CHAPTER-5

MEDIATION AND PEACEKEEPING IN BOSNIA

The adoption of Security Council Resolution No.713 on 25 September 1991 put a general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Yugoslavia, at the same time it expressed strong support for European Community's efforts of mediation in the ongoing conflict. Numerous Security Council resolutions notwithstanding no political will ever existed within the Security Council for sanctioning the interstate coercive military involvement that would redress what are widely viewed as clear violations of the established norms of international society.

The reasons for this have been twofold. First and most important, has been the unprobable prospect of an 'open ended' commitment not underpinned by any compelling political or 'national' interest that could sustain public support in troop-contributing states. Visions of a 'Balkan Quagmire', with high casualty rates and significant economic costs have defined the limits of involvement. On this, there have been no splits between permanent members of the Security Council. As a test case for the 'new humanitarianism', the former Yugoslavia has shown that if there was not a perceptible national interest involved, there are few governments which can pay the potentially high price in
blood and resources which may be entailed through dispassionate engagement in the relief of suffering.

Secondly, the issues of self-determination, humanitarian intervention and state succession raised by the conflict in Yugoslavia are extremely complex. There is no consensus among member states of the Security Council, let alone the U.N. as a whole, as to how tensions raised by the espousal of competing even mutually exclusive principles should be reconciled. There remains, for example an inherent tension between the principle that borders should not be changed by means of force and the right of minorities to self determination.

Any attempt to draw wider lessons from U.N. Peacekeeping in the former Yugoslavia must take this overall framework of political constraints as its point of departure.

**Role of U.N. in Mediation and Peacekeeping in Bosnia**

After the issue of calls for an end to the fighting, mediation is often the U.N.'s conflict resolution mechanism of first choice. The frequent use of this mechanism in part reflects the case of dispatching a mediation mission. The brief case and suit of the mediator contrasts sharply with the blue helmets and armoured personnel carriers of peacekeepers as they enter a civil war; yet as they begin their
work they begin to exhibit many of the same features and vulnerabilities shared by all missions. This chapter searches for the weaknesses identified by the analytical framework. If the weaknesses are present and vulnerable to resistance from the conflict dynamic in the unsuccessful mediation mission, but are absent or not accentuated in the successful mediation, it will begin to establish the responsibility of these structural weaknesses for U.N. mission failures in civil wars.

Mediation, whether in international or civil wars, is a voluntary, peaceful intervention designed to affect the conflict situation towards a peaceful resolution. A mediator enters the dispute to establish, as an intermediary, a non-military channel of interaction between the disputants. Mediation is an attempt to substitute negotiations for warfare as method of apportioning the disputed commodities at the base of the conflict. A UN mediator is most commonly dispatched as a representative of either a U.N. forum or of the Secretary General. Mediation missions are also

3. ibid., p.158.
extremely flexible in what they can be seen to be responding in some way to the latest outrage or conflict. Mediation missions are also extremely flexible in what they can be sent to do, and are often most appropriate for the early stages of a violent or bitter conflict. For this reason, they are sometimes sent to explore whether a solution is able to be brokered at that stage of the conflict. If a solution can be found, the U.N. relies on the mediators to secure an agreement that its peacekeepers and peacebuilders can oversee the implementation of.

While a mediator’s mission is to some extent experimental, he or she must be mindful of the mandate that the U.N. wishes to be carried out. Mediation missions are never sent without being given a detailed set of instructions on the conflict and its preferred form of resolution. These instructions emerge either informally from the Secretary General in consultation with concerned states, or from resolutions authoritatively stating the principles upon which a peace agreement should be based. While usually reflecting a desire for a peaceful, acceptable solution, these instructions emerge either informally from the Secretary General in consultation with concerned states, or from

resolutions authoritatively stating the principles upon which a peace agreement should be based. While usually reflecting a desire for a peaceful, acceptable solution these instructions are also shaped by the UN’s diagnosis of the conflict and the interests of its member states. The mission is designed to use its detachment from the conflict to break up the conflict dynamic and reach a creative solution. "Redefining the issues in conflict, or finding a formula for its resolution or management is the key to its termination, with parties frequently finding a solution hidden in the morass of bad relationships or in constructing a solution from the pieces of the conflict itself." A mediator, through providing a non-military form of interaction between the disputants, is able to provide alternative perceptions and castings of the conflict: ‘Parties involved

5. A former U.N. mediator sent to the Cyprus conflict stated: ‘Any settlement’ must be consistent with the provisions of the U.N. Charter, of which the following in particular seems relevant: the purposes, principles and obligations relating to the maintenance of international peace and security, the peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, recognition of the sovereign equality of member states, abstention from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any member state, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, recognition of the equality of member states, abstention from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any member state and respects for treaty obligation not in conflict with those of member states under the charter. See Rosalyn Higgins, *The Development of International Law Through the Political Organs of the United Nations* (London: OUP, 1963), pp.6-12.
in a conflict... are not likely to have sufficient knowledge either of the sources of their conflictual relationships, or of the options available to resolve them. In the absence of adequate knowledge, there can be no accurate costing of policies, or of the consequence of behaviours".6

Most U.N. mediators approach the resolution of the conflict deductively, by devising a general formula for negotiation that is designed to alter the parties terms of reference towards the dispute from a zero-sum equation to a mutually benefitting trade-off of items of differing value.7 Mediators try to gain the parties agreement on the definition of the conflict, the formula for negotiation and the principles susceptible to agreement. Then, according to a cumulative time-table of negotiations, they try to negotiate and offer an agreement on matters of increasing specificity. They attempt to maintain the strict confidentiality of the negotiations, as a way of deflecting public scrutiny, maintaining a dispassionate atmosphere and, allowing greater flexibility and creativity during negotiations.8 Such a discrete channel of talks can also allow belligerents to make concessions without risking their reputations, support

or future bargaining positions.  

While these mechanisms give mediators a high level of control over the process of negotiations, the nature of the mediation gives them little control over the outcomes. The mediation relationship is highly consensual: it is non-coercive in process and the extent to which former belligerents are bound by its results depends on their satisfaction with the outcomes. To have any chance of success at the beginning of the resolution of a conflict, the peace talks and agreement need to include all major participants in the conflict. This arises from the 'double veto' which underlie all peace talks, wherein both parties can block a negotiated solution if it does not satisfy them, but can also prevent a unilateral solution from taking place if it excludes them. From the point of view of belligerents, negotiating an end to the war takes place as a cumulative process of making conditional commitments: each undertakes to carry out cer-


11. ibid., p.4.

tain measures if opponents are faithful in implementing those measures that they have agreed to.\textsuperscript{13} Often belligerents' negotiating an end to the war takes place as a cumulative process of making conditional commitments: each undertakes to carry out certain measures if opponents are faithfully in implementing those measures that they have agreed to.\textsuperscript{14} Often belligerents will be more inclined to participate in mediated talks because of their consensual nature, knowing that they can withdraw from the talks at any time without risking any military or political resources. For this reason, belligerents often enter negotiations as an experiment, to see what they are able to gain from the peace talks, and to gauge how much their opponents are preferred to concede.

These characteristics of both the U.N. mediators and the belligerents entering mediated talks, impart a certain character on mediation missions to civil wars. While these peculiarities exist in mediation, these missions share many of the same vulnerabilities as other types of U.N. missions. An attempt is being made in this chapter to analyse the mediation exercises undertaken by the U.N., E.U. (formerly

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{14} Zartman and Berman, n.10, \textit{The Practical Negotiator}, pp.57-8.
\end{itemize}
E.C.) and NATO in the crisis of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In March 1992, ethnic Serbs began a secessionist insurgency against the 'Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina' which had recently voted for independence from Yugoslavia by referendum, and had been granted diplomatic recognition by the E.U., the U.N. and a large part of the international community. Fighting against being absorbed into a state dominated by other ethnic groups, the Bosnian Serbs embarked on a project of carving a 'greater Serbia' from the constituent republics of the former Yugoslavia. The Bosnian Serbs felt betrayed by the international community which they believed had consigned them to minority status and a possible genocide in the newly independent republics. Incidentally, with the help of the Yugoslav National Army (JNA), they were able to quickly seize and hold 70% of Bosnia and link these areas with Serbia and the Krajina region of

15. The referendum held from 29 February to 1st March 1992 was boycotted by the 31% of the population that were ethnic Serbs, but returned a 90% result in favour of independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

16. The U.S. and the E.U. recognised Bosnia on 17 April 1992 and it was accepted as a member of the U.N. on 22nd May 1992.

Croatia. In the areas they controlled, they carried out widespread policies of ethnic cleansing to rid them of Muslims, Croats and undesirable Serbs. The other ethnic groups in Bosnia, the Muslims and the Croats, organised a makeshift defence against the ferocity of the Bosnian Serb Assault. Heavily outgunned, outsupplied and out-trained by the Bosnian Serb army (URS) they clung tenuously for over three years of war to pockets of the 30% of Bosnian territory they were able to deny to the URS. The Bosnian Muslim and Croat armies slowly mobilised into mass conscript armies, but their essential vulnerability of the URS' weapons predominance was perpetuated by the U.N. arms embargo around the former Yugoslavia. This stalemate was to last, usually unchanged, until the Bosnian Serbs were weakened by sustained NATO airstrikes in September 1995 and suffered substantial losses of territory to a combined Bosnian Muslim and Croat offensive. The changed circumstances were to lead all of the parties to sign the Dayton Peace Accords in November 1995.


