

5

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Prof. Klemenčič and Dušan Janjić assumed team leadership from John A. Fine (2001-2003) in order to streamline the team's internet communication. An initial draft was submitted for project-wide review in November 2003, which mandated considerable expansion in the chapter's length and research base. Although the text was adopted following project-wide review in April 2005, further revisions were undertaken in 2008 to address concerns raised by two of the four outside referees in 2010, to accommodate constructive criticism raised in book reviews, and again in 2012 to incorporate new evidence of U.S. and NATO complicity in avoiding the arrest of ICTY indictees.

The chapter cites several confidential interviews conducted by SI scholars with several current and former officials from the U.S. State Department and IFOR military; in each case their identities have been recorded and stored in the Purdue University archives for later release, upon request, consistent with terms negotiated with each individual.

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND THE FRY/BELLIGERENTS, 1989-1997

◆ Matjaž Klemenčič ◆

For almost four decades after World War II, the international community supported socialist nonaligned Yugoslavia as a symbolic and even strategic crossroads between the polar world of the cold war. Billions of dollars of aid flooded the country in the belief that it was important to support Tito's Yugoslav experiment.¹ When the crises leading to Yugoslavia's dissolution mounted in the last years of the 1980s, both the United States and the Soviet Union/Russian Federation tried to maintain the status quo and hold together a Yugoslavia that had become an empty shell. Instead of seeking to facilitate a peaceful transformation of the country's dissolution, the international community attempted to support a unified Yugoslavia and thus arguably bears some responsibility for the violence and insecurity that followed. Both the United States and Russia, along with other states, ignored the basic truth that no state, whatever its origins, can expect to survive without the support and at least the passive allegiance of most of its citizenry.²

What role did the international community play in the Yugoslav crisis in the first half of the 1990s? Could the bloody demise of Yugoslavia have been prevented if the international community had reacted sooner? Scholars disagree in their assessments of the real intentions of the world powers toward Yugoslavia. According to most Western authors, in the late 1980s political leaders from most of Europe and also the U.S. desperately wanted to preserve the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia. In contrast, others (and also almost all the pro-Milošević Serb politicians) suggest that the breakup of Yugoslavia was the ultimate goal of the West.³ Slobodan Milošević started his defense in The Hague by blaming foreigners for the breakup.⁴ Some authors, such as Russian historian Elena Guskova and Polish political scientist Marek Waldenberg, blame the West not only for the dissolution but also for the violent nature of the breakup.⁵ One can argue that the

dissolution was unavoidable, but one can also contend that the process might have been more peaceful if the international community had acted differently.

The U.S. was closely involved in the international diplomacy related to the dissolution of Yugoslavia, although its policy toward Yugoslavia was inconsistent from the very beginning. Three phases characterize U.S. policy: (1) an initial reluctance to interfere in a primarily European problem, (2) an attempt at diplomacy, and finally, (3) armed intervention.⁶ Its policy was in part determined by domestic public opinion polls and the actions of the U.S. Congress. Interestingly, the ethnic background of members of Congress and their constituencies played a role, as did activities in the United States of the leaders of different immigrant ethnic groups from the territories of the former Yugoslavia.

How aware were U.S. politicians of the situation in Yugoslavia? The CIA predicted in an October 1990 report that Yugoslavia would cease to function within one year and would probably dissolve within two years. According to its report, economic reform would not prevent the breakup. The agency predicted that Serbia would block Slovenian and Croatian attempts to secede from the Yugoslav confederation, that there would be a protracted armed uprising by the Albanians in Kosovo, and that Serbia would foment uprisings by Serbian minorities in Croatia and Bosnia. It noted the possible danger of ethnic violence becoming an organized civil war between republics but considered that unlikely. It concluded that there was nothing the United States or its European allies could do to preserve unity and that Yugoslavs would see any such efforts as antithetical to the principles of democracy and self-determination.

The CIA discussion on historical background and the economy, as well as the maps and tables that followed in the report are accurate. As then U.S. Ambassador to Belgrade Warren Zimmermann wrote in his memoirs, this prescient analysis erred only on Kosovo, which remained tense but quiet, and on the timetable for civil war, which unfolded even faster than predicted. In its main elements, the estimate proved deadly accurate.⁷ From an historian's point of view, this report is a relatively good analysis of the situation in Yugoslavia at that time.⁸

In spite of CIA warnings, it became clear that the United States did not want to get intensively involved in the Yugoslav crisis and that it would let the European states, especially the EC, try to solve it. The Bush administration was too busy resolving the crisis in Iraq and did not want to be involved in another regional crisis. Until 1992 this administration tried to avoid playing any important role in solving the Yugoslav crisis. Because Bush was afraid that any action by his administration would influence the outcome of the U.S. presidential election in November, the U.S. opposed recognition of new states as the country collapsed. Moreover, the U.S. was afraid that the Yugoslav crisis would influence the very complicated internal political situation in the Soviet Union.

The key personalities of this period were U.S. Ambassador to Belgrade Warren Zimmermann; Undersecretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, who had also served as U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia in the late 1970s; and National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, who had served as military attaché in Belgrade in the early 1960s. They represented the “pro-Serbian lobby” in the Bush administration, which was also connected to Yugoslavia through political and economic interests (e.g., the Yugo-America Company, in which Henry Kissinger, former U.S. secretary of state, took part).⁹ From the beginning and not very effectively, these administration members supported the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia and the economic reform policy of Ante Marković. These views were shared by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, who at the same time was known to have often said: “We don’t have a dog in this fight.”¹⁰

On 18 June 1991 at the Berlin Aspen Institute, Baker demanded that members of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) do everything they could to preserve the unity of the states of Eastern Europe.¹¹ Three days later he visited Belgrade and demonstrated that he did not have a plan and that he had few ideas to offer on Yugoslavia except to suggest that the United States wanted a united Yugoslavia that was also democratic. He told the leaders of Yugoslavia’s republics that they should continue to negotiate. He called for the devolution of additional authority, responsibility, and sovereignty to the republics.¹² At the same time he expressed continued U.S. support for a united Yugoslavia by promising Milošević that the United States would not recognize the independence of either Slovenia or Croatia.¹³

In his memoirs Baker distinguished between the independence proclamations of Slovenia and Croatia, on the one hand, and Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia, on the other. He was of the same opinion in February 2005 when he gave an interview to this author.¹⁴ Lawrence Eagleburger would later comment: “How could we recognize Croatia and Slovenia, which had pursued independence unilaterally and in violation of the Helsinki principles, and not recognize Skopje and Sarajevo, which had done so in a peaceful and democratic manner?” Moreover, not recognizing Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia, he noted, “could create real instability, which less than mature players in Serbia and Greece might decide to exploit.”¹⁵

Although interpretations of Baker’s visit have varied, Zdravko Tomac probably spoke for many Croats when he wrote that, “James Baker . . . actively encouraged the federal government, Serbia and the Yugoslav Federal [sic] Army. By insisting on the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia, he agreed with Milošević’s policy and endorsed the JNA’s [Yugoslav National Army’s] threat to Slovenia.”¹⁶ Then Slovenian Prime Minister Lojze Peterle emphasized in his memoirs that Baker insisted that Yugoslavia ought to stay together but not at any price; he im-

plied that it should be democratic.¹⁷ Slovene politicians tried to tell Baker that it was far too late to call off the transition to independence, but Baker did not want to listen.¹⁸

Many U.S. politicians were so naive (ignoring the power of the national/ethnic movements and national/ethnic problems in general that could not be solved by economic measures) that they believed the market-oriented economic reforms of Ante Marković, along with financial aid from the West, especially the U.S., could stop nationalist and separatist tendencies. Thus the U.S. let the EU take the lead.¹⁹

In spite of the reluctance of the U.S. administration, the U.S. Congress did at times try to influence the situation in Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav crisis—especially the crisis in Kosovo—brought quite a few debates in both chambers of Congress. Representatives and senators were active in introducing amendments to foreign aid bills and special resolutions regarding the critical conditions in Yugoslavia. In the years 1985–1995, Representative Helen Delich-Bentley (R-MD), of Serb descent, made an important contribution to lobbying for the “Serb Truth,”²⁰ with support of other members of Congress from districts where large numbers of the electorate were of Serb descent. Those Congress members were almost always in a bind, however, because their constituencies usually included not only Serb Americans, but Croat Americans, Slovene Americans, and Albanian Americans as well.²¹

Germany’s role during the dissolution is another controversy. Some authors consider that from the very beginning of the Yugoslav crisis, Germany together with Austria, Hungary, and Denmark at least covertly supported and encouraged Slovene and Croatian strivings for independence.²² Scholars on the team agree that Germany, Austria, Denmark, and Hungary were certainly sympathetic to the Croatian and Slovenian causes, but we conclude that they did not actually encourage independence.

This position is supported by Michael Libal, the former head of the South-Eastern European Section of the German Foreign Ministry. He claims that although German parliamentarians demanded from the German government recognition of Slovenia and Croatia in June of 1991, the German government tried to use the threat of recognition only as a method of pressure on the Serbs of Croatia and the Yugoslav government to end the military fighting. Already on 24 August 1991, German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher called the Yugoslav ambassador in Bonn, Boris Frlec,²³ to make clear the attitude of the German government not only to him but also, via an appropriate press release, to the public at large. The core of Genscher’s *démarche* was a threat of recognition: “If the bloodshed continues and the policy of *faits accomplis* by force supported by the Yugoslav army is not halted immediately, the Federal Government [of

Germany] must seriously examine the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia in their given frontiers.”²⁴

Whereas Germany reluctantly supported the independence of Slovenia and Croatia, the Soviet Union wanted Yugoslavia to be preserved at all costs. Already during the first period of the Yugoslav crisis, the Soviet Union itself had experienced independence movements and declarations of independence by some of its Soviet republics. Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnych had stated already in April 1991 that keeping the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia was “one of the preconditions for stability in Europe.”²⁵ It is important to note, however, that the Soviet political leadership decided to help Yugoslavia only politically through international institutions and not militarily.

The Yugoslav crisis presented a profound shock for many members of the nonaligned movement because Yugoslavia was a founding member. A large gap in understanding the Yugoslav crisis developed between some nonaligned countries that supported the unity of Yugoslavia at all costs and some Muslim countries that were most concerned about supporting Yugoslavia’s Muslim population. Support from the nonaligned countries (which then represented almost two-thirds of the member states of the UN) would be very important for Serb policy, and thus the position of some Muslim countries was a great disappointment for Serb politicians.²⁶

Hungary did not support the breakup of Yugoslavia out of concern for the large Hungarian minority in Vojvodina (Serbia). As Foreign Minister Géza Jeszenszky stated publicly and not particularly diplomatically, Hungary aimed to establish “friendly” relations with Croatia and a “correct” one with Serbia.²⁷ Borisav Jović rejects any suggestion that Hungary supported the preservation of Yugoslavia. In his diary he writes that in December 1990 the U.S. “asked Hungary with American help to use all of its forces to destroy the socialist system in Yugoslavia and the unity of Yugoslavia and to take particular measures against Serbia.”²⁸ Jović supported this by citing the illegal importation of weapons by Croatia from Hungary (20,000 tommy guns) in 1990, which Croatia undertook, from his point of view, to form its own army.

Italy, by contrast, remained in an ambivalent position. The Italian foreign minister, Gianni De Michelis, strongly supported a united Yugoslavia. In the spring of 1991 he said to his Slovene counterparts, “In Europe there is no place for new states, and I am sure that you do not want to immigrate to another continent.”²⁹ He also opposed the changing of Yugoslavia’s internal borders. He expressed this position very clearly at a conference of foreign ministers on 10 July 1991, where he also advocated a system of minority protection that would be based on international law, similar to the protection existing for the German minority in South Tyrol.

