

# SAVING PEACE IN BOSNIA

## MYTHS, CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES

Papers presented at The Lord Byron Foundation's 2009  
conferences on the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina held in  
Toronto, Belgrade, and Washington D.C.

The Lord Byron Foundation for Balkan Studies

2010

THE LORD BYRON FOUNDATION FOR BALKAN STUDIES was founded by the late Sir Alfred Sherman in 1994 as a non-partisan research center devoted to studying the Balkan Peninsula in all its aspects. The Foundation's research, publications and conferences are designed to correct the current trend of public commentary, which tends, systematically, not to understand events but to construct a version of Balkan rivalries that fits daily political requirements. The Foundation is named after a great Western poet who gave his life in the fight to free Balkan Christians from Islamic rule. This choice reflects its belief in the essential unity of our civilization. The work of The Lord Byron Foundation is based on the acceptance that the cause of tolerance in a troubled region can never be advanced by misrepresentation or by the sentimental lapse of seriousness that all too often characterizes Western discourse on the region.

Published in the United States by  
The Lord Byron Foundation for Balkan Studies  
Chicago-Ottawa-London

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ISBN 978-1-892478-07-8

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## Post-Dayton political map of Bosnia-Herzegovina



## Foreword

**D**uring the 1990s, the Balkans erupted in ethnic violence with the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia. A hundred thousand people died in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Yugoslavia's central republic, the scene of three-way fighting among Muslims, Serbs, and Croats. The "General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina" negotiated at Dayton, Ohio, in 1995 provided for a decentralised state comprised of two entities of roughly equal size: the Muslim-Croat Federation and the Republic of Srpska (*Republika Srpska*, RS), a majority-Serbian unit. While not fully satisfying any of Bosnia's three warring nations, the Dayton agreement provided each group with basic security and a considerable degree of self-government.

Under Dayton, there has been no resumption of hostilities or serious threat of renewed bloodshed. Free and fair elections have taken place in both the Federation and the RS. Bosnian citizens live, work, and travel freely in both entities regardless of their ethnicity. Bosnia-Herzegovina has been admitted to the Council of Europe, has been nominated for membership in the United Nations Security Council. For all its shortcomings, and in spite of many attempts to revise or reverse it, the Dayton agreement has provided a platform for peace and gradual progress for Bosniaks (Muslims), Serbs, and Croats alike.

Bosnia's relative stability was unnecessarily threatened in the spring of 2009 by political forces in Washington intent on reneging on the delicate balance achieved at Dayton. Secretary of State Hillary

Clinton declared she was committed to wrapping up what she called ‘the unfinished business in the Balkans.’ A series of op-eds and public pronouncements by ‘experts’ on Balkans affairs, papers by U.S. government-sponsored NGOs and statements by Administration officials, invariably advocating Bosnia’s unitarization, were followed in May 2009 by a nonbinding Resolution passed by the House of Representatives calling for President Obama to appoint an American special envoy for the Balkans. The underlying message from all quarters was the same: the U.S. needs to revise Dayton in the direction of greater centralization of Bosnia at the expense of the autonomy of the two entities – which in reality would adversely affect only one of them, the Bosnian Serb Republic (Republika Srpska, RS).

The pressure escalated in the second half of 2009. When it was first announced that the Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt and the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State James Steinberg would be coming to Bosnia in October with a secret proposal for constitutional reform, the news was hyped in the Western media and in Sarajevo as the imminent remaking of Dayton. Even the location chosen for the talks – a NATO military base at Butmir near Sarajevo – echoed the events of November 1995, when the Bosnian war was ended at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base outside Dayton.

On October 20-21 2009 the representatives of seven political parties in Bosnia from all three sides were presented with a set of centralizing reforms that were suggested, and failed miserably, four years ago. The Serbs rejected these proposals because they would have stripped them of the remaining elements of self-rule that were first guaranteed by the Dayton agreement. The Bosniaks (i.e. Bosnian Muslims), on the other hand, complained that the proposed package did not go *far enough* in giving them control of Bosnia.

The failure of this attempt, one of many, to reduce the Republika Srpska to an empty shell devoid of self-rule was inevitable. The meetings at Butmir were arranged hastily on the American

initiative in an *ad-hoc* forum composed of politicians who have no constitutional power or popular mandate to commit themselves to any fundamental changes, even if they wanted to do so. The putative “Butmir Process,” of which the State Department continued talking, was utterly devoid of legality or legitimacy. In reality there was no “process” at all. It was simply another variant of the same made-in-Washington program to weaken and then dissolve the RS in order to create a Muslim-dominated unitary state.

A reasonable observer might hope that a failure at Butmir (as measured in the eyes of its foreign authors) might finally convince Washington that no arrangements can be good for Bosnia-Herzegovina as a whole unless it is good for all of its three constituent peoples. Yet the only way to make an impact on foreign meddlers who refuse to allow reality to blur their ideologically induced “vision” is to present them with a visible and tangible failure – the one that would be clearly registered as such both in Washington and in Brussels.

As for American officialdom concerned with Bosnia, the real problem does not originate with the people on the ground. Not that they are not likely part of the problem; but its roots are in Washington, and have been for years. No Western ambassador in the region has ever tried to counter the line dictated from Washington, Brussels, London or Paris while on duty. Even if they say something discordant – like former U.S. Ambassador in Belgrade William Montgomery did regarding Bosnia in May 2009 (or Britain’s Charles Crawford in July 2009) – it happens years after they leave their official posts.

The larger problem is the self-defeating notion that the U.S. needs to be seen, and perhaps even appreciated, in the Islamic world as the champion of Muslim interests in Europe.

The push for Bosnia’s “constitutional reform” will undoubtedly continue in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, which is unfortunate. That push is a major obstacle to the lasting stabilization of the area known as Western Balkans in general, and of Bosnia-Herzegovina in

particular. It is but a codeword for establishing what in effect what would be a Muslim-dominated unitary state – in a majority-Christian country! – and amounting to the end of the RS in fact if not in name.

In addition to being certain to re-ignite old animosities that caused the war of 1992-1995, this scenario is incongruous with the trend towards devolution, self-rule, and decentralization in some of the world's most stable democracies – from Quebec to the Basque Country, from Scotland to Catalonia. It is also at odds with the Western demand that Serbia grants its northern province of Vojvodina the level of autonomy which is frowned upon when it is demanded from Banja Luka.

Whatever the defects of Dayton, the essential fact is that for over 14 years Bosnians and Herzegovinians have not been killing each other. Nothing should be done that risks a new confrontation among Bosnia's communities and possibly reigniting the horrors of the 1990s. With all that America has on its plate today, at home and abroad, it is ill advised to trigger an optional crisis. What is really impeding Bosnia's progress is heavy-handed international bureaucracy and excessive foreign meddling in local affairs. Such meddling is detrimental to the spontaneous growth of democratic institutions. Going a step beyond and imposing centralization would be a gross violation of democracy, law, and logic.

In the 1990s there existed a yawning gap between the avowed objectives of America's foreign and security policy and its implementation by Bill Clinton's team. Nowhere was this discrepancy more apparent than in the Balkans. The declared policy was packaged as a commitment to the principles of national self-determination, respect for the sovereignty of states, promotion of peace and harmony amongst the peoples of the region, adherence to international law; and upholding moral principles, rather than "mere" interests, in world affairs.



As the contributors to this volume are well aware, many questions regarding Western policy in the Balkans remain unanswered almost two decades after Yugoslavia started unravelling. If the United States and the European Union were so fully committed to the model of multicultural states in the Balkans, why did they condone the dismembering of eminently multi-ethnic, multicultural, multi-everything Yugoslavia in the 1990s?

Even today, an old question remains unanswered by the advocates of unitary Bosnia like Hillary Clinton, Richard Holbrooke, and Paddy Ashdown: If Yugoslavia was untenable, and eventually collapsed under the weight of the supposedly insurmountable differences among its constituent nations, how can Bosnia-Herzegovina – the Yugoslav microcosm *par excellence* – develop and sustain the dynamics of a viable polity, let alone a centralized and unitary state?

If America was willing to let the Europeans solve the Balkan problems themselves, why did it block the 1992 Lisbon Plan brokered by the European Union, which could have avoided conflict in Bosnia even before the first shot was fired in Sarajevo? Why did it undermine several subsequent EU-UN initiatives, such as the Vance-Owen Plan and the Owen-Stoltenberg Plan in 1993, both of which could have ended the bloodshed on terms not much different from those dictated at Dayton? Obviously the declared goals of American policy in the Balkans were not the actual reasons guiding that policy.

This book offers insights into the likely true motives of Bosnia's would-be centralizers by several informed foreign policy and Balkan specialists of various backgrounds and areas of expertise. They all have in common the view that the United States does not need to "re-engage" in Bosnia, let alone to appoint a special envoy.

Bosnia is not much of a problem, our authors agree, and in any event it is *Europe's* problem, not America's: Bosnia's future is integration with its immediate and regional neighbors. There are many responsible European officials who privately admit that they do not

want Washington charging in and upsetting the applecart, especially since *they* would have to cope with the consequences. Furthermore, with no end in sight for America's many foreign quagmires from Mesopotamia and Hindukush to the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel and beyond, and no end in sight for its ongoing economic, financial, and social-cultural problems, the United States does not have the resources to police and subsidize yet another stepchild 'nation-building' project.

This book, based on the papers presented at international conferences sponsored and organized by The Lord Byron Foundation in Toronto, Belgrade and Washington D.C. in 2009, is presented in the hope that it is still possible for even-handedness, realism and prudence to prevail. Bosnia-Herzegovina has suffered a lot through history, almost invariably due to some distant powers' ambitions and policies. It deserves to be left well alone.

Chicago and Ottawa, February 2010

The Editors

## **Does Bosnia Need a ‘Second Dayton’?**

Steven E. Meyer<sup>1</sup>

**T**he ink was hardly dry on the 1995 Dayton Accords when calls began to surface that a second “Dayton Conference” was needed to complete the transition of Bosnia from a dysfunctional war-torn ward of the “international community” to a vibrant, stable, multi-ethnic, free enterprise democracy. Already in September 1996, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, the primary architect of the Dayton agreement, said that a second conference was required to “strengthen” these accords. At the tenth anniversary of the Accords, while there was broad self congratulations at the “success” of the Dayton agreement, many officials in Europe and the United States saw the need to convene another Dayton-styled conference to consolidate the “benefits” of the 1995 agreement and to take Bosnia to the next level. In March 2009 the International Crisis Group published an assessment of Bosnia which proposed a series of substantial recommendations that are once again designed to overcome considerable residual problems through ever tighter central structures supposedly designed to bring Bosnia into the European family of fully functioning states.

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***The Old Paradigm*** – These are but three time-sequenced examples of fairly consistent calls, present ever since late 1995, to convene some sort of Dayton-like conference to “fix” Bosnia’s serious, nagging problems. Such calls over the years have demonstrated two major phenomena. First, they underscore that fact that the Dayton Accords of 1995 have been a failure in establishing the conditions necessary to guarantee a viable, modern, democratic, multi-ethnic, free enterprise state. To its credit, the Dayton process did bring the Bosnian war to an end. Nevertheless, it has failed in its efforts to engineer the necessary social, economic and political conditions required to establish a broadly accepted political community. Most importantly for Bosnia, this has meant that the Dayton process has been totally unable to meld the three ethnic groups into any semblance of what Benedict Anderson has eloquently described as the “imagined community.”<sup>1</sup>

The Dayton Accords have failed on two major, specific points described by Anderson. First, the large majority of the inhabitants of Bosnia do not recognize that the state is limited—that there are recognized borders beyond which exist other, different states. And, second, they do not recognize that Bosnia is sovereign—that in law and practice, Bosnia coincides with the commonly accepted borders. Put simply, for too many citizens of Bosnia, borders and sovereignty do not coincide with what the Dayton Accords define as *the state*.

The calls over the years for a “second Dayton” reflect the determination and self-defined responsibility of the “international community” (in reality, the U.S. and several European countries) to perpetuate the process of control and management of the social, political and economic process in Bosnia. This determination by a handful of powerful countries, which are euphemistically known as the “international community,” is founded on a traditional paradigm of how political community *must* be constructed. It is a paradigm built on

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<sup>1</sup> Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso, 1991.

firm conviction that only this handful of major powers—but, primarily the U.S.—has the knowledge, wisdom, power and wherewithal to determine how political communities must be established if they are to be successful and deemed legitimate. It is a paradigm that considers the interest of the great powers to be both very broadly understood and to be superior to the interests of the smaller powers they dominate.

Through much of modern history—at least since the 15<sup>th</sup> century—the West has justified domination of a large portion of the globe through the old paradigm. In the Balkans, this domination began with the collapse of the Croatian and Serbian medieval states in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries respectively, and has continued with few interruptions until today. Consequently, over the centuries the Balkans became an imperial playground not because the great powers were interested in the region as such, but because it had become the intersection of several powers that competed with each other. The Congress of Berlin, called by German Chancellor Bismarck in 1878, set the standard for modern imperial domination of the Balkans for the purposes of the imperial powers irrespective of the impact on the Balkans itself. Although they differ in substance, the Dayton Accords of 1995 follow the logic and impact of the Congress of Berlin.

Yet the weight of responsibility does not rest only with the great imperial powers, the ‘international community.’ As time passed, the peoples and leaders in the Balkans became complicit with the old paradigm. Although it took root gradually after the Middle Ages, the old paradigm began to sink deeply into the psyche in the Balkans after the advent of the industrial revolution and the French Revolution, which together defined “modernity” after the first quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The message was passed to the Balkans (as well as elsewhere) by the major powers of northwestern Europe, and soon thereafter by the United States, that to be truly modern, to be counted among the first rank of states, a country had to embrace fully the benefits of these twin revolutions. Along with all the rest of Eastern and Central Europe, the

Balkans has struggled to attain the prescribed level of modernity. But, try as they may, the Balkans has never come remotely near the mark, either politically or economically. Despite some variations in the level of development, the countries of the Balkans remain prisoners of two powerful forces: the ongoing domination of outside powers, and the propensity of those powers to administer self-inflicted wounds.

***Renewing the Old Paradigm*** – During the 1990s, the Balkans became the single most important foreign policy of the Clinton administration. Although that administration was successful in ending the war in Bosnia, it struggled – as have so many other powers in the past – to design and enforce a political settlement in the region. While the Dayton Accords were the cornerstone of the Clinton administration’s ineptness, its overall failures in the region have helped sow continuing economic and political failure and backwardness in the Balkans.

The Clinton administration’s saving grace was that finally left office and the Balkans faded from the American foreign policy consciousness, not because success had been achieved there but because other more serious matters intervened and the incoming Bush administration had other priorities. The Bush administration decided early on in its tenure that the U.S. would withdraw from the Balkans and turn the issue over to the Europeans to the greatest extent possible. Bush did not decide to do this because he rejected the old paradigm in favor of some new, enlightened course of action, but because he felt compelled to apply the old paradigm in other parts of the world.

The end of the Bush administration and the advent of the Obama administration has seen a return of the Balkans to the American foreign policy agenda. It has become Clinton era redux. The Balkans in general and Bosnia specifically are being pushed as an issue less by the White House and more by the upper levels of the “new” State Department. In addition, the Balkans have become a renewed priority among a few prominent politicians in Western Europe and among several think-tanks and advocacy groups in the United States. Their

stated concern is that Bosnia is failing, that it is not making the requisite progress toward becoming that viable, stable, democratic, multi-ethnic, free enterprise state that danced so vividly in their imaginations when the Dayton Accords were concluded in 1995.

As their argument goes, Bosnia was showing “steady progress” prior to 2006. Reforms, the One Bosnia advocates argued, were moving forward steadily: judicial and tax reform had become realities, intelligence and security reform were in place, two rounds of defense reform had been concluded, reform of the Council of Ministers was in place, police reform had moved forward, and reform of the Constitution, especially in the realm of human rights, had been cemented into place. Since then, however, not only have the reforms flat lined, Bosnia has slipped “dangerously backward.” The situation, according to the self-appointed saviors of Bosnia, has become critical. Bosnia is in danger of slipping into chaos and disintegration.

Why has this happened? According to the saviors, there are two primary reasons. First, they assign blame to the Bush administration for its alleged neglect of the Balkans generally and Bosnia specifically. Second, and perhaps most important, they argue that there is a failure of indigenous leadership. Specifically, they assign blame to Milorad Dodik, the Prime Minister of the Republika Srpska, and, to a lesser extent, to Haris Silajdzic, the Muslim member of the Bosnian tripartite Presidency. According to the Western illuminati, Dodik (in particular) and Silajdzic (perhaps) are pursuing policies that strongly favor their own ethnicity rather than Bosnia as a whole.

Consequently, this combination of government officials (mostly in the Obama administration) and their closely allied cohorts in think-tanks and advocacy groups believe that it is necessary to pick up the thread of solid reform that they believe dominated the “positive” evolution of Bosnia prior to 2006 and reestablish it before it is “too late.” This group is blinded by its own arrogance and by its misunderstanding of Bosnia, the Balkans, and the larger reality of

international politics. There is no rational argument, in fact, for any major American re-engagement in Bosnia, or the Balkans. There are no significant American interests now at stake in the region. There have never been any. The Obama administration does face a welter of bewildering and dangerous issues elsewhere that are clearly in the vital interest of the U.S. Moreover, the contention that there was *real* progress prior to 2006 is a figment of a collective, self-important, self-righteous imagination.