The U.N., concerned with the growing security threat and humanitarian tragedy of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the destructive effect of the conflict on the cohesion of the international community, engaged in a frantic effort to mediate solution from the beginning of the conflict in March 1992. In the first weeks of the war in Bosnia, the Security Council initiated the mediation process by requesting the Secretary General to dispatch his Special Envoy\textsuperscript{21} to assist the peace efforts of the E.U.\textsuperscript{22} In this capacity special envoy Cyrus Vance had already met with Moslem, ethnic Serb and ethnic Croat leaders in Sarajevo on 6 March 1992, obtaining their agreement to seek a peaceful settlement of their differences. By September 1992, the U.N. and E.U. had established the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia (ICFY) in London as a formal mechanism to co-ordinate their mediation efforts. Co-chaired by the U.N. special representative and the E.U. envoy, the I.C.F.Y. consisted of a Steering Committee and six working groups meeting in Geneva to 'prepare the basis for a general settlement and associated measures,\textsuperscript{23} in support of the efforts

\textsuperscript{21} Cyrus Vance had earlier been appointed by Javier Perez de Cuellar as Special Envoy to the former Yugoslavia on 8 October 1991.

\textsuperscript{22} Statement by the President of the Security Council, 10 April 1992.

\textsuperscript{23} Report of the U.N. Secretary-General, S/24795, 11 November 1992, pp.3-4.
of the mediators. In this way, the U.N. mediators played a collaborative but significant role in efforts to mediate an end to the war in Bosnia. They were involved in three significant mediation initiatives: the Vance-Owen Plan, the Serb-Croat proposal and the Contact Group Plan. None of these plans succeeded to gain the Bosnian Serb agreement. By late 1994, the U.N.'s mediation role had become largely moribund, having been repeatedly frustrated by Bosnian Serb obduracy. Thereafter mediation was largely conducted by the Western Contact Group and carried out by U.S. diplomats. It was Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. special envoy, who finally brokered the Dayton Peace Accord. The U.N.'s lack of success points to serious weaknesses in the mediation mission and ultimately the unsuitability of an U.N. mediation initiative to bring an end to the conflict. The application of the analytical framework to the Bosnia negotiations will reveal the location and extent of the weaknesses in the mission, how vulnerable these were to aggravation by the conflict dynamic of the Bosnian civil war and what effect these weaknesses had on the ultimate failure of the U.N. to mediate a solution in Bosnia.

The most fundamental fault in the U.N.'s mediation mission to Bosnia originated in its sponsoring coalition within the U.N. The states in this grouping brought widely divergent interests in Bosnia to each meeting, coupled with
a timidity about getting too closely involved with the war. The sources of these member states’ motivation are complex. At one level, the states in the Bosnia grouping were motivated by their own interests, as influenced by the war, and considerations like relative gains and duties and obligations within Albanies. Eager to test their new security independence after the Cold War, the E.U. states originally claimed the response to the crisis was the ‘hour of Europe’. Acquiescing to a new stridency in the German foreign policy, the members of the European Union recognised the sovereignty of the seceding Yugoslav republics’ eventually carrying the U.S. and U.N. reluctantly with them and, to some extent hastening the onset of hostilities. Seeing its attempt at conflict resolution fail, the E.U. called for the U.N. involvement in October 1991. The Europeans in the Security Council, headed by Britain and France in the permanent five, thereafter formed the core of sponsoring coalition of the U.N. mediation efforts. From this genesis, Britain and France, in order to gain significant concessions

24. Germany advocated recognising the seceding republics of the former Yugoslavia as a cheap way of stopping hostilities. This adds an additional level of parsimony to the Bosnia coalition.

within the E.U.\textsuperscript{26} and to retain influence within NATO,\textsuperscript{27} struggled to maintain their supremacy in setting U.N. policy on Bosnia. Most of the U.N.'s mediator and peacekeeping initiatives were instigated by these two states. Their perception of the Bosnian conflict as a civil war to be contained and resolved informed early U.N. decisions on Bosnia, and as embodied by the large European contingents among the UNPROFOR II peacekeeping force, this perception was to remain the basis of official U.N. policy.

After initially acceding to European dominance in responding to the Yugoslavia wars as a way of retreating from 'its global policeman' role, the U.S. became involved with the activation of U.N. response. Much of the disunity in the sponsoring coalition on Bosnia stemmed from disagreements between the U.S. and the European coalition partners. The American position on Bosnia was determined by a different perception of the conflict, which saw the war in Bosnia as an international conflict, in which the sovereignty of an

\textsuperscript{26} In late 1995, it was revealed that the U.K. and France had acceded to German proposals to recognise the breakaway Yugoslav republics in return for German lenience on the question of opting out on the currency integration and the social charter proposed in Maastricht Treaty.

\textsuperscript{27} The end of the Cold War had placed great internal strains on the alliance, and a great deal of debate had
U.N. member state was threatened by external intervention. 28 Initially the U.S. contemplated military intervention on behalf of the Bosnian government, but thereafter acceded to the European position of containment relief and negotiations in the interests of unity with Western Europe. This accession was neither consistent nor gracious, combining domestic attacks on the pussalimanity of the Europeans with official attempts to challenge the European formulated U.N. response in Bosnia. 29 The U.S. declined to contribute peacekeeping forces in Bosnia, a fact that became a source of acrimony with the Western Europeans as the U.S. begun to advocate its policy of lifting the arms embargo on the Bosnian government and shifting the military balance in its favour using surgical airstrikes. The American 'lift and strike' proposal was to become a symbol of the divisions between the Bosnia coalition, being advocated by the U.S. but opposed by the Europeans, whose peacekeepers in Bosnia would have come under attack during the resulting escalation in the war.

28. American Policy was originally defined by James Baker's June 1991 speech in Belgrade, which advocated the continued existence of the state of Yugoslavia. However, once convinced to recognise the seceding republics, the U.S. policy on Bosnia was informed by legalistic considerations.

29. As a compromise and a way to deflect divisions within NATO, the U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher proposed the use of U.S. troops in preventive deployment in Macedonia in a NATO meeting in Attens on 10 June 1993. U.S. forces duly took up their preventive role in Macedonia.
The Europeans, particularly the French, showed their annoyance at American reluctance to pressure the Bosnian government to accept various peace plans advocated by the U.N. The dissenting American position led to splits between the European coalition parties; Britain and France expressed their irritation when German Chancellor Kohl advocated lifting the embargo on the Bosnian government at a private E.U. dinner on 21 June 1993 after the correspondence with U.S. President Bill Clinton.\(^3\)\(^0\)

Other dissenting members of the sponsoring coalition were the Russian Federation and Greece, largely sympathetic to the Bosnian Serb position. The Russian Federation in particular had vital geopolitical interests in the Bosnian conflict of international response. Worried about the expansion of NATO influence into Eastern Europe, Russia was concerned to forestall a vigorous Western intervention in the Bosnian conflict. Consequently, Russia became closely involved in the Bosnia coalition, chiefly to guard against an assertive Western response, and placing a series of diplomatic obstacles in front of any changes to the passive U.N. policy in Bosnia, particularly those advocating punish-

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30. As a compromise and a way to deflect divisions within NATO, the U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher proposed the use of U.S. troops in preventive deployment in Macedonia in a NATO meeting in Attenro on 10 June 1993, the U.S. forces took their role in Macedonia duly later.
ing or pressurising the Serbs. The Russian leadership determined to dampen right-wing opposition and to appear independent of Western policy in this traditional area of Russian influence, repeatedly warned that it 'would not allow attempts to solve the problems in Bosnia without Russia'. 31 The Western members of the coalition, particularly sensitive to preserving the tenure of the Yeltsin regime in Russia, restrained their own initiatives to coincide with the Russian position. Greece had its own geopolitical incentives to be supportive of Bosnian Serb positions in the face of western activism. Lacked in a long rivalry with Turkey, the Greeks worked hard to stay with in the coalition and moderate any forceful pro-Muslim action by it. Turkey found common cause with the Muslim states in their sympathy with the largely Muslim Bosnian government, and it advocated the lifting of embargo and helping Bosnia defend its sovereignty. 32 In an anomaly common in such complex and fractured coalitions the U.S. repeatedly found support for its policies among Islamic states with which it had hitherto experienced decades of antagonistic relations.


32. There were numerous calls for enforcement action and a lifting of the arms embargo, such as that issued by the Islamic Conference Organisation of 13 July 1993, A/47/977 and S/26112.
Further complicating these clashing interests were the imperatives forced on the states by the domestic passions aroused by the war. The ferocity and visibility of the war in Bosnia stimulated a wave of international horror, and determined that much of the international response to the crisis was dictated by states responding to the demands of their publics to do something. These reactions were, however, tempered by a reluctance to become heavily involved in the conflict. Public pressure often hampered government attempts to moderate their diplomatic responses and relations with the other members of the coalition. The states were reportedly pushed into more extreme or intransigent positions by media and domestic criticism of the governments or their coalition partners. Among American and Western European public there was an outrage at the excesses of war and the international response. These tended to be echoed within the Islamic world, and embellished with claims that the international response was a way of ensuring the genocide of the Muslims in Europe.\(^{33}\) The supporters of the Bosnian Serbs - the Russians and the Greeks - to a large extent adopted the opposite position because of the religious, historic and ethnic ties between their populations and the Serbs. The effect of domestic pressure was therefore to exacerbate tensions within the coalition. Hence,

\(^{33}\) See President Yeltsin, n.32.
the number of the great powers with strongly held interests in the Bosnian crisis necessitated the creation of a large sponsoring coalition for U.N. initiatives on Bosnia. The extent of divergence between these states positions produced a limited and faltering response to the crisis. Much of the U.N.’s diplomatic activity and policy responses were mere attempts to preserve the fragile coalition than to address resolution possibilities within the conflict. This consideration deprived the U.N. response of much of its coherence and purpose. These passions and interests were not sufficient to trigger a significant response from any of the states in the coalition. Proposals for a Gulf war type operation were mooted by the Islamic states and non-aligned movements, but rejected due to massive casualties that would be suffered by any offensive intervening forces. This inevitably led to states turning to the U.N. as a mechanism through which they would mount a response while sharing the risks and costs.

