

The London School of Economics and Political Science

**Playing the Patron: Croatian-American Relations and the
Development of American Policy in Yugoslavia: From the
collapse of Yugoslavia to Tadjman's *Storm*, 1989-1995**

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of Doctor of Philosophy, London, December 2019

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¹ 113,001- 3039(Bibliography)

Abstract:

Between 1989 and 1995 American policymakers struggled with breakup of Yugoslavia. The greatest challenge facing American officials was not ancient hatreds or the complexities of diplomacy but their own inability to define objectives which could be reconciled with the region's importance or lack thereof to the United States. The United States wanted to preserve Yugoslavia, but not enough to pay the costs needed for success. Later, the United States wanted to secure an independent Bosnia, but not enough to jeopardized interests elsewhere in the world or to risk American lives. Virtually every major Yugoslav player in 1989 was convinced that securing American support was vital to their own success. That American officials failed to reconcile themselves to their actual leverage prevented the United States from taking advantage of this belief. Instead, it was Croatia led by Franjo Tudjman who filled the vacuum. Ultimately, the United States settled for an end to the fighting in the region on whatever terms could be sold domestically and international as a victory. Tudjman delivered that victory on the ground in exchange for American legitimization of his objectives, and then used the prospect that America would only legitimize a peace on his terms to secure the agreement of the other Yugoslav parties. America secured a peace agreement, but one that was less favorable to all parties except for the Croats than could have been achieved earlier.

Utilizing newly declassified documents and multiarchival research, this Thesis will demonstrate how a failure to reconcile means with objectives defined American policy towards Yugoslavia, and how Franjo Tudjman's grasp of this dynamic enabled him to emerge as America's partner in the region.

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	9
Chapter 1: The US and the Breakup of Yugoslavia.....	37
On the Precipice of an Abyss.....	37
The General and the shadow of history	53
US-Serbian Relations.....	60
Sleepwalking towards Calamity	63
Building to a Crisis.....	66
Was Failure Inevitable?.....	74
CHAPTER 2: From War to Recognition back to Cold War.....	77
Yugoslavia on Washington’s Backburner.....	82
From Yugoslav to Croat-Serb Conflict Management.....	98
Recognition of Neutrality’s Failure.....	114
CHAPTER 3 Foreign Policy in the 1992 Election and the Clinton Experiment	118
Staffing an Administration	133
The Clinton Administration’s First Foreign Policy Team	137
Policy in the Balkans in the Early Months of the Clinton Administration: The Limits of American Power	147
The End of the First Year	165
Chapter 4: From the Ashes of Failure: US-Croatian Relations 1993-1994 and the Reinvention of American Policy in the Former Yugoslavia	168
The New Team in Zagreb.....	176
Policy in Action: Galbraith in Croatia.....	181
The Art of the Deal.....	187
The Washington Agreement of 1994.....	200
The US, the Arms Embargo, and Iran.....	210
The April 29th “Incident”	218
After the Washington Agreement	230
CHAPTER 5: Winning Croatia’s War.....	231
The Limits of Initiative: Galbraith, Gore and Operation ‘Flash’	234
The Indian Summer of the Serbian Cause.....	254
The Man and the Hour have met: Operation Storm and the Art of Indispensability.....	258
From Tudjman’s Storm to Dayton	277
Conclusion	295
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	313

Primary Sources	313
Unpublished Documents	313
Published Documents	314
Interviews	315
Contemporary newspapers and journals	316
Memoirs and Biographies	317
Articles and chapters in edited volumes	320

Glossary

ARBiH – Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Hercegovina

BTF – Balkan Task Force, CIA Committee Chaired by Norman Schindler charged with Balkan analysis

CIA – Central Intelligence Agency, US external intelligence and operations service

FOIA – Freedom of Information Act, legislation allowing for the release of classified documents

JNA - Yugoslav Peoples' Army / Jugoslovenska Narodna Armija – JNA, in Serbo-Croatian

HDZ – Croatian Democratic Union, Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica, in Croatian

HV - Hrvatska Vojska

ICTY – International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NDH - Quisling Second World War Croatian Independent State – Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, run by the Ustaše and headed by Ante Pavelić

OSCE – Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

SVK - Srpska Vojska Krajine, Army of the Serbian Krajina

TO - Territorial Defense Organization; Teritorijalna Odbrana in Serbo-Croatian

UNPA – United Nations Protected Areas, a designation given to regions within Croatia's international borders controlled by Serb forces after the Vance Plan of January 1992, patrolled by UN Peacekeepers

VRS - Vojska Republike Srpske, Army of the Republica Srbska

Introduction

Between 1991 and 1995, American foreign policy was preoccupied with events in the former Yugoslavia. Once representing Cold War possibilities of nonalignment, Yugoslavia became a symbol of the inevitability of ethnic conflict in multi-ethnic societies. In 1989, Sarajevo was known as the host of the 1984 Olympics and the location of the 1914 assassination of the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand which triggered the First World War. By the 1992 US Presidential elections, it became symbolic of how the focus on American interests to the exclusion of morality left the Bush Administration open to charges of moral obtuseness by its Democratic opponents. After Bill Clinton won that election promising to end the fighting in Bosnia, his failure to do so became emblematic of his own ineffectiveness. The belated “triumph” at Dayton, in 1995, was a compromise with realism, made on terms which candidate Clinton would have denounced three years earlier. At Dayton, the Clinton Administration accepted terms regarding borders and refugee rights which enshrined the results of “ethnic cleansing” within Bosnia, and only managed to hold the Dayton talks in the first place with the aid of Croatian arms, a circumstance which made even the commitments Zagreb made regarding minority rights of dubious value. Nonetheless, those compromises represented concessions on values rather than interests. If the Clinton team failed to secure the moral causes they had charged their Republican predecessors with abandoning, they secured the key objectives the Bush team had fought for. The validity of Yugoslavia’s pre-1991 borders was recognized as sacrosanct. The principle that international borders, if not the make-up of populations within them, could not be altered by military force was reaffirmed. Most importantly, the war in Bosnia, along with the Serbian-Croat conflict which had divided America from its allies, and weakened its prestige in the eyes of both the American public and the Islamic world was ended.

If Dayton was not a triumph for humanitarianism, nor the realization of all of the goals the Clinton team set out for itself in January of 1993, it could be considered a solid success. But that was not the story that emerged. History is rarely black and white, but historiography aspires to a more dramatic contrast, especially when it is written by politicians and journalists

rather than academics benefitting from distances of time and space. If the failure to end the conflict in Yugoslavia symbolized the limits of American power, many writers after 1995 cited Dayton as evidence of what American power could do when applied to humanitarian causes. Samantha Power, who covered the Bosnian conflict as a journalist, expounded on these themes in her Pulitzer winning *A Problem from Hell: America in the Age of Genocide*, which contributed to Power's appointment as Barack Obama's Ambassador to the United Nations.² Power would struggle to apply the "lessons of Dayton" to conflicts in Syria, the Ukraine, and Yemen, encountering no more success than her predecessors in the period 1989-1994.

This Thesis does not reject the importance of the international actors with regard to the struggle over the former Yugoslavia between 1989 and 1995. Instead, it will place that agency in perspective. Conspiracy theories to the contrary, no international actor was as invested in the outcome of the conflicts as the domestic actors themselves. The overriding interest of both the Bush and Clinton administrations, as well as European states like Britain, France and Germany, was to end a war whose continuance posed far greater risks to their interests than the victory of any of the participants. The desire of many Bush officials to preserve a united Yugoslavia, or of Clinton officials to fulfill campaign promises to "roll back Serb aggression", had to be pursued in a manner subordinate to domestic political considerations. Power saw the difference between Dayton and the failed Vance-Owen plan in the willingness of the United States to use power to achieve the former, and the refusal to have done so in support of the latter. The idea that the "force" Power described either did not exist in 1993, or was limited in its extent and use was ignored. This Thesis will argue that little "choice" was involved. The restrictions on American policy were structural rather than intellectual. This was often recognized by American officials at the time. General Colin Powell always maintained that external military force could never "impose" peace, while Anthony Lake, National Security Adviser during Clinton's first term concurred that "successful negotiations proceed from balance of

² Power, Samantha and American Council of Learned Societies. *A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide* (Basic Books: Ann Arbor, 2002).

power realities.”³ The inability of American policymakers to compromise on the resources they were willing to dedicate to the region meant that they were to have no choice but to compromise with that partner, who would turn out to be Franjo Tudjman of Croatia.

Just how far American officials went in compromising with Tudjman on their core objectives, and how far Tudjman succeeded in achieving his goals which did not align with American interests is something this Thesis will try to address. It could be argued that on certain core principles, such as the idea that international borders could not be changed by unilateral force, American objectives were both consistent across Administrations, and ultimately achieved in the Dayton Settlement of 1995. While those objectives may have manifested in different ways; in the form of maintaining Yugoslavia as a united entity prior to the fall of 1991; in the form of preserving the Yugoslav-era Republican boundaries as the borders of the new successor states after that date. American officials did not bend from that principle even when the parties themselves showed a willingness to do so. Even in the case of Croatia, those such as Tudjman himself who aspired to unite the Croats of Bosnia with Croatia, such objectives were abandoned in deference to American wishes. How then could it be argued that Tudjman was anything less than a junior partner of the United States, a “junkyard dog” in the words of an American official, paid in table scraps?⁴

When analyzing the extent of Tudjman’s success, and measuring it against American objectives, it is important to recognize the distinction between American “objectives” and the American “policies” used to achieve them. The latter are only evaluated by what eventually happened, whereas the former consider the process by which that outcome occurred. The United Kingdom won the First World War, but that in no way implies that the policy of landing a force at Gallipoli was a successful or wise policy. The same is true when it comes to American policy towards Yugoslavia. It is true that if we skip to the end of the story, there is ample justification for why Richard Holbrooke considered Dayton a personal triumph, and the Clinton

³ Senate Hearing 105-424—Hearing on Nomination of Anthony Lake to be Director Central Intelligence (March 11th, 12th, 13th 1997). p.102..

<https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/hearings/105424.pdf>: Accessed August 23rd 2019

⁴ Holbrooke, Richard, “*To End a War: Excerpt*” *The New York Times* May 20th 1998

<http://www.nytimes.com/books/first/h/holbrooke-war.html>: Accessed September 3rd 2019

Administration was more than satisfied with the outcome. It ignores, however, the story of the six years which preceded it. If America achieved in 1995 a settlement in which all parties agreed to recognize the Yugoslav-era borders as international, American officials failed to achieve such a settlement in 1991, 1992, 1993, or 1994. They also failed to prevent the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1989-1991. All policies either end in success or failure, but many policies fail before they succeed. US policy in the former Yugoslavia was widely seen as a failure, especially by its own practitioners until 1995. American objectives were ultimately accomplished on Croatian terms, using Croatian force, and through Croatian methods, especially in the Krajina. American officials achieved their peace and their borders, but in order to do so they had to acquiesce in Croatian military action, in Croatian intervention in Bosnia, and in Croatian impunity from retribution for violations of domestic and international law. They had to become complicit. America may have "hired" Zagreb, but they hired them on Croatian terms, and assumed responsibility for Zagreb's actions no matter how much they attempted to shake it. There is a reason why, years later, American officials are still trying to shake Carl Bildt's suggestion that the Croatian reconquest of the Krajina during Operation Storm constituted "ethnic cleansing."⁵

How much the events in the Krajina, or the compromises on Bosnia's internal arrangements bothered American policymakers, is, nonetheless, a legitimate question, and at the core of this Thesis. American policy-makers had clearly been bothered by the prospect of such a decentralized Bosnian state enough to reject the Cutileiro Plan in early 1992, and Zimmerman "had no hesitation" in suggesting that the US should refuse Croatian requests for help in acquiring weapons in early 1990, which "would only increase the Croatian government's capacity to oppress its Serbian citizens".⁶ Zimmerman later regretted the rejection of the Cutileiro plan, but if American policy changed, so did the men who made it. In November of 1992, George Bush lost reelection, at least in part, this Thesis will argue, because of a perceived failure to adapt to the complexity of the post-Cold War world, especially in the Balkans. Despite

⁵ Carl Bildt, *Peace Journey: The Struggle for Peace in Bosnia*, (London: Weidenfeld Orion, 1998. P. 80)

⁶ Zimmermann, Warren, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and its Destroyers* (Times Books: New York, 1996, p.95).

having campaigned on a platform which criticized the lack of moral fervor of the Bush Administration, it would be the Clinton Administration which would make compromises, first on methods – undermining the enforcement of an arms embargo that the United States had proposed itself – and then on objectives, accepting a settlement where most, if not all earlier objections to the Cutileiro plan were forsaken. After a first year of his Administration, chronicled in the third Chapter of this Thesis, in which Clinton attempted to fulfill his campaign promises to take a more intransigent moralistic stand, the President and his advisers seemed to grasp that they had misunderstood the message of the American public. They had not opposed the policy the Bush Administration had pursued to end the war in Yugoslavia but rather the failure to do so. Having won election denouncing, to use the words of Vice President Albert Gore, the ‘moral obtuseness’ of the Bush Administration’s approach, the Administration would conclude that in fact the Bush Administration had been “morally obtuse” in a manner opposite to that in which they thought.⁷ Rather than missing the moral issues at stake, Bush, Baker, and Zimmerman had made too much of them, and Gore, who had denounced them for being too compromising in 1992, would play a leading role in encouraging Tudjman to use arms to settle diplomatic disputes the Vice President found frustrating, even when it meant going behind the back of the rest of Administration, as Chapter 5 will chronicle.

One would be correct in noting that even if the preceding analysis is true, and that various US policy initiatives to achieve American objectives in Yugoslavia failed between 1989 and 1995, it was a change in American policy that led to success in 1995. In that case, the Croats merely were lucky, and benefited from developments in Washington that they could neither have triggered nor resisted. Here Thesis’ main conclusions break more dramatically with the diminishment of Croatia’s role. Even if the US was committed to a settlement in the region which preserved international borders and ended the fighting, there was no reason why Tudjman was the one to deliver it. His proxies, the Bosnian Croats, were the weakest party in Bosnia, and their agreement or rejection of peace accords was irrelevant to the ultimate success of such negotiations as was proven time and again. It was the Serbs who needed to be

⁷ “The Crisis in Kosovo” U.S. Senate, Subcommittee on European Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations, May 6th 1998 <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007608888>: Accessed May 25th 2014

brought to the table, and the only man who could do that was the Serbian President Slobodan Milošević. This was a conclusion the international community held in 1993 when it was the centerpiece of the Vance-Owen process, and it was still the position of American policy-makers in 1995, who as we will see, were more interested in securing Milošević's endorsement of any Bosnian settlement than they were concerned with the views of the Bosnian Muslims. What is surprising then is not that the US worked with local actors, but that it ultimately used Tudjman to bring Milošević to the table, rather than sacrificing Tudjman and Croatian interests to achieve a settlement with the Serbs, Muslims, or between the two. As will be shown, avoiding that outcome was the overriding priority of Croatian policy from 1991 to 1994, and while American diplomats like Peter Galbraith occasionally used the prospect to try and coerce Zagreb, as chronicled in chapter 3, Zagreb not only avoided that outcome but averted it. Croatia, despite having the least to offer in Bosnia, arguably ended up being "paid" the most for in the Dayton settlement.

Croatia may have been a junior partner, but it was a junior partner to the only external power that mattered, and just as importantly, a junior partner on the winning side. Tudjman's understanding of both the extent and the limitations of American power enabled him to avoid the pitfalls encountered by his Muslim and Serb counterparts.⁸ Critically, Tudjman understood what an American need to compromise meant. If he could make Croatia's objectives appear as prerequisites for any stable outcome, as he did in 1991 with independence, and again in 1995, by making clear that no peace settlement could last as long as the Krajina continued to exist, those objectives would become America's. Tudjman's compromises were on matters he could not reconcile – a partition of Bosnia, in order to incorporate into Croatia proper the Bosnian Croats could never be reconciled with a settlement once it became clear that the Muslims would never agree to such an outcome, and the US would never force them to do so. It is true Milošević would have had a harder time making concessions as he had more Serbs in Croatia

⁸ Tudjman, Franjo, *Horrors of War: Historical Reality and Philosophy* (Rev. ed., M. Evans: London, 1996); Tuđman, Franjo, 'Nationalism in Contemporary Europe', *East European Quarterly*, Vol 87. Issue 3, 1981; Djuraskovic, Stevo 'Nation-building in Franjo Tuđman's Political Writings' *Croatian Political Science Review*, 2014, 51:5, pp.58-79. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286448709_Nation-building_in_Franjo_Tudman's_Political_Writings: Accessed April 16th 2016

and Bosnia to concern himself with, but part of being a good poker player is knowing the strength of one's hand. Tudjman knew the strength of his hand and played it well, even getting off a few bluffs for good measure as he arguably did over Sector East in 1995. Most importantly, he understood the need to collect his winnings, which is why he ensured all of his key objectives were not up for discussion before agreeing to attend Dayton.