Certainly there was structural change; but the new, ever more centralized “Bosnian” structures were a chimera. Those structures meant very little. The locus of power has always been in the ethnic communities. The leadership in Muslim-Bosnia has always been adept at telling American and other Western officials what they wanted to hear, regardless of reality. In short, the reforms were a triumph of form over substance. They were hollow, phony attempts to make it appear that change had taken place when, in reality, it had not and could not.

For Western advocates of intervention, the fault for failure in Bosnia lies squarely on the shoulders of Bosnia’s leadership. These leaders, they argue, have failed to take seriously the good efforts of the architects of Dayton and have failed miserably, at least since 2006, of implementing the plan that would make Bosnia a shining example of a vibrant multi-ethnic democracy. In truth, however, to the extent Bosnia has “failed,” the fault rests squarely with the Western advocates themselves. The root cause of failure is with *them* and their misguided, inept policies initiated during the 1990s. The failure of Bosnia has nothing to do with the neglect of the Bush administration or indigenous leadership. It has, rather, to do with the arrogant inability or refusal to understand the nature of ethnic politics, to totally misjudge what is required to establish a modern political community.

The Bosnifiers completely miss the fact that self-determination cannot be smothered by dictate. A piecemeal resolution of the Yugoslav issue, instead of one that focused on the region as a whole,



was a prescription for disaster. In the end, for the who advocate a strong U.S. reengagement in Bosnia (and the Balkans), that country and that region as such were never really the point. For them, the point speaks to a strong strain of American imperialism and exceptionalism, the power of manifest destiny. For many of them, the cause of Bosnia has become a way to fulfill a personal and psychological need in the guise of national interest.

*A (Not So) New Paradigm* – Simply stated, Bosnia does not a new Dayton or anything even remotely resembling it. Undergirding this contention is the more basic judgment that the old paradigm of imperial intervention has long since outlived its usefulness in the globalizing world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In a world in which economic, social and political structures are rapidly changing, it is no longer workable or just to determine the nature of political community for others. It is especially inappropriate for a major power, such as the U.S., to attempt to “dictate” or even prescribe the form and substance of economic, social and political organization and interaction, such as the Balkans, which is of minimal national interest.

Instead, the U.S. and the major powers in Western Europe need to accept a new paradigm—one that is not really all that new. In the evolving world, no longer will there be one acceptable, legitimate way to organize communities, to pursue interests, and to express ideologies. States will continue to be the dominant form of political organization, but they are being challenged increasingly by other modes of organization – by non-state actors that are leveling the global playing field by becoming legitimate and authoritative organs of political, social and economic expression. In the contemporary world, this reality is manifest in a new understanding of self-determination and self-actualization.

These are not new principles, but in the past they have almost always been expressed in terms of new state formation or state reformation based on some sort of mutual material, cultural or

ideological interest. While self-determination and self-actualization will continue to be expressed this way in the future, increasingly communities will form along business, cultural, ethnic, religious, military, etc. lines. Although at times controversial and open to differing interpretations, one can point for instruction to the “subsidiarity” principle that is firmly enshrined in European Union law (see the European Charter of Local and Self-Government and the 1992 Maastricht Treaty).

For the contemporary great powers to buy into a new paradigm that links self-determination, self-actualization and subsidiarity would require a change in outlook and policy that is, at best, unlikely but which may be forced upon them by evolving circumstance. Such an acceptance would require an admission that past Western policy has failed in the Balkans and that a new approach is unavoidable.

At minimum this would require closing the Office of the High Representative, ending the Bonn Powers and Peace Implementation Committee (PIC) some time in 2010. These two offices, in particular, are vestiges of a heavy-handed, often oppressive weight on local self-development. Of course the OHR and the PIC see themselves as enlightened guarantors of peaceful transition to successful statehood for Bosnia. In the absence of war the opposite is closer to reality, because these organizations inhibit the local parties from coming to terms with each other. Their continued existence encourages either subterfuge on the part of local authorities or a pretext for not having to honestly find areas of compromise, agreement and disagreement.

Leaders in Washington, along with those in every other capital, realize at an intellectual level that the Cold War era has passed into the globalizing, post-September 11 world. Since this means that American hegemony has passed and the world is now much more differentiated, real acceptance by the Western policy cognoscenti is extremely difficult. Translating such acceptance into true policy change is very difficult. It is especially hard for those who have come to professional

maturity during the heady days of the Cold War and have been used to American supremacy. Irrespective of whether American (and some European) policy-makers cannot make the transition to the emerging new world, it is important that others do not fall prey to belief in an American dominance and hegemony that no longer exist. Indeed, it is ever more necessary for political leaders in the region, and especially in Bosnia, to hold American influence and interference at arm's length, and to exert their own leadership and influence far more assertively.

Ironically, the only place in the Balkans where that is happening right now is in the Republika Srpska (RS). At least for now, the RS leadership, especially Milorad Dodik, has shown the courage, fortitude and intelligence to insist that local leaders and citizens take responsibility for their futures. The SNSD leadership has taken the advice of Muslim leader Sulejman Tihić to end the “philosophy of victimhood and self-pity” that has pervaded broad swaths of Bosnian-Muslim leadership since the collapse of Yugoslavia and which actually reinforces Western dominance.

If this experiment in local control and decision making, consistent with the EU policy of subsidiarity, is to continue and locals are to gain real and lasting control of the political process, it will be necessary for the Bosnian Serb Republic to continue to lead. To do this, RS leaders need to articulate and pursue several specific policies:

- Revive the ‘Prud Process’ based on direct negotiations – free from foreign meddling – between the parties inside Bosnia-Herzegovina, not because it will necessarily lead to agreement on the structure and function of political community, but because it empowers the leaders and citizens in the region to take charge of their own lives.
- As The RS needs to insist on elimination of the OHR, the Bonn Powers, and the PIC in 2010. These are all vestiges of overbearing concepts and policies that have long since outlived their usefulness.

- Under Dayton the RS can expand cultural, security, and especially economic relations with many other areas. In particular, the RS should seek to expand its credit line with Russia.
- Expand and improve tools to protect its financial assets and use financial assets as leverage in Bosnia and throughout the Balkans.
- Expand Ministry of Interior (MUP) police forces as a way of better protecting RS people and property. This should be seen as clearly a defensive, cautionary measure.
- Explore expanding relations with Serbia, which is quite consistent with Article IV of the Dayton Accords.

***Conclusion*** – It is a time of potentially significant change in the Balkans generally and specifically in Bosnia and the RS—it is perhaps the most important time since the advent of the Dayton Accords in 1995. There are two significant reasons for this. First, the change in administrations in Washington has brought the Balkans, and especially Bosnia, back onto the American agenda. There are those in Washington who wish to return to the old paradigm, but there also are people in Washington who see the necessity for the political communities in the Balkans to determine their own futures.

The region would be much better served by a hands-off approach by the Obama administration, with the heavy hand of imperial authority replaced by an enlightened hand of restraint. The the leaders and citizens in the region should seize the initiative, follow the lead of the Republika Srpska, and begin more forcefully to shape their own destinies.

## A New Bosnian Crisis?

James Bissett<sup>1</sup>

American renewed interest in the region is bad news for the Serbian people in general and for the Republic of Srpska in particular. The American record in the Balkans since the break up of the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990's has been disastrous. In March 1992, the Portuguese foreign minister, Jose Cutileiro, acting on behalf of the European Union, was able, through skillful diplomacy, to arrange a peaceful settlement of the Bosnian crisis by getting the Muslims, Serbs and Croats to agree to a peace plan that would give autonomy to the three groups and allow Bosnia to exist as an independent state.

Not willing to accept this sensible solution the United States sent their Ambassador in Belgrade to Sarajevo to persuade the Muslim leader, Alia Izetbegovic, to renounce the agreement and to declare unilateral independence. The Ambassador promised that after the announcement the United States would immediately recognize the new state. Izetbegovic seeing his opportunity to become the leader of the first Muslim state in the heart of Europe acted accordingly. What followed was, as to be expected, a ferocious three way civil war that cost 100,000 lives and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people from their ancestral homes.

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During the course of the war the Americans prolonged the conflict by sabotaging every effort of the European Union to arrange a cease fire and peaceful settlement. In addition, the Americans supported the Muslim cause by secretly providing them with arms and equipment and arranging for the entry into Bosnia of several thousand veteran Mujihadeen to fight against the Bosnian Serb forces. Later in the conflict it was US pressure that obtained UN approval to conduct NATO air strikes against the Serbs.

Following the end of the conflict and the peace agreement signed in Dayton in 1995, the Americans again intervened in Balkan affairs. This time it was in Kosovo where an armed rebellion had taken place by Albanians led by a terrorist group calling themselves the Kosovo Liberation Army [KLA] who were trying to break away from Serbia. The Americans again supported the rebels and through allegations that genocide and ethnic cleansing was taking place in Kosovo bombed Serbia. The bombing was done by NATO forces led by the United States and was done without consultation with the United Nations and in violation of NATO's own Article 1 that unambiguously stipulated the Alliance would not threaten or use force in the resolution of international disputes. Later the United States and most of the NATO countries recognized Kosovo independence, despite the declaration being a violation of international law and contrary to the principals of territorial integrity and sovereignty. The independence of Kosovo was resisted by the Russians who feared this blatant violation of international law would set a dangerous precedent for other groups around the world who desired to gain independence .The Russian President also warned that if Kosovo gained independence, Russia would recognize the independence of Abkhasia and South Ossetia. The Russian warnings were simply dismissed out of hand.

**Blaming the Serbs** – In addition to consistently breaking all of the international rules and violating fundamental principles that have governed the relationship between states for hundreds of years the

American conduct in the Balkans has been further tarnished by their attempt to justify their extraordinary behavior by demonizing Serbia. This has been accomplished by an organized and highly successful media campaign to blame the responsibility for all of the tragic events that occurred after the disintegration of Yugoslavia on Slobodan Milosevic and Serbia.

Today throughout the globe this simplistic view is accepted and remains unchallenged. Academics, politicians, journalists, entertainers, authors... claim the Serbs are the perpetrators of all of the crimes, the violence and the bloodshed in the former Yugoslavia.

The U.S.-backed and financed International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia [ICTY] has also played a major role in portraying the Serbs as the villains in the Balkan tragedy. Almost all of the sentences handed down by the Tribunal have been against Serbs. Several of the most serious convictions have relied on the dubious charges of “joint criminal enterprise and command responsibility,” concepts designed by the Tribunal to convict individuals of crimes of which they themselves did not commit. In contrast, some of the most notorious Muslim and Albanian Kosovars charged with crimes they did commit have been released by the tribunal or have received light sentences.

The ICTY has been hailed as a major step in bringing war criminals to justice and to ensure that those who commit crimes against humanity will not go unpunished. In fact the Tribunal at the Hague has acted more in keeping with the processes followed by the Stalinist show trials of the late 1930's. The Tribunal has been used as a propaganda machine and a convenient cover for the misguided and damaging policies followed by the US led NATO powers and because of its shameful record it has, ironically, dealt a serious blow to the very concept of international justice.

**Double Standards** – An objective analysis of U.S. policy in the Balkans since the early 1990's will observe that it has been based on

the assumption that the countries of the Balkans and the peoples living there are not quite worthy of being treated as equals under the normal laws of the community of nations. Serbia and its citizens have been accorded the status of what Rudyard Kipling, the English poet and writer, described as, “lesser breeds without the law.”

This false assumption has persuaded American politicians that the United Nations Charter, The Helsinki Final Accords and the norms of international law do not apply to the Balkans. It explains why Washington was so shocked when the Russians repulsed the Georgian assault on South Ossetia in August 2008. The U.S. government bitterly complained at that time that Russia had violated Georgian sovereignty and its territorial integrity. Only six months earlier the United States had recognized the independence of Kosovo – a clear violation of Serbia’s territorial integrity and sovereignty. Yet the hypocrisy of such protests seemed not to be noticed either by US political leaders or by the Western media.

Evidently the Americans believe they can get away with anything in the Balkans and do so without worrying about the consequences or of the dreadful damage they have done to the framework of peace and security in the world. The bombing of Serbia in 1999 was a historic turning point because it showed that the principles of the UN Charter were no longer respected by the world’s most powerful nation. Furthermore, the bombing enabled the United States to co-opt NATO into becoming, in effect, an instrument of US military power as opposed to its original role of defending Europe from Soviet aggression and operating in accordance with the principles of the UN Charter.

The subsequent recognition of Kosovo independence was simply the logical extension of policies carried out by US policy makers without regard to the fateful consequences such policies might have elsewhere or in the future. Sadly, the public conditioned by a compliant media continues to believe the rhetoric of their political



leaders and intellectual elite that America still stands for democracy, the rule of law and equal treatment for all nations.

**Decline of American Power** – At the heart of the problem is the hubris that accompanies unrivaled power based primarily on military supremacy. In the 1990's the United States stood alone as the greatest military power in the world. It could do as it wished, not only in the Balkans but anywhere. It could act without fear of reprisal. However, that power supremacy is now being challenged.

The events in Georgia in August 2008 showed that a resurgent Russia will no longer stand by and allow the U.S. to do as it wished in areas of Russia's national interest. The growing economic power of China, India, Brazil and the critical economic and financial crisis now faced by the United States must inevitably force the United States to withdraw from its dominant position as the only world power.

Moreover, added to the critical financial disaster facing the U.S. is the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the possible collapse of Pakistan, the continuing threat of a terrorist strike at home and the challenge of a nuclear armed North Korea and perhaps Iran. These developments have radically changed the geopolitical landscape. One might hope that American leaders will realize that they cannot be dealt with by the use of force or by the threat of force.

The sudden and renewed interest of US policy makers in Bosnia would indicate that there are many in Washington who are not aware of the changing balance of power in the world. How else can one explain the "re-engagement" in Balkan affairs? As history shows, this can lead to problems that reach far beyond the Balkans. After the catastrophic results of American intervention in Bosnia in the 1990's, why now risk new disaster by returning to the scene of the crime?

**Is There a Bosnian Crisis?** – Dayton ended the bloody conflict that had been raging in Bosnia from 1992 to 1995 and brought about a balance of dissatisfaction to the three warring sides. Over the past

fifteen years the country has managed to function although it is not making much progress in terms of economic prosperity or good governance. Of course, the bitterness of the savage civil war with its ethnic cleansing and mutual atrocities has not been forgotten. The Muslim leadership, in particular, remains steeped in a sense of victimhood and entitlement. Nevertheless, the country is at peace and there is no indication that any of the Bosnians – whether Serb, Croat or Muslim – are anxious to have another armed conflict erupt. While it is true there are serious obstacles to overcome if the present Bosnia is to prosper and meet the requirements for entry into the EU, what is the rush? The existence of issues to overcome does not mean there is a crisis that requires urgent resolution.

The core of the problem is the insistence that foreign input is needed to resolve local problems. The office of the High Representative is clearly part of the problem. Bosnia continues to be treated as it was following the Congress of Berlin in 1878, when it was handed over to Austria-Hungary. Today, the High Representative is another Austrian, Valentin Inzko. He and those preceding him since 1995 have acted as local “gauleiters” and are quite prepared to take sides and to exercise their dicatorial powers.

The American push for reshaping the Dayton agreement or scrapping it altogether has nothing to do with helping overcome the difficulties confronted by the three sides in Bosnia. Historically, intervention in the Balkans never has been in the interest of the local people living there but always it has been to serve the foreign policy objectives of the intervening power. If the American decision-makers hope that they can win the hearts and minds of the Islamic world by finally restoring Bosnia to Muslim rule, as it was during the long years of the Ottoman empire, they are deluded. Herein lies the real danger. Herein is the real crisis in Bosnia.

## Leave the Balkans to the Balkans

Doug Bandow<sup>1</sup>

**F**or nearly two decades the Balkans has been a major priority of U.S. foreign policy. Washington initiated military action in Bosnia and full scale war against Serbia to redraw the Balkans map. The U.S. also devoted billions of dollars and enormous diplomatic efforts to reengineer countries and territories to suit arbitrary American preferences.

Yet U.S. interests in the Balkans were – and remain – minimal at best. Absent a Cold War environment which could turn a local conflict into a global conflagration, the Balkans mattered most to the residents of the region, and much more to the Europe than to America—and not much even to the former.

One of the unfortunate consequences of the end of the Cold War was the bloody disintegration of Yugoslavia. There was more than a little blame, and more than a few atrocities, to spread around. However, allied policy was built on a destructive hypocrisy: every ethnic group could secede from Serb-dominated political entities, but Serbs could never secede from a political authority dominated by anyone else.

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This was, in fact, the only evident principle promoted by the U.S. and Europeans, and it had deadly consequences. Rather than opening the way to a negotiated if complicated redrawing of political boundaries, the Western allies insisted that the new states created out of the old Yugoslavia stay within their boundaries as drawn up, mostly arbitrarily, by Tito's communists. This prompted the inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina, that veritable microcosm of old Yugoslavia's ethnic complexity, to slug it out for control.

It was here that Washington and Brussels, if not all of the member states of the European Union, have returned to a policy of colonialism, with a new, humanitarian gloss. The new lodestar is multi-cultural democracy, irrespective of the wishes of the citizens of the particular territory involved... *unless* it is Serbs who wish to maintain a multi-ethnic state, in which case secession in the name of self-determination is the West's preferred policy. Thus, Washington's policy has been to impose—*after* the breakup of Yugoslavia, naturally—a Western vision of liberal pluralism on peoples more inclined to order their politics along ethnic lines. Moreover, the U.S., followed a bit more reluctantly by the Europeans, managed Balkan affairs with little concern for Russian interests. This policy helped spawn Moscow's punishing response to Georgia's provocative behavior in South Ossetia in the summer of 2008.