France also fought for the further existence of a united Yugoslavia, influenced perhaps by old traditions of French friendship with the Serbs. Keeping together the Yugoslav federation would, in the French view, avoid the spreading of separatist and nationalist tendencies to other European regions. It would also thwart plans for establishing a new *Mittleuropa* under German leadership. French policy also took the position that the rights and interests of the Serb minority in Croatia were threatened after Croatia declared its independence.³⁰ It should be remembered, of course, that France had its own minority problems, especially with the Basques and the separatists in Corsica.³¹

Great Britain tried to keep a low profile on the Yugoslav crisis, especially because the U.S., its most important ally, was doing the same. Although Great Britain had a history of intensive contacts with Serbia, this did not appear to play an important role at the time.

The position of the Netherlands toward the Yugoslav crisis was influenced especially by the fact that it presided over the EC in the second half of 1991.³² At the beginning of the conflict, Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers and Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek led the policy of supporting a unified Yugoslavia and not recognizing Slovenia and Croatia. In the second half of 1991, van den Broek was the greatest opponent of the German initiative for the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia.³³

The Austrian government's statements about Yugoslavia had to be in accord with those of the EC because the Austrian government was then concerned about not disturbing Austria's application for EC membership. The Austrian position toward the Yugoslav crisis was influenced also by the fact that Slovenes and Croats live in Austria as indigenous minorities and that many *Gastarbeiter* from Yugoslavia worked in Austria. Moreover, the Austrian economy was affected by the crisis. Austria was especially afraid of a great influx of refugees. There was debate within the Austrian government because Austrian Chancellor Franz Vranitzky followed the path of his fellow Socialists in support of a united Yugoslavia, whereas his foreign minister, Alois Mock (Austrian People's Party), was a leading advocate for the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia. Despite the debate, Austria gave Slovenia loans so that it could continue its imports and exports in June and July 1991.³⁴

On 9 July 1991 Chancellor Vranitzky invited representatives of Western social-democratic parties to Vienna in order to exchange views on the Yugoslav crisis. The leader of the German Socialists, Bjoern Engholm, demanded recognition of Slovenia and Croatia as a result "of the end of the negotiations and not at the beginning of negotiations." The leader of the Italian Socialists, Bettino Craxi, was afraid of a "chain reaction," but he still demanded a new order on the territory of Yugoslavia and the recognition of the new states. The president of PASOK (Greek Socialists), Carolos Papoulias, warned "against threatening the security

of the Mediterranean.”³⁵ This was in line with the Greeks’ support for the preservation of the unity of Yugoslavia at all costs. Greece was the only EC/EU country with a prevailing Orthodox Christian population. Orthodoxy was a bond that connected them with the Serbs. The Greeks were also upset because of the possible international recognition of Macedonia.³⁶

International organizations and their working bodies, like the OSCE, the EC, the European Parliament, NATO, and the UN also tried to deal with the Yugoslav crisis. The positions of individual members of these bodies differed. Often they mirrored the official policy of their states or their homeland political parties; at other times individual members represented their own opinions. Until the beginning of military clashes in Yugoslavia, however, the consensus of these international organizations and their working bodies was that Yugoslavia should keep its territorial integrity and that it should become a democracy.

On 18 December 1990 the EC foreign ministers demanded respect for human rights and democratic principles in Yugoslavia, along with the territorial integrity and unity of Yugoslavia and respect for the interests of the republics. Already on 14 February 1991, Slovene Prime Minister Peterle met with European Parliament President Enrique Baron and European Commission member Abel Juan Matutes and acquainted them with Slovenia’s attempts to achieve independence and its desire to become a full member of the EC.³⁷

At their 9 April 1991 meeting, presidents and prime ministers of EC member states again demanded that the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia be preserved. This was the EC position for the next few months. In addition to promises about associate membership once Yugoslavia had solved its internal problems,³⁸ the EC also tried to preserve Yugoslav territorial integrity by offering credits. In May 1991, on the occasion of his visit to Belgrade, EC Commission President Jacques Delors promised to request \$4.5 billion in aid from the EC in support of the Yugoslav commitment to political reform.³⁹ A day before Slovenia and Croatia declared independence, on 24 June 1991, a third financial protocol was approved with which the EC gave Yugoslavia 1.5 billion German marks in loans. At the same time the European Investment Bank also assured Yugoslavia that it would provide another loan of 1.5 billion German marks.⁴⁰ Twelve EC foreign ministers declared that they did not support Slovenian and Croatian independence endeavors.

The West tried to resolve the Yugoslav crisis with economic and political pressure, whereas the Soviet Union only provided Marković’s government with oil and weapons. The West did not oppose the decision of the Soviet Union to sell arms to the JNA, which included twenty MiG-29 airplanes, rocket weapons, radar equipment, and other equipment.⁴¹ The Soviet Union’s Mikhail Gorbachev and the Soviet generals were also determined to keep Yugoslavia united.⁴²

The OSCE also got actively involved in the Yugoslav crisis. Only a few days before the Slovene and Croatian declarations of independence, at a meeting of foreign ministers of the OSCE on 19–20 June in Berlin, the foreign ministers accepted “mechanisms of quick interventions” in case critical circumstances developed that would endanger the common security.⁴³ Yugoslav Foreign Minister Budimir Lončar warned members of the conference that the dissolution of Yugoslavia would also destabilize other parts of Europe.⁴⁴ All participants in the conference expressed their interest in keeping Yugoslavia united as a democratic and federated state. Minister of foreign affairs of Germany Genscher wrote in his memoirs of successfully reaching agreement with ministers of foreign affairs of the United States (Baker), Soviet Union (Bessmertnych), and Yugoslavia (Lončar) at this meeting. This agreement had long-term consequences for future developments. Ministers agreed that it is the duty and right of every people (nation) of Yugoslavia to freely determine the future of their land (country) and that on the other hand the OSCE member states should, as one of the possibilities, respect also the “right to secession” of individual peoples (nations) of the Yugoslav state, as stipulated by the Constitution of SFRY of February 1974.⁴⁵

During these early months before war, NATO and the UN did not give special attention to the crisis in Yugoslavia. Both organizations limited their reactions to following the situation in Yugoslavia and issuing statements that warned that the crisis could destabilize the region. Some authors like Woodward wrote that the UN was used as leader to organize a coalition in armed fight against Iraq, which had a negative impact on their activities in the Yugoslav conflict. The UN was the only international organization which all the sides involved in the conflict could accept as an honest broker. Yugoslavia, as one of the leaders in a nonaligned movement to which two-thirds of the UN member states belonged, had very solid connections to the UN, even though it was never a member of the EC or NATO.⁴⁶

The European Parliament devoted much of its time to the Yugoslav crisis. Already in March 1991 it passed a resolution declaring “that the constituent republics and autonomous provinces of Yugoslavia must have the right freely to determine their own future in a peaceful and democratic manner and on the basis of recognized international and internal borders.” Otto von Habsburg played quite an important role in passing this and all the subsequent resolutions in the European Parliament that supported the principle of self-determination⁴⁷ for Slovenes, Croats, Kosovo Albanians, and the other nations of Yugoslavia. In the second half of 1991, Habsburg finished most of his speeches in the European Parliament by saying: “*Ceterum autem censeo Croatiam et Sloveniam esse reconoscendam*” (Otherwise, I think that Croatia and Slovenia ought to be recognized).⁴⁸ The Greens in the European Parliament sharply criticized the situation in Yugoslavia and expressed their criticisms in a letter to van den Broek and Delors.⁴⁹

At the beginning of July 1991, under the leadership of Belgian Prime Minister Wilfried Martens, a meeting of the presidency of the European People's Party took place. At this meeting they passed a resolution on the situation in Yugoslavia, condemned the attack of the JNA on Slovenia, and stated "that Slovenes and Croats . . . when they declared the independence of their states acted in accordance with their right of self-determination as well as with the wishes of their nation." At the same time they demanded that the international community recognize Slovenia and Croatia as independent states if there was not a peaceful solution to the crisis within three months.⁵⁰

In December 1990 more than 88 percent of all eligible voters of Slovenia and in May 1991 more than 80 percent of eligible voters of Croatia voted for independence. Slovene politicians negotiated with the federal government for a peaceful separation from the rest of the Yugoslav republics, but without success. On 25 June 1991, Croatia and Slovenia carried through with their intent to declare independence. This triggered an attack by the JNA on Slovenia, with the goal of overthrowing the Slovene proindependence government and gaining control over the territory, with special concern for the borders with Austria and Italy.

During the Slovenian Ten-Day War, the JNA lost the international public relations campaign. German Foreign Minister Genscher accused the JNA of "running amok" in Slovenia. Evidence of how much Germans were interested in solving the conflict was the visit of Genscher to Slovenia on the invitation of Slovene Foreign Minister Dimitrij Rupel. He landed in nearby Carinthia, Austria, on 2 July with the intention of driving into Slovenia, but because of the fighting he could not enter Slovenia. Instead Slovene President Milan Kučan and Rupel discussed the issues with Genscher in Carinthia. The result was the continuing support of Genscher for the Slovene cause throughout the conflict.⁵¹

Others joined the fray. British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd told the British parliament that the JNA had hastened the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Italy said it would "act in solidarity" with Croatia and Slovenia unless the JNA respected a cease-fire. In the U.S. the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Claiborne Pell (D-RI), urged President Bush to support Slovene and Croatian independence if Yugoslavia's "renegade army does not cease its wanton aggression."⁵² In spite of these calls, the Bush administration limited itself only to criticizing the JNA's actions. As the world's sole remaining superpower, the U.S. frowned on secessionism as a threat to the hard-won status quo. Its leaders also retained that Wilsonian preference for following Balkan violence from as far a distance as possible. Hence, whereas there were discussions among different desks of the Departments of State and Defense, as there had been during the Wilson administration concerning different options for the region,⁵³ the conventional wisdom was that the EC should lead attempts to resolve the Yugoslav crisis.

The EC, which tried for a long time to play a role more significant and independent than that of the United States in foreign policy in general, accepted the opportunity to mediate in the Yugoslav crisis.⁵⁴ Already on 27 June Genscher asked the OSCE to start procedures that its member states had accepted a week before in Berlin. In accordance with the mechanisms designed for “extraordinary circumstances,” on Genscher’s demand the OSCE Committee of Senior Officials met on 3 and 4 July 1991 and asked the belligerents in Yugoslavia to stop the fighting and offered to send a group of observers.⁵⁵ In July 1991, the EC sent the foreign ministers of the sitting EC troika (representing the states holding the presidency, his predecessor, and his successor) as mediators to Yugoslavia. The troika made three visits to Yugoslavia, which resulted in a cease-fire between the Slovene Territorial Defense Force and the JNA; by 7 and 8 July, they had convened a conference at Brioni for the purpose of resolving the crisis.

The EC-sponsored Brioni Accord prevented further air raids or other military activity by the JNA against Slovenia. Mediators from the EC quickly negotiated an agreement between Slovenia and the JNA because the EC did not want war on its borders. They also still hoped that Slovenia might act as a democratizing force in Yugoslavia.⁵⁶ After its defeat, the JNA decided to retreat from Slovenia with all its equipment and machinery. The Brioni Accord, in effect, recognized the Slovene military victory and also made Slovenia and Croatia subject, *de facto*, to international law and cleared the way for the eventual recognition of their statehood.⁵⁷ The EC started its first ever peace mission in Slovenia where it sent 30-50 observers after receiving an OSCE mandate.⁵⁸ Parallel to the withdrawal of the Yugoslav army from Slovenia, the armed conflict in Croatia widened.

Although Croatia and Slovenia had declared their independence, most of the world did not support their declarations and still wanted to preserve Yugoslavia. All of the great powers—the U.S., the Soviet Union, China, Britain, and France—remained united in their support for the idea of a united Yugoslavia, as did EC members Sweden, Denmark, Italy, and Greece and former Communist bloc states Romania, Poland, and Hungary. The governments of neighboring Austria as well as Germany expressed their sympathy with Croatia and Slovenia; however, they did not recognize their independence.