The weaknesses that these divisions within its sponsoring coalition placed in the U.N. mediation mission were magnified by the coalition’s fundamental misunderstanding of the conflict and its required response. The misdiagnosis arose partly from the U.N.’s unique involvement in the origins of the wars in the former Yugoslavia. Having in part prompted the conflict through recognising the break-
away republics and matched with horror the ferocity of the wars, the U.N.'s members saw no alternative but to attempt to adhere to the logic of this decision in their efforts to end the war. On 18 May 1992 Bosnia sought and was granted, the U.N. recognition of its sovereignty as an independent state and membership of the organisation as a sovereign state after fulfilling the Carrington Arbitration Commission's requirement of two-third of its voters support for independence in a referendum. This made it incumbent on the U.N. to uphold the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the responsibility of the Security Council in this regard.

Having tolerated the break-up of the former Yugoslavia by the consent of its populations, the U.N. involved the international legal principle of uti possedentis in refusing to tolerate the further break-up of its constituent republics through the use of force: "Bosnia Herzegovina should remain a sovereign, independent, integral and multi-ethnic state in which all parts of the population could live in peace in accordance with their respective cultures and traditions." Accordingly the U.N., the I.C.F.Y. co-chair-

man, and the mediators deemed it necessary to reject any model based on three separate ethnic/confessionally based states.³⁶

This entailed an explicit statement that the U.N.'s primary objective remains to reverse the consequence of the use of force and to allow all persons displaced from their homes in the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina to return to their homes in peace.³⁷ It was from these obligations that the misdiagnosis of the conflict arose that the conflict in Bosnia was largely over issues of autonomy and self-govern-ment, rather than of ethnic assertiveness, deep fear of being culturally swamped; and a brute complex of desires to live in ethnically pure states.³⁸

The misdiagnosis led inevitably to the formulation of an inappropriate response. A mediation mission and a protec-
tion force were sent to reverse the results of a brutal ethnic war. The mediators were instructed to achieve ‘the withdrawal of Bosnian Serb troops from territories occupied

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by force,\textsuperscript{39} the reversal of "the practice of ethnic cleans-
ing [which] is unlawful and unacceptable, and will not be
permitted to affect the outcome of the negotiations on
constitutional arrangements for the republics of Bosnia, and
Herzegovina",\textsuperscript{40} and the "return of 'all displaced persons...
in peace to their former homes".\textsuperscript{41} The objective of the
U.N. coalition in dispatching the mediation mission was to
secure a lasting solution to the conflict based on the
principles of:

immediate and complete cessation of hostilities; with-
drawal from territories seized by the use of force and
ethnic cleansing; reversal of the consequences of
ethnic cleansing and recognition of the right of all
refugees to return to their home; and respect for the
sovereignty territorial integrity and independence of
the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.\textsuperscript{42}

These results were to be the outcome of 'a negotiated solu-
tion freely arrived at'.\textsuperscript{43} With this configuration of
states and instructions as its basis, the U.N. mediation
mission was deeply vulnerable before it even neared Bosnia.

\textsuperscript{39} Report of the Secretary General, Joint Action Program

\textsuperscript{40} Security Council Resolution 787 (1992), 16 November

\textsuperscript{41} ibid.

\textsuperscript{42} Security Counsil Resolution No.836 (1993), 4 June 1993.

\textsuperscript{43} Security Council Resolution No.859 (1993), 24 August
1993.
In this deeply complex civil war, the disputants' interest and objectives inevitably diverged on the way they viewed the U.N. interventions. The government of Bosnia, only in existence since the first free election in Bosnia in November 1990, had watched in fear as all around it the republics of Yugoslavia imploded in bitter ethnic conflict. Pushed towards calling a referendum on independence by disintegration rather than transformation of Yugoslavia, the government had watched the Bosnians that polled overwhelmingly for independence and recognition such as that given to Croatia and Slovenia.\footnote{L. Silber and A. Little, \textit{The Death of Yugoslavia} (London: Penguin Books, 1995), pp.226-240.} Then the secessionist war that the Bosnian Serbs had threatened for so long descended on Bosnia. Deserted by the J.N.A., which it had hoped would protect it, the new Bosnian state, with no army of its own, watched the Serbs rapidly conquer 70\% of its territory. As its appeals for help to defend itself brought no substantive response, the Bosnian government felt that it had been betrayed by the very international community that had recognised its sovereignty. Over time, it organised an army, mainly of Muslims, and began to fight for an independent multi-ethnic Bosnia of the internationally recognised pre-war
boundaries. Finding its severe disadvantage relative to Bosnian Serbs in weaponry was perpetuated by the U.N. arms embargo, the Bosnian government became dependent on the international community to redress the balance through its peacekeeping and mediation missions. Consequently, the Bosnian government's interests were largely in accord with those of the U.N. mediators; indeed it found itself in a position where it had little choice but to cooperate with the U.N. mission.

While the Bosnian Croats also had territorial designs on Bosnia similar to the Serbs, they found it in their interests to co-operate with the U.N. mission for two reasons. The first was that, able to draw on only 18% of the population, and without the help of JNA, Croats could not hope to advance their cause militarily, and had to rely on diplomatic means to advance their interests. Second, the government of Croatia had, since early 1991, played a clever propaganda game retaining the sympathy and support of the international community while pursuing ethnic territorial goals every bit as cynical as those of the Serbs. Both of


these imperatives dictated the policies of the Bosnian Croats. Their alliance at the war’s beginning with the Bosnian government was dictated by military weakness and a desire to protect the strategically vulnerable Croatian state, with two long prongs of territorial division of Bosnia which would prevent Croatia’s further encroachment by the pan-Serb state. These considerations were to prompt them to break alliances in June 1993, and begin to fight the Bosnian government in central Bosnia, often in alliance with the Serbs. This phase of the war ended in March 1994 with the signing of the Washington agreement establishing a Muslim-Croat federation, brokered by U.S. envoy Charles Redman. At most stages of the war irrespective of their particular military tactics the Croats opted to co-operate with the U.N. and its mediation mission as a way of diplomatically securing their interests.

It was the Bosnian Serbs whose interests were so impossibly opposed to those of the mediators. Their position was based on the contention that "as far as they are concerned the independent state of Bosnia and Herzegovina has never existed and does not exist (an) . . . that it is being forced by the international community ignored their objections to Bosnia and Herzegovina against its wishes."48 The

Bosnian Serbs demanded the same right to exercise self-determination as was extended to the former Yugoslav republics after the international community ignored their objections to Bosnia seceding from Yugoslavia. They refused to live as minorities in states ruled by other ethnic groups. Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic placed their demands in political legal terms when he asserted that the boundaries of the republic in federal Yugoslavia were administrative and that it was nations, rather than republics, that were sovereign. They recommended partitioning Bosnia along the lines dictated by military holdings, which would have awarded the Serb state over 70% of Bosnian territory. These Bosnian Serb areas, according to leaders Karajdic and Mladic, had to be linked territorially and be cleansed of communities other than Serbs.

Bosnian Serb military action took over a vast majority of Bosnian territory in the first six months of the war, and by the time the mediators presented a peace proposal to them 'the reality on the ground was that Serb-held areas were already joined on the map; Serb military leaders would never sacrifice these links, which were a key element in their own

plans.\textsuperscript{50} Any surrender of territory held was completely unacceptable to the Bosnian Serb military, led by General Ratko Mladic, who stated that the lines of conquest "have been traced in Serbian blood and no one has the right to erase them."\textsuperscript{51} The Bosnian Serbs wanted eventually to unite with Serbia and Krajina Serbs in Croatia and wanted their holdings to be contiguous with the territories of the ethnic kin. They defended their claim to 70% of Bosnian territory for 31% of the pre-war Bosnian population by asserting that the Serbs in Bosnia were predominantly rural and that the Muslims and Croats would retain the major cities and natural resources of the state.\textsuperscript{52} These adamantly held Bosnian Serb objectives were incompatible with the solution proposed by the U.N. mediators’ fundamental weakness, that of having been given objectives that were inappropriate to the situation or their capabilities.