It comes as no surprise, then, that Washington's policy in the Balkans has had disappointing results. The region still is divided ethnically, politically, and religiously. While a violent breakdown of the present order seems unlikely, such a crisis would inevitably pull the United States back into conflicts largely irrelevant to its own security.

Kosovo has declared its independence with the Bush administration's support, but has won the recognition of less than a third of the world's nations. Serbs in the north refuse to submit to KLA's control, leaving Kosovo an amputated wannabe-state.

Serbia is governed by a coalition that is pro-Western in the sense of being committed to entering the European Union, but which continues to oppose an independent Kosovo. U.S. and some European officials argue that Serbia should forget its anger over being shorn of its territory and acquiesce in Kosovo's independence. According to the U.S. Government-funded Radio Free Europe, Serbia needs to make it clear to Banja Luka "that Bosnia's Serbs must seek solutions to their problems in Sarajevo and not in Belgrade." Instead of such heavy-handedness, the U.S. should forswear further intervention in Serbian politics, either directly or through government funded institutes and NGOs. The U.S. also should reduce trade barriers to Serbian commerce, to encourage private economic ties.

Ethnic tension remains a dangerous undercurrent in the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, which is effectively divided into Slavic and Albanian regions. If Kosovo eventually succeeds as an independent state, it might create an even greater draw for ethnic Albanians. In addition, Skopje remained locked in a bitter disagreement with Greece over its use of the name Macedonia. While the U.S. should encourage the two neighbors to settle the name issue, it should not further expand NATO into the Balkans, which is a security black hole. If the EU wishes to attempt to pacify the Balkans, it is welcome to do so.

The end of the Cold War should have led to a rethinking of America's role in NATO. But policing the Balkans turned into a justification for expanding the alliance and increasing U.S. military commitments. Especially now, with so many responsibilities elsewhere, the U.S. should begin rationalizing its foreign and military policies, turning outside responsibility for the Balkans over to Europe. The Europeans may whine about U.S. disengagement, but the process would be salutary for them. For years leading European officials have promoted a separate European defense and foreign policy. Yet these efforts have routinely come to naught, since there was no pressing need

for the Europeans to shift funds from undoubtedly expensive welfare states to seemingly unnecessary militaries. With the American safety net withdrawn, the Europeans would have to reconsider their security requirements.

**Bosnia the Unviable** – Bosnia-Herzegovina continues to be run largely by allied diktat a decade and a half after its creation, vulnerable to ethnic separatism within and lacking a viable economy. There is much wailing and gnashing of teeth in Washington and Brussels alike over Bosnia’s failure to blossom into a compliant would-be member of the EU as planned. Vice President Joseph Biden thus chided local leaders, and especially the Serbs, for failing to heed their foreign betters.

The fighting in Bosnia was bitter and costly, though advocates of intervention routinely exaggerated casualties for political effect. Western military pressure against the Bosnian Serbs and economic sanctions against Serbia led to the 1995 conference in Dayton. The so-called Dayton Agreement created a federal Bosnian state, within which the Bosniak-Croatian Federation and the RS could exercise substantial autonomy. The allies created the Office of the High Representative to run the territory like an imperial governor of old. When the Western allies spoke of democracy, they meant the election of compliant officials willing to implement policies decided by the imperial powers irrespective of the wishes of the ignorant locals.

The results have been disappointing. There is little self-sustaining economic growth, as statist economic policies discourage entrepreneurship and business creation; Bosnia has been ranked number 121 in the world in terms of economic freedom, and well below average on business freedom, government size, property rights, corruption, and labor freedom. Irena Jankulov, an economist with the International Monetary Fund, complains that the “overabundance of public sector officials is impeding growth.” The West has poured billions of dollars into its nation-building project, but even as \$5.1 billion was being “invested” in Bosnia, reported the *New York Times*:

“As much as a billion dollars has disappeared from public funds or been stolen from international aid projects through fraud.”

Political advances, too, have been slow. Freedom House reports that Bosnia remains gdeficient in terms of governance, independent media, and corruption. Elections have been dominated by ethnic politics, resulting in frequent interventions by the High Representative to overturn the people’s choices.

Indeed, most of the High Representatives gloried in the arbitrary exercise of their power. Wolfgang Petritsch announced that he “did not hesitate to use my authority to impose legislation and dismiss officials.” In late 2008 his successor, Miroslav Lajčak of Slovakia, criticized the Republika Srpska (RS) for being in “open defiance” of the international community (whatever that is), adding: “We don’t have to go back too far into the history to see how defying the international community usually ends up.” He also demanded that local leaders “stop criticizing” him. Boss Tweed would be jealous.

Although Bosnia theoretically is on the path to EU membership, the quasi-state has not met the requirements to allow visa-free travel throughout Europe. Less than half of the population expresses any enthusiasm for joining the EU. Morton Abramowitz and Daniel Serwer admitted, “Bosnia is a nonfunctioning state.” Jan Mus at the University of Maastricht wrote of “the main Bosnian problems, namely the inefficiency of the state institutions, the economic underdevelopment, the harmful division of competences between the state and the regions, and the lack of reconciliation between three ‘constituent’ nations.” That’s quite a list.

**Those Serbs Again!** – What most upsets U.S. and European officials is the failure of some million and a half Serbs of Bosnia-Herzegovina to cheerfully accept allied dictates. In December 2008 Lajčak complained that the RS should “stop provoking the international community and be serious, state-making partners.”

The Serbs have jealously guarded their autonomy, refusing, for instance, to integrate their police force with that of the Federation. Kosovo's declaration of independence understandably has led to increased Bosnian Serb interest in independence. Although RS prime minister Milorad Dodik reiterates his support for Dayton and the EU, he also has threatened to hold an independence referendum if the Serbs are further pushed into a centralized structure. That elicited vehement denunciations from Washington and Brussels.

James Lyons of something called Democratization Policy Council sees Dodik engaged in a stealth campaign, emulating "Montenegro's gradual path to independence by blocking state institutions from functioning and attempting to take state-level competencies for his entity, while attempting to claim attributes of sovereignty for Republika Srpska." Radio Free Europe complained that "In Dodik's view, the future of the Republika Srpska is safe—it is Bosnia that will not last. His arrogance ... is an international jibe meant to annoy his political partners and force Muslim and Croat leaders to ask for an ethnic 'divorce'."

The effrontery of pursuing the agenda of Banja Luka instead of Washington and Brussels! Once called "the most promising young Bosnian politician of his generation" by Richard Holbrooke and "a breath of fresh air" by Madeleine Albright, he now is denounced as an ultranationalist. Holbrooke claims that "Dodik's actions have been fuelled by Russian encouragement and petrodollars." Ian Traynor of the *Guardian* called Dodik "the biggest" problem in Bosnia. Vice President Biden said "on many occasions Dodik has not been helpful."

Helpful in advancing the U.S. and EU agenda, that is. Dodik was supposed to serve the interests of the United States and the European union, rather than those of his people. The preferences of those who elected Dodik and other RS officials are irrelevant. Choosing to represent them has earned him uniform obloquy abroad. The attacks indicate that Washington and Brussels are worried. The



opening salvo came in October 2008, when Paddy Ashdown and Richard Holbrooke claimed, in a joint article published in several respected dailies on both sides of the Atlantic, that “the division of Bosnia that was [war crimes suspect Radovan Karadžić’s] dream is now more likely than at any time since he became a fugitive.” Messrs. Ashdown and Holbrooke further contended that “the country is in real danger of collapse.” Their like-minded colleagues Morton Abramowitz and Daniel Serwer worried about Bosnia sliding “toward greater instability,” with “the U.S. most on the sidelines,” even though “America’s massive investment in the region in the 1990s may go the way of the subprime market.” Reflecting similar concerns, Vice President Biden lectured his way through the Balkans in May 2009. “This must stop,” he told the Bosnian parliament: “Your only real path to a secure and prosperous future is to join Europe.” The nationalist rhetoric must end as people work across ethnic and party lines, lest Bosnia “descend into ethnic chaos that defined the country for the better part of a decade.”

Most Europeans are not enthused about an attempt by Washington to seize control of Bosnia’s agenda, fearing that the result would be sledgehammer tactics that would destroy Bosnia. It is hard to see how Bosnia-Herzegovina can work as a real country. Most Croats and Serbs feel loyalty to neighboring nation states dominated by their own ethnic groups. The Muslims have begun to emphasize their own identity, mandating Koran lessons in once multi-ethnic Sarajevo. While the allied occupation could stop widespread violence and killing, it could not kindle warm feelings of national comradeship.

There is no reason for the U.S. and Europe to force Bosnia to remain a unified state. And whatever Bosnia’s future, it is of little interest to the U.S. Exactly why Washington should care about, let alone insist that Bosnia’s Croats and Serbs remain within a country called Bosnia has never been explained. If the Europeans believe this to be an important goal, then let them pursue what amounts to a colonial

project. It is not in America's interest to do so, whether with troops, money, or diplomacy.

**Senseless U.S. Meedling** – Washington's insistence on intervening so deeply in a region that is not even of peripheral security interest to the United States never made sense. If anyone had an interest in attempting to manage Yugoslavia's dissolution it was the European Union, and if the Europeans didn't believe that objective to be worth military intervention, it certainly did not warrant American involvement.

It always is easier to get into than out of a geopolitical tar pit. Washington should extricate itself from the region, initially by bringing home its remaining troops and cutting off aid funds. Washington should make clear that the peoples of the Balkans must create their own destinies. It is not America's place to impose its preferred version of nations, polities, constitutions, laws, or any other political or legal arrangements. To the extent that outside powers should be involved, it is the Europeans. If they are so inclined, let them oversee the Balkans. In return, the U.S. should promise not to hector or second guess the Europeans.

The Balkans is of a peripheral interest for America. The U.S. no longer can afford to waste such efforts on such frivolous commitments. Nor, frankly, can the Balkans people afford it any longer. While the policies are formulated at little apparent expense in well-appointed offices by well-paid officials in the imperial city of Washington, the high costs are paid by real people living in real towns in real countries in the region.

It is time America left the Balkans to the peoples of the Balkans.

## **A Matter of Principle: Bosnia and the EU**

Ronald L. Hatchett<sup>1</sup>

One of the most troubling things about the international reaction to the Balkan situation since the 1990's is the lack of consistent principle in U.S. and EU policy towards the region. When Croatian and Slovenian nationalists unilaterally declared their independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, the EU, followed by the U.S., recognized these moves as a legitimate expression of national self-determination. When Bosnia also announced its unilateral separation from Yugoslavia in 1992, on the basis of a stage-managed referendum which violated Bosnia's own constitution, the EU and U.S. again validated the action on the basis of the right of self-determination.

One could question whether this was good policy, but at least the policy appeared to be based on a principle which gained prominence as part of the proposals President Woodrow Wilson advanced in early 1918 for shaping a new Europe in the eventual aftermath of the Great War. But when Serb populations in Croatia and Bosnia, and Croats in Bosnia, tried to assert the principle of self-determination to control their own destinies in the rapidly shifting

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Balkans political structure, the EU and the U.S. abruptly replaced the principle of self-determination as a guide to building a new Europe with the principle of multi-culturalism. The idea now was that the various peoples of the Balkans should live in harmony within the boundaries of the newly declared states (even though these boundaries were arbitrarily established by Tito's regime).

This principle reflected the thinking of the Europhile social engineers in Brussels who envision a future European identity that eclipses national identity as Europeans' pre-eminent self-image. It also was consistent with the "new world order" thinking of the G.H.W. Bush and Clinton administrations.

The wisdom of this policy is not even debatable: it condemned the peoples of this region to four years of inter-ethnic fighting with thousands killed or maimed and even more displaced from their homes. When peace finally came in 1995, it was based on international acceptance of the forced removal of nearly all Serbs from their ancestral homes in the Krajina area of Croatia, and a Bosnia and Herzegovina comprised of a loose union of two entities. The constitution of the new Bosnia was actually enshrined in the Dayton Agreement that ended the fighting. It established Bosnia as a single state but guaranteed each ethnic group the right to control most aspects of their day-to-day lives through autonomous governments in each republic. The only real power given to the central government was the right to represent Bosnia in international matters. Thus, peace in Bosnia since 1995 has rested on respect for the self-rule of each people over their own territory and societies.

In 1998-99, U.S. and EU Balkan policy made another abrupt reversal, this time regarding Kosovo, an autonomous province of Serbia. This ancient homeland and spiritual center of the Serbs had seen a steady encroachment of ethnic Albanians since the end of World War II. By the 1980s the Albanians were nearly 90 percent of the population but only one-seventh of the overall population of Serbia.

The Albanians used their local majority and new political powers to begin to intimidate non-Albanians in Kosovo. Inter-ethnic tensions worsened throughout the 1980s. By the late 1990s violent outbreaks against Yugoslav state authorities by an armed group calling itself the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA, UCK in Albanian) became frequent, resulting in a further increase in emigration of Kosovo Serbs and other ethnic groups. The KLA was branded a terrorist group by the U.S. State Department at this time.

As the Yugoslav government stepped up its effort in the 1990s to restore order and preserve the integrity of the state, the U.S. and EU reversed their previous commitment to the multi-cultural ideal and returned to the principle of self-determination, saying that violence by Kosovo Albanians was a legitimate manifestation of the principle. The process culminated in a U.S./EU/NATO ultimatum at Rambouillet in February 1999, which effectively told Yugoslavia to surrender de facto sovereignty over Kosovo to NATO and the Albanians, or face NATO military action. The Yugoslavs refused and underwent an intense NATO bombardment between March 24 and June 10, 1999.

The agreement ending the conflict [*UNSCR 1244 Principles for Kosovo Peace*] provided for Kosovo to remain a part of Yugoslavia and for Yugoslavia to control Kosovo borders and Serbian cultural sites. Unfortunately the UNSC 1244 provisions were never fully implemented. Yugoslav security forces were never allowed to take up positions on the frontiers of Kosovo or at Serbian cultural sites. A European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo, (EULEX) eventually replaced the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), although Russia and Serbia, among others, considered the EU mission illegal.

Albanian ethnic cleansing attacks against Serb and other non-Albanian groups were unchecked by the EU-led forces. During the years of international control, over 200,000 non-Albanians in Kosovo were driven from their homes. In March 2004, for example, ethnic

Albanians took part in a three-day wave of attacks on Serbs and other minorities, as well as on United Nations buildings and property. Nineteen people were killed and 4,000 were forced from their homes. Additional 34 Christian churches and monasteries, many of them centuries old, were destroyed.

Despite this record of violence the EU and U.S. acquiesced to a unilateral Albanian declaration of independence on 17 February 2008 and on 15 June 2008 the EU representatives in Kosovo turned over power to a new Kosovo-Albanian government. The new “country” is hardly an example of political, economic and social success. After eight years as an international protectorate and billions of dollars in aid, its economic prospects are grim. Organized crime is big business: drugs, prostitution, guns. Non-Albanians have been herded into smaller and smaller enclaves. Still, EU nations, with the exception of Spain, Greece, Cyprus, Slovakia, and Romania, have recognized the Albanian-controlled government, as has the United States. Russia, China, India, and a host of countries in South America, Africa and Asia have yet to do so. It was natural therefore for the Serbs of the Republika Srpska to wonder if the Kosovo events meant that there is a new international norm in place allowing them to invoke the self-determination principle to realize their own national aspirations. The answer they are getting is clear: absolutely not, the principle of multi-cultural inclusiveness still applies in Bosnia and Kosovo. The argument for this policy most often used by EU and U.S. authorities is that Bosnia and Kosovo must strengthen their multi-cultural cohesion so that they can meet the requirements for membership in the EU.

The general requirements for EU membership are outlined in the so-called Copenhagen Criteria, set out in December 1993 by the European Council. These criteria require a candidate country to have:

- Stable institutions that guarantee democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;

- A functioning market economy and the ability to cope with the pressure of competition and the market forces at work inside the Union;
- Ability to assume the obligations of membership, in particular adherence to the objectives of political, economic and monetary union.

On the face of it, Republika Srpska and Serbian Kosovo meet these requirements, but Brussels bureaucrats have compiled pages of specific changes they say must be made in the status quo before accession to EU membership can be considered.<sup>1</sup> The specifics are long and arduous to read, but the gist is simple: autonomy of the ethnic subdivisions must be given up and political control concentrated in the central government. While EU statements on the prospects of Bosnia's joining the EU cite economic and legal issues that need reform, it is clear that political change is the real price of admission. Among the highest priority changes envisioned in the referenced document are:

- Ensure that State-level ministries and institutions are adequately financed, operational and properly equipped.
- Strengthen administrative capacity [of the central government] in preparation for implementing Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA)<sup>2</sup> and Interim Agreement (IA) commitments.
- Take measures to achieve more functional and sustainable institutional structures and better respect for human rights and

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<sup>1</sup> A comprehensive summary of these requirements can be found in 2008/211/EC: Council Decision of 18 February 2008 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the European Partnership with Bosnia and Herzegovina and repealing Decision 2006/55/EC. *Official Journal L 080*, 19/03/2008 P. 0018 - 0031

<sup>2</sup> The SAA is the vehicle the EU is using to encourage "reform" of Bosnia's constitution. According to the European Commission: *The purpose of the Stabilisation and Association Process is to establish special relations between the countries concerned and the Union in exchange for reforms with a view to accession, which will involve aligning their legislation more closely with that of the Community.*

fundamental freedoms, including by agreeing and adopting changes to the constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as necessary.