In German parliamentary debates on the situation in Yugoslavia in September 1991, Chancellor Helmut Kohl argued that if the Yugoslavs could no longer live in peace, Germany would have to consider the question of recognizing those republics that no longer wanted to be part of Yugoslavia.⁵⁹ Genscher was even more explicit: “If those peoples of Yugoslavia who desire independence cannot realize it through negotiations, we will recognize their unilateral declarations of independence.”⁶⁰ Addressing the JNA, he said: “With every shot of your cannons and tanks, the hour of recognition moves closer. We shall not be able to disregard this further.”⁶¹ This view was soon adopted as well by Lord Peter Carrington,

the former British foreign secretary and former secretary-general of NATO. And at a press conference on 12 September 1991, French President François Mitterrand stated that “after the events of the last months, in the future it is possible to think about independence for Slovenia and Croatia.”⁶² As the fighting continued through the autumn of 1991 and after a long struggle in the EC, Germany prevailed and the EU announced on December 1991 that it would recognize Slovenia and Croatia as independent states. Numerous states opposed this action. With the support of Great Britain and France, the U.S. at the beginning of December 1991 even suggested a special resolution of the UN Security Council (UNSC) that would demand that Germany stop asking for the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia by the international community. Genscher eventually succeeded in changing the perspective of his French colleague, Roland Dumas, and thus France no longer supported the U.S. position.⁶³ At the same time Genscher warned the U.S. not to use the UN to “torpedo” European actions for peace.⁶⁴

The role of Yugoslavia’s neighbors also caused controversy. Hungary and Albania were, of course, interested in the destiny of their ethnic minorities in Yugoslavia. Both countries took precautions to defend their airspace,⁶⁵ and Albania placed its army in a state of alert.⁶⁶ Under the pressure of public opinion, the policies of Austria and Italy toward Slovenia and Croatia also started to change in the summer of 1991,⁶⁷ and Bulgaria, always conscious of its historical ties with Macedonia,⁶⁸ hinted that it was prepared to recognize an independent Macedonian state. It finally did so on 15 January 1992.

Nevertheless, in the second half of 1991 there were still voices calling for the preservation of a democratic Yugoslavia.⁶⁹ The large socialist faction of the European Parliament was one of the main opponents to diplomatic recognition of Croatia and Slovenia. In October 1991, Jannis Sakellarios, the Greek press representative of this faction, declared that if Croatia were recognized as an independent state, then the Serbs of Croatia should also have the right to self-determination because Serbs in some parts of Croatia represented a majority of the population. Motives for such positions by European socialists might be explained by their sympathies for Yugoslav self-management as a “third way” between capitalism and communism. These pro-Yugoslav views of the European Left were eventually transformed in the course of events to pro-Serbian positions. The views of this socialist faction played a decisive role in the decision of the European Parliament not to support a proposal by the Christian-Democrats that advocated recognition of Slovenia and Croatia if the Serbs violated the cease-fire and if the UN was forced to intervene militarily.⁷⁰

In the second half of 1991 NATO also started to deal with the Yugoslav conflict.⁷¹ Already on 7 June 1991, the foreign ministers of NATO declared that the security of the NATO states depended on the security of all other states in Europe.⁷² Member states of NATO on 4 June 1992 accepted in the Oslo Declaration

that NATO, on demand of the OSCE or UN, could intervene militarily outside of its member states.⁷³

From the beginning of the crisis, the UN had called for noninterference in Yugoslavia's internal affairs. Therefore, until Slovenia and Croatia were internationally recognized, the organization could not send peace-keeping missions into Yugoslavia until all the involved parties agreed. UN Secretary-General Pérez de Cuéllar opposed the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia and condemned the German intention to recognize their independence as an "insane step." Because the Germans did not react to his statements, de Cuéllar on 12 December 1991 sent a letter to the presiding minister of the EC Council of Foreign Ministers, van den Broek, and asked him to send the letter to other EC member states. Genscher answered de Cuéllar the next day and said that de Cuéllar was, with this letter to van den Broek, "encouraging those forces in Yugoslavia which were already fighting against a successful conclusion of peace efforts in Yugoslavia."⁷⁴

De Cuéllar then wrote to Genscher and expressed his concern over the "untimely recognition for which there had not been a vote."⁷⁵ De Cuéllar also informed Genscher that the presidents of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia asked him not to act in favor of the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia and that if they were recognized, there would be danger of war spreading into their republics as well. De Cuéllar's letter started new discussions. U.S. President George Bush again criticized the plans for the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia and instructed U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Thomas Pickering, to ask the German government to reconsider its position on recognition.⁷⁶

While the international community dealt with the question of what to do with Slovenia and Croatia, armed conflict in Croatia started to spread dangerously. The EC on 7 September called a peace conference in The Hague that, on Genscher's advice, was presided over by Lord Carrington.⁷⁷ Although some members of the international community had already started to change their positions concerning the independence of Slovenia and Croatia and in spite of the fact that the Yugoslav federation had practically ceased to exist, the Hague conference still tried to find a solution within the framework of preserving Yugoslavia. According to the plan which was proposed by Lord Carrington, all six republics—six constitutive parts of former federal states—could have as much sovereignty as they wanted. According to Silber and Little, Carrington understood that those who wanted to be independent should be independent and that they should have connections with a 'confederation' as much as they wanted to. Those who did not want to be independent could stay within what used to be Yugoslavia. At the same time, Carrington insisted that the international community should recognize neither of the republics (of former Yugoslavia) until they could find a solution which would be acceptable for all the Yugoslav republics.⁷⁸

Efforts to solve the crisis were supported also by the UN Security Council (UNSC). Invoking Chapter 7 of the UN charter and declaring that the Yugoslav conflict had become a “direct threat to international peace and security,” the UNSC on 25 September 1991 passed the first of sixty-seven resolutions that would be adopted by January 1995. This first resolution, number 713, imposed a general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Yugoslavia.⁷⁹ This resolution still dealt with the conflicts in Yugoslavia as if they were the internal affair of a UN member state. The resolution did not have any serious consequences for the JNA, which had stocks of weaponry in its arsenals, but it had serious consequences for the Croatian side.⁸⁰ The weapons embargo on Yugoslav republics made it possible for Milošević to strengthen his own power in rump Yugoslavia and to strengthen the offensive against Croatia.

On 8 October 1991, on the day the three-month moratorium enacted under the Brioni Accord ended, UN Secretary-General de Cuéllar decided to send Cyrus Vance, former U.S. secretary of state, to the Balkans as his personal envoy. In de Cuéllar’s view the EC could not be neutral in imposing a just peace.⁸¹ In cooperation with Lord Carrington, Vance was authorized to start a negotiating process that they hoped would be fruitful under the auspices of the EC and the UN.⁸²

On 15 October 1991 Mikhail Gorbachev invited Tudjman and Milošević to Moscow. Gorbachev was sure that the events in Yugoslavia only “mirrored the horrors” that could be possible in the Soviet Union. Both leaders pleaded that they would, in the course of November and with the assistance of the Soviet Union, the U.S., and the EC, find an honest solution to end the fighting.⁸³ Very soon the international community discovered that these promises would not be kept.

The EC’s Hague conference issued a draft general settlement on 24 October 1991. It called for the demilitarization of all ethnic enclaves, a guaranteed autonomy for Kosovo and Vojvodina, and new relations among the republics. As an answer to the Carrington plan, the Serbs boycotted the conference in The Hague. Therefore on 4 November the EC prepared a new version of the plan that did not mention Vojvodina and Kosovo any more; it talked only in general about territories with special status.⁸⁴ This proposal did not fulfill the goals of the Serbian leadership either. They still wanted a Yugoslav federation that would remain the only heir of the SFRY and that would unite “all those republics and peoples” that wished to remain in the federation.⁸⁵

The basis for a new settlement was certainly offered by the legal opinion of the Arbitration (Badinter) Commission that argued that since 8 October, Yugoslavia had been a “state in the process of dissolution.” Nonetheless, on 8 November the EC proceeded with its strategy of imposing trade sanctions on and threatening the isolation of Yugoslavia in order to press Serbia into accepting its plan and to get both Croatia and Serbia to sign a cease-fire.⁸⁶ In this framework the EC also discussed compensatory measures for parties such as Bosnia-Herzegovina and

Macedonia, “which do cooperate in a peaceful way towards a comprehensive political solution on the basis of the EC proposals.”⁸⁷

Finally, on 23 November in Geneva, Milošević accepted a cease-fire under the auspices of the UN and welcomed the Vance proposal to station UN blue helmet units on occupied Croatian territories. The Croatian government also agreed to this because it was aware that its armed forces would not be able to fight the Serbs on occupied territories while at the same time defending its compatriots in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Croatian government demanded, however, that the UN troops be stationed at the border with Serbia (the ex-republican border between Croatia and Serbia) and not at the front line, as Milošević demanded.⁸⁸

While the EC member states got actively involved in the crises, the UN continued to remain passive. German Foreign Minister Genscher talked about that in a speech he gave on the occasion of a German–Italian meeting in Venice on 22 and 23 November 1991. He stated that what was going on in Yugoslavia was not a civil war but “an attack on Croatia and therefore it does not concern only the EC and OSCE, but it should be above all the business of the UN Security Council to deal with the problem.”⁸⁹

On the demand of the SFRY government, the Security Council finally discussed the situation in Yugoslavia on 27 November 1991. The UNSC unanimously adopted Resolution 721, proposed by the UK, France, and Belgium, empowering Vance to prepare the diplomatic terrain for UN peacekeeping forces on the territory where the fighting had occurred and asking all parties to the conflict to observe a cease-fire and to fulfill UNSC Resolution 713 of 25 September 1991.⁹⁰ This resolution sent an additional message: the Soviet Union had unified its views on the use of UN peacekeeping forces with those of the Western powers, and the EC accepted defeat in its attempts to solve the Yugoslav crisis.⁹¹ At a joint press conference in Bonn with Kohl on 15 November 1991, Mitterrand emphasized that this question could not be solved under time pressure and without due caution. He believed that it was above all a question of guaranteeing minority rights as well as a question of borders. The EC defeat convinced the Germans that they should meddle directly in the Yugoslav crisis. In a 27 November address to the *Bundestag*, German Chancellor Kohl set 24 December 1991 as the date for German recognition of Slovenia and Croatia.⁹² This provoked many opposing views within the international community.

The EC peace plan was based on the French position that any new nations that would be established could be internationally recognized only after human rights issues had been resolved and inter-people and inter-ethnic relations normalized.⁹³ On 2 December 1991 Genscher demanded that the UNSC meet and discuss a possible UN peacekeeping operation in Yugoslavia. On 15 December 1991 the UNSC passed Resolution 724 for sending a group of observers to Yugoslavia with the intention of preparing for a peace mission. This Resolution also

asked UN member states to secure the observance of the weapons embargo and to abstain from all activities that might postpone or prevent negotiations for a cessation of fighting or render impossible a permanent ceasefire.⁹⁴

On the night of 16-17 December the EC foreign ministers discussed the Yugoslav crisis. At three in the morning they succeeded in reaching a compromise according to which the EC would recognize the independence of all of the Yugoslav republics that wished to be recognized and formally petitioned for recognition by 23 December 1991. The EC ministers also passed the French-German draft on conditions for the recognition of independence. They agreed that the Arbitration (Badinter) Commission would be the first to provide an evaluation on the fulfillment of conditions by 15 January 1992 after which the EC would recognize all those republics that met the requisite conditions. Among the demands for recognition were adherence to the terms of the UN Charter and the directives of the OSCE and the Charter of Paris for a new Europe that pertained to the principles of a democracy, the rule of law, the rights of national minorities, and the inviolability of international borders (which could be changed only by peaceful means). In addition, the newly recognized republics were expected to participate in the peace conference on Yugoslavia, while committing themselves to a program for disarmament.⁹⁵

According to Carrington's letter to van den Broek, Germany's success in its campaign for the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia was the death knell to peace negotiations. This is a major unresolved controversy. Some scholars, like team member Marko Hoare, argue:

In fact, it was precisely the "even-handed" approach of the European powers, their unwillingness to take sides or to intervene in force, that had encouraged the apparently stronger side—Serbia and the JNA—to exploit this vacillation and attack. There were many faults on the Croatian side—above all the demotion of the status of Serbs in Croatia from "nation" to "minority," but ultimately this war involved an attack by one side against the other. Withholding recognition from Croatia, the side that was attacked, "as a reward for a peaceful settlement" could not have worked because it was not Croatia that was blocking a peaceful settlement.