\textbf{Mission Presence and the Military Balance}

The misdiagnosis of the conflict by the U.N. inevitably led it to prescribe an inappropriate response. The media-


\textsuperscript{51} Quoted in \textit{The International Heald Tribune}, 2 December 1993.

tors had been deprived of all flexibility to find a solution to the conflict by the sponsoring coalition's strict instructions. The U.N. and I.C.F.Y. mediators roles "of clarifying the issues" and acting as a 'channel of communication to clarify ideas and proposals advanced by the parties during discussions." were nullified by their advocacy of definite objectives for the peace process. While the mission was welcomed by the government and acceded to by the Bosnian Croats, the legitimacy of its presence and objectives were never recognised by the Bosnian Serbs. To the Serbs, the U.N. mission and the I.C.F.Y.'s objectives threatened to take away their hard won territorial gains and were an attempt to once more swamp the Serb ethnic groups within the Muslim Bosnian states. The U.N.'s admission and recognition of Bosnia-Herzegovina, its dedication to defend its sovereignty and unity, and its advocacy of the interests of the Bosnian government and Muslim population, made it more of an arbiter or a participant in the dispute than a suitable third party. The Bosnian Serb distrust of mediators was further deepened by the adversarial way in

which the U.N. began to characterize them. Since the first reports by the media and its own human rights reporteurs the U.N. regularly expressed horror at the practice of ethnic cleansing and condemned the Bosnian Serb as its perpetrators. The Security Council repeatedly denounced the practice of ethnic cleansing and expressed concern over its use in the "pattern of hostilities by Bosnian Serb paramilitary units." Such prejudices necessarily had an adverse effect on the negotiating process:

"The a priori negative characterization of one of the parties in a conflict is a sure disincentive for them even to appear at the bargaining table, and in turn can well provide the rationale for the other belligerents to refuse to participate in the process. Labelling has a powerful impact not only on the warring parties, but on the individuals and organizations to act as mediators." 58

Neither was the adverse Bosnian Serb perception of the mission mitigated by a belief that the U.N. as a mediator could provide an outcome that was acceptable to the Serbs. To the Bosnian Serbs, the mediators were intended as executors of the great powers' plot to deprive them of their


right to self-determination. This harmonized with their self-image as misunderstood, persecuted and embattled people standing up to a hostile international community. This developed into anger and hostility towards the outside world: "The Serbs denounced a plot of the whole world against their nation, only guilty of continuing to assume its historical role of barrier of the Christian west against the spread of Islam." These feelings of victimization were only increased by international threats and sanctions. This fundamental suspicion of and hostility towards its presence by the Bosnian Serbs became a crippling weakness to the JCFY mediation mission as it tried to negotiate the agreement of all the parties to its peace plans.

Bosnian Serb military predominance translated into a hardened bargaining position and an insistence on their demands. Until peacekeepers were withdrawn from vulnerable positions in mid-1995, attempts to blockade Bosnian Serb held areas had little effect, and the first tentative NATO airstrikes were responded to by taking peacekeepers hostage and other measures, rather than modifying the basic Bosnian


Serb conditions. Furthermore, the Bosnian Serbs realized that its inability to serve a settlement paralysed the U.N.’s actions in Bosnia. It became clear that a solution would usher in not a reduction in the dangers to Bosnian Serb interests, but a more muscular international presence: all implementation plans signalled to the Serbs that a large NATO force would be inserted into Bosnia not if the fighting continued, but only if it stopped. The Bosnian Serbs military preponderance and the confidence to resist that flowed from this, exposed the weaknesses within the JCFY mediation mission that derived from its inappropriate presence and mediators prey to non-cooperation and cynical exploitation by the militarily strongest party.

The serious vulnerabilities of the U.N. mission arising from a divided coalition which misunderstood the conflict and dispatched a flawed response, put the mediators at a serious disadvantage as the talks began. The U.N.’s advocacy of "the imperative need to find an urgent political solution for the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina followed closely on the outbreak of hostilities in Bosnia. The Steering Committee of the I.C.F.Y. emphasized the importance


of persevering with mediation when it warned of the dangers of escalation of the conflict if the parties turn their backs on the search for negotiated solutions. Acting on such urgent instructions, the ICFY mediators had little time to develop a formula tailored to the situation or to wait for development that made the conflict more conducive to a negotiated solution. The ICFY adopted a deductive approach. It attempted to deal with the problem of the strongly opposing positions of the disputants by directing its working groups to prepare the basis for a general settlement and associated measures which would then be presented to the parties who would be encouraged and pressured to sign it. The three frameworks around which the ICFY mediators worked did not manage to tie the belligerents, especially the Bosnian Serbs to the mediation process. Attempts by the U.N. to pressure the Bosnian Serbs into becoming more flexible and accepting the peace plans through applying sanctions to Serbia, and by issuing warnings and ultimatums, were unsuccessful.63 The mediators were reduced to plea reminding the parties of their previous commitments to peace. "...the decision to choose peace or war rests with you.... You agreed to the principles of the International Conference adopted on 26 August. You committed yourselves that all

63. SCR's (757) 1992, 30 May 1992 and 787 (1992), 16 November 1992, applied mandatory sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro and explicitly liked the shifting to Bosnian Serb co-operation with peace plans.
parties should cease fighting and should engage actively in negotiations." Until the military balance changed after September 1995, the Bosnian Serbs had little rational incentive in complying with these peace plans.

By the end of 1994, the U.N. mediators and the J.C.F.Y. had presided over the tabling of three major attempts to define a mediation and settlement of frameworks that tried to reconcile the positions of the Bosnian parties as well as fulfilling the instructions of the U.N.: the Vance-Owen plan, the Serb-Croat proposal and the contact group plan.64 The first framework advanced by mediators came in the form of comprehensive settlement plans designed by U.N. envoy Vance and EU envoy Sir David Owen. In an early attempt at compromise between clashing interests, the Vance-Owen plan proposal dividing Bosnia into ten ethnically mixed cantons, each with built in guarantees of power-sharing between all three ethnic groups and the respect of human rights. Although the plan’s decentralization of the state and explicit recognition of the three ethnic groups was an acknowledgement of Serb concerns about living in a Bosnian state, the cantonization recommendation amounted to a direct rejection of the Bosnian Serb objective of ethnically partitioning

Bosnia. The Vance-Owen Plan explicitly forbade any prospect of international personality or unification with territories or states outside of Bosnia. The map drawn up by Vance and Owen proposed the reduction of Bosnian Serb-dominated territory from 70% to slightly over 43%, and apportioning the remaining Bosnian territory between the Muslim majority holdings and the Croat majority holdings in proportion roughly reflecting the pre-war ethnic number.

The Bosnian government initially rejected the plan that divided up Bosnia, but under intense international pressure and guarantees accepted the plan offered them predominance in the stretches of Central Bosnia that they had been fighting for.65 For the Bosnia Serbs, in addition to taking over one-third of their captured territory from them, the plan proposed to deprive them of the vital northern Breko corridor that links Serb territories in Eastern and Western Bosnia as well as making a linking of Serb areas together and to the Krajina and Serbia virtually impossible.66 So inimical were the proposals of the Vance Owen plan to the interests of the Bosnia’s Serbs they were repeatedly rejected in their successive manifestations in January, April and May 1993, by popular referendum among the Bosnian Serbs.

Following the final rejection of the Vance-Owen plan, the Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats advanced their own formula for peace in Bosnia. The plan proposed a confederation of three ethnically defined constituent republics, while retaining many of the constitutional principles that had been established in the Vance-Owen plan. While based on the positions of the two of the belligerents, the plan encountered the opposition of the U.N. and J.C.F.Y. mediators, based on their incompatibility with the mediators' own instructions. The mediators advanced several elements on behalf of the Bosnian government and Muslims that had to be included if the plan was to be successful. Their constitutional suggestions showed concern to preserve the sovereignty and integrity of the Bosnian state, while they were anxious to serve for the Muslims in the territorial divisions "an equitable and economically viable share of territory, with guaranteed access to the Sava river and the Adriatic sea. The international mediators remained adamant that an equitable share amounted to not less than 30% of Bosnian territory for the Muslim republic. They objected to confederation because 'it would be seen as the first step towards secession. The mediators worked intensively with Serb and Croat representatives to try to alter the plans along these lines. The Bosnian Serbs rejected all of their

proposals, which they saw as ultimately incompatible with
the goals of the original plan: the de facto partitioning of
Bosnia between Croatia and Serbia. The plan was finally
abandoned when 58 of the 69 deputies in the Bosnian Parlia-
ment established the basis of their commitment to the Con-
tact Group plan. Again, it was the Bosnian Serbs who re-
jected the frameworks by the end of August 1994. Once more
they objected to surrendering nearly one-third of their 70%
territorial holdings, particularly in the Breko corridor and
in eastern Bosnia around Jajce, Doboj, Sanski Most and
Visegrad.

The failure of each of the three attempts to reconcile
the demands of the Bosnian disputants demonstrates the
weakness of a mediation mission introduced into an inappro-
priate context with an unachievable mandate. This suggests
that a deductive mediation design without the ability to
bind the belligerents to the process and compel them towards
a solution becomes vulnerable to a party that is able to
resist and remain unpunished.

While the U.N. proposals threatened to take from the
Bosnian Serbs much of which they had fought for, they were
shrewd enough to realize that total withdrawal from the
mediation process held the possibility of hardening the
resolve of international coalition against them. Further-
more, the Bosnian Serb leadership saw an opportunity to exploit the negotiations towards objectives not favoured by the U.N., but which were advantageous to themselves. Having made and secured their military holdings by September 1993, the Bosnian Serbs became receptive to the idea of a negotiated peace based on their military gains. As they saw it, 'with control of contiguous territory making it possible to travel from Belgrade to Banja Luka and beyond into the Serb-held territory in Croatia without crossing a frontline, the Serbs were in a position to seek a settlement in order to get international sanctions lifted. 68 Their serious adherence to the mediation process, however, was clearly contingent on the assumption that the peace settlement would reflect their military position and be a stage on the route to secession of the Serb areas and their integration into Greater Serbia. Mediation proposals that rejected these Serb conditions were viewed as diktats imposed on the Serbs by the international community and deserving rejection and non-cooperation. 69

Bosnian Serb leader Karajzdic repeatedly warned JCFY mediators that if their conditions were not agreed to in the


negotiations, the Serbs would continue to wage war in Bosnia. The Bosnian Serbs, in addition to these changes in their strategy and tactics, used their negotiating behaviour with the mediators to exacerbate the weaknesses in the mission and the divisions within its sponsoring coalition.

