comprehensive analysis of Clinton's overall military management, see: Michael O'Hanlon, "Clinton's Strong Defense Legacy," *Foreign Affairs* 82, no. 6 (2003): 126-34.

<sup>51</sup> US troops were deployed in more nations around the world than had been the case for any incoming president since Truman. US Marines were in Somalia, the US Navy and Coast Guard were in Haiti, and the US Air Force had just completed missions in Iraq. Brinkley, "Democratic Enlargement," 112.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> See: Mandelbaum, "Foreign Policy as Social Work," 16-32.

<sup>54</sup> It should be noted however that Bush himself undertook the first post-Cold War "idealist" mission in deploying troops to Somalia in 1992 to combat mass starvation. Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure*, 87. In text citation: *Ibid.*, 83.

morally conscious; preventing starvation in Somalia, restoring a democratically elected civilian leader in Haiti, and protecting Muslims from ethnonationalist Serbian aggression in Bosnia, it was difficult to justify these interventions as having unequivocal strategic or economic importance.<sup>55</sup> The decision to intervene in these theaters, especially in stark contrast to the absence of US intervention during the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda in 1994, amplified the widely held critique that Clinton's ad hoc foreign policy was too inconsistent, lacked vision and cohesion.<sup>56</sup> Longtime American diplomat and former Director of Policy Planning, Richard Haass, addressed the discrepancy in theory and practice of Clinton's policy, specifically noting that success within foreign policy does not lend itself to ad hoc approaches.<sup>57</sup> Revered journalist Thomas L. Friedman questioned that same disjunction in the *New York Times*.<sup>58</sup> This inconsistency unceremoniously earned him the nickname "William the Waffler."<sup>59</sup> Clinton himself was also well aware of his foreign policy shortcomings, stating in his memoir "the failure to try to stop Rwanda's tragedies became one of the greatest regrets of my presidency."<sup>60</sup>

Perhaps the historical narrative would have been different had these interventions produced more successful results. The humanitarian intervention in Somalia injudiciously unfolded into a nation-building mission, and the horrific events of the Battle of Mogadishu on 3 October 1993, in which 18 Americans were killed and 75 were wounded, would leave an indelible mark on Clinton and his administration.<sup>61</sup> The intervention in Somalia accomplished

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<sup>55</sup> See: *Ibid.*, 83-86.

<sup>56</sup> Examples of inconsistency in his ad hoc foreign policy are discussed at length in: Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure*, Naim, "Clinton's Foreign Policy," Jewett and Turetzky, "Stability," 638, Zoellick, "A Republican," 64-68, Mandelbaum, "Foreign Policy as Social Work," 16-32, Haass, "Fatal Distraction," 112-23, Rory Carroll, "US chose to ignore Rwandan genocide," *The Guardian*, March 31, 2004, Russell L. Riley, "Bill Clinton: Foreign Affairs," Miller Center, October 4, 2016, accessed September 20, 2020, [www.millercenter.org/president/clinton/foreign-affairs](http://www.millercenter.org/president/clinton/foreign-affairs), Friedman, "Theory vs. Practice," Lawrence J. Korb, "Clinton's Foreign Policy Woes: A Way Out," *The Brookings Review* 12, no. 4 (1994): 3, and Paul D. Wolfowitz, "Clinton's First Year," *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 1 (1994): 28-43.

<sup>57</sup> Haass was the first director of the PPS under George W. Bush, worked previously in the DOD and the DOS, and has served on the Council of Foreign Relations, the Brookings Institution, and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (all widely regarded as the most influential policy institutes in the US). Haass, "Fatal Distraction," 113.

<sup>58</sup> Friedman, "Theory vs. Practice."

<sup>59</sup> Jewett and Turetzky, "Stability," 638.

<sup>60</sup> Clinton, *My Life*, chap. 38, para. 39.

<sup>61</sup> Corpses of the deceased US soldier were desecrated and dragged through the streets, broadcast on television for all the world to see. For more on the Battle of Mogadishu, see: Michael R. Gordon and Thomas L. Friedman, "Details of U.S. Raid in Somalia: Success So Near, a Loss So Deep," *New York Times*, October 25, 1993. There were also substantial Somali casualties. According to a *Washington Post* report, Somali leaders put their losses at 312 killed and 814 wounded. Rick Atkinson, "Night of a Thousand Casualties," *Washington Post*, January 31, 1994.



little, as the US and UN withdrawal left no functioning government with warlords remaining in control.<sup>62</sup> The calamitous events concluded with the resignation of Secretary of Defense Les Aspin, further perpetuating the impression that Clinton was ill-prepared for foreign affairs.<sup>63</sup>

A mere eight days after the tragic events in Somalia, Clinton's foreign policy suffered yet another vital blow. A small contingent of two hundred US military personnel had been assembled and sent to Haiti on the USS *Harlan County* to train local police and assist in the preparations for former Haitian President Aristide's return to power.<sup>64</sup> However upon reaching the Haitian shores, the boat was greeted by an angry mob of junta supporters, who chanted anti-American slogans, ultimately preventing the boat from docking.<sup>65</sup> The fear of a Somalia-like incident prompted the Clinton administration to withdraw the vessel, and just like that, "a small mob in the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere had intimidated and repulsed the government of the United States."<sup>66</sup> Albright remembered the early failures stating, "after Somalia, the sight of the U.S. military retreating in the face of an unfriendly mob was a low point in Clinton administration foreign policy."<sup>67</sup>

### **3. The Failure of International-led Negotiations in Bosnia**

The end of the Cold War brought about a unique opportunity for integration and cooperation in the international community. Events preceding the outbreak of war in Yugoslavia, from the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 to the international coalition assembled in the Gulf War of 1991, had shown promise and spirit of a new era of multilateral collaboration.<sup>68</sup> The crisis which unfolded in Yugoslavia beginning in 1991 not only presented yet another opportunity for international synergy, but according to scholar James Gow, the Yugoslav crisis, with its complex social,

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<sup>62</sup> Riley, "Bill Clinton."

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Jean-Bertrand Aristide was the first democratically elected president of Haiti. He was deposed in a military coup in 1991. For more, see: Marvine Howe, "U.N. Assembly Calls for the Restoration of Haiti's Ousted President," *New York Times*, October 12, 1991.

<sup>65</sup> The angry mob were waving signs that read "Remember Mogadishu," and rabidly jeered "Somalia! Somalia!" while the ship hovered offshore. Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 358.

<sup>66</sup> Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure*, 92.

<sup>67</sup> Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 358.

<sup>68</sup> For a detailed account of American multilateral efforts after the Cold War, see: John Gerard Ruggie, "Third Try at World Order? America and Multilateralism after the Cold War," *Political Science Quarterly* 109, no. 4 (1994): 553-70.

economic and political structures, would be the litmus test for the transition to a post-Cold War world made better through international cooperation.<sup>69</sup>

Unfortunately, the “litmus test” for this transition emerged stillborn. As Yugoslavia devolved into fratricide in 1991, US Secretary of State James Baker infamously stated the US does “not have a dog in that fight.”<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, JCS Colin Powell and the US military leadership agreed with the administration’s position, seeing no immediate, strategic, or compelling reason for involvement.<sup>71</sup> Even Scowcroft and Eagleburger, who had served in the Balkans earlier in their careers, were against intervention believing military involvement would eventually turn into mission creep.<sup>72</sup> For more than forty years, the US had gone to great lengths to preserve and support Yugoslavia, but now with the Soviet Union collapsing and the Cold War coming to an end, Yugoslavia was suddenly dispensable. There was no compelling or strategic reason to intervene in a fight amongst stray dogs.

The apparently prompt US dismissal of the Yugoslav crisis in this new post-Cold War era however, was not without consideration. In late 1990 and early 1991, intelligence memos were circulating around Washington directly acknowledging there was little the US could do to preserve Yugoslav unity and that some form of civil war was likely inevitable.<sup>73</sup> Any type of US intervention to preserve Yugoslavia would have also been seen as contradictory to the advocacy of democracy and self-determination of the constituent republics seeking independence.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Gow is a professor of International Peace and Security in the War Studies Department at King’s College London. From 1994-1998 he served as an expert advisor and expert witness for the Office of the Prosecutor at the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. For more on Gow, see: King’s College of London, “Biography; Professor James Gow,” King’s College of London, accessed January 22, 2021, <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/people/professor-james-gow>. In text citation: Gow, *Triumph*, 2-3.

<sup>70</sup> Wilentz, *The Age*, 339.

<sup>71</sup> Brands, *Making*, 323, and Wilentz, *The Age*, 339.

<sup>72</sup> Brent Scowcroft was Bush’s National Security Advisor and had served as a military air attaché at the American Embassy in Belgrade from 1959-1961. Lawrence Eagleburger was Deputy Secretary of State, later replacing Baker as Secretary of State from 1992-1993 when Baker stepped down to run Bush’s re-election campaign. Eagleburger was the US Ambassador to Yugoslavia under President Carter from 1977-1981. Robert D. McFadden, “Brent Scowcroft, a Force on Foreign Policy for 40 Years, Dies at 95,” *New York Times*, August 7, 2020, and “Biographies of the Secretaries of State: Lawrence Sidney Eagleburger (1930–2011),” *Office of the Historian*, accessed January 22, 2021, <https://history.state.gov/departments/history/people/eagleburger-lawrence-sidney>. In text citation: Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between*, 126.

<sup>73</sup> For more details, see: “1990-10-01, National Intelligence Estimate Report re Yugoslavia Transformed,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed January 23, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12289>, and “1991-03-01, Office of European Analysis Intelligence Assessment re Yugoslavia Military Dynamics of a Potential Civil War,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed January 23, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12290>.

<sup>74</sup> “1990-10-01, National Intelligence Estimate Report re Yugoslavia Transformed.”

Perhaps more than any other current international situation, Chollet and Goldgeier suggest that Bosnia encapsulated the multitude of challenges US foreign policy faced in the post-Cold War era.<sup>75</sup> They present four key questions that haunted US foreign policy in the Bosnian arena: to what extent should the US (1) risk American lives ending ethnic bloodshed, (2) work with international institutions, (3) share responsibility with its European partners, (4) risk its relationship with Russia to help solve global problems?<sup>76</sup>

The failure to adequately answer any of these issues questions resulted in initial US inaction. The CIA had published NIE 15-90 in October 1990, forecasting there would be little, if anything at all, the US or its European allies could do to support continued Yugoslav unity, so Bush decided to pass the problem to the Europeans.<sup>77</sup> By spring 1992, the National Intelligence Estimate assessed that nothing short of large-scale outside military intervention could cease the fighting in Yugoslavia.<sup>78</sup> Although Clinton openly criticized Bush's passivity to the intensifying situation during the 1992 election campaign, he was soon confronted with the same complex reality as he assumed the presidency in January of 1993.<sup>79</sup> Unwilling to assert the traditional American leadership position, Clinton adopted Bush's policy of relegating ownership to the Europeans and the United Nations.<sup>80</sup>

Jacques Poos, Chair of the EC Foreign Affairs Council and the Foreign Minister of Luxembourg, would boldly state: "This is the hour of Europe – not the hour of the Americans... If one problem can be solved by the Europeans, it is the Yugoslav problem."<sup>81</sup> At the onset of the crisis, EC leaders were eager to prove to the EC, then about to become the EU, that they could handle delicate international situations without US leadership, particularly those taking place in their own proximity.<sup>82</sup> With Western democratic ideals and market economics having emerged victorious after the Cold War, Western Europe was confident it could entice Yugoslavia to cease

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<sup>75</sup> Gow also suggests as much for international diplomacy as a whole. Gow, *Triumph*, 2-3. In text citation: Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between*, 126.

<sup>76</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between*, 126.

<sup>77</sup> See: "1990-10-01, National Intelligence Estimate Report re Yugoslavia Transformed."

<sup>78</sup> "1992-04-01, NIE Report, A Broadening Balkan Crisis Can It Be Managed," *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed January 23, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12293>.

<sup>79</sup> Wilentz, *The Age*, 339.

<sup>80</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between*, 126.

<sup>81</sup> Josip Glaurdić, *The Hour of Europe: Western Powers and the Breakup of Yugoslavia* (Yale University Press, 2011), 1.

<sup>82</sup> Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure*, 98.

its quarrel and join the promise of a better, common European future.<sup>83</sup> In addition to effectual multilateral (and bilateral) European governmental diplomacy, the crisis also tested the efficacy of numerous international institutions. The EC/EU, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and the United Nations (UN), had all been structured by the Cold War, either explicitly or implicitly, and the Yugoslav crisis would initiate much debate of the continued relevancy, credibility and vitality of these institutions in an emerging new world order.<sup>84</sup>

The initial decision for EC intervention was made by the European Council of the EC at the Luxembourg Summit on 28-29 June 1991.<sup>85</sup> The decision was made somewhat spontaneously, and according to Gow somewhat haphazardly, as the summit happened to coincide with the eruption of fighting in Slovenia.<sup>86</sup> This violent new episode in the crisis forced European leaders at the summit to rapidly craft a collective response. This proved somewhat difficult, as it had become increasingly clear during the summit that the EC's major powers approached the crisis from dramatically different positions.<sup>87</sup> Initially, the twelve countries of the EC had made it clear they preferred a united Yugoslavia when they chose not to recognize the independence referendums of Slovenia and Croatia.<sup>88</sup> As previously noted, the EC was also in the active phase of negotiations on the Maastricht Treaty, of which there was significant debate(s) surrounding common foreign and security policies.<sup>89</sup> Recognizing Slovenia and

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<sup>83</sup> Glaurdić, *The Hour*, 2.

<sup>84</sup> The EC became the European Union (EU) in 1992, and the CSCE evolved into the Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in 1995. Gow, *Triumph*, 3. The Maastricht Treaty altered the former European treaties and created a European Union based on three pillars, the second of which was a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). "The Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaties," Fact Sheets on the European Union, European Parliament, accessed March 23, 2021, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/factsheets/en/sheet/3/the-maastricht-and-amsterdam-treaties>. In text citation: Ivo H. Daalder, *Getting to Dayton: The Making of America's Bosnia Policy* (The Brookings Institution, 2000), 1.

<sup>85</sup> Gow, *Triumph*, 46.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 46-47. For more on the Luxembourg Summit, see: European Council, "Presidency Conclusions; Luxembourg Summit, 28 and 29 June 1991," accessed January 22, 2021, [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/20528/1991\\_june\\_-\\_luxembourg\\_eng.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/20528/1991_june_-_luxembourg_eng.pdf).

<sup>87</sup> Glaurdić, *The Hour*, 179.

<sup>88</sup> See: Pierre Gerbert, "The vain attempts of the European Community to mediate in Yugoslavia," Report, Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe (CVCE), July 8, 2016, accessed January 22, 2021, [http://www.cvce.eu/obj/the\\_vain\\_attempts\\_of\\_the\\_european\\_community\\_to\\_mediate\\_in\\_yugoslavia-en-cf4477b6-87a5-4efb-982d-fb694beac969.html](http://www.cvce.eu/obj/the_vain_attempts_of_the_european_community_to_mediate_in_yugoslavia-en-cf4477b6-87a5-4efb-982d-fb694beac969.html).

<sup>89</sup> For analysis of the debate, see: Pierre Gerbert, "The common foreign and security policy," Report, Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l'Europe (CVCE), July 8, 2016, accessed January 22, 2021, [https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/the\\_common\\_foreign\\_and\\_security\\_policy-en-a02ed085-03b9-4202-93d3-794363f699e8.html](https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/the_common_foreign_and_security_policy-en-a02ed085-03b9-4202-93d3-794363f699e8.html). In text citation: Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 158.

Croatia's independence stirred fears that the legitimization of nationalist territorial disputes over borders would set a dangerous precedent in Eastern and Central Europe.<sup>90</sup> There were also substantial economic concerns, as the European Economic Community (EEC) had preexisting cooperative agreements in place with Yugoslavia, and dissolution threatened trade, aid and investment.<sup>91</sup> Additionally, there was growing apprehension that economic collapse and nationalist territorial claims would result in a large-scale refugee problem.<sup>92</sup>

The EC elected to send its troika of foreign ministers to mediate the situation.<sup>93</sup> The troika confidently demanded that Croatia and Slovenia freeze the implementation of their independence declarations for three months, that the Serbian contingent unblock its opposition to the appointment of Stipe Mesić to the Yugoslav federal presidency, and that all parties immediately commit to a ceasefire.<sup>94</sup> The naivety of the troika (and by extension the EC), was on full display when the three foreign ministers triumphantly returned to the EC Council, with Poos emphatically declaring: "I think that we achieved the main aim of our mission, which is bringing about a de-escalation of the situation."<sup>95</sup> Meanwhile, despite the troika's victorious declaration, Milošević still defiantly opposed Mesić's appointment and heavy fighting raged on in Slovenia.<sup>96</sup> While the troika's visit achieved virtually nothing, general EC consensus remained that maintaining unity and territorial integrity was the fastest route to European integration.<sup>97</sup> Many EC officials also publicly supported the position of the troika. Jacques Santer, the president of the European Council and the prime minister of Luxembourg, stated "we have to try all means to save the federation at this moment," with British Prime Minister John Major adding "the great prize is to hold the federation together."<sup>98</sup>

However, behind closed doors the EC/EU discussions were not so clear. While some of the strongest support for a unified Yugoslavia came from countries with historical ties to Serbia, such as France and Great Britain, a small contingent consisting of Germany, Austria, and

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<sup>90</sup> Gerbert, "The vain attempts," 2.

<sup>91</sup> Gow, *Triumph*, 49.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> The troika consisted of foreign ministers from Luxembourg: Jacques Poos, Italy: Gianni De Michelis, and the Netherlands: Hans van den Broek. Glaurdić, *The Hour*, 183.

<sup>94</sup> Gow, *Triumph*, 51.

<sup>95</sup> See: Glaurdić, *The Hour*, 184, and *The Death of Yugoslavia*, "Wars of Independence," BBC.

<sup>96</sup> *The Death of Yugoslavia*, "Wars of Independence," BBC.

<sup>97</sup> Glaurdić, *The Hour*, 145.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 183.

Denmark, covertly supported and encouraged Slovene and Croatian independence.<sup>99</sup> Germany in particular, following its own recent reunification, saw the hypocrisy in actively preventing self-determination and was under great domestic pressure to advocate for those same principles for the Croatian and Slovenian peoples.<sup>100</sup> This led to a critical moment for the future of EC policy, when on 1 July 1991 – the day after the troika left Yugoslavia, German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich-Genscher visited Milošević in Belgrade.<sup>101</sup> Testimonies of German diplomats present at the meeting described it as a, “psychological disaster in German-Yugoslav relations,” as Milošević was uncharacteristically cold, dismissive, and uncooperative.<sup>102</sup> Perhaps most noteworthy, was the refusal to cease JNA operations in Slovenia, which prevented Genscher from attending a scheduled meeting with Slovene President Kučan in Ljubljana.<sup>103</sup> Personally experiencing the urgency of the situation, along with perceived Serbian and JNA intransigence, the visit greatly affected Genscher, prompting him to markedly transform his opinion regarding the position of German and EC policy.<sup>104</sup> Upon his return to Bonn, he swiftly became one of the leading advocates for a change in international policy towards Yugoslavia. Slovene Foreign Minister Dmitrij Rupel, who met with Genscher in Austria, described Genscher’s visit and subsequent experience as a “turning point... in German policy” towards the region.<sup>105</sup>

Under sponsorship of the EC, a glimmer of hope was achieved with the signing of the Brioni Agreement on 7 July 1991, effectively ending the war in Slovenia.<sup>106</sup> However, any optimism that this was the first step in a progression towards regional peace was short-lived when Belgrade shifted tactics and its military force towards Croatia.<sup>107</sup> Croatia was much more

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<sup>99</sup> See: Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 159, and Matjaž Klemencic, “320. The International Community’s Response to the Yugoslav Crisis: 1989-1995,” Report, Wilson Center, January 11, 2006, accessed January 22, 2021, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/320-the-international-communitys-response-to-the-yugoslav-crisis-1989-1995>.

<sup>100</sup> Gow, *Triumph*, 49.

<sup>101</sup> Glaurdić, *The Hour*, 185.

<sup>102</sup> Milošević was usually quite charismatic and charming towards Western politicians. *Ibid.*, 186.

<sup>103</sup> In the end Genscher was forced to meet with the Slovenians across the border in Austria. *Ibid.*

<sup>104</sup> See: Richard Caplan, *Europe and the Recognition of New States in Yugoslavia* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), 47, and Glaurdić, *The Hour*, 186.

<sup>105</sup> Rupel’s quote is from the interview transcripts of the BBC documentary, *The Death of Yugoslavia*, cited in: Caplan, *Europe*, 47.

<sup>106</sup> Slovenia was the most homogenous of the former republics, containing a 90 percent Slovene majority. With less than a 3 percent Serb minority, Milošević effectively decided to let Slovenia go. Szayna and Zanini, “The Yugoslav Retrospective Case,” 130, and Tagliabue, “Yugoslavs Agree to a Compromise on Border Posts.”

<sup>107</sup> *The Death of Yugoslavia*, “Wars of Independence,” BBC.

important to Milošević, as it shared physical borders with Serbia and had a Serbian minority population some 600,000 strong.<sup>108</sup>

#### 4. Germany Goes Rogue

As the fighting raged on through fall into winter of 1991, Germany's new stance became less secretive. In August 1991 Genscher publicly informed the Yugoslav ambassador to Germany that Germany would officially recognize Croatia and Slovenia unless the JNA ceased its military intervention in Croatia.<sup>109</sup> While continued negotiations proved to be fruitless, Germany was successful in lobbying a few other EC countries to join its position, insisting that delaying recognition until a political settlement was reached would only allow Milošević to pursue his war with virtual impunity.<sup>110</sup> The escalation of violence in November prompted Germany to publicly break ranks, when one week into December German Chancellor Helmut Kohl announced that Germany would officially recognize Croatia and Slovenia by Christmas.<sup>111</sup> This unilateral shift undermined the already fragile position of the EC front, leading to a period of intense debate within the EC about the sagacity and repercussions surrounding Germany's proclamation.<sup>112</sup> Fearful of the fallout Slovene and Croat recognition would have on Bosnia, Izetbegović himself traveled to Bonn pleading for Kohl and Genscher to reconsider.<sup>113</sup> Even UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar wrote a strongly worded letter to Genscher urging them to reconsider, citing recognition would "provoke the most terrible war in Bosnia."<sup>114</sup> In the end, Germany prevailed

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Steven L. Burg and Paul S. Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina; Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention* (Routledge, 2015), 92.

<sup>110</sup> Caplan, *Europe*, 47.

<sup>111</sup> Burg and Shoup, *The War*, 93.

<sup>112</sup> It is important to understand the motives behind Germany's unilateral actions. There was intense speculation, that after reunification, Germany sought to recreate its traditional sphere of influence by playing a domineering role in European affairs. Additionally, there was tremendous domestic political pressure to recognize the former republics, based upon historical ties dating back to the days of religion and empire. The Christian Social Union, which was predominantly catholic, was part of the ruling coalition and lobbied heavily for recognition on behalf of their fellow catholics. For a detailed account of Germany's role in the Yugoslav Crisis, see: Michael Libal and Donald D. Halstead, *Limits of Persuasion; Germany and the Yugoslav Crisis, 1991-1992* (Praeger, 1997). In text citation(s): Tomáš Zipfel, "Germany and the Recognition of the Sovereignty of Slovenia and Croatia," *Perspectives*, no. 6/7 (1996): 137, and Burg and Shoup, *The War*, 93.

<sup>113</sup> Glenny, *The Fall*, 163.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

when on 16 January 1992, all twelve members of the EC agreed to recognize Slovene and Croat independence.<sup>115</sup>

As foreshadowed, Germany's actions would indeed prove consequential. Lord Peter Carrington, Chairman of the EC Conference on Yugoslavia, correctly predicted that recognition of Croatia and Slovenia would necessitate recognition of Bosnia, which could in turn ignite a civil war.<sup>116</sup> Carrington could not have been more correct, as EC recognition of Croatia and Slovenia pushed Bosnia into the abyss.<sup>117</sup> Bosnia was now left with three decisions: (1) remain in Yugoslavia under Serbian hegemony, (2) accept the territorial division suggested by Tudjman and Milošević, or, (3) declare independence.<sup>118</sup> The Bosnian government chose the latter.<sup>119</sup> The fearful premonitions were immediately realized, as the parliamentary drafting of an independence resolution by the Muslim SDA and the Croat HDZ-BiH party groups fractured the already fragile tripartite coalition.<sup>120</sup> The incensed Bosnian Serb party launched into open rebellion and refused further participation in any collective institutional capacity.<sup>121</sup> The Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadžić, called for segregation along ethnic lines, and an illegal plebiscite was held in November creating a Serb state in Bosnia that would remain part of Yugoslavia.<sup>122</sup> On 9 January 1992, Karadžić proclaimed that any municipality, community, or populated area in which 50 percent of Serbs voted affirmatively in the plebiscite would now be part of *Republika Srpska*.<sup>123</sup> Amidst the turbulence, Tudjman staged a coup within the leadership of the Bosnian Croat party. He deposed elected leader Stepjan Kljuić, who stood for Bosnian integrity, and replaced him with Mate Boban, who proceeded to immediately declare a Croat proto-state, *Herceg-Bosna*, in Herzegovina.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> For more on the EC recognition of Croat and Slovene independence, see: Stephen Kinzer, "Europe, Backing Germans, Accepts Yugoslav Breakup," *New York Times*, January 16, 1992.