The EC decision in December to recognize Croatia (and Slovenia) was criticized from some quarters for not going sufficiently far in protecting the rights of the Serbs in Croatia, and it left open the question of what would become of the other four republics. The internationalization of the crisis also affected Milošević's calculations. He became convinced that Serbia should look for help from the UN, where the idea of Yugoslavia was still alive. Therefore the federal government of Yugoslavia on 25 December 1991 demanded intervention by the UN blue helmets on occupied Croatian territories and asked de Cuéllar to person-

ally intervene in favor of the peace process “because the EC is acting in favor of secessionists and violates international law.”⁹⁶

The Vance plan differed on many issues from the EC plans, which tried in vain to keep Yugoslavia intact. It foresaw a cease-fire on all territories in question, 10,000 blue helmets, and the creation of United Nations Protected Areas (UNPA) in those territories where the Serbs lived in Croatia and that were until then occupied by the JNA. Meanwhile, the JNA would withdraw from Croatia.⁹⁷ Tudjman proclaimed the entrance of blue helmets into Croatian territory as an important victory for Croatia. He was ready to fulfill the Vance Plan to please the international community, which demanded this in order to recognize Croatia as an independent state.⁹⁸ Milošević acted similarly and accepted blue helmets in Croatia. We presume that he believed that it represented the first step toward a plebiscite to enable the annexation of ethnically Serb parts of Croatia to Serbia.⁹⁹ The other possibility is that he thought that the introduction of UN troops would freeze existing lines of confrontation, which would, in time, transform themselves naturally into new, *de facto* international borders.¹⁰⁰

Remarkably, the Belgrade regime acted against the leadership of the Serbs of Krajina. Milošević and his collaborators believed that Vance and the new UN secretary-general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali from Egypt, were “realists,” that is, pro-Serb. Vance and Boutros-Ghali still treated the Yugoslav wars as a civil war and not as an international war that could threaten international peace. UN Resolution 727 of 8 January 1992 also reflected this approach and authorized the sending of fifty military liaison officers to promote the maintenance of the cease-fire, as if this were a fight between two armed factions.¹⁰¹ From the beginning of the conflict, Slovenes and Croats considered the actions of the Yugoslav army and Serb insurgents as acts of aggression on the newly established states of Slovenia and Croatia.¹⁰²

These first days of January 1992 were quite interesting in the reactions of the international community toward the Yugoslav crisis. They were also important because Milošević’s regime also declared its (war) aims. Milošević wanted to create a rump Yugoslavia that would also be the only lawful successor of the former SFRY, in which all those who wanted to keep their Yugoslav citizenship would live. Actually it was an open call to arms to create Great Serbia and to introduce new wars.

On 13 January 1992, the Vatican recognized Slovenia and Croatia, and the next day the Badinter Commission submitted its expected evaluation of the candidates for recognition. The commission recommended immediate recognition of Slovenia and Macedonia; recognition of Croatia conditioned on certain assurances concerning democratic principles, national minorities, and border protections; and a referendum for Bosnia-Herzegovina. (On the issue of the par-

ticipation of all three communities in significant numbers, see chapter 3.) The application from Kosovo was considered invalid because it did not come from a recognized republic.¹⁰³

Realistically, the commission's opinion did not have much influence on the decisions of those EC states that had demanded it. When they recognized Croatia and Slovenia on 15 January 1992, those states demanded that Croatia incorporate the necessary assurances into its constitution. Croatia gave them only a written promise to comply, and such compliance did not happen until a change of regime in Croatia in the year 2000.

In April 1992 the United States finally recognized Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina within its current borders. Serbia (with autonomous regions Kosovo and Vojvodina) and Montenegro formed a new entity, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), which Milošević hoped would encompass also the ethnically Serb territories in neighboring Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Macedonia had to wait for international recognition because the Greeks opposed it on the grounds that the international community should not recognize a state that had irredentist objectives. Ironically, the EC had asked the Montenegrin government to request recognition, and the Badinter commission had excluded any connection between the name of Macedonia and irredentist demands toward neighbors.¹⁰⁴ Greece believed that the name was its exclusive property and that the very use of this name by the former Yugoslav republic showed the irredentist plans of that state toward Aegean Macedonia. Because both states were not able to solve these problems, Greece in 1992 introduced economic sanctions against Macedonia and hindered the formation of EU policy toward Macedonia.¹⁰⁵ Eventually, the UN intervened, and the foreign ministers of Greece and Macedonia met in New York and signed an agreement (on 13 September 1992) by which Greece rescinded its economic sanctions, but Macedonia was required to change its state flag because it contained Greek symbols. By 1993 they were able to solve some disagreements on the name of the new state. Greece accepted a temporary name for Macedonia—the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia—and Macedonia became a member of the UN in April 1993 under this name.¹⁰⁶

There were also quite a few unsolved questions regarding the new Macedonian state's relationship with the FRY, especially concerning the border. At the request of the Macedonian government and Macedonian émigré organizations in the United States and Canada,¹⁰⁷ NATO peacekeeping forces of 1,000 American soldiers were stationed at the border of Macedonia with the FRY to prevent war from spreading to Macedonia (UNSC Resolution 795, 9 December 1992).¹⁰⁸

Eventually the UN introduced economic sanctions against the FRY with Security Council Resolution 757/1992, which isolated the FRY from the rest of the world.¹⁰⁹ This "third Yugoslavia" soon got new political leadership. The first

president of the FRY was the “spiritual father of the Serbs,” Dobrica Ćosić, while an American businessman of Serb descent, Milan Panić, became the new Yugoslav prime minister. Panić was a surprise for everyone. Milošević chose him because he thought that Panić would be the right man to help fight the international isolation of the FRY, whereas the U.S. government counted on Panić to help the international community find a solution to the crisis in the former Yugoslavia. Thus the State Department gave permission for Panić, an American citizen, to head the government of the FRY.¹¹⁰ Panić supported the attempts of the international community to find a peaceful solution to the Yugoslav crisis, especially at the 1992 conference in London, but Panić only remained in office until he lost the election for president of the Republic of Serbia on 20 December 1992. A few days after the election he had to resign.

The main problem for the international community was Bosnia-Herzegovina, the only republic of the former Yugoslavia in which none of the Yugoslav ethno-nations had an absolute majority in the population. The constitutive nations of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1991 were the Bosniaks (i.e., Bosnian Muslims, 43.7 percent), Serbs (31.4 percent), and Croats (17.3 percent).¹¹¹ The Muslims had a majority in central Bosnia, in northeastern Bosnia (south of Tuzla), in Cazinska krajina (northwestern corner of Bosnia), and in northern Herzegovina. They were a relative majority of the cities of these regions. The Serbs had a majority in Bosanska krajina, Semberija, and eastern Herzegovina. Croats were a majority in western and central Herzegovina, in parts of Posavina (northern Bosnia), and in some parts of central Bosnia.

Although the Serbs, Croats, and Muslims traditionally lived together, the demands by nationalistic politicians that Bosnia-Herzegovina be reorganized into homogeneous national territories inevitably required the division of ethnically mixed territories into their Serb, Croat, and Muslim parts. Due to estranged interethnic relations, the president of the presidency of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegović, had already in July 1991 demanded that UN peacekeepers be stationed in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Because of the philosophy of the UN, which did not want to intervene to prevent the start of violence but only to “stop” it once it broke out, Izetbegović’s proposal did not succeed. Also, demands by some Western diplomats for an international protectorate over Bosnia-Herzegovina remained unanswered.

International peacemakers called a conference on Bosnia in the beginning of February 1992 to find a comprehensive political settlement under the auspices of the EC troika and its chair, José Cutileiro from Portugal. Cutileiro’s plan did not advocate the division of Bosnia-Herzegovina into three entities but only into “spheres of interest” of the three ethnic groups. In principle, this plan was approved by Croats and Muslims as well as by the Serbs. Thus, instead of establishing a constitution for Bosnia-Herzegovina, or a constituent assembly to

write one, the EC negotiators accepted the view that the internal conflict was ethnically based and that the power-sharing arrangement of the coalition should translate into a triune state in which the three main ethnic parties (Party for Democratic Action, *Stranka demokratske akcije* [SDA]; Serbian Democratic Party, *Srpska demokratska stranka* [SDS]; and Croatian Democratic Union, *Hrvatska demokratska zajednica* [HDZ]) divided territorial control among themselves. By the time of the Lisbon conference all three parties expected ethnic cantonization of the republic into three parts.

At a meeting in Lisbon on 23 February, EC Chair Cutileiro showed a map that divided Bosnia-Herzegovina in a way that Croats and Muslims controlled about 56 percent of the territory and Serbs 44 percent. No one was happy with this plan. Serbs wanted a larger percentage of the territory; Croats did not achieve what they wanted (because of their low numbers); and Muslims would be affected badly by any territorial division.¹¹² Therefore, at the meeting convened by Cutileiro in Sarajevo on 27 February, Izetbegović again talked about a united multiethnic Bosnia to be comprised of citizens and not nations. As a result, the agreement on a confederated Bosnia-Herzegovina—which representatives of the Bosnian Serbs made a precondition for Bosnian-Serb participation in a referendum on independence for Bosnia-Herzegovina—was not signed.

In spite of this, Bosniaks, in cooperation with Bosnian Croats, issued writs for a referendum, which took place on 29 February and 1 March. Bosnian Serbs boycotted the referendum, and thus the turnout was 63 percent. In spite of the fact that more than 99 percent of those who participated voted for the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina, this percentage was still too small to cement a new state community.¹¹³ When the government of Bosnia-Herzegovina declared the results of the referendum and, on its basis, the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina (on 3 March), the first armed clashes occurred in Sarajevo. The Lisbon talks were forgotten. An overwhelming majority of the Serbs were sure that they wanted to stay in Yugoslavia, whereas a similarly overwhelming majority of the Croats and Muslims were sure that they wanted to leave.

During this period of complicated interethnic relations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the international community, especially the United States, had to deal with the problem of the international recognition of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia. After a great deal of discussion, the foreign ministers of the EC countries and the U.S. resolved that the EC countries would recognize Bosnia-Herzegovina on 6 April and that the United States would recognize Slovenia and Croatia as well.¹¹⁴

At the same time, Lord Carrington and Cutileiro continued to try to find a peaceful solution to the crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In spite of an outbreak of armed clashes, the international community still thought that the Bosnian crisis could be solved by peaceful means. This can be confirmed by the fact that on 13

March Sarajevo became the headquarters of the general staff of UNPROFOR under the leadership of Canadian General Lewis MacKenzie.¹¹⁵ The leaders of all sides, Muslim Alija Izetbegović, Serb Radovan Karadžić, and Croat Mate Boban even succeeded in accepting a “declaration on constitutional principles for a republic” in Sarajevo on 16-18 March 1992. According to the declaration, Bosnia-Hercegovina would be comprised of three “constitutive entities which should be based on ethnic principles; the constitution of its geographic territories should also be based on economic, physical-geographical and other criteria.”¹¹⁶

Emboldened by the growing U.S. pressure on Europe for immediate recognition of Bosnian sovereignty and, perhaps, by promises of support from Middle Eastern leaders (or by the negative implications of the accord for Bosnia and the Bosniaks), President Izetbegović reneged on his commitment to the document within a week.¹¹⁷ He was followed by the Croat leader Mate Boban, who saw the opportunity to gain more territory in a new round of negotiations. Izetbegović rejected Cutileiro’s plan because it would neglect Bosniaks’ interests, demanding cantonization of Bosnia-Hercegovina as *conditio sine qua non* for its international recognition.¹¹⁸

Some scholars claim that Izetbegović changed his approval of this plan under the influence of U.S. Ambassador Zimmermann, who encouraged him to resist Serbian and European pressures.¹¹⁹ In an interview published in 1994 in the Belgrade weekly *Vreme*, Zimmermann denied this but said that “he asked Izetbegović why he signed something that he did not agree to.”¹²⁰ The conversations of Zimmermann with Izetbegović were one of the first signs that the U.S. would become more involved in the Yugoslav drama. This was partially the result of criticism that it had not been providing leadership of the Western world and partly the result of intensive lobbying in Washington by Bosnian representatives.¹²¹

When the representatives of all three constituent nations of Bosnia-Hercegovina met again in Brussels on 30 March, it was clear that war could not be avoided because the Serbian side was unwilling to talk any more. Under these circumstances, the EC recognized the independence of Bosnia-Hercegovina on 6 April 1992. The U.S. followed the next day. The Assembly of the Serb Nation in Bosnia-Hercegovina soon declared the independence of the Serb Republic of Bosnia-Hercegovina (later renamed *Republika Srpska*, Serb Republic).