Key to Tudjman's success was his relationship with the United States. Tudjman was not above appealing to other actors when advantages could be gleaned from doing so. In 1991 he focused heavily on lobbying the German government, and in 1992 he tried to interest the Islamic World in backing Croatia's conflict with the Serbs, but in both cases it was not because he believed the support of either party would be decisive on its own, but in order to influence those who were. The appeal to German public opinion and later political elites was designed to leave American policy-makers with no alternative but to accept the breakup of Yugoslavia, while sidelining other European actors who were less friendly such as France and Britain, while appeals to the Islamic world were designed to pressure Sarajevo. While not ignoring Russia or the EC, Croatia viewed their role as important only insofar as it influenced Washington. Neither could endorse a settlement in the face of American opposition, or block a settlement which had American support and that of the local parties themselves. Tudjman, unlike Milošević, or even less visionary Croatian nationalists in Bosnia, understood that ultimately no settlement could be final unless it had the support of the United States, and just as importantly what the United States would and would not support. Here, Tudjman's great strength was to understand not the strength of his influence in the United States, but its weakness. For all the assistance Croatia might gain from successful public relations campaigns, effective lobbying, and the influence of the Catholic Church, it was not enough to alter the core objectives previously mentioned. The United States would not abandon Yugoslavia in favor of an independent Croatia as long as a united Yugoslavia was viable, and after 1992, the United States would not accept any settlement which destroyed the legal integrity of the Bosnian state, nor cease to recognize the Sarajevo government as legitimate. Tudjman could wield influence both in Washington and on the ground in the region to maneuver within these constraints but not alter them.

Croatian policy, instead adapted itself to the motivations behind the US positions, such that they could only be accomplished on Croatian terms. The US commitment to a single Yugoslavia was not, as will be seen in chapter 2, abandoned merely because fighting broke out. The outbreak of fighting did not change the view of figures such as Zimmerman and Eagleberger that creating more borders by recognizing the Republics would exacerbate the causes of conflict. As long as there seemed to be a viable Yugoslavia whose borders could be upheld, maintaining Yugoslavia was always preferable in their minds to enforcing the administrative boundaries of the Republics. The United States abandoned Yugoslavia when it imploded not at the periphery, with the secession of Slovenia in June of 1991, and the outbreak of fighting in Croatia over the summer, but rather when the central authorities ceased to exist. The breakdown of both the Presidency, leaving a Serbian rump, combined with the defection of Prime Minister Markovic from the Yugoslav cause, left no legitimate political authorities around and the prospect that a state could be restored. Moreover, the military had already shown neither the aptitude nor the stomach for assuming political authority. The United States turned to the Republics when there was no Yugoslav government left to claim sovereignty, and it was to Tudjman's credit that he met the challenge of both appearing to try to make Yugoslavia "work" in 1991, and ensuring that when the crunch came it fell apart in the center. That work in Belgrade mattered more in the end than what happened on the battlefield.

Once Yugoslavia was gone, in fact if not in name, the United States commitment to the inviolability of borders fell upon the legal authorities that remained capable of exercising sovereignty, namely the Republican governments. The question was not whether the administrative borders drawn by Tito were ideal or made sense ethnically; they made sense in one vital respect, they each corresponded to a "government" which had a "President" and could be assigned legal responsibility. For Washington, the logical continuation of support for the sovereignty of the Yugoslav Federation over its territory was to champion the sovereignty of republican governments over their's. In the case of five of the Republics this approach made sense. Whatever the flaws of the Milošević or Tudjman governments, they were generally recognized as the legitimate governments of Serbia and Croatia, and the same was true in

Slovenia and Macedonia. The critical flaw in this policy lay in Bosnia, where the “President”, Alija Izetbegovic, was the leader of one of three ethnic groups, and the government was seen as partisan if not illegitimate by the others. Having rejected partition too soon, as American officials would later concede, the only option was to strengthen Bosnia’s government, in this case its Muslim government enough, such that it could fulfill the role American policy envisaged for it - exercising sovereign authority over the republic’s borders

Tudjman, despite his designs on Bosnian territory, and his doubts about the longterm viability of any Bosnian government built on a predominantly Muslim basis, eventually not only accepted this as an unchangeable basis of US policy, but forced the Bosnian Croats to do so as well. It was by recognizing what he could not achieve, in this case a partition of Bosnia, which allowed him to achieve virtually everything else, by posing as an ally who could deliver what Washington needed - Croat and Serbian acceptance of republican boundaries. That said, acceptance extended to guaranteeing Croatia’s control of its own 1991 territorial claims made this objective compatible with his own. For all the influence Croatia wielded in Western capitals, Croatia’s strongest advocates, men like Peter Galbraith in 1993-1994, and Richard Holbrooke and Vice President Al Gore in 1994-1995, backed Croatia because Croatia, unlike the UN, Milošević, Russia, or the EC, appeared able to actually deliver a settlement. Tudjman did not change core US objectives. He accepted them in a way which allowed him to achieve everything else.

Tudjman also grasped something else about the geopolitical environment in which the Yugoslav conflict was taking place. From the fall of 1991, when American efforts to delay recognition of the Republics forced Washington into conflict with Germany’s push for unilateral recognition, the conflict took on the overtones of a geopolitical conflict. As will be seen in chapters 2 and 3, fears of setting a precedent for a potential Soviet collapse drove American policy under the Bush Administration, just as a desire to avoid humiliating Russian President Boris Yeltsin appear as a constant refrain in American intelligence briefings during the early months of the Clinton Administration. American policy-makers were quick to fob off the blame for the failure of “Lift and Strike” onto America’s European “allies”, and the latter were equally quick to leave Washington with the blame for torpedoing the Vance-Owen Peace plan. In both

cases the charges were unfair, but they illustrated a key point which Tudjman was to grasp. By the end of 1993, conflict between Europe, America, and Russia was less about policy, as none of the three intended to actually dedicate the resources necessary to intervene directly, and more about assigning blame for the lack of action. America might well have been the power with which Tudjman partnered in 1994 and 1995, but when he took action in August of 1995, EU and Russian influence in the region was revealed to be a paper tiger. Europe and Russia were sufficiently relieved to be done with the conflict, that they were willing to allow the United States to settle it provided it was settled.

That is why this Thesis is less concerned with the events which occurred in Dayton, Ohio, in November 1995 than with the developments which made that conference possible. The Dayton Conference is arguably documented more thoroughly than any other event during the break-up of Yugoslavia, whether in the form of the participants' memoirs, secondary sources, or even the State Department's officially commissioned history.⁹ There is little to add to that existing body of literature within the scope of this Thesis, and coverage that would do justice to the importance of the Dayton conference and the wealth of material available could come only at the cost of other topics given the 110,000 word-limit of this Thesis. The scope of this Thesis is therefore limited to the period prior to Dayton, with developments there covered only insofar as they directly affect the core arguments, such as Croatia's efforts to ensure that the issue of Eastern Slavonia was on the agenda. Dayton is ever-present, the foreordained end-point of the events chronicled, the proverbial ghost at the feast, yet it is precisely because the terms and conditions of the settlement ratified at Dayton were pre-determined by the events chronicled before the conference ever met that this Thesis will focus on those events rather than the narratively exciting but tale of a Dayton conference which was little more than a ratification of the situation which had already been established by Croatian arms.

A lack of primary sources is a problem for many contemporary writers, with secondary sources often predating primary access to sources which only became available years later. *Balkan Battlegrounds*, written by two military analysts from the Central Intelligence Agency, is a

⁹ Chollet, Derek, *The Road to the Dayton Accords: A Study of American Statecraft* (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2005).

collation of open source analyses, based upon primary sources for events, while relying on secondary sources only for the political narrative.¹⁰ *In the Eye of the Storm*, by Ante Gugo, was commissioned to promote a Croatian view of the conflict.¹¹ Brendan Simm's *Unfinest Hour* alleges that a cabal of British civil servants obstructed the efforts to support Bosnia's Muslims.¹² David Rief's *Slaughterhouse* and Michael Sells' *The Bridge Betrayed* make a similar allegation, but identify different perpetrators of this crime.¹³ Anodyne titles do not necessarily indicate greater impartiality. Croatian journalist Mihailo Crnobrnja's *The Yugoslav Tragedy* conceals a pro-Croat bias behind a neutral-sounding title, just as German journalist Viktor Meier's *Yugoslavia: A History of its Demise* hides a pro-Slovene one. The contrast with the wider field makes near objectivity achieved by Allan Little and Laura Silber's 1995 *The Death of Yugoslavia*, the more impressive.¹⁴ It formed the basis for a wildly-acclaimed five-part BBC documentary series on the conflict, and was used by the authors of CIA's *Balkan Battlegrounds* as their secondary source.

The greater availability of primary sources produced by the passage of time has exacerbated the bias through placing a premium on selectivity. The existence of a source or record does not guarantee its accuracy, and the sheer volume of evidence now available renders a concrete analysis of all sources impossible. The result is a tendency among authors to identify primary sources which support their narrative, which then rises or falls based on the reliability of that evidence. Ana Trbovich, in her *A Legal Geography of Yugoslavia's Disintegration*, fills a unique gap in the field, testing the positions adopted by the Western states and international actors against the standards set by international law and their own Badinter Commission, only to find them wanting. The work's persuasiveness is undermined, however, by an uncritical acceptance of Krajina and Bosnian Serb sources. While such sources are of vital importance, Trbovich accepts demographic figures at face value which are at odds

¹⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis, *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995* (Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 2002).

¹¹ Gugo, Ante, *In the Eye of the Storm: Political, Diplomatic, and Military Struggle for Croatian Independence* (Createspace Independent Publishing Platform: Amazon Kindle, 2016).

¹² Simms, Brendan, *Unfinest Hour: Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia* (Penguin Books: London, 2002).

¹³ Rieff, David. *Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West* (Vintage: London, 1995; Sells, Michael Anthony, *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia* (University of California Press, Berkeley: 1996).

¹⁴ Silber, Laura, and Little, Allan, *The Death of Yugoslavia* (Penguin: London, 1996).

with the official census data, as well as electoral results where the total votes exceed the total population of the regions concerned. The citations are not incorrect, as documents exist which purport to confirm the figures cited. Nevertheless, these numbers are not just at odds with other sources, as is often the case with personal recollections, but are outright impossible. As the legal claims are based on the “facts” established by these sources, Trbovich’s conclusions are undermined as well.¹⁵

Unreliability is not the only risk that authors face when managing documentary evidence. Due to the sheer volume of material now available, there is a temptation to embrace a narrow focus on a specific set of sources. Joseph Glaurdic did so, producing an excellent examination of the transcripts of phone conversations between Serbian President Slobodan Milošević and Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić. Released by prosecutors, these sources provide an insight into how the Serbian leadership perceived the conflict, supporting the theory that their ambitions changed in response to events, even as they plotted with elements of the army to establish a “Greater Serbian State”,¹⁶ but it is possible to exaggerate the importance of the sources, especially if a researcher has invested years in examining them. Glaurdic concludes that Milošević’s ambitions, which he himself proved changed in response to developments driven by other, non-Serb actors such as the Croats, Slovenes, Army Generals, and Bosnian Muslims, were the driving force behind almost every political development in Yugoslavia from 1988 onwards. Josip Glaurdic’s *The Hour of Europe: Western Power’s and the Breakup of Yugoslavia*, is brilliantly researched and compellingly written. It is far from clear if the research and analysis, which on an event-by-event level is excellent, support the conclusion that a preconceived plan by Slobodan Milošević to make himself master of Yugoslavia destroyed the state.¹⁷ Glaurdic thereby does what so many others did before him, including the Yugoslav politicians themselves. He analysed the outcomes along with the events that preceded them

¹⁵ Trbovich, Ana S., *A Legal Geography of Yugoslavia's Disintegration* (Oxford University Press: New York, 2008); Meier, Viktor, and Ramet, Sabrina, *Yugoslavia a History of Its Demise* (Routledge: London, 1999); Crnobrnja, Mihailo, *The Yugoslav Drama* (I.B.Tauris: London, 1994)

¹⁶ Glaurdić, Josip, ‘Inside the Serbian War Machine: The Milošević Telephone Intercepts, 1991-1992’, *East European Politics & Societies and Cultures*, 2009, 23:1, pp.86-104.

¹⁷ Glaurdić, Josip, *The Hour of Europe: Western Powers and the Breakup of Yugoslavia* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 2011).

and concluded that the motivation of the actors was to accomplish the outcome in question. Sometimes this reflects the reality, but far more frequently it retroactively projects the certainty of hindsight onto actors who had to make decisions in a chaotic environment. Glaurdic effectively chronicles Milošević's actions and analyses their consequences but fails to prove that those actions aimed to achieve those specific consequences.

The preceding discussion of the works of Trbovich and Glaurdic is not intended to denigrate other works, many of which cover much of the same material with as great if not greater depth and objectivity.¹⁸ Rather, the intention was to highlight the works of these two authors as examples of analytical flaws which can afflict even high quality literature when it comes to the topic of Yugoslavia's collapse. The research and writing of this Thesis has entailed a constant struggle to avoid similar pitfalls. I began this project precisely because I had preconceived notions about the end of Yugoslavia which I wished to challenge. Some of these persist even now, six years later. Far more have fallen by the wayside as my research has led me to change my beliefs about a host of issues. I entered this project believing that Colin Powell had been wrong, and that the "Vietnam Syndrome" which allegedly made a generation of US military officers unduly squeamish about the use of force was real. Initially, this Thesis was intended to provide a chronicle of Dayton as a triumph of American policy, a successful example of the utilization of limited force to achieve limited political ends, one which could be contrasted with the disastrous efforts towards regime change undertaken by George W. Bush in Iraq after 2003. Instead I discovered that this narrative was a myth: that it had been Croatian arms which had delivered an agreement at Dayton on Croatian terms, a success which American officials were desperate enough to claim as their own. By the end of this project, I had concluded that Dayton itself was ultimately unimportant. It merely ratified decisions which had already been made. At most, it involved the US, Croatia, and Serbia bullying the Bosnian Muslims and Serbs into agreeing to terms which had already been agreed beforehand. To the

¹⁸ For a deeper analysis of the legal context of the breakup of Yugoslavia, see Hayden, Robert, *Blueprints for a House Divided: The Constitutional Logic of the Yugoslav Conflicts*, (University of Michigan Press: Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1999).

extent that this conclusion is at odds with the narrative presented by much of the field, this Thesis will be biased towards my own viewpoint.

No authors writing on a contemporary conflict or event can ever be fully satisfied with their use of sources. If they are, then something has potentially gone wrong during the research process. Sources which were unavailable at the start of this project became available by the end of it, and it is likely sources that were unavailable when this Thesis was submitted may become available by the time it is read. For example, when former Secretary of State James Baker donated his documents to Princeton University, it was on the condition that they remain confidential for 100 years from his birth or until after his death.¹⁹ He subsequently approved a number for use by researchers at the end of 2018. Many of the documents utilized in subsequent chapters were released over the course of the project, and it is reasonable to suppose that relevant sources will continue to become available at a similar rate. It is possible that future sources will substantially alter the basis on which our conclusions were reached. I feel that the release of further sources may illuminate two issues in particular. First, Al Gore's role in the events of 1994 and 1995. The absence of either the former Vice President's personal papers, or any form of memoir has forced me to construct a picture of his role based off the recollections and communications of other actors. While I believe the portrayal presented in Chapters 4 and 5 is well-supported, it is still conjectural in many places. Secondly, while not a particularly key focus of this Thesis, the degree to which Milosevic may have explicitly coordinated with Tudjman during the summer and fall of 1995, as opposed to implicitly as chronicled in Chapter 5, may be revealed by the full release of Tudjman's presidential records. At this time we also only have conjecture, and the strong suspicions of multiple sources.

While occasional use has been made of European sources, this has primarily been for the purpose of providing an outside perspective on American policy. The wealth of materials available placed a comprehensive study of the European or international perspectives of American policy towards Croatia beyond the scope of this Thesis. A balance needed to be struck

¹⁹ Baker, James A., III Papers, MC197, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library. <https://library.princeton.edu/news/general/2018-02-02/james-baker-iii-papers-open-all-researchers>; Accessed November 23, 2019

with the need to maintain the focus of the project as well as the requirements concerning length. The same can be said regarding the interviews. I personally interviewed Peter Galbraith at his Cambridge Massachusetts home and corresponded with Lord David Owen by email. Inquiries made to other figures, including Al Gore, were declined. While I feel that the project would have benefited from additional interviews with specific individuals, I do not believe that there is a deficit of interviews among the sources used.