<sup>116</sup> These sentiments were also echoed by Cyrus Vance, former US Secretary of State under President Carter, and leader of the UN negotiating efforts in Yugoslavia. Burg and Shoup, *The War*, 94.

<sup>117</sup> Izetbegović had even pleaded with Genscher in December about prematurely recognizing Croatia for fear it would spark war in Bosnia. See: Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 184, and Glenny, *The Fall*, 143.

<sup>118</sup> Glenny, *The Fall*, 143.

<sup>119</sup> For more on Bosnia's move to pursue an independence referendum, see: Chuck Sudetic, "Yugoslav Breakup Gains Momentum," *New York Times*, December 21, 1991.

<sup>120</sup> Calic, *A History*, 301.

<sup>121</sup> Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 194.

<sup>122</sup> See: Velikonja, *Religious Separation*, 237, and Calic, *A History*, 301.

<sup>123</sup> Calic, *A History*, 301.

<sup>124</sup> Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy*, 194.



Bosnia was rapidly devolving.<sup>125</sup> As panic of a drastic escalation in violence mounted across Europe, Lord Carrington proposed an EC sponsored conference on Bosnia prior to the independence referendum in February 1992.<sup>126</sup> Carrington, along with new EC mediator José Cutileiro, proposed that an independent Bosnia be divided into three constituent units – regions that were to be defined by the principle of ethnicity.<sup>127</sup> Over the coming weeks, Cutileiro was successful in convincing all three national political parties to support “cantonization.”<sup>128</sup> Karadžić and the SDS believed that in addition to their “autonomous region,” they would emerge with around 70 percent of Bosnia covered by Serb “cantons.”<sup>129</sup> The Croats also supported the Cutileiro Plan as it was perceived as an effective measure towards their aspirations of an autonomous Western Herzegovina.<sup>130</sup> Izetbegović however was not convinced. He viewed partitioning the country as a disappointment and continued to strongly support the retention of a unitary Bosnian state.<sup>131</sup>

The apprehensive Bosnian government proceeded with an independence referendum held between 29 February and 1 March 1992.<sup>132</sup> Although it passed overwhelmingly, formal recognition was encouraged to be delayed until the Cutileiro Plan was signed and implemented.<sup>133</sup> Although not pleased with the territorial divisions, Izetbegović begrudgingly signed the agreement with Boban and Karadžić on 18 March 1992, because at the very least, it retained Bosnia as a single state.<sup>134</sup> However the arrangement was short lived. After seeing the proposed map, both Izetbegović and Boban withdrew their support with the goal to secure a

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<sup>125</sup> The situation in Croatia was also spiraling out of control. After the collapse of Lord Carrington’s negotiations regarding the restructuring of all six republics at the Hague in November 1991, the JNA launched a series of brutal war operations in Vukovar and Dubrovnik. *The Death of Yugoslavia*, “Wars of Independence,” BBC.

<sup>126</sup> Lord Carrington decided to redirect focus specifically to Bosnia. This sub-conference was to seek a constitutional framework for the future of Bosnia, as fears of war were becoming more imminent. Burg and Shoup, *The War*, 108.

<sup>127</sup> The Portuguese diplomat Cutileiro was asked by Lord Carrington to lead negotiations as the EC presidency had passed from the Netherlands to Portugal. Gow, *Triumph*, 80. In text citation: Burg and Shoup, *The War*, 108.

<sup>128</sup> The cornerstone of the “Statement of Principles for New Constitutional Arrangements for Bosnia and Herzegovina,” was that Bosnia would be independent and decentralized. Caplan, *Europe*, 129.

<sup>129</sup> “Cantons” are subdivisions of a country established for political or administrative purposes. In text citation: Gow, *Triumph*, 81.

<sup>130</sup> The Cutileiro Plan is also commonly referred to as the Carrington-Cutileiro Plan, and/or the Lisbon Agreement. Burg and Shoup, *The War*, 107.

<sup>131</sup> Gow, *Triumph*, 81-82.

<sup>132</sup> The Bosnian Serb parties boycotted the referendum. However, according to journalist Noel Malcolm, thousands of Serbs in major cities voted for independence. Voter participation was roughly 64 percent, with 99 percent voting in favor of independence. See: Calic, *A History*, 301, and Velikonja, *Religious Separation*, 238.

<sup>133</sup> Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure*, 99.

<sup>134</sup> Gow, *Triumph*, 85.

more profitable territorial division at a future date.<sup>135</sup> This was an early example of the perennial complications that would ensue in drawing an acceptably partitioned map of Bosnia – a dilemma that would plague peace negotiations all the way to the end.

The ethnic clashes that had already been flaring up across the country erupted into full-out war when Bosnian independence was finally recognized by the EC and US on 7 April 1992.<sup>136</sup> The Bosnian Serb separatists had used the slow-moving negotiations to launch a sweeping offensive, gaining hold of 70 percent of Bosnian territory by May.<sup>137</sup> The escalation of violence had prompted further cries for UN intervention, something Izetbegović had been pleading for since November.<sup>138</sup> Due to a lack of pressure from the lead UN envoy Cyrus Vance, Milošević and the Bosnian Serbs had been successful in rejecting Izetbegović's proposed plan for a UN peacekeeping deployment in the region.<sup>139</sup> Bosnian Foreign Minister Haris Silajdžić, in another plea to Boutros-Ghali for UN troops, had his request dismissed with a technical response about division of labor between the UN and the EC, with the UN secretary general suggesting that it was the responsibility of the latter.<sup>140</sup> According to Josip Glaurdić in *The Hour of Europe*, the failure to take a firmer stance with Milošević and deploy a peacekeeping unit in 1991 was a grave misjudgment on behalf of Vance and the UN.<sup>141</sup> Scholar Richard Caplan reiterated similar sentiments, adding: “an international presence might have been a deterrent against some of the

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<sup>135</sup> Boban and the HDZ-BiH were not pleased after they realized 59 percent of the Bosnian Croats they relied on for support would end up in non-Croat cantons. After discussing the suggested map with the US Ambassador to Yugoslavia Warren Zimmerman, Izetbegović rejected the proposal, electing to lean into the prospect that the US would become more involved in the peace process and provide Bosnia with the foundational support he felt had been lacking from his European colleagues. Gow, *Triumph*, 87-88. In text citation: Melanie C. Greenberg and Margaret E. McGuinness, “From Lisbon to Dayton: International Mediation and the Bosnia Crisis,” in *Words Over War; Mediation and Arbitration to Prevent Deadly Conflict*, eds. Melanie C. Greenberg, John H. Barton and Margaret E. McGuinness (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 45-46.

<sup>136</sup> Examples of increased ethnic fighting in the days leading up to the war can be found in series of articles published in the *New York Times* by journalist Chuck Sudetic: “Serbs Attack Muslim Slavs and Croats in Bosnia,” April 4, 1991, “Bosnia Calls Up Guard and Reserve,” April 5, 1992, and “Ethnic Clashes Increase in Bosnia As Europe Recognition Vote Nears,” April 6, 1992.

<sup>137</sup> Milošević had quietly diverted contingents of JNA forces from Croatia to assist Karadžić and the Bosnian Serbs. See: Greenberg and McGuinness, “From Lisbon,” 45, and Glaurdić, *The Hour*, 277.

<sup>138</sup> Bosnian leaders repeatedly begged to no avail for a UN peacekeeping deployment to prevent the spread of violence. Glaurdić, *The Hour*, 277.

<sup>139</sup> According to Glaurdić, Vance was unwilling to get tough with Milošević, believing he needed to remain in Milošević's good graces in order to get the Krajina peacekeeping initiative up and running. Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Caplan, *Europe*, 132.

<sup>141</sup> Glaurdić, *The Hour*, 277.

more egregious violations of human rights that would later be perpetrated, including ethnic cleansing and the establishment of concentration camps.”<sup>142</sup>

At a time when the UN was presented with an opportunity to showcase its substance and relevance in the post-Cold War world, it failed miserably. From the onset of the crisis in Bosnia, there were numerous criticisms that the UN preferred to direct their attentions elsewhere, were unwilling to commit to the measures needed for adequate conflict resolution and lacked the ability to successfully formulate a collective peacekeeping response.<sup>143</sup> High-ranking UN officials even went as far as to publicly display their ambivalence with the situation. In December 1991, UN official Shashi Tharoor gave a cynical explanation to Bosnian leaders on the unwillingness of the UN to deploy troops: “First war should happen... It should be a terrible war in order to attract the attention of the international community. Then a cease-fire should occur, and then we send in the troops.”<sup>144</sup> Even more damning, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali infamously stated upon arrival to Sarajevo in 1992 that: “Bosnia is a rich man’s war. I understand your frustration, but you have a situation here that is better than ten other places in the world... I can give you a list.”<sup>145</sup>

UN negligence was perhaps most visible with the continuation of its arms embargo against Bosnia. In September 1991, the UN passed UNSCR 713, imposing a “general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Yugoslavia.”<sup>146</sup> Although by April 1992 Bosnia was an independently recognized nation, Boutros-Ghali and Vance believed applying the embargo to ex-Yugoslav republics would be beneficial to the

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<sup>142</sup> Caplan, *Europe*, 133.

<sup>143</sup> The UN’s continuation of the arms embargo against Bosnia (it was originally issued to Yugoslavia, but when that dissolved was passed down to its successor republics), is virtually unanimously criticized. For criticisms on collective action or inaction, perceived enabling, general disinterest in the region, or continuation of the embargo, see: Gow, *Triumph*, 44-47 and 89-91, Holbrooke, *To End*, 174-75 and 187, Glaurdić, *The Hour*, 276-77, Caplan, *Europe*, 131-33, Noel Malcolm, “Bosnia and the West: A Study in Failure,” *The National Interest*, no. 39 (1995): 7 and 13-14, Sheila Zulfiqar Ahmad, “The UN’s Role in the Bosnian Crisis: A Critique,” *Pakistan Horizon* 51, no. 2 (1998): 83-92, and Paul C. Szasz, “Peacekeeping in Operation: A Conflict Study of Bosnia,” *Cornell International Law Journal* 28, no. 3, (1995): 685-99.

<sup>144</sup> Tharoor was a UN special assistant for peacekeeping operations. Glaurdić, *The Hour*, 277.

<sup>145</sup> This was Boutros-Ghalis’ one and only visit to Bosnia during the crisis. Holbrooke, *To End*, 175.

<sup>146</sup> United Nations Security Council resolution 713, *Socialist Federal Rep. of Yugoslavia (25 Sept)*, S/RES/713 (1991) (25 September 1991), accessed October 10, 2020, <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/713>.

peacemaking process.<sup>147</sup> This left an ill-equipped Bosnia to defend itself against an aggressor with access to the stockpiles of the fourth largest army in Europe.<sup>148</sup>

## 5. Bosnia is Burning

War raged through the summer of 1992. Sarajevo had been under siege since April, snipers picked off civilians in the streets, Bosnian Serb paramilitary forces had invaded eastern Bosnia, and Muslim cities were under full-scale attack.<sup>149</sup> By August, some 50,000 were dead and another two million homeless.<sup>150</sup> Most appallingly, the world became privy to some of the more bestial atrocities unfolding in Bosnia. In early August, international news reports broke about a prisoner of war camp in Omarska, in the Northern Bosnian district of Prijedor.<sup>151</sup> International humanitarian agencies estimated that some 3,000-5,000 Muslims, Croats, and “disloyal” Serbs were being interned in insufferable conditions.<sup>152</sup> Photos and videos of the pale, gaunt, hollow-eyed detainees were broadcast across the world, producing the “CNN effect.”<sup>153</sup> According to the Bosnian government, it was estimated that the Serbs opened fifty-seven camps during the first four months of the war.<sup>154</sup> The ghastly images conjured up memories of WWII concentration camps, prompting international public outcry for substantive intervention.<sup>155</sup> The EC resumed deliberations in London calling for the introduction of a UN backed peacekeeping initiative.<sup>156</sup> At long last, UNPROFOR was extended to Bosnia with UNSCR 776.<sup>157</sup> The London Conference

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<sup>147</sup> Malcolm, “Bosnia and the West,” 7-8.

<sup>148</sup> In September 1992 it is estimated that Serbia had 300 tanks and 200 armored personal carriers. Bosnia had two of each. Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Burg and Shoup, *The War*, 119-20.

<sup>150</sup> The 50,000 dead, of which most were civilians, and the two million homeless are tallies of Serbian aggression in both Bosnia and Croatia. Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 208.

<sup>151</sup> For more on the camps, see: Chuck Sudetic, “Conflict in The Balkans; Inside Serbs’ Bosnian Camp: Prisoners, Silent and Gaunt,” *New York Times*, August 8, 1992.

<sup>152</sup> Glenny suggests that the camps were a product of a “Serb lust for vengeance,” revenge for the historical atrocities committed against Serbs by Croats (and some Bosnians) in the concentration camps in Yugoslavia during WWII. Glenny, *The Fall*, 206. In text citation: Glenny, *The Fall*, 203.

<sup>153</sup> For more on the “CNN effect,” see: Robinson, “The CNN Effect,” 301-09.

<sup>154</sup> Glenny, *The Fall*, 203.

<sup>155</sup> See: Steve Coll, “In the Shadow of the Holocaust,” *Washington Post*, September 25, 1994.

<sup>156</sup> Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 208.

<sup>157</sup> The UN had finally passed UNSCR 770, recognizing the humanitarian situation in Bosnia, just a month earlier. UNSCR 776 extended the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), from Croatia into Bosnia to protect humanitarian missions and other activities as requested by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In April 1993 they would also pass UNSCR 819, designating many of the Muslim enclaves in the recently invaded Eastern Bosnia “safe areas.”

also established the Steering Committee of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia (ICFY), co-chaired by Lord David Owen and Cyrus Vance, and laid the framework for the Geneva Peace Conference in early September.<sup>158</sup> But once again, the international-led negotiations proceeded in a misguided fashion. Almost immediately in Geneva the ICFY repudiated its mandate agreed upon in London, with the decision to now consider the Bosnian government one of the three warring factions.<sup>159</sup>

Even though there was growing international indignation over the Serb irregulars' systematic program of murder, a term that came to be defined as "ethnic cleansing," there was not sufficient political support for international military intervention.<sup>160</sup> Forceful intervention would have required UN authorization by way of a UN Security Council resolution, however Moscow continued to stubbornly oppose any form of Western military action against Serbia.<sup>161</sup> While hope dwindled for halting the violence, Vance and Owen proceeded to engage in mediation without the requirement of a ceasefire, basing negotiations upon good faith.<sup>162</sup> Following in the footsteps of their predecessors, Vance and Owen set about creating the Vance-Owen Peace Plan (VOPP). The VOPP contained several attributes familiar to the Cutileiro Plan, calling again for a centralized federal government and ethnic partitioning, but with significant functions to be carried out by ten regions.<sup>163</sup> The plan was a tough pill to swallow for the

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<sup>158</sup> Lord Carrington stepped down and Lord Owen was appointed chief EC negotiator. Owen, *Balkan*, 1. The ICFY met in Geneva to discuss mechanisms for the implementation of the principles decided upon in London. Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 208.

<sup>159</sup> In London, the ICFY had elected to recognize the territorial integrity of Bosnia and identified Serbia and Montenegro as the aggressors. The week Geneva opened, an Italian air force plane carrying humanitarian supplies was shot down and a UNPROFOR convoy was attacked outside of Sarajevo airport. Evidence suggested that perhaps both attacks were carried out by Bosnian Croat and/or Bosnian government forces, which led a previously naïve Owen to change his opinion of the Bosnians. The change made in Geneva now placed the Muslim-led government in Sarajevo on the same level as the Croat and Serb insurgents. Owen, *Balkan*, 41-44. Many accusations circulated throughout the entire conflict that the Muslim forces carried out forms of self-sabotage, sacrifice, and/or inflicted violence upon their own people in attempts to garner sympathy from the international community. More on these accusations will be discussed later in the chapter. As an example, see: Leonard Doyle, "Muslims 'Slaughter Their Own People': Bosnia Bread Queue Massacre Was Propaganda Ploy, UN Told," *The Independent*, October 22, 1992.

<sup>160</sup> Gow, *Triumph*, 93.

<sup>161</sup> Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 209.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>163</sup> Although the plan called for a centralized federal government on paper, it would in practice be quite decentralized. Owen notes that this was the best compromise they could achieve given the widely differing positions of the three parties. In his words, it "promised the most stable governmental form for the whole of Bosnia-Herzegovina, since much of the intercommunal friction could be kept from the central government by giving the provinces competence over the most divisive issues, e.g. police, education, health and culture, while depriving them of the right to be a state within a state." Owen, *Balkan*, 61-62.

Bosnian government and the Bosnian Serbs. Both would make considerable concessions; Izetbegović was forced to abandon hope for a strong and decisive central government, and the Bosnian Serbs were to return some 60 percent of the land they had conquered and currently occupied.<sup>164</sup> While this plan prevented the state-within-a-state, annexation or obliteration scenarios, it was heavily criticized for awarding the Serbs more territory than they had before the war – thus rewarding ethnic cleansing.<sup>165</sup> Glenny defends the proposal, explaining it was never intended to be a permanent solution to the crisis, but to provide an interim political solution that would reduce military hostilities in the republic.<sup>166</sup> Others however, expressed differing views. Ramet stated it “represented little besides the optimistic hopes and private notions of Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance.”<sup>167</sup> Burg and Shoup noted that it fell short, writing “the most important deficiency of the Vance-Owen plan was the continuing absence of provisions for enforcement of its territorial, institutional, and legal provisions against those who might not comply with them.”<sup>168</sup> In the end, the lack of US support for the proposal, on account it was unjust towards the Bosnian Muslims, ultimately sealed its fate.<sup>169</sup>

While other international peace proposals appeared over the subsequent years, none came as close to the prospects of success as the VOPP. In May of 1993, the newly elected US President Bill Clinton’s made his first (direct) foray into the international peace negotiations. The Joint Action Program was established by US Secretary of State Warren Christopher together with his counterparts from Britain, France, Russia, and Spain.<sup>170</sup> The EC’s final effort was the Owen-Stoltenberg plan in the summer of 1993, which was a revised version of the VOPP with a new map dividing Bosnia into three autonomous regions; the Bosnian Serbs retaining 52 percent

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<sup>164</sup> Additionally, neither Izetbegović nor Karadžić were happy with the map. The Bosnian Croats, and Zagreb, on the other hand, were perfectly happy with the plan. See: Glenny, *The Fall*, 225, and Gow, *Triumph*, 237.

<sup>165</sup> Greenberg and McGuinness, “From Lisbon,” 47.

<sup>166</sup> Glenny, *The Fall*, 224.

<sup>167</sup> Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 209.

<sup>168</sup> Burg and Shoup, *The War*, 231.

<sup>169</sup> Lord Owen himself felt the VOPP did not succeed because it was undercut by Clinton and the Americans. See: Owen *Balkan*, 169-84. For extensive analyses of the VOPP, see: Burg and Shoup, *The War*, 189-262, and Gow, *Triumph*, 223-59. For a condensed account of the role of the US in the VOPP process, see: Greenberg and McGuinness, “From Lisbon,” 50-51. In text citation: Gow, *Triumph*, 258-59.

<sup>170</sup> More on Clinton’s foray into the affair will be discussed later in the chapter. In text citation: David B. Ottaway, “‘Joint Action Program’ for Bosnia Leaves Muslims Disillusioned,” *Washington Post*, May 25, 1993.

of total Bosnian territory, the Bosniaks 30 percent, and the Bosnian Croats 18 percent.<sup>171</sup> The Bosnian government considered this a step backwards.<sup>172</sup>

Between 1993 and early 1994 fighting had also erupted between the Bosnian government forces and the Bosnian Croats in Central and Western Bosnia.<sup>173</sup> The “war within a war” was brokered to a ceasefire in early 1994 after behind-the-scenes deliberations by the US and Germany resulted in the early groundwork for the creation of the Bosnian Federation.<sup>174</sup> On the morning of 5 February 1994 as reconciliation between the Bosniaks and Croats was taking place, a single mortar shell hit a busy Sarajevo market killing 68 people and wounding more than 100 others in one of the single bloodiest attacks of the war.<sup>175</sup> The gruesome attack prompted a NATO ultimatum demanding that Bosnian Serb forces withdraw their heavy artillery surrounding Sarajevo.<sup>176</sup> NATO had been minimally involved since 1992, after their foreign ministers agreed to support the peacekeeping initiatives of the CSCE, and later the UN, on a case-by-case basis.<sup>177</sup> After the Sarajevo market bombing however, NATO became more proactive. On 28 February 1994, NATO conducted its first ever military engagement when it shot down four warplanes violating the no-fly zone.<sup>178</sup> A few weeks later in April 1994, the Bosnian Serb irregulars bombed the UN “safe area” of Gorazde, finally prompting the UN to

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<sup>171</sup> In April 1993, Vance resigned as the chief UN negotiator and was replaced by former Norwegian Foreign Minister Thorvald Stoltenberg. This time round, the mediators agreed to accept proposals from the warring factions, rather than attempt to impose a just solution. Greenberg and McGuinness, “From Lisbon,” 54.

<sup>172</sup> After pressure for modifications that might be minimally acceptable, all three parties agreed to a provision of the proposal aboard the HMS *Invincible* in the fall of 1993, but Izetbegović later reneged and renounced the deal. Agreeing and then later reneging was starting to become a pattern by Izetbegović and the Bosnian government. *Ibid.*, 55.

<sup>173</sup> For a detailed timeline of the Croat-Muslim conflict (as it became to be called), see: Central Intelligence Agency, *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995* (Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis, 2002), 179-213.

<sup>174</sup> Greenberg and McGuinness, “From Lisbon,” 56.

<sup>175</sup> This was one of the events called into question as to whether the Muslim-led government was intentionally killing its own people to garner international sympathy and provoke NATO involvement. See Lord Owen’s first-hand account of the information circulated upon investigation of the attack: Owen, *Balkan*, 255-62. For a more general summary, see: Jim Fish, “Sarajevo massacre remembered,” BBC News, February 5, 2004, accessed February 11, 2021, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3459965.stm>. This horrific act also became a factor propelling the Bosnian government to reconcile with the Croats, as they could not afford to be fighting a war on both fronts. Greenberg and McGuinness, “From Lisbon,” 57.

<sup>176</sup> In what would become a recurring theme throughout the entirety of the conflict, disharmony arose when the UN seemingly contradicted the ultimatum issued by NATO. See: John Pomfret, “U.N., NATO in Dispute Over Bosnia,” *Washington Post*, February 14, 1994.

<sup>177</sup> See: North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), “Peace support operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” NATO, April 26, 2019, accessed February 11, 2021, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics\\_52122.htm#:~:text=NATO%20conducted%20its%20first%20major,led%20Stabilisation%20Force%20\(SFOR\).](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_52122.htm#:~:text=NATO%20conducted%20its%20first%20major,led%20Stabilisation%20Force%20(SFOR).)

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*

approve NATO air strikes.<sup>179</sup> The initial air strikes were negligible, and did little other than enrage the Bosnian Serbs, as evidenced when Mladić retaliated by taking 150 UN personnel hostage at Tuzla.<sup>180</sup> With no international consensus for future air strikes, and all recent negotiation efforts dead, the US and Russia decided to push for peace in a new direction with the creation of the Contact Group.<sup>181</sup> If the international community had learned anything through its prior negotiation efforts, it was that the two powers would need to be directly involved if there was any chance of creating lasting peace.<sup>182</sup>

From 1991 to 1994, not only did all international-led peace attempts fail considerably, in some instances they decisively made matters worse. In hindsight, Lord Owen likened the mistake of the EC and international community pursuing Bosnian recognition in spring of 1992 as “pouring petrol on a smoldering fire.”<sup>183</sup> The ethnic-based territorial partitioning presented in the Cutileiro Plan legitimized the Bosnian Serb platform, setting a damaging precedent for all other peace proposals that followed.<sup>184</sup> Rather than standing up to the bully, the international community instead pressured the weaker party, the Bosnian government, to make concessions at every turn.<sup>185</sup> After three years of failed diplomacy, the EC and the international community’s lasting achievement was immortalizing an internal ethnic division that still haunts Bosnia to this day.<sup>186</sup>

## **6. Muddling Through: The Clinton Administration’s Early Policy in Bosnia**

During his 1992 US presidential campaign, candidate Bill Clinton attacked President Bush for his inaction in Bosnia. “Once again, the administration is turning its back on violations of basic

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<sup>179</sup> Goražde was one of the Muslim enclaves in Eastern Bosnia that had been regularly under siege since 1992. Greenberg and McGuinness, “From Lisbon,” 58.