During the Bosnia negotiations all parties developed into a fine art the skill of using agreement, disagreement, temporizing or tortuous boggling to manipulate the international community. It was the Bosnian Serbs, however, who continued to flirt with peace proposals as the most likely way of limiting western military intervention and exacerbating the acrimony between the troop contributors and the advocates of stronger action. The mediators came to realize that agreement on paper rarely translated to compliance in this field. 'Nor can intermediaries keep the parties to their word. Ceasefires are entered into the full knowledge that they are not going to be fulfilled, and other pledges broken within hours of being made. The parties began openly admitting their intentions to enter agreements for political reasons with no intention of implementing them. 'We'll sign and then ignore the agreement. That's what everyone has

done in their war so far'. 71 As a final touch, the Bosnian Serbs orchestrated their rejections of the peace plans in a way calculated to manipulate international opinion, by using referenda in their ethnically cleansed areas to overwhelmingly reject the various peace plans by 96% majorities. 72 So vulnerable were the division and weaknesses within the U.N. mission and so adept were the Bosnian Serbs at exploiting them, that the mediators found themselves being used to aggravate and worsen the original divisions within their sponsoring coalition. 73 By accordingly altering their political military tactics, the Bosnian Serbs were able to exploit vulnerabilities in the mission's design and presence in a way that enabled them to avoid the goal towards which the mediators were instructed to work.

LINKS AND EXTERNAL SUPPORT

The war in Bosnia stood alone among contemporary conflicts for the widest and most diverse range of external interests and support for the warring parties. These connections with the parties, however, failed to provide the mediators with leverage because of the international commu-


73. William Pfaff, n.71.
nity's own deep disagreement about and solution to the crisis. The variety of agenda among the various external supporters of the parties left the U.N. mediators with leverage because of the international community's own deep disagreements about the war and solution to the crisis, the variety of agenda among the various external supports of the parties left U.N. mediators with very little cohesive support for their efforts. Whatever little support materialised was faltering and ineffectual. The tightening sanctions regime applied by Security Council resolutions 757 (1992) and 787 (1992) and the appeals and pressures of leading powers finally forced Serbia to condemn Bosnian Serb intransigence and institute a blockade of military supplies to the Bosnian Serbs monitored by the U.N. States with ties to the Bosnian Serbs, such as Russia and Greece, were willing to appeal for cooperation but adamantly opposed proposals by advocates of the Muslims to bring Bosnian Serbs to the table with coercive action. The U.S. influence over the non-Serb parties was used to engineer the Muslim-Croat alliance in March 1994.74 These tentative involvements.

74. The Russian Warnings against aiding the Muslims have often been belligerent: in June 1994 Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev warned that secret arms shipments to the Muslims could ignite a 'new world war': see "Bosnia arms could spark world war", International Herald Tribune, 15 June 1994, The European powers, particularly Britain, France and Germany were also adamant on this issue, with French Foreign Minister Alain Juppe calling American proposal to lift the embargo "an
The confidence of the Bosnian Serbs in defying the international community was in part furnished by their military preponderance and their support by sympathetic states. Their intransigence was also a result of their imperfect isolation from external support. Despite the international arms embargo around the former Yugoslavia and the tightening sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro, the Bosnian Serbs continued to receive supplies and support from various sources. Military supplies were smuggled through the porous Serbian border through Macedonia, the republic of the rump Yugoslavia with the lower international profile from Greece through Macedonia and through the Krajina region in Croatia. While the weapons embargo was imperfect, its existence favoured the Bosnian Serbs by perpetuating their relative preponderance in heavy weapons which were not easy to smuggle through the embargo. Furthermore, the Russian diplomatic patronage provided support for the Bosnian Serbs' intransigence and manipulations in negotiations. 75 The Bosnian Serbs' confidence in Russian and Greek sympathy, support and protection undoubtedly buttressed their intran-

...Continued...

aburdity'. See 'America and Europe Clash over Arms Ban', Daily Telegraph, 12 September 1994.

75. See, for example, 'Bosnian Serbs seek Map change and further Talks', International Herald Tribune, 22 July 1994.
sigence to all attempts to resolve the conflict.

On the other hand, the Bosnian Government's knowledge of the American, Islamic, and general international sympathy with its cause made it less amenable to Bosnian Serb demand. Although international support for parties in the dispute, its most pronounced impact was on the Bosnian Serbs. Their sponsorship by major members of the coalition allowed them to manipulate and weaken the mediators position, while confidently defending their own interests.

As a result of the deep divisions within its sponsoring coalition, the mediation mission lacked the durability, confidence and initiative to explore other formula for resolution. As international opinion polarised over the war, the states began to advocate the position of different belligerents, the U.N. and I.C.F.Y. became increasingly preoccupied with maintaining international unity at the expense of single-mindedly searching for a resolution to the conflict. As a result of these pressures, the importance of the presence of U.N. mediators to the peace process was diminished. One of the greatest impediments to the mediators in Bosnia was the lack of cohesion in the U.N. behind any one preferred solution or strategy. The numerous unanimous Security Council resolutions supporting the mediators efforts could not hide the genuine divisions between strongly held positions both within and outside the Security
Council. These divisions were only exacerbated by each development in the fighting, as each state reappraised the status of its commitment to the initiative. 76

International disagreement over Bosnia actually predated the conflict, having stemmed from the disputes over the recognition of the constituent republics of former Yugoslavia. The underlying affiliations and agenda that drove the dispute between sovereignty and self-determination endured to suffuse the positions of the U.N. member states over subsequent issues in Bosnia. At one level, some states supported the various parties due to ethnic, cultural or religious ties; the Russians and the Greeks supported the Serbs, the Turks and Islamic countries supported the Muslims whereas the Germans and Central European states had their sympathies for the Croats.

On the political level disagreements arose from different views of the war: the U.S. saw it as a case of external aggression by a large against a small state. Whereas the European’s view dictated this response that through mediation, containment of the conflict, maintenance of the arms

76. Heightened tensions within the Contact Group were noticeable on many occasions during changes in the tempo of war, such as during the Muslim offensive and Serb counter offensive around the Bihac pocket in late 1994; see Michael Sheridan, 'U.N. Takes stock of Muslim offensive', The Independent, 8 November 1994.
embargo and a large peacekeeping presence would help contain the conflict and prevent further conflagration. The lack of success of this policy only served to heighten the dissent and frustration of supporters of the U.S. strategy of withdrawing the peacekeepers and lifting the embargo. The non-aligned movement advocated launching a conventional multilateral intervention on behalf of the Bosnian government, while the Islamic Conference Organisation held the West responsible for unilaterally breaking the embargo and begin supplying the Muslim with arms. These deep and enduring divisions within the U.N. membership significantly hampered the ability of the mediators to creatively search for a solution in Bosnia.

As the U.N., the J.C.F.Y. and the Contact Group had to increasingly devote their energy to preserve their own fragile unity, their directives and support for the mediators became both vague and weaker. Their inability to agree on the form of military action needed to give the mediators leverage or to back up their own threats and warnings deprived the mediators of the crucial tool of being able to offer side-payments or threaten punishments in order to induce the parties to cooperate. The combination of the

78. See Dan William, 'Bidding time, By powers seek New Sanctions on Serbs', International Herald Tribune, 1 August 1994.
embargo and the peacekeepers placed an inertia on the mediators position, with the peacekeeping presence giving the Bosnian Serbs and the European members of the coalition a veto over any change in international strategy to try to find a solution. The lack of cohesion within the U.N. also meant that none of the peace plans offered was able to attract the strong international support that the mediators needed as badly due to the unacceptability of their proposals to the Bosnian Serbs. Unfortunately for the mediators, this lack of cohesion was well appreciated by the Bosnian Serbs who cleverly stalled and manipulated the negotiations in order to derive the greatest benefits from International divisions. These divisions made it possible for the Bosnian Serbs not to cooperate with the mediators while escaping any serious consequences.

The Bosnian Serbs' intractability was partly inspired by their strong military position and the high morale that flowed from this and nationalist myths. Contemptuous of the use of appeals, threats, and sanctions to pressure them into unfavourable negotiations, the Bosnian Serb military commanders boasted in 1993 that they had enough martial spirit and arms stockpiles to continue the war independently for another six or seven years. It was also partly inspired by

their likely inability to maintain their own cohesion besides any concessions or cooperation with the mediators that was not justified by military realities. The bitterness of the Balkan conflict equated cooperation with betrayal: ‘...the expression of willingness to negotiate, the notion of compromise, and the very idea of dialogue were often taken as treason.’

The Bosnian Serb leadership was itself beset by serious factionalism. The fact that led to its paranoia, militarism and uncompromising positions during negotiations. Any concessions, particularly over the surrender of captured territory, were vociferously opposed by hardline politicians local Serb warlords, and the Bosnian Serb military led by General Mladic. The Bosnian Serb cadre and supporters were so internally divided that orders from the leadership were often ignored, without having ‘any consistent and tangible impact on the ground.’ These severe divisions among the Bosnian Serbs led to a paranoid leadership making use of the ‘parliament’ at Pale and referenda to make impor-

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81. Malcolm, Bosnia, p.250.

82. Ibid., p.252.
tant decisions regarding the peace talks. These factors of cohesion and morale made it even more irrational for the Bosnian Serbs to cooperate with the mediators.