In the spring of 1992, Europe’s bloodiest conflict since World War II began in ethnically mixed Bosnia-Hercegovina. From the very beginning of the war, the international community tried to stop the fighting and to find a peaceful solution to all questions. All the peace plans suggested by the UN and the EC/EU were based on the condition that Bosniaks would not be forced to leave their homes in those territories where they were a majority before the war. By May–June 1992, the issue of national sovereignty was beginning to confront Western governments

with a dilemma: strategically Bosnia-Herzegovina was perhaps not terribly significant, but there was a growing humanitarian crisis for all the world to see.

The so-called CNN effect influenced acceptance of many decisions in attempts to reach peace. One such event, which shocked viewers all over the world, happened on 27 May in Sarajevo, where sixteen people were killed and 160 more were wounded by a grenade on Vasa Miskin Street.¹²² Serb media tried to convince the world that Muslims had targeted their own people in order to invoke the sympathy of the West.¹²³ By the next day, the EC and the United States had reacted by imposing sanctions against the FRY. The UNSC confirmed the economic sanctions the next day. Resolution 757 outlawed Serbia from the international community until the attacks stopped. This resolution also asked NATO to organize supervision over the flow of traffic on the Adriatic Sea to ensure respect for the economic sanctions against the FRY and for the arms embargo on weapons for all of the regions of the former Yugoslavia.¹²⁴

At the same time, conditions in Sarajevo under siege worsened. UNPROFOR could do nothing, in spite of the fact that catastrophe was anticipated. Some blame this on the UN secretary-general himself, who looked upon the war in the former Yugoslavia as “the war of the rich.”¹²⁵ However, many in the West agitated for doing something as soon as possible. The Islamic world also reacted sharply to the persecution of its fellow believers in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Forty-seven member states of the Islamic Conference Organization cut diplomatic ties with the FRY. Saudi King Fahd asked President Bush in a special letter to do something for Bosnian Muslims.¹²⁶

To calm down public opinion, the officers of UNPROFOR who remained in Sarajevo wanted to convince the Bosniak government and the Bosnian Serbs to agree on security for the airport in Sarajevo so that humanitarian aid could be delivered. Bosnian Serbs promised to withdraw their troops. This victory convinced UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali to suggest to the UNSC on 6 June that it widen the UNPROFOR mandate in Bosnia-Herzegovina and strengthen the forces of the UN with one battalion. Thus Resolution 759 was passed, in which the UNSC noted the agreement of all parties to the reopening of the Sarajevo airport for humanitarian purposes under the executive authority of the UN and demanded that all parties and others concerned immediately create the necessary conditions for the unimpeded delivery of humanitarian supplies to Sarajevo and other destinations in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Meanwhile, the attacks of Serb forces convinced U.S. Secretary of State James Baker to consider military intervention. He constructed “Game Plan: New Steps in Connection with Bosnia.” This would enable humanitarian aid to reach Sarajevo “with all possible means.” President Bush supported Baker in this effort, whereas U.S. Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney and General Colin Powell, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, were against the plan. Although Bush

theoretically had the last word, “bureaucratic-military obstruction” made it impossible for a feasibility study of this plan. This was Baker’s last attempt to influence events in the Balkans. Later he was named leader of the campaign for the reelection of George Bush, and Lawrence Eagleburger replaced him.¹²⁷

The Serb army attacks and Baker’s proposals made it possible for European leaders to sharpen their views. In concurrence with a German proposal they demanded the opening of the Sarajevo airport and declared that they would still try to resolve the crisis peacefully. Nevertheless, they did not eliminate the possibility of the use of military means if the Serbs continued to block the flow of humanitarian aid.¹²⁸ French President Mitterrand annulled this decision. Without consulting either his European or American partners, he flew into Sarajevo to support his understanding that the conflict in Bosnia should be viewed not as aggression but as civil war.¹²⁹

The international community had to deal with the question, were the wars in Croatia and Bosnia civil wars or international conflicts (for which the FRY would be guilty of the charge of aggression)? Academic and popular literature on the war in Bosnia still remains deeply divided on this basic issue. Supporters of the external aggression thesis were strong proponents of preserving and developing Bosnia-Herzegovina as a single, united state, whereas those who believed the 1992–1995 conflict was primarily a civil war demonstrated a range of attitudes from cautious neutrality to active hostility in their analysis of the post-1992 state.¹³⁰

Certainly to the outside world the war appeared as a conflict among neighbors, sometimes in the same village or town, and presented the ugly traits usually associated with such a war. Most researchers, however, believe that this should not distract attention from the fact that the rebellion of the Croatian and Bosnian Serbs could not have taken place, and above all could not have been successful in the beginning, without the decisive involvement of the Serbian-led Yugoslav army. Among the EC member states, Germany was adamant that this was blatant aggression by one Yugoslav republic and one Yugoslav nation against another and should not be tolerated by the international community. This, however, did not reflect a naive and one-sided good-versus-evil view that demonized the Serbs, as some critics of German policy like to pretend when trying to evade a discussion of the objective foundations of Germany’s views on the conflict.

Certainly international recognition of Slovenia and Croatia in January 1992, followed by the recognition of Bosnia-Herzegovina in April 1992 and the recognition of Macedonia in April 1993, was very important because from then on one could talk only about international conflict and not civil war in the former Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, in the summer of 1992 it appeared that most Western diplomats still considered it as a civil war. From the Serb point of view, of course, it was a civil war. Few were surprised, therefore, when French President Mitter-

rand flew into Sarajevo on 28 June 1992 to observe what was going on in Bosnia-Herzegovina and to conclude that it was a civil war that could only be solved with negotiations and not with force.

The international media supported Mitterrand's bravery in traveling to Sarajevo; however, diplomats did not. British Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd remarked that this was the "brave gesture of a president who is getting old."¹³¹ The reactions in Belgrade and in the Bosnian Republika Srpska were more positive. Five months later, General Momir Talić, commander of the First Corps of the Bosnian-Serb army, in an interview for Paris's *Le Monde*, declared that Karadžić successfully used Mitterrand's *coup de theater* to the Bosnian Serbs' own advantage. Serb troops withdrew from the airport, as UNSC Resolution No. 761 of 29 June demanded. International public opinion seemed convinced that military intervention was not necessary.¹³² Already on that day the first plane with humanitarian aid landed at Sarajevo airport.¹³³ The airlift soon played the role—as one Bosniak journalist observed—of morphine with which the West provided aid to the victims of war. At the same time, the West prolonged the war by giving Bosniaks the possibility of surviving but not of defending themselves.¹³⁴

In the summer of 1992 greater alarm all over the world was provoked by *Newsday* correspondent Roy Gutman, who publicized his discovery of Serb concentration camps in northern and western Bosnia.¹³⁵ Gutman's articles on Muslim and Croatian Bosnian prisoners in concentration camps and his photographs of living skeletons in a concentration camp in Omarska (north of Banja Luka) forced the international community to demand action at once. One day before Gutman's article was published, the U.S. Department of State admitted knowing about the described horrors, but in a special statement it also said that there was nothing the U.S. could do to prevent them.

Once television stations from all over the world started to transmit photographs from the concentration camps (there were 94 of them with 400,000 prisoners¹³⁶), President George Bush called a press conference at Patterson Air Force Base in Colorado to condemn ethnic cleansing.¹³⁷ The Balkan question also became a burning question in the U.S. presidential campaign because it gave Bill Clinton many opportunities to criticize Bush and to condemn the persecution and killing of people because of their ethnicity.¹³⁸

Already in the summer of 1992 the UNSC accepted Resolution 770, which demanded that unimpeded and continuous access to all camps, prisons, and detention centers be granted immediately to the International Red Cross and that all detainees receive humane treatment. In addition, the UNSC also asked the member states and regional institutions to use all necessary means to enable the flow of humanitarian aid to Bosnia-Herzegovina.¹³⁹ Thus, the UNSC indirectly allowed for the use of force. The same day, the UNSC also passed Resolution

771, which “strongly condemns violations of international humanitarian law, including those involved in the process of ethnic cleansing.”¹⁴⁰

At a London conference on Yugoslavia that started on 26 August, UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali and British Prime Minister John Major offered a strong condemnation of the FRY. It soon became clear, however, that the Western powers wanted to continue a policy of noninterference and that they did not plan to revoke the arms embargo on the territory of the former Yugoslavia. The conference ended on 27 August, when all the participants accepted a statement of principles. But these principles contained all the contradictions and equivocation on the problem of national self-determination and the collapse of a state that had characterized Western action during the previous fourteen months.¹⁴¹

After this conference did not produce the desired results, the international community started to coordinate its efforts. Cyrus Vance, as representative of the UN secretary-general, and David Owen, former UK foreign secretary, became cochairs of the new International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia (ICFY). ICFY thus joined the other international organizations that were operating to find a solution to the Yugoslav crisis.

In mid-September Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance visited Sarajevo, Zagreb, and Belgrade and, in consultation with political leaders there, agreed to new negotiations, which started in Geneva at the end of September. Izetbegović continued to defend a unified and centralized Bosnia-Herzegovina, which Western diplomats looked on as an irrational option. Soon afterward the military alliance between the Bosnian government and Croatia began to break down, and it officially ended on 24 October. The consequences of this were clear by November, when fighting erupted between Bosnian Croat forces and the Bosnian government. Unfortunately, this new outbreak of violence in Bosnia-Herzegovina confirmed the thesis of those diplomats who believed that the Bosnian War was the result of irrational tribal conflict.¹⁴²

On 6 October 1992 the UNSC unanimously passed Resolution 780, which requested the secretary-general to establish, as a matter of urgency, an impartial commission of experts with a view to providing him with its conclusions on the evidence of grave breaches of the Geneva conventions and other violations of humanitarian law committed in the territory of the former Yugoslavia.¹⁴³ With Resolution 781, which was passed 9 October, the Security Council decided to establish a ban on military flights in the airspace of Bosnia-Herzegovina, to examine without delay all the information brought to its attention concerning the implementation of the ban, and in the case of violations, to consider urgently further measures necessary to enforce it. This resolution, as well as Resolution 786 (adopted on 10 November, which reconfirmed prohibition against the use of aircraft and helicopters), did not have any special effect, however, because Boutros-Ghali and

UNPROFOR commanders did not want to provoke the Serbs; it was thus accepted only as a warning.¹⁴⁴

The Bosnian Serb army did not pay attention to all of these resolutions. Because of numerous infringements, from 10 October onward NATO started to use airborne warning and control system (AWACS) airplanes. This support for the implementation of the UNSC resolutions began NATO's active involvement in the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. During this period, Owen, Vance, and their collaborators tried to find a diplomatic solution to the land dispute that would be acceptable to all sides in the conflict. They tried to prevent the division of Bosnia-Herzegovina into three parts and, in accordance with the directives of the London conference, tried to keep intact its ethnic structure.