An SAA between the EU and the Bosnian central government was initialed on 4 December 2007 and signed on 16 June 2008. The central government foreign minister says his government will submit an application for EU membership between April and June 2009. Since the signing of the SAA, those who would like to put an end to the autonomy of Serbian areas have mounted an ever intensifying chorus calling for an end to the current confederation arrangements and for a more active U.S. and EU role in making this happen.

A strident voice in this chorus is that of Paddy Ashdown, the international High Representative to Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2002-2006. On 6 April 2009 he told the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe (known as the U.S. Helsinki Commission) that the U.S. must work with the EU “to move Bosnia and Herzegovina towards a position not just of stability but also functionality as a state”:

[T]he progress of forward movement of Bosnia and Herzegovina towards a position not just of stability but also functionality as a state has now moved substantially into reverse. There are elements – largely in the Republika Srpska – who would wish to even undo the reforms toward statehood that have already been established. And indeed, [they] have been allowed to do so... Belgrade should be told that if it wants to proceed toward EU membership, it must ‘actively support’ the EU-U.S. policy in Bosnia by telling the government in Republika Srpska that the question of secession ‘will not ever be on the table.’

Some players within the Obama administration are beating the reform drum too. Richard Holbrooke, currently Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, was the lead representative for the Clinton administration in the Balkans. In October 2008 he co-wrote an opinion piece in the (London) *Daily Telegraph* calling for “a new transatlantic policy, backed by Washington’s full engagement and



strong EU conditionality, which can lead to deeper and broader international involvement in Bosnia.” Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of State Hilary Clinton also have a long and distinguished record, dating from the 1990’s, supporting Muslim sides in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo.

On his May 2009 visit to Bosnia, Vice President Biden told the Sarajevo parliament that “making the right choice [for the future of the people of Bosnia] means that the leaders of this country must stop the pursuit of narrow ethnic and political interests instead of the national interest.” Following Biden’s remarks, in an interview with Radio Free Europe, Muslim Presidency representative Haris Silajdžić made clear the message he heard: “We need to start with reforms immediately and clearly point to those who are blocking them.” The kind of reforms he has in mind were revealed in an earlier interview with the BBC: “Our constitutional arrangement is such that actually it rewards the aggression and genocide and ethnic cleansing and so on.”

*BBC:* Are you saying that for you the political future for Bosnia has to rest upon eliminating the Republika Srpska, created under Dayton? That is, the autonomous Serb region inside Bosnia?

*Silajdžić:* Yes I have a different future for Bosnia. I'd like to see a Bosnia not based on ethnic regions. I'm fighting for more centralised power... Sometimes for the sake of stability and peace you have to actually do something, not follow the line of least resistance, and break some eggs to make this omelet.

The policies emerging in Brussels, Washington, and Sarajevo seem to converge along similar lines: Bosnia and Kosovo have no future unless they gain membership in the European Union, but membership in the European Union depends upon their forging a multi-cultural state under a centralized government.

I find this particularly puzzling since one of the most dynamic political realities underway in the EU is devolution – *decentralization* of power precisely to satisfy self-determination concerns of ethnic

groups. A 'Europe of the Regions' became a rallying cry during the 1990s for interest groups committed to more participative and more decentralized forms of governance.

The concept is of a Europe in which the powers of the nation state are supposedly seeping away in two directions – upwards to Brussels as a result of a process of ever-closer integration and downwards to the regions as a result of the growing trend towards devolution. Spain, the United Kingdom, and Belgium are among those active in transferring power from the center to ethnic regions.

The second article of Spain's constitution of 1979 recognizes the rights of "regions and nationalities" to self-government. Spain is divided into 17 "autonomous communities," each with its own elected parliament and government. Over the past 30 years more and more powers and money have been devolved. The regional governments are now responsible for schools, universities, health, social services, culture, urban and rural development and, in some places, policing and even foreign policy. Catalan and Basque territories and population have been designated "nations." These nations have their own police force and collect their own taxes, less than 10 percent of which is handed over to the central government in Madrid.

Devolution is also well underway in the UK. The 'New Labour' government, formed by Prime Minister Tony Blair in 1997, began a process of transferring certain governing powers to Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. Through the provisions outlined in three key pieces of legislation, The Scotland Act 1998, The Government of Wales Act 1998, and The Northern Ireland Act 1998, differing degrees of home-rule were defined for each region. But each of these three distinct ethnic regions now has a government with legislative and executive branches and responsibility for education, local government, housing, tourism, civil and criminal law, emergency services, economic development, agriculture, and sports. Matters reserved to the U.K. government in London include foreign policy, national security, fiscal

policy, international trade policy, nuclear safety, certain areas of social security and employment policy, and certain areas of health policy.

Devolution in Belgium has almost reached the point of dissolution of the state. Until the 1960s, the country had a single government for the whole country. But over the past four decades, a series of constitutional reforms have devolved ever more powers to ethnic groups and regions. Belgium's unique devolution reforms split the country three ways – twice. In the 1970s, “communities” were set up on the basis of language and culture. They represent the Dutch-speakers, French-speakers, and the small German-speaking population. Then, in the late 1970s and 1980s, three geographical regions were created: Flanders to the north, Wallonia to the south, and the capital, Brussels. Today Belgium and its constituent parts have a total of six governments, each with its own parliament and cabinet ministers. The regional and community governments have wide ranging powers over such things as the economy, employment, agriculture, water policy, housing, public works, energy, transport, the environment, town and country planning, nature conservation, credit, and foreign trade.

Another major inconsistency in the idea that accession to the EU can only be had by states which have resolved all ethnic divisions is the fact that Cyprus was admitted to the EU in 2004. The northern third of the island has made unilateral declaration of independence as Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, separate from the government recognized by the EU. It has hosted a military force from Turkey since 1974. But according to the Directorate-General for Enlargement of the European Commission, the whole of the island is in the EU, even though in the northern part of the island, in the areas in which the Government of Cyprus does not exercise effective control, EU legislation is suspended in line with Protocol 10 of the 2003 Accession Treaty. The situation will supposedly change once a Cyprus settlement enters into force,

and it will then be possible for EU rules to apply over the whole of the island. However, the suspension does not affect the personal rights of Turkish Cypriots as EU citizens. They are citizens of a Member State, the Republic of Cyprus, even though they may live in the northern part of Cyprus, the areas not under government control.

The European Commission also supervises an aid program for northern Cyprus “for the benefit of the Turkish Cypriot community aimed at putting an end to the isolation of this community and helping prepare for the reunification of the island.”

Then there is the experience of the Czechs and Slovaks. These two constituent nations of the now-defunct state of Czechoslovakia decided to part ways three years after the fall of the authoritarian communist government. It took a mere six months to split the 74-year-old dual federation after the June 1992 elections. As secessionist wars raged in Yugoslavia, Czechs and Slovaks peacefully agreed to split their country's assets and liabilities, shook hands and went separate ways. Both countries are now members of the European Union.

Could not the same principle be applied to the Republika Srpska vis-à-vis Bosnia-Herzegovina? If the EU and the U.S. expect to be respected as the leaders of the “international community,” setting and enforcing norms of behavior, then they must base their policies on recognizable principles. These principles should be applied consistently in every situation and towards every people. This has not been the case in the Balkans. While attempting to depict its actions as motivated by high moral standards, the policy of the EU and U.S. in fact has bounced from one principle to another, whatever is necessary to justify the outcome desired.

The only real principle apparent in EU and U.S. Balkan policy over the past two decades seems to be, “It’s our policy and we like it.”

## America's Last Balkan Adventure

James George Jatras

**A**s has become painfully obvious, personages from the Bill Clinton Administration, having returned to power under Barack Obama, have made it a priority to “reenergize” U.S. policy in the Balkans. The contours of their effort are clear: throttle the Republika Srpska (under the guise of moving the “Dayton process” forward) and secure greater international support for the pseudo-state decreed by Washington and its hangers-on in Kosovo. Both can be summed up further as antagonism toward the well-being of Serbia as a state, regardless of its current “pro-Western” coalition, and toward Serbs in the region as a whole.

The passage of House Resolution 171 on May 12, 2009, can be taken as a manifesto of the initiative. The product of behind-doors collaboration among committee staffers, administration officials, think tank “experts,” and pro-Muslim activists, it was approved in the Committee on Foreign Affairs by unanimous consent (i.e. without a formal vote) and adopted on the floor by voice vote. The rubber-stamped resolution by the Elected Representatives of the People becomes part of the “policy-making” process in which the U.S. commits itself to further “progress” in the Balkans. But such political theatre should not be sneered at: the proponents of American re-intervention think such shams are a necessary part of their agenda, along with orchestrated op-eds, ‘analyses’ from think tanks, and all the

rest of the contrived campaign. The Clinton retreads and their nominally Republican neoconservative allies believe they need such machinations in order to cajole the Europeans into yet one more Balkan blunder – and to roll the Russians.

The real purpose is not hard to discern. First, the Democrats want to point to their Balkan “success” of the 1990s in contrast to GOP “failure” in Iraq. Not mentioned is that the Republican neocons who fathered the Iraq war are precisely the wing of the GOP that supported Bill Clinton in his Balkan aggression; nor that most of the Democratic Balkans hawks now wishing to pile success on success were themselves early supporters of George W. Bush’s Iraq war. As did their predecessors in Vietnam, they only turned against the war when it began to be politically inconvenient.

Second, as was the case in the period leading up to the Bush Administration’s push for the Kosovo-Albanians’ UDI, a major factor is the chimera of garnering the goodwill of the Islamic world through Washington’s trumpeting its support for Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo. All this pandering has resulted in absolutely no evidence of success. In the Muslim mind what is registered is not that “the U.S. helps Muslims” but that “the U.S. stood idly by for too long as Muslims were victimized.” This sense of grievance was originally manufactured by the very proponents of Muslim interests in the Balkans who themselves now vainly seek to capitalize on it. One could hardly find a better example of the Washington bipartisan establishment’s utter incomprehension of the motives, mindset and methodologies of the global jihadist movement.

The Balkan reinvigoration campaign faces two obstacles. First is the European allies. While no one would ever accuse the Europeans of having courage when it comes to standing up to the United States, there may be a limit to their patience. Obama is still enjoying a protracted honeymoon with the Europeans. It would be hard to overestimate their relief that they have seen the last of the despised

George W. Bush and what they regard as the imperious, dictatorial style of his administration. How soon they forget that the style originated not with Cheney and Rumsfeld but with Albright and Holbrooke, and indeed in the very Balkans to which these worthies seek to return with their dubious talents. When, as seems likely, they reengage with the same soft touch they used before, the Europeans might be heading for divorce court sooner than anticipated.

Ideology and egomania are among the great blinders to reality, and the recycled Clintonistas are great exemplars of both. As criminals returning to the scene of the crime, they believe they can bully and bluster their way forward as they did over a decade ago. Living in a 1990s time warp they seem not to notice that the world has changed since they last held the levers of state power.

The United States is far weaker than it was in their glory days, and relatively speaking Russia, China, and India are far stronger. Apart from its economic woes, the United States finds itself in two intractable wars. With regard to Iraq, Obama is backpedaling on his earlier pledge of an early withdrawal. In Afghanistan he indicates a bull-headed determination to escalate the war there. Looking to make the Afghanistan war his own, as Nixon did the one in Vietnam, he has sent as special envoy to the Afghan-Pakistan quagmire – none other than Richard Holbrooke, of Balkan infamy. If his earlier track record is any indication, we can look forward in the near term to the collapse of the perennially dysfunctional Pakistan with the obviously catastrophic consequences. That possibility is not lost on the Europeans, who will drag their feet on further commitment of soldiers and material to the NATO mission in the Hindu Kush as doggedly as they did during the preceding administration. In addition, it seems there is no end of difficulties confronting the new administration, whether from the increasingly erratic Kim Jong-Il to the possibility that Israel might launch a strike on Iran's nuclear facilities.

The crucial link, as always, is what kind of leadership is coming from the Serbian side. In this respect Republika Srpska is in far better shape than Serbia itself. Prime Minister Milorad Dodik has become the “nationalist” lightning rod for every slander, personal or political, human malice can dream up.

Bolstered by an unprecedented level of popular support for a post-Dayton Bosnian Serb leader, Dodik has to date stared down every effort to undermine Republika Srpska’s status under Dayton. Coupled with a level of economic activity that outpaces not only the moribund Muslim-Croat Federation but neighboring Croatia and Serbia, Dodik can accurately claim that his state is an island of relative stability in the region. His stance, coupled with American obstruction of handing full authority from the huge powers of the Office of the High Representative to the relatively weak EU Special Representative, gives Europeans further reason to ask why they should upset Dayton’s delicate balance of equal dissatisfaction to please the Boomerang Generation from the 1990s.

What we are left with is that the Obama Administration and its fellow-travelers, in both parties, has a surfeit of “experts” and “activists” itching to kick over the applecart in the Balkans but a dearth of options as to how to do so. In the dying days of the American “hyperpower,” relative weakness may be the best means for an infusion of sanity into our overextended and misdirected foreign policy.

No doubt, there are dangerous days ahead as we wait for reality to sink into even the smallest minds in Washington, as it inevitably must. Until that happens a lot of damage might still be done, and not just in the Balkans. But in any case, the power curve is against the success of the effort at reengagement, which has at most about two years, perhaps far less, to achieve its objectives. Let us hope that will be the end of America’s ill-fated and destructive Balkan adventures.



## Fourth Generation War and Balkan Folly

William S. Lind<sup>1</sup>

**A**mong the rumors historians least like hearing are suggestions that outside Powers intend once again to meddle in the Balkans. Such intervention seldom attains its objectives, and too often it has proven self-defeating, as Ottomans and Hapsburgs can alike attest. It has been said that the Balkans tend to produce more history than they can consume locally. The consequences of events in the Balkans, especially when those events involve outside powers, have often extended far beyond the region. The death of the West in the civilizational catastrophe we know as World War I began in the Balkans, not only immediately with the assassination of Archduke Francis Ferdinand in Sarajevo but also in larger origins, especially in the Bosnian Annexation Crisis of 1908.

Regrettably, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton wants to renew her husband's administration's assault on the Serbs, this time under the label of an "unfinished business in the Balkans." For reasons that are difficult to comprehend, the Clintons apparently regard the fiasco of their Balkan wars in the 1990s as a success. Its principal strategic result was to poison American-Russian relations, with unfortunate

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<sup>1</sup> William S. Lind is the leading authority on Fourth Generation Warfare, a prolific author, and Director of the Center for Cultural Conservatism at the Free Congress Foundation

consequences from which American interests still suffer. Locally, it protected one European base for Islamic jihadis, Bosnia, and created another, Kosovo. If that is what the Clintons regard as success, it is difficult to explain why U.S. troops are fighting such jihadis in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The twin objectives of a renewed American “engagement” are to eliminate Republika Srpska, or reduce it to an empty shell devoid of constitutional prerogatives, and to compel Belgrade to renounce all Serbian claims to Kosovo and cut off ties with the remaining Serbs in the province. Exactly why the United States would wish to engage in such an enterprise in the Balkans when it has its hands more than full with unsuccessful wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is difficult to say.

The reality of overextension is so obvious one may dare hope that wiser minds in the Obama administration may scotch any such plans. Nonetheless, it is useful to consider just how badly a renewed American “engagement” would be likely to hurt America and serve its enemies. Conventional strategic analysis makes the point clearly enough:

- America’s relations with Russia would take another blow, just as U.S. and NATO forces in Afghanistan find they need alternate line of supply through Russia.

- NATO, already strained by the Afghan conflict, would suffer further internal division; not all NATO countries share the Clintons’ enthusiasm for making Europe safe for jihad.

Consequences in the Balkans are predictable, and greater instability is almost certainly one of them. Washington could face yet another theater demanding American commitment, at a time when we have no forces to spare.

All of these consequences and more would follow from actions in a region where the United States has essentially no interests. We would face, if not a “war of choice” like Bush’s Iraq adventure, at least

a first class mess of choice. In terms of serving American interests, we would do as well to intervene among the penguins of Antarctica.

To understand in full why re-engaging America in the Balkans is folly, we need to look beyond the framework of traditional diplomacy and strategic analysis. In the 21st century, any analysis of prospective actions on the world stage should consider a new factor: Fourth Generation war.<sup>1</sup>

Since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, states, at first in Europe and subsequently throughout the world, have based their actions on an assumption that only states were actors. The state system had a monopoly, and with the exception of an occasional “small war” with colonial natives, whose outcome was pre-determined, all foreign policy and consequent military action was conducted within that monopoly. That assumption no longer holds. Within the last several decades, the state system has begun to break down.

War has escaped the state’s monopoly established by Westphalia. What some military theorists call Fourth Generation war, the fourth dialectically qualitative change in the conduct of war in the modern period (i.e., since 1648), increasingly faces states with non-state opponents. More, unlike 19th century colonial conflicts, the outcome is not pre-determined in favor of the state. On the contrary, in most such conflicts around the world today, including those in Iraq and Afghanistan, the state is losing. In the face of 4GW, the most vital interest of all states – including the U.S. – is preserving the state system. Actions such as America's invasion and occupation of Iraq, which destroy a state and replace it with an area of stateless chaos, are fundamentally inimical to all states.