The major challenge faced while working on this Thesis was less a lack of sources, and more the often-uneven nature of their availability. This was particularly evident when it came to the American side. Compared to past administrations, fewer senior officials under George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton published their recollections; the published works were generally far shorter than the mammoth volumes which defined their predecessors under Reagan and Nixon, and rarely did they deal with Yugoslavia. Bush himself, in the pseudo-memoir he co-wrote with his National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, does not explicitly mention the policy towards Yugoslavia at all, except in passing.²⁰ Neither Scowcroft nor Lawrence Eagleburger published a set of memoirs, a far cry from the three mammoth volumes produced by their mentor Henry Kissinger, nor did Assistant Secretary for European Affairs Thomas Niles. James Baker's *The Politics of Diplomacy* does address Yugoslavia, albeit for around nine out of nearly 600 pages, more than a third of which are dedicated to his trip to Belgrade in June 1991.²¹ Defense Secretary Richard Cheney finally published a book two decades after the events, primarily focused on his tenure as Vice President in a later Bush Administration.²² Condoleezza Rice also primarily focused on her tenure in the Bush Jr. Administration in her official memoirs, along with a volume chronicling her childhood in segregation-era Alabama. While she authored a

²⁰ Bush, George, and Scowcroft, Brent, *A World Transformed* (Knopf: New York, 1998).

²¹ Baker, James Addison, and DeFrank, Thomas M, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace, 1989-1992* (G.P. Putnam's Sons: New York, 1995).

²² Cheney, Richard B., and Cheney, Liz. *In My Time: a Personal and Political Memoir* (Threshold Editions: New York, 2011).

book on German unification with fellow NSC staffer Philip Zelikow, Rice has not published any memoirs dedicated to the first Bush Administration.²³

Bill Clinton's *My Life* is a mammoth work of over 1,000 pages, whose length proves an outlier in an administration where senior officials left either short works or none.²⁴ The memoirs of Warren Christopher and Madeline Albright are both relatively sparse, clocking in at under 350 pages in Christopher's case, and deal only to a limited degree with US policy towards the ex-Yugoslavia before Dayton.²⁵ National Security Adviser Anthony Lake published no memoirs, nor did Vice President Albert Gore Jr. or his National Security Adviser, Leon Fuerth, who oversaw the US sanctions policy towards Serbia. US Ambassador to Croatia Peter Galbraith has provided hundreds of pages of interviews, including more than 60 pages to this author but his intended memoirs remain unpublished as of 2019.

This silence among senior policymakers has left a rhetorical vacuum, to be filled by those who have been only too happy to speak up. Warren Zimmerman's book, chronicling his tenure as America's last Ambassador to Yugoslavia, has become a defining work, partially because there is so little on the American side to rebut it.²⁶ Richard Holbrooke's *To End a War* became a definitive account of Dayton in the historical narrative.²⁷ Richard Holbrooke's papers became public only after his death, when they were used for an official biography to be released in 2019.²⁸ Christopher Hill and Strobe Talbott have both published memoirs but, apart from a childhood spent in Zagreb, the former had no further interaction with the region until he was drafted there by Holbrooke as his deputy in mid-1995, while Talbott is primarily concerned with the relations with Russia.²⁹

²³ Rice, Condoleezza, *No Higher Honor: a Memoir of My Years in Washington* (Crown Publishers: New York, 2011); Zelikow, Philip, and Rice, Condoleezza, *Germany Unified and Europe Transformed: a Study in Statecraft* (Harvard University Press: Boston, 1995).

²⁴ Clinton, Bill, *My Life* (Alfred A. Knopf: New York, 2004)

²⁵ Christopher, Warren, *Chances of a Lifetime* (Scribner, New York, 2001); Albright, Madeleine Korbelt, and Woodward, William, *Madam Secretary: a Memoir* (Macmillan: New York, 2003).

²⁶ Zimmermann, Warren, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers* (Times Books: New York, 1996).

²⁷ Holbrooke, Richard C., *To End a War* (Modern Library: New York, 1999).

²⁸ Packer, George, *Our Man: Richard Holbrooke and the End of the American Century* (Knopf: New York, 2019).

²⁹ Hill, Christopher, *Outpost: Life on the Frontlines of American Diplomacy* (Simon & Schuster: New York, 2014); Talbott, Strobe, *The Russia Hand: A Memoir of Presidential Diplomacy* (Random House: New York, 2003).

A debt is owed to the Clinton Presidential Library, which released more than 2,500 pages of documents related to the war in Bosnia, including minutes of meetings of the “Principals;” i.e. senior national security officials such as the Vice President, Secretary of State, CIA Director, and the “Deputies”, their chief staffers. Also released were reports by the Central Intelligence Agency’s Joint Balkan Task Force. Documents from the Department of State, by contrast, are available only through individual FOIA requests, with the result that the volume of material, while plentiful, is uneven chronologically. Until recently, the Bush [Sr.] Presidential library declined to release more than an index of which files exist, and James Baker, while turning his personal papers over to Princeton, postponed their release until after his death.³⁰ However, a number of State Department cables from the Bush years have been released, including a large portion of the reports from embassies and consulates abroad such as those in Belgrade and Zagreb, but not internal communications within Washington which will only appear after Baker dies. Any author researching this period must express their incalculable debt to the Oral History projects of the Miller Center on Presidential history and the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training for Foreign Affairs Officers.³¹ Together, they provided hundreds of pages of recollections from the key players, involving, insights that would otherwise have been missing, given the lack of memoirs or relevant official documents.

Events surrounding the collapse of Yugoslavia in the period 1989-1992 were heavily documented during the trial of Slobodan Milošević, perhaps the highest profile prosecution attempted by an international body since Nuremberg in 1946. Franjo Tudjman’s potential ambitions for Bosnia were a subject of Slobodan Milošević’s trial, as well as those of the Serbian leaders of Eastern Slavonia and Krajina, Goran Hadžić, Milan Babić, and Milan Martić, but despite the best efforts of the defense teams of the latter three, no real interest was shown by the Court in interpreting Croatian motives during most of the subsequent two years.³² The

³⁰ Baker, James A., III Papers, MC197, Public Policy Papers, Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

³¹ The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project <http://www.adst.org/> Presidential Oral Histories, Miller Center, University of Virginia, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/anthony-lake-oral-history-2002-national-security-advisor> : accessed May 10th 2019

³² Judgment, Case No.: IT-06-90-T(Gotovina) p.1172 http://www.icty.org/x/cases/gotovina/tjug/en/110415_judgement_vol2.pdf: Accessed May 24th 2018.

prosecutors of Croatian Generals Ante Gotovina, Ivan Čermak, and Mladen Markačić set themselves a low bar, simply alleging that the “joint criminal enterprise” by the Croatian government for the removal of the Serbian population of the Krajina “came into existence no later than at the end of July 1995”.³³ An effort to sue L-3 Communications, the successor to Military Professionals Resources Incorporated, a firm made up of retired US military officers which trained the Croatian military in “democratic institution building” between 1994 and 1995, was filed by a group of Serbs in 2010.³⁴ It was dismissed on the grounds that the US judicial system lacked jurisdiction over events in the former Yugoslavia before it could proceed to the “discovery phase” which might have shed light on the firm’s activities in Croatia.³⁵

Nonetheless, the volume of primary sources available were copious and presented serious challenges in terms of presentation. One of the challenges of academic writing lies not in developing research, but rather presenting the results in a full cited manner. Of the tens of thousands of pages of documents that are available regarding the period covered by this Thesis, including diplomatic cables, legal testimony, expert reports, intelligence estimates, minutes of meetings, and memoirs without official English translations or releases, the vast majority are available only in digital form. While it is possible to obtain physical copies of FOIA documents from the US Department of State, or of submissions to the ICYT, they are merely copies of the digital resources. Academic style-guides have yet to fully catch-up with this phenomenon, much less reach consensus, and there are real questions as to what documents are – are the notes prepared for the Director of the CIA after a meeting the minutes capturing the actual words of participants? Or merely paraphrases? Who wrote cables with Embassy Belgrade or Consulate Zagreb but no name attached? The Ambassador? And how should one cite documents that were released in bulk. A prime example are more than 650 pages of the minutes of the

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Isenberg, David “MPRI Couldn’t Read Minds So Let’s Sue Them” *The Huffington Post* August 19th 2010, Accessed May 30th 2018 https://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-isenberg/mpri-couldnt-read-minds-l_b_688000.html Complaint, *Genocide Victims of Krajina v. L-3 Communications, MPRI inc*, United States District Court, Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division, filed August 17th 2010, <http://www.veritas.org.rs/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/tuzba-usa.pdf>: Accessed May 30th 2018

³⁵ Order of Dismissal, *Genocide Victims of Krajina v. L-3 Communications*, September 24th 2014, <https://cases.justia.com/federal/district-courts/illinois/ilndce/1:2010cv05197/246538/100/0.pdf?ts=1428699857>: Accessed May 30th 2018

meetings held by President Franjo Tudjman in his palace in Zagreb with his closest advisers and foreign officials. Submitted by the defense team of Slobodan Praljak, the Croatian Army's liaison with the Bosnian Croat forces, they are a small selection of a much larger and inaccessible archive.³⁶ President Tudjman recorded all of his conversations, as was discovered when Stipe Mesić succeeded as President in 1999, including explosively more than fifty with Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević. None of the Tudjman-Milošević conversations are included in the transcripts made available to the ICYT, though details of a number were eagerly leaked by those around Mesić to the Western press.³⁷ Not only is the selection biased, but the English translation is also dubious with rampant misspellings. Finally, the documents are not individually available, but rather provided in a single PDF document. When used in this Thesis I have sought to deal with these challenges by presenting them verbatim as they appear in the original translation except in cases where names are misspelled where I have altered them for consistency. I have also provided a full-citation in this paragraph(footnote 38) as well as in the bibliography. Otherwise, where documents have been drawn from this archive, I have made reference to the document's title, "Annex III" and a page number where it can be located by following the link to the original. The alternative was to commit to 70-100 word citations each time a document from this resource was mentioned. In the cases of the memoirs of former Serbian President Borisslav Jovic and Yugoslav Defense Minister Veljiko Kadijevic, both of which never saw official English releases, but had unofficial translations made available through the ICYT, I uploaded copies to my google drive, links to which can be found in a citation and the bibliography.³⁸ Page numbers in subsequent references refer to these versions. State Department Cables and CIA documents include direct links where possible. As the page

³⁶ International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia "Prlić et al. (IT-04-74)" Annex III: Presidential Transcript Evidence November 3rd 2008, <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed November 30th 2018

³⁷ Sherwell, Philip; Petric, Alina "Tudjman Tapes Reveal Plans to Divide Bosnia and Hide War Crimes" The Telegraph June 18 2000 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/bosnia/1343702/Tudjman-tapes-reveal-plans-to-divide-Bosnia-and-hide-war-crimes.html>: Accessed November 22, 2019

³⁸ Kadijević, Veljko, *My View of the Break-Up: An Army Without a State*, Excerpt, Exhibit P449a, ICYT Translation, Copy Uploaded by Author August 29th 2019 <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1FCWkclFmOPVd-9VU5QaD0RzU-J8-MPPD>; B. Jović. *The Last Days of the SFRY*, Belgrade, 1992, p.325. From ICYT Translation Uploaded to Daniel Berman Google Drive, <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1-M87Kce4RWVHDAOj9Md2ssh5CnFTxUc5>: Accessed June 11th 2019

numbers differ between versions of the same documents made available within the CIA's own "Virtual Library" and the 2100-page pdf document released by the Clinton Library, I have tried to utilize links to the former when possible.

No amount of creative footnoting can erase the political motivations which lie behind the selective release of documents. Yugoslavia collapsed in a manner which caused vast devastation to an entire region, and ruined millions of lives. Something or someone must have been responsible for this. The "blame game" for Yugoslavia's collapse was already well under way long before the old federation broke up, fought out in testimony before the US Congress for instance, and only intensified thereafter as the stakes soared.³⁹ The simplest answer was to blame the Yugoslavs themselves, following the lead of Robert Kaplan's *Balkan Ghosts* in seeing the origin of the conflict as lying in "ancient hatreds".⁴⁰ If Kaplan's effort was too ecumenical, there was no shortage of sources blaming almost everyone, though the Serbs rapidly became a favorite target in the West. In the aftermath of the Gulf War, the Western media were seeking the next Saddam Hussein and the Serbian cause provided a ready-made villain in the form of Slobodan Milošević.⁴¹ In a 1991 cable to Washington, Zimmerman declared "'I have no doubt if Milošević's parents had committed suicide before his birth rather than after I would not be writing a cable about the death of Yugoslavia".⁴² Zimmerman's own characterization, echoed by Louis Sell and other biographers of Milošević, was that of an opportunist, and an opportunist needs real opportunities to exploit. By implication, that opportunity to exploit nationalism would have existed regardless of Milošević's birth. Kosovo was placed under martial law back in 1981, five years before Milošević rose to power in Serbia. What about Milošević's efforts to recentralize power within Yugoslavia by destabilizing other Republican leaderships? Did this

³⁹ United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. Subcommittee on European Affairs. Civil Strife In Yugoslavia: the United States Response: Hearing Before the Subcommittee On European Affairs of the Committee On Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Second Congress, First Session, February 21, 1991. Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 1991. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007608451>: Accessed October 21st 2018

⁴⁰ Kaplan, Robert D., *Balkan Ghosts: a Journey through History* (Papermac: London, 1994).

⁴¹ Sell, Louis, *Slobodan Milošević and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (Duke University Press Books: Durham, 2003).

⁴² Cable "Who Killed Yugoslavia" Warren Zimmerman to State Department May 12 1992

https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/9-30-FY2013/F-2009-07813/DOC_0C17588420/C17588420.pdf: Accessed November 25, 2019

lead to escalation on all sides? That is the case made by Josip Glaurdic.⁴³ While authors of this “school” differ over the degree to which the Serbian grievances were legitimate, and whether the responses of the other actors were wise or proportionate, all seem to agree that it was the Serbian actions under Milošević against Kosovo and then during the “anti-bureaucratic revolution” which destabilized Yugoslavia. Whether Milošević or the Serbs sought control of a majority in the state presidency out of an ambition to rule Yugoslavia, or as a byproduct of his support for centralization within Serbia, the result was the same, creating a political and constitutional situation in which no Croatian or Slovene government could remain in Yugoslavia.

The narrative of Milošević’s guilt conveniently absolves other Yugoslav actors of responsibility. If no self-respecting government of Slovenia or Croatia could remain in Yugoslavia as it existed by 1991, then it did not matter what the governments who were in fact in office in 1990-1991 did. Kučan may have been self-interested and reckless, indifferent to the fate of the rest of Yugoslavia, and Tudjman a racist nationalist, but even the most liberal or federalist leaders would have had to move to secession. As the agency of Kučan and Tudjman counted for nothing, the actions they did take can be forgiven. It is in this way that authors like Viktor Meier can concede that Tudjman was a racist who missed multiple opportunities to reassure Croatia’s Serbian population, but nevertheless absolve him of responsibility for the violence which followed.⁴⁴ It is also how the overwhelming majority of Western observers were able to absolve Bosnian Muslim leader Alija Izetbegović of responsibility for helping to start a war that he had no way of winning. Izetbegović’s critics, such as Lord David Owen, could see their work dismissed by a *New York Times* writer as a “self-serving memoir” which “overlooks many things, of which the most basic is this historical fact”.⁴⁵

⁴³ Glaurdić, Josip, *The Hour of Europe: Western Powers and the Breakup of Yugoslavia* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 2011).

⁴⁴ Meier, Viktor, and Ramet, Sabrina *Yugoslavia a History of Its Demise* (Routledge, New York, 1999).

⁴⁵ Cohen, R., ‘Peace In His Time’, *New Republic*, 1996 214:11, pp.34–40.

<http://search.ebscohost.com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=9602287803&site=ehost-live>:Accessed June 13th 2019.