<sup>180</sup> Tuzla was another Muslim enclave designated as a “safe area” by the UN. Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> The Contact Group, as well as US and Russian involvement, will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

<sup>183</sup> Owen, *Balkan*, 46.

<sup>184</sup> Karadžić and the SDS had been advocating for ethnic partitioning since 1990. The VOPP and Stoltenberg-Owen Plan followed similar suit, with Serbian appeasement occurring in one facet or another. Glaurdić, *The Hour*, 290.

<sup>185</sup> On this note, there has been speculation that the EC did not want a majority-Muslim country in Europe. President Clinton himself made mention of this in his memoir, writing: “some European leaders were not eager to have a Muslim state in the heart of the Balkans, fearing it might become a base for exporting extremism, a result that their neglect made more, not less, likely.” Clinton, *My Life*, chap. 32, para. 40.

<sup>186</sup> Just to be clear, the US also bears equal responsibility for this lasting internal division via official recognition of the *Republika Srpska* at Dayton. More on this will be discussed in the next chapter.



human rights and our own democratic values.”<sup>187</sup> Clinton made promises that if elected he would act forcefully to end the war, but after assuming office in January 1993, those convictions seemed to disappear when faced with the real costs of active engagement.<sup>188</sup> Increased intervention would cost money, political capital, and perhaps above all, American lives.<sup>189</sup> This initial reversal was an embarrassing moment for the administration, as Clinton’s foreign policy experience was viewed as a critical deficiency during the election campaign.<sup>190</sup> The successive failures of the EC and the international community to achieve a peaceful resolution, and the drastic escalation of violence from 1992 onwards, further put the Clinton administration under intense scrutiny to follow through on their campaign promises. The longer the crisis continued, the more noticeable the hypocrisy became.<sup>191</sup> According to Chollet and Goldgeier, “for the better part of three years, the Bosnia policy hung like a strategic albatross around the administration’s neck.”<sup>192</sup>

The Europeans, who deemed the conflict a civil war, were eager to end the fighting as quickly as possible, even if it meant an unfavorable settlement for Bosnia’s Muslim

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<sup>187</sup> Elizabeth Drew, *On the Edge: The Clinton Presidency* (Simon & Schuster, 1995), 138.

<sup>188</sup> Clinton had primarily campaigned on domestic reform, and according to Gow, the administration wanted to “avoid the fate of the last great domestic reform-oriented White House, under President Lyndon Baines Johnson,” who’s reforms were sunk by entanglement in Vietnam. Gow, *Triumph*, 213. In text citation: Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between*, 126.

<sup>189</sup> Faced with domestic political ramifications, Clinton’s first Bosnian effort, the Joint Action Plan in May 1993, was negligible relative to the firm rhetoric he used on the campaign. He even rebuffed European calls to provide US troops to reinforce the designated “safe areas” should they fall under attack. The Europeans were particularly distraught he not only rejected their approaches, but also appeared unwilling to take the lead in the West’s Bosnia policy as promised. Daalder, *Getting*, 16-19.

<sup>190</sup> There have been countless mentions from scholars, diplomats and journalists that Clinton’s change of tune after elected, or initial inaction, came from “reading the wrong book” when it came to fully understanding the situation in Bosnia and the Balkans. Most notably, Washington journalist Elizabeth Drew, in her book, *On the Edge: The Clinton Presidency*, reported the president read *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* by Robert D. Kaplan, from which Clinton naively inferred the people of the Balkans were incapable of peacefully coexisting. This conjecture has prompted criticisms against his reservations for broader intervention earlier in the conflict, particularly in pushing sooner for lift and strike. Mentions appear in (to name a few): Holbrooke, *To End*, 22, Owen, *Balkan*, 161-62, Daalder, *Getting*, 17, and Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between*, 355. Also see articles by: Michael T. Kaufman, “The Dangers of Letting a President Read,” *New York Times*, May 22, 1999, Richard Cohen, “Bookish on the Balkans,” *Washington Post*, May 25, 2000, Akash Kapur, “To Hell in His Handbasket,” *The Nation*, November 30, 2000, and Daniel D. Drezner, “Deconstructing Kaplan,” *Foreign Policy*, November 27, 2005. Kaplan himself published a response, emphatically stating his book was not intended to be interpreted in such a manner: Kaplan, “After ‘Balkan Ghosts’,” *Washington Examiner*, December 18, 1995. In text citation: Velikonja, *Religious Separation*, 256.

<sup>191</sup> As an early example, see: Elaine Sciolino, “Clinton Delaying Plan to Aid Bosnia,” *New York Times*, May 13, 1993.

<sup>192</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between*, 126.

government.<sup>193</sup> In contrast, the Clinton administration viewed the war from the start as an act of Serbian aggression against Bosnia.<sup>194</sup> Its goal was justice for the Bosniaks, which explains the lack of ardent American support for the VOPP that seemingly rewarded Serbian belligerence.<sup>195</sup> As discussed previously in the chapter, the Serbs pushed forward with military objectives while stonewalling most peace efforts, so after the assault on the Muslim enclave, Srebrenica, in March 1993, new calls for forceful intervention began circulating within the Clinton administration.<sup>196</sup> It was determined that “only a serious and forceful approach would persuade the Bosnian Serbs to desist.”<sup>197</sup> The strategy of using force to subdue the Bosnian Serbs became a staple of Clinton’s Bosnia policy moving forward, and as such, the administration would find itself at odds with its European counterparts for the better part of the conflict.<sup>198</sup>

When Srebrenica was attacked in the spring of 1993, US concern was growing that hopes for a political agreement were slipping away.<sup>199</sup> The Clinton administration’s Balkan Task Force (BTF) concluded that the elimination of Srebrenica and the few other remaining Muslim enclaves in Eastern Bosnia would make Serb control in the region a reality, both militarily and demographically.<sup>200</sup> Should the Serb offensive emerge triumphant, such a *fait accompli* would undoubtedly leave implementation of the VOPP map with even less chance of success. Internally however, the administration was still far from a consensus on a new course of action. Secretary of Defense Les Aspin and the Pentagon strongly favored pursuing a ceasefire while providing some limited protections for the enclaves under assault.<sup>201</sup> Christopher felt the focus should be placed on containing, rather than fixing the problem, while other administration members like Lake, Holbrooke, and Albright pushed for much bolder intervention.<sup>202</sup> Few decisions were

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<sup>193</sup> For a US interagency analysis of European countries’ early views on the emerging war in Bosnia, see: “1992-08-10, BTF Memorandum, European Views on the Use of Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 30, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12295>. By summer 1995 National Intelligence estimates suggested the Western European Allies were moving toward “less ambitious concepts,” in hopes of resolving the conflict as soon as possible. “1993-05-01, NIE Report re Prospects for Bosnia,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 30, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12327>.

<sup>194</sup> Or more specifically, against the Muslims. Mandelbaum, “Foreign Policy,” 23.

<sup>195</sup> In his memoir, Clinton states that he made the decision not to endorse the VOPP in February 1993, almost immediately upon taking office. Clinton, *My Life*, chap. 32, para. 34.

<sup>196</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 12.

<sup>197</sup> Gow, *Triumph*, 212.

<sup>198</sup> This theme will be discussed throughout the remainder of this chapter and in the following chapter.

<sup>199</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 12.

<sup>200</sup> See: “1993-03-23B, BTF Memorandum re Serb War Aims,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed February 14, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12318>.

<sup>201</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 12-13.

<sup>202</sup> Chollet and Goldgeier, *America Between*, 126-27.

reached in the early policy meetings, with one high-ranking official stating the long hours spent in the Situation Room was more like “group therapy.”<sup>203</sup>

Clinton felt strongly that upholding the arms embargo was a moral problem, actively preventing people under attack from defending themselves.<sup>204</sup> Throughout 1993 he and his administration finally settled on the position of “lift and strike,” especially as the Serb offensive was gaining momentum.<sup>205</sup> The BTF surmised the Serbs were unlikely to withdraw from any of their occupying territories barring external military pressure, so they proceeded to act with impunity under the presumption the international community would eventually abandon any long-term commitments in the region.<sup>206</sup> But Clinton’s European counterparts were still opposed to the use of US or NATO air strikes, particularly the countries that had troops on the ground as part of the UN peacekeeping force.<sup>207</sup> Christopher also gave the same explanation when a US proposed UNSCR for lifting the arms embargo was rejected.<sup>208</sup> To Europe, lift and strike meant an escalation of the war. With WWI memories still vivid, the possibility that war might spread and further destabilize the region was a frightening scenario.<sup>209</sup>

Nonetheless, in May 1993, Christopher embarked on a European tour to try to sell the lift and strike option.<sup>210</sup> In the end, perhaps Christopher could have pressed his allies to support Clinton’s plan, but only with the promise America would assume the lead in the West’s policy regarding Bosnia.<sup>211</sup> This, however, would have made Bosnia America’s problem, something the Clinton administration (and Bush before him), had avoided at all costs. A top policymaker confided to Drew that “the basic strategy was, this thing is a no winner, it’s going to be a quagmire. Let’s not make it our quagmire.”<sup>212</sup> After Christopher’s return to the US, lift and strike

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<sup>203</sup> Drew, *On the Edge*, 150.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>205</sup> The “lift and strike” approach was a plan to end the embargo on arms shipments to Sarajevo, followed by the threat of air strikes. Albright, *Madam*, 414.

<sup>206</sup> “1993-03-23B, BTF Memorandum re Serb War Aims.”

<sup>207</sup> There was some irony behind US criticisms of EC opposition to lift and strike, as the US had repeatedly refused to commit any troops to the peacekeeping force in the war zone. Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 214.

<sup>208</sup> Nine member countries, including the UK, France, and Russia, abstained from voting. Albright, *Madam*, 416.

<sup>209</sup> For more on the European perception of spreading destabilization in the region, see: Mike Bowker, “The Wars in Yugoslavia: Russia and the International Community,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 50, no. 7 (1998): 1250-51, Gentjan Skara, “The Role of the EU as a Peacebuilder in the Western Balkans,” *Romanian Journal of European Affairs* 14, no. 4 (2014): 29, and Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 3.

<sup>210</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 15-17.

<sup>211</sup> Drew, *On the Edge*, 156.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

was effectively dead.<sup>213</sup> Instead, the administration settled on a new “softball” policy direction called the Joint Action Plan on 22 May 1993.<sup>214</sup> As former NSC Director for European Affairs Ivo Daalder writes, the focus of the new direction “shifted from intervention to containment.”<sup>215</sup>

By July 1993 the “CNN effect,” was having a pervasive impact. Gruesome images of the deteriorating humanitarian situation were being widely broadcast over news stations and print reports were detailing a level of starvation so severe people were resorting to eating raw sewage.<sup>216</sup> At the request of the administration, a CIA National Intelligence Estimate, NIE 93-23/II, was assembled suggesting that a large-scale ground deployment would be necessary to enforce any agreed upon peace plans, create or protect safe havens, and roll back Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) territorial gains.<sup>217</sup> JCS estimates put the number of troops needed around 70,000.<sup>218</sup> The number of troops required to be impactful was exorbitant, so again the conversation reverted to the prospective use of air power. A National Intelligence Council report however indicated that any unilateral US air strikes would likely break the coalition and create further divisions in the UN Security Council.<sup>219</sup> Hoping to have better luck than Christopher only a few months earlier, Lake traveled secretly to Europe to meet with French and British officials to make clear that if Sarajevo collapsed by the end of the year the future of the alliance was at stake and the NATO summit scheduled for January 1994 would be nothing more than a gigantic farce.<sup>220</sup> In the end, Lake was able to convince the allies to support the use of NATO air power,

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<sup>213</sup> Michael Mandelbaum also posits that “European governments were not as well disposed to the Muslim cause as the Americans were and did not regard Muslim military success, the aim of the Clinton policy, as being either as desirable or as feasible as Washington did.” Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure*, 105. In text citation: Daalder, *Getting*, 18.

<sup>214</sup> The agreement was made with the UK, France, Spain, and Russia. Its core components were to protect the six designated “safe areas” with force, if necessary; establish an international war crimes tribunal; place monitors on the Serbian border to ensure Belgrade was honoring the international embargo on the Bosnian Serbs; and to increase the international presence in Kosovo and Macedonia to help the conflict. Daalder, *Getting*, 18-19.

<sup>215</sup> Daalder was the Director for European Affairs from 1995-1996, responsible for coordinating US policy for Bosnia. This new US direction was lampooned by the Bosnians and the press. See: Ottaway, “‘Joint Action Program’ for Bosnia Leaves Muslims Disillusioned,” and Paul Lewis, “Hostility to Allies’ New Plan For Bosnia Increases at U.N.” *New York Times*, May 25, 1993.

<sup>216</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 19.

<sup>217</sup> “1993-07-01b, NIE Report re Combatant Forces in the Former Yugoslavia Volume 2,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed February 15, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12331>.

<sup>218</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 20.

<sup>219</sup> “1993-08-05, NIC Memorandum re Likely Allied Reactions to Unilateral U.S. Actions in Bosnia,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed February 15, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12333>.

<sup>220</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 21.

but only insofar as the decision be shared with the UN.<sup>221</sup> This effectively gave veto power to both NATO and the UN, birthing the infamous “dual-key” arrangement.<sup>222</sup>

Another critical opponent to the use of force was Russia. Given Russia’s longstanding cultural and historical ties to Serbia, it was not surprising that Moscow tilted towards the Serbs, and the sentiment was reinforced when the Russian Parliament adopted a resolution in April 1993 calling on its government to exercise veto power in the UN Security Council to block any military operations against the Bosnian Serbs.<sup>223</sup> Since Clinton had made strategic partnership with Russia an early administration priority, maintaining harmony with Moscow had become of equal importance, if not more, than the actual situation on the ground in Bosnia.<sup>224</sup> After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia was experiencing its own wave of political turbulence and sought to use Bosnia as an opportunity to reassert itself as a great power on the international stage.<sup>225</sup> There was however reason to be optimistic about diplomatic cooperation between the former Cold War adversaries. Moscow had, for the most part, supported the majority of the Western initiatives in the Balkans, accepting that the Serbs bore the brunt of responsibility for the war.<sup>226</sup> They supported economic sanctions against Serbia in 1992, approved the extension of UNPROFOR to Bosnia, agreed to a NATO role in enforcing the no-fly zone, and enthusiastically supported the VOPP.<sup>227</sup> However, according to Gow, the demise of the VOPP in 1993 turned the tide on “Moscow’s unadulterated cooperation with the West.”<sup>228</sup> Amidst growing domestic criticism of selling out to the West, Russian policy changed significantly with the end of the Muslim-Croat alliance.<sup>229</sup> As fighting erupted between the two, Moscow’s allegiance started shifting back towards Belgrade. Scholar Mike Bowker notes, “the Croat betrayal did not

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<sup>221</sup> The French changed their objections to the use of air strikes after their UNPROFOR base in Sarajevo was shelled. Burg and Shoup, *The War*, 267. In text citation: *Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency: The Role of the Intelligence and Political Leadership in Ending the Bosnian War* (William J. Clinton Presidential Library, Central Intelligence Agency, 2013), 6.

<sup>222</sup> Clinton himself called the “dual-key” arrangement “a frustrating impediment to protecting the Bosnians.” Clinton, *My Life*, chap. 34, para. 15.

<sup>223</sup> Ramet attests that Russia even went as far as to regularly supply the Bosnian Serbs with sophisticated weaponry. Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 214-15.

<sup>224</sup> Gow, *Triumph*, 221.

<sup>225</sup> Bowker, “The Wars,” 1245.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, 1250.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>228</sup> Gow, *Triumph*, 192-93.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

exculpate the Serbs as some Russian parliamentarians claimed, but it did demolish the common perception of Serbia as the sole villain of the piece.”<sup>230</sup>

The tide was slowly turning on the US side as well. The NATO summit in January 1994 exposed the fundamental contradiction in Clinton’s Bosnia policy.<sup>231</sup> In a meeting with Secretary Christopher, French Foreign Minister Juppé asserted that should the US continue its refusal to put troops on the ground, then they should at least pressure Izetbegović to accept a European backed peace plan.<sup>232</sup> The idea, which Christopher hastily rejected, demonstrated precisely just how antithetical the administration’s approach was. As Daalder writes: “while the Clinton administration supported the Bosnian Muslim contention that nothing less than the status quo ante – including the reversal of Serb war gains – was an acceptable outcome of negotiations, it was unwilling to run the military risks necessary to bring this about.”<sup>233</sup>

After the NATO summit, a sense of urgency started brewing within the administration. Juppé’s threat to withdraw France’s 6,000 peacekeepers in spring, if followed through, would likely precipitate a domino effect culminating in the intentional expiration of the UNPROFOR mandate.<sup>234</sup> At the same time, the CIA was circulating NIE 94-2, which estimated Milošević would begin uniting and consolidating Serbian portions of Bosnia and Croatia with Serbia by year’s end, regardless of any settlement to the conflict.<sup>235</sup> The confluence of these events inspired several members of the administration, who had long advocated for a stronger US leadership role, to mobilize. Albright, after a post-summit trip to Central and Eastern Europe, sent a memo to the president that was uncompromising in its view the conflict be ended under US leadership.<sup>236</sup> According to Daalder, in her passionate memo she detailed how the situation in Bosnia was hurting the development of democracy in the region and warned “of the dire consequences to the administration’s Europe policy and the credibility and effectiveness of NATO and the United Nations.”<sup>237</sup> Lake had separately arrived at a similar conclusion and began an internal NSC review of what could be done.<sup>238</sup> New Secretary of Defense William Perry also

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<sup>230</sup> Bowker, “The Wars,” 1251.

<sup>231</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 24.

<sup>232</sup> Elaine Sciolino, “U.S. Rejects Plea to Act in Bosnia,” *New York Times*, January 25, 1994.

<sup>233</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 24.

<sup>234</sup> Sciolino, “U.S. Rejects Plea to Act in Bosnia.”

<sup>235</sup> “1994-01-01, NIC Report re Serbia A Troubled Year of Consolidation Ahead,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed February 15, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12336>.

<sup>236</sup> David Scheffer, *The Sit Room: In the Theater of War and Peace* (Oxford University Press, 2018), 70.

<sup>237</sup> Albright memo, as quoted by Daalder in: Daalder, *Getting*, 24.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*

provided input, and on 4 February 1994, Christopher compiled the ideas into a coherent strategy and presented Clinton with a memo calling for enhanced US leadership.<sup>239</sup> “The Christopher memorandum called for US leadership in trying to find a diplomatic solution by threatening the Serbs with air strikes if Pale refused to negotiate seriously and strengthening the Bosnian negotiating position by forging an alliance between the Bosniaks and the Bosnian Croats.”<sup>240</sup> The very next day, an artillery shell hit the market in Sarajevo, providing a bloody catalyst for a more active US leadership role.

The North Atlantic Conference convened in the aftermath of the devastating attack, issuing an ultimatum that any heavy weaponry within the Sarajevo exclusion zone be withdrawn in ten days.<sup>241</sup> The ultimatum applied to all parties, and failure to cooperate would result in NATO air strikes.<sup>242</sup> Clinton spoke by telephone with Russian President Boris Yeltsin of the decision the day after the meeting, and while there was no disagreement about the proposed action, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Vitaly Churkin expressed disappointment in being excluded from the process.<sup>243</sup> In doing so he also pushed for a new UNSCR to demonstrate a unified position amongst the four permanent members of the Security Council.<sup>244</sup> While the NATO countries objected to further Security Council involvement, cooperation and uniformity began materializing a week later when Russian negotiators secured the Bosnian Serbs’ agreement in observing the NATO imposed deadline.<sup>245</sup> Simultaneously, Clinton sent Undersecretary of State Peter Tarnoff and Special Envoy to the Balkans Chuck Redman to consult with London, Paris, and Bonn about a new US diplomatic initiative.<sup>246</sup> Redman underscored that any diplomatic success must begin with an end to the Muslim-Croat conflict.<sup>247</sup> Threatened with sanctions, Tudjman ultimately agreed to a ceasefire with the Bosnian Muslims

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> The city of Pale, in the hills some 20km to the east of Sarajevo, had become the de facto capital of *Republika Srpska*. Scheffer, *The Sit Room*, 70.

<sup>241</sup> The Sarajevo exclusion zone was a 20km radius around the Sarajevo city center. Any heavy weaponry within this zone was to be withdrawn, regrouped, or placed under UNPROFOR control. For the entire list of decisions taken at the meeting, see: North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), “Decisions taken at the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Permanent Session 1,” NATO, February 9, 1994, accessed February 11, 2021, [https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official\\_texts\\_24465.htm](https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/official_texts_24465.htm).

<sup>242</sup> Ibid.

<sup>243</sup> Owen, *Balkan*, 264.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 26.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid., 27.

and to the creation of a Muslim-Croat Federation in Bosnia.<sup>248</sup> On 2 March 1994 the Washington Agreement was reached, and shortly after for the first time since fighting erupted, the balance of power on the battlefield slowly started moving away from the Serbs.<sup>249</sup>

## 7. The Contact Group

With Washington and Russia emerging as major players in Balkan diplomacy in early 1994, their inclusion in any future international-led peace negotiations became imperative. To ensure there was positive cohesion to the various international initiatives taking place, the Contact Group was formed in April 1994.<sup>250</sup> The group consisted of representatives from the US, Russia, Germany, France, and the UK. According to Daalder, participation in this new international coalition offered each of the countries particular advantages: the US could shed the bureaucratic complexities of working with the UN and all twelve members of the EU; the Europeans could ensure that Washington didn't move too far ahead of the prevailing consensus; and Russia could confirm its international standing as a major power.<sup>251</sup> Germany, France, and the UK were technically members of the ICFY and would also nominally represent the EU and the UN.<sup>252</sup> Additionally, France and the UK had troops on the ground and were permanent members of the Security Council. Germany was selected for its burgeoning position within the EU, as well as its perceived influence over Croatia.<sup>253</sup> Glenny however notes that, despite their pledge to work collectively, each of the countries held positions that were mutually exclusive: while initially reluctant to become involved in the negotiating process, the US was growing ever more wary about the deployment of 25,000 troops, as promised in 1993, should a peace deal be reached; the Germans were still stung by the backlash of their early recognition of Croatia and looked to establish a leadership position in the EU; the British and French were deeply worried about the safety of their soldiers on the ground; and Russia was particularly sensitive about the use of

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<sup>248</sup> Washington secured Tudjman's compliance by proposing an economic aid package to help rebuild the Croatian economy and by turning a blind eye to the delivery of military armaments to Zagreb, which violated the UN arms embargo. In the wake of the agreement, the Bosnian army received a trove of arms and war materials from Iran, Pakistan, and Sudan – almost all of which was financed by Islamic foundations in Saudi Arabia. See: Bowker, "The Wars," 1253, and Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 216-17.

<sup>249</sup> Bowker, "The Wars," 1253.

<sup>250</sup> Gow, *Triumph*, 261.

<sup>251</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 28.

<sup>252</sup> Owen, *Balkan*, 276.

<sup>253</sup> Gow, *Triumph*, 261.