THE DAYTON PEACE ACCORD

In Paris on 14 December 1995, the presidents of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia signed the General Framework Agreement for peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (also known as the Dayton Agreement). This agreement comprising 11 articles, set out the principles for the maintenance of a unitary and sovereign republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, consisting of two entities: Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The latter was to control 51% of the territory of the republic. The agreement also set out a series of constitutional provisions relating to the bicameral legislature of the unitary state, the election of a three man presidency, the role and the responsibilities of central government and the general relationship between the two entities of the central government.

As a corollary to the seeming willingness of the Balkan parties to seal a peace deal after over three years of,

fighting in Bosnia, the Dayton agreement also set out the responsibilities of the organs and institutions of the international community to ensure that the peace would be a lasting one. Included in these provisions were: the definition of the role to be played by the OSCE in the areas of confidence building, monitoring elections and arms control; the continuing operations of the International War Crimes tribunal, the creation of a Commission of Human Rights to be monitored both by the OSCE and the Council of Europe; the creation of a U.N. International police task force; and the nomination of a high representative to monitor and oversee all civilian aspects of the peace plan. The most important provision relating to the work of the international community in ensuring the success of the peace plan was the direct military involvement of NATO through the Implementation Force (IFOR).

This was a major new development in the international mechanisms involved in attempting to bring peace to this war torn area. The UNPROFOR was to be relieved of its responsibilities in Bosnia and replaced by IFOR, which was to be an implementation and not a peacekeeping force, led by a U.S. General and consisting of some 6,000 NATO troops including a U.S. contingent of some 20,000 troops.

This peace accord has been approached by a long and arduous route. In the public eye it had only been achieved
because of the indefatigable work of the U.S. envoy, Richard Holbrooke. In reality, however, events on the ground in Bosnia and its environs throughout 1995 had favored this outcome. The increasing diplomatic involvement of the U.S. made a significant difference to the warring parties' perceptions of how much they stood to gain or lose by pursuing conflict, and a series of events in 1995 drew United States further and further into the Bosnian mire and resulted in the transformation of the U.N. peacekeeping and humanitarian mission into a peace implementation mission. All the Bosnian parties to the dispute were brought to accept this although often with great reluctance. Those involved from outside, including President Milosevic, the E.U. and the U.N., breathed a sigh of relief.

The move away from a U.N. dominated peacekeeping operation began in February 1995, when NATO issued a strong ultimatum to the Bosnian Serbs, in the wake of the explosion of a Mortar Shell in Sarajevo market on 5 February which resulted in 68 deaths and nearly 200 wounded. Even though this was the list of sequence of NATO issued threats, which in the past Bosnian Serbs had scorned the increasing U.S. diplomatic manoeuvring behind the scenes paradoxically lent 'diplomatic muscle' to the existing military potential. This was manifested at the beginning of March by the creation of a Muslim-Croat federation, heavily brokered, if not
forced upon the parties, by the U.S. which indicated that the balance of diplomatic and military forces arrayed against the Serbs was growing stronger and more coherent.

The shifting balance of power within the regional context and the heightened role of the NATO, forced the Bosnian Serb leadership into a series of rash retaliatory measures which were to have enormous repercussions. In late May, the Serbs abducted and held hostage dozens of U.N. peacekeepers and observers from remote positions in an attempt to intimidate NATO into withdrawing its threat to use force against Serb positions if the latter's heavy artillery and other weaponry were not removed from certain key positions (primarily around Sarajevo). In itself this move was not considered out of character for the Bosnian Serbs, though it was portrayed in some quarters as a sign of increasing desperation of the Bosnian Serb forces and leadership in the face of mounting military and diplomatic pressure.

Nevertheless, it did trigger a Western response beyond the normal diplomatic negotiations aimed at releasing the hostages, in that Britain and France decided to deploy a newly styled Rapid Reaction force in Bosnia. This force, consisting of national troops outside U.N. jurisdiction was intended to protect the British and French troops operating
in Bosnia under the U.N. flag and mandate. It was a bizarre arrangement yet one which indicated that the thankless task of the UNPROFOR operation in Bosnia was constantly evolving into an operation in which other regional organisation such as NATO and individual states such as Britain and France were taking the lead. What emerged in the summer of 1995 was a gradual shift of emphasis away from the peacekeeping role of UNPROFOR to a more proactive policy of enforcement which would later lead to the implementation force agreed at Dayton, Ohio and signed in Paris.

Two major events in late July and early August 1995 damaged the image of the U.N. as a viable organisation for dealing with conflicts such as that in Bosnia and the utility and success of peacekeeping operations. These events also dramatically attend the military and territorial scenario on the ground in the Balkans. Their ramifications had two important consequences.

The first involved the collapse of the U.N. designated and protected 'safe areas' of Zipa and Srebrenica to Bosnian Serb attacks and the ensuing allegations of mass murders committed by the Bosnian Serbs against the Muslim men of Srebrenica. This discredited the U.N. and highlighted the impotence of UNPROFOR as the international community had repeatedly stated that the safe areas would be defended from Serb aggression. It was swiftly followed in early August by
the stunning success of the Croatian armed forces in overrunning the Krajina and driving out the local Serbs. This too undermined the authority of the U.N., which had commenced its involvement in the wars of the former Yugoslavia by deploying the UNPROFOR as a traditional peacekeeping force to keep Croats and Serbs apart in the Krajina while a diplomatic solution was negotiated. Internationally the U.N. was discredited and the UNPROFOR shown to be an inadequate mechanism through which to attempt to provide an unacceptable and lasting peace for Bosnia and other parts of former Yugoslavia.

The second consequence involved the development of the military and territorial situation on the ground, as a result both of Croat successes in the Krajina and the increasingly emboldened attitude of the Bosnian government army in its operations against the Bosnian Serbs. Throughout August the war in Bosnia flared up with renewed vigour and the Bosnian Serbs were on the receiving end of Croat and Muslim attacks along the whole of their front lines, a precursor to the major offensive to be conducted by the Croats and the Muslims in tandem in September and October. The Bosnian Serbs were also under political and military pressure from other sources since Milosevic steered well clear of providing them with any overt diplomatic support, insisting that they should sue for peace, while NATO with strong
American insistence came into the military picture more emphatically.

Towards the end of August, the NATO aircraft and the previously deployed Anglo-French Rapid Reaction force, pounded Serbian positions around Sarajevo, and targeted and destroyed a range of Serb military, logistics and command and control installations throughout the Serb controlled territory. This provided a clear signal of the intent and determination of the international community to pursue a solution to the Bosnian conflict through the use of force if necessary. It also eventually caused enough disruption and dislocation to the Bosnian Serb military machine to allow the Croat and Muslim forces to prosecute their military offensive with great territorial success. Paradoxically, the Bosnian Serb escalation of attacks of the U.N. positions, and the overrunning of the safe areas, helped the U.N., as it forced a concentration and relocation of peace-keeping forces to make them less vulnerable to counter-attack in the wake of NATO air-strikes.

As the many internationally brokered attempts at negotiating peace had for the most part foundered on the inability of the local warring parties to agree to the demarcations of frontiers on the maps, the NATO bombardment paved the way for a significant redressing in the balance of
power on the ground that was fundamental to the final agreement in Dayton. Now on the receiving end of a formidable array of diplomatic and military muscle, the Bosnian Serbs were dragged back to the negotiating table in Geneva in an attempt to thrash out a ceasefire and the basic principles of a peace settlement, including the demarcation of frontiers. This the Bosnian Serbs did with great reluctance, but the mounting pressure placed on them by the United States and Milosevic (who could no longer rely on the support of Serbs at large after the disastrous loss of the Krajina and who hence was ready to sign a peace deal to retain his position in power) meant that they had few alternatives.

The final incentive for the Bosnian Serbs was provided by the great territorial gains made by the Croats and Muslims through their renewed and to date most successful, military campaigns in Bosnia throughout September and early October. While negotiations orchestrated by Holbrooke continued, the Bosnian Serbs were being pushed back in all parts of Bosnia to the extent that even the vital city of Banja Luka came under threat. More importantly the Bosnian Serb retreat meant that the frontiers in Bosnia were forced back towards the 51-49 percent Croat-Muslim/Serb split which was the agreed benchmark for any short term settlement. What had not been achieved since 1992 through international
diplomacy and the threat of the use of force was rapidly coming about through the successes of the Croat-Muslim military machines to which the broader international community turned a blind eye under pressure from Washington. A basic set of peoples for a peace deal was agreed in Geneva on 9 September and while war still raged a ceasefire was set for 12 October, after which intensive negotiations would take place for a final settlement.

The role of the U.S. in forming all the parties into signing the General Framework Agreement for peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina is vital in both military and political terms. The U.S. lent its weight militarily, through increased participation in NATO operations, and finally indicated its willingness to send troops to the region to police a peace deal. Diplomatically the U.S. persuaded Milosevic that the time had come for a settlement by making obvious the long term consequences of war, but also by throwing its weight behind the Croat/Muslim caucus by tacitly agreeing to the military campaigns in Krajina and Bosnia; this finally forced the Bosnian Serbs to accept the Dayton accords. What became obvious throughout 1995 was that even though diplomacy could play a leading role in reaching peace it was the changing military situation on the ground, and the evolving balance of power, which would provide the final catalyst for a settlement. And while the UNPROFOR mission would be
disbanded and replaced by the Implementation force with a different role, the U.N.'s peacekeeping mission had played a significant role in maintaining the Bosnian war on the international agenda. The UNPROFOR had neither the necessary military instruments nor political directions to bring peace to Bosnia, but it certainly provided a framework both politically and militarily.