Lord Owen was not the only dissenter.⁴⁶ Some Serbian writers tried to portray the anti-bureaucratic revolution as an indigenous populist movement rather than a conspiracy, and made a case for Serbia's actions.⁴⁷ The flaw in many of these works is they fail to answer the charge they are intended to rebut. While many authors assign malicious motives to Serbs and/or Milošević, the argument is not ultimately about the motivation behind Milošević's actions or those of the Serbian leadership, but about whether those actions posed an existential security threat to other republics. They also ignore the fundamental truth. Regardless of whether Milošević sought domination of a multiethnic Yugoslavia, to create a Serbian "rump", or merely pursued policies as the opportunity arose, he was guilty of one offense that could never be levied at Tadjman. He was guilty of failure. That guilt explains the ambivalence felt by Serbian authors towards Milošević, who now had to decide whether it was Milošević, the Serbian people, or both who were being falsely maligned. By comparison, Croatian and Muslim authors had an easier task. Both Tadjman and Izetbegović had internal critics, but they mainly differed on domestic politics, and perhaps how the war came about. After 1992, there was little disagreement within either community regarding the justice of their cause.⁴⁸

It was not only authors who displayed insufficient sympathy to the plight of Bosnia's Muslims who found themselves crowded out of the public discourse in the 1990s. Also sidelined were those who argued that the resurgent nationalism and the leaders who exploited it were both the symptoms rather than the causes of Yugoslavia's problems. Often presented by those with first-hand experience of Yugoslavia before its collapse, whether it be high-ranking Yugoslav Titoist officials such as former President Dizdarević or Susan Woodward who spent years studying Yugoslavia's economy for the Brookings Institute, this narrative focused on crimes of

⁴⁶ Owen, David, *Balkan Odyssey* (Victor Gollancz, London, 1995); Cohen, R., 'Peace In His Time', *New Republic*, 1996, 214:11, pp.34-40.
<http://search.ebscohost.com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=9602287803&site=ehost-live>: Accessed June 13 2019

⁴⁷ Vladislavljjevic, Nebojsa, *Serbia's Antibureaucratic Revolution: Milosševć, the Fall of Communism and Nationalist Mobilization* (Palgrave Macmillan Limited, London, 2008).
<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/londonschoolecons/detail.action?docID=435840>: Accessed November 21, 2019; Stojanović, Svetozar. *The Fall of Yugoslavia: Why Communism Failed* (Prometheus Books, London, 1997).

⁴⁸ The outlook of one critic of Izetbegović's policies, especially towards the Serbs, can be found in Zulfikarpašić, A., Djilas, Milovan, *The Bosniak: Adil Zulfikarpašić in dialogue with Milovan Djilas and Nadežda Gaće* (C. Hurst and Co.: London, 1996).

omission rather than commission.⁴⁹ First in the dock on charges of negligence was Marshal Josip Broz Tito himself, who endowed Yugoslavia with a constitution designed to decentralise power, and an economic system addicted to foreign borrowing. In the 1980s, as Yugoslavia was “forced” to adopt policies of austerity by the international actors, namely the IMF, the differences between richer and poorer republics increased even as those same international donors pushed for a greater centralisation of economic decision-making. With the internal boundaries having deliberately been drawn on ethnic lines, these economic conflicts then became ethnic. The real villains were the international actors who invested their hopes in the central government of Prime Minister Ante Marković and his economic reforms, but then failed to provide actual financial support for this.⁵⁰

Economic forces undoubtedly drove the political ones in the 1980s, just as in the Soviet Union. Yet, just as in the Soviet Histories, of which there are several, which focus only on the problems facing the regime in the late Brezhnev era rather than the role of Gorbachav, there is something about the structural explanations which seems centered on what was a necessary but not sufficient condition for the collapse of Yugoslavia. Analyzing the origin of problems can help to identify a cure but tends to do little to cure them on its own. Hitler may have been brought to power by the harshness of the Treaty of Versailles but, as the failure of appeasement showed, his ascension changed the nature of the problem from one of international relations to one of Hitler. Modifying the treaty failed to mollify him. Whatever the origins of the ethnic tensions in Yugoslavia, by 1991, the major fault lines were no longer economic but ethnic and security based, as James Baker and other Western diplomats found when they did belatedly offer financial support, that might have made a difference two years earlier.

Separating political from economic factors is furthermore futile as reform in any field would have encountered resistance from the same vested interests. This leaves us back where

⁴⁹ Woodward, Susan L and the Brookings Institution, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (Brookings Institution, New York, 1995); Dizdarević, Raif, *From the Death of Tito to the Death of Yugoslavia* (Šahinpašić, Sarajevo, 2009).

⁵⁰ Hutchings, Robert, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War* (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1997, p.302)

we started, with the question of agency. Did Yugoslavia collapse or was it murdered? And if so, was it murdered by Milosevic and/or Tudjman, or did Markovic and his allies fail to save it? The answer to these questions, as will be chronicled in chapter one, is that while these individuals were dispensable, their roles were not. The same factors that made a prospective effort by a figure like Milosevic to dominate Yugoslavia a mortal threat to the unity of the common state, would have ensured that any successful effort by Markovic or anyone else to liberalize Yugoslavia's political and economic systems would have posed the same threat to the same vested interests, who would have had the same power and motivation to breakup Yugoslavia.

The 1974 constitution made it impossible for any political figure to reform the system economically without amassing the power necessary to become another Tito. Unless a figure succeeded in that objective, reform was impossible, and the state would collapse under the burden of austerity and national bankruptcy. If someone succeeded, or threatened to succeed, a security dilemma would be created for every other political leader and faction in the country. In the event, it was the efforts of Slobodan Milošević to become another Tito that links the two theories. It does not matter if Milošević acted out of ambition to rule Yugoslavia, a desire to advance Serbian interests at the Federal level, or as self-defense against efforts by the Slovenes to use the Federal institutions to threaten his position in Serbia and Kosovo. By mid-1990, Milošević was perceived as controlling three if not four out of the eight votes in the Presidency, which made any reform impossible without him, and unacceptable for the Slovenes with him. Tudjman, for all his nationalist ambitions, was not opposed to working with Milošević within Yugoslavia or outside. If his ultimate ambition was sovereignty, he was willing to settle, as had his hero Vladko Maček in 1939, for co-dominion.⁵¹ It was only after it became clear that Milošević had no interest in co-rulership on Tudjman's terms and the departure of Slovenia left Croatia isolated that the decision was made to fight for independence. This was symbolic of a pattern that was to be repeated many times and is chronicled throughout this Thesis. Tudjman was a fanatic when it came to ends, but the most flexible Yugoslav leader when it came to

⁵¹ Djuraskovic, Stevo , 'Nation-building in Franjo Tuđman's Political Writings' *Croatian Political Science Review*, 2014, 51:5, pp.58-79 p.73. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/286448709_Nation-building_in_Franjo_Tudman's_Political_Writings: Accessed April 16th 2016

means. He would work with anyone, although he preferred the strongest potential partner. In Yugoslavia that had been Milošević. After the breakup, it was the US.

This Thesis is divided into five chapters, with the first chronicling US policy towards Yugoslavia from the start of the Bush Administration through to the outbreak of fighting in June 1991. The figure of Warren Zimmerman will be a central focus, as his failure is a microcosm of the American policy-failures in the region. Zimmerman pursued a forward policy, attempting to influence domestic Yugoslav policy and browbeat the key players. Zimmerman sent mixed messages about American objectives, while lulling Washington into a false sense of security which delayed any high-level decisions about Yugoslavia's future until it was too late. While the both the policy Zimmerman pursued, and the methods by which he pursued it proved to be failures, this chapter will highlight the extent to which any other policy was possible given the constraints of American policy. Not one of Kucan, Zimmerman, Tudjman, or Milošević did much to resolve Yugoslavia's problems, but this chapter will raise the question as to whether their absence would have changed the outcome.

The second chapter covers events from June 1991 to the recognition of the independence of Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia in 1992. It will argue that it was not the outbreak of fighting in Slovenia, but the subsequent decision of the Serbian and Slovene leaders to withdraw the Army from that republic which marked the end of any prospect of Yugoslav unity. Despite Tudjman's nationalist ambitions, it was this final victory of the republican leaders over the federal government which rendered Croatian independence inevitable. The international community had sought to keep Yugoslavia together not because it was morally committed to the unity of the federation but because this seemed the easiest way to avoid combat. The departure of Slovenia made it impossible for Yugoslav unity to coexist with an end to armed conflict. Now, the only way the international community could secure an end to armed conflict would be to recognise the internal Republican borders as international borders. What was at stake in the fighting in Yugoslavia in autumn 1991 and the diplomatic maneuvering between Germany and the US, was not whether the independence of Croatia and Slovenia would ultimately be recognized, but when and under what conditions it would be granted. For Croatia, unilateral recognition was desirable not because it promised a resolution to the conflict in the

region but precisely because it did not. Recognition as part of a general settlement in Yugoslavia might require binding concessions from Zagreb regarding minority rights domestically as well as changes to the international borders. By contrast, unilateral recognition maintained Zagreb's legal claims to whatever territory the Croats did not control militarily in 1992. If Tudjman could not retake those areas in 1991, it preserved his right to do so if he ever gained the necessary military strength.

The third chapter examines how the Yugoslav conflict played out in American domestic politics. It will cover the 1992 Presidential election, followed by the efforts of the incoming Clinton Administration to establish a policy which would fulfill the promise made during the campaign to be more assertive against "Serb aggression". Clinton's victory marked the culmination of a strategy, pursued by the Democrats from 1991 onwards, to use foreign policy in general, and Yugoslavia in particular, to erase memories of their opposition to the Persian Gulf war by outflanking Republicans on human rights. Yet, the very opportunism of this policy created difficulties when it succeeded. The Clinton Administration was divided between those who had genuinely embraced the change of direction, and those who had embraced it out of opportunism. The Administration struggled to commit to a policy, especially one which took seriously the tradeoffs in policy choices. By the end of 1993, the high level decision-making had fallen into a chaos from which it would never fully emerge. Nonetheless, if the Clinton Administration could not agree on its aims, the struggles of 1993 provided clarity regarding what the US did not want to happen in the region. The deliberations over the Vance-Owen plan made it clear that the Clinton Administration was unwilling to reconcile its conditions for a settlement in Bosnia to the military balance on the ground. The rejection of "Lift and Strike" made it equally apparent that the US was unwilling to use its own military to change that balance. By a process of elimination, the US had already embraced policy constraints which pointed inevitably to a reliance on Croatia.

The fourth chapter will examine the origins and development of the American-Croatian alliance. By mid-1993, Croatian forces were in retreat in Bosnia, Zagreb was threatened with sanctions, and there was the prospect of a Muslim-Serb settlement at Croatian expense. Both Tudjman and American activist officials shared a common interest in continued resistance by

the Bosnian Muslims against the Serbs, albeit for different reasons. Zagreb extricated itself from a war it could not win, while convincing American officials that the result was a triumph of American policy. Zagreb emerged with an explicit American commitment to the reintegration of Serb-occupied territories, along with implicit support for a build-up of the Croatian army. From near disaster in mid-1993, Zagreb was sufficiently strong by early 1995 to engage in brinkmanship with the UN, the Serbs, and even those in Washington who were less eager about taking action. America, by contrast, has compromised itself, not just through the decision to support Croatia but also by the means through which the policy was carried out, including not only the violation of the UN Arms Embargo but also providing a green light to Iranian Arms shipments.

The fifth chapter brings these strands together. Croatia has secured its diplomatic position with regards to the US and the Bosnian Muslims, and although not everyone realizes it, the Krajina Serbs as well. While some American officials in Croatia see this as an opportunity to secure a settlement between Zagreb and the Knin, the Croatian leadership takes advantage of the international situation to evade pressure to embrace any concessions to its own Serbian population. With the collapse of the Bosnian Muslims' military position, threatening the domestic political strength of those American officials in Washington associated with sanctions, desperate American policy-makers urge the Croats to take military action. Croatia is not only able to secure American support for Operations both *Flash* and *Storm*, but also to condition its behaviour in Bosnia on securing promises of the return of Eastern Slavonia along the Serbian border. The Dayton Agreement which ends the war in Bosnia is hailed as a triumph of American diplomacy but the result conforms far more to the preferences of the Croats than to those of either the Bosnian Muslims or the Serbs. Croatia receives control of the entirety of its internationally-recognized territory with a newly-homogenous population. The Bosnian Muslims are denied any state of their own, while the Serbs are prevented from unifying.

By the end, I hope to have gone some way towards redressing the balance in English secondary writing regarding Croatia's role in the Yugoslav wars. Ideally, the reader will have found their preconceptions challenged regarding exactly who wielded the agency, and which party manipulated the other in the American-Croatian relationship. While Croatian émigrés and

other ethnic lobbies will feature, as will American geopolitical interests, the focus will be on the role of Franjo Tudjman and his inner circle in the relationship, along with the behaviour of their key counterparts on the American side. I also hope to highlight the actions of Vice President Albert Gore and his staff in the formation of US policy. Any examination of the period which looks at the key decisions, whether to sign the Washington Agreement in 1994, to launch Operations *Flash* and *Storm* in 1995, and not to take Banja Luka that autumn cannot help but conclude that it was Tudjman, rather than Gojko Sušak, a Croatian lobby, or rogue military actors who made the decisions. By the end of this Thesis, in fact, one might wonder whether the American policy-makers were even making their own decisions, or simply conforming to those of Tudjman.

Chapter 1: The US and the Breakup of Yugoslavia

On the Precipice of an Abyss

Arnold Toynbee is commonly credited with describing history as “one damned thing after another”. At one level Toynbee is correct. History is the study of events which happened. However, what happened cannot be the entire story of history. We need to understand why things happened. Not for purely academic or analytical purposes, or to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past, but because it is impossible to judge events properly in isolation. Even Toynbee’s quote appears very different in its context.⁵² As for historical events, for every battle that occurred, assassination that succeeded, and revolution that transformed the world there was an unfought battle, a failed plot, and a suppressed riot. Arguably, most potentially world-changing events never happened. Understanding why they did not occur is critical to understanding why the events that did happen did occur.

History is perhaps better described as an iceberg. At the top, visible to all, is what happened. Below the surface lie the underlying causes of those events, forces which could easily have been manifested in different ways but were not. A prime example lies in 1989, the year when the Berlin wall fell, Communism collapsed in Eastern Europe, and the Cold War “ended”. It was also the year when a similar anti-Communist protest movement was crushed in China with implications for world history perhaps as great as the success of the Eastern European revolutions. Lost somewhere between the two were events in Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia seemed to be following the same script as Poland and Hungary. A new reformist government had taken office under Ante Marković, who the then-American Ambassador Warren Zimmerman described with gushing praise. “He had very western ideas about how to develop the economy”, Zimmerman recalled, “I took George Soros to see him once, and Soros left the

⁵² “History is just one damn thing after another.” Quote Investigator, <https://quoteinvestigator.com/2015/09/16/history/>; Accessed September 4th 2019

meeting after we had two hours of the Marković treatment saying, ‘that was the most impressive leader he had met in Eastern Europe’.”⁵³ That year was also the 600th anniversary of the battle of Kosovo, a celebration of which Zimmerman boycotted, thereby alienating the new Serbian President Slobodan Milošević.⁵⁴ With hindsight, within three years, Yugoslavia would no longer exist, Milošević’s actions would appear key and Marković would be not more than a footnote. That is the way events turned out. But was this inevitable? And if so, why?

Warren Zimmerman is fatalistic in his conclusions. “Analytically if you asked me if I were a professor, I would have said this isn't going to work. It is going to fall apart and there is going to be war”, he recalled in 1996. “But, my job was not just to be an analyst; it was to do with what could be done, and Washington was very strongly on the side of trying to hold Yugoslavia together at least until it was possible to work something out to prevent a war.”⁵⁵ Peter Hall, Britain’s last Ambassador to SFR Yugoslavia, went further, suggesting “the mistake the West made over Yugoslavia in general was to think that it was feasible and possible to maintain a federal unitary Yugoslavia. It wasn't. The divisions were much too great”.⁵⁶

Yugoslavia undoubtedly faced problems. When Marković took over, the country was facing a debt crisis, the result of the easy borrowing during the 1970s when Oil Crises made it easy for Belgrade to access loans.⁵⁷ When the oil prices plummeted during the 1980, loans were called in and borrowing became harder.⁵⁸ The design of the Yugoslav state made it peculiarly dependent on borrowing not only for economic but also for political stability. Embracing the concept of “self-management”, which was to be the ideological calling card of Yugoslavia, power was decentralised from the central government and Party to those at the level of the six

⁵³ Interview with Ambassador Warren Zimmerman by Charles Kennedy” December 10th 1996 p.133.
<http://www.adst.org/OH%20TOCs/Zimmerman,%20Warren.toc.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁵⁴ Ibid., p.124.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.149.