NATO in Central Europe before they had clarified the future of East-West relations in the post-Cold War era.<sup>254</sup>

Preliminary Contact Group discussions in spring and early summer 1994 focused on the map. While it took on many attributes similar to the VOPP and Owen-Stoltenberg maps, the final product consisted of a 51/49 split.<sup>255</sup> This territorial division was viewed as the best compromise between justice and reality, with the Muslim-Croat Federation allocated 51 percent and the Bosnian Serbs retaining 49 percent – a significant amount of their occupied lands.<sup>256</sup> The map represented quite a change of heart from the Clinton administration, who from the start had strongly opposed the partitioning of Bosnia and supported Izetbegović's desire to retain an undivided, multiethnic Bosnia.<sup>257</sup> The plan was presented to the parties on 6 July 1994 on a take-it-or-leave-it basis, under the pretext that rejection would result in punitive actions.<sup>258</sup> The Muslim-Croat Federation agreed to the plan almost immediately, while “the Bosnian Serbs delayed their response to the very last minute and then couched the terms of their acceptance in so many conditions as to be tantamount to a rejection.”<sup>259</sup>

At a Principal's Committee Meeting in the days following the Bosnian Serb quasi-rejection of the proposal, it was noted that “the [Clinton] administration senses a public relations disaster in the making.”<sup>260</sup> Congress was starting to apply stronger pressure on the administration to take more forceful action, so a decision needed to be made within the Contact Group of whether to follow through on the threats of punishment for rejecting the proposal.<sup>261</sup> Ultimately a decision was made to put more coercive pressure on Milošević to get the Bosnian Serbs to accept the agreement.<sup>262</sup> As Lord Owen wrote: “the key as always is Milošević.”<sup>263</sup> The pressure of

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<sup>254</sup> Glenny, *The Fall*, 280-81.

<sup>255</sup> William Drozdiak, “U.S., Allies Agree on Map For Partition of Bosnia, Add Incentives, Sanctions,” *Washington Post*, June 30, 1994.

<sup>256</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 28.

<sup>257</sup> Drozdiak, “U.S., Allies Agree on Map For Partition of Bosnia, Add Incentives, Sanctions.”

<sup>258</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 30.

<sup>259</sup> This had long been par for the course throughout negotiations with the Serbs/Bosnian Serbs. For more on the Bosnian Serb response, see: David B. Ottaway, “Bosnian Serb Reply to Peace Plan Seeks More Talks on Map, Six Issues,” *Washington Post*, July 22, 1994. In text citation: Daalder, *Getting*, 30.

<sup>260</sup> “1994-07-26D, BTF Memorandum re Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia July 27, 1994,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed February 16, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12362>.

<sup>261</sup> Punishment measures discussed included tightening sanctions, expanding exclusion zones, or ultimately lifting the arms embargo. *Ibid*.

<sup>262</sup> The Contact Group used tighter sanctions as the stick, and looser sanctions as the carrot. “1994-07-26C, BTF Memorandum re A Summary of Diplomatic Strategy July 30 Geneva Ministerial,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed February 16, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12361>.

<sup>263</sup> Owen, *Balkan*, 287.

added sanctions worked, and to great surprise, Milošević agreed to cut off ties with Pale.<sup>264</sup> While Milošević's decision severed ties economically and closed the border with Bosnia to everything but food, clothes, and medicine, somehow arms, ammunition, and fuel still managed to find its way across the Drina River from Serbia into Bosnia.<sup>265</sup> Even though reports indicated the shipments were being provided by the JNA, likely with the knowledge of Milošević, the UN still voted on a resolution to lift sanctions against Serbia for 100 days in good faith that pressure from Serbia would push Pale to accept the peace agreement.<sup>266</sup> As the people in Bosnia prepared for another hard winter, there was perhaps a sense of peace on the horizon.

To the contrary, grave fears of a worst-case scenario began emerging by year's end. The Bosnian government forces had launched an ill-advised offensive from the Bihac pocket of Northern Bosnia where they were met by a massive Serb counterattack.<sup>267</sup> The Bihac pocket was a particularly sensitive area geographically, in the sense that it provided a small and fragile buffer between the Bosnian Serb forces of the east and the Croatian Serb forces in the north and west. There had long been fears that should the two factions converge the consequences would be disastrous, potentially reigniting the frozen war in Croatia.<sup>268</sup> Those frightening premonitions partially materialized, as some 2,000-4,000 Croatian Serb forces joined a Bosnian Serb force already 10,000 strong in laying siege to Bihac.<sup>269</sup> There was little the UNPROFOR troops could do, and by the end of November, the city had fallen to the Croatian Serb and Bosnian Serb irregulars.<sup>270</sup>

Lord Owen pointed out that the siege of Bihac “showed up yet again the folly of the Security Council ‘safe area’ policy.”<sup>271</sup> While the city was being shelled, the Bosnian government called for NATO air strikes to push back the mixed Serb forces, which the Clinton

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<sup>264</sup> Milošević announced on Serbian television that it was time to end the relationship in hopes Pale would follow the national interest and accept the proposed peace agreement. For more, see: Emma Daly, “Milosevic to cut ties with Serbs in Bosnia,” *The Independent*, August 4, 1994.

<sup>265</sup> Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 218.

<sup>266</sup> Barbara Crossette, “U.N. Eases Curbs on Yugoslavia After Serbian Peace Concessions,” *New York Times*, September 24, 1994.

<sup>267</sup> Bihac was one of the six designated UN “safe areas” and had seen an influx of Muslim refugees seeking shelter from the ethnic persecution. Daalder, *Getting*, 31.

<sup>268</sup> “1994-11-15, BTF Memorandum re Bihac Implications of the Worst Case Scenario,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed October 31, 2020, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12375>.

<sup>269</sup> For more on the siege of Bihac, see: John Pomfret, “Serbs Push Into Bihac ‘Safe Area’,” *Washington Post*, November 27, 1994. In text citation: Daalder, *Getting*, 31.

<sup>270</sup> “1994-11-27B, Anthony Lake to President Clinton re Bosnia Policy after the Fall of Bihac,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed February 17, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12382>.

<sup>271</sup> Owen, *Balkan*, 305.

administration vociferously supported, only to be rebuffed by the other allies who feared retaliation against their soldiers on the ground.<sup>272</sup> In Sarajevo, Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdžić walked out of a meeting with the UN commander in Bosnia, British Lt. General Michael Rose, accusing the UN of holding up NATO action.<sup>273</sup> The situation had become catastrophic. Lt. General Rose, the UN, and the other allies wanted to pursue ceasefire negotiations, but should the assault go unchecked, it would create a dangerous precedent which might have cataclysmic consequences for the other UN “safe areas.”<sup>274</sup>

Back in Washington, very different discussions were taking place. During the counterattack, the administration had met and assessed the repercussions should the US elect to unilaterally lift the arms embargo on the Bosnian Muslims.<sup>275</sup> It was speculated that should the US unilaterally lift the embargo, it would most likely lead to one of two scenarios: (1) demands by Allies for US troops to join their UNPROFOR forces on the ground, or (2) a complete withdrawal of UNPROFOR forces from the region, in which case, the US would be expected to provide troops for support.<sup>276</sup> In the end, Clinton chose to break with his European allies and directed the US military to cease enforcement of the embargo against the Bosnian government.<sup>277</sup>

These early steps towards US unilateralism came during a time of increased frustration between the allies and international institutions. At a Principals Committee meeting on 28 November 1994, the administration acknowledged heightened levels of tension between US-Allied/Russian relations and UN-NATO relations about pursuing more air strikes.<sup>278</sup> Washington

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<sup>272</sup> Pomfret, “Serbs Push Into Bihac ‘Safe Area’.”

<sup>273</sup> Silajdžić became prime minister in October 1993. Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> The other “safe areas” were also only manned with lightly armed UNPROFOR troops. There was now no reason to think they might not succumb to the same fate as Bihac. Ibid.

<sup>275</sup> “1994-11-01, NIC Report re A Multilateral Lifting of the Arms Embargo on Bosnia Political and Military Implications,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed February 17, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12371>.

<sup>276</sup> The second option was essentially a “lift and leave” approach that was starting to garner more prominent consideration, particularly by the Europeans, as violence and frustrations increased. Ibid.

<sup>277</sup> For more details on Clinton’s announcement, see: Michael R. Gordon, “President Orders End To Enforcing Bosnian Embargo,” *New York Times*, November 11, 1994.

<sup>278</sup> The Principals Committee is a National Security Council cabinet-level senior interagency forum chaired by the National Security Advisor. The Clinton administration’s Principals Committee meetings on Bosnia were chaired by Anthony Lake, and usually included the following participants: Leon Feurth and Rick Saunders from the Office of the Vice President (OVP), Secretary Christopher, Tarnoff, and Holbrooke from the Department of State, Secretary Perry and Jan Lodal from the Department of Defense, Director John Deutch and Dennis Blair from the CIA, Chairman General John Shalikashvili, Wesley Clark and Howell Estes from the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Alex Vershbow and Nelson Drew from the NSC, Ambassador Albright and Rick Inderfurth from the USUN, Sandy Berger and Nancy Soderberg from the White House, White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta, and Director Alice Rivlin from the Office of Budget Management (OBM). In text citation: “1994-11-27A, BTF Memorandum re

felt strongly that abandoning pressure of a military threat to the Bosnian Serbs forces would weaken positions at the negotiating table, but the Allies and UN were firm in their stance calling for renewed diplomatic efforts.<sup>279</sup> Should Clinton pursue unilateral air strikes, the fallout “threatened to undermine the most successful military alliance in history, but also one that provided the essential glue for the US military presence in Europe and its leadership of NATO.”<sup>280</sup> Once again, the administration found itself faced with the same dilemma.

In December 1994, at the invitation of Karadžić, former US President Jimmy Carter visited Bosnia and was able to successfully broker a four-month nationwide ceasefire.<sup>281</sup> Clinton was not opposed to Carter’s independent peace negotiations, as it bought time for tensions to cool and for the administration to formulate a strategy to deflect criticism over the decision to unilaterally lift the arms embargo.<sup>282</sup> On the ground, the ceasefire also brought a welcomed reprieve from fighting due to the extremely harsh winter conditions.<sup>283</sup> Prospects for sustained peace were fleeting. In January 1995, in a conversation with recently appointed US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs Richard Holbrooke, Izetbegović stated candidly the ceasefire had only been agreed upon due to the difficulties of fighting in the winter, predicting the war would resume with even greater intensity in spring.<sup>284</sup>

Unfortunately, Izetbegović was right. The situation started spiraling out of control moments after the ceasefire concluded on 30 April 1995.<sup>285</sup> Tudjman, who had grown increasingly impatient with developments in the Serb occupied areas of Croatia, launched a sweeping offensive into Slavonia.<sup>286</sup> The Krajina Serb separatists responded by rocketing

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Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia November 28, 1994,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed February 18, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12381>.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

<sup>280</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 33.

<sup>281</sup> Carter had recently played the role of peacemaker in North Korea and Haiti. While he was in contact with Washington throughout the duration of his negotiations with the Bosnian Serbs, Carter had traveled to Bosnia as a private citizen and representative of the Carter Center. The Carter Center, “President Carter Helps Restart Peace Efforts in Bosnia-Herzegovina,” accessed February 12, 2021,

<https://www.cartercenter.org/news/documents/doc214.html>. For more details on Carter’s negotiations, see: John Pomfret, “Carter Gets Bosnia Foes To Agree To A Cease-Fire,” *Washington Post*, December 21, 1994.

<sup>282</sup> “1994-12-16, BTF Memorandum re Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia December 19, 1994, 1100-1230,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed February 18, 2021,

<https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12389>.

<sup>283</sup> See: Richard Cohen, “A Cease-Fire Called Winter Settles Over Bosnia,” *New York Times*, December 22, 1994.

<sup>284</sup> Holbrooke, *To End*, 61-62.

<sup>285</sup> See: The Associated Press, “U.N. Forces Shelled as Bosnia Truce Nears End,” *New York Times*, April 30, 1995.

<sup>286</sup> A few months later, they also forcefully established control in Krajina. Daalder, *Getting*, 38.

downtown Zagreb and taking 122 UNPROFOR troops hostage.<sup>287</sup> The Bosnian Serb forces launched attacks on Sarajevo, Bihac, Brcko, Banja Luka, and Tuzla.<sup>288</sup> Bosnian Foreign Minister Irfan Ljubljankić was killed when his helicopter was shot down over Croatian Serb controlled territory.<sup>289</sup> NATO launched a series of air strikes around Pale, targeting heavy munitions bunkers.<sup>290</sup> The Europeans' worst fears came true when Mladić started ordering his men to take UNPROFOR troops hostage, using them as human shields against any potential retaliatory NATO air strikes, or ransoming them for return of his captured soldiers.<sup>291</sup> On 16 June the UN Security Council authorized a British-French-Dutch rapid reaction force (RRF) to be deployed to protect the UN peacekeepers.<sup>292</sup> As much of the world recoiled in horror at the levels of terror unfolding across the region, the worst sadly had yet to come. On 11 July 1995, Mladić and his men besieged Srebrenica.<sup>293</sup> The atrocities that transpired over the subsequent eleven days would be Europe's darkest since the Holocaust and serve as the catalyst for Clinton's upcoming unilateral push for peace.<sup>294</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> CIA, *Balkan Battlegrounds*, 35.

<sup>288</sup> For more, see: John Pomfret, "Bosnian Serbs Shell Sarajevo Suburb, Launch Attack On Catholic Churches," *Washington Post*, May 8, 1995.

<sup>289</sup> Joel Br, "Bosnian Serbs Seize More U.N. Troops," *Washington Post*, May 21, 1995.

<sup>290</sup> CIA, *Balkan Battlegrounds*, 36.

<sup>291</sup> Br, "Bosnian Serbs Seize More U.N. Troops."

<sup>292</sup> CIA, *Balkan Battlegrounds*, 36.

<sup>293</sup> Srebrenica, a Muslim enclave, was one of the UN designated "safe areas." Traynor, "Srebrenica Genocide."

<sup>294</sup> Things momentarily got personal for Washington when US Air Force pilot, Captain Scott O'Grady, was shot down by Bosnian Serbs forces behind enemy lines. O'Grady managed to eject and survive in hiding for 6 days until his rescue on 8 June 1995. CIA, *Balkan Battlegrounds*, 36.

CHAPTER THREE:  
Clinton's Shift to Unilateral Diplomacy

“[The policy] is beyond redemption now and should be brought  
to an end before the 1996 presidential campaign commences.

Otherwise we will be handing a sharp sword  
to this Administration's political opponents next year.

And we can expect they will use it.”

Robert Frasure

Special Envoy to Bosnia

Derek Chollet, *The Road to Dayton: A Study of American Statecraft* (p. 21)

### **1. A Resolution at All Costs**

The 8,000 men and boys that were systematically executed in and around Srebrenica between 11 to 22 July 1995 would constitute the single largest massacre on the European continent since WWII.<sup>1</sup> Refugees and survivors tearfully recounted horrific scenes of extreme brutality, psychological torture, physical degradation – including rape, and the cold-blooded murder of unarmed civilians.<sup>2</sup> “The Muslim men were herded by the thousands into trucks, delivered to killing sites near the Drina River, lined up four by four and shot.”<sup>3</sup> Although American satellite photographs captured images of the men held at gunpoint in fields outside the city on 13 July, the US later said it had no advanced warning the town would be taken, and there was nothing that could be done to save its people.<sup>4</sup> But Mladić's motives were no mystery to the West; he had but one objective – to “ethnically cleanse” the territory by eliminating the three Muslim enclaves in Eastern Bosnia, thus securing all of the region for the Serbs.<sup>5</sup> As Mladić and his men entered

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<sup>1</sup> The massacre would be formally declared a genocide by the International Criminal Tribunal of the Former Yugoslavia (ICTFY). “Srebrenica Genocide Overview,” Srebrenica Memorial Center, accessed February 20, 2021, <https://www.srebrenicamemorial.org/en/category/5/1>.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Kinzer, “Conflict in the Balkans: The Refugees; Muslims Tell of Atrocities in Bosnian Town,” *New York Times*, July 14, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Stephen Engelberg, Tim Weiner, Raymond Bonner, and Jane Perlez, “Massacre in Bosnia; Srebrenica: The Days of Slaughter,” *New York Times*, October 29, 1995.

<sup>4</sup> U-2 spy plane photos taken two weeks later showed fields of freshly turned earth. Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> The three enclaves in his warpath were Srebrenica, Zepa, and Gorazde. National Security Council, Michael Hurley, and Southeast NSC European Affairs Office, “Srebrenica (Unclassified Report) [1],” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed February 20, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/53013>.

Srebrenica that fateful summer afternoon, he ghastly proclaimed that “the time has come to take revenge on the Turk.”<sup>6</sup> The overrun Dutch UNPROFOR troops’ subsequent calls for help were rejected or ignored entirely.<sup>7</sup> UNPROFOR Commander General Bernard Janvier vetoed an incoming Dutch request for NATO air strikes, as accusations were made later that the threat of imminent slaughter was not properly relayed.<sup>8</sup> While the genocide was occurring, UN Spokesman Lt. Colonel Gary Coward came to the defense of his commander, stating “we were tasked with deterring attacks, not defending ‘safe areas.’”<sup>9</sup> Regardless of whether it was impotence or acquiescence, the tragedy that occurred at Srebrenica under international protection was a new low point for Western policy in Bosnia.<sup>10</sup>

According to Holbrooke, Clinton realized immediately after Srebrenica that although the American people might not like it, the US could no longer stand idly by.<sup>11</sup> As Lord Owen wrote, “a human tragedy of massive proportions had unfolded in the former Yugoslavia in less than a month.”<sup>12</sup> For the humanitarian-centric foreign policy president, direct and active involvement was seemingly no longer optional.<sup>13</sup> The call to duty was amplified by a telephone conversation Clinton had with Jacques Chirac on 13 July, where the French president issued an admonishing proposal: provide air power and transportation support for an RRF operation to reestablish the “safe areas” around Goražde and Srebrenica, or else the French would withdraw their UNPROFOR forces.<sup>14</sup> As a further insult, as Zepa capitulated, Mladić taunted the West by

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<sup>6</sup> Mladić’s nationalist and irridentist declaration was a reference to imperial rule under the Ottoman Empire. Holbrooke, *To End*, 69.

<sup>7</sup> Engelberg et al., “Massacre.”

<sup>8</sup> Some UN officials said General Janvier “had little enthusiasm for protecting an enclave widely viewed as an indefensible impediment to ending the war.” Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> NSC, “Srebrenica (Unclassified Report) [1].”

<sup>10</sup> A fact sheet detailing the atrocities at Srebrenica was sent to Lake and Deputy National Security Advisor Sandy Berger by Senior Director of European Affairs Alexander Vershbow labeled “Grim reading.” National Security Council, European Affairs, and Alexander Vershbow, “Declassified Documents concerning Genocide in the former Yugoslavia,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 2, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/36593>, 18-20.

<sup>11</sup> Derek Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, xi.

<sup>12</sup> Owen, *Balkan*, 329.

<sup>13</sup> A presidential statement read: “Public condemnation of the atrocities alone is insufficient. There also must be justice, and those who have committed these acts must be held accountable.” NSC and Vershbow, “Declassified Documents concerning Genocide in the former Yugoslavia,” 16-17.

<sup>14</sup> The UNPROFOR threat entailed the US providing ground forces to assist with withdrawal. “1995-07-13A, BTF Memorandum re Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia July 14, 1995,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed February 20, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12492>.



making his strategy public: “By the autumn, we’ll take Goražde, Bihac and in the end Sarajevo and we’ll finish the war.”<sup>15</sup>

British PM Major publicly rejected Chirac’s proposal, instead calling for an emergency crisis meeting in London.<sup>16</sup> The Principals Committee quickly convened and established consensus to continue multilateral diplomacy by making UNPROFOR more robust and coordinating with NATO to provide air power for RRF and UNPROFOR operations.<sup>17</sup> While the desire was expressed to advocate for a stronger air campaign, it was agreed the decision would not be made without support from the other Contact Group members and the Bosnian government.<sup>18</sup> London concluded with two important policy changes: (1) NATO would draw “a line in the sand” around Goražde, and (2) the decision to use air power at Goražde would be made by NATO only, thus removing the UN from the equation by eliminating the dreaded “dual-key” system.<sup>19</sup> While the decisions made in London would spare Goražde of the same fate that befell Srebrenica, many in the administration concluded the measures were not strong enough.<sup>20</sup> These policy changes applied only to Goražde, but what about Bihac or Sarajevo?

Prior to the conference in London, the BTF had presented the administration with a list of prospective courses of action.<sup>21</sup> What few options were left, were not really options at all. There was essentially a single choice: either assist UNPROFOR in a humiliating withdrawal or make an all-out, last-ditch American effort to end the war on terms the administration deemed fit.<sup>22</sup> Special Envoy Robert Frasure would memorably state, the only choice to make was “which waterfall” it wanted to go over.<sup>23</sup>

Back on 8 December 1994, at the recommendation of his senior advisors, Clinton had pledged to Congress and his NATO allies to provide half of the NATO ground force troops

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<sup>15</sup> Originally quoted in David Evans, “Muted Threat Falls Short of Summit Hopes,” *The Times*, July 22, 1995. Cited from: Daalder, *Getting*, 68.

<sup>16</sup> “1995-07-14, Summary of Conclusions of Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia July 14, 1995,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 19, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12494>.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> “A line in the sand,” was a deliberate evocation of President Bush’s language about Iraq. Holbrooke, *To End*, 72.

<sup>20</sup> See: “1995-07-24, Summary of Conclusions of Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia July 24, 1995,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 19, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12504>.

<sup>21</sup> For the detailed list, see: “1995-07-13B, BTF Report re Bosnia Alternative Courses of Action,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 19, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12493>.

<sup>22</sup> Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, xi.

<sup>23</sup> Recounted from a phone interview with Chris Hill, in: Derek Chollet, *The Road to Dayton: U.S. Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process, May-December 1995* (United States Department of State, 1997), 13.



needed to assist with a UN withdrawal, should UNPROFOR indeed collapse.<sup>24</sup> Beginning in the spring of 1995, UNPROFOR, NATO, and the Pentagon had secretly been working on a highly classified planning document that covered every aspect of NATO's support for a UN withdrawal.<sup>25</sup> The completed plan was called OpPLAN 40-104. While there was some confusion about the sequence of steps in the plan amongst several administration officials, one thing was certain: the plan committed US ground troops to Bosnia should the UN mission fail.<sup>26</sup> Although this was universally unwanted within the administration, Lake underscored the importance in a memo to Clinton, stating: "U.S. credibility among NATO allies would be seriously damaged if we were to turn down a request for assistance."<sup>27</sup> In Holbrooke's analysis, he describes how due to complicated Cold War procedures, should the NATO council give the order to assist with the UN withdrawal, the planning document would become an operational order, automatically triggering the deployment of 20,000 US troops as part of the NATO extraction force.<sup>28</sup> Daalder notes that the administration conditioned US participation in the operation with the understanding that NATO would be in sole operational command (no more UN "dual-key" agreement), US troops would be under leadership of an American commander, and the rules for engagement would be robust, while at the same time acknowledging the administration's bizarre "lack of clarity" surrounding the specific logistics of temporary deployment.<sup>29</sup> The peculiar nature of the administration's decision to agree to a plan whose implications were obviously not completely understood was emphasized by Chollet, given that Clinton had consistently avoided sending US troops to Bosnia.<sup>30</sup> Army Lieutenant and Senior Planner on the JCS Wesley Clark described it as "the equivalent to a major war plan," with Carl Bildt calling it "the perfect military plan for a major political disaster."<sup>31</sup> Whatever the reasoning or miscalculation behind agreeing to the plan, the administration now found itself in a dangerous bind.

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<sup>24</sup> The JCS estimated this extraction operation would require between 20,000-25,000 US troops. Daalder, *Getting*, 47.

<sup>25</sup> Holbrooke, *To End*, 66.

<sup>26</sup> See: Daalder, *Getting*, 47 and 53, Holbrooke, *To End*, 66-67, and Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 9 and 21.

<sup>27</sup> "1995-05-29, Anthony Lake to President Clinton re Policy for Bosnia Use of U.S. Ground Forces to Support NATO Assistance for Redeployment of UNPROFOR within Bosnia," *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed November 1, 2020, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12471>.

<sup>28</sup> Holbrooke, *To End*, 66-67.

<sup>29</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 47 and 53.

<sup>30</sup> In his book, Chollet even refers to OpPLAN 40-104 as the "doomsday machine." Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 9 and 21.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

The quagmire the administration faced was directly addressed in a highly secretive 17 July 1995 NSC paper sent to the Principals titled “Bosnia Endgame Strategy.”<sup>32</sup> The paper highlighted fears of an imminent UNPROFOR collapse, thus triggering the NATO extraction plan, and stressed the “need to make an all-out effort in the coming weeks to restabilize the situation on the ground, restore UNPROFOR’s credibility in Sarajevo, Central Bosnia and Gorazde, and press for a realistic diplomatic settlement this year.”<sup>33</sup> NSC analysts projected that should the situation on the ground and efforts for a political settlement continue to deteriorate over fall, a UNPROFOR withdrawal would likely occur in spring.<sup>34</sup> While avoiding the deployment of US troops had always been a priority, it suddenly became a realistic outcome not linked to the fighting on the ground: should UNPROFOR fold in spring, the administration would be faced with “a messy and protracted NATO withdrawal operation right in the middle of the election campaign.”<sup>35</sup>

Mention of Clinton’s 1996 re-election campaign proves, that in addition to taking stronger action in light of recent humanitarian events, there was also an ulterior motive in hurriedly pushing for a resolution in Bosnia. While obvious that a sitting US president would prefer not to be engaged in a foreign policy debacle during an election campaign, the NSC paper provides confirmation that the impending shift to increased engagement and unipolar diplomacy were indeed linked in part to Clinton’s upcoming re-election campaign. As Daalder writes: “after all, with an election year approaching, the president and his advisers were well aware of the political implications of deploying perhaps tens of thousands of American troops into what many believed would be a quagmire.”<sup>36</sup> As detailed in chapter two, domestic politics had always played a role in Clinton’s foreign policy. With the Republican Revolution that had occurred in Congress the previous November, one can only assume Clinton was becoming increasingly sensitive to the shifting domestic trends and polls.<sup>37</sup> Congress had long been critical of Clinton’s

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<sup>32</sup> “1995-07-20A, NSC Paper re Bosnia Endgame Strategy.”