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<sup>1</sup> This concept was first described in an article in the October, 1989 *Marine Corps Gazette*, "The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation" by W.S. Lind, Col. K. Nightengale USA, Capt. J.F. Schmitt USMC, Col. J.W. Sutton USA and Lt. Col. G.I. Wilson, USMC.

Any prospective action, such as a renewal of America's crusade against the Serbs, must be evaluated first and foremost from this prospective. The central question must be, will the action strengthen or weaken the states involved and, with them, the state system itself?

The starting point for such an analysis is the question of legitimacy. The origin of Fourth Generation war is a generalized crisis of the legitimacy of the state. That crisis varies greatly in intensity, from places such as Somalia where testate has vanished to much of Africa where the state is a polite fiction to places such as Switzerland and most monarchies where the legitimacy of the state transcends the de-legitimizing follies of the political class. But this variation should not obscure the basic fact almost everywhere, the state faces crisis of legitimacy of greater or lesser intensity.

The origin of the crisis is that most state governments no longer represent the interests of the state's people. Instead they represent the interest of a New Class, a globalist elite that has more in common with its counterparts in other states than with its own state's population. In general, the New Class has three characteristics: it cannot make things work (consider the current world-wide economic crisis), it uses its position and privilege to exempt itself from the consequences of things not working (Wall Street gets bailed out but not Main Street), and it cares about only one thing, remaining the New Class.

Faced with the corruption of the state, more and more people world-wide are transferring their primary loyalty away from the state. They are giving it instead to a wide variety of other things: races and ethnic groups within races, religions, ideologies, "causes" such as animal rights and environmentalism (itself at least a proto-ideology), business enterprises (legal or illegal), gangs – the variety is almost limitless. Many people who will not fight for the state are ready, even eager, to fight for their new primary loyalty. Interestingly, many of

these new primary loyalties are also old. They are what people gave their allegiance to before the rise of the state.<sup>1</sup> Again, the most vital interest of all states, including the U.S., is retarding this dynamic. The state system itself is at stake. Actions that undermine the legitimacy of other states must be avoided. Their likely consequence is the spread of Fourth Generation war and an intensification of the crisis of the state system. If we look at the prospective re-involvement of the U.S. in the Balkans, with the objective of inflicting further injury on the Serbs, from this perspective the conclusions are strongly cautionary.

The current Serbian government's legitimacy is already shaky. Unlike the Milosevic government, Serbia's current rulers are in sympathy with the globalist elite. They earnestly seek, among other things, Serbia's accession to the European union, an anti-nationalist entity that has far less support among European peoples than among Europe's elites. This Serbian government's electoral support is fragile; few actions would more strongly undermine its legitimacy than its acceptance of the permanent loss of Kosovo. Serbs' attachment to Kosovo, their ancestral homeland, is difficult to overstate. Those who understand it might suggest that no Serbian government could survive, that accepted an ultimatum to renounce Kosovo.

Viewed from a Fourth Generation perspective, pressure on Serbia to renounce Kosovo would weaken the Serbian state regardless of how it responded. If it yielded, its government would lose legitimacy and some of its people would lose trust in the state itself and start acting accordingly. If it rejected the demand, Mrs. Clinton and her ilk would presumably demand retaliatory action that would prevent Serbia's government from delivering what it had promised in return for cooperation with the "international community," i.e., improved economic conditions and ever-closer ties to "Europe." Either way, the government, and possibly the state as well, face a serious loss of

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War*. New York: The Free Press, 1991.

legitimacy, which is to say that the outcome, in terms of U.S. interests, is negative. Putting one's own country in a "lose-lose" situation is generally not regarded as the pinnacle of diplomatic achievement.

The "government" of Kosovo is a fiction, because there is no state. Kosovo was never a state, and never will be one. Its inhabitants identify themselves as Albanians (the misnamed "Kosovars" of the Western media) or Serbs – a fast-disappearing community. Kosovo is a victory for the forces of the Fourth Generation, a stateless region where they can do as they please. It is already a base for many such entities, including jihadis, drug smuggling gangs, people smugglers and criminal enterprises of various sorts.

The improbability of Kosovo ever becoming a real state, regardless of what the international community may do or intend, suggests that the state system would be better served by making Kosovo once again part of a real state, or more than one state.

The situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina is similar to that in Kosovo. Bosnia was never a state since the domain of King Tvrtko almost seven centuries ago – and even then it was just one of his many illustrious domains. Bosnia is not a state now, and it never be a state. The Croat-Muslim federation is unstable, accepted neither by Croats nor by Moslems. The Croats want union with Croatia, and the Muslims want to control the whole of Bosnia. There is no chance that Bosnia will evolve beyond that point. The one entity in Bosnia with legitimacy derived from the loyalty of its citizens is Republika Srpska; however, it, too, is not a state. Its legitimacy springs from the fact that it is a government by the Serbs representing the people who regard themselves as Serbs, not anything else, least of all as "Bosnians." The state they envision being citizens of, one day, is Serbia.

Meanwhile, just as in Kosovo, the absence of a real state (and its impossibility) render Bosnia a happy hunting ground for Fourth Generation entities. The Muslim portion of Bosnia reeks with jihadis and gangs of many varieties, who find Muslim Bosnia a useful base.

In sum, the net effects of the Clintons' Balkan policy have been to weaken one state, Serbia, and create two new stateless regions, Kosovo and Bosnia. If current U.S. policies persist, Serbia itself might become a hollow state, while both Kosovo and Bosnia are doomed to remain so. America would find that, in direct contradiction of its interest is maintaining and strengthening the state system, it has weakened it further. This prospect raises a question: how might the Concert of Europe (with the U.S. staying out) act in the Balkans to strengthen the state system there?

First, it could seek to buttress the Serbian state. That would mean facilitating Serbian economic development while allowing the Serbian government to offer its people a reasonable prospect of retaining some claim to Kosovo. So long as the prospect exists, Kosovo does not become a decisive de-legitimizing issue for the Serbian government.

Kosovo will remain effectively a stateless region and a home to Fourth Generation entities until it is incorporated into a real state. The best way to accomplish that goal is partition between Albania and Serbia. The establishment of a new Serbian-Albanian border somewhere in central-northern Kosovo should probably be followed by voluntary exchanges of population. The timing and conditions for an eventual partition can remain vague, but there will be no real state in Kosovo until it happens.

Bosnia-Herzegovina might be used as a prequel to the partition of Kosovo, since Bosnia is already effectively partitioned. In the end Republika Srpska should join Serbia, as compensation for the prospective loss of the greater part of Kosovo. The other half of the Bosnian entity could either be partitioned between Croatia and a Muslim rump state, or absorbed by Croatia in its entirety.

These steps would put all Balkan territory under real states, thereby strengthening the state system, which should be Europe's and America's primary strategic objective in the face of Fourth Generation

war. The settlement should be acceptable to all the local powers, at least for the foreseeable future; no Balkan settlement is ever permanent. Serbia would regain part of Kosovo and be compensated for the loss of the rest by gaining Republika Serpska; Albania and Croatia would both gain territory; and in time the Bosnian Moslem population would come to perceive the benefits of having a *real* state of their own, however small.

In contrast, should the United States yet again intervene in the Balkans, by attempting to force Belgrade to formally cede Kosovo and by abolishing Republika Serpska, the almost certain result will be a victory for the forces of Fourth Generation war. Kosovo and Bosnia will remain quasistates where Fourth Generation entities run rampant. Beyond the Balkans, the U.S. would send a clear message that it does not respect the state system, that it merely uses the system when it wishes to, and violate its rules with impunity. That would be a further blow to the legitimacy of the state system, in direct contradiction of the most vital interest of all states.

The Balkans now face Washington with perhaps the most important question of the 21st century: does it understand how the rise of Fourth Generation war alters basic strategic calculations or does it not? The answer to that question will go far in determining the fate of the United States, and the state system itself.



# **The Srebrenica “Genocide”: Totem of the New World Order**

John Laughland

The events at Srebrenica in July 1995 now enjoy a special status in international criminal law. Uniquely among the many clashes which occurred during the ten-year violent break-up of Yugoslavia, those events have been formally characterised as *genocide* by both the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the International Court of Justice.

It is notable that no court, not even the ICTY Prosecutor, has ever characterised the events in Kosovo in 1999 as genocide, even though it was precisely on the basis that genocide was occurring there that NATO attacked Yugoslavia that spring.<sup>1</sup>

The history of this accusation of genocide is important. It was first levelled formally on 20 March 1993, when the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina initiated proceedings at the ICJ against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for the application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948. The case was eventually ruled on in 2007 but the timing of the initial filing is key: it came within weeks of the vote of UN Security Council Resolution 808 (22 February 1993) which had called for the creation of an international criminal tribunal to prosecute war crimes in the former

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<sup>1</sup> Prime Minister Tony Blair said, “It is no exaggeration to say that what is happening in Kosovo is racial genocide.” *My pledge to the refugees*, BBC News Online, 14 May 1999.

Yugoslavia. The ICTY at The Hague was indeed quickly brought into being with a further Security Council resolution, 827, passed on 25 May 1993. This use of the criminal law to intervene in the wars of Yugoslav succession was unprecedented. Never before had an international criminal tribunal been created with such intrusive powers, or as a peace-keeping measure. American judges at Nuremberg in 1947, acting under the terms of the Charter of the original International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, had specifically ruled out such judicial interventionism. Their own power, they said, flowed only from the fact that Germany had no government of her own because she had surrendered unconditionally in May 1945:

Within the territorial boundaries of a state having a recognised, functioning government presently in the exercise of sovereign power throughout the territory, a violator of the rules of international law could be punished only by the authority of the officials of that state... In Germany an international body has assumed and exercised the power to establish judicial machinery for the punishment of those who have violated the rules of the common international law, a power which no international authority without consent could assume or exercise within a state having a national government presently in the exercise of its sovereign powers.<sup>1</sup>

This lack of either precedent or consent by the states concerned did not bother the advocates of a new world order. The ICTY was itself only one part of an intense and general UN interventionism in the Yugoslav wars. In the 18 months following the outbreak of fighting in Bosnia on April 2, 1992, no fewer than 47 Security Council Resolutions were adopted; 42 statements were issued by the President of the Council. No issue in the UNSC has ever generated so many resolutions and statements over a comparable period.

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<sup>1</sup> *Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals under Control Council Law No. 10*, Volume III, "The Justice Case" (1947), Washington DC, 1951, pp. 970-971.

The interventionism was both judicial and military. The UN force, UNPROFOR, having been despatched in 1992, the spring of 1993 also saw the adoption of Security Council Resolution 819 (on 16 April 1993) which proclaimed the creation of a UN protected “safe area” around the town of Srebrenica. At that time the military balance of power had shifted in favour of the Bosnian Serbs and the area controlled by Muslims around Srebrenica had been greatly reduced. Srebrenica linked the northern and southern parts of Serb controlled territory and thus had a great strategic importance.

The creation of a “safe area” there – which, as even the ICTY admits,<sup>1</sup> the Muslims then used as a base for launching three years of raids on the surrounding Serb villages – was key to preventing the Serbs from realising their goal of seceding from Bosnia-Herzegovina with a viable state. The same status of “safe area” was later accorded to a number of other Muslim-held towns in Bosnia by Security Council Resolution 824, passed on 6 May 1993. In other words, the accusation of genocide formally lodged with the ICJ in March 1993 was made at a critical time. The Bosnian Muslims had suffered heavy military defeats and were on the point of losing the war. Their international strategy was to seek foreign moral and military support on the basis that Yugoslavia was practising genocide against them.<sup>2</sup>

When the International Court of Justice finally ruled on the Bosnian suit in 2007, it threw out every single accusation of genocide except where Srebrenica was concerned. This was partly its own

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<sup>1</sup> ICTY, Prosecutor v. Radislav Krstic, Trial Chamber Judgement, 2 August 2001, par. 24.

<sup>2</sup> The claim of genocide was supported by various academics in the West. See Norman Cigar, *Genocide in Bosnia, The Policy of “Ethnic Cleansing”*, (Texas A&M University Press, 1995), reviewed by Noel Malcolm in *The Sunday Telegraph* on 11 June 1995: “If you want just one work which explains the real nature of this war, you should read this one.” Yet Srebrenica is nowhere mentioned in that book because the events of July 1995 still lay in the future: the accusation of genocide, once again, long pre-dated them.

reading of events and partly that of the ICTY, whose rulings it felt it could not disregard. In the intervening 14 years, the ICTY had entered convictions for genocide in Srebrenica against Radislav Krstic in 2001 and Vidoje Blagojevic in 2005.

The original suit used the most inflammatory language to argue that genocide was being committed.<sup>1</sup> This makes it all the more perplexing that the original claims of a vast genocide allegedly perpetrated against an entire people have been whittled down so far that only Srebrenica remains. In the ordinary meaning of the word, genocide is a massive state-sponsored programme. The Nazis' persecution of the Jews provides the paradigm: certainly, it was with the Nazi genocide in mind that the father of the Genocide Convention, Raphael Lemkin, proposed the original draft and the authors drew up the final version.

In contrast to the Naz program of extermination which involved massive logistical planning, huge amounts of manpower and materials, more than a decade of ideological racism, and implementation over a period of several years, the mass executions which occurred after the fall of Srebrenica took place in little over a week in July 1995, and in a sporadic and impromptu fashion. Whereas Hitler's anti-Semitism had been publicly expressed in *Mein Kampf*, published in 1925, and whereas he had threatened "the destruction of the Jewish race in Europe" in a speech to the Reichstag on 30 January 1939, i.e. nearly three years before he finally gave the order physically to murder the

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<sup>1</sup> The opening paragraph of the Application (20 March 1993) reads: "Not since the ... revelations of the horrors of Nazi Germany's 'Final Solution' has Europe witnessed the utter destruction of a People, for no other reason than they belong to a particular national ethnical, racial, and religious group as such. The abominable crimes taking place in the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina at this time can be called by only one name: genocide. Genocide is the most evil crime a State or human being can inflict upon another State or human being. The sheer enormity of this crime requires that the nations of the world stand together as one, and with a single voice stop the destruction of the Bosnian People."

Jews<sup>1</sup>, the ICTY judges say that the genocidal plan at Srebrenica did not come into being until on or around 13 July 1995, i.e. spontaneously in the heat of battle.<sup>2</sup> And whereas the Nazis targeted all Jews, the genocidal plan supposedly conceived by the Bosnian Serbs did not target the Bosnian Muslims as a whole but only, according to the ICTY, “the Bosnian Muslim population of Srebrenica”.<sup>3</sup>

There have been complaints about this ruling, largely on the basis that the findings are exaggerated and unsubstantiated, that the figure of 7-8,000 is far too high, that most of the victims of executions were combatants. These arguments fail to grasp that we are dealing not so much with an anti-Serb bias in the practice of international criminal justice, but rather with a program of international interventionism, based on dangerously weak legal reasoning and disregard for due process, of which the Serbs happen to be the guinea-pigs.

Srebrenica has been raised to the legal status it now enjoys partly because the town's fall in 1995 to Bosnian Serb forces represented a defeat not only for the Bosnian Muslims but also for the international community as a whole – not only its policy of creating safe areas but also, and more generally, of the interventionism practised by various parts of the “international community” ever since the EU interposed itself between the parties to the conflict in July 1991. Srebrenica was important – at least for the supporters of interventionism - because the UN was there, not just because it was a Muslim enclave. The United Nations as an institution, it must be remembered, had embarked in the 1990s on an aggressive policy of military, political and judicial interventionism in both Iraq and Yugoslavia; it continued to apply the highly intrusive sanctions regime

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<sup>1</sup> Edouard HUSSON, *“Nous pouvons vivre sans les juifs”, Novembre 1941, Quand et comment ils décidèrent de la solution finale* (Paris: Perrin, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> ICTY Trial Chamber, Prosecutor v. Radislav Krstic, 2 August 2001, par. 573.

<sup>3</sup> ICTY Appeals Chamber, Prosecutor v. Radislav Krstic, Judgement, 19 April 2004, par 19, and Trial Chamber Judgement, 2 August 2001, pars 560 and 561.

against Iraq throughout the decade and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and of course was happy to become the administrator of Kosovo after 1999. Its own credibility, and that of the states which dictated its policies, was destroyed when the enclave fell.

The activists of judicial and military supranationalism are therefore determined to make the genocide charge stick somewhere. Perhaps they want revenge for the military defeat of 1995. Genocide offers two key legal advantages in pursuit of the goal of creating a new international system no longer based on state sovereignty. These advantages are in addition to the rhetorical advantage which derives from putting the Bosnian Serbs into the same category as the Nazis.

The first legal usefulness of the genocide charge is that, according to the questionable way in which international criminal law is currently formulated, the threshold of proof required to secure a conviction for genocide is lower than it is for crimes against humanity. To secure a conviction for crimes against humanity the Prosecution must prove that the acts were “widespread or systematic”.<sup>1</sup> No such condition applies for genocide. Moreover, crimes against humanity can be committed only against civilians, whereas genocide can include the killing of military personnel as well.<sup>2</sup> In other words, spontaneous or disparate acts involving the killing of military personnel can be classified as “genocide”; this is exactly what has happened in the case of Srebrenica.

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase “widespread or systematic” appears in Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. The relevant Article 5 of the ICTY Statute does not contain the phrase but the Trial Chamber determined in its very first trial that the acts “must be undertaken on widespread or systematic basis and in furtherance of a policy”. See Trial Chamber judgement in Prosecutor v. Dusko Tadic, 7 May 1997, par. 626.