Because of the dangers of a widening conflict, U.S. President Bush changed his views toward the Yugoslav crisis. The fact that he lost the November 1992 election to Clinton also played a role. Bush, who stayed in office until 20 January 2003, called an ICFY meeting in Geneva. Lawrence Eagleburger surprised everyone by his condemnation of Serb war crimes and his demand for the establishment of an international court for war crimes on the territory of the former Yugoslavia, where Milošević, Šešelj, Karadžić, General Ratko Mladić, Željko Ražnatović (widely known as Arkan), and others could be tried.¹⁴⁵

Already on 2 January 1993, a new meeting of the ICFY was called. Vance and Owen showed their peace plan for Bosnia-Herzegovina. The territory of the republic would be divided into ten provinces (three for every ethnic group plus the neutral region of Sarajevo) drawn on the basis of geographic and historical criteria as well as the ethnic mix of the local population. The constitution established a power-sharing agreement among the nations of local and central governments, and a weak, decentralized state. Nonetheless, the negotiators' mandate was still to obtain a cease-fire as rapidly as possible.¹⁴⁶

Only the Croats agreed to the plan because it promised them 25 percent of the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Serbs were disappointed because the plan promised them only 42 percent of the Bosnia-Herzegovina territory. They would have to give up 24 percent of already occupied land. The Vance-Owen plan was criticized also by the Bosniaks, who thought that its fulfillment would sooner or later mean a division of Bosnia-Herzegovina between the Serbs and Croats, while it would at the same time encircle the Bosniaks in a ghetto where only traces of religious and cultural autonomy would be maintained.¹⁴⁷

Vance and Owen renewed negotiations in Geneva on 10 January 1993. This time they changed tactics and bet everything on Milošević. They did not care much about Eagleburger's statement of 16 December 1992 that Milošević ought to be held accountable before a military court tribunal for crimes against humanity. Milošević at first did not want to cooperate, but in the end he came to

Geneva.¹⁴⁸ He was forced to cooperate out of fear of NATO intervention, which seemed more and more likely, but also to save the FRY from international isolation. During that time, the Bush administration sent the aircraft carrier *J. F. Kennedy* with accompanying ships of the Sixth U.S. Fleet to the Adriatic.¹⁴⁹ Under the above-mentioned threats and due to the worsened economic situation in which the FRY found itself, Milošević was forced to fundamentally change his foreign policy and tried to convince Karadžić to sign at least the constitutional part of the Vance-Owen plan.¹⁵⁰

During the course of negotiations in Geneva, newly elected U.S. President Bill Clinton replaced George Bush on 20 January 1993. The sympathies toward the Bosniaks expressed by the new president and his advisers during the presidential campaign were confirmed after he entered the White House. Until the Dayton agreement was reached, however, there was debate within Clinton's administration. Vice President Albert Gore; Anthony Lake; Gore's national security advisor, Leon Fuerth; and U.S. Ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright pushed for the "lift and strike" approach, which meant sending arms shipments to Sarajevo's Bosniak government while threatening air strikes. The rest of the administration, especially Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Secretary of Defense Leslie Aspin Jr., and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell opposed this approach.¹⁵¹ The new administration at first criticized the talks in Geneva because there the attackers were put on an equal footing with those whom they attacked. The Clinton administration also emphasized that the fulfillment of the Vance-Owen plan would mean that the world community for the first time in the twentieth century was rewarding a policy of aggression.¹⁵²

Those who prevailed among the policymakers in the White House were the ones who thought that the U.S. should take the initiative and solve the Bosnian question based on moral values.¹⁵³ Therefore, the United States started to search for a possible solution that would include lifting the weapons embargo for the Bosniaks and having NATO airplanes enforce no-fly zones over Bosnia-Herzegovina. If this could be done, the Serbs would lose at least some of their military superiority.¹⁵⁴ This plan was met by great resistance from the European allies, the Pentagon, and even the Russian government. Critics of the Russian government from nationalistic circles accused President Boris Yeltsin and Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev of "treason against their Slavic brothers."¹⁵⁵

In numerous diplomatic actions and in the U.S. Congress, President Clinton pleaded for the stationing of U.S. troops in Bosnia. At the same time, he was under pressure from military leaders in the Pentagon, who doubted that the bombing of Bosnian Serb positions would be successful. Clinton was actually on the verge of not executing the lift and strike option.¹⁵⁶ The U.S. position was indeed complicated. To explain the outcome of the Dayton agreement it is necessary to trace the triangular interplay among the three sides to Western policy: the British and

French (broadly pro-Belgrade), the U.S. Congress (broadly pro-Bosnian), and the Clinton administration (vacillating between the two).

In spite of diplomatic efforts, the fighting and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia-Herzegovina continued. To protect its credibility and to ease the pressure from international public opinion, the UNSC tried to convince the Bosniaks to accept the Vance-Owen plan. However, it also promised that crimes against humanity committed by Serbs and Croats against Bosniaks would not remain unpunished. Thus the UNSC, on a proposal by France, passed UNSC Resolution 808 on 22 February establishing the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) at The Hague. The next day, after clearing it with UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali, President Clinton proclaimed that the West would airlift supplies to the Bosniaks, who were cut off from their supply lines.¹⁵⁷

By the end of February 1993 Russia had asked all sides involved to agree to a cease-fire, emphasized its support for the Vance-Owen plan, and expressed its support for a formation of military forces of the UN, in which Russian forces and NATO would cooperate. During March, April, and May 1993 bargaining over the Vance-Owen plan continued. The problem was again the same as in Lisbon: delineation of the future entities of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The co-chairmen divided the plan into four parts, namely the principles for a future constitution; a peace agreement on the cessation of hostilities; the frontiers among future entities; and an interim constitution. They managed to obtain signatures from all three parties in the conflict for the constitutional principles. During the next three months, however, they were not able to get unanimous agreement for the other parts of the peace plan.¹⁵⁸

The Bosnian government and the Bosnian Croats affixed their signatures to all four documents by 25 March, while at the same time the Bosnian Serbs refused to sign those documents which related to boundaries and to the interim constitution. The solution was to put pressure on the Bosnian Serbs by turning again to President Milošević. If Bosnian Serbs did not sign by 26 April, sanctions on the FRY would be substantially extended and tightened.¹⁵⁹ Because the Bosnian Serbs resisted, on 31 March the UNSC accepted Resolution 816, which strengthened its enforcement of a no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina. NATO planes began overflights—Operation Deny Flight—on 12 April.¹⁶⁰

Karadžić reacted to this with threats of new violence. Only fifteen minutes after the operation began, Bosnian Serbs answered with a new attack on Srebrenica, which caused the passage of UNSC Resolution 819 on 16 April.¹⁶¹ Because of the new eruption of violence, the UN decided to punish the FRY with economic sanctions.¹⁶² New sanctions meant a real economic catastrophe for the FRY. Milošević realized that he could not fight against the whole world; therefore, he pushed for a compromise in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Milošević was also aware of new debates in the White House, where the president and his advisers

were seriously discussing an end to the arms embargo for the Bosniaks and the bombing of Serb military targets.¹⁶³

The possibility of military intervention increased so dramatically that the international community started to discuss a postwar scenario.¹⁶⁴ This convinced Milošević to put pressure on the Bosnian Serbs to accept the Vance-Owen plan. With the assistance of Greek Prime Minister Konstantin Mitsotakis, Milošević convened a meeting at Vouliagmeni, near Athens, on 1–2 May of the cochairmen and Yugoslav, Croatian, and Bosnian leaders: Ćosić, Bulatović, Tudjman, Izetbegović, and Karadžić. After heated discussions the meeting ended with the promise of Karadžić to support the Vance-Owen plan if it were accepted also by the parliament of Republika Srpska.¹⁶⁵

This parliament met on 5 May and decided on holding a referendum to let the people decide whether to accept the Vance-Owen plan.¹⁶⁶ On 15 and 16 May 1993, 96 percent of all Bosnian Serbs who voted rejected the plan. After this political defeat, Milošević introduced economic sanctions against the Bosnian Serbs and at least on paper closed the border on the Drina River. In reality, FRY resources continued to pour into the Republika Srpska.

The Bosnian Serb refusal of the Vance-Owen agreement surprised the Clinton administration. A meeting of the UNSC was called. The Bosnian Serb actions were condemned even in Moscow,¹⁶⁷ and on 6 May, UNSC Resolution 824 declared that Sarajevo, Tuzla, Žepa, Goražde, Bihać, and Srebrenica should be treated as safe areas¹⁶⁸ (next chapter).

Because of political and military changes that occurred in the spring of 1993 in Bosnia-Herzegovina and in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (e.g., the outbreak of fights between Bosniaks and Croats and the defeat of Milan Panić in Serbian elections) as well as in the international community (Cyrus Vance's resignation; he was replaced by Norwegian Foreign Minister Thorwald Stoltenberg), the EC foreign ministers decided to start a new cycle of peace negotiations among the warring Bosnian sides. The new so-called Owen-Stoltenberg peace plan was formulated between June and September 1993. It divided Bosnia-Herzegovina into a confederation of three ethnic states and thus returned to the ethnic principles of Lisbon.¹⁶⁹ In spite of the fact that a solution on division into three parts was in place, many questions were left unsolved. The most burning of these concerned how much territory Bosniaks would get because they controlled only 10 percent of Bosnia-Herzegovina but demanded 40–45 percent of its territory.¹⁷⁰ Izetbegović explained those demands in a radio broadcast on 31 July and emphasized "that the Muslims would now have to fight for territory to ensure their survival as a nation."¹⁷¹ In this unsettled climate, on 18 August in Geneva, Owen and Stoltenberg presented their plan for the future of Bosnia-Herzegovina. It included maps according to which Serbs would control 52 percent of the territory; Croats 19 percent; and Bosniaks 30 percent.

The Bosnian government announced on 30 August that it rejected the plan and negotiations stopped. Some Muslim politicians simultaneously started to create a Muslim state. They expelled non-Muslims from the villages and towns. Muslim schools which gave the children religious training were started. These efforts were financially supported by Arab Muslim states. Some circles within the Bosnian government started to show increased radicalism.¹⁷²

In the autumn of 1993 the war intensified. The violence reached one of its peaks on 9 November 1993, when Croats continued their merciless siege of Mostar, willfully destroying its sixteenth-century bridge, a symbol of Bosnian unity and culture.¹⁷³ This action shocked the world and began to have an immediate impact on the policies of the international community.

Under increasing pressure from front-line states, particularly Hungary, to relieve the costs of the sanctions to their economies and political stability, the EC began to discuss terms under which sanctions on the FRY might be gradually lifted.

The first sign of change was an increased interest by the Clinton administration in the Bosnian war. One reason for this was the success of the nationalist opposition in the Russian elections. Their leader, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, attacked the foreign policy of Yeltsin and Kozyrev and at the same time promised "Serb brothers, traditional allies of Russia" all the help they needed.¹⁷⁴ The Clinton administration was aware of the fact that the Bosnian question was a salient issue in Russian internal politics, and it had to consider how to prevent tensions between Russia and the U.S. because of the Balkan crisis. With the help of the Vatican and Bonn, the United States started to plan an intervention that would lead to peace between the Croats and the Bosniaks, isolate the Serbs, and strengthen Macedonian independence.¹⁷⁵

One of the main reasons for the failure of international policy in Bosnia-Herzegovina was the effort of many to view all sides as equally responsible, which some criticized as fruitless passivity.¹⁷⁶ By opposing air strikes on Serbian targets, Boutros-Ghali was in reality supporting the Bosnian Serbs, who were happy with his policy. At an international conference in Kuala Lumpur, Izetbegović said that among thirty UNSC resolutions on Bosnia-Herzegovina, only the one that prohibited the Bosniaks to be armed was implemented.¹⁷⁷ Boutros-Ghali tried to find excuses for his policy by saying that NATO's attacks would be more dangerous for UN troops on the ground than for the Serbs.¹⁷⁸ As a former Egyptian foreign minister during the Tito period, he seemed to suffer from "Yugo-nostalgia."