<sup>33</sup> Providing support for Gorazde, per Chirac’s request, was seen as imperative to avoid a French withdrawal from UNPROFOR. Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> It was assumed that fighting and positions would once again pause during winter, as had historically been the case the previous years. Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 81.

<sup>37</sup> The Republican Revolution in 1994 saw the Republican Party (GOP) win both chambers of Congress for the first time in 40 years, picking up 54 seats in the House and 8 seats in the Senate. In this historic victory for the GOP, not a single incumbent Governor, Senator, or Representative was defeated. For more, see: Adam Clymer, “The 1994

Bosnia policies, and the new Republican-led Congress had already begun applying pressure with a bill to unilaterally lift the arms embargo.<sup>38</sup> New Senate majority leader Bob Dole (R-KS), who had been advocating for lift and strike since early 1994, pushed a bill through Congress calling for the US to unilaterally lift the arms embargo against the Bosnian government.<sup>39</sup> Although Clinton had long supported lift and strike, without any clear diplomatic direction proceeding the lift – and with OpPLAN 40-104 firmly in place – Clinton vehemently opposed the bill.<sup>40</sup> He would later explain the basis of his opposition as “for fear of weakening the United Nations,” and because he “didn’t want to divide the NATO alliance”.<sup>41</sup> However, based on declassified records of the Principals Committee discussions, we can also deduce Clinton was aware that passage of the bill would surely provoke the French and British to withdraw, thus cementing the deployment of US troops.<sup>42</sup>

In what *New York Times* journalist Elaine Sciolino called “a striking challenge to the President’s ability to make foreign policy,” the Republican-led Congress passed the bill on 2 August 1995.<sup>43</sup> Although Clinton would use just his second presidential veto to shoot down the bill ten days later, it’s overwhelming passage symbolized the growing Congressional frustrations (Republican in particular) with the administration’s Bosnia policy, and foreshadowed the attacks and criticisms Clinton would inevitably face from his Republican presidential opponent should the conflict carry on into the election year.<sup>44</sup>

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Elections: Congress The Overview; G.O.P. Celebrates its Sweep To Power; Clinton Vows To Find Common Ground,” *New York Times*, November 10, 1994.

<sup>38</sup> See: Helen Dewar, “Senate Votes to Lift Bosnia Arms Ban,” *Washington Post*, July 27, 1995.

<sup>39</sup> The Republican Senator Bob Dole from Kansas would go on to be Clinton’s GOP challenger in the 1996 presidential elections. See: Elaine Sciolino, “House, Like Senate, Votes To Halt Bosnia Embargo,” *New York Times*, August 2, 1995, Kenneth J. Cooper and Ann Devroy, “House Votes to Lift Embargo on Bosnia,” *Washington Post*, August 2, 1995, Dewar, “Senate Votes to Lift Bosnia Arms Ban,” and Karen Hosler and Mark Matthews, “Senate votes to lift Bosnia arms embargo, The War in Bosnia,” *Baltimore Sun*, July 27, 1995.

<sup>40</sup> The administration had been successful in getting Dole to shelve the bill since December 1994, but as the situation began rapidly deteriorating at the start of summer 1995 it “returned with a vengeance.” Daalder, *Getting*, 61-62, and Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 37.

<sup>41</sup> *Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency*, 6.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Sciolino, “House, Like Senate, Votes to Halt Bosnia Embargo.”

<sup>44</sup> Todd S. Purdum, “Clinton Vetoes Lifting Bosnia Arms Embargo,” *New York Times*, August 12, 1995.

## 2. Endgame

In the summer of 1989, the revered American statesman George Kennan shared the following statement with then US Ambassador to Yugoslavia Warren Zimmerman: “I think events in Yugoslavia are going to turn violent and confront the Western countries, especially the United States, with one of their biggest foreign policy problems of the next few years.”<sup>45</sup> Albright candidly validated Kennan’s claim in a 3 August 1995 memo to Lake: “I fear Bosnia will overshadow our entire first term.”<sup>46</sup> If Clinton were to survive to see a second term, Albright boldly proposed that America must take the lead. In her memo addressing the NSC “Bosnia Endgame Strategy” paper, she masterfully detailed the *sine qua non* of shifting from a European-led plan to an American-led plan.<sup>47</sup> Putting the situation in Bosnia into greater political context, Albright stressed how continued reluctance “has placed at risk our leadership of the post Cold War world,” adding, “it didn’t matter what the subject was we were talking about in New York, the U.S. position on Bosnia affected it.”<sup>48</sup> She also specifically shared concerns about the “erosion in the credibility of the NATO alliance and the United Nations,” and underscored how failure to act in support of the Bosniaks jeopardized key relationships with the Muslim world.<sup>49</sup> She presented a new military and diplomatic strategy that proposed a significant increase in responsibilities for the US, and while not everyone in the administration shared this view, there was one thing she stated upon which everyone did agree: “this conflict will be ‘Americanized’ sooner or later.”<sup>50</sup>

According to Chollet, Albright’s memo quickly became a must-read within the administration.<sup>51</sup> Under the assumption the conflict would inevitably be “Americanized,” Albright advised taking control of the situation immediately in order to control the narrative.<sup>52</sup> “If we agree that American troops will be in Bosnia sooner or later, why not do it on our terms

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<sup>45</sup> Warren Zimmerman, *Origins of a Catastrophe* (Times Books, 1996), 51.

<sup>46</sup> “1995-08-03B, UN Ambassador Memo re Bosnia Endgame Strategy.”

<sup>47</sup> According to Chollet, Albright first floated this strategy to the president and his top advisors in a 21 June 1995 Oval Office meeting. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 18-19. In text citation: “1995-08-03B, UN Ambassador Memo re Bosnia Endgame Strategy.”

<sup>48</sup> “1995-08-03B, UN Ambassador Memo re Bosnia Endgame Strategy,” and Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 18.

<sup>49</sup> “1995-08-03B, UN Ambassador Memo re Bosnia Endgame Strategy.”

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 19.

<sup>52</sup> “1995-08-03B, UN Ambassador Memo re Bosnia Endgame Strategy.”

and on our timetable?”<sup>53</sup> Her gutsy strategy challenged the prevailing caution that a UNPROFOR withdrawal was to be avoided at all costs, and suggested it was time to re-examine the fundamental assumption of US policy, perhaps even to actively promote the collapse of UNPROFOR.<sup>54</sup> With the Europeans and the UN out of Bosnia, the international community could collectively lift the arms embargo against the Bosnian government and NATO could follow-up with more forceful air strikes.<sup>55</sup> The credible threat of military force had been successful in getting Pale to the negotiating table before, and with a sanctions relief proposal for Milošević, just maybe this approach would finally provide the leverage needed to resolve the conflict.<sup>56</sup>

Albright’s proposal had recommended one final diplomatic effort with a firm fall deadline.<sup>57</sup> Thus, if negotiations were unsuccessful, a UNPROFOR withdrawal could ensue mid-fall and would be accomplished before the onset of winter.<sup>58</sup> Albright’s response to the proposed NSC “Bosnia Endgame Strategy” paper would be included, along with assessments from the State Department and Defense Department, for review at a Foreign Policy Group Meeting with the president and vice president on 7 August 1995.<sup>59</sup> While Clinton’s top foreign policy advisors unanimously agreed that “muddling through” was no longer a viable option and enhanced US leadership was demanded, there were two main diverging opinions as to what constituted the best overall outcome.<sup>60</sup> Christopher and Perry believed the optimal route was convincing the Bosnian government to consolidate the territory it held at the time of the ceasefire, possibly adding some marginal territorial gains thereafter.<sup>61</sup> Lake and Albright, on the other hand, pushed

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Both Daalder and Chollet note the valiant nature of her proposal. Daalder, *Getting*, 103, Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 19, and “1995-08-03B, UN Ambassador Memo re Bosnia Endgame Strategy.”

<sup>55</sup> “1995-08-03B, UN Ambassador Memo re Bosnia Endgame Strategy.”

<sup>56</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 103.

<sup>57</sup> Albright’s proposal caught the president’s attention, and while he didn’t agree with everything she said, he did confess that he “liked the thrust of it and...that it was the right direction to go.” Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 19. In text citation: “1995-08-03B, UN Ambassador Memo re Bosnia Endgame Strategy.”

<sup>58</sup> “1995-08-03B, UN Ambassador Memo re Bosnia Endgame Strategy.”

<sup>59</sup> Chollet accredits the additional/revised papers to Berger and Vershbow at the NSC, Steinberg, Frasure and Tarnoff from State, and Undersecretary of Defense Walter Slocombe and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Joe Kruzell from the Pentagon. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 38. In text citation: National Security Council and Records Management Office, “Declassified Documents concerning Bosnia” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed February 23, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/36591>, 21.

<sup>60</sup> As such, there were also differences in what constituted the best course of action to reach each respective outcome. NSC and RMO [36591], “Declassified Documents concerning Bosnia,” 21.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 22.

for nothing less than the 51/49 partitioning as suggested by the Contact Group.<sup>62</sup> With visions of two different post-war Bosnias emerging, the path to achieve either outcome differed substantially. Christopher and Perry favored limiting US military involvement to the greatest extent possible, while Lake and Albright maintained that “the stakes went far beyond the particulars in Bosnia,” reiterating the need to firmly restore Washington’s credibility as a world leader.<sup>63</sup> In the end, Clinton voiced support for Albright’s argument and Lake’s diplomatic approach, adding “we should bust our ass to get a settlement within the next few months.”<sup>64</sup>

Clinton tasked Lake and Tarnoff with presenting the new diplomatic full court press option to Europe.<sup>65</sup> A seven-point plan was drawn up under direction of Lake calling for a comprehensive peace settlement, three-way recognition, territorial adjustments, a lasting ceasefire, lifting of sanctions, regional economic aid, and reaffirmation of the 51/49 Contact Group plan.<sup>66</sup> Richard Holbrooke was selected to lead the last-ditch negotiating effort, and he deployed for the Balkans with his team on 15 August 1995.<sup>67</sup>

This new unilateral US initiative effectively sidelined EU negotiator Bildt.<sup>68</sup> With the rejection of Bildt’s latest proposal, a mid-August BTF memo noted his insignificance, stating “our recommendation would be to put him on ice in case the Lake initiative losses momentum.”<sup>69</sup> The Lake initiative included many of the critical points the US had adamantly excluded from Contact Group negotiations over the last year, such as recognition of *Republika Srpska*, and providing it with roughly the same linkage to Serbia as the Washington Agreement had established between the Muslim-Croat Federation and Croatia.<sup>70</sup> The EU and Russia both

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Lake and Albright’s assessment included restoring US credibility within NATO and the UN. Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Albright, *Madam*, 435.

<sup>65</sup> Christopher noted their mission had explicit instructions from the president to “leave no doubt as to the firmness of the U.S. commitment.” Christopher, *Chances*, 255. In text citation: National Security Council, European Affairs, and Mary Ann Peters, “Declassified Documents concerning Bosnia,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 2, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/36592>.

<sup>66</sup> The above is a simplified version as described by Holbrooke in: Holbrooke, *To End*, 74. For a much more detailed account of each point, see: National Security Council and Records Management Office, “Declassified Documents concerning Bosnia,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 2, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/36614>, 89-90.

<sup>67</sup> At the onset, Holbrooke’s shuttle diplomacy team included General Wesley Clark, Rosemarie Pauli, Bob Frasure, Joe Kruzel, and Nelson Drew. Holbrooke, *To End*, 73.

<sup>68</sup> For how insignificant the administration believed Bildt would be moving forward, see: “1995-08-14B, BTF Memorandum re Principals Committee Meeting August 15, 1995,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 2, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12515>.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> According to Owen, these were two points that had been continually rebuffed by Washington on the basis they were rewarding or appeasing Bosnian Serb aggression. Owen, *Balkan*, 330.

supported the plan, amid frustrations the US took so long to arrive at these conclusions.<sup>71</sup> Milošević also approved, as it provided his much needed sanctions relief and covered the other key points he had been arguing for months.<sup>72</sup> However, Sarajevo and Pale still thought they could do better when it came to the map, so the two stubbornly retained their will to continue the battle.<sup>73</sup>

Sadly, the new US hyper-diplomatic track got off to a tragic start. Just four days after arriving in the Balkans, Frasure, Kruzel, and Drew were killed in a vehicle accident en route from Mount Igman to Sarajevo when their armored personnel carrier (APC) slid off the treacherous pass and rolled several hundred yards down the mountain.<sup>74</sup> The tragedy on Mount Igman was deeply personal for the “Holbrooke Shuttle,” and efforts were temporarily put on hold as they accompanied their fallen colleagues back home to Washington.<sup>75</sup> Having laid their comrades to rest, the shuttle was preparing to resume its course when disaster struck again. On the morning of 28 August 1995, mortars hit a crowded Sarajevo market, killing thirty-seven and injuring hundreds more.<sup>76</sup> A UN investigation determined beyond a doubt that the Bosnian Serbs were responsible for the attack, and while it was by no means the worst incident of the war, Holbrooke noticed a particularly unsettling distinction behind this latest attack:

Coming immediately after the launching of our diplomatic shuttle and the tragedy on Igman, it appeared not only as an act of terror against innocent people in Sarajevo, but as the first direct affront to the United States.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> For more on Milošević’s positions regarding the renewed negotiations, see: Gow, *Triumph*, 280-81, Holbrooke, *To End*, 4-5, and “1995-08-16, BTF Report re Serbia's Milosevic Still on the Negotiating Track,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 2, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12516>.

<sup>73</sup> Owen, *Balkan*, 330.

<sup>74</sup> For an emotional and personal account of the incident, see: Holbrooke, *To End*, 10-18.

<sup>75</sup> Holbrooke was the US Ambassador to Germany until he was called back to Washington by Christopher in 1994 and appointed assistant secretary of state for European and Canadian Affairs. Frasure had been Holbrooke’s deputy assistant since 1994. He was also the team member who had the most direct experience dealing with Milošević, having served throughout 1995 as the State Department’s top envoy in the region. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 54. The “Holbrooke Shuttle,” was what Christopher called Holbrooke and his team as they engaged in hyper-shuttle diplomacy between Sarajevo, Belgrade, Zagreb and Washington. Christopher, *Chances*, 256.

<sup>76</sup> The shells landed less than one hundred yards from the Markale marketplace where a similar attack on 5 February 1994 killed sixty-eight people. Roger Cohen, “Shelling Kills Dozens in Sarajevo; U.S. Urges NATO to Strike Serbs,” *New York Times*, August 29, 1995.

<sup>77</sup> Quote from: Holbrooke, *To End*, 93. UN analysis from: Owen, *Balkan*, 330.

*New York Times* journalist Roger Cohen would write that the attack “demonstrated how Western attempts to end the war have gone around in circles, drifting from threats to new peace proposals as the killing has continued.”<sup>78</sup> Holbrooke immediately contacted Washington encouraging them to press the Allies for NATO air strikes.<sup>79</sup> By the early hours of 30 August 1995, more than sixty NATO planes were in the air striking Bosnian Serb targets south and east of Sarajevo.<sup>80</sup> After forty months of tap dancing around the situation, NATO stepped firmly into the conflict with Operation Deliberate Force, its largest military engagement in alliance history.<sup>81</sup>

Given the sequence of events since the tragedy on Mount Igman, there was suddenly a new meaning in Washington to find peace in Bosnia.<sup>82</sup> As Holbrooke would later recount, the final week of August 1995 “would prove to be one of the decisive weeks of the war, indeed a seminal week in the shaping of America’s post-Cold War foreign policy.”<sup>83</sup>

### 3. Enter Holbrooke

According to his boss, Secretary Christopher, Holbrooke was entrusted to “carry the burden of one of the most important foreign policy initiatives the administration had undertaken to date.”<sup>84</sup> This burden was on full display, while at the same time NATO bombs rained down on Bosnian Serb air defense targets, Holbrooke and his team arrived in Belgrade to meet with Milošević.<sup>85</sup> During the meeting, Milošević presented Holbrooke with what became later known as the “Patriarch Paper.”<sup>86</sup> The document was the administration’s first strategic success of isolating Pale and dealing directly with Milošević.<sup>87</sup> The paper established Milošević as the head of a joint six-member delegation, made up of three representatives from the Federal Republic of

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<sup>78</sup> Cohen, “Shelling Kills Dozens in Sarajevo; U.S. Urges NATO to Strike Serbs.”

<sup>79</sup> That very night, UNPROFOR, NATO and US military officials drew up specific operational and targeting plans. By the following afternoon UNPROFOR ground troops were out of harms’ way, and the UN “turned their key,” authorizing NATO airstrikes. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 60-62.

<sup>80</sup> Anthony M. Schinella, *Bombs Without Boots: The Limits of Airpower* (Brookings Institution Press, 2019), 25.

<sup>81</sup> For a detailed account of the air campaign and Operation Deliberate Force, see: Schinella, *Bombs*, chap.1. In text citation: Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 62.

<sup>82</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 116.

<sup>83</sup> Holbrooke, *To End*, 94.

<sup>84</sup> Christopher, *Chances*, 256.

<sup>85</sup> By the end of the first day of air strikes, more than 300 sorties (a combat mission of an individual aircraft), had hit some twenty-three major targets. Schinella, *Bombs*, 25. Shuttle team itinerary from: Holbrooke, *To End*, 104-05.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>87</sup> Since early spring 1994, Frasure had designed a strategy of direct negotiations exclusively with Milošević. *Ibid.*



Yugoslavia (FRY) and three from Pale, who would be responsible for negotiating the overall peace process in Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>88</sup> As Daalder put it, with Milošević as the head, he “in effect gained exclusive and legal authority for the peace negotiating process.”<sup>89</sup>

As the war escalated over the years, Milošević had continuously tried to distance himself from Pale.<sup>90</sup> Having repeatedly claimed he had no influence over the Bosnian Serbs, the Patriarch Paper, in its essence, directly tied their destiny to him.<sup>91</sup> This procedural breakthrough, as Holbrooke would call it, finally accomplished what Frasure had been working towards for months: using Milošević to bring the Bosnian Serbs to the negotiating table.<sup>92</sup> Milošević was desperate to get an agreement in place so sanctions would be lifted, and was “enthusiastically agreeable” over the course of the eight hour meeting.<sup>93</sup> With Milošević having the final say on behalf of the Bosnian Serbs, the dynamics of the negotiations would change drastically.<sup>94</sup>

A BTF report from 5 September 1995 uncovered what Holbrooke and his team experienced in Belgrade.<sup>95</sup> The report detailed that, above all, Milošević was dedicated to maintaining and ensuring his power base in Belgrade, and “that his sanctions and war-weary constituency have tired of the sacrifice required to unite all Serbs in one state.”<sup>96</sup> Seeking to immediately capitalize on Milošević’s newfound willingness to negotiate on behalf of the Bosnian Serbs, Holbrooke offered for consideration a suspension of the NATO bombings in

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<sup>88</sup> The designated members from Pale were Karadžić, Mladić, and Krajisnik. The FRY side was Milošević, Bulatović, and the Yugoslav Foreign Minister Milan Milutinović. Daalder, *Getting*, 128. With the two FRY members hand selected by Milošević, he effectively controlled their votes, and within the paper was a very important clause: in the event of a tie, the head of the delegation would make the tiebreaking decision. Holbrooke remarked that Milošević specifically pointed out the clause while rhetorically asking: “Who is the head of the delegation? Slobodan Milošević!” Holbrooke, *To End*, 106.

<sup>89</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 129.

<sup>90</sup> Recent instances of separation, such as when Milošević elected to cut ties with Pale, were discussed in the previous chapter. For a condensed BTF analysis and more examples through 1994, see: “1994-11-23, BTF Report re The Milosevic-Karadzic Break Stalemated For Now,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed October 31, 2020, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12380>.

<sup>91</sup> The Holbrooke team would attest that this change was a result of the pressure they applied to Milošević at the onset of their diplomatic blitzkrieg, while other observers would accredit the NATO bombings. Bulatović would later say Milošević forced the Bosnian Serbs to sign the paper. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 63-64.

<sup>92</sup> Holbrooke, *To End*, 106.

<sup>93</sup> According to James “Jim” Pardew, the Defense Department representative on Holbrooke’s shuttle team, Milošević’s charisma and charm was on full display during the meeting. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 64.

<sup>94</sup> As will be discussed later in the chapter, with Milošević negotiating on behalf of Pale, the burden of achieving a settlement would shift from the Serbs to the Croatian and Bosnian sides. Daalder, *Getting*, 129.

<sup>95</sup> “1995-09-05B, BTF Report re Milosevic, Karadzic, Mladic Serbs More United,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 7, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12530>.

<sup>96</sup> Milošević had in fact dropped the mantle of “Serb protector” the previous year when he perceived the sanctions were undermining his position in Belgrade. *Ibid.*

return for a guarantee that Mladić end the siege of Sarajevo.<sup>97</sup> After Milošević contacted Mladić, he agreed to halt the attack on the city and remove heavy weapons from the exclusionary zone if the bombings were suspended.<sup>98</sup> Suddenly, by way of the Patriarch Paper, the administration realized it might have a real shot at a settlement with Milošević negotiating on behalf of Pale.<sup>99</sup> Eager to display a public symbol of progress to build upon their new position, Holbrooke arranged for a conference to be held on 8 September in Geneva where the Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian foreign ministers could meet to bless an interim agreement.<sup>100</sup>

To prepare for Geneva, Holbrooke and his team flew to Bonn to discuss a draft agreement with the Contact Group.<sup>101</sup> While there was widespread support for the Geneva meeting, the Europeans were unhappy that the US had pursued unilateral negotiations with Milošević and that they were subsequently informed.<sup>102</sup> As the Contact Group had failed to bring the warring parties any closer to a peace over two fruitless years of negotiations, Holbrooke and the Clinton administration had grown weary of the group's ability to be a constructive partner moving forward.<sup>103</sup> Holbrooke would justify the unilateral measures by explaining, "if we consulted the Contact Group prior to each action, it would be impossible for the negotiations to proceed, let alone succeed."<sup>104</sup> While the Europeans had steadily called for greater American involvement over the last two years, Holbrooke remembers there remained concerns of public humiliation should Europe fully relinquish leadership to the US.<sup>105</sup> Yet

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<sup>97</sup> Holbrooke, *To End*, 107.

<sup>98</sup> UN General Janvier actually chose to meet with Mladić directly during the suspension of the bombing, and over a grueling fourteen-hour meeting he was able to secure these written, albeit vague, assurances from Mladić. Daalder, *Getting*, 132.

<sup>99</sup> It was however specifically noted in the BTF report that even with his newfound willingness to negotiate a settlement, "as usual with Milošević, the devil is in the details." "1995-09-05B, BTF Report re Milosevic, Karadzic, Mladic Serbs More United." In text citation: "1995-09-05A, Summary of Conclusions of Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia September 5, 1995," *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 7, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12529>.

<sup>100</sup> Holbrooke hoped the conference would create public and private momentum towards a peace agreement. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 65.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

<sup>102</sup> This pattern of excluding the Contact Group until after the fact would continue throughout the entirety of Holbrooke's shuttle diplomacy. Holbrooke, *To End*, 116.

<sup>103</sup> The Contact Group's involvement in the new US-led effort was largely viewed as a hindrance by the Holbrooke shuttle and the administration. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 68.

<sup>104</sup> Holbrooke emphasizes that disagreements amongst the Contact Group were more often over procedure and protocol as opposed to substance. "Minidramas" about the location and hosting of meetings were intense and time-consuming, highlighting the bureaucratic confusion in ad hoc attempts to manifest a common EU foreign policy. Holbrooke, *To End*, 117.