⁵⁶ Interview with Sir Peter Hall, British Diplomatic Oral History Project, Churchill College p.36.
<https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/media/uploads/files/Hall.pdf>: Accessed November 24 2019

⁵⁷ Woodward, Susan L., *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (Brookings Institution Press: Washington, D.C., 1995).

⁵⁸ Zametica, John, *The Yugoslav Conflict*. IISS. Adelphi Papers 270, p.10
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/05679329208457615>: Accessed June 12th 2019

republics and two autonomous regions.⁵⁹ Milovan Djilas, a close colleague, had urged Tito to invest his federal institutions with real power by allowing multiparty competition, but all that Djilas gained was Tito's enmity and persecution after 1954.⁶⁰ The problem was that "self-management" stood, not for democracy, but for decentralisation. It decentralised the power of both the party and government to republics which were explicitly defined as sovereign by the central government, and then erected a wall between them such that no one could build a powerbase beyond a single republic. For Tito, institutions were about dispersing power and preventing its concentration, not wielding it. Rather than seeking to create forums for compromise, Tito tried to avoid conflict by giving every group security by making their republics impregnable political fortresses. "The constitution of 1974 defined the republics explicitly as states (article 3) and made them into independent agents of political decision-making", Viktor Meier wrote in his history of Yugoslavia's collapse, and "every republic or province enjoyed a veto right in practically all affairs of any importance."⁶¹ Only Tito stood above the system. He was not indispensable to Yugoslavia because, without him, ethnic war would naturally break out. Marshal Tito was indispensable because he constructed a system which made him so and deliberately was unable to function without him, or another figure whose influence transcended the republican borders. As no legal mechanisms transcended these except for the army, such power could only be based on extralegal mechanisms or military force.

Tito's 1974 Constitution critically reserved the right to levy taxation for the Republics, probably to avoid complaints of exploitation from the richer Republics. Slovenia's per capita GDP in 1991 was \$12,618, nearly double that of Croatia's at \$7,179, and almost three times that of Serbia at \$4,810.⁶² A uniform, equal tax levied at the Federal level would see wealthy Slovenia paying a share of the national revenue that was out of proportion to its population, much of which would be spent on poorer areas. As the poorest regions of Yugoslavia were

⁵⁹ Judah, Tim, *The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1997, p.140).

⁶⁰ Meier, Viktor, *Yugoslavia: A History of its Demise* (Routledge, New York, 1999, p.2).

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p.6.

⁶² Dragnich, Alex N., 'Yugoslavia in Historical Perspective', *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Summer 1992, pp.5-19) in Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002), *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995* (Central Intelligence Agency: Washington, D.C., vol 1, 2002, p.50).

Bosnia and Kosovo, it was easy for Slovenes to associate high taxes with subsidizing Muslims, Serbs, and Albanians. A federal government with the power to tax elected by universal suffrage would virtually ensure this outcome, as the Slovenes constituted a mere 10% of the population, while contributing 20% of GDP.⁶³ Contrary to later claims made by the Slovene leaders and their apologists, that Slovenia was a champion of democracy and free-market reform within Yugoslavia, the economic disparities with the rest of the federation made the prospect of either political or economic liberalisation a mortal threat to the position of the Slovene leadership. Democracy on any sort of Yugoslavia-wide level, presumably on the basis of one-person one-vote, would have almost invariably led to exactly the sort of progressive taxation described above, which would have hit Slovenia hardest, as would have been the case in almost any other democracy worldwide. Yet if Slovenia, and to a lesser extent Croatia, had a reason to fear the consequences of a Yugoslavia-wide democracy regarding their position, the leaders of every republic had reason to fear the consequences that democracy or economic reform might have on their own power. Having wrested control of economic and fiscal policy from Belgrade, and with it the control of housing and employment for most of the population, the republican leaders had no intention of surrendering this either through privatisation or genuine self-management at the factory level. Even democratisation at the republican level was suspect, as it too might cost the leaders their positions. It was only when threatened by Belgrade with the prospect of economic and political liberalisation at the federal level that the republican leaders dared to gamble on holding multi-party elections themselves. When they did so, it was not to enable liberalisation, but to be in a better position to resist it. The resort to democracy by the Republics as a last-ditch defence of their privileges would only come when Yugoslavia had reached the point where the only available options were reform or collapse.

After Tito's death in 1980, the federal government was too weak to challenge the Republics, and too dominated by Republican appointees to have any desire to do so. The main impact of the decentralisation of taxation was to impair, not democratisation at the national level, but fiscal solvency. Belgrade had liabilities to pay, not least the army. Not only was the army a major political actor, with a role enshrined by the 1974 Constitution, but in the context

⁶³Thompson, Mark, *A Paper House: The Ending of Yugoslavia* (Pantheon Books: New York, 1992) p. 9

of the Cold War it guaranteed Yugoslavia's security against invasion. Whether real or not, the prospect of invasion was also a guarantee that Western aid would continue to flow. This required a steady source of revenue. The 1974 Constitution assumed that taxes would be collected by the Republics and transferred to Belgrade voluntarily. While Tito was alive, his personal authority over every Republic's Party Central Committee justified this assumption. In Tito's absence, the Federal government had to find another way to compel the Republics to collect taxes or another source of revenue. Tito, however, had removed almost all of the mechanisms by which the Federal government could accomplish the 1974 Constitution. All except one.⁶⁴

While denied the ability to levy taxation, only the Federal government could borrow money internationally. This not only freed the Federal government from reliance on transfers from the Republics, but also provided the Republics with another vested interest in the preservation of a Yugoslav state. Not only could Federal expenditure be financed by loans, but this money could also be transferred to the Republics in the form of subsidies. Local elites could then avoid the political costs not just of taxation but also of unemployment and the higher fuel prices that would raise the need to make hard fiscal choices. The Republics were encouraged to run themselves at a deficit, funded by borrowing from the Federal government which itself followed suit. The reason why the Republican leaders, whether in Slovenia or Kosovo, needed Belgrade was because Belgrade funded the industries which employed their populations, enabling them to avoid the unpopular measure of raising taxes. While richer Republics such as Slovenia could raise funds in the absence of federal subsidies, it would be unclear what benefit they would then be receiving from the Yugoslav government which justified subsidising the poorer regions of the country. In the meantime, the costs of remaining in Yugoslavia increased as the Federal debt burden ballooned, creating an incentive for the richer Republics to consider

⁶⁴ Much of the economic data are sourced from Susan Woodward's work but, while similar in some ways to her argument, my analysis of the political actors is original as is my conclusion that Marković's entire economic reform strategy represented a continuation rather than a radical break with the post-1974 norm. Woodward, Susan L., *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War* (Brookings Institution Press: Washington, D.C., 1995) Further discussion can be found at: Dyker, D., *Yugoslavia: Socialism, development and debt* (Routledge: London, 1990); Yagci, F., Kamin, Steven B., & the World Bank, *Macroeconomic policies and adjustment in Yugoslavia: Some counterfactual simulations*. World Bank discussion papers 16 (The World Bank, Washington, D.C., 1987).

secession as a means of escaping responsibility for the debts they had so enthusiastically helped to accumulate.

The long-term impacts were devastating. Had the Federal government lacked access to international loans, the only options available to Yugoslavs would have been either to provide it with a steady revenue stream or witness the collapse of the state. In the international climate of the early 1980s, with the Eastern bloc intact and the Cold War ongoing, even the most recalcitrant Republican leader would have recognized that the breakup of the Federation would have constituted an invitation to chaos and foreign intervention. Without loans, the Republican leaders would have been forced to work out a stable system of revenue for the Federal government. A Yugoslavia dependent for its survival on its own economic resources would have been pressured into adopting economic reforms to utilize those resources more effectively far earlier. Instead, both economic and political reforms were delayed until the federal government had run out of money. Milka Planinc, who served as Prime Minister between 1982 and 1986, reflected that the party had become “the main source of conflicts and conservatism. In Tito's time changes were still possible if Tito was convinced they were necessary. But after him”, she reflected in 1998, “[t]here was no money any more to satisfy everyone's needs”.⁶⁵ By the time reforms became necessary, the international situation had changed due to the ending of the Cold War. Yugoslavia was now dispensable to the Slovenes, while the enormous debt burden which had accumulated during the preceding years made reforms vastly more expensive than would have been the case at an earlier stage. “That was really the thing that began the movement toward the breakup of Yugoslavia, the Slovene calculation that they couldn't do it in Yugoslavia, they had to do it independently”, Warren Zimmerman wrote years later. Zimmerman lamented the failure of the Slovenes to step “forward as the champions of democracy in Yugoslavia”, but in doing so he missed the interconnected nature of economic and political matters.⁶⁶ Zimmerman confused a symptom, namely the nationalism which he saw epitomised by the rise of Slobodan Milošević and later Franjo Tudjman, with the refusal of the

⁶⁵ Djokic, Dejan Obituary Milka Planinc. *Guardian*. October 10th 2010.

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/oct/10/milka-planinc-obituary>: Accessed October 11th 2015

⁶⁶ Meier, Viktor, *Yugoslavia: A History of its Demise* (Routledge, London, 1999, p.218).

“Western” Slovenes to present an alternative liberal model of Yugoslavia. Slovenia’s position could only ever be federalist and conservative in nature, as was the case during the 1980s when Slovenia blocked economic and political reforms, or secessionist and liberalism. Yugoslav liberalism was a threat to, not the aspiration of, Slovene nationalism.

The interconnected nature of economic and political factors can be seen in the case of the autonomous region of Kosovo. The poorest region of Yugoslavia, it became symbolic to those in the richest, Slovenia, of the unpopularity of transfer payments, and the belief that “their money” was being wasted. The Serbs had the opposite issue; namely, independence from Serbia which the direct relationship with the Federal government allowed Kosovo. Nominally a province of Serbia, but with an Albanian majority, under the 1974 Constitution, Kosovo was given a republic’s attributes, having its own Assembly and Representative in the Federal Presidency, but denied official status in an effort towards compromise which satisfied no one. Albanians pushed for the status of a full republic, believing that their position could never be secure within Serbia. Even non-nationalist Serbs felt that Kosovo’s autonomy was aimed at undermining the Serbian position within Yugoslavia, and saw Albanian aspirations to achieve republic status as an effort to dismember Serbia.⁶⁷ Zimmerman reflected that “Serbs could argue credibly that they could be outvoted two-to-one in their own supposed sphere of influence”.⁶⁸

Yugoslavia’s problems did not become unsolvable because Milošević advocated Serbia’s interests any more than that it collapsed because the Slovene leadership advocated those of Slovenia, or Kosovo those of the Albanians, what they felt were theirs. Yugoslavia collapsed because there was no system at the federal level to reconcile mutually irreconcilable interests. All economic and political systems produce winners and losers, and all policies that differ from the *status quo* produce relative winners and losers even if there is a net benefit overall. Democracies do not prevent such problems from arising, nor avoid conflicts over whom the winners and losers should be. Zimmerman observed, “[I]n the United States, France, the

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.9, 18.

⁶⁸ Zimmerman, Warren *U.S. and Russian Policymaking With Respect to the Use of Force - Chapter 11: Yugoslavia: 1989-1996*, 1996, p.4 http://www.rand.org/pubs/conf_proceedings/CF129/CF-129-chapter11.html: Accessed 11 June 2019

United Kingdom, and Germany racist demagogues have been politically active, but they have rarely been able to clear the hurdles and obstacles thrust in their way by the need to win and hold the support of electorates...but Yugoslavia had no such democratic obstacle course". As such, "a clever political manipulator like Milošević could exploit the nondemocratic elements of Yugoslav communism for his own nationalistic purposes".⁶⁹ Yugoslavia's problem in the post-Tito era was, therefore, not that it was not a democracy or was a dictatorship, nor that the situation it faced was unsolvable. Rather, the system itself promoted extremes. In his decentralisation, Tito had laid a time-bomb that was even more explosive than the one that Stalin had planted in the Soviet system. If the "wall" erected between the republics held, effective government would be difficult at the federal level; the inability to solve problems without bringing down the "wall" incentivised the leaders to try and find ways to achieve this. If they succeeded, the system provided no middle ground between Milošević achieving Serbia's legitimate interests in Kosovo and hegemony over Yugoslavia as a whole.

Marković's "political program" was simply to implement sufficient economic reforms to regain the Federal government's access to the international financial markets. That was the motivation for and limit of his commitment to effective monetary and financial policy across the whole territory of Yugoslavia. Even this limited program threatened to spark fierce Republican opposition. Marković appears to have believed that, once the Federal government's fiscal power was restored, its political power would follow. His plans depended on securing access to foreign financing to enable structural reforms, not implementing structural reforms in order to attract foreign capital. As few private lenders would be attracted by such an investment, Marković seemed to expect that the US and other Western governments would provide the loans themselves in the form of a political investment, as had been the case in the past. The failure of this aid to materialise "infuriated Marković because he kept saying, what good is your rhetorical support if you can't come forward with hard cash", recalled Robert Rackmales, a US diplomat working in Belgrade at the time, "But it's very hard to justify [this] in a situation where the IMF and other international institutions, and our own analyses saw the Federal government as

⁶⁹ Zimmermann, Warren, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers* (Times Books: New York, 1996) p.41

impotent.”⁷⁰ Marković had no solution other than a return to debt-financed governance, and never developed one beyond warning of the increasingly dire consequences if his program failed due to a lack of financial support.

Marković was correct. The IMF and other international actors failed to grasp how Yugoslavia’s economic problems were inherently political in nature. Their economic criticisms were accurate but based on a limited framework which perceived the support of Marković and the Yugoslav government as a purely economic, rather than political, investment. Robert Hutchings, who headed the European Desk for the National Security Council from 1989 to 1992, later reflected that, without a willingness to invest financial resources, the policy of supporting Marković should have been abandoned. He further observed, “Was Marković Yugoslavia’s last hope or was he already marginal to the real political struggle over the future of the federation? If the former was true, we should have lent him all possible support. If the latter, we should have concluded that Yugoslavia was already doomed and begun preparing for its dissolution”.⁷¹ The US, however, was under no obligation to defer to the IMF. Doing so was a choice. It made perfect sense for the US not to invest money into Marković’s program on the basis of IMF doubts if the US interests were purely economic, but if the US objective was to secure, not an economic return on the investment but, rather, a political one in the form of preventing the breakup of the country, then this became nonsensical. Unlike the IMF, which could claim only to have purely economic interests in Yugoslavia, the US explicitly did have political interests. Somewhere along the line, the priorities had become confused and the decision-making had gone awry, not least because Milošević’s actions in Kosovo followed rather than preceded the decline in federal authority, only truly beginning in 1989. Even if all Marković achieved was to hold Yugoslavia together only so long as he received what were in effect international subsidies, with hindsight, a billion dollars or so a year to hold Yugoslavia together peacefully would have been a bargain for the US if not the entire world.

In 1989, American policy-makers failed to see enough value in preserving Yugoslavia to

⁷⁰ “Interview with Robert Rackmales by Charles Kennedy” May 11, 1995, in “Yugoslavia Country Reader” p, 520 <http://www.adst.org/Readers/Yugoslavia.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁷¹ Hutchings, Robert *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press ,1997 p.302)

justify not just the financial aid that Marković was requesting but also the political costs of providing it. In early 1989, Condoleezza Rice, a staffer under Scowcroft at the National Security Council, completed a policy review. It concluded that, whereas in previous periods the distance from Moscow had been the criterion for measuring the relative “moderation” of regimes in Eastern Europe, criteria that benefitted not only Yugoslavia but also Romania’s Nicolae Ceausescu, who presided over what was perhaps the most brutal and eccentric regime within the Eastern bloc, now it should be defined by respect for human rights and a move towards political and economic reform.⁷² “No longer could it be argued that Yugoslavia's unity and territorial integrity were essential to America's vital security interests”, Warren Zimmerman would write in a 1996 Rand Institute report on Yugoslavia’s breakup, elaborating “It now became possible for members of Congress to isolate and advance specific aspects of policy toward Yugoslavia, such as human rights and ethnic preferences or dislikes.”⁷³

“By the time of my return in 1989”, Zimmerman reflected in his memoirs, “Kosovo had become the most serious European human rights problem west of the Soviet Union”, and “nowhere was there more concern than in the United States.”⁷⁴ This concern manifested in a Congressional reaction, which greatly curtailed the maneuvering room in which American officials could operate. Diaspora groups had long wielded political influence in the US, and substantial Albanian (and, as we will see later, Croatian) communities lived in North America. Michael Mandelbaum, a prominent academic who would be offered and decline a senior role in the Clinton Administration, observed that while “all presidents have catered to important domestic constituencies...In the post-Cold War era, without an overarching principle to guide the nation's foreign relations, it is all but inevitable: the promotion of domestic interests is the default strategy of American foreign policy”.⁷⁵ Zimmerman reflected how “During 1989-1990...