The unease over the ineffectiveness of the international community showed also in Brussels at a NATO summit on 10–11 January 1994, which U.S. President Bill Clinton attended.¹⁷⁹ At the end of the meeting a communiqué for the public was issued in which NATO threatened the Bosnian Serbs again with air strikes if they did not stop the siege of Sarajevo, permit a rotation of UN troops (from

Canadian to Dutch) in Srebrenica that the Bosnian Serb Army was blocking, and permit the use of the Tuzla airport for UN humanitarian aid.¹⁸⁰ The NATO summit did not decide when these air strikes would occur if the Serbs did not fulfill their demands. The French response (in reverse of their previous position) was to mobilize Boutros-Ghali, persuading him to reverse his position of mid-January and agree to start air strikes by 26 January if those demands were not met. The French did that under the pressure of public opinion in their own land.¹⁸¹ In spite of this French viewpoint, Clinton still doubted the readiness of the European allies to act. At the end of the summit, he told them not to threaten air strikes if they did not think they could fulfill the threat. He said: "At stake is not only the security of the Sarajevo townspeople and the possibility to end this horrible war, but also the credibility of the [NATO] alliance."¹⁸²

This new ICFY tactic yielded a broad cease-fire area among all three parties in Bosnia-Herzegovina and also between the Croatian government and Krajina Serbs—a Christmas truce from 23 December 1993 to 15 January 1994. In January, a new UNPROFOR commander for Bosnia-Herzegovina, British Lieutenant General Michael Rose, committed himself to building on the diplomatic progress of his predecessor in Sarajevo, Belgian Lieutenant General Francis Briquemont, with a "robust" approach to implementing its mandate.

And then the tragedy of 6 February 1994 took place. A 120-millimeter mortar fired into the Markale market in Sarajevo killed at least 68 people and wounded 197, providing the psychological shock necessary to mobilize diplomatic efforts from many sides. Aided by a NATO ultimatum to the Bosnian Serb army issued on 9 February to "end the siege of Sarajevo" by withdrawing or regrouping under UNPROFOR control, all heavy weapons from an exclusion zone around Sarajevo of twenty kilometers had to be removed within ten days or be subjected immediately to air strikes. The first of three negotiated cease-fires over the next six weeks appeared to create momentum for peace "from the bottom up."¹⁸³ NATO's ultimatum to the Bosnian Serbs was one of the decisive factors in the quest for a solution to the Bosnian crisis because the West turned from peacekeeping to peacemaking.¹⁸⁴

Once NATO had addressed this ultimatum to the Bosnian Serbs—without informing Moscow about it—Zhirinovskiy announced that air strikes on Serb positions in Bosnia-Herzegovina would mean a "declaration of war with Russia . . . and the beginning of World War III."¹⁸⁵ Russian foreign minister Kozyrev also wrote in a letter to Boutros-Ghali that "any type of air raids . . . could provoke the worst consequences."¹⁸⁶

In the meantime, part of the international community worked toward an agreement between the Croats and Bosniaks to be negotiated and implemented as soon as possible.¹⁸⁷ The impulse for agreement was initiated by Pope John Paul II, the Croatian Catholic Church, and Bosnian Franciscans. It was supported also

by Turkish, German, and especially U.S. diplomats.¹⁸⁸ President Clinton's special representative, Charles Redman, and U.S. Ambassador to Croatia Peter W. Galbraith presented Croatian President Franjo Tudjman with plans for a Muslim-Croatian federation in Bosnia-Herzegovina. With various threats (e.g., economic sanctions) they convinced Tudjman to give up, at least temporarily, the idea of a division of Bosnia-Herzegovina and persuaded the warring Bosnian Croats and Bosniaks to stop fighting each other.¹⁸⁹

For perhaps the first time, the U.S. and other members of the international community appeared to mean business. With the help of Russian diplomats and threats of air strikes, they convinced the Bosnian Serbs to withdraw some of their heavy weaponry from the hills surrounding Sarajevo.¹⁹⁰ In the first armed action ever by NATO, two F-16 fighter jets shot down four Yugoslav planes that had violated the no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina. This time, even the Russians thought that the action was justified.¹⁹¹

The actions of the international community brought results. On 2 March 1994 the international mediators practically forced the Muslims and Bosnian Croats to sign the Washington framework agreement, which unified the territories under their control into the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. After some days of Croat-Bosniak negotiations in Vienna, they formally signed the so-called Washington agreement in the U.S. capital on 16 March 1994; in addition to Tudjman and Izetbegović, President Clinton also attended.¹⁹² Because of the federation, the Bosnian Croats would permit supplies to flow again to the Bosnian government (including weapons and materiel for the army) along routes they controlled, and joint operations could be encouraged between the Croatian Defense Council (*Hrvatsko vijeće odbrane*, HVO) and government forces.¹⁹³

While providing a welcome cease-fire and the revival of commerce through the opening of routes in areas controlled by the federation, the Washington agreement also encouraged an intensification of the Bosnian government military offensive during the spring, confirmed General Mladić's interpretation of the discussion of August 1993 that Serbs were at war with NATO, and returned negotiations on a peace agreement to the situation that existed before May 1993. Now the Bosnian Croats and the Bosnian government favored peace, whereas the Bosnian Serbs were again in the opposition. To ward off what appeared to be a death blow to ICFY from U.S. initiatives and to avoid the fate of the Hague conference in December 1991 and the Lisbon negotiations in March 1992, the cochairmen proposed to set up a negotiating group of the major powers. This contact group, composed of representatives from the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, and Russia, was to work out the missing ingredient to a general peace—an agreement between the new Bosnian-Croat federation and the Bosnian Serbs. The EU and the UN were excluded from the negotiating process in hopes of making it easier to negotiate.¹⁹⁴

In the summer of 1994, the group emerged with its peace plan, which recognized the existing borders of Bosnia-Herzegovina as a whole but more importantly allocated 51 percent of the territory to the Muslim-Croat federation and 49 percent to the Bosnian Serbs, effectively reducing the latter's previous gains by one-third. The plan was issued to all sides with a fortnight's deadline to reply.¹⁹⁵ After the Bosnian Serbs rejected the contact group plan, the UNSC adopted two resolutions in September.

Resolution 942 introduced economic sanctions against the Bosnian Serbs and prohibited any diplomatic contacts with their leaders. Resolution 943 suspended the restrictions on travel and sports imposed by earlier resolutions on the FRY for an initial period of 100 days from the receipt by the council of a report from the secretary-general that the authorities of the FRY had effectively closed its international border with the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina with respect to all goods except foodstuffs, medical supplies, and clothing for essential humanitarian needs.¹⁹⁶

In the United States, new attacks by Serbs on Bihać triggered yet another assault on the administration's policy and sharp criticism of the Europeans, particularly the British. The attack on Clinton administration policy was led by incoming Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole and by Newt Gingrich, the incoming House majority leader. Both demanded UN withdrawal, U.S. air strikes, and the arming and training of the army of the Sarajevo government. In order to stave off Congressional demands for more concrete action, the U.S. administration unilaterally withdrew from policing the arms embargo in mid-November 1994.¹⁹⁷

Despite seventy-seven cease-fires from March 1992 until May 1994 and numerous diplomatic missions, in particular by Richard Holbrooke, U.S. assistant secretary of state for European and Canadian affairs, ethnic cleansing continued in Bosnia-Herzegovina. However, the sequence of events that was to change fundamentally the dynamic of the conflict and immensely enhance the prospects for peace began with the fall of western Slavonia in Croatia. On 1–2 May 1995, Croatian armed forces mounted a surprise attack known as Operation Flash, which successfully reclaimed for the Croatian government control of UN Sector West (western Slavonia), which was part of the Serb-controlled Krajina.¹⁹⁸

The fall of western Slavonia showed that all the fanfare about a union between the Serbs in Bosnia and Croatia was a hollow boast. But the Croatian Serb authorities ignored the lesson. After four years of rejecting any compromise and expunging all traces of Croat history in their domain, they would not alter course. The EU, the U.S., and Russia did not ignore the lesson. Keen to forestall another Croat incursion, the diplomatic representatives of the U.S., UK, EU, and UN stationed in Zagreb pressed a special peace plan for Croatia that was intended to

rectify the loopholes in the Vance plan. First conceived in late 1994, the so-called Z-4 plan attempted to reconcile Croatia's insistence on preserving the integrity of its frontiers with Serb insistence on self-determination.¹⁹⁹ Tudjman agreed gingerly, though only as a starting point for discussions; Milošević supported the agreement. But Croatian Serb leaders, Milan Martić and Milan Babić, rejected it outright.

After the Serbs in Slavonia were defeated, Bosnian Serbs captured Žepa and Srebrenica. The diffidence of the international community manifested itself once again as the Srebrenica "safe" area's 300-man Dutch "protection force" allowed the Bosnian Serb victors to round up and massacre almost 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys.²⁰⁰ International outrage forced a new resolve that quickly led to the resolution of the Croatian and Bosnian conflicts and, following a second Markale marketplace attack, a NATO air campaign against the Serb positions that brought the Serbs back to the peace table. By then, Milošević's dream of Greater Serbia had been crushed in Croatia. On 4 August 1995, Croat formations estimated at 150,000 men launched a coordinated series of around thirty attacks into the former UN Sectors North and South along a 300-kilometer front.²⁰¹

This operation, known as Operation Storm, lasted only five days. Knin, the capital of the Krajina, fell on the second day. With Operation Storm, the Croatian army regained control over most of the territories of the RSK.²⁰² Croatia was again unified, with the exception of Baranja and eastern Slavonia (Croatian *Podunavlje*). An offensive of united Croat-Bosniak forces against the Bosnian Serbs continued in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

On 8 September 1995, the foreign ministers of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and the FRY, meeting in Geneva, agreed that Bosnia-Herzegovina would remain a country divided into two entities—a Croatian-Muslim entity and a Serbian one. In October of the same year a cease-fire started. On 1 November 1995 peace negotiations began at an American air force base near Dayton, Ohio, ending with the signing of a peace agreement in December 1995 in Paris.²⁰³ The signatories of this agreement were Izetbegović of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Milošević of Serbia, and Tudjman of Croatia.

The reactions to the signing of the Dayton agreement were the most euphoric in Belgrade, where the people honored Milošević as a visionary, and in Zagreb, where Tudjman evaluated it as a "victory of Croatian diplomacy" because the Croats lost the least of all the belligerents in the conflict. In Bosnia-Herzegovina there were many who had doubts about the peace.²⁰⁴ Dayton did not hold the warring parties accountable for the return of refugees and apprehension of war criminals. Nor was either the explicit responsibility of the 60,000 NATO-led troops that had been charged with maintaining order and protecting Bosnia-

Hercegovina's internationally recognized frontiers. In accordance with a special agreement between NATO and Russia, 2,000 Russian soldiers would be stationed in Tuzla. Having averted another human catastrophe like Srebrenica, the great powers were once again unwilling to get too deeply involved in affairs in which they had no compelling national interest.