<sup>105</sup> As recalled by Holbrooke, in: Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 68.

despite their fears and complaints, the Europeans were slowly confronting the realization their role had now become, as Bildt would describe it, “supportive and complimentary.”<sup>106</sup> The unilateral US mindset was underscored by Holbrooke: “Now that the United States was finally engaged in Bosnia, we could not allow internal Contact Group squabbles to deflect us.”<sup>107</sup> Even so, the administration was keenly aware they could not shut the Contact Group out entirely. Should a settlement ever be reached, the EU, UN, NATO, and the Russians would all be needed for economic assistance, legitimization, peacekeeping forces, and influence on Belgrade.<sup>108</sup> Holbrooke recalls that his approach to the Contact Group was their inclusion but with limits to the information shared.<sup>109</sup> Additionally, Holbrooke would promote/attribute high profile engagements – such as the Geneva meetings – as a “Contact Group effort,” building public symbolism of transatlantic unity.<sup>110</sup>

After the first two days of the bombing moratorium it became increasingly clear that Mladić had no intention of meeting NATO’s demands.<sup>111</sup> Most discouragingly, Milošević’s failure to deliver Mladić now cast doubt on the dependability of the Patriarch Paper and the overall efficacy of negotiating directly with Milošević.<sup>112</sup> A BTF report indicated that while Mladić has a history of defying Belgrade or even Bosnian Serb leadership, he does respond to

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 68-69.

<sup>107</sup> Holbrooke, *To End*, 117.

<sup>108</sup> The administration knew the Contact Group’s assistance was imperative, so the idea was to keep them in the loop yet sufficiently distanced in order to prevent them from bogging down progress. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 69.

<sup>109</sup> Holbrooke would take suggestions and potential plan of actions (POAs) from the Contact Group but would not reveal more than a rough outline of the US’ agenda. Ibid., 69-70.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>111</sup> Just three days after their meeting, Mladić had penned a rambling and unhinged letter to General Janvier accusing NATO of Nazi-level brutalities, threatening UN personnel, and countering with a ludicrous peace offering of his own. NATO rejected Mladić’s proposition and gave him until 11 p.m. on 4 September 1995 to meet the following three specific demands: (1) No Bosnian Serb attacks on Sarajevo or other “safe areas,” (2) Bosnian Serb withdrawal of heavy weapons in and around the Sarajevo exclusion zone, and (3) Freedom of movement of UN personnel and unrestricted access and use of Sarajevo airport. Holbrooke, *To End*, 128, and Daalder, *Getting*, 132. A BTF report concluded that there was no evidence the Bosnian Serbs were removing heavy weapons from the exclusionary zone. “1995-09-10, BTF Memorandum re Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia September 11, 1995,” Clinton Digital Library, accessed March 8, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12534>. Mladić was a firm believer that Serbs were historical victims of persecution and therefore felt justified in using whatever methods necessary to “protect” his people. He also believed the international community would ultimately tire and abandon its military efforts, and as such there were concerns in the intelligence community that “fighting to the last man” may well be within the range of outcomes he finds acceptable. For more details on the CIA’s analysis of Mladić’s perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, see: “1995-09-06, Memo re Mladic Running True to Form,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 7, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12531>. In text citation: Daalder, *Getting*, 132.

<sup>112</sup> For accounts and analysis of Milošević’s failure to deliver Mladić, see: Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 73-74, Holbrooke, *To End*, 127-28, Daalder, *Getting*, 132, “1995-09-05B, BTF Report re Milosevic, Karadzic, Mladic Serbs More United,” and “1995-09-06, Memo re Mladic Running True to Form.”

credible military pressure.<sup>113</sup> Holbrooke was quick to point out that showing phony “compliance” in an effort to head off NATO action was a common Bosnian Serb tactic used repeatedly over the course of the conflict.<sup>114</sup> He concluded by emphasizing, “the bombing must be resumed. If it is not...our chances for success in the negotiations will be seriously reduced.”<sup>115</sup> The administration also supported continued air strikes, as they had so far given added impetus to the negotiations.<sup>116</sup> NATO commanders themselves were tired of the Bosnian Serb’s false assurances and many opposed the moratorium from the start.<sup>117</sup> NATO Supreme Commander General Joulwan’s feelings were well known as he was quoted: “We’d be snatching defeat from the jaws of victory.”<sup>118</sup> So after intense pressure from Washington and Brussels, the air campaign resumed on the morning of 5 September 1995 and continued for nine straight days.<sup>119</sup> As Christopher would recall, “we were determined to send the message that the days of pinprick response to aggression and brutality were over.”<sup>120</sup>

The NATO bombings intensified the night before the meeting, but on 8 September 1995 an agreement was reached between the three foreign ministers and the Contact Group in Geneva.<sup>121</sup> Based around the fundamentals of the previously proposed 1994 Contact Group plan, Chollet called the Geneva meeting a modest step on the road towards peace.<sup>122</sup> The main points of the “Agreed Basic Principals” were official international recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which would consist of two entities – the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina

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<sup>113</sup> The BTF report went as far as to say that Mladić’s rebuttals of Milošević and refusal to obey Karadžić have arguably made him the de facto Bosnian Serb leader. “1995-09-05B, BTF Report re Milosevic, Karadzic, Mladic Serbs More United.”

<sup>114</sup> Holbrooke, *To End*, 132.

<sup>115</sup> The moratorium was also hampering negotiations from a different angle, as Holbrooke was receiving significant pressure to resume the bombing by Izetbegović and the Bosnian government. *Ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> “1995-09-05A, Summary of Conclusions of Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia September 5, 1995.”

<sup>117</sup> For an excellent account, see: Rick Atkinson, “In Almost Losing Its Resolve, NATO Alliance Found Itself,” *Washington Post*, November 16, 1995.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 132.

<sup>120</sup> Christopher, *Chances*, 257.

<sup>121</sup> Foreshadowing future negotiations, Holbrooke describes the Bosnian government’s volatility in concluding the Geneva meeting successfully. Although the agreement had been accepted by everyone just two days prior, Bosnian Foreign Minister Muhammed Sacirbey told Holbrooke on the eve of the meeting that the agreement was not good for his country, and that Izetbegović was taking “a lot of heat” for it back home. Holbrooke, *To End*, 138-39.

<sup>122</sup> For further accounts on the meeting’s significance towards the Dayton Accords, see: Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 79, Pardew, *Peacemakers*, chap. 6, sec. 9, Owen, *Balkan*, 333, and Helen Leigh-Phippard “The Contact Group on (And In) Bosnia: An Exercise in Conflict Mediation?” *International Journal* 53, no. 2 (1998): 310.

and the *Republika Srpska*, with a 51/49 territorial split.<sup>123</sup> The administration felt it was an important political and symbolic step, but it was not a total public relations win as it received continuing criticisms for rewarding Bosnian Serb aggression.<sup>124</sup> Lord Owen was quick to point out that the US-led plan was far more favorable to the Bosnian Serbs than the VOPP, which ironically the US had rejected on the basis it appeased the Bosnian Serbs and was unjust towards the Bosniaks.<sup>125</sup> Even more critical was *New York Times* journalist Anthony Lewis who wrote that Holbrooke's preliminary agreement should not be confused with justice or Western values, as "the creation of a Serbian republic within Bosnia, is a victory for the racist fanatics. It legitimizes the terrible proposition that a tribal group in a territory has the right to create its own ethnically pure state, killing or expelling all others."<sup>126</sup> Internally, the administration also reluctantly understood that agreeing to use the term *Republika Srpska* conferred a degree of legitimacy to the Bosnian Serbs, with Holbrooke later recalling not pushing harder to drop the name as one of his major early regrets.<sup>127</sup>

#### 4. Operation Deliberate Force

Geneva aside, significant military operations were simultaneously taking place that were changing the course of events.<sup>128</sup> The resumption of Operation Deliberate Force finally crippled

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<sup>123</sup> This would also mark the first time the United States and Germany publicly accepted there would be two separate entities in Bosnia, the Muslim-Croat Federation and the *Republika Srpska*. A compact summary of what was, and what remained to be, accomplished can be found in: William Drozdiak, "Belligerents Accept Bosnian Peace Plan," *Washington Post*, September 9, 1995. For more specific details on the Agreed Basic Principles, see: United Nations Peacemaker, "Agreed Basic Principles," September 8, 1995, accessed March 5, 2021, <https://peacemaker.un.org/bosniaagreedprinciples95>.

<sup>124</sup> A laundry list of similar criticisms would emerge surrounding Dayton (those will be discussed later in the chapter and conclusion), but other preliminary agreement criticisms can be found in: Michael Dobbs, "Pursuing Peace at High Volume," *Washington Post*, September 22, 1995, George F. Will "Morality and Map-Making," *Washington Post*, September 7, 1995, and Jutta Paczulla, "The Long, Difficult Road to Dayton: Peace Efforts in Bosnia-Herzegovina," *International Journal* 60, no. 1 (2004): 262-63. For a comprehensive and compelling analysis detailing the US' foundational missteps in the pursuit of peace from the start of the conflict up through September 1995, see: Charles G. Boyd, "Making Peace with the Guilty: The Truth about Bosnia," *Foreign Affairs* 74, no. 5 (1995): 22-38. In text citation regarding the important symbolism of the meeting can be found in: "1995-09-11C, Anthony Lake to President Clinton re Drop-by at the September 11 Principals Meeting on Bosnia," *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 9, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12537>.

<sup>125</sup> Owen, *Balkan*, 335.

<sup>126</sup> Anthony Lewis, "Abroad at Home; What Weakness Brings," *New York Times*, September 11, 1995.

<sup>127</sup> For the administration's discussions, see: "1995-09-11C, Anthony Lake to President Clinton re Drop-by at the September 11 Principals Meeting on Bosnia." For Holbrooke's personal account, see: Holbrooke, *To End*, 135.

<sup>128</sup> Examples can be found in: Daalder, *Getting*, 132-33, Holbrooke, *To End*, 143-46, Albright, *Madam*, 436-37, Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 85-87, Michael O. Beale, *Bombs over Bosnia: The Role of Airpower in Bosnia-*

the Bosnian Serbs, forcing them to commit to serious negotiations.<sup>129</sup> Mladić's defiant behavior had opened the door for a ramped-up air campaign complete with Tomahawk cruise missiles to attack vital BSA air defenses near Banja Luka.<sup>130</sup> While Clinton and his administration had been briefed on the operation and the use of land attack cruise missiles, the Tomahawk strikes caught the Europeans off-guard, spurring them to call an emergency meeting at NATO.<sup>131</sup> The missiles were fired from the USS *Normandy*, and while NATO military planners believed the attack to have been authorized under the previously agreed NAC approved rules, several allies accused the US of unnecessary unilateral escalation.<sup>132</sup> "We got criticized fairly heavily for [not checking] more carefully with our allies," Perry recalled, admitting the operation was, "a significant escalation in the perception of what we were doing."<sup>133</sup>

The sternest objections to the escalated air campaign came from Russia.<sup>134</sup> Even prior to the use of cruise missiles, Russian President Boris Yeltsin had written Clinton condemning the bombings.<sup>135</sup> Yeltsin also voiced his displeasure publicly. In a press conference he condemned the NATO bombings, accusing the alliance of being "judge and executioner," and warned Russia might need to "reconsider thoroughly our strategy including our approaches to relations with the North Atlantic Alliance."<sup>136</sup> Upset with NATO's ability to act unilaterally per the London

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*Herzegovina* (University Press of the Pacific, 2004), 31-41, and Eric Schmitt, "NATO Shifts Focus of its Air Attacks on Bosnian Serbs," *New York Times*, September 11, 1995.

<sup>129</sup> General Janvier met once again with Mladić on 10 September 1995. Janvier presumed that with the resumption of bombing he could this time convince Mladić to meet UN demands. Once again however, the meeting did not go according to the UN plan, with Mladić threatening to attack the "safe zones" and refusing to budge until the bombing ceased. Holbrooke, *To End*, 143. For a BTF analysis on the impact of the bombings, see: "1995-09-19, BTF Report re Impact of the NATO Air Campaign in Bosnia," *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 9, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12539>. In text citation: Daalder, *Getting*, 132.

<sup>130</sup> Banja Luka was the largest Serb city in Bosnia. The use of cruise missiles (sophisticated weapons) was intended to produce a psychological effect in addition to excessive structural damage. Holbrooke, *To End*, 143.

<sup>131</sup> These were the first air strikes outside the primary area of operations in Eastern Bosnia. France joined Spain, Greece, and Canada in arguing that the campaign had "insidiously slid" from Option Two to Option Three targets. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 82.

<sup>132</sup> Examples of allied grievances can be found in: Schinella, *Bombs*, 28-29, Holbrooke, *To End*, 143-46, Daalder, *Getting*, 132-33, Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 81-82, and Bradley Graham, "US Fires Cruise Missiles at Bosnian Serb Sites," *Washington Post*, September 11, 1995.

<sup>133</sup> Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 82.

<sup>134</sup> Chollet notes that Russia felt duped about agreeing to eliminate the "dual-key" system at the London Conference, and having been opposed to air strikes all along, were enraged over the NATO campaign. *Ibid.*, 83. For more on Russia's objections to the NATO campaign, see: Owen, *Balkan*, 358-59, Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 82-85, Holbrooke, *To End*, 143-44, Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 238, Rick Atkinson and John Pomfret, "NATO Airstrikes Resume in Bosnia," *Washington Post*, September 6, 1995, and Schmitt, "NATO."

<sup>135</sup> The Russians had long been opposed to military action against the Bosnian Serbs/Serbs, as was discussed in the previous chapter. In text citation: Holbrooke, *To End*, 143.

<sup>136</sup> These accusations and objections created another Russian-related foreign policy quagmire for the administration, who were already at odds with Russia over NATO expansion. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 83.



Conference, Russia tried, albeit unsuccessfully, to hold a UN Security Council vote to halt the NATO campaign.<sup>137</sup> Clinton knew the delicate situation Yeltsin was in, facing heavy criticism for cooperating with the US from the ultranationalists at home whose sympathies lay with the Serbs.<sup>138</sup> The administration sent Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott to Moscow to diffuse the situation, where he stressed to Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev that although the NATO bombings were hard for Russia to accept, allowing the war to carry on would be even worse.<sup>139</sup> Talbott was successful in calming Russian nerves, as Kozyrev indicated cautious yet continued support for the US-led peace initiative.<sup>140</sup>

The bombings, or even the legitimate threat thereof, were finally producing the intended objectives which were paramount to forcing compliance from Pale.<sup>141</sup> The recent cruise missile strikes around Banja Luka in particular had caught the attention of Milošević, prompting a third round of reinvigorated negotiations between the Holbrooke shuttle and Milošević in Belgrade.<sup>142</sup> Calling for a calming of the situation, Milošević expressed confidence he could convince the Bosnian Serbs to agree to a nationwide ceasefire and lift the siege of Sarajevo in return for a cessation to the bombing.<sup>143</sup> As a show of commitment, Milošević surprised the shuttle with news that Mladić and Karadžić were in a nearby villa and wanted to meet to negotiate directly.<sup>144</sup> After several hours of tense discussions, it was increasingly clear the Bosnian Serb leadership wanted the bombing to end.<sup>145</sup> The Bosnian Serbs agreed to let the shuttle draft terms to end the

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<sup>137</sup> For more details on Russia's attempt to call a UNSC vote, see: Christopher S. Wren, "Russia fails In U.N. to Bar Raids on Serbs," *New York Times*, September 13, 1995.

<sup>138</sup> Clinton, *My Life*, chap. 44, para. 42.

<sup>139</sup> Kozyrev eventually agreed with Talbott's assessment. Discussions were also held about Russian participation in a post-settlement security presence. These would be some of the preliminary talks of Russian troops joining alongside the NATO Implementation Force (IFOR). More on IFOR will be discussed later in the chapter. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 84-85.

<sup>140</sup> Ron Laurenzo, "Russia supports new Bosnia plan," *United Press International*, September 15, 1995.

<sup>141</sup> The top UN military official in Sarajevo, British Lt. General Rupert Smith, concurred arguing that if the Bosnian Serbs perceived that "Holbrooke doesn't have his hand on the [bombing] lever, they will refuse to talk." Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 81. For more analysis on the combination of force and diplomacy, see: Thomas W. Lippman and Ana Devroy, "Clinton's Policy Evolution," *Washington Post*, September 11, 1995.

<sup>142</sup> Holbrooke, *To End*, 146-48.

<sup>143</sup> At this particular time the administration was not interested in a nationwide ceasefire, as the Federation offensive was progressing in reclaiming territory in Krajina and Slavonia. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 87, and Holbrooke, *To End*, 148.

<sup>144</sup> Holbrooke, *To End*, 148.

<sup>145</sup> For personal accounts of the discussions, see: Holbrooke, *To End*, 149-52, Pardew, *Peacemakers*, chap. 7, Christopher R. Hill, *Outpost: A Diplomat at Work* (Simon & Schuster, 2014), chap. 8, Richard Holbrooke, "The Face of Evil," *The Guardian*, August 12, 2008, Neal Conan, "Ambassador Recalls 1995 Meeting with Karadzic," Special Series: The Capture of Radovan Karadzic, NPR, National Public Radio, July 23, 2008, accessed March 9, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/transcripts/92829536>, "War in Europe. Interview: General Wesley Clark," Frontline,

bombing campaign, pledging to cease all offensive operations around Sarajevo and withdraw their heavy weaponry from the exclusionary zone.<sup>146</sup> In exchange, bombing would be suspended for seventy-two hours to assess compliance.<sup>147</sup> The Holbrooke shuttle's calculated risk in meeting with the Bosnian Serb leaders directly proved worthwhile, as remarkably, Milošević delivered what he had promised, proving that he indeed was the one in charge.<sup>148</sup> In the early hours of the morning on 14 September 1995 the agreement drafted by the Americans was signed by the Bosnian Serb leaders and Milošević.<sup>149</sup> Now, they just had to convince the Bosnians.<sup>150</sup>

## 5. Blitzkrieg Diplomacy

By 16 September 1995, the Bosnian Serbs forces had withdrawn some forty-three heavy weapons out of the exclusionary zone around Sarajevo.<sup>151</sup> As it grew increasingly clear they intended to comply with their end of the agreement, the moratorium was extended another seventy-two hours so that all heavy weaponry could be withdrawn from the area under UN supervision.<sup>152</sup> After more than three and a half years, it appeared as if the siege of Sarajevo was finally coming to an end.<sup>153</sup> Four days later, on 20 September 1995, NATO and the UN declared that “the resumption of airstrikes is currently not necessary,” and just like that, Operation Deliberate Force officially came to an end.<sup>154</sup>

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PBS, Public Broadcasting System, February 29, 2000, accessed March 14, 2021, <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/kosovo/interviews/clark.html>.

<sup>146</sup> The Bosnian Serbs also agreed to allow open humanitarian access to the Sarajevo airport. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 87.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> Holbrooke recalled that in the end, the Pale Serbs were essentially bullies when their bluff was called. They were irrational and prone to theatrics, which had made meaningful negotiations virtually impossible since the conflict began. But when it came down to it, “they respected only force or an unambiguous and credible threat to use it.” Holbrooke, *To End*, 152.

<sup>149</sup> The agreement was drafted by Clark, Owen, Hill, and Pardew. It was signed by Karadžić, Koljević, Krajisnik, Mladić, Milutinović, and finally Milošević. Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> Getting the Bosnian Serbs on board had been the challenge from the start, but with developments shifting on the ground and in the air a new challenge would emerge in Sarajevo. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 104.

<sup>151</sup> Ramet, *Balkan Babel*, 239.

<sup>152</sup> By 20 September 1995, it was reported they had withdrawn more than 240 heavy weapons from Sarajevo. Daalder, *Getting*, 133-34.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> There was a fierce day-long debate between UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali and NATO Secretary General Willy Claes about what language to use when making the announcement. Claes wanted to say the campaign was “indefinitely suspended,” where Boutros-Ghali favored the word “terminated.” The eventual language used, quoted in the text above, was a compromise. Atkinson, “In Almost Losing Its Resolve.”



While Clinton emphasized that air strikes would resume immediately should the Bosnian Serbs fail to comply, the administration was able to relish in a rare moment of success for its diplomatic efforts.<sup>155</sup> While the NATO campaign had rewritten the negotiation timetable and been instrumental in securing an agreement in Belgrade, the succession of events over the previous weeks had also reshaped the administration's endgame strategy.<sup>156</sup> When the last-ditch US-led effort began, few in the administration thought the diplomatic track would succeed.<sup>157</sup> As Daalder indicates:

The negotiating component of the endgame strategy provided a convenient – and politically necessary – cover for the strategy's real purpose, which was to implement the post-UNPROFOR withdrawal strategy designed both to punish the Serbs and to level the playing field by assisting the Bosnians militarily.<sup>158</sup>

By mid-September the landscape was changing across Bosnia.<sup>159</sup> The new dynamics reshaped the administration's strategic outlook, with a new operating assumption emerging that negotiations would ultimately succeed rather than fail.<sup>160</sup> Although the Bosnian Serbs were now in agreement, a new impediment to peace arose.

In the previous month (August), the Croatians had launched a massive assault in the Krajina where they quickly overtook the rebel Serb forces.<sup>161</sup> After their decisive victory, the Croatian forces joined up with the Federation forces and began marching westward, achieving substantial territorial gains.<sup>162</sup> By the time the NATO campaign officially ended on 20 September, Bosnia was roughly split in half between the Federation forces and the Bosnian

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<sup>155</sup> Elaine Sciolino, "Conflict in the Balkans: The Overview; Serbs, Complying with Deal Forged by U.S., Begin Moves to Lift Siege of Sarajevo," *New York Times*, September 16, 1995.

<sup>156</sup> Holbrooke, *To End*, 146, and Daalder, *Getting*, 134.

<sup>157</sup> Daalder, *Getting*, 134.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>159</sup> See: "1995-09-19, BTF Report re Impact of the NATO Air Campaign in Bosnia," *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 19, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12539>.

<sup>160</sup> Lake spoke positively to Clinton about prospects for an international conference after another round of shuttling. "1995-09-23, Anthony Lake to President Clinton re Your Participation in Principals Committee," *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 19, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12542>.

<sup>161</sup> The offensive, known as Operation Storm, lasted from August 4-7, 1995. It was one of the final battles fought during the Croatian War of Independence, resulting in a decisive victory for the Croatian Army. Darko Bandic, "Croatia marks 1995 blitz; Serb politician there for 1st time," *Washington Post*, August 5, 2020.

<sup>162</sup> See: John Pomfret, "Bosnian Army Launches Offensive in North," *Washington Post*, August 13, 1995.

Serbs.<sup>163</sup> The fact that the country was almost equally divided territorially fit well with the previously proposed and US-brokered, 51/49 split Contact Group plan.<sup>164</sup> The administration, believing now a diplomatic settlement was within reach, concluded it was best the Croatian offensive be halted.<sup>165</sup> With Croatian and Federation forces getting dangerously close to Banja Luka, the administration feared should they indeed reach the Serb city, things could further escalate.<sup>166</sup> If forces attacked Banja Luka, the hinderance to the effective diplomatic course would be the least of concerns. In addition to the creation of more refugees, should Banja Luka fall, it could potentially destabilize Milošević, and since he was the chief Serb calling for negotiations, it was imperative he remain in power until peace was obtained.<sup>167</sup> But perhaps the worst potential outcome was the scenario that might involve JNA intervention and a broadening war.<sup>168</sup> In retrospect, opposition to an attack on Banja Luka was interestingly agreed upon by both Milošević and Izetbegović.<sup>169</sup> There was a moderate, anti-Pale sentiment amongst the Bosnian Serb community in Banja Luka, which both leaders believed should be exploited in opposition to Pale.<sup>170</sup> With these considerations, the administration assed that “demarches should

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<sup>163</sup> An estimated 150,000 Serbs fled the area in just the first few days of the offensive. John Pomfret and James Rupert, “U.N. Reports Attacks on Serb Civilians Fleeing Croatia’s Krajina Blitz,” *Washington Post*, August 10, 1995. In text citation: Daalder, *Getting*, 135.

<sup>164</sup> When the Croat and Bosnian forces drove the Bosnian Serbs out of the Bihac pocket, much like when the Bosnian Serbs drove the Muslims out of the enclaves in the east, ethnic homogeneity started forming in the territories. Chris Hedges, “Extent of Croat-Bosnia Advance Threatens U.S.-Brokered Peace,” *New York Times*, September 19, 1995.

<sup>165</sup> For detailed accounts and analysis of the administration’s fears surrounding a continued Croatian offensive, see: “1995-09-11A, BTF Report re Croatia’s Vision of Bosnia,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 9, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12535>, and “1995-09-11B, BTF Report re Prospects for Ethnic Cleansing in Sector East,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 14, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12536>. Secondary analysis can be found in: Holbrooke, *To End*, chap. 11, Pardew, *Peacemakers*, chap. 7, sec. 5, and Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 91-93.