⁷² Schmitz, David F., *Brent Scowcroft: Internationalism and Post-Vietnam War American Foreign Policy* (Rowman and Littlefield: Plymouth, 2011, pp.96-97).

⁷³ Zimmerman, *U.S. and Russian Policymaking With Respect to the Use of Force - Chapter 11: Yugoslavia: 1989-1996*, 1996, p.4 http://www.rand.org/pubs/conf_proceedings/CF129/CF-129-chapter11.html: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁷⁴ Zimmermann, Warren, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers* (Times Books: New York, 1996, p.14)

⁷⁵ Mandelbaum, Michael, ‘Foreign Policy as Social Work’, *Foreign Affairs*, 75:1, Jan. 1996, pp.16–32. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/haiti/1996-01-01/foreign-policy-social-work>: Accessed March 18th 2018

a pro-Albanian coalition formed among those who had ethnic Albanian constituents (Representative Joseph Dioguardi, an Albanian-American, and Senator Alphonse D'Amato), those who habitually cultivated the support of ethnic groups (Senator Bob Dole), and those who saw Kosovo more as a pure human rights problem (Representative Tom Lantos)".⁷⁶ Lantos, a holocaust survivor, may have seen Kosovo as a pure human rights problem, but the examples of D'Amato, Dioguardi, and Dole had far much more partisan motivations. They were Pro-Albanian, a bias that was fully displayed when the House Foreign Relations Committee in 1986 spent two days holding hearings into the "persecution of the Albanian minority in Yugoslavia". The hearing featured a one-sided witness list, including three Albanians, Ekrem Bardha the Chair of the Albanian-American Republican Clubs of America, Sami Repishti the Chair of the Foreign Relations Department at Malverne High School in Malverne, New York, and Albert Tochess, a geography professor at Salem State College in Washington, who lectured to the committee on the Albanian nationalist claim that "the entire western portion of the Balkan peninsula was populated by the ancient Illyrians, known in Roman times, from whom the modern Albanians claim descent". Serbian representation was limited to Congresswoman Helen Bentley of New York.⁷⁷

A victim of this Congressional reaction was Zimmerman's predecessor, John Scanlan, who was recalled following a campaign led by Rep. William Broomfield (R-MI), angered at Scanlan's response to the arrest of Pjeter Ivezaj, an Albanian activist and naturalised American citizen, in 1986.⁷⁸ In the Congressional hearings which followed, Scanlan, a career civil servant, was subjected to a tirade by rep Phil Crane(R-IL), who demanded "Where is the State

⁷⁶ Zimmerman, Warren *U.S. and Russian Policymaking With Respect to the Use of Force - Chapter 11: Yugoslavia: 1989-1996*, 1996, p.4 http://www.rand.org/pubs/conf_proceedings/CF129/CF-129-chapter11.html: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁷⁷ United States. Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations. Persecution of the Albanian Minority In Yugoslavia: Hearing And Briefing Before the Subcommittee On Human Rights And International Organizations of the Committee On Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-ninth Congress, Second Session, October 2nd and 8th, 1986. Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 1987. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007608629>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁷⁸ Meier, Viktor, *Yugoslavia: A History of its Demise* (Routledge, London, 1999, p.38)

Department when we need them?”⁷⁹ Scanlan’s travails helped to create a perception that partiality towards Yugoslavia or the Serbs was a domestic liability in the face of the Congress Congressional Albanian lobby. Senior Bush officials were uniquely vulnerable to this charge. Scowcroft had been Air Force attaché in Belgrade during 1966-67,⁸⁰ while Lawrence Eagleburger was a former Ambassador to Yugoslavia under Jimmy Carter, and both had worked with Yugoslav firms on behalf of Kissinger Associates while out of office. Eagleburger would be dubbed “Lawrence of Serbia” by critics of the US policy who regarded him as Pro-Serb, although the then Hungarian Foreign Minister Geza Jezensky noted that “in our several encounters he did not show such a bias at all”.⁸¹

While the Bush team’s Pro-Serbain bias was largely mythical, senior Administration officials had other biases which influenced their manner of response to the Congressional pressure on Yugoslavia. The most prominent of these appears to have been a bias towards excessive self-confidence. Senior officials trusted their own knowledge, experience, and judgement, doubting the value of external advice. “The closeness and congeniality among the key cabinet officers and their deputies, including particularly Deputy Secretary of State Larry Eagleburger, also had the effect of narrowing the range of opinions and options that found their way into the policy debate”, Robert Hutchings would reflect later.⁸² This was matched by a distrust towards those outside the magic circle on the part of many Administration officials, which Hutchings himself reflected in his opinions of the intelligence community. “The

⁷⁹ United States. Congress. House. Committee on Foreign Affairs. Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organizations. Persecution of the Albanian Minority In Yugoslavia: Hearing And Briefing Before the Subcommittee On Human Rights And International Organizations of the Committee On Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, Ninety-ninth Congress, Second Session, October 2nd and 8th 1986. Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 1987. p.47 <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007608629>; Accessed March 20th 2018

⁸⁰ Schmitz, David, F., *Brent Scowcroft: Internationalism and Post-Vietnam War American Foreign Policy* (Rowman and Littlefield: Plymouth, 2011, p.44).

⁸¹ Glynn, Patrick, P., ‘Lawrence of Serbia’, *New Republic*, 1993, 206:8, p.16. Accessed: June 13th 2019); <http://search.ebscohost.com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=12083172&site=ehost-live> “Departure of Lawrence of Serbia” by Milan Mišić in *Politika*, June 8th 2011, reproduced by B92 http://www.b92.net/eng/insight/opinions.php?nav_id=74817; Accessed March 20th 2018
Jezensky, Geza, ‘Hungary and the Break-up of Yugoslavia - a Documentary History Part 1’, *Hungarian Review*, 2018, 10, March 2011. http://www.hungarianreview.com/article/20110310_hungary_and_the_break-up_of_yugoslavia_-_a_documentary_history_part_i; Accessed March 20th 2018

⁸² Hutchings, Robert, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War* (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1997, p.22).

intelligence community's role was to demonstrate that any possible course of action was fraught with danger or otherwise doomed to fail, while advancing the seemingly inconsistent view that events in the outside world were driven by deep impersonal forces not susceptible to human intervention", he would recall later, in a logically ironic justification for freezing the intelligence Community out of the policy debates.⁸³ Mark Danner, in *the New York Review of Books*, concluded of the Bush team, "their information on and familiarity with Yugoslavia was quite out of date, and yet because they had a sense of the place and thought they knew what was going on there, they felt they could rely on their instincts and ignore the reporting coming out of the country".⁸⁴

The culture of the Bush Administration also bred doubts about Marković's prospects. According to his biographer, David Schmitz, "Scowcroft believed that the Reagan Administration, having first gone too far to one extreme with its bellicose attacks on the Soviet Union and its attempts to win the Cold War through an arms race in the first term", then swung too far, based on "an unwarranted assumption that the changes in Soviet attitudes and rhetoric, or perhaps the accession of Gorbachev to power, signaled the end of the forty-year confrontation between East and West".⁸⁵ Marković looked dangerously like a discount Gorbachev, and the Administration never fully invested in Marković to the same degree as the State Department. Of the 56 recorded meetings of the full National Security Council between 1989 and 1991, not a single one listed Yugoslavia as the main item on the agenda.⁸⁶ President Bush had four conversations with Yugoslav leaders: a meeting on September 25th 1989 with Presidency head Janez Drnovšek; another with newly-appointed Prime Minister Ante Marković on October 13th 1989; a phone conference with Borislav Jović, chair of the collective presidency, on October 1st 1990; and a final phone call with Marković again on May 20th 1991, during which he urged the

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Danner, Mark, *The US and the Yugoslav Catastrophe*, *New York Review of Books*, November 20th 1997, <http://www.markdanner.com/articles/the-us-and-the-yugoslav-catastrophe>: Accessed August 19th 2019

⁸⁵ Schmitz, David F., *Brent Scowcroft: Internationalism and Post-Vietnam War American Foreign Policy* (Rowman and Littlefield: Plymouth, 2011, p.94).

⁸⁶ George H.W. Bush Presidential Library NSC Meeting List, 1989-1993 Last Updated: June 27th 2013. <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/NSC%20Meetings%201989-1992--Declassified--2013-06-27--REVISED.pdf>: Accessed September 18 2016

Prime Minister to seek EC mediation.⁸⁷ If there was a “Marković strategy”, it was carried out by the Department of State, not the President or his inner circle. The choice of Zimmerman, who as US representative to the CSCE was closely identified with support for human rights and democracy in Eastern Europe, was motivated less by a desire to support human rights in Yugoslavia than to appease Congressional sentiment.⁸⁸ The Administration never seriously asked Congress for money to support Marković’s reforms.

Marković was unable to charm Congress into compensating for the lack of executive branch engagement. “When Marković visited the United States in the fall of 1989, there was a disastrous meeting on the Hill with a number of Senators and Congressmen in which Marković was blamed for everything Milošević was doing despite the fact that he totally disapproved of it and there was nothing he could do about it”, Zimmerman bemoaned in 1996, “There was just very little understanding on the Hill of the particular dilemma that this very good man who was trying to create a western style market economy and democracy, the difficulties he was having.”⁸⁹ Congress showed virtually zero interest in Yugoslavia’s economic problems, preferring to view national issues purely through an ethnic lens. Senate Hearings held in February 1991 on “Civil Strife in Yugoslavia” presented a forum for representatives from various ethnic lobby groups, such as the Slovenian-American Heritage Foundation, the Albanian American Civic League, and the Croatian American Association, to express their demands, and for members of Congress to pander to them. While the Serbian American Federation was represented by a single speaker, no member of the Senate was willing to speak on behalf of the Serbian position, requiring Representative Helen Bentley of Illinois to make the trek from the House.⁹⁰ Assistant Secretary of State James Dobbins was treated like a hostile witness, forced to ward off claims by Senator Joe Biden that he “did not recall the Administration being so insistent on Soviet Unity”

⁸⁷ “Transcript of Call Between President Bush and Ante Markovic” May 20 1991 Bush Presidential Library <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/memcons-telcons/1991-05-20--Marković.pdf>: Accessed June 20 2017

⁸⁸ “Interview with Ambassador Warren Zimmerman by Charles Kennedy” December 10th 1996 pp.121-122. <http://www.adst.org/OH%20TOCs/Zimmerman,%20Warren.toc.pdf>: Accessed April 20th 2014

⁸⁹ Ibid., p.137 George H.W. Bush Presidential Library Telcon Archive, 1989-1993 . <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/archives/memcons-telcons>: Accessed November 20 2015

⁹⁰ United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. Subcommittee on European Affairs. Civil Strife in Yugoslavia: the United States Response: February 21st 1991. Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 1991. <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007608451>: Accessed March 11th 2019

and that the US risked “being more Yugoslav than the Yugoslavs”.⁹¹ Senate Republican leader Robert Dole of Kansas attacked Zimmerman directly, complaining that “In August 1990, I led a Senate delegation to Yugoslavia and stopped in Zagreb, Belgrade and Priština. Albanians were beaten and tear-gassed in our presence, but Zimmerman seemed more concerned that we emphasize support for the unity of Yugoslavia - insisting that we include such a statement in our press release”.⁹²

It was testament to just how limited the resources Zimmerman had to work with were that he struggled to support Yugoslav unity in press releases. Had the Yugoslav republics been able to reach an agreement even on a new constitutional order, the US would have been hard pressed to find it acceptable without a restoration of full Albanian autonomy in Kosovo. Aware of this, the Slovenes, who had hitherto cared so little about the Kosovar Albanians they had objected to subsidising in their provinces, became champions of their rights.⁹³ “Slovenes did not want anything more to do with the Balkans, to which Croatia, with its many tangled issues, still very much belonged”, observed Viktor Meier, otherwise a Slovene apologist.⁹⁴ The Slovenes had this luxury, enjoying a homogenous existence at the margins of Yugoslavia. The Serbs, by contrast, spread throughout Yugoslavia, with substantial minorities in Croatia, Bosnia, and Kosovo, could not so easily place economic self-interest above security, nor could the Croats, who would have to deal with a Serb minority, or Bosnian Muslims who would have to deal with a Republic in which, despite representing a plurality, were outnumbered by Serbs and Croats, neither of whom would accept the rule of the other.

If Milošević made a single decision that led to the break-up of Yugoslavia, it was to encourage rather than try and prevent Slovene secession. Janez Drnovšek recalls that, in August 1990, when he was serving as chair of the Yugoslav Federal Presidency, “Milošević and Borisav Jović informed him that Slovenia would be allowed to depart the federation peacefully on the basis of a referendum”. Milan Slovene President Kučan conceded in turn, after a meeting on

⁹¹ Ibid., p.88.

⁹² Dole, Bob, ‘The Diplomacy of Denial: US Policy in the Former Yugoslavia’, *Harvard International Review*, 1994, 16:2, pp.38-64. www.jstor.org/stable/42760476: Accessed March 11th 2019

⁹³ Meier, Viktor, *Yugoslavia: A History of its Demise* (Routledge, London, 1999, p.218).

⁹⁴ Ibid., p.157.

January 24th 1991, that “Yugoslavia should respect the right of the Serb nation to live in one state”.⁹⁵ The Serbs would have happily let the Slovenes abandon Yugoslavia, and the Slovenes were happy to abandon the Albanians, but the Croats would have no such option for an amicable settlement, and the option of compromise that they did have was dashed when the Croatian electorate followed their Slovene counterparts to the polls.

⁹⁵ Sell, Louis *Slobodan Milošević and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (Duke University Press Books: Durham, 2003, p.128).

The General and the shadow of history

The results of the first multiparty elections in Yugoslavia, held in Slovenia on April 8th 1990 did not upset the American calculations. In a meeting of opposition politicians with Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger during a visit to Belgrade, Peter Jambrek, representing the Slovenian opposition (DEMOS), both expressed confidence in forming the next government, and “was the only one in the room who answered yes when Eagleburger asked if anyone favored the end of Yugoslavia as a unified country”.⁹⁶ Neither Eagleburger nor Zimmerman paid much attention to another guest at the event, Vladimir Šeks, who represented the Croatian Democratic Union, a party running in Croatia’s upcoming elections. Šeks added to the impression that he was a crank representing a fringe outfit when he launched into a long argument supporting the expansion of Croatia into Bosnia.⁹⁷ Most observers expected a victory for the reformed Croatian Communist party under Ivica Račan over an opposition divided between the right-leaning HDZ led by former General Franjo Tudjman and a liberal coalition led by former Croatian Spring-era party leaders.⁹⁸ With the anti-Communist vote split, the superior resources of the apparatus of the party which had governed Croatia for 45 years should have carried Račan’s party to victory. It came as a shock when, three weeks after the Slovene elections, the Croatian Democratic Union won a majority of the Croatian Parliamentary seats, albeit with only 42% of the votes cast.⁹⁹

The Communists had “failed to reckon with the outside money that flowed from

⁹⁶ Zimmermann, Warren, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers* (Times Books: New York, 1996, p.62).

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Meier, Viktor, *Yugoslavia: A History of its Demise* (Routledge 1999, pp.144-145).

⁹⁹ [Statistical Indicators on Performed Elections of Representatives in the Parliament of the Socialist Republic of Croatia - Annex] (PDF. Zagreb, Croatia: Croatian State Electoral Committee. 1990. https://web.archive.org/web/20150514021334/http://www.izbori.hr/arhiva/pdf/1990/1990_2_1_Sabor_Statistika_Stat_podaci.pdf:Accessed March 18th 2018

Croatian emigrants, mostly in the United States and Canada to Franjo Tujman's Croatian Democratic Union, or with the highly effective nationalist campaign Tujman had the resource to run".¹⁰⁰ Žarko Puhovski, a professor of political philosophy at Zagreb University and a frequent critic of the government, recalls the impact of the campaign well. "We were shocked", he said, "Tujman at this point was just a retired general sitting in a cafe, and suddenly he had more money than anybody. It dominated everything". [Later Defense Minister Gojko] Sušak said: "It was maybe a couple of million dollars", shrugging modestly, then breaking into a wide grin, "But here it was like it was a trillion. We had posters all over".¹⁰¹

A victory "bought" on these terms was, from the outset, at risk of being mortgaged to the right-wing émigrés who had financed it. While the vast majority of the party's 1990 voters had little in common with Susak, who as a Herzegovinian was not even from Croatia proper, the money vital for victory had come from abroad, where Tujman had sought to tie the HDZ to Croatian nationalist traditions while keeping such links in the background at home. "There will not be revenge, the HDZ will come out for full equality of all citizens in Croatia", regardless of their ethnicity", Tujman promised before the second round of voting.¹⁰² To counteract any association with exiled apologists for the World War II fascist regime, Tujman cited his family's role in fighting the Ustaše during the Second World War, a struggle in which the future Croatian leader lost his younger brother. Tujman expressed vitriol and contempt for those on the far-right who embraced Ustaša symbols, condemning them as, "misled youth or fanatics who cannot -they have not realized that Germany could not have been built on Hitler, they have not realized that Croatia could not be built on [Ante] Pavelić[Ustaše wartime leader] and therefore, they are unintentionally, serving their opponents".¹⁰³ Tujman nonetheless showed a

¹⁰⁰ Zimmermann, Warren, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers* (Times Books: New York, 1996, p.71).