<sup>2</sup> Article 5 of the ICTY Statute specifies that crimes against humanity are directed “against any civilian population”, a phrase repeated in the relevant Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the ICC. See also John Quigley, *The Genocide Convention, An International Law Analysis*, (London: Ashgate, 2006), p.12.

The second legal advantage of genocide - from the point of view of the project of creating a system of supranational coercive criminal law which can constrain states and convict their leaders - is that genocide, unlike crimes against humanity, is the subject of a binding international treaty, the 1948 Genocide Convention. To be sure, the normal rules of international behaviour have been severely distorted in recent years by the antics of the Security Council and the United Nations in general in creating international criminal tribunals which, in the case of the ICTY, the ICTR and the ICC, have all indicted heads of state or government who would normally enjoy sovereign immunity. This is especially the case with President Omar Al-Bashir of Sudan, a country which has not signed the Rome Statute but who was nonetheless indicted by the ICC in March 2009. International judicial activists can more or less do what they like these days. However, they are on stronger ground when there is actually a treaty in existence which forbids genocide and requires states to prevent and punish it.

The importance of the existence of a treaty, as opposed to the existence of a norm in mere “customary international law” – i.e. whatever judges or even academics say they think the law is – was illustrated with the landmark ruling in the British House of Lords against General Pinochet, issued on 24 March 1999 (the day the bombs started raining down on Yugoslavia). Activists for universal jurisdiction *ratione materiae* were very excited by this ruling because it seemed to confirm that even heads of state could be put on trial when certain kinds of crimes were alleged against them. However, their victory was less decisive than they sometimes pretend. It is true that the House of Lords overruled the principle of sovereign immunity, but it did so only on the basis that Chile itself – which claimed the immunity for Pinochet – had in fact consented, in 1988 when Pinochet was himself head of state, to the terms of the 1985 UN Convention by signing and ratifying it. The noble Lords deduced from this that Chile had earlier revoked its own immunities in this area and that its

revocation remained in force because it had never subsequently denounced the Convention.

The status of genocide as a crime prohibited by treaty law, rather than customary international law, was also raised in the ruling given by the ICJ in the *Bosnia v. Serbia* case in February 2007. Article 9 of the Genocide Convention gives the ICJ the power to rule on whether it is being respected or not. This part of the Genocide Convention was extensively discussed in the ruling, specifically the question whether the responsibility of states could be incurred under its terms. The Court concluded that the responsibility of states could be so incurred, a finding which represents a departure from the classical rules of international law according to which states are the upholders of the criminal law and, as such, not the subjects of it.<sup>1</sup> Many states derogated from this provision, Article 9, when they ratified the Genocide Convention. They entered reservations saying they did not accept the jurisdiction of the ICJ. However, Bosnia has entered no such reservation and although Yugoslavia did, it agreed to litigate the case before the ICJ in 1993. In other words, the principle is now established that genocide can be litigated at international level in Bosnia, and that the responsibility of states can be engaged.

There is a final point, weaker than the previous two. Some international lawyers argue that there is no right of secession for states which have committed massive violations of human rights. They also claim that there does exist a right of secession when self-determination is violently suppressed. Such arguments may obviously be invoked against Republika Srpska which could be branded *un État génocidaire* if it tried to secede, or to resist fresh attempts to dissolve its autonomy.

The positive law on this is thin, as it is indeed on secession in general: the only real text which can be adduced is Resolution 2625 adopted at the 25<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the United Nations on 24

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<sup>1</sup> See paragraphs 155 – 182 of the ICJ ruling, 27 February 2007.



October 1970.<sup>1</sup> The reference is vague and indirect; consequently some authors deny that it exists as a principle of customary international law. But it is a feature of recent international legal practice that the pronouncements of law lecturers are invoked as sources of law itself. Moreover, as the abuses of due process often committed by the ICTY and other tribunals show<sup>2</sup>, international criminal law is currently in a dangerously fluid state. The first conviction under the Genocide Convention was that of Jean Kambanda, the former Prime Minister of Rwanda, in 1998: this is all very recent law, as is shown by the quotation by the ICTY of very new precedents in its rulings on Srebrenica.<sup>3</sup> It can be easily pressed this way or that according to the political imperatives of the day, and according to the institutional self-interest of international judges, who take decisions free of any meaningful oversight.

The convictions for ‘genocide’ at Srebrenica may be used as a stick with which to beat Republika Srpska. The ICTY has declared an explicit link between the July 1995 events in Srebrenica and the existence of RS itself. In 2004, the Appeals Chamber upheld the Trial Chamber’s 2001 finding that, “without Srebrenica, the ethnically Serb state of Republika Srpska they (the Bosnian Serbs) sought to create would remain divided into two disconnected parts, and its access to Serbia proper would be disrupted”:

The capture and ethnic purification of Srebrenica would therefore severely undermine the military efforts of the

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<sup>1</sup> “Declaration on Principles of International Law Concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation Among States in Accordance with the Charter of the United Nations,” esp. provisions in the section entitled “The Principle of Equal Rights and Self-Determination of Peoples”.

<sup>2</sup> See my books *Travesty: the Trial of Slobodan Milosevic and the Corruption of International Justice* (London: Pluto Press, 2007) and *A History of Political Trials from Charles I to Saddam Hussein* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008).

<sup>3</sup> ICTY Trial Chamber judgement, Prosecutor v; Radislav Krstic, 2 August 2001, par 571.

Bosnian Muslim state to ensure its viability, a consequence the Muslim leadership fully realized and strove to prevent. Control over the Srebrenica region was consequently essential to the goal of some Bosnian Serb leaders of forming a viable political entity in Bosnia...<sup>1</sup>

This paragraph is specifically a justification for the Appeal Chamber's finding that genocide *did* occur: the judges are seeking to justify their ridiculously baroque finding that a massacre of a tiny percentage of a "protected group" (the Bosnian Muslims) can be proof of genocidal intent. Aware that their rulings on genocide appear to cheapen the concept so far that it becomes nugatory, they say that the importance of the Muslim community of Srebrenica "is not captured solely by its size" but instead by this strategic importance and by the fact that the town was a UN protected safe haven for Muslims. It is for this reason, argue the judges, that the destruction of the "Bosnian Muslim population of Srebrenica" was "emblematic"<sup>2</sup> of the Bosnian Muslims as a whole and therefore evidence of full genocidal intent.

Srebrenica, then, is an existential issue, not as much for Republika Srpska as for those activists who seek to consolidate once and for all that outcome which the former ICTY Prosecutor, Louise Arbour, said she had achieved in 1999: "We have passed from an era of cooperation between states to an era in which states can be constrained."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> ICTY Appeals Chamber, Prosecutor v. R. Krstic, Judgement, 19 April 2004, par.15.

<sup>2</sup> par. 16.

<sup>3</sup> *Le Monde*, 6 August 1999.

## Islam, the West, and Orthodoxy

Gregory M. Davis<sup>1</sup>

**T**he Balkans have always presented a challenge to the student of geopolitics, and the conflicts of our own time are no exception. The analyst gropes from one handhold to another, dogged by misinformation and ideological spins. In coming to grips with the forces behind the breakup of Yugoslavia and the plight of its successor states, one comes to appreciate the inadequacy of a traditional realist approach. National self-interest on the part of the United States and other great powers alone does not explain their actions – least of all the persistent U.S.-led campaign against the Serbs throughout the region, now into its fourth American administration. The policy analyst must reach for more powerful tools.

The breakup of Yugoslavia and the *de facto* secession of Kosovo from Serbia mark significant episodes in the post-Cold War struggle between three major world-historical forces: U.S.-led globalization, jihad, and the old nation-state system. These three forces are the current expressions of the three civilizations that have competed for pre-eminence in the Balkan peninsula for a thousand years: the West, Islam, and the Orthodox East.

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The Orthodox nations of Eastern Europe, which still retain characteristics of “whole” societies based in common language, ethnicity, territory, and religion, remain one of the few genuinely conservative forces on the world stage. In simplified but meaningful terms, the Orthodox East has once again found itself squeezed in a vice between two imperialistic, violent ideologies, happy to wreck Balkan civilization for their own misguided self-interests. Despite its Christian elements, the West has once again shown itself willing to undermine the Christian East even while strengthening Islam, the ancient enemy of both. To that end, during the Yugoslav civil wars of the 1990s, the US-led West, also known as the “international community,”

a) encouraged the violent breakup of Yugoslavia;

b) supported a hard-core Islamic supremacist, Alija Izetbegović, president of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in his efforts to build the first Islamic state in Europe in modern times; and

c) supported, both diplomatically and militarily, Muslim terrorists in Bosnia and Kosovo in their efforts to kill and ethnically cleanse Serb civilians.

US-led Western policy continued in a similar vein during the Bush administration with the recognition of Kosovo, and, sadly, shows few signs of changing under the Obama administration.

To some extent, the Western-backed assault on Yugoslavia of the 1990s may be regarded as exploitation of a target of opportunity. Communism was falling apart all over Europe. One of the Yugoslav republics, Croatia, was an old ally of a newly-reunified, resurgent Germany, which was happy to bring her old confederate into the Western fold; and Yugoslavia itself, in the decade after Tito’s death, had endeavored to cauterize its internal ethnic and religious fault lines with only incomplete success.

The West’s demonization of the Serbs was easy. First, the Serbs posed no conceivable threat to Western interests, so there was no

danger in antagonizing them; second, they showed themselves unable to present their side of the story to Western audiences with any efficacy. Villainizing them, therefore, was basically costless. It is far easier to pick on a weak, largely innocent party than a strong, culpable one with the capacity to retaliate. By throwing the Serbs under the bus, one of the West's objectives was evidently to court Islamic world opinion. Commenting on US support for the secession of Kosovo from Serbia, the late Tom Lantos, Chairman of the US House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, put it this way:

Just a reminder to the predominantly Muslim-led governments in this world that here is yet another example that the United States leads the way for the creation of a predominantly Muslim country in the very heart of Europe. This should be noted by both responsible leaders of Islamic governments, such as Indonesia, and also for jihadists of all color and hue. The United States' principles are universal, and in this instance, the United States stands foursquare for the creation of an overwhelmingly Muslim country in the very heart of Europe.

In short, the West has been trying to appease the Islamic world by supporting their cause in the Balkans in the hope of benefiting from, one supposes, more freely available oil and fewer aircraft crashed into crowded office buildings.

The West's continued persecution of Serbia, however, years after Yugoslavia's demise, indicates deeper forces at work. America's support of Muslim Albanian terrorists in Kosovo, in particular, bears noting. It is clear that, beyond even horribly distorted considerations of realpolitik, there is an ideological affinity between the contemporary West and Islam that has escaped most observers. This affinity has enabled the West and Islam to work hand in glove against a common enemy: the old nation-state system and its leading representatives in the Orthodox Christian, Slavic East. Understanding this affinity is key to understanding Western motives in the Balkans and the continued anti-

Russian, anti-Slavic, anti-Orthodox attitude prevalent in the West, especially the United States.

At first blush, the claim that the West and Islam would be able to cooperate in any significant way appears insupportable. The West and Islam seem to be polar opposites. Islam, in its traditional form, mandates the imposition of Sharia law over the globe, which includes stoning for adultery, amputation of limbs for theft, a blanket moratorium on the construction of Jewish and Christian houses of worship and all evangelism, the forcible conversion of pagans and atheists on pain of death, the proscription of usury, and the execution of apostates – to start with. While Islam seeks the political supremacy of “god” and his law, the West today seems intent on shoving God and His laws as far out of the public square as possible. Western man is now sovereign; he can do no wrong. (Needless to say, he would not last very long under Sharia.)

Yet while there are major differences between Islam and the West, there are powerful similarities. Islam from its beginnings aspired to global mastery. According to Muhammad and the Koran, the law of Allah is prescribed for the globe; any nation or individual who does not submit to Islamic rule is ipso facto in a state of rebellion with Allah and must be brought into obedience by force.

Islam, in short, constituted an early form of globalization. It does not recognize the legitimacy of nations, peoples, or governments except insofar as they submit to Islamic overlordship. So it is with the West today. Only if a nation-state is willing to play ball with the West on its terms is it considered legitimate. Like Islam, the West’s ambitions are global: there is no longer any long-term accommodation possible between the West and alternative systems. The West employs its parochial definitions of “human rights,” “democracy,” “free markets,” etc. to cajole and browbeat nations that refuse to submit to its economic and strategic hegemony, or it employs economic pressure and, if that fails, military force. Nations such as China, Pakistan,

Kazakhstan, and Saudi Arabia, whose record on “human rights,” etc., is checkered at best, escape serious Western pressure thanks to their willingness to play the West’s political and economic ballgame.

The common ground then between the West and Islam is that they are both programs of globalization that have as their object the destruction of the old nation-state system based on the sovereignty of states and nationhood defined by ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and territorial commonalities. Both Islam and the contemporary West are essentially empires that seek global hegemony and do not recognize the legitimacy of alternative forms of political, social, and cultural organization if they refuse to submit to the suzerainty of the larger system. With this in mind, it is not hard to see how the West and Islam would connive in the destruction of independent nation-states such as Serbia that have historically resisted both systems. In Marxian parlance they are “objective allies” in this common aim.

Following the breakup of the Soviet bloc, the Eastern European countries, especially the Orthodox countries, became the leading champions of the old nation-state system. Thanks to the Iron Curtain, these countries were relatively preserved from the poisonous effects of Western consumerism, multiculturalism, and general social-cultural suicide. Since the fall of Soviet Communism, most of the former east-bloc states have been falling over themselves to jump on the Western bandwagon. Those former Communist states such as Russia and Serbia that retained more of their Slavic, Orthodox, and national consciousness, and which consequently present the greatest potential resistance to Western and Islamic expansion, attract the special antipathy of both.

We should bear in mind that Western policies for the past thirty years have been substantially pro-Islam and pro-jihadist: US support for the mujahideen fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan; EC and later EU encouragement of Muslim immigration into Europe and the propagation of Islamic identity among European Muslims; the

replacement by Western force of the relatively secular regime of Saddam Hussein with a government based in Sharia; criticism of Russia for effective counter-jihad measures in Chechnya and the Caucasus; support for elections in the Palestinian territories with the resulting success of the jihadist group Hamas; etc. Furthermore, it is easily demonstrated that, for all the bluster about fighting the “war on terror,” the US is not really that serious about reducing the threat of Islamic terrorism. Former Vice President Richard Cheney remarked shortly after leaving office that another major terrorist attack is not a question of if but when. Yet reducing the likelihood of another such attack would be hugely aided by a few simple steps that the US and the West refuse to adopt.

Nine years after September 11, the most spectacular national-security-intelligence failure in world history, the United States, the most awesome economic and military power of all time, has yet to gain control of its borders or to name the enemy that it is supposedly fighting. Rather, it insists on keeping its borders largely uncontrolled and on affirming, time and again, the preposterous notion that Islam is “a religion of peace” in contradiction to the religion’s own core texts and historical record. In such an absurd context, continuing US support for Muslim expansion in the Balkans is almost unsurprising.

The failure to implement serious border-control measures or to name the enemy indicates that the U.S. is less interested in protecting itself from terrorist attack than it is in advancing the cause of its own global empire, its “imperial democracy.” The building of the empire is significantly aided by the persistence of a grass-roots, violent, religious ideology such as Islam. By abetting the growth of jihadist culture both in the Islamic world and in the West, the Western empire both undermines old national identities and fosters a justification for its own ever-expanding power. Islam is a perfect foil for Western imperialism: it provides a powerful solvent to the old nation-states that beautifully compliments the cultural alienation that is the West’s weapon of



choice. Islam's global ambitions help justify Western overseas military and intelligence adventures worldwide, i.e. the "global war on terror."

However, while the ideologies of Islam and the contemporary West both aspire to global mastery, the fact is that the latter is increasingly the only game in town. While small groups of Orthodox Muslims continue to press their violent, jihadist agenda sporadically around the globe – with the occasional spectacular success – Western economic, cultural, and military power is, for the most part, carrying everything before it. The Islamic states themselves, with only a few exceptions, are integrating themselves into the Western-dominated global game. The Islamic world, while still possessed of an abiding religious orientation, remains fragmented and largely incapable of bringing new nations into the Islamic fold save for the tactic of populating them with Muslims (and this only insofar as other nations permit them, e.g. Western Europe).

Islam is increasingly emptying from the center. Islamic governments tread a fine line between the mandates of Sharia, which are fundamentally impractical, and the overwhelming military and economic power of the West. More and more, Islamic states are showing themselves willing to play ball with the West while pushing strict Sharia and jihad to the periphery and into Dar al Harb, The House of War, the non-Muslim world. Syria, Jordan, Egypt, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, and most Islamic countries are pretty well integrated into the Western-dominated economic and military global order even while significant elements in those countries wax nostalgic for the good old days when Sharia ruled much of the known world and Dar al Islam made the infidel nations tremble. The distinctly Islamic policies of those states, such as they are, come mainly in the form of enforcing as much Sharia at home as needed to pacify Muslim conservatives and subsidizing jihadist terrorism abroad. Their leaders are happy to meet and shake hands with

the leading infidel powers because they know those powers hold the economic and military trump cards.