The Dayton Agreement, in many ways, was a reworking of previous plans proposed by the U.N. and E.U. and not a novel departure. By the time of the conference, not only did the participants have the lessons of more than three years of abortive peacekeeping to draw on, there was also a range of Security Council resolutions already in place. These provided the essential context for the final negotiation of the peace. During the course of its involvement, the U.N. had also pioneered new forms of proactive conflict management, making any retreat to a traditional and more passive peacekeeping in the future unlikely. The experience of the UNPROFOR was therefore by no means wholly negative. Nonetheless, in many ways the peace settlement indicated that the use of force still pays. While we may laud the onset of peace in Bosnia, what we are left with is a country split in two by force of arms - a unitary sovereign state with two entities.
The Role of European Union in the Mediation Process

In the Balkans in 1991 the European Community (previously E.C. later the European Union) took up a colossal task for which it was badly equipped and that in fact uncovered the flimsiness of the collective mechanisms through which that organisation expected to deal with the new fast unrolling panorama of international problems and pressures. Especially in the early phase of the conflict, the community took up a broad commitment that went beyond anything it had previously done in the global arena. In the end the Yugoslav conflict dealt a serious blow to the image and credibility of the organisation, to its perceived weight as a major unitary actor, and to its inspiration to anchor the emerging political order on the European continent.

Yet, the inadequacy and failures in the Balkans should not be attributed solely to the European Union (E.U.). The major individual powers and other multilateral institutions steered clear of the problem, proved unable to bring it under control (as was the case with the CSCE in the early phase) or were able to deal only with very limited aspects of it (as did the U.N. and NATO after the armed conflict broke out). In fact it is hard to separate the inadequacies and limitations of present day militarism.
When fighting broke out in Slovenia after 25 June 1991, the European community partners acted collectively but within an ill defined institutional framework. Other Western European countries generally followed the community's lead. Throughout the second half of 1991 the E.U. was looked upon as the most suitable organisation for dealing with the Yugoslav crisis and played an almost exclusive role. For much of that time the community's strategy remained that of maintaining some form of unified Yugoslav framework or at least trying to solve all the different aspects of the Yugoslav crisis contextually.

The E.U. troika mediated an agreement in early July providing for a three month freeze on implementation of the independence declarations while the parties tried to negotiate a political solution to the crisis, signed on the island of Brioni on 7 July. It also envisioned the deployment of the U.N. observers in Slovenia and if possible in Croatia to monitor the ceasefire. In the Croatian case there were obstacles to actual deployment. On 5 July the community suspended all financial aid and banned arms exports to Yugoslavia in the expectation that it could force the parties to accept binding community mediation. Praising the European efforts, Washington quickly followed Brussels in

imposing a ban on arms sales.

The organisation of a peace conference vetoed at the CSCE by Belgrade was taken up by the community after the war moved to Croatia. The 27 August and 3 September meetings of the E.U. ministers of foreign affairs in the framework of European Political Cooperation (E.P.C.) drafted the mandate of the proposed conference. It included among its general principles "no unilateral changes of borders by force protection for the rights of all people in Yugoslavia and the need for full account to be taken of all legitimate concerns and negotiations. In the attempt to overcome explicit Serbian resistance the foreign affairs ministers threatened to impose broad economic sanctions against those who refused to accept the E.U. proposals.

The peace conference opened at the Hague on 7 September with Lord Carrington, a former British foreign secretary and former Secretary General of NATO as President. While at Brioni the solution of the crisis has been left to negotiations among the parties, at the Hague E.U. mediators advanced a specific constitutional solution replacing the federal state with a confederation of sovereign states.85

As an inducement this time the E.U. offered association status to the individual republics.

An Arbitration Commission first proposed by the EPC meeting of 27 August was to advise the conference on legal matters. Although it was auxiliary to the conference itself, the declaration deemed to imply that the Commission's decisions would be legally binding on the parties. The five members of the Commission were to be selected from among the presidents of the Constitutional Courts of the E.U. member states. Since the Yugoslav federal Presidency was unable to agree on the two appointments it was entitled to make, that selection was made by the three judges already appointed by the E.U. countries. French Constitutional court judge Robert Badinter, the originator of the idea of the Commission, was chosen by the other members as President. The Brussels declaration mandated that 'relevant authorities' not specifically identified, were entitled to submit their differences to the Commission.

In an attempt to bring the deteriorating military situation under control, the E.U. gained agreement of the parties to accept a small team of observers in Slovene and Croat territory. But as ceasefires continued to be signed and broken, a number of community parties repeatedly put forward the idea of a European "interposition force" to
separate the warring parties. As defined by the Secretary General of the Western European Union (WEU) Willelin Van Eebelen, the mandate of the force would be to "isolate the sources of conflict" and to ensure "an orderly process of change". 86

Originally proposed by the governments of Luxembourg and the Netherlands, the "interposition force" was strongly supported by France, which wanted it organised under the control of WEU. And since the Maastricht Treaty Negotiations were then underway, the "interposition force" proposed got caught up in the controversial issue of the Union's "common foreign and security policy". Many thought that a mission in Yugoslavia of a large and visible WEU-led force would settle many of the contentious points that were holding up the conclusion of the treaty. 87

This symbolism may have been the main attraction of the proposal. In other respects, it appears totally unrealistic, due in the first place, to the lack of organisational and command structure and logical capability of the WEU. Moreover, the proposal with a strongly negative reaction on the part of the Soviet Union. And most importantly, it


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could not overcome London's opposition. The German Government despite its enthusiastic support was then bound by constitutional restrictions on the use of German forces out of the NATO area.

The unreality of the idea of a large European Interposition force is also demonstrated by the Serb refusal to allow even ceasefire observers along its border with Croatia. There were those who supported the dispatch of such a force without regard to the consent of the warring parties. Indeed Germany advocated a speedy recognition of Croatia, on the grounds that the consequent 'internalisation' of the crisis would permit intervention without Belgrade's consent. Then, at the London extraordinary session of the WEU council, on 18-19 September, the proposal of an EU-WEU "interposition force" was thoroughly examined, and in effect killed. At that point Paris insisted that led to the first U.N. intervention in the crisis.

After the Hague Conference failed to move the conflict to the negotiating table Security Council Resolution 713 of 25 September tried to affect events by imposing "a general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Yugoslavia." However, the resolution did

89. Ibid., pp.581 and 583.
not prescribe any enforcement measure and it would take until late November for the Security Council to accept the European proposal to deploy peacekeeping forces.

The Conference also formally stated for the first time at the 4 October meeting that "recognition would be granted in the framework of a general settlement". Finally a sort of autonomy status was envisioned for areas in which a national or ethnic group constituted a majority. Washington and Moscow endorsed the outgoing peace process with a joint statement of 18 October.

Lord Carrington, the Chairman of the Peace Conference, acting as the E.U.'s negotiator made a detailed proposal on 25 October, with the general agreement of five of the six republics. It included, among others, the following points:

i) In the framework of a general settlement, recognition of the independence within existing borders, unless otherwise agreed, of those republics wishing it,

ii) A free association of the republics with an international personality as envisaged in these arrangements, and

iii) Comprehensive arrangements, including supervisory mechanisms for the protection of human rights and special status of certain group.90

In an attempt to meet Serbian concerns, the final draft convention presented by Lord Carrington on 4 November included a more detailed list of the institutional elements, including demilitarization that would characterize 'special status' of the areas in which national minority constituted a local majority. On 18 November, after Serbia rejected Carrington's peace proposals, the E.U. Council imposed economic sanctions on Yugoslavia suspending the cooperation and trade agreements and asked the Security Council to order an oil embargo. Washington immediately joined in this action. The sanction was later lifted and economic and reestablished for Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia, all of which had adhered to the community's plan.

There always existed a tiff between the E.C. member states over the question of maintaining status quo over Yugoslavia. Britain and France wanted to move a resolution through the U.N. General Assembly with the object of thwarting Bonn's pledge to recognize Croatia and Slovenia but seeing a determined Germany over the recognition issue they dropped the plan to move the resolution to avoid a serious

political crisis within the European Community. Subsequently Germany recognised Croatia and Slovenia on 23 December 1991 and other countries followed suit.

The role of the European Union in the international response to the Yugoslav crisis greatly diminished after 18 January 1992 and the abandonment of the search for an integrated (or contextual) solution compelled Bosnia and Herzegovina and also Macedonia to seek independence in turn set free new centrifugal ethnic pressure within these two republics. Thus, beginning in early 1992, Western Europe and the international community in general faced an even more complex situation, to the creation of which they had contributed.