<sup>166</sup> The administration had neither supported nor objected to the Croatian offensive, but the Bosnian Serbs believed it to be in coordination with the NATO air strikes. Although the administration was not involved, Pardew noted “the offensive had been a US decision by inaction.” Pardew, *Peacemakers*, chap. 7, sec. 5, para. 1.

<sup>167</sup> “1995-09-11A, BTF Report re Croatia’s Vision of Bosnia.”

<sup>168</sup> A BTF report from 28 September 1995 indicated that while the JNA was capable of quickly mobilizing forces into Bosnia or Croatia, the primary reason they had not intervened to date was because Milošević believed it was not in Belgrade’s best interests. “1995-09-28A, BTF Report re The Yugoslav Army Flawed But No Paper Tiger,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 16, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12545>. All of the scenarios mentioned above were discussed by the administration and/or the Holbrooke shuttle, as detailed by Pardew in: Pardew, *Peacemakers*, chap. 7, sec. 5, para. 4.

<sup>169</sup> Holbrooke, *To End*, 167.

<sup>170</sup> Izetbegović was ambivalent about taking the city, and it held little value to Tudjman, as it would have likely been awarded to the Bosniaks or later returned to the Serbs during peace negotiations. *Ibid*.

be made to Croatian leaders to urge restraint,” with the Holbrooke shuttle being dispatched for Zagreb to deliver the news.<sup>171</sup>

With the Federation forces having their best days on the battlefield since the start of the war and the Bosnian Serbs losing territory daily, it was no surprise that the Bosnian government was unhappy the NATO campaign concluded and Pale was now calling for a ceasefire.<sup>172</sup> The day before the Holbrooke shuttle arrived in Mostar to discuss the new agreement with the Bosnian leadership, Christopher had called Izetbegović, urging him to support the agreement.<sup>173</sup> Much to the shuttle’s chagrin, Christopher was apparently not very convincing. Holbrooke recalls how Izetbegović showed no appreciation for the end of the siege, with Silajdžić calling the ceasefire “totally unacceptable,” demanding the air strikes be resumed at once.<sup>174</sup> Pardew wrote that “the Muslim leaders blew up,” adding “these men wanted revenge, not compromise.”<sup>175</sup>

The challenge now was getting the Bosniaks and Croats to come to agreement.<sup>176</sup> In the week following the meeting in Belgrade, the Holbrooke team’s shuttle diplomacy was on full display, visiting for the first time all three capitals and all three presidents in a single day.<sup>177</sup> The various meetings and continued negotiations set the stage for a follow-up to Geneva, and a second foreign ministers meeting was set for New York on 26 September 1995.<sup>178</sup> In preparation for the meeting, there was an interesting development surrounding the Croatian offensive. Fearing a continued Croatian offensive would only produce more violence and potentially derail the diplomatic effort, the White House went public with its opposition to the offensive.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> “1995-09-08, Summary of Conclusions of Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia September 8, 1995,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 9, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12533>.

<sup>172</sup> Holbrooke writes “We knew the Bosnians would be unhappy; from their point of view, stopping the bombing after only a few weeks in return for ending a four-year siege was a poor bargain.” He went on to describe how the meeting was even worse than he expected. Holbrooke, *To End*, 154-55.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 155.

<sup>174</sup> For Holbrooke’s entire personal account, see: Holbrooke, *To End*, 154-55. Hill also discusses having to ride back from Mostar to Sarajevo with Silajdžić after the meeting in: Hill, *Outpost*, chap. 8, para. 21-22.

<sup>175</sup> For Pardew’s complete personal account, see: Pardew, *Peacemakers*, chap. 7, sec. 5. Quotes are from: Pardew, *Peacemakers*, chap. 7, sec. 3, para. 5.

<sup>176</sup> The administration concluded that the “Bosnians are sniffing a victory and becoming increasingly disinclined to any concessions to bring peace.” “1995-09-20, BTF Memorandum re Principals Committee Meeting September 21, 1995,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 15, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12540>.

<sup>177</sup> This trifecta was more than a publicity stunt – with negotiations entering a new critical phase, the ability to swiftly move from capital to capital became essential. Holbrooke, *To End*, 158. For a detailed account of the “Three-Capital Day,” see: Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 91-93.

<sup>178</sup> Holbrooke, *To End*, 167.

<sup>179</sup> See: Chris Hedges, “Extent of Croat-Bosnia Advance Threatens U.S.-Brokered Peace,” *New York Times*, September 19, 1995.

Holbrooke however, shared a different opinion.<sup>180</sup> Having spent more time with Balkan leadership than any intelligence analyst back in Washington, Holbrooke pursued a unilateral strategy when meeting with a confused Tadjman.<sup>181</sup> Tadjman was receiving mixed messages about whether to halt or continue his offensive, and Holbrooke attests that while the administration favored halting the offensive, they did not provide any clear instruction on how exactly to proceed, leaving him and the team to “exact calibration of the signal.”<sup>182</sup> Holbrooke, believing the offensive had value in the negotiations, recommended Tadjman continue marching westward, yet stop short of Banja Luka.<sup>183</sup> If towns such as Sanski Most, Prijedor, and Bosanski Novi were captured prior to territorial negotiations, they would almost certainly remain under Federation control.<sup>184</sup> If not, they might be difficult to obtain via negotiation.

The second meeting in New York was almost a complete disaster. Eleventh hour disagreements over central authority versus regional autonomy, last minute objections to previously agreed upon rhetoric, and internal bickering amongst the delegations threatened to kill the meeting before it even began.<sup>185</sup> In continuing with what had been so successful to this point, Holbrooke and his team shuttled around the US Mission to the United Nations cooling tensions and securing assurances, and by the time the meeting ended, key provisions had been secured towards the promise of a permanent peace.<sup>186</sup> A complement to the Agreed Basic Principles of

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<sup>180</sup> Holbrooke writes that many of Washington’s Bosnian policy disputes began with “flawed intelligence assessments.” Holbrooke, *To End*, 158.

<sup>181</sup> Christopher had permitted Holbrooke to make some executive decisions on the spot if needed to quickly move negotiations forward. *Ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 159.

<sup>183</sup> Holbrooke would later privately reflect upon whether, in hindsight, this was a just decision as the Bosnian Serbs defied or ignored many key political provisions of the peace agreement in 1996 and 1997. *Ibid.*, 166-67. In text citation: *Ibid.*, 160. For secondary analysis, see also: Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 93-94.

<sup>184</sup> Holbrooke, *To End*, 160.

<sup>185</sup> All of these topics would again be revisited at Dayton. For more detailed accounts of the issues leading up to the New York conference, see: Holbrooke, *To End*, 175-83, Pardew, *Peacemakers*, chap. 8, and Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 99-104. For the administration’s analysis, see: “1995-09-20, BTF Memorandum re Principals Committee Meeting September 21, 1995.” The internal bickering was most prominent amongst the Bosnian delegation, so much so that the day following New York the BTF circulated an intelligence report detailing the divisions. See: “1995-09-27B, BTF Report re The Bosnian Government Divisions Show Confusion in Peace Negotiations,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 15, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12544>.

<sup>186</sup> Although this was again billed as a Contact Group endeavor, the actual representatives of the Contact Group were largely “shunted around.” One of the specific conditions of getting the Bosnians to agree to the new round of principles was a promise President Clinton would publicly state that he opposed the partition of Bosnia. On the afternoon the meeting ended, Clinton announced from the White House pressroom that “today’s agreement moves us closer to the ultimate goal of a genuine peace, and it makes clear that Bosnia will remain a single internationally recognized state. America will strongly oppose the partition of Bosnia, and America will continue working for peace.” Holbrooke, *To End*, 183. For Clinton’s entire speech, see: “Remarks on the Peace Process in Bosnia and an Exchange with Reporters,” *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: William J. Clinton (1995, Book II)*:

Geneva, appropriately titled “Further Agreed Basic Principles” provided the plan to establish a three-person presidency, a parliament, a constitutional court, and also addressed issues concerning sovereignty, territory, relations with neighbor states, elections, human rights and refugees.<sup>187</sup> There was still much work to be done, and while it was becoming frustratingly apparent nothing was certain until officially signed (and sometimes not even then), Holbrooke’s “shuttle diplomacy had produced the basic building blocks of the future Balkan state.”<sup>188</sup>

## 6. Ceasefire

The next logical step following New York was securing a ceasefire. Historically, ceasefires throughout the conflict had only occurred in instances when the warring sides wished to momentarily reduce the level of violence – usually to build up forces prior to renewed fighting – or on account of the weather.<sup>189</sup> As Holbrooke and his team set off for their fourth round of shuttle diplomacy in the Balkans, the primary objectives were to obtain a ceasefire, begin serious territorial negotiations, and establish an international conference to broker a permanent peace agreement.<sup>190</sup>

While the Holbrooke shuttle bounced around the three Balkan capitals at a blistering pace, the administration back in Washington began discussions about the location, logistics and

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1493-1494, U.S. Government Publishing Office, September 26, 1995, accessed March 15, 2021, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/PPP-1995-book2/html/PPP-1995-book2-doc-pg1493.htm>.

<sup>187</sup> In an interview for the Dayton History Project in 1996, Holbrooke underscored the significance and importance of the New York meeting to Chollet, recalling: “we couldn’t have gone from Geneva to Dayton,” and that “New York never got the attention it deserved.” “1996-07-10, Dayton History Project Interview with Richard Holbrooke and Christopher Hill July 10, 1996,” Clinton Digital Library, accessed March 17, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12621>, 28 and 44. For more specifics on the Further Agreed Basic Principles, see: United Nations Peacemaker, “Further Agreed Basic Principles,” September 26, 1995, accessed March 5, 2021, <https://peacemaker.un.org/bosniafurtherprinciples95>.

<sup>188</sup> For an external analysis of the New York meeting, see: Elaine Sciolino, “Conflict in the Balkans: The Overview; Enemies in Bosnia Devise Structure for a Government,” *New York Times*, September 27, 1995. In text quote: Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 104.

<sup>189</sup> For a historical overview of the ceasefires, see: “1995-09-27A, BTF Report re Cease-Fires in the Balkans A Historical Overview,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 15, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12543>.

<sup>190</sup> Obtaining a ceasefire topped the list of the administration’s agenda. A BTF memorandum discussing these steps highlighted the recent complications and internal instability within the Bosnian government, suggesting more time be spent in Sarajevo than Belgrade: “Compared to Sarajevo, Belgrade will be easy the rest of the way.” It also suggested centering negotiation efforts around personnel who would be less erratic, specifically mentioning Bosnian Vice President Ejup Ganić, or Silajdžić, as opposed to Sacirbey. See: “1995-09-28B, BTF Memorandum re Next Steps,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 16, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12546>.

objectives of a prospective international peace conference.<sup>191</sup> Holbrooke suggested that in order to maximize US leverage and control of the process, the location should be held in the United States, but somewhere slightly removed from the limelight of New York or Washington.<sup>192</sup> Initially, there was fierce debate within the administration about the location of the prospective conference. With the exception of Holbrooke (and his shuttle) and Lake, the majority consensus was that it should be held in Europe.<sup>193</sup> Many were critical that a failure on American soil would be a political disaster for the administration, but Holbrooke contested that “the administration’s prestige was already fully on the line in the eyes both of the American public and of the world, and that failure would be no more costly in New Jersey than in New Caledonia.”<sup>194</sup> Ultimately the decision came down to Clinton, who at Lake’s persuasion, formally approved the conference to be held in the US.<sup>195</sup>

According to Holbrooke, this decision further relegated the Contact Group and roused ongoing resentment over American unilateralism.<sup>196</sup> The French were particularly angered by the decision not to hold the conference in France, so in order to appease them, Christopher kept open the possibility of holding a signing ceremony in Paris after the conference.<sup>197</sup> The British stressed they had not agreed to Paris, and felt it was only fair should the French host a signing ceremony that they in turn host an “implementation conference.”<sup>198</sup> And of course, if the French and British each got a conference, then certainly Moscow wanted one as well.<sup>199</sup> Each country wanted to demonstrate publicly it was involved in the peace process, and these were precisely the trivial quarrels within the Contact Group that had long proved problematic in producing

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<sup>191</sup> “1995-10-04, Summary of Conclusions of Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia October 4, 1995,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 16, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12553>.

<sup>192</sup> Holding the conference in an isolated location outside of the public spotlight was a tactic to prevent the delegations from railroading negotiations by hijacking the press. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 104, and Holbrooke, *To End*, 203-04. Once it had been determined the conference would be held in the US, the Principals determined the location needed to be somewhere relatively accessible from Washington, in the event high-level USG officials needed to intervene at a moment’s notice. “1995-10-04, Summary of Conclusions of Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia October 4, 1995.”

<sup>193</sup> Holbrooke, *To End*, 186.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 192

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, 195.

<sup>196</sup> Incidentally, all three Balkan presidents expressed desire to hold the conference in the US. *Ibid.*, 191. In text citation: *Ibid.*, 200-01.

<sup>197</sup> “The French Foreign Minister de Charette had already made a ‘big pitch’ to host the conference in Evian, France (the same place where the agreement was signed to end Algeria’s war of independence in 1962).” Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 104. In text citation: Holbrooke, *To End*, 200.

<sup>198</sup> Holbrooke, *To End*, 200-01.

<sup>199</sup> According to Holbrooke, the Europeans who were not part of the Contact Group, absent to these petty “who would host where what” squabbles, praised the American leadership and diplomacy. *Ibid.*, 201.



constructive multilateral international negotiations.<sup>200</sup> But as superficial as these self-serving interests were, it was necessary to placate the Contact Group. Should an accord be reached, Europe would be integral to the structural implementation of peace.<sup>201</sup>

As battle lines began to stabilize, it became imperative to get a ceasefire in place as quickly as possible.<sup>202</sup> The BSA had already mounted successful counterattacks, regaining some ground in Western Bosnia.<sup>203</sup> US intelligence reports also indicated increased cooperation between the BSA and the JNA, leading to speculation that a BSA revival might make the Bosnian Serbs less willing to make concessions in future negotiations.<sup>204</sup> Meanwhile, the Holbrooke team continued their shuttle, outlining conditions for a ceasefire and peace conference with the three Balkan presidents.<sup>205</sup> With each party Holbrooke established three ground rules: (1) each delegation would be empowered to make decisions on behalf of their government – meaning there would be no ratification process back home at a later date; (2) once the conference was underway, delegations could not threaten to walk away from negotiations; and (3) no press would be allowed.<sup>206</sup>

On 4 October 1995, Izetbegović agreed to a ceasefire.<sup>207</sup> The remaining signatures were procured the following day, and news was relayed to Washington that a nationwide ceasefire was in place.<sup>208</sup> Clinton broke the news on the morning of 5 October 1995, that a general ceasefire would take place in five days followed by Camp David-style peace talks to be held in the United

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<sup>200</sup> Competing individual domestic agendas were discussed in chapter two.

<sup>201</sup> The administration was well aware it would need Europe to be heavily involved in a post-war Bosnia. See: “1995-10-12A, Department of State Memorandum re A Multilateral Framework for Bosnian Peace,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 16, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12558>.

<sup>202</sup> See: “1995-10-03, BTF Memorandum re Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia October 3, 1995,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 19, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12552>.

<sup>203</sup> For details of the BSA counteroffensive, see: CIA, *Balkan Battlegrounds*, 389-90.

<sup>204</sup> Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 105, Pardew, *Peacemakers*, chap. 9, sec. 1, and “1995-09-29B, BTF Memorandum re Deputies Committee Meeting September 30, 1995,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 16, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12548>.

<sup>205</sup> “1995-10-03, BTF Memorandum re Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia October 3, 1995.”

<sup>206</sup> Holbrooke also made crystal clear to everyone that Milošević would continue to negotiate on behalf of Pale. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 106.

<sup>207</sup> Against the advice of his military leaders, Izetbegović agreed under three conditions: (1) the ceasefire did not take place for another five days – so they could try to regain more territory in the interim, (2) gas and electricity were to be restored to Sarajevo, and (3) the road to Goražde must be reopened prior to any peace conference. Holbrooke, *To End*, 195-96.

<sup>208</sup> An agreement was quickly drafted and rushed off to Belgrade, where Holbrooke and Owen spent most of the night haggling with Milošević over the agreement’s language until it was acceptable to both Sarajevo and Belgrade. Hill and Pardew had stayed behind with the Bosnians in Sarajevo and played messenger over the telephone until the wording was ironed out. For Holbrooke’s personal account in Belgrade, see: *Ibid.*, 196-97.

States at a later date.<sup>209</sup> Clinton stressed that while an important milestone towards ending the war and achieving peace, “deep divisions” remained to be overcome.<sup>210</sup> In the three and a half years of fighting some fifty plus partial and general ceasefires had been signed, but as Michael Dobbs of the *Washington Post* underscored, the latest agreement is different because, “the military and political prestige of the United States is on the line.”<sup>211</sup> Alison Mitchell of the *New York Times* echoed a similar sentiment regarding the administration hosting the conference in the US: “Mr. Clinton has recently been seeking to highlight a series of visible accomplishments overseas, and the convening of talks in the United States will put his Administration in the center of a potential settling of the most violent conflict in Europe since World War II.”<sup>212</sup>

Behind the scenes, other preparations were taking place at lightning speed. Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio was chosen for the talks.<sup>213</sup> It was also decided the conference would be co-chaired by Holbrooke, Bildt, and the Russian representative from the Contact Group, Igor Ivanov.<sup>214</sup> Bildt was selected to represent the EU, and since the focus of internal administration discussions had been shifting to a post-peace military implementation force – one that would involve Russian troops assisting NATO forces – it was tactful to include Ivanov.<sup>215</sup> It was determined prior to the start of Holbrooke’s last-ditch effort that a major US

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<sup>209</sup> Per the Bosnians’ conditions, the ceasefire would only be observed should gas and electricity be restored to Sarajevo. Camp David-style peace talks is a reference to when US President Jimmy Carter hosted Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar El-Sadat at Camp David for 13 days of proximity talks. Holbrooke wrote of studying Carter’s Camp David negotiations in preparation for Dayton: Holbrooke, *To End*, 204-05. For more on Clinton’s public announcement of the ceasefire, see: Michael Dobbs, “Bosnia Cease-Fire Agreement Reached,” *Washington Post*, October 6, 1995, and Alison Mitchell, “Conflict in the Balkans; The Overview: Bosnian Enemies Set a Cease-Fire; Plan Peace Talks,” *New York Times*, October 6, 1995.

<sup>210</sup> Dobbs, “Bosnia Cease-Fire.”

<sup>211</sup> For the full agreement, see: “Cease-fire Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina, 5 October 1995,” *Peace Agreements Database*, The University of Edinburgh, accessed March 16, 2021,

<https://www.peaceagreements.org/viewmasterdocument/322>. In text citation: Dobbs, “Bosnia Cease-Fire.”

<sup>212</sup> Mitchell, “Conflict in the Balkans; The Overview: Bosnian Enemies.”

<sup>213</sup> The search had narrowed down to three sites: the Navy base at Newport, Rhode Island; Langley Air Force Base in Norfolk, Virginia; and Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio. Surprisingly, Dayton was ultimately selected for practical reasons; five visiting officers’ quarters (VOQ) were all relatively close together grouped around a central parking lot, naturally producing a convenient environment for the proximity talks. Carl Bildt commented that the scenery of a military base might be a little “hawkish,” but Holbrooke thought that “reminders of American airpower might not hurt.” Holbrooke, *To End*, 204.

<sup>214</sup> Secretary Christopher elected not to attend the conference (only if and when it was required), fearing his presence would precipitate requests from the other Contact Group foreign ministers to participate, thus making negotiations ungovernable. Albright and Holbrooke concluded it was in the conference’s best interest that the UN representative Stoltenberg only participate if matters specifically concerned Eastern Slavonia, further illustrating the world body’s impotence and ineptitude in Bosnia. *Ibid.*, 200-03.

<sup>215</sup> For details on the administration’s discussions surrounding the mission and mandate for the NATO military presence assisting with the implementation of a peace settlement, see: Daalder, *Getting*, 140-49. For more on the



military commitment was inevitable, but with the diplomatic initiative on the cusp of peace, talks had veered from OpPLAN 40-104 UNPROFOR withdrawal support to contributions to the IFOR.<sup>216</sup> As Chollet writes, difficult questions were once again held about how much “blood and treasure” the administration was willing to pay for peace in Bosnia.<sup>217</sup>

While deploying US troops abroad only months prior to kicking off a re-election campaign proved quite the risk, Richard Sobel points out that by 1995 American public opinion polls supporting US military intervention in Bosnia had slowly been growing since 1993.<sup>218</sup> Support for sending US troops as peacekeepers post-settlement even reached majority levels just before Dayton in November 1995, although it subsequently dropped into the 40 percent range.<sup>219</sup> When confronted with the possibility of US casualties however, support dropped significantly.<sup>220</sup> These numbers aside, the scope and structure of IFOR transcended Bosnia.<sup>221</sup> IFOR would be responsible for furthering the charter of the Alliance in the post-Cold War world, so there was never any doubt within the Clinton administration that the United States – not the Europeans, the UN, nor the Balkan parties – would be tasked with writing the military component of the proposed peace agreement.<sup>222</sup>

## 7. War Ends in Ohio

“The eyes of the world are on Dayton, Ohio,” Secretary Christopher remarked upon arrival.<sup>223</sup> Marking the first face-to-face meeting of the three presidents since Yugoslavia stood on the precipice of dissolution and war in 1991, the conference kicked off on 1 November 1995 with a

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integration of Russian forces, see: “1995-09-29A, Joint Chiefs of Staff Memorandum re Russian Participation in IFOR,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 16, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12547>.

<sup>216</sup> IFOR is the NATO Implementation Force. For internal IFOR discussions, see: “1995-10-01B, Joint Intelligence Report re Bosnia Potential Challenges to the IFOR,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 19, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12551>.

<sup>217</sup> Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 107.

<sup>218</sup> By April 1995, support for intervention had grown to 40 percent. There were higher approval ratings for multilateral military action (with European allies), than unilateral intervention. Sobel, “Trends,” 253.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*, 251.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 255.

<sup>221</sup> It would involve key operational decisions: rules of engagement, appropriate force, and command flexibility, to organizational decisions: UN role and non-NATO roles (Russia). Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 115-16.

<sup>222</sup> For primary analysis, see: “1995-10-12A, Department of State Memorandum re A Multilateral Framework for Bosnian Peace.” For secondary analysis, see: Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 116-21, Daalder, *Getting*, 140-49, Holbrooke, *To End*, 215-18, and James Dobbins et al., “BOSNIA,” in *America’s Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq* (RAND Corporation, 2003), 93. In text citation: Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 115.

<sup>223</sup> Holbrooke, *To End*, 235.

symbolic public handshake.<sup>224</sup> Twenty grueling days later, on 21 November 1995, the three presidents would finally agree to end the war.<sup>225</sup>

The negotiations that resulted in the Dayton Accords were the culmination of the administration's unilateral and last-ditch diplomatic initiative led by Holbrooke and his shuttle. The Milošević strategy, which was conceived by Robert Frasure, was one of the shuttle's first unilateral breaks from the previous multilateral negotiations, as virtually all of the Europeans believed it necessary to deal directly with Pale.<sup>226</sup> The rationale behind this strategy, along with American pressure involving sanctions, enticed Milošević into accepting more responsibility for the Bosnian Serbs – resulting in the Patriarch Paper.<sup>227</sup> As Chollet explains, the Patriarch Paper, when coupled with the Washington Agreement, greatly simplified negotiations by reducing the number of parties from five to two.<sup>228</sup>

Most certainly there were external factors that also contributed to bringing the parties together in Dayton, such as the NATO campaign and the Croatian offensive, but it would be

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<sup>224</sup> Sciolino wrote “just bringing them into the same room represented a considerable achievement,” but that symbolism aside, “there was an air of awkwardness... and the body language of the three Balkan leaders as well as the choreography of the Americans revealed much more than the official statements.” Elaine Sciolino, “Conflict in the Balkans: The Overview; 3 Balkan Presidents Meet in Ohio to Try to End War,” *New York Times*, November 2, 1995. It was well documented how much the three presidents despised each other; Roger Cohen wrote that Izetbegović once remarked that choosing between Tudjman and Milošević “was like choosing between ‘leukemia and a brain tumor.’” Roger Cohen, “Conflict in the Balkans: The Overview; Balkan Leaders Face an Hour of Painful Choices,” *New York Times*, November 1, 1995.