These trump cards are played with remarkable consistency almost regardless of the partisan orientation of particular Western governments. Whatever the differences between the major poles of “mainstream” political thought in the West today, advancing the cause of imperial democracy is a point of general agreement, especially in the US. Under a right-wing US administration, imperialism assumes an “America-first” veneer; under a left-wing administration, “multilateralism,” “co-operation,” and “engagement” serve as its cover. President Clinton’s Yugoslav adventures were generally portrayed as “humanitarian” actions; the Asian wars of the two Bushes were painted as “patriotic” wars to safeguard US interests and get the bad guys. Grains of truth in all cases, atop heaps of falsehood. U.S.-led Western imperialism thus takes on different shades depending on the partisan flavor of the sitting administration, but the overall program advances largely unhindered.

Neither the left nor the right can provide effective resistance to the general imperial program.

On the left, we have the running criticism of US-led foreign and defense policy as provocative, destructive, and unjust. There is much truth there. Unhappily, bound up with such criticism is a standing apology for everybody else, including the Islamic world, as innocent victims of U.S. aggression, and a contempt for the remaining noble elements of the West such as Christianity and genuine patriotism.

On the right, there is recognition (more so) of the dangers and distortions of non-Western ideologies, such as Islam, and of the progressive cultural suicide of the West, yet there is little understanding of the failures of American policy or of the destructiveness of Western military adventurism.

The errors of the one are pounced on by the other, and vice versa, such that the inane left-right ping pong match proceeds unimpeded. The actual policies of both wings, however, prove remarkably similar. The US administrations since the end of the Cold War have all engaged, at one time or another, in a major overseas adventure that directly involved US combat forces. The continuity goes back even further, but, with the decline of Soviet Communism, there is no major counterweight to American-led power, and the imperial tendencies of the West have burst into the open. Gulf War I, the NATO campaign against the Bosnian Serbs, the NATO campaign against Serbia, Afghanistan, Gulf War II, and the Obama administration's new Afghan offensive are really aspects of the same program even while Republican and Democratic administrations find somewhat different ways of justifying them. Imperial democracy rolls on.

Hopes that a new Democratic administration would reconsider the program of imperial democracy have not been borne out. Having been promised "change," President Obama's supporters have in fact got pledges to keep 50,000 troops in Iraq indefinitely and of a much wider war in Afghanistan. The Obama administration has not so much rethought the wisdom of imperial democracy as rehashed it.

Of special relevance to the Serbs is the return of Clintonian logic to U.S. policy in the Balkans. Lamentations about the Bush administration's "disengagement" from the Balkan scene have been giving way to new calls to "re-engage," which can only mean bad news for the Serbs and the general health of the region. Calls for the US to reassume leadership in Bosnia by Balkan perennials Paddy Ashdown and Richard Holbrooke as well as various think-tankers eager to relive the glory days of Clintonian anti-Serb strong-arm diplomacy all have the same thrust: the Serbs – whether in Belgrade, Republika Srpska, or the remnant in Kosovo – still haven't learned their lesson, and still need to be taught one.

As long as Serbs desire to remain Serbs – to retain their distinctive ethnic, linguistic, cultural inheritance – they remain *personae non gratae*. Writing in 2009 in the *Wall Street Journal*, Morton Abramowitz and Daniel Serwer, while pointing out the Bosnian Muslim leadership’s program of undermining the power-sharing arrangement with Republika Srpska in the federal republic, hasten to blame Serbs for the ongoing tensions in both Bosnia and Kosovo: “The root cause for most of this instability still rests in Belgrade.”

Nowhere, it seems, is anyone willing to consider whether the Dayton accords actually settled anything. The persistent “tensions” in the region are substantially Western-induced iatrogenesis guaranteed to leave underlying issues unresolved and the way cleared for generations of Western diplomatists to peddle their hackneyed wares. The visit to the region by Vice President Biden – one of the most vociferous antagonists of the Serbs during the Clinton years – affirms that US policy towards the Serbs is once again serious and seriously misguided.

The Western war against the Serbs is part of a general program that the Western empire would very much like to extend to the current champion of the nation-state system and historic ally of the Serbs, Russia. What distinguishes Russia from other countries today is (a) that she is a nation-state – a territorial, ethnic, linguistic, cultural and religious whole – and (b) that she has shown a will and a capacity to remain that way. Like Serbia, her national-religious consciousness runs deeper than most Westerners can fathom. Following the disastrous 1990s in which Russia adopted Western-style “reforms,” Vladimir Putin led his nation back onto a path of national regeneration that has stirred the ire of the Western globalizers.

One of Russia’s greatest offences is the rejection of the Western “separation” of church and state. In the Orthodox tradition, the nation is an organic whole that cannot be categorically compartmentalized into political versus religious, secular versus spiritual. To “separate” the church from the state is akin to separating

the soul from the body, i.e., to kill it. The fruits of the West's "separation" are everywhere apparent: empty churches, rising crime and delinquency, divorce, climbing suicide rates, and the waning of the social survival impulse in the form of collapsing birth rates. These problems are not unique to the West, but they prevail in proportion to the extent to which a given society has adopted the contemporary Western program of moral-cultural suicide.

The ongoing US-led persecution of the Serbs is closely linked with the one of the most persistent strains of Western policy, namely, its Russophobia. Since the collapse of Soviet hegemony in Europe, the US-led West has instituted a series of highly aggressive policies that evince a total disregard for Russia's traditional sphere of influence. Further expansion of NATO to Russia's borders may directly involve the United States and all of Western Europe in any conflict between Russia and the Baltic countries, territories that Russia directly ruled for centuries. For Westerners to get some idea of the extreme lengths US-led anti-Russian policy has reached since the close of the Cold War, they should try to see things from Russia's point of view.

How would America react, one wonders, if the old USSR had effected policies comparable to America's since 1989? Try this: Twenty years ago, the democratic regimes of the NATO countries disintegrate and are replaced with pro-Soviet regimes that expel American troops. Next, in 1991, the United States itself suffers an internal upheaval that sees a massive economic contraction and the secession of Alaska, Hawaii, and Texas. During this time of US weakness, civil war breaks out in the United Kingdom in which the Warsaw Pact intervenes and facilitates the breakup of the country. In 1998, the US defaults on its debt and the dollar collapses. Then, in 1999, unhappy with English "oppression" of the Scots, the USSR bombs London for seventy-eight days. The Soviet Union then extends Warsaw Pact guarantees to Western Europe, Canada, and the former US states of Hawaii and Alaska. Now the USSR is preparing a mutual

defense agreement with Texas and building a missile shield in Quebec to safeguard against rogue Latin American states.

Absurd? The foregoing is a fair approximation of how Western policy appears from a Russian standpoint. That such an aggressive policy is sincerely defended in the West as reasonable and defensive testifies to the unlimited extent of Western aims. While those aims entail the subversion and ultimate destruction of strong nation-states such as Russia, the process of national disintegration is not only for foreign consumption. The West so far has been most successful in undermining its own constituent nation-states. The general strategy of the empire is to undermine the natural and organic means of political and social organization so as to leave its own power unchecked – even at the expense of its own constituent nation-states. Imperial democracy is truly supranational. The nation-states in the West are almost as much targets for social, political, economic, and territorial dissolution as non-Western nation-states.

The Western-sponsored ideological movements of multiculturalism and moral relativism (to name but two) serve to delegitimize the principles of common ethnicity, language, religion, and territory around which peoples and nation-states have historically organized. By leaving the official institutions outwardly intact while eviscerating them from within, the empire can implement its aims without fear of effective organized resistance from within the legal-constitutional channels of power.

The money and media interests that serve the empire's agenda have become the true centers of power, the real government, even while the official legislative, executive, and judicial institutions retain the appearance of authority. The beauty of "democracy" is that it engenders a constantly shifting landscape that is easily manipulated. The delegitimation of ethnicity (in particular among the dominant Western ethnicity, whites), language, religion (in particular, traditional forms of Christianity), and territory forestalls any attempt by

representatives within the official institutions to reclaim their national inheritances.

Acknowledging the West's crimes against the Serbs, terminating the continuing injustices of The Hague "war crimes tribunal," and reversing the policy on Kosovo would be the right places to start a process of long-term recovery. Supporting the national and religious reawakening of Russia, as a healthy model for nation-states everywhere, would be another.

The unyielding expansion of the Western empire is today the greatest threat to peace and freedom in the world. The diplomatic and military campaigns directed against the Serbs during the past twenty years and the West's willingness to ally itself with as alien and destructive an ideology as Islam, are some of the most vivid examples of the lengths to which the U.S.-led West will go to impose its will on nations that seek to resist imperial democracy.

The West's treatment of the Serbs should be a cautionary tale for nations such as Russia, who have so far resisted Western pressure by virtue of their greater size and power. The West now offers the nations of the world two options: submit to Western economic and strategic dominance and remain intact, or seek to remain outside the Western orbit and face destruction. In either case, the result – the loss of independence and nationhood – is the same. It is the same sort of "choice" that revolutionary ideologies from Islam to Communism have offered and it should galvanize resistance everywhere.

Like all revolutionary programs that have sought world mastery, imperial democracy can only end in material and spiritual oblivion. The Western political and economic order is already showing the strain. The question is whether genuine forces of conservation in the West can succeed in reigning in the excesses of imperial democracy before a Western internal collapse or a violent confrontation with Russia. So far there is not much ground for optimism.

## *Afterword*

### **Causes and Legacy of the Bosnian War**

Srdja Trifkovic<sup>1</sup>

**A**t a time when the U.S. power and authority are challenged around the world, some key players in President Obama's team see the Balkans as the last geopolitically significant area where they can assert their "credibility" by postulating a maximalist set of objectives as the only outcome acceptable to the United States, and duly insisting on their fulfillment. We have already seen this pattern with Kosovo, and now we see an attempt to stage its replay in Bosnia under the demand for constitutional reform, i.e. centralization.

The advocates of unitary Bosnia studiously ignore the fact that similar U.S. policies contributed to the war 18 years ago. In March 1992 the late Warren Zimmermann, the last U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia before its breakup and civil war, materially contributed, more than any other single man, to the outbreak of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The facts of the case have been established beyond reasonable doubt and are no longer disputed by experts.

Nine months earlier, in June 1991, Slovenia and Croatia declared independence, a move that triggered off a short war in Slovenia and a sustained conflict in Croatia where the Serbs refused to accept Tudjman's fait accompli. These events had profound

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consequences on Bosnia-Herzegovina – which was a veritable Yugoslavia in miniature. The Serbs (34 percent) adamantly opposed the idea of Bosnian independence. The Croats (17 percent) predictably rejected any suggestion that Bosnia-Herzegovina remains within a Serb-dominated rump Yugoslavia.

Alija Izetbegović had decided a year earlier that Bosnia should also declare independence if Slovenia and Croatia secede. On 27 February 1991 he went a step further: “I would sacrifice peace for a sovereign Bosnia-Herzegovina, but for that peace I would not sacrifice sovereignty.” The process culminated with the referendum on independence (29 February 1992). The Serbs duly boycotted it; just 62 percent of voters opted for independence, Muslims and Croats; but even this figure was short of the two-thirds majority required by the constitution. This did not stop the rump government of Izetbegović from declaring independence on 3 March.

Simultaneously one last attempt was under way to save peace. The Portuguese foreign minister Jose Cutileiro persuaded the three sides that Bosnia-Herzegovina should be independent but internally organized on the basis of ethnic regions or “cantons.” The breakthrough was due to the Bosnian Serbs’ acceptance of an independent Bosnia, provided that the Muslims give up their ambition of a centralized, unitary one. Izetbegovic appeared to accept it.

**The Zimmermann Mission** – When Izetbegović returned from Lisbon, Zimmermann flew from Belgrade to Sarajevo to tell him that the EU-brokered deal was a means to “a Serbian power grab” that could be prevented by internationalizing the problem. State Department later admitted that the US policy “was to encourage Izetbegovic to break with the partition plan.” *The New York Times* (August 29, 1993) brought a revealing quote from the key player himself:

The embassy [in Belgrade] was for recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina from sometime in February on,” Mr. Zimmermann said of his policy recommendation from

Belgrade. “Meaning me.” ... Immediately after Mr. Izetbegovic returned from Lisbon, Mr. Zimmermann called on him in Sarajevo... “He said he didn’t like it; I told him, if he didn’t like it, why sign it?”

After that moment Izetbegović had no motive to take the EC-brokered talks seriously, just as the Albanians had no motive to negotiate with Belgrade after President Bush declared in Tirana in June 2007 that Kosovo would become independent. After his encounter with Zimmermann Izetbegović felt authorized to renege on tripartite accord signed in Lisbon only days earlier: the U.S. would come to his assistance to enforce the independence of a unitary Bosnian state.

The motives of Ambassador Zimmermann and his superiors in Washington had no basis in the law of nations or the notions of justice. Their policy decision was the end-result of the interaction of pressure groups within the American power structure. Thus the war in the Balkans evolved from a Yugoslav disaster and European inconvenience into a major test of “U.S. leadership.” This was made possible by a bogus consensus that passed for Europe’s Balkan policy. This consensus, amplified in the media, limited the scope for debate.

Just as Germany sought to paint its Maastricht *diktat* on the recognition of Croatia as an expression of the “European consensus,” after Zimmermann’s intervention Washington’s *faits accomplis* were called “the will of the international community.” Europe was resentful but helpless when the U.S. resorted to covert action to smuggle arms into Croatia and Bosnia in violation of U.N. resolutions. Zimmermann’s torpedoing of the EU Lisbon formula in 1992 started a trend that frustrated the Europeans, but they were helpless. Cutileiro was embittered by the US action and blamed Izetbegović for renegeing. Had the Muslims not done so, he recalled in 1995, “the Bosnian question might have been settled earlier, with less loss of life and land.” Cutileiro also noted that the decision to renege on the agreement was not only Izetbegović’s, as he was encouraged to scupper that deal and to fight for a unitary Bosnian state by foreign mediators.”

**The Setting** – At the outset of the crisis in 1990-91 most inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina did not want to become “Bosnians” in any political sense; but they were unaware of the extent to which their future depended on events beyond their republic’s boundaries. The ruling League of Communists of Yugoslavia literally disintegrated in the first months of 1990. The resulting power vacuum was felt in Bosnia-Herzegovina more keenly than in other republics because the Party rule there was more rigidly doctrinaire. When the first multi-party election since 1938 finally took place in November 1990, the voters overwhelmingly acted in accordance with their ethnic loyalties that proved more enduring than any ideological differences between them.

When the Bosnian election results were tallied, they effectively read like a census plain and simple. The overwhelming share of the vote—80 percent—went to the three parties that had grounded their appeal in the ethnic-national identity and issues. The apparent ability of the three “nationalist” parties to cooperate in the aftermath of the election was based on one thing they all had in common: the desire to break free from the Titoist straitjacket. Had Yugoslavia not been breaking up in 1991-1992, this emphasis on traditional identities would have passed as a natural, democratic adjustment to reality. There was no internal Bosnian threat to peace in early 1991: when it came, the threat was from outside. The Serbs of Bosnia wanted, overwhelmingly, to preserve the *status quo*. As they had no desire for the destruction of Yugoslavia, they were forced into *reactive posture* vis-à-vis those who willed its disintegration.

**The Serbs’ Demands** — Even if seldom stated with simplicity and coherence, the Bosnian Serbs’ argument was clear: they had lived in one state since 1918, when Yugoslavia came into being. They reluctantly accepted Tito’s arbitrarily determined internal boundaries between the six federal republics—which left one third of them outside Serbia-proper—on the grounds that the Yugoslav framework afforded them a measure of security from the repetition of the nightmare of

1941-1945; but they could not swallow an illegal ruse that aimed to turn them into minorities, overnight, by unconstitutional means, in their own land.

Even without the vividly remembered trauma of the Second World War, they reacted in 1991-1992 just as the Anglophone citizens of Texas or Arizona might do if they are outvoted, one day, in a referendum demanding those states' incorporation into Mexico. They demanded the right that the territories, which the Serbs have inhabited as compact majorities long before the voyage of the Mayflower, not be subjected to the rule of their rivals. In the same vein the Protestant Ulstermen demanded - and were given - the right to stay apart from united Ireland when the nationalists opted for secession in 1921.

In the same vein the state of West Virginia was created in 1863, incorporating those counties of the Commonwealth of Virginia that refused to be forced into secession. The Loyalists of Ulster and the Unionists of West Virginia were just as guilty of a "Joint Criminal Enterprise" to break up Ireland, or the Old Dominion, as were the Serbs of Bosnia-Herzegovina who did not want to be dragged into secession.

Yugoslavia was a flawed polity, and in principle there should have been no rational objection to the striving of Croats, and even Bosnian Muslims, to create their own nation-states. But equally there could have been no justification for forcing over two million Serbs west of the Drina to be incorporated into those states against their will. Yugoslavia came together in 1918 as a union of South Slav peoples, and not of states, or territorial units. Its divorce should have been effected on the same basis; the boundaries of the republics should have been altered accordingly. *This is, and has been, the real foundation of the Yugoslav conflict ever since the first shots were fired in the summer of 1991.* Even someone as unsympathetic to the Serb point of view as Lord David Owen conceded that Josip Broz Tito's internal administrative boundaries between Yugoslavia's republics were grossly arbitrary, and that their redrawing should have been countenanced:

Incomprehensibly, the proposal to redraw the republics' boundaries had been rejected by all eleven EC countries... [T]o rule out any discussion or opportunity for compromise in order to head off war was an extraordinary decision. My view has always been that to have stuck unyieldingly to the internal boundaries of the six republics within the former Yugoslavia... as being those for independent states, was a folly far greater than that of premature recognition itself.