¹⁰¹ Kifner John, "From Pizza Man in Canada to Croatian Kingmaker" The New York Times, January 16 1994 <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/01/16/world/from-pizza-man-in-canada-to-croatian-kingmaker.html>: Accessed March 18th 2018.

¹⁰² Gagnon, V. P., Jr.. *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 2006, p.138). <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/londonschoolecons/detail.action?docID=3138491>.

¹⁰³ Presidential transcript of a meeting attended by Franjo TUDJMAN and Commanders of the Army of Republic of Croatia held on 04/03/1992 Annex III p. 15

<http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed 12th January 2019

willingness to let bygones be bygones, at least among Croats, warning his advisers “we must not forget that the majority of Croatians were in favor of NDH not the Ustašas but the NDH”, and welcomed their support. “I do not care if he was an Ustaša in the World War Two. I care that he is a Croat, that doesn't preach Ustaša ideology.¹⁰⁴ He even drew an equivalency with Serbian history, informing an interviewer in 1993 “Not all Ustašas in the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) were fascists, not all committed crimes, just as from the Serbian point of view, not all Chetniks were fascists and perpetrators of crimes”.¹⁰⁵

In 1990, Tudjman needed the votes of Croats who did not care for the WWII regime, and the money of émigrés who expressed a nostalgia for it. Furthermore, achieving power did not negate Tudjman’s need for émigré money. Their support was useful for remaining in power because they were rich and powerless within Croatia. Without a firm domestic base, émigrés like Sušak could wield influence in Croatia only through Tudjman. In turn, the émigrés’ relationship was with Tudjman rather than the HDZ as such, and hence only Tudjman could access the émigré community’s financial and other resources. Tudjman was as indispensable to the HDZ as Tito had been to the Yugoslav Communist party. Any effort by the HDZ’s domestic wing to oppose him would encounter his control of finances, whereas attempts by the émigrés to act independently would founder due to a lack of support. Playing the factions off was central to Tudjman’s political strategy until his death, as Mesić and a host of would-be émigré power-brokers would learn at the cost of their career.¹⁰⁶ Tudjman “publicly supported the moderate, reformist line on most issues, privately he consistently protected and supported the minority hardline conservatives and their policies”.¹⁰⁷ The HDZ might have been in power and

¹⁰⁴ Presidential Transcript of a meeting attended by Tudjman Franjo and Greguric Franjo on 27/01/1994. Annex III p.481 <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed January 12th 2019

¹⁰⁵ Interview: Franjo Tudjman - Waiting For Belgrade to Show the Initiative, Transitions Online, April 19th 1993, <http://www.tol.org/client/article/15055-interview-franjo-tudjman-waiting-for-belgrade-to-show-the-initiative.html?print>: Accessed October 17th 2019

¹⁰⁶ Oh, Seung Eun, ‘The Fourth Party Convention of the HDZ and the Internal Power Struggle’, *SEER: Journal for Labour and Social Affairs in Eastern Europe*, 1999, 2:2, pp.37-56. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/43291785: Accessed April 10th 2019

¹⁰⁷ Gagnon, V. P., Jr., *The Myth of Ethnic War: Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 2006). <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/londonschoolecons/detail.action?docID=3138491>: Accessed June 26th 2019

may have included diverse figures and factions but none were capable of taking action independently of Franjo Tudjman.

Tudjman took power at a moment when the actions of the Federal military authorities had created a feeling of crisis among large parts of the Croatian population that were not conducive to magnanimity. With the cooperation of local officers in the local Territorial Defense Force formations, the JNA launched a campaign to seize the Croatian and Slovenia TOs' weapons the very day the new DEMOS government was due to take office in Slovenia, and between the Croatian elections' first and second rounds. The Slovenes had prepared for this move, and were able to save more than half of the weaponry. In Croatia, where Račan had yet to hand over power to Tudjman, the disarmament proceeded more successfully.¹⁰⁸ The greatest impact of the Army's action was political rather than military in nature. The perception that Serbian officers of the TO and the Croatian Ministry of the Interior had cooperated with the Army provided a pretext for purging the security services.¹⁰⁹ This transformed the Croatian police into a political army of the HDZ. Miroslav Tudjman, the President's son and head of domestic intelligence, recalled how the "Croatian political leadership recommended that in newly created IC [intelligence community], only young persons should be employed, that do not have any communist past, that were proven patriots".¹¹⁰

If Tudjman believed in reconciliation between Croats across ideological lines, he did not extend this generosity to Serbs. "Tito let the Serbs discriminate against us", Tudjman explained to Ambassador Zimmerman on the morning of his election victory.¹¹¹ Reversing this meant not only ensuring the police and TO's "loyalty", but also reconstructing the cultural environment that, in his view, had "destroyed the moral values of Croatian society".¹¹² "Serbs are 11% of the population, but they make up 40% of government workers", he told Zimmerman, and "in the

¹⁰⁸ [Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis \(2002\). *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990–1995, Volume 2* \(Central Intelligence Agency: Washington, D.C., 2002\).](#)

¹⁰⁹ Judah, Tim, *The Serbs: History, Myth and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 1997, p.172).

¹¹⁰ Tudjman, Miroslav, 'The First Five Years of the Croatian Intelligence Service 1993-1998', *National Security and the Future*, 2000, 2:1, p.94, 98. <https://hrcak.srce.hr/18422>: Accessed June 11th 2019

¹¹¹ Zimmermann, Warren, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers* (Times Books: New York, 1996, p.73).

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p.72.

police and media the situation is even worse. Seventy-five percent of police are ethnic Serbs, and so are six and a half of the seven top editors.”¹¹³ ¹¹⁴ Regardless of the accuracy of the numbers, which seem to have excluded those who identified as Yugoslavs or other non-Croat categories from the 11% estimate of Croatia’s overall Serb population but then cited the % of non-Croats within given institutions, it demonstrated that the Croatian president saw proportionality, not civic equality, as “fairness”.

There is a parallel with the way in which Kosovo had become a symbol for Serbs, where it was necessary not only to remedy the Serbs’ actual concerns within the region but also symbolically to reinforce their victory by destroying any Albanian “claim” through autonomy. Similarly, HDZ went beyond the needs of pragmatism and sought to obliterate the idea that anyone other than the Croats had a rightful claim to Croatia. The new Croatian Parliament adopted the checkerboard flag used by the 1941-45 NDH which Tudjman defended by pointing to its usage since medieval times.¹¹⁵ The new constitution altered the definition of Croatia from the “national state of the Croats, the state of the Serbian people in Croatia, and the state of nationalities who live there” to one where the Serbs were just another minority, and refused to budge in the face of Serb outrage and American pressure on a matter of wording.¹¹⁶ The names of Marshal Tito and other “antifascist” fighters vanished from streets names to be replaced with those of individuals who, in many cases, had supported the other side in 1941-45.¹¹⁷ This seemed nonsensical to outsiders such as Zimmerman, and Hutchings, who described Tudjman as “a romantic lost in dreams of a glorious Croatian past that never was”, but so was the Serbian leadership, investing enormous political capital in a struggle to control a Kosovo which was less than 20% Serbian.¹¹⁸ It was also very real to the Serbs of Croatia, who had experienced

¹¹³ Ibid., p.74.

¹¹⁴ Tudjman, Miroslav, ‘The First Five Years of the Croatian Intelligence Service 1993-1998’, *National Security and the Future*, 2000, 2:1 p.94, 98. <https://hrcak.srce.hr/18422>: Accessed January 15 2018

¹¹⁵ Zimmermann, Warren, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers* (Times Books: New York, 1996, p.74).

¹¹⁶ Meier, Viktor, *Yugoslavia: A History of its Demise* (Routledge: New York, 1999, p.154). Mesić Testimony October 2nd 2002.

¹¹⁷ Slavenka Drakulic *Nazis Among Us* New York Review of Books May 27th 1993 Issue

<http://www.nybooks.com/gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/articles/1993/05/27/nazis-among-us>: Accessed June 11th 2019

¹¹⁸ Hutchings, Robert, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War* (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1997, p.312).

genocide at the hands of Ante Pavelić's forces using the exact same checkerboard flag, and proclaiming many of the same slogans that were used during the Second World War.¹¹⁹

The new Croatian leadership envisioned an independent Croatian nation. Tudjman spoke, in his victory speech, of the "1000-year dream" of Croatian independence, and the first HDZ Prime Minister Stipe Mesić, who would later break with Tudjman, said the goal of independence was set but the timeline was open to discussion. "One could not fix a deadline for this aim", according to Mesić, "or say whether it would become reality immediately or only in 10 years. The eventual goal, however, was fixed".¹²⁰ Nonetheless, Croatia's claim to the land populated by ethnic Serbs rested on Yugoslavian law, and Tudjman maintained Croatian support for Federal institutions as long as they exerted some influence on the JNA's actions.¹²¹

Relations with the US were initially cool. Zimmerman shared the sentiment of most of his subordinates in the region in 1989, who were also apt to see in the HDZ a dangerous revival of Ustaša memories. Robert Rackmales, his deputy in Belgrade, recalled that "Well, relations were strained with Tudjman too because what immediately happened is that...and he had some very unsavory characters coming in, he brought some people back from the United States with World War II backgrounds".¹²² Tudjman resented this, often citing extensive criticism of the US in the local press, but ultimately "Tudjman knew very well that his only chance of achieving independence was with a degree of western sympathy. So he would never have stiff-armed the United States the way Milošević did".¹²³ The Croatian state media highlighted any signs of recognition from Washington, such as when the state press reported in 1990 that "that "Dr. Tudjman (...) informed President Bush of the situation in Croatia and Yugoslavia". The meeting

¹¹⁹ Bookbinder, Paul, 'A Bloody Tradition: Ethnic Cleansing in World War II Yugoslavia', *New England Journal of Public Policy*, 2005, 19:2, pp99-109.

¹²⁰ Judah. Tim, *Croatia Reborn* New York Review of Books August 10th 2000 Issue

<http://www.nybooks.com/gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/articles/2000/08/10/croatia-reborn>: Accessed January 15 2018

¹²¹ Presidential transcript of the Minutes taken at the 39th session of the Supreme State Council of the Republic of Croatia, November 18th 1991 Annex III p. 8

<http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed January 12th 2019

¹²² Interview with Robert Rackmales by Charles Kennedy" May 11, 1995, in "Yugoslavia Country Reader" p.533

<http://www.adst.org/Readers/Yugoslavia.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p.533.

with Bush lasted under two minutes.¹²⁴

Tudjman lacked the ability to destroy or save Yugoslavia in 1990. While Tudjman had the power to intensify or deescalate the Serbs-Croats conflict within Croatia, it was beyond his ability to prevent Slovenia from leaving Yugoslavia. Once Slovenia left, conflict between Croats and Serbs within Croatia would become unavoidable not due to ancient hatreds or present fears, but because of insoluble differences over the future. It would be unacceptable to even the most Federalist Croats to remain in a Yugoslavia without Slovenia, and most Croatian Serbs shunned the prospect of becoming a minority in even a tolerant, independent Croatia. Tudjman and Milošević treated the ethnic tensions within Croatia, not as a conflict to be solved, but as an opportunity to maneuver for position prior to the real struggle which would follow Slovenia's departure. Both Milošević and Tudjman used the conflict to consolidate their respective positions as leaders of their people rather than as chief executives of their republic. This cast both leaders as villains in the eyes of Warren Zimmerman, who maintained that, if the Serbs could merely be persuaded to extend autonomy to the Kosovar Albanians, and the Croats to their Serbs, somehow this would influence the Slovenes and Yugoslavia would be saved.

¹²⁴ Bing, Albert, 'Kiss: Keep It Simple, Stupid: Critical Observations of the Croatian American Intellectuals During the Establishment of Political Relations Between Croatia and the United States, 1990-1992', *Review of Croatian History*, 2006, 2/2006:1, pp.179-205). <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/24046>: Accessed August 30th 2019

US-Serbian Relations

If the Slovenes and Croats were moving away from even a limited federal model for Yugoslavia, far more the democratic one envisaged by Marković, the group with the most to lose if the federal project failed was also on poor terms with the US. The Serbs had every reason of wish to preserve Yugoslavia, given their distribution across the republics of Bosnia and Croatia but, rather than serving as allies, they became the major targets of Zimmerman's resentment and ultimately the scapegoat for his failure.

Early on, Zimmerman came into conflict with Serbian president Slobodan Milošević, who had invited the foreign diplomatic corps to an event in Kosovo marking the 600th anniversary of the 1389 Serbian battle. Zimmerman, after calling a meeting of his staff at the embassy, decided not to attend, a decision also followed by the Western diplomatic corps with the exception of the Turkish Ambassador", who said he went because he had a different view of the battle since his country had won it".¹²⁵ Milošević took the snub personally. "Milošević was very upset, I learned later. He blamed me for the fact that almost none of the western embassies had gone, and he decided simply to refuse to see me", Zimmerman recalled later. "That was a boycott that lasted until January of 1990, so I had been in the country almost a year before I got to see the primary politician in it."¹²⁶

Zimmerman seemed to relish his non-relations with Milošević as proof of virtue.¹²⁷ Milošević may have responded by refusing to receive Zimmerman for almost a year, a mistake he later regretted but. from the perspective of Zimmerman's objective – preserving Yugoslavia, improving Kosovo's human rights situation – preemptively destroying a relationship with one of Yugoslavia's most powerful figures, especially over a purely symbolic matter, was unproductive and petty. Rather than initiating reconciliation, Zimmerman openly cultivated the Serbian

¹²⁵ Interview with Ambassador Warren Zimmerman by Charles Kennedy" December 10th 1996 p.124
<http://www.adst.org/OH%20TOCs/Zimmerman,%20Warren.toc.pdf>: Accessed April 20th 2014

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Zimmermann, Warren, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers* (Times Books: New York, 1996, pp.19-20).

opposition, especially Vuk Drašković and his wife, who dined regularly at the embassy.¹²⁸ Milošević himself told Zimmerman's successor, Rudy Perina, that Zimmerman was plotting with Drašković to kill him.¹²⁹ Had that been so, it would have made the policy pursued regarding the Serbian leader more justifiable from the perspective of American interests, indicating that, rather than intending to irritate and provoke the problem (Milošević), Zimmerman's dalliance with the Serbian opposition was an effort to remove it. Instead, Zimmerman merely ensured that his advice carried no weight with Milošević or his inner circle.