Their diffidence was most evident in the decision not to enforce the Dayton articles that mandated the apprehension and transfer of individuals who had been indicted by the ICTY. The first signs surfaced right after the initialing of the draft agreement at Dayton, when officials of the U.S. Department of Defense inserted language in the final text that relieved the multinational "Implementation Force" (IFOR) of responsibility for apprehending indictees, except when they encountered them "during the normal course of their duties." The wording came as a surprise to the U.S. negotiating team headed by Richard Holbrooke, which had anticipated that indictees like Bosnian Serb President Radovan Karadžić and commanding General Ratko Mladić would be detained within a month or two. Instead, the high priority that the Pentagon attached to "force preservation" prevailed in the ensuing confrontation with an increasingly frustrated State Department as President Clinton weighed the political consequences that U.S. casualties would have on the broad but shallow popular support for U.S. participation in the military occupation of Bosnia.²⁰⁵

The gap between the promise of Dayton and the tactical avoidance of ICTY fugitives by U.S. and other IFOR military units became evident as the U.S., Britain, and France led sixty thousand troops into Bosnia during the winter of 1995–1996. Whereas White House Press Spokesman Mike McCurry announced that pictures of all of the indictees were being distributed at IFOR checkpoints, the photographs were posted only at the headquarters compounds far removed from the checkpoints and, presumably, from the fugitives themselves. When a Bosnian-Croat fugitive, Miroslav Bralo, turned up at a checkpoint in Vitez and offered to surrender, Dutch IFOR units merely took down his name and address, then returned to their base to look for his picture. It soon became apparent that U.S. military commanders were actively forestalling efforts by the Dutch, Danish, and other IFOR contingents to apprehend fugitives, a charge confirmed by military and civilian officials from several NATO countries and former Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt, then serving as the international community's high representative for Bosnia.²⁰⁶

Even the war's most wanted indictees were effectively immune from arrest. Between late February and early July 1996, a U.S. Army reconnaissance team observed Ratko Mladić himself on at least twenty occasions, closely tailing him roughly a dozen times as he commuted between his command post inside Mount

Žep, the nearby compound of the VRS Sixty-Fifth Protective Regiment, and other locations in the vicinity of Han Pijesak; the base itself was also subjected to regular weapons inspections by Colonel (later Major General) John Batiste and an MP escort. In addition to exercises for the arrest of ICTY indictees prescribed by Batiste, the platoon rehearsed the protocol for Mladić's permissive detention. The close surveillance and inspections came to an abrupt end on 6 July 1996 when a large crowd of demobilized soldiers from the Sixty-Fifth accosted the reconnaissance unit outside the Mount Žep facility.²⁰⁷

Such deferential treatment extended to Radovan Karadžić. Fearing that he would eventually be arrested, the Bosnian Serb president had actually begun exploratory talks with the ICTY in 1996, terminating them only after the resistance of U.S. officials to calls for his arrest during a 13-14 June meeting of the Peace Implementation Council suggested that he was in no imminent danger.²⁰⁸ This development frustrated some U.S. State Department officials, who bitterly contested the military's refusal to act since it regarded Karadžić's total removal from politics as indispensable to stabilizing postwar Bosnia.²⁰⁹ The task of securing Karadžić's withdrawal fell to Richard Holbrooke who, in turn, sought the assistance of Slobodan Milošević. Milošević readily accepted the challenge, given his immediate strategic interest in retaining American and western support, including the removal of sanctions. Karadžić agreed to leave, but only on condition that he be left alone. Holbrooke accepted Karadžić's terms, knowing fully well that the U.S., French and British military had no intention of arresting any ICTY indictees, but declined to put such a promise in writing. Instead, he instructed his close associate Christopher Hill to draft a memorandum to be signed by Karadžić in which he agreed to give up power and retire to private life. The agreement almost came to grief when Holbrooke vigorously refused Karadžić's demand—and Hill's appeal—that he also affix his signature to it. Securing Karadžić's signature required a late night helicopter flight to Pale by Milošević's state security chief Jovica Stanišić, who overcame Karadžić's resistance after several hours of intensive discussions.²¹⁰ Whereas Holbrooke, High Representative Carl Bildt, and Karadžić himself have readily confirmed that the Bosnian Serb leader pledged to step down, Holbrooke and other U.S. officials have consistently claimed that there was no *quid pro quo*; by contrast, Karadžić has insisted since his July 2008 arrest that he was promised immunity from *prosecution* in exchange for his withdrawal.²¹¹ What we know from three senior State Department officials with intimate knowledge of Holbrooke's activities is that the ambassador explicitly assured Karadžić that he would not be *arrested*, a concession that is common knowledge among several others at the State Department who have heretofore remained silent.²¹² As Karadžić himself put it, "After the Holbrooke agreement, I

felt completely free and moved around openly in Bosnia,” which he proved daily by regularly commuting between his Pale home and office in full view of the town’s International Police Task Force (IPTF) headquarters manned by Austrian, Swedish, and Ukrainian officers, who neglected to report the encounters to their Sarajevo headquarters.²¹³

Indeed, the U.S. prohibition was so proscriptive that not a single one of more than fifty indictees was apprehended by IFOR during the first eighteen months of its deployment in Bosnia. In desperation, ICTY prosecutor Louise Arbour appealed to Ambassador Jacques-Paul Klein, who headed the UN Transitional Administration in Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES). On 27 June 1997, Klein broke the ice by orchestrating the capture and rendition of Croatian-Serb indictee Slavko Dokmanović, which Arbour used to goad IFOR’s U.S. commanders into action. That summer, British IFOR personnel initiated the process of capturing ICTY fugitives, many of whom had lived openly, often in the presence of IFOR soldiers engaged in “the normal course of their duties.”²¹⁴

The breakup of multinational empires in Europe by the end of World War I resulted in a proliferation of sovereign states. The breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s resulted in a further proliferation of states. The international community should have tried much sooner to foster a peaceful dissolution of Yugoslavia with the encouragement of and support for new democratic states that protected the rights of all the people who lived within their borders. All this may well have failed, but it would have been the “right thing to do.” Although the actions and inaction of the international community were not the primary causes for the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia, they at least helped to foster a climate that only encouraged increasing instability in the region.

The major powers definitely wanted to see a political solution to the conflict but were from the start unwilling to place either the region’s immediate interests or the timeless universal values of the UN Charter ahead of their own national agenda. The EU was divided in its views on the Yugoslav crisis, and the U.S. hesitated while long and exhausting discussions were held among the principals in the U.S. government. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell and others continued to defend their ultimately discredited view that military intervention would be too costly.²¹⁵

Thus Great Britain, France, and particularly the United States worked for three years to avoid direct military intervention that threatened to incur considerable costs both in treasure and the lives of their own citizen soldiers. Instead, they pursued the Vance-Owen plan and the Dayton Accords, which tacitly accepted territorial changes brought about by war crimes enumerated in the previous chap-

ter. Even when they felt compelled to intervene militarily in 1995 (and again in 1998–1999) to forestall an even greater humanitarian catastrophe, the Big Three were content to assume a passive stance once that cataclysm had been successfully averted.

Bill Clinton eventually agreed with Richard Holbrooke, who described the Bosnian situation as “the greatest collective security failure of the West since the 1930s.” In his book *To End a War*, Holbrooke ascribes the failure to five factors: (1) a misreading of Balkan history that viewed ethnic strife as too ancient and ingrained to be prevented by outsiders, (2) the apparent loss of Yugoslavia’s strategic importance after the end of the cold war, (3) the triumph of nationalism over democracy as the dominant ideology of post-Communist Yugoslavia, (4) the reluctance of the Bush administration to undertake another military commitment so soon after the 1991 Iraq war, and (5) the decision of the United States to turn the issue over to Europe instead of NATO and the confused and passive European response. To Holbrooke’s list Bill Clinton added a sixth factor: some European leaders were not eager to have a Muslim state in the heart of the Balkans, fearing it might become a base for exporting extremism.²¹⁶

The failure of the international community to deal effectively with first the crisis and then the tragedy of Yugoslavia’s dissolution will continue to be a subject of intense scrutiny and analysis among scholars. The continuing turmoil created by secession movements across Africa, Asia, and the Soviet successor states reminds us of the relevance of such analysis.

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- 199 Peter W. Galbraith, ed., *The United States and Croatia: A Documentary History, 1992–1997* (Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1998), 142–80.
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- 202 Marcus Tanner, *Croatia: A Nation Forged in War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 296–98.
- 203 Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War* (New York: Modern Library, 1998), 79–288.
- 204 Peter Potočnik, “Hrvati so dosegli največ!” *Delo*, 23 November 1995, 5.
- 205 Interview with senior State Department official #1 by Charles Ingrao. The NATO Atlantic Council (NAC) explicitly forbade IFOR commanders from pursuing war criminals

- or even escorting returning refugees. Richard M. Swain, *Neither War nor Not War: Army Command in Europe during the Time of Peace Operations: Tasks Confronting USAREUR Commanders, 1994-2000* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, May 2003), 97, <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/00205.pdf>.
- 206 Interviews with IFOR officials #1, #2; #3, #4 by Charles Ingrao. John Pomfret and Lee Hockstader, "In Bosnia, a War Crimes Impasse," *Washington Post Foreign Service*, 9 December 1997, A1. Carl Bildt, *Peace Journey: The Struggle for Peace in Bosnia* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1998), 237. U.S. Ambassador William Montgomery would later claim that "senior officials of the uniformed and civilian sides of the United States Department of Defense absolutely refused to have anything to do with the apprehension of war criminals in Bosnia," and Bildt has described "a truly massive reluctance throughout the NATO chain of command—the senior commanders on all levels of relevance being American—to address [this] issue." Quoted in John Berlin, "Karadzic and Mladic Will Never Really 'Do Time,'" *UN Observer and International Report*, 11 August 2007, www.globalpolicy.org/intljustice/wanted/2007/0811neverdotime.htm, accessed 5 April 2008.
- 207 Interviews with U.S. IFOR official #3 and Maj. Gen. John Batiste (ret.) by Charles Ingrao; typically a twelve-man unit drove directly behind from one to three VRS jeeps, within as little as fifty feet of Mladić. The 6 July altercation resulted in several minor injuries, plus the possible death of one VRS soldier who was severely beaten by members of the reconnaissance unit. For contemporary media reports of varying accuracy, see "Yugoslavia: Close Encounter," AP broadcast, 13:50, 11 June 1996; IFOR press briefing, Sarajevo, 6 July 1996; Ian Fisher, "Bosnian Serbs End Standoff by Allowing an Inspection," AP, 13 August 1996.
- 208 Interview with former OSCE Deputy Head William Stuebner by Charles Ingrao.
- 209 Interviews with senior State Department official #1 and Intelligence and Research—Europe Director Daniel Serwer by Charles Ingrao.
- 210 The agreement, which was drafted under Hill's supervision and has been authenticated by Karadžić's legal team and a State Department source, bears the signatures of Aleksa Buha, Momčilo Krajišnik, Slobodan Milošević, Milan Milutinović, and Biljana Plavšić. Senior State Department official #2. Hill and Holbrooke have denied the assertions of both senior State Department officials #2 and #3.
- 211 "Bildt confidently predicts that Karadzic will leave gov't.," CourtTVNews, 5 April 1996; Bildt, *Peace Journey*, 237; www.courttv.com/archive/casefiles/warcrimes/reports/week3.html, accessed 5 April 2008; "Radovan Karadzic Finally Steps Aside," by James Hill, *Phoenix Gazette*, 23 July 1996, www.balkan-archive.org.yu/kosta/autori/hill.james/karadzic.steps.aside.html, accessed 5 April 2008; "Irregularities Linked to My Arrival before the Tribunal," pretrial statement by Radovan Karadžić, IT-95-5/18-I D11337-D11344, 1 August 2008.
- 212 Interviews with senior State Department officials #2, #3 and #4, and former Bosnian Foreign Minister Muhamed Sačirbey.
- 213 Interviews with IPTF Deputy Commissioner Robert Wasserman, IPTF-Pale staff, Press Spokesman Alex Ivanko, and Radovan Karadžić by Charles Ingrao. Anthony Lewis, "Winking at Karadzic," *New York Times*, 28 October 1996. Interview with former OSCE Deputy Head William Stuebner, May 2012.
- 214 Interview with Ambassador Jacques-Paul Klein by Charles Ingrao; "Louise Arbour: Farewell Interview," IWPR, 30 August-5 September 1999, <http://www.iwpr.net/>, accessed 5 November 2008. The British initiative likely reflected the replacement just one month earlier of Prime Minister John Major by Tony Blair.

- 215 Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 181–82; Colin Powell, *My American Journey* (New York: Random House, 1995), 576–77.
- 216 Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 22–31; Bill Clinton, *My Life* (New York: Knopf, 2004), 512–13.