<sup>225</sup> I have chosen to cover only select incidences of the twenty-day negotiations at Dayton highlighting critical moments of US unilateralism. For a knowledgeable, well-written and comprehensive account of the twenty-one days, see: Elaine Sciolino and Roger Cohen, “Balkan Accord: The Play-By-Play 21 Days in Dayton: A Special Report.; In U.S. Eyes, ‘Good’ Muslims and ‘Bad’ Serbs Did a Switch,” *New York Times*, November 23, 1995. Holbrooke provides a very detailed and personal account of the daily negotiations, in: Holbrooke, *To End*, 235-312. Chollet also supplies a day-by-day account in: Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, chap. 8-9. For Pardew's personal portrayal, see: Pardew, *Peacemakers*, chap. 11-12. A condensed retrospective of the negotiations by Bildt can be found in: Carl Bildt, “War and Peace in Bosnia,” Project Syndicate, November 23, 2020, accessed March 16, 2021, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/bosnian-war-dayton-agreement-25th-anniversary-by-carl-bildt-2020-11?barrier=accesspaylog>. And for the complete agreement's full text and provisions, see: “Dayton Peace Agreement,” Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), December 14, 1995, accessed March 16, 2021, <https://www.osce.org/bih/126173>.

<sup>226</sup> Bildt was one of the few European exceptions. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 188.

<sup>227</sup> For “carrot and sticking” Milošević with sanctions, see: “1995-09-05B, BTF Report re Milosevic, Karadzic, Mladic Serbs More United.” In text citation: Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 188.

<sup>228</sup> Rather than holding negotiations amongst Croatia, Bosnia, Serbia, the Bosnian Serbs, and the Bosnian Croats, the Washington Agreement and the Patriarch Paper reduced the parties involved to the Muslim-Croat Federation and Serbia. Considering the Contact Group was made up of representatives from five different countries, one could argue there were really over ten parties involved in negotiations prior to Holbrooke's unilateral crusade, after which it pared down to three: the US, Serbia, and the Muslim-Croat Federation. In text citation: Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 188.

folly not to emphasize the decisive individual role(s) of Holbrooke and his shuttle.<sup>229</sup> For more than two years the administration had accepted the need for consensus as the basis of policy.<sup>230</sup> But from the onset of Holbrooke's shuttle in mid-August, the Contact Group was intentionally sidelined from the critical negotiations with the Balkan presidents and their representatives that led ultimately to the agreement reached at Dayton in November.<sup>231</sup> Their absence from the three most contested and difficult provisions brokered during the accords – elections, the constitution, and the map – which were all authored if not entirely then predominantly by the American team, demonstrates as much.<sup>232</sup> Chollet summed up the Contact Group's role at Dayton rather poignantly in the following quote: "The Contact Group's accommodations at Dayton symbolized the role they would play: their VOQ was the fifth building, near the quad, but not part of it."<sup>233</sup>

Holbrooke and his shuttle also lobbied the Balkan delegations for results independently of, and with significantly more power than, the other co-chairs over the duration of the conference.<sup>234</sup> When discussions hit an impasse, instead of reaching out, for the most part the Americans reached in.<sup>235</sup> Christopher was called in to broker the terms of Eastern Slavonia between Tudjman and Milošević.<sup>236</sup> He also stepped in for multiple "heart-to-hearts" with

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<sup>229</sup> It is also worth noting, that while external factors, the administration used both the NATO air campaign and the Croatian offensive to complement their unilateral effort(s). Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 170.

<sup>230</sup> Ivo H. Daalder, "Decision to Intervene: How the War in Bosnia Ended," Brookings, December 1, 1998, accessed September 12, 2020, [www.brookings.edu/articles/decision-to-intervene-how-the-war-in-bosnia-ended](http://www.brookings.edu/articles/decision-to-intervene-how-the-war-in-bosnia-ended).

<sup>231</sup> See "3. Enter Holbrooke" earlier in the chapter.

<sup>232</sup> Pardew writes "Holbrooke took personal control over the map discussions." Pardew, *Peacemakers*, chap. 12, sec. 1, para. 10. All three of the abovementioned provisions at one point or another almost derailed the negotiations. Two weeks into the negotiations, the basic issues of the constitution were sorted out, but it was noted that "disputes could still erupt." In the brief to Christopher prior to a return visit scheduled for 17 November, elections were flagged as a "possible deal-breaker," requiring direct engagement from the Secretary, with the map being "a key issue for the Secretary to address in Dayton." "1995-11-14F, Don Kerrick to Tony Lake re Dayton SITREP #10 November 14, 1995, 1110pm," *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 18, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12593>. In text citation: Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 170.

<sup>233</sup> When the conference began, Holbrooke hosted a Contact Group meeting each morning. Soon he became tired of how engrossed the Europeans became in the technical issues, that he handed the meetings off to shuttle member John Kornblum. For a list of specific complaints from the individual Contact Group members about being sidelined, see: Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 158-59. In text quote appears on: *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>234</sup> While Bildt was the most involved non-American, he provided consultation more than direction. While he tolerated a certain amount of American "flag-waving" in the buildup to the conference, his backseat role in the actual negotiations prompted rumors he might leave Dayton. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 158. Holbrooke writes that Ivanov did "not play a major role," with Pardew adding, "Ivanov could have caused considerable trouble at Dayton, but never did." Holbrooke quote from: Holbrooke, *To End*, 311. Pardew quote from: Pardew, *Peacemakers*, chap. 12, sec. 1, para. 9.

<sup>235</sup> While largely seeking solutions "in-house," Holbrooke and Christopher did reach out to British Prime Minister Major and Turkey's leader, Suleyman Demirel, to plead on their behalf to Izetbegović. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 171. German Chancellor Helmut Kohl also sent a message. Pardew, *Peacemakers*, chap. 12, sec. 2, para. 8.

<sup>236</sup> Milošević demanded three years for the Serbians to withdraw from Eastern Slavonia but Tudjman offered only one. Christopher suggested that the Serbs withdraw in one year, subject to extension for another year if local

Izetbegović when internal divisions were plaguing the Bosnian delegation.<sup>237</sup> Even Bildt was keenly aware of the star power the Americans had at their disposal internally, remarking that whenever Christopher was present “he became the house psychiatrist...without him, the whole thing would have exploded.”<sup>238</sup> When progress stalled two weeks into the negotiations, Lake traveled to Dayton and met with Izetbegović, Milošević, and Granić (filling in for Tudjman who stepped away briefly to preside over the opening of the new Croatian Parliament).<sup>239</sup> At Clinton’s behest, Lake informed each of the three men that America’s patience was waning and strongly encouraged them to take the last remaining steps towards peace.<sup>240</sup> If closure was not reached in the coming days, Lake indicated that Clinton was prepared to shut down the conference and hand things back over to the Europeans.<sup>241</sup> This threat was particularly effective, as Chollet puts it, “no one – not Milošević, not Izetbegović – wanted the Europeans to be in charge.”<sup>242</sup> The next day the Americans brought in the big guns, literally; Perry, Undersecretary of Defense Walter Slocombe, General Joulwan, and Major General Nash arrived in a bold display of American military leadership, which was intended to both impress and intimidate the Balkan delegations.<sup>243</sup> Perry even came up with a daunting tagline he planned to use with the

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authorities recommended more time was needed. The agreement was signed in Croatia two days later (12 November). Christopher, *Chances*, 262. Croatian officials even urged the US to step in and help draft the UNSCR. “1995-11-16A, Summary of Conclusions of Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia November 16, 1995,” Clinton Digital Library, accessed March 18, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12595>.

<sup>237</sup> Izetbegović was reluctant about giving up sole-leadership of his country for a “power-sharing system.” After his meeting with Izetbegović, Christopher even called Clinton to inform him that, “the Bosnians are very divided among themselves and still not fully convinced that a peace agreement is in their interest.” Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 162. For Christopher’s personal account of the meeting, see: Christopher, *Chances*, 265.

<sup>238</sup> Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 163.

<sup>239</sup> In a memo to Christopher on 14 November, Holbrooke categorized the breakdown: “so, on Day 14, we are where we should have been on Day 8 or 9.” “1995-11-14E, Don Kerrick to Tony Lake re Dayton SITREP #9 November 14, 1995, 110am,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 18, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12592>. In text citation: Holbrooke, *To End*, 276.

<sup>240</sup> For a full list of Lake’s talking points with Izetbegović, Milošević, and Granić, see: “1995-11-15, Don Kerrick to Tony Lake re Talking Points for Meeting with President Izetbegović,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 18, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12594>.

<sup>241</sup> Details on the impact of Lake’s message can be found in: “1995-11-17, Don Kerrick to Tony Lake re Dayton SITREP #12 November 17, 1995, 1110am,” *Clinton Digital Library*, accessed March 18, 2021, <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/12597>.

<sup>242</sup> Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 166.

<sup>243</sup> Major General Nash was the commanding general of the First Armored Division; the army force designated to deploy in Bosnia. Pardew remarks that in addition to adding pressure on the parties, the generals’ presence put faces on the NATO and US military commitment in Bosnia. Pardew, *Peacemakers*, chap 12., sec. 1, para. 12. In text citation: Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 168.

Balkan leaders: “Lack of a settlement would be a problem for the United States. It would be a catastrophe for your country.”<sup>244</sup>

On the eve of 20 November, when refusals to make concessions on the map brought negotiations to the brink of collapse, the Americans called for deployment of the heaviest weapon of all. With an agreement in sight, Holbrooke and Christopher asked Clinton to personally call Tudjman and deliver a simple presidential message: “You are very close to success, and I am asking you, in the name of peace, to work out your differences.”<sup>245</sup> Tudjman acquiesced to Clinton’s request, but Izetbegović stubbornly waffled.<sup>246</sup> According to Holbrooke, in the end it was actually none other than Milošević who told him: “I will walk the final mile for peace.”<sup>247</sup> Holbrooke and Christopher frantically scampered around to gather everyone’s initials before anyone changed their mind.<sup>248</sup> With the initials collected, an excited and relieved call was placed to the White House proclaiming peace. A short while later, at 11:40 a.m. on 21 November 1995, President Clinton made the announcement on live television across the world from the White House Rose Garden.<sup>249</sup> Then Holbrooke briefed the Contact Group.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>244</sup> Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 168.

<sup>245</sup> Holbrooke writes that a presidential intervention “had always been part of our operating assumption at Dayton.” In fact, Holbrooke and Christopher also asked Lake for Clinton to call Izetbegović, but Lake opposed over concerns the president could be portrayed as pressuring the Muslims. Holbrooke, *To End*, 301. The discussions almost collapsed at the eleventh hour. Milošević had unknowingly conceded more territory than needed to achieve the 51/49 split, and after accidentally noticing a chart titled “FEDERATION TERRITORY INCREASED FROM 50% TO 55% DURING DAYTON TALKS,” he demanded 4 percent be returned to meet the original agreement. After Clinton’s call, Tudjman agreed to return 3 percent, but Izetbegović refused to return the remaining 1 percent and the negotiations almost collapsed entirely. For more details of the drama that almost ended the conference that night, see: Holbrooke, *To End*, 294-312, and Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 171-77.

<sup>246</sup> According to Holbrooke, Izetbegović would only concede the 1 percent of “theoretical land” remaining to reach an agreement in exchange for Brcko, which Milošević had repeatedly made clear was nonnegotiable. “Theoretical land,” was land which was not under Federation control at the start of the conference but had since been appropriated. Sloba pleaded “give me anything. Rocks, swamps, hills – anything, as long as it gets us to 49/51.” Holbrooke, *To End*, 303-06. Kerrick had foreshadowed this precise scenario, writing in a memo to Lake almost exactly one week prior: “Brcko emerging as territorial issue most likely to spiral Dayton into failure.” “1995-11-14E, Don Kerrick to Tony Lake re Dayton SITREP #9 November 14, 1995, 110am.”

<sup>247</sup> According to Christopher, on the morning of 21 November, Milošević offered to accept under the condition that arbitration for Brcko would take place in one year. Christopher, *Chances*, 266. In text quote: Holbrooke, *To End*, 308.

<sup>248</sup> Holbrooke, *To End*, 308-09.

<sup>249</sup> For Clinton’s speech in its entirety, see: The American Presidency Project, “Remarks Announcing the Bosnia-Herzegovina Peace Agreement and an Exchange With Reporters,” UC Santa Barbara, accessed March 24, 2021, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/remarks-announcing-the-bosnia-herzegovina-peace-agreement-and-exchange-with-reporters>. For a well written overview of the announcement and events of that day, see: Elaine Sciolino, “Conflict in the Balkans: The Overview; Accord Reached to End the War in Bosnia; Clinton Pledges U.S. Troops to Keep Peace,” *New York Times*, November 22, 1995. In text citation: Holbrooke, *To End*, 309-10.

<sup>250</sup> Holbrooke writes that he informed the Contact Group later before lunch. Holbrooke, *To End*, 310.

## CONCLUSION

“After nearly four years, two hundred and fifty thousand people killed, two million refugees, and atrocities that have appalled people all over the world, the people of Bosnia finally have a chance to turn from the horror of war to the promise of peace.”

US President Bill Clinton  
White House Rose Garden Address  
21 November 1995

The agreement reached at Dayton was the culmination of Clinton’s four-month unilateral push for peace in Bosnia. “Worried that the deteriorating situation in Bosnia was tarnishing his presidency,” what started with a meeting in the White House Cabinet Room on 7 August 1995 between Clinton and his top foreign policy advisors turned into the driving force necessary in bringing the conflict to an end.<sup>1</sup> Although the diplomatic initiative started as a cover for the selected strategy’s real purpose – to implement a post-UNPROFOR withdrawal strategy – the machine of Holbrooke’s shuttle ultimately achieved what had escaped the Europeans and the international community for more than three years.<sup>2</sup> By mid-September Holbrooke’s negotiating efforts, along with the combination of Milošević’s seizure of control from Pale, Operation Deliberate Force, and the successful western offensive by Croatian and Bosnian forces, brought the prospect of a viable peace settlement to the forefront of the strategy.<sup>3</sup> Over the subsequent two months, Holbrooke’s unilateral negotiations set the stage for the conference in Dayton, Ohio, where curtains would draw on the worst episode(s) of violence in Europe in more than a half-century.

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<sup>1</sup> For more details on the 7 August 1995 Foreign Policy meeting, see: Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 40. In text quote: Lippman and Devroy, “Clinton’s Policy Evolution.”

<sup>2</sup> As was mentioned by several high-level officials in the administration, both before and after Dayton, a major difference in the US approach relative to the previous international-led initiatives was the use of force. From early on Clinton lobbied for lift and strike, with other administration officials such as Albright, Lake, and Holbrooke advocating at the time for a more forceful intervention. Even Perry, who was initially opposed to increased engagement in the conflict, revised his earlier opinions after the accord stating: “Operation Deliberate Force was the absolutely crucial step in bringing the warring parties to the negotiating table at Dayton, leading to the peace agreement,” adding, “we should have been prepared to use or to threaten to use military force from the beginning.” First part of Perry quote from: Beale, *Bombs over Bosnia*, 32. Second part of Perry quote from: Elaine Sciolino, “The Clinton Record: Foreign Policy; Bosnia Policy Shaped by U.S. Military Role,” *New York Times*, July 29, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> Once again, the additional factors mentioned above, while not direct products of the unilateral US push, were however indirect products of US efforts. Chollet, *The Road: A Study*, 170. In text citation: Daalder, *Getting*, 134.



While there is no question Clinton was successful in achieving his peace prior to his 1996 re-election campaign, the peace achieved left much to be questioned.<sup>4</sup> Retired Four-Star General Charles G. Boyd surmised, “Dayton was a brilliantly negotiated accord to support a dubious objective,” as it essentially froze the conflict and erected a complex system of forced integration and cooperation.<sup>5</sup> According to Holbrooke, Izetbegović himself almost refused to initial the agreement, before reluctantly stating: “It is not a just peace...But my people need peace.”<sup>6</sup>

Clinton followed through on his promise (one that he even repeated during his 21 November 1995 Rose Garden address) and deployed 20,000 US troops as part of a 60,000 strong NATO peacekeeping force after IFOR took over from the UN on 20 December 1995.<sup>7</sup> On 27 November 1995, Clinton directly addressed the nation from the Oval Office, explaining to the American people the decision to send troops was not to fight but to implement the peace which had been committed to at Dayton. In Clinton’s own words, he summarized the address saying, “I pledged that they would go in with a clear, limited, achievable mission and would be well-

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<sup>4</sup> Sciolino presented just a few of many questions that were left unanswered in her *New York Times* article published on 22 November: Sciolino, “Conflict in the Balkans: The Overview; Accord Reached to End the War in Bosnia; Clinton Pledges U.S. Troops to Keep Peace.” Jane M. O. Sharp raised several other important questions surrounding the structural integrity of the accord: Jane M. O. Sharp, “Dayton Report Card,” *International Security* 22, no. 3 (1997): 102.

<sup>5</sup> Charles G. Boyd, “Making Bosnia Work,” *Foreign Affairs* 77, no. 1 (1998): 46. For other critiques of Dayton, see: Warren Bass, “The Triage of Dayton,” *Foreign Affairs* 77, no. 5 (1998): 95-108, Ivo H. Daalder and Michael B. G. Froman, “Dayton’s Incomplete Peace,” *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 6 (1999): 106-13, Patrice C. McMahon and Jon Western, “The Death of Dayton: How to Stop Bosnia From Falling Apart,” *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 5 (2009): 69-83, Charles Crawford, “The Balkan Chill: The Intrinsic Weakness of the Dayton Accords,” *Harvard International Review* 21, no. 1 (1998): 84-83, Majda Ruge, “Hostage State: How to Free Bosnia From Dayton’s Paralyzing Grip,” Report, European Council on Foreign Relations, November 2020, Sharp, “Dayton Report Card,” 101-37, Edward Morgan-Jones, Neophytos Loizides, and Djordje Stefanovic, “20 years later, this is what Bosnians think about the Dayton peace accords,” *Washington Post*, December 14, 2015, and Julian Borger, “Bosnia’s bitter, flawed peace deal, 20 years on,” *The Guardian*, November 10, 2015,

<sup>6</sup> With the Bosnian Serbs retaining 49 percent of the nation’s territory yet consisting of only 30 percent of the country’s inhabitants, along with a power sharing government, Izetbegović knew not everyone back in Bosnia would be happy with the agreement. However, tremendous pressure was being applied by the Americans on the Bosnians to come to agreement. For a compelling piece detailing the pressure on the Bosnians, which led to Sacirbey’s abrupt resignation in protest, see: Roger Cohen, “For Bosnia’s President, An Agonizing Choice,” *New York Times*, November 20, 1995. For contemporaneous responses to the agreement in Sarajevo, see: Kit R. Roane, “Balkan Accord: In Sarajevo; In Weary Bosnian Capital, Joy, and Tears for the Dead,” *New York Times*, November 22, 1995. In text quote: Holbrooke, *To End*, 309.

<sup>7</sup> In terms of the transition from UNPROFOR to IFOR troops, Daalder remarks it happened with relative ease: “In December 1995, when implementation of Dayton began, most of the UNPROFOR troops changed helmets, and were instantly transformed into IFOR [Implementation Force] soldiers.” From: Daalder, “Decision to Intervene.” For analysis of Clinton’s speech and his (re)pledge to send troops, see: Sciolino, “Conflict in the Balkans: The Overview; Accord Reached to End the War in Bosnia; Clinton Pledges U.S. Troops to Keep Peace.” For a brief recap of the complete Bosnia IFOR mission, see: North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), “SHAPE History, 1994-1998: One Team, One Mission! NATO Begins Peacekeeping In Bosnia,” accessed March 24, 2021, <https://shape.nato.int/page14672955.aspx>.

trained and heavily armed to minimize the risk of casualties,” adding further that, “I had made the strongest case I could for our responsibility to lead the forces of peace and freedom, and hoped that I had moved public opinion enough so that Congress would at least not try to stop me from sending in the troops.”<sup>8</sup> The following month, Congress sent Clinton mixed messages, as the House approved a resolution opposing Clinton’s policy, but the Senate sided with the president.<sup>9</sup> While there was noted Congressional disapproval of sending troops, Sobel points out that the government and the media tended to often present the idea that everyday Americans were vehemently opposed to the deployment of US troops in Bosnia, while in contrast, a Gallup Poll from 6 November 1995 asking specifically about the 20,000 US troops Clinton had promised, showed only minor opposition, with 49 percent opposed and 47 percent in favor.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the level public opinion, some members of Clinton’s own inner circle were rooting for Dayton to fail so the president would be off the hook. George Stephanopoulos candidly recalled to Holbrooke that some, primarily on the domestic side, were relieved when it looked like Dayton may fail, because “if you got an agreement the president would have to make the single most difficult decision of his presidency – to send troops to Bosnia – and then defend it during the 1996 elections.”<sup>11</sup>

Although mention of the re-election campaign came up several times over the course of those defining Bosnian foreign policy group meetings in July and August 1995 – the very meetings which ultimately resulted in Clinton’s unilateral push for peace – administration officials would later vehemently deny that the timing of the unilateral effort was motivated by the upcoming election campaign.<sup>12</sup> In their work “From Lisbon to Dayton: International Mediation and the Bosnia Crisis,” Greenberg and McGuinness attempt to apply William Zartman’s “ripeness theory” to the conflict in Bosnia, ultimately concluding that Bosnia

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<sup>8</sup> Quotes are from Clinton’s written summary of his speech in: *Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency*, 8-9.

<sup>9</sup> On 14 December 1995, the Republican-led House approved a resolution opposing the president’s policy (but supporting the troops) by a vote of 287 to 141, and rejected 237 to 190, a Democratic resolution that supported troops without reference to the policy. The Republican-led Senate on the other hand, voted 69 to 30 in favor of the deployment and 52 to 47 against the resolution opposing Clinton’s decision. *Washington Post* reporters Helen Dewar and Guy Gugliotta noted that Vice President Gore’s presiding over the votes was “an indication of the significance the administration attached to the action.” Helen Dewar and Guy Gugliotta, “Senate Backs Troops To Bosnia,” *Washington Post*, December 14, 1995.

<sup>10</sup> Sobel, “Trends,” 257 and 274.

<sup>11</sup> Stephanopoulos’ account, as retold by Holbrooke, in: Holbrooke, *To End*, 307.

<sup>12</sup> Administration officials did note that Congressional pressure played a major role in moving Clinton. Lippman and Devroy, “Clinton’s Policy Evolution.”



represents a case that “inverts Zartman’s ripeness scenario: In Bosnia, it was the outside intervenors—the mediators themselves—who determined when the situation was ripe for resolution.”<sup>13</sup> Bildt arrived at a similar conclusion, writing: “The reason we succeeded in November 1995 was that all the key international actors – the EU, the United States, and Russia – were all finally on the same page.”<sup>14</sup> As I discussed at length in earlier chapters, there is undeniably a plethora of other complex factors that contributed to Clinton’s policy evolution in July and August of 1995, yet Occam’s razor comes to mind: the simplest explanation is usually the right one. Once the administration made a concerted effort to end the conflict, it was over in four months.

In the end, a majority approved of Clinton’s Bosnian foreign policy handling even after he deployed US troops in December 1995.<sup>15</sup> With Bosnia far from the front page, Clinton went on to win re-election in November 1996, handily defeating Republican challenger Bob Dole to become the first two-term Democratic president since Franklin Delano Roosevelt.<sup>16</sup> And while the foreign policy victory in Bosnia may not have been a re-election campaign boost, it was perhaps more importantly, not a liability.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> For Zartman’s mediation and conflict resolution “ripeness theory,” see: I. William Zartman, “‘Ripeness’: the importance of timing in negotiation and conflict resolution,” E-International Relations, December 20, 2008, accessed March 24, 2021, <https://www.e-ir.info/2008/12/20/ripeness-the-importance-of-timing-in-negotiation-and-conflict-resolution/>. In text quote and citation: Greenberg and McGuinness, “From Lisbon to Dayton,” 71.

<sup>14</sup> Carl Bildt, “War and Peace in Bosnia.”

<sup>15</sup> Sobel, “Trends,” 253.

<sup>16</sup> Clinton carried 31 states for 379 electoral votes, while Dole carried 19 states for 159 electoral votes. Dan Balz, “Clinton Wins by Wide Margin,” *Washington Post*, November 6, 1996. In text citation from: Richard L. Berke “Clinton Elected To A 2d Term With Solid Margins Across U.S.; G.O.P. Keeps Hold On Congress,” *New York Times*, November 6, 1996.

<sup>17</sup> Winston underscores this philosophy noting that in presidential politics over the last half of the twentieth century foreign policy rarely won a presidential election, but it did lose some. Winston, “Foreign Policy: The ‘Stealth’ Issue of the 1996 Campaign?” 285. In text citation: Mandelbaum, *Mission Failure*, 109.

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