As mentioned earlier the need to involve the United Nations was first fall after the failure to create an EU-WEU interposition force for Croatia in mid-September 1991. After passing resolution 713 (September 25) imposing the arms embargo, the Security Council responded to the West

92. A. Lewis, "U.N. Yields to Plans by Germany", A strong difference with Washington with regard to military observers to deploy in Yugoslavia apparently was also another reason for the French and British giving up their original positions. The International Herald Tribune with wide circulation in European Capitals, but mostly based on the New York Times and Washington Post's services, did not reproduce the well-informed and names naming Lewis article and gave only a compilation of agency dispatches about the Security Council debates.
European pressure for sending peacekeepers to monitor the Geneva ceasefire agreement between Croatia and Croatian Serbs. It first took up the issue at the end of November shortly after the Geneva ceasefire agreement in Croatia (Resolution 721 of November 23). Eventually Resolution 743 of 21 February 1992, adopted under Chapter 6 of the Charter established the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) to be deployed in the "protected areas" of Croatia, areas with large Serbian population outside the control of Zagreb. Subsequently the Security Council passed Resolution 758 (8 June 1992) that extended the mandate of UNPROFOR to Bosnia and Herzegovina in connection with an agreement among the warring factions to permit the reopening of the Sarajevo Airport. The early mission of protecting humanitarian convoys organised by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and other organisations broadened over time to include a multiplicity of tasks: Silencing sniper rifle, taking control of heavy weapons, monitoring the no fly zone over Bosnia; and protecting six Security Council designated safe areas. These extensions of the traditional peacekeeping mission began a period of great difficulty and considerable confusion about U.N. military operations.93

Reflecting growing pressures on the part of European Union, the U.S. and increased reporting of the civil war in the international media in June 1992 in a landmark development agreed to make itself available for the U.N. and CSCE generations. For the first time the Security Council invoked its Chapter 7 powers in Resolution 770 of 13 August 1992, calling on member states "nationally" or through regional agencies or arrangements "to help ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance".

As time went on, the NATO became the main enforcement instrument and main power faction in a number of Security Council decisions. The process was set rolling with the enforcement of the embargo along the Adriatic Coast in 1992. Then, after a UN report 1993 found hundreds of violations of the no-fly zone, NATO started enforcing that decision under authorization of the Security Council Resolution 816 (31 March 1993). A few months later NATO began providing 'close air support' on a case by case basis for UNPROFOR personnel operating in the safe areas, thus giving more substance to the decision establishing those special areas. The authorization for the operation was contained in Security Council Resolution 836 of 4 June 1993.

In taking up these tasks, NATO carried out some high profile operations, such as the downing of Serbian Planes
after a bombing raid, or delivering and enforcing ultimatums to stop the bombing of Sarajevo and Garazde, or the destruction of the runway of airport in Krajina which was being used to support attacks on the Bosni's safe area of Bihac. The visibility of these operations and the expectations created by the use of force and by NATO's role, further helped to push the community to the sidelines. At the same time, coming as a response to Western public opinion's pressures rather than as part of any political diplomatic strategy, the coercive use of military force remained episodic and contributed to the growing inconsistency of the international response in this phase.

The E.C. recognised Bosnia and Herzegovina on 6 April 1992. The referendum, in which 99% of those voting supported independence, had been boycotted by the Bosnian Serbs who constituted almost a third of the population. On 27 March the Bosnian Serbs proclaimed their own "Serbian Republic of Bosnia Herzegovina" with its capital in Pole, near Sarajevo.94 The U.S. administration recognised Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia on 7 April 1992.95 These actions took place in the midst of a serious escalation of

94. Text in Review of International Affairs (Belgrade), 1 April 1992.

the fighting throughout the republic and around Sarajevo.

With violence increasingly directed at the civilian population and reaching unprecedented levels of barbarity, much of the pressure of the international community was now specifically on Serbia as protector and supplier of the Bosnian Serbs. On 11 May, the E.U. ministers of foreign affairs decided to recall their ambassadors from Belgrade. The Union now concentrated its scaled down activities primarily on the attempt to stop the fighting in Bosnia through any kind of political settlement. To that end, a peace conference was called in London for late August, under the co-chairmanship of Carrington's successor, Lord Owen (also a former British Foreign Secretary) and former U.S. Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, who served as the representative of the U.N. Secretary General, Boutros Ghali to the pressures exerted by the Western Europeans for more decisive U.N. action. In one such instance, after Lord Carrington reported to the U.N. Secretary-General on a ceasefire agreement and invited the Security Council to take enforcement action. Boutros Ghali reacted testily, questioning the appropriateness of a regional organisation telling the U.N. what to do.96


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The international conference on the former Yugoslavia opened on 27 August in the presence of the foreign ministers of a number of influential powers, including the U.S., Russia, China and Japan and established the main reference framework for the subsequent Geneva negotiations. As part of this framework the regional parties underwrote a series of general people such as the illegitimacy of the frontiers changed by force the renunciation of violence as a way to settle national grievances, and respect for individual and minority rights. It also set up six working groups on Bosnia, minorities, the succession to Yugoslavia, economics, confidence building measures and humanitarian relief.

In addition to the principles already announced in London, all warring parties pledged not to interfere with the flow of humanitarian aid and not to violate the ban on military fights over Bosnia. However, "the shells and mortar bombs falling on Bosnia's capital" wrote the Economist in the days of the conference, "seemed mocking proof of the inability of diplomats to end this conflict." 97

The plan Vance and Owen circulated in the fall of 1992 and officially submitted to the parties in January 1993 built on the Culileiro Plan that had been agreed among the leaders of the three factions on the eve of the referendum.

This agreement recognised Bosnia as being made of three "national components" and accepted the principle of "cantonalization" of the country, although, after recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina this notion was rejected by its President Izetbegovic.98 The Vance Owen plan envisioned three cantons for each group, reflecting the prevailing ethnic character of the different areas, with a tenth ethnically mixed Canton around Sarajevo. In contrast with later plans, the qualifying feature of the Vance Owen proposal was that it still provided for a central, multiethnic government that was to keep Bosnia from being dismembered and absorbed into a "greater Serbia" and a "greater Croatia".

But the Vance-Owen plan did not find favour with the parties involved. France and Britain which had two largest contingents on the ground in Bosnia, opposed the use of air strikes against the Serbs while some western governments tried to present an alternative option of the creation of safe havens around six Bosnian cities. However, as General Phillippe Morrilon, the Commander of the U.N. troops in Bosnia and the originator of the proposal, pointed out the "safe havens" were solely an emergency problem to save human lives, not a substitute for the Vance Owen Plan.

Unlike the Vance-Owen plan, which envisioned a leopard-skin distribution of the ethnic groups without territorial continuity between the Serb cantons and the Republic of Serbia - to which, of course, the Serbs had objected - the direction taken by the Geneva negotiations was towards a mere partition of Bosnia into three ethnic states. The version of the plan presented at the end of August gave 52.5% of territory to the Serbs 17.5% to the Croats, and 30% to the Muslims. Lord Owen, still chairing the negotiations, now condemned the Vance-Owen plan as "unrealistic", and Vance who had stepped down from his assignment judged the new partition plan as "completely wrong".99

The E.U.'s diplomatic influence became increasingly marginal in the summer and fall of 1993, as the intensified Serb offensive and growing pressures from Washington gave the use of military force, however occasional, the prominent role. In early August, when the U.S. administration threatened to act unilaterally to prevent the "strangulation" of Sarajevo and urged the allies to take appropriate measures, NATO approved a plan to attack the Serb positions around the city. In this case, as in Sarajevo and Goradze in February and April 1994, the determination shown by the western allies contributed, with intense U.N. negotiations, to

produce the desired effect.

However, because of its very effectiveness the growing use of military force tended also to become increasingly a strategy of its own, increasing expectations and creating higher standards for assessing effectiveness. It pushed the negotiating process further into the background and even came into conflict, at times, with the requirements of that process. Thus, in August Lord Owen criticised the threat of military action because it tended to stiffen the Bosnian Government's position. A month later, indicating his limited commitment, President Clinton disabused Izetbegovic of any expectation of the Western military action and urged him to go back to the negotiating table and strike the best deal he could.100 In January 1994, the European Parliament asked that Lord Owen be replaced and that "another E.U. mediator be appointed, this time provided with an appropriate mandate and a new strategy for pursuing it. The Council, however, rejected the proposal.

Then, in the first half of 1994, Greece succeeded to the Presidency of the Union. The lack of confidence in the

Greek Presidency further contributed to the waning of Europe's collective role in the former Yugoslavia. London and Paris took the initiative to bring together all independently active countries, thus in effect bypassing the Greek Presidency. Washington became increasingly active diplomatically, and much of the credit for the April 1994 Muslim Croat agreement on the confederal plan for Bosnia went to the United States. At the same time, Moscow's domestic pressures pushed it to play a more active role. With the largest contingents on the ground in Bosnia, Paris and London were now the main conditioning elements behind the U.N. operation. In April those four powers plus Germany which insisted on a place in the discussion, formed a "Contact Group" for Bosnia. With the creation of the Contact Group the peace process had been taken over by a sort of directorate, which further reduced the role for collective mechanisms of the Western European foreign policy.

Many commentators have criticized the E.U. for the "fiasco" in the former Yugoslavia. The focus of complaint has been the failure of the community's attempt to bring the conflict under control in the second part of 1991. Others have attempted to exonerate the E.U. by pointing out that the crisis caught the organisation in a phase of institutional renovation. James B. Sleenburg argues that
"in many respects, the Yugoslavia crisis was 'premature', it caught Europe in the act of self redefinition". Others emphasize the already crowded foreign policy agenda of the E.U. in the summer and fall of 1991, which included the fast deteriorating situation in the Soviet Union, the collapse of Communism, the unification of Germany, and the Mastricht Treaty negotiations. Still rather than revealing the potentialities and capabilities of the E.U., the efforts to deal with the crisis over the next three years instead confirmed its inadequacy in dealing with the problems of international stability in Europe.

The efforts of the U.N., E.U. and NATO were very commendable under the given circumstances but what was lacking was the thrust that was supposed to have been given by the collective efforts. Perhaps they were of the opinion that Serbs who were the crucial aspect in the problem lacked their policy and perception on how to solve the problem and pushing Serbia to the wall through force, coercion and cajoling might not always work.