Of the three ethnic-religious parties in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Muslim party—the SDA—was the most radical, in that it alone advocated a fundamental restructuring of the Bosnian society in accordance with divine revelation. It attempted to do so not on Bosnia's own terms, not within the Republic's own local paradigm, but within the terms of the global-historical process—as its leaders saw it—of the global *Islamic renaissance*. Many in the West have been in a state of denial for years about the nature of Alija Izetbegović's long-term program, preferring to believe their own assurances that his blueprint is not “Islamist” but “multicultural.”

**An Islamist Parading as a Democrat** – Not unlike Islamist parties elsewhere (notably the ruling Justice and Development Party, AKP, in Turkey) the SDA had a public, “secular” front, and an inner core of Islamic cadres that remained semi-conspiratorial in the early days. This is vividly described by one of the party's founders who had previously made a successful business career in the West, Adil Zulfikarpašić. He was appalled by the “fascist” methods of the SDA and by its “conservative, religious, populist” orientation.

The root cause was in the core beliefs of Izetbegović, who was an advocate of Sharia law and a theorist of the Islamic Republic long before the first shots were fired. His early views were inspired by the teaching of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Al Hussein, who toured the German-occupied Europe preaching that the Third Reich and the Muslim world had a natural community of interests. Izetbegović's ideas

later matured into a comprehensive, programmatic statement in the *Islamic Declaration* – his *de facto* political platform:

The Islamic movement must, and can, take over power as soon as it is morally and numerically so strong that it can not only destroy the existing non-Islamic power, but also build up a new Islamic one... There is no peace or coexistence between the Islamic faith and non-Islamic social and political institutions.

This was a political program *par excellence*. The author's abiding contempt for Western values is evident in his dismissal of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's reforms: "Turkey as an Islamic country used to rule the world. Turkey as an imitation of Europe represents a third-rate country the like of which there is a hundred in the world." Elsewhere, he accepts the "achievements of Euro-American civilization" but only in the area of "science and technology... we shall have to accept them if we wish to survive."

In another revealing sentence, Izetbegović discusses the status of non-Muslims in countries with Muslim majorities: "The non-Muslim minorities within an Islamic state, *on condition that they are loyal* [emphasis added], enjoy religious freedom and all protection." He advocates "the creation of a united Islamic community from Morocco to Indonesia."

Izetbegović's views were unremarkable from a traditional Islamic point of view. The final objective is *Dar al Islam*, where Muslims dominate and infidels submit. That is the meaning of his generosity to the non-Muslims, "provided that they are loyal": the non-Muslims can be "protected persons," but only if they submit to Islamic domination.

In his daily political discourse Izetbegović behaved throughout the 1990s as a *de facto* nationalist, fostering narrowly-defined Bosniak nationalist feeling and seeking to equate the emerging "Bosniak" identity with an imaginary supra-ethnic "Bosnia." He was juxtaposing the construct with the two traditionally Christian communities—Serbs

and Croats—whose loyalties were alleged to lie elsewhere, with Belgrade and Zagreb respectively. The two sides of his personality were not at odds, since within his terms of reference the Bosniak-Muslim ethnicity was defined by religion. To have Alija Izetbegović, with his record and his vision, as the head of a democratic, pluralist state anywhere in the world, is of course unthinkable. But for his peculiar vision to be applied in practice, Bosnia-Herzegovina had to be taken out of Yugoslavia and proclaimed independent and sovereign.

Izetbegović's chief concern was to find a pretext for the intended separation from Yugoslavia—*any* Yugoslavia—and to use the Croat tactical alliance in pursuit of that goal; the day of reckoning with the HDZ could come later. Izetbegović was willing to risk the war. In the 1990 election campaign he said that the Muslims would “defend Bosnia with arms.” In February 1991 he declared in the Assembly: “I would sacrifice peace for a sovereign Bosnia-Herzegovina, but for that peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina I would not sacrifice sovereignty.” By May 1991 he went even further, saying that the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina probably could not be avoided because “for a state to be created, for a nation to be forged, it has to endure this, it is some kind of fate, destiny.” This statement echoed his Islamic fatalism.

When the Bosnian Serbs took control of the Serb-majority areas and connecting corridors in 1992, they were well equipped and officered. But the numerical advantage lay with the Muslims, who hoped to win in the end with international help. Radavan Karadžić never understood that this was, indeed, Izetbegović's grand strategy, and that time was not on the side of the Serbs. In addition the Serbs were severely damaged by the Western media handling of the mistreatment of Muslim prisoners and the expulsion of non-Serb civilians in the summer of 1992. Similar atrocities by Croats and Muslims against Serbs and against each other, while equally common, were deemed unworthy of Western attention.

The media call for intervention was launched in the early stage of the war. Many Europeans were inclined to support a compromise peace, a federalized Bosnia, and a real arms embargo; whereas the United States disliked European peace plans, broke the arms embargo starting in late 1993, and overtly supported the Muslims.

**The Meaning of Dayton** – The end of the war was the result of a transatlantic compromise: London and Paris reluctantly agreed to let NATO bomb the Serbs, while the United States reluctantly accepted the sort of settlement the Europeans had wanted in 1992-1993. The chief outcome of the war was a transformed NATO, and the renewal of American leadership in Europe to an extent not seen since Kennedy. It established that America wanted to lead, and to be indispensable, in the process of European reorganization after 1989. In Bosnia itself the war took longer than it would have done but the settlement that followed Dayton is not unlike a plausible compromise that appeared to have been reached in Lisbon in April 1992.

Richard Holbrooke, the chief U.S. negotiator in 1995, boasted a year later: “We are re-engaged in the world, and Bosnia was the test.” This “we” meant the United States, not “the West” or “the international community.” Indeed, no nation-state started and finished the Bosnian story as a political actor with an unchanged diplomatic personality. Each great power became a forum for the global debate for and against intervention, the debate for and against a certain kind NATO, and an associated, media-led international political process. The interventionists prevailed then and their narrative still dominates the public commentary.

The current clamoring for unitarization raises an old question that remains unanswered by the Bosnifiers: If the old Yugoslavia was untenable and eventually collapsed under the weight of the supposedly insurmountable differences among its constituent nations, how can Bosnia—the Yugoslav microcosm *par excellence*—develop and sustain the dynamics of a viable polity?



As for the charges that the RS is founded on war crimes, we need not hypothesize a pre-war “joint criminal enterprise” to ethnically cleanse and murder, to explain the events of 1992-1995. The crimes that followed were not the result of *anyone’s* nationalist project. These crime, as Susan Woodward notes, “were the results of the wars and their particular characteristics, not the causes.”

The effect of the legal intervention of the “international community” with its act of recognition was that a Yugoslav loyalty was made to look like a conspiratorial disloyalty to “Bosnia”—largely in the eyes of people who supposed *ex hypothesi* that if there is a “Bosnia” there must be a nation of “Bosnians.” In 1943-1944 Tito was able to force the Anglo-Americans to pretend that his struggle was not communist revolution. In 1992-1995 Izetbegovic forced the West to pretend that his jihad was the defense of “multi-ethnicity.” Both pretenses were absurd.

The campaign against the RS is detrimental to what America should stand for in the world. It seeks to give further credence to the myth of Muslim blameless victimhood, Serb viciousness, and Western indifference, and therefore weaken our resolve in the global struggle euphemistically known as “war on terrorism.” The former is a crime; the latter, a mistake. Yet there is no true debate in Washington on the ends and uses of American power, in the Balkans or anywhere else. Obama’s and Bush’s rhetoric differ, but they are one regime, identical in substance and consequence. Its leading lights will go on disputing the validity of the emerging balance-of-power system because they reject the legitimacy of any power in the world other than that of the United States, controlled and exercised by themselves. The proponents of American exceptionalism will scoff at the warning of 1815, 1918, or 1945 as inapplicable in the post-history that they seek to construct. They will confront the argument that no vital American interest worthy of risking a major war is involved in Russia’s or China’s near-abroad with the claim that the whole world is America’s near-abroad.

It is vexing that the demand for rekindling the Bosnian crisis after almost 15 years of peace comes at a particularly dangerous period in world affairs: the return of asymmetrical multipolarity. Following a brief period of post-1991 full-spectrum dominance, for the first time after the Cold War the government of the United States is facing active resistance from one or more major powers.

More important than the anatomy of the South Ossetian crisis in August 2008, or the Taiwanese crisis five years from now, is the reactive powers' refusal to accept the validity of Washington's ideological assumptions or the legitimacy of its resulting geopolitical claims. At the same time, far from reconsidering the hegemonistic assumptions and claims of their predecessors, the key foreign policy players in the Obama Administration are groomed on Albright's hubris ("If we have to use force, it is because we are America. We are the indispensable nation. We stand tall. We see further into the future."). The old premises of an imperial presidency – which in world affairs translates into the quest for dominance and justification for interventionism – remain unchallenged.

U.S. meddling in the Balkans remains unaffected by the ongoing financial crisis, just as Moscow's Cold War expansionism was enhanced, rather than curtailed, by the evident shortcomings of the Soviet centrally planned economy.

## Appendix

### America's Bosnian War

#### Sir Alfred Sherman<sup>1</sup>

The war in Bosnia was America's war in every sense of the word. The United States administration helped start it, kept it going, and prevented its early end. Indeed, all indications are that it intends to allow the war to continue in the near future, as soon as its Muslim protégés are fully armed and trained. How it did so is common knowledge. Why it did so, and the implications for American defense and foreign policy generally remain to be elucidated.

The facts of the case are clear enough. In 1991, the breakup of Yugoslavia, abetted by a reunified Germany newly dominant in the European Union, led to conflict in Croatia and brought the future of Bosnia onto the agenda. It had become clear that whereas a united secular Bosnia was feasible within Yugoslavia—any Yugoslavia—its perpetuation as a sovereign state created serious difficulties. A strong current of Muslim opinion led by Alija Izetbegović desired to restore the *status quo ante* 1878, when Bosnia was an Ottoman province ruled

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<sup>1</sup> Sir Alfred Sherman (1919-2006), writer, journalist, political analyst and former advisor to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, was a co-founder and – until March 2001 – Chairman of The Lord Byron Foundation for Balkan Studies. This article was Sir Alfred's introduction to *America's Intervention in the Balkans*, a collection of essays published by The Lord Byron Foundation in 1997. Thirteen years later the author's key points remain as relevant as they were at the time of the writing.

by the Sharia law, with its Christian majority in subjection and subordination.

Not even Izetbegović's professional apologists in the West deny that under Yugoslavia the Muslims of Bosnia were accorded civil and political rights equal to, or better than, those enjoyed by other nations in the federation. This situation was inherently unacceptable to committed Muslims, however, for whom Islamic rule independent of infidel power was a religious prerequisite. This view was openly espoused in their own publications during the period of Yugoslavia's disintegration, notably in the periodical *Islamska Misao* and in Izetbegović's *Islamic Declaration*, though *bien pensants* are as reluctant to take it seriously as an expression of intent as their predecessors were loath to take *Mein Kampf* seriously.

At the outset of the crisis, most inhabitants of Bosnia-Herzegovina did not want to become "Bosnians" in any political sense. The Croats, concentrated in western Herzegovina, sought secession from Yugoslavia in order to facilitate their union with an enlarged Croatia. The Serbs, for their part, wanted to remain linked to their brethren east of the Drina river, having suffered for centuries under alien misrule, including the clerico-fascist Ustaša regime, which in 1941-1945 perpetrated genocide against the Serbs of Croatia and Bosnia with active Muslim participation.

At all events, the European Union, having contributed to the breakup of Yugoslavia at German prompting which unleashed war in Croatia, sought to prevent the same thing happening in Bosnia. The Europeans brokered an agreement, initialed in early 1992 in Lisbon by leaders of the three constituent nations in Bosnia—Serb, Croat, and Muslim—who returned to their respective strongholds committed to seeking ratification from their assemblies.

At that point America acted fatefully. For reasons which remain unclear, acting Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger—who knew Yugoslavia well from his term as Ambassador there and as

banker subsequently—instructed Warren Zimmerman, the U.S. Ambassador in Belgrade, to fly posthaste to Sarajevo to persuade Izetbegović to renege on the agreement. He needed little persuasion, duly reneged on the agreement, and appealed for support in the Muslim world. The Bosnian war began. It has yet really to end. As in Greek tragedy, one action by a protagonist, Eagleburger, set a train of events irrevocably in motion.

During the years that followed, America pulled the strings from the background, encouraging, arming, aiding, and abetting the Muslims. Washington kept pressing EU members, like Britain and France, which had serious misgivings to accept its *faits accomplis*. Russia was forced to toe the line under the most inept administration it has ever had. The U.S. encouraged and facilitated the dispatch of arms to the Muslims via Iran and Eastern Europe—a fact which was denied in Washington at the time in the face of overwhelming evidence. America used NATO and UNPROFOR as its policy instruments, and blocked all peace moves, of which there were several between 1992 and 1995. Then, having effectively prevented the Europeans from reaching agreement, the United States was able to corral them into a military offensive in the summer of 1995, sparked off by staged incidents reminiscent of the battleship Maine and the Gulf of Tonkin incident.

But why? Here we have the most powerful country on earth at the present time deeply involved in Balkan affairs (which bear absolutely no relationship to American security), extending its power into Eastern and Southeastern Europe, and involving itself deeply in a number of long-standing and perhaps incurable national conflicts...

The enlargement of NATO, at a time when Europe is as peaceful as it has ever been, entails the militarization of foreign policy, the very antithesis of the American tradition in international relations. Madeleine Albright, speaking as U.S. ambassador to the UN, stated unequivocally that the U.S. policy in Bosnia was “the foundation of its

policies for Europe.” We need to consider the implications: lying and cheating, fomenting war in which civilians are the main casualty and in which ancient hatreds feed on themselves, involving America in a maelstrom easier to enter than to leave, and above all risking long-term conflict with a Russia which is only partly removed from its recent imperialist past.

One can understand the principle of U.S. involvement in Cuba, Guatemala, or Haiti, even if one does not necessarily approve of particular policies. America is of necessity involved in hemispheric affairs, and it has traditionally been involved in “North Atlantic,” i.e., European, affairs, to the extent of two world wars and the Cold War. But what is the relevance of the Balkans and the Black Sea? And what is the point of creating and arming a militantly Muslim polity in the Balkans which ineluctably gives Iran a foothold there and a route into Central and Western Europe for subversion and terror?

An attempt will be made in these pages to examine “rational” and “ideological” reasons for doing so. The U.S. has traditionally worked with some ugly despotisms, and is still doing so, viz. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, or Pakistan. But to intervene in favor of Islamic fundamentalism, to help expel Serbs from land they have inhabited as majorities for centuries, and to adopt the German-encouraged drive to reverse what is left of the Versailles provisions does not make sense.

The temptations of imperial arrogance are not new, even in the United States. They should not be forgotten just because America was, in some part, protected from this arrogance by the genuine weight and burden, more imposed than chosen, of defending the free world against Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia. The end of the Cold War has stripped off this protection. Yet the White House has chosen a Secretary of State who is a Cold War junkie, a connoisseur of confrontation, a woman living too passionately in the past, eager to seize the first opportunity to show how the old battles should have been fought, how the West should have won at Munich. Let us not be

surprised if all the talk of leadership, resolve, firmness, and new interests is a preparation for war and the nomination of new enemies.

To present the United States as the world's policeman, judge, and jury may or may not play well in campaign rhetoric, but the idea is endlessly seductive for the Washington community of foreign policy professionals—often poorly educated, high on excitement, and low in statesmanlike patience. They fear, quite irrationally, that the world will happily pass them by unless America imposes herself, “rises to the challenge,” and throws her weight about. The foreign policy community wants the feel-good factor, the winning-the-Cold-War glow, to go on and on. But to live for the adrenaline and glory of yesterday and yesteryear is to ride for a fall and to walk with hubris.

Can the yearning to be the world's policeman be the basis of policy? If the poison is at work, it may be detected. Inside the State Department and the CIA, there is always room for the pretense that policy is more limited and calculated than the passions and arrogance which may drive it. German policy before 1914 was also sometimes defined, on paper, by men more rational than those who took the initiatives and made the choices.

The power and prestige of America is in the hands of people who will not resist the temptation to invent new missions, lay down new embargoes, and fabricate new courts. For the time being, they control the United Nations, the World Bank, most of the world's high-tech weapons, and the vast majority of the satellites which watch us from every quadrant of the skies. This is the opportunity they sense, and we must ask what ambitions they will declare next.

The pursuit of world importance for the sake of world importance is the great temptation in human history, the path of ruin that winds from Xerxes, the Persian king of kings, to Hitler, the Austrian corporal-tyrant. It is the path which George Washington forbade America ever to take. The American people will never choose it, but can they prevent it? The American foreign policy elite is locking

itself onto this path, and their coconspirators in the media corporations are calling it a pilgrimage. Bosnia was the acid test. They knew why they should not go in; but they could not resist. The combination of high moral purpose, however trumped up by the media, and the chance to show Europe that “only America decides” was just too intoxicating.

At the time of this writing, America is uniquely powerful. It will not always be so. In the course of time, Russia may gain its potential strength, and there is very little the United States can do about China’s development one way or the other.

A law of history is that power tends to generate countervailing power. We do not know how this will come about. We can do little more than guard against arrogance and overextension, and minimize the pointless sacrifices they usually entail. The contributors to this volume should be proud to have taken part in this endeavor.