In alienating Milošević, Zimmerman misjudged the nature of his mission. Congressional interest in US Yugoslav policy was driven by "human rights" issues, and appeasing domestic criticism motivated the Bush Administration, but US policy embraced the actor, Marković, who represented issues that Congress did not care about – economic reform, unity – and alienated the actors who could influence the situation on the ground in Kosovo or Croatia; namely, Milošević and Tudjman. This was unfortunate - as the Serbs could not impose a settlement on the other republics of Yugoslavia, they could, as Zimmerman found with Marković's lack of influence over Kosovo, block one. Moreover, ultimately, while recognising that both the Serbs and Slovenes were threats to "democracy" and "unity", Zimmerman adopted a policy of coercion towards the former and appeasement towards the latter. This could not be justified on any grounds apart from personal hostility towards Milošević; namely, the reality that the goals of American policy, economic reform and democratisation, required Serbia to pay the transaction costs. Serbia, with much of Yugoslavia's outdated heavy industry and loss-making state companies, would suffer from any transition to a liberal market. Simultaneously, Serbia was being told that it had to "give up" Kosovo for Yugoslavia to join Europe. American officials such as Zimmerman were dimly aware of Kosovo's importance to to Serbs on an intellectual level, and accepted that Serbs had been mistreated under Albanian rule; Zimmerman later said that "on a scale of 10, we could say what the Serbs were doing to the Albanians was about nine,

¹²⁸ "Interview with Ambassador Warren Zimmerman by Charles Kennedy" December 10th 1996 in "Yugoslavia Country Reader" p.515. <http://www.adst.org/Readers/Yugoslavia.pdf>: Accessed April 20th 2014

¹²⁹ "Interview with Rudolf Perina by Charles Kennedy" 2006, in "Yugoslavia Country Reader" p.656. <http://www.adst.org/Readers/Yugoslavia.pdf>: Accessed June 20th 2017

but what the Albanians had been doing to the Serbs was about three”.¹³⁰ The US could seek to secure minority rights for Serbs in the province, and discourage Albanian moves to secede from Yugoslavia but Zimmerman called it an outrage that “Serbs are running Kosovo against the wishes of 90% of the people who live there”.¹³¹

Nonexistent Serb-American relations rendered Zimmerman’s hostility towards Tadjman an irritant rather than a threat to the Croatian leader. While finding Milošević malicious, Zimmerman had only contempt for a whom Tadjman he saw “not only as an ardent nationalist, which he was, but as an almost buffoon– like character, temperamental, humorless, racist toward Serbs, probably anti-Semitic, given to pomposity, and often poorly briefed”.¹³² Whatever Tadjman’s moral character, this was a blatant underestimation of a man who had already demonstrated the political skills to run circles around Milošević and perceive how Zimmerman’s feud with Milošević created a climate in which Tadjman could operate secure in the knowledge that, whatever issues he might have with Zimmerman, America would never back his Serbian enemies. The US had no leverage over anyone. The Serbs had no reason to work with an actor whom they regarded as hostile, the Slovenes knew the US would not coerce them, and the Croats knew that, whatever the US thought of them, it disliked the Serbs more.

¹³⁰ Interview with Ambassador Warren Zimmerman by Charles Kennedy” December 10th 1996 p.127 <http://www.adst.org/OH%20TOCs/Zimmerman,%20Warren.toc.pdf>: Accessed June 20th 2017

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² “Interview with Rudolf Perina by Charles Kennedy” 2006, in “Yugoslavia Country Reader” p.656 <http://www.adst.org/Readers/Yugoslavia.pdf>: Accessed June 20th 2017

Sleepwalking towards Calamity

By the end of 1990, it was evident that Marković's program was in trouble. "Faced with deepening national divisions, growing economic difficulties, and Republic's leaderships determined to go their own ways, Yugoslav federal institutions are divided and increasingly irrelevant",¹³³ Zimmerman wrote to Washington on September 27th 1990.¹³⁴ Zimmerman had no difficulty identifying the causes of failure. "Marković's efforts to straddle the fence on such controversial issues as confederation versus federation and Kosovo have eventually led to an erosion of support for his government", reported the Ambassador, unhelpfully failing to suggest which positions Marković should have adopted on those issues.¹³⁵ Writing four years later, Slaven Letica was blunter, writing in a review of Zimmerman's memoirs, "Unfortunately, Ante Marković is, like Warren Zimmermann himself, more of a loser".¹³⁶

American Intelligence Agencies agreed with Letica's assessment. On October 18th 1990, a National Intelligence Estimate entitled "Yugoslavia Transformed" was submitted to the National Security Council. Compiled by a team consisting of representatives of the Central Intelligence Agency(CIA), Defense Intelligence Agency(DIA), National Security Agency(NSA), and the Department of State, it predicted that Yugoslavia "will cease to function as a federal state within one year, and will probably dissolve within two".¹³⁷ "[T]he economic reform launched by then-Federal Prime Minister Marković and his effort to create an all-Yugoslav political party", would be unlikely to succeed as "it is highly improbable that Slovenia and Croatia will agree to surrender the authority to the federal government that he has sought in order to implement the reform's next phase". Noting that "the key question for Serbia is the fate" of the Serbs who

¹³³ "Whither Yugoslavia? Near Term Prospects" Cable, US Embassy Zagreb, to Thomas Niles, September 27th 1990, released July 28th 2016.

https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/september2014/F-2013-18415/DOC_0C05555263/C05555263.pdf: Accessed June 20th 2017

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Letica. Slaven, "The Last or the Lost American Ambassador?" CROATIAN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS REVIEW p.20. <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/10919>: Accessed August 3rd 2018.

¹³⁷ "Yugoslavia Transformed". NIE 15-90, October 18th 1990, National Intelligence Board, Approved for release May 2006. <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1990-10-01.pdf>: Accessed February 12th 2014

dwelling outside the borders of Serbia”, it predicted that “the most plausible scenario for inter-republic violence is one in which Serbia, assisted by disaffected Serbian minorities in the other republics, moves to reincorporate disputed territory into a greater Serbia, with attendant and bloody shifts of population”.¹³⁸ As for the American options, “Any US Statements in support the territorial integrity of the old federation will be used by federal leaders to strengthen their case against republic attempts to assert their independence”, while “statements by US officials on behalf of national self-determination will be used out of context by republic leaders to rally support within their national constituencies against central control”.¹³⁹

According to Hutchings, “No one in the policy community disagreed with the main thrust of these judgements -only with the smug finality with which they were rendered”, yet on September 27th 1990, Zimmerman sent a wire to Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Thomas Niles, possibly in response to the NIE, entitled “Whither Yugoslavia?” Warning that “over the next six months or so Yugoslavia is almost certain to experience a period of heightened change, instability and turmoil, as various efforts are made to come up with a new Yugoslav architecture”, he conceded that “Whether Yugoslavia will ultimately survive this process as a united country is an open question”, adding “we are not counting her out yet”.¹⁴⁰ Zimmerman’s optimism was encouraged by his personal contacts, noting that “while almost all Yugoslavs, including senior officials, acknowledge that a breakup of Yugoslavia is possible, at this point, few officials, judge a split to be inevitable”, and “Former Yugoslav President Drnovšek – a pro-Yugoslav Slovene – recently put the odds of Yugoslav survival at 50/50 in a private interview”.¹⁴¹

Scant attention is paid to the individual actors or to the “nationalist” factors in the NIE report, where the major focus is on economic and constitutional differences. Serbian, Slovenian, Albanian, and Croatian nationalism only feature as a consequence of the breakdown of the state due to the preceding factors. The “fate of the Serbs who dwell outside the borders of

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Whither Yugoslavia?, State Department Cable, September 27th 1990 p.1
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/september2014/F-2013-18415/DOC_0C05555263/C05555263.pdf:
Accessed February 12th 2014

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

Serbia” is a vital problem, but one which will only arise when Yugoslavia no longer exists. By contrast, Zimmerman’s cables seemed to blame all of Yugoslavia’s problems on Tudjman and Milošević. Zimmerman called Milošević “one of the most duplicitous politicians the Balkans has ever produced”, declaring “I have no doubt if Milošević’s parents had committed suicide before his birth rather than after I would not be writing a cable about the death of Yugoslavia”.¹⁴² Tudjman’s victory, “brought to power a crypto-racist regime hostile to Serbia and to the Yugoslavia it erroneously believed Serbia controlled.”¹⁴³ To argue that Yugoslavia’s problems were solvable, Zimmerman embraced the belief they were the artificial result of individual actors. If the resurgence of nationalism was being stirred up by a conspiracy of Milošević, the Serbian secret police, and Tudjman, then their removal would banish those tensions also. In a level of denial bordering on rewriting history, Zimmerman would assert in 1992 that “Slovenia would almost certainly have tried to remain in Yugoslavia if Serbia had a less aggressive leader”.¹⁴⁴ Zimmerman provided Washington with a counterintelligence assessment so “deterministic that it suggested no possible avenue for American policy that might avert or at least contain the violence attending Yugoslavia’s seemingly inevitable disintegration”.¹⁴⁵ What he failed to do was provide it with a viable policy. Nowhere was this more evident than in his dealings with the army.

¹⁴² Cable “Who Killed Yugoslavia” Warren Zimmerman to State Department May 12 1992
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/9-30-FY2013/F-2009-07813/DOC_0C17588420/C17588420.pdf:
Accessed February 12th 2014

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Hutchings, Robert, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War* (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1997,, p.306)

Building to a Crisis

Zimmerman's actor-based analysis exercised a pernicious influence over his judgement. Zimmerman blamed Milošević's actions in Kosovo for the decline in federal authority, rather than seeing that decline as contributing to Milošević's success. Similarly, Zimmerman seemed to view the tensions between the Army and Republican militias, not as an outgrowth of political tensions, but rather as the result of distrust and misunderstanding. It would be enough to lobby the individual actors to remain in communication with each other, and to avoid actions like trying to disarm the paramilitaries which might "raise tensions". To the half-Serb/half-Croat Minister of Defense Veljko Kadijević, the Ambassador conceded that "the Yugoslav army had a point in its desire to prevent the proliferation of armies in the still-sovereign state of Yugoslavia" and that "after all the United States had fought a rebel confederate army to maintain its unity, as Kadijević never tired of reminding me".¹⁴⁶ The proliferation of Armies was a political problem and Zimmerman instructed Kadijević on December 11th 1990 that "the proper role of a military is to defend the country, not to engage in domestic politics."¹⁴⁷ Two months later, following revelations of Croatian arms' smuggling, Zimmerman warned Kadijević that Yugoslavia could not be held together by force".¹⁴⁸ Zimmerman told Chief of Staff Blagoje Adžić that "the JNA was in danger of losing its favorable impression in my country. The threat of force against Croatia was going down badly...I urged a reasonable dialogue, without accusations and smear tactics. I assured Adžić that we were pressing the same approach on Tudjman".¹⁴⁹

Many American policy-makers would come to regret the JNA's failure to intervene. Craig Nathan, writing for the US Department of Defense, suggested that "in the confused circumstances of 1990-91 the JNA would have been acting within its prerogative had it seized

¹⁴⁶ Zimmermann, Warren, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers* (Times Books; New York, 1996, p.95).

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.96.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.99.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.101.

the initiative, declared a state of emergency as a pretext for dismissing nationalist leaders in Ljubljana, Zagreb, and Belgrade”.¹⁵⁰ While believing that “forces in the Fifth Military Region[encompassing Slovenia and much of Croatia] are among the Army's most capable units and probably could seize key republic facilities such as government buildings and communications facilities within hours,” CIA Analysts worried “the discipline of enlisted men would be gravely tested by orders to fire on civilians or even on TO units.”¹⁵¹ Consequently, “sustained or large-scale violence, as would probably occur in fighting against Slovene or Croatian forces, would, in our view, shatter the troops' discipline, carrying a risk that “the Army would probably fracture along ethnic lines, leading to wholesale desertions and intra-unit violence”.¹⁵² The JNA would get one shot, and it was on the issue of defining a political objective that its efforts would fail.

The Yugoslav Army's tragedy was not that the US prevented action, but that the Army could never decide where to aim its single shot. Borislav Jović later recollected his thoughts about the generals in April 1990:

*If they [generals] meet resistance I ask them whether we are in a position after that to get other democratically elected authorities that will be on our side. **No response**....we will not be able to find new democratic authorities, there will be bloodshed, we will have to enforce martial law for at least a year, we will be isolated from the world, through such action we would disrupt any effort for a peaceful solution to the political crisis, speed up Slovenia's secession, and reinforce the Albanians' resistance.*¹⁵³

While united by a desire to remove Kučan and Tudjman, the Army could never decide

¹⁵⁰ Nathan, Craig War in the Balkans 1992-2002, (Department of Defense Washington, 2003, pp.113-114) <https://archive.org/details/War-in-the-Balkans-1991-2002-2003/page/n16>: Accessed November 25, 2019

¹⁵¹ *Yugoslavia: The Military Dynamics of a Potential Civil War. Intelligence Assessment.* Central Intelligence Agency Office of European Analysis C00372340 March 1991 pp.2-3. <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1991-03-01.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p.3.

¹⁵³ B. Jović. *The Last Days of the SFRY*, (ICYT, Belgrade, 1992; pp.248-253 and pp.328-336)

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1-M87Kce4RWVHDAOj9Md2ssh5CnFTxUc5L>: Accessed 11 June 2019.

with whom they wished to replace the republican leaders. Future Croatian Chief of Staff General Anton Tus, then commanding the Yugoslav Air Force, recalled that “the West was not disinclined to tacitly support a coup d'état. My proposal was that Marković, in the capacity of prime minister should take over the Ministry of Defense and try to prevent a coup, both in Belgrade and in 'recalcitrant' republics”.¹⁵⁴ The Army's desire to receive orders from someone was demonstrated by the events surrounding the failure to elect Stipe Mesić as Yugoslav President. Arguing that, as a member of the pro-independence HDZ, Stipe Mesić could hardly be expected loyally to execute the duties of a President of a state whom he wished to cease to exist, on May 15th 1991, the Serbian bloc called for a vote, producing a 4-4 deadlock, leaving Yugoslavia without an executive.¹⁵⁵ Janez Drnovšek, the Slovene representative on the Presidency, saw “the crucial question at the time was who would control the army”, an interpretation that led to speculation that the army was behind the move to block Mesić.^{156 157} “The supreme commander of the armed forces can transfer the execution of definite actions of commanding and leading the armed forces to the federal secretary for national defense”, stated Article 20 of the Constitution, implying that, if the President were unable or unwilling to function, control of the army then devolved to the Secretary of National Defense.¹⁵⁸ Tudjman himself saw the army's hand behind the blocking of Mesić, informing the French daily newspaper *Le Monde* on April 17th that “The army cannot prevent Croatia from becoming a democratic country”.¹⁵⁹

It served the Croatian leadership's purposes to claim that the army was behind the

¹⁵⁴Gugo, Ante, *In the Eye of the Storm: Political, Diplomatic, and Military Struggle for Croatian Independence* (Createspace Independent Publishing Platform: Amazon Kindle, 2016. P. 390)

¹⁵⁵ Bohlen, Celestine (16 May 1991). "[New Crisis Grips Yugoslavia Over Rotation of Leadership](#)". *The New York Times*.

<https://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9D0CE0D7173BF935A25756C0A967958260&sec=&spon=&scp=8&sq=Mesić&st=cse>: Accessed May 24th 2010.

¹⁵⁶ Drnovšek, Janez, 'Yugoslavia in Retrospect: Lessons from the War', *Harvard International Review*, 2001, 23:1, pp.14-19. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/42762655. Accessed November 20th 2019.

¹⁵⁷ Laura Silber and Allan Little, *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation* (Penguin: London, 1997, pp.145-46).

¹⁵⁸ Marco Milivojevic, 'The Political Role of the Yugoslav People's Army in Contemporary Yugoslavia', in name, *Yugoslavia's Security Dilemmas: Armed Forces, National Defense and Foreign Policy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, date, pp.27-29).

¹⁵⁹ Gugo, Ante, *In the Eye of the Storm: Political, Diplomatic, and Military Struggle for Croatian Independence* (Createspace Independent Publishing Platform: Amazon Kindle, 2016. P. 115)

obstruction of Mesić, but this appears to have been untrue. Jović himself maintained that the motivation for blocking Mesić's accession had less to do with his views on Yugoslavia, and more with the lines of communication that the liberal Mesić kept open with the Serbian opposition, regarding which he was arguably a worse offender than more hardline members of the HDZ.¹⁶⁰ Rather than conniving over the move, the Army refused to take power, displaying behavior that Jović termed frivolous.¹⁶¹ Jović recalls that both Kadijević and Adžić confronted himself and Milošević after Mesić was blocked, with Kadijević calling this a "mistake", and Adžić threatening to arrest the Serbian leadership.¹⁶² At a time when the Army was searching for a source of authority and legitimacy, the decision to block Mesić, leaving the Presidency paralysed, denied it both when the clock was kicking down to the scheduled date of Slovenia's secession on June 26th.

Zimmerman joined Kadijević and Adžić in blaming Milošević for the crisis. "The first thing is that Slobodan Milošević and nobody else started this crisis, and he, along with his ally Jović, is pushing it to dangerous extremes", Zimmerman cabled on May 20th.¹⁶³ The Ambassador was correct insofar as he blamed Milošević for the crisis, but he proceeded to extend his case too far, concluding that Milošević's action represented not only a preconceived plot against Yugoslavia, but the only plot against Yugoslavia then in motion. "In his[Milošević's] tactics against Croatian President Tudjman, he has won every time, his negotiating techniques leaving the slower witted Tudjman gasping for breath", Zimmerman informed Washington, proceeding to warn that Slovenia would do "exactly what Milošević wants"; i.e. push for unilateral secession, "something Kučan understands", but "the Slovenes are too self-absorbed to care [about Yugoslavia]".¹⁶⁴ Zimmerman believed that the independence deadline announced by the Slovenes and Croats on June 26th was a negotiating tactic to force the seating of Mesić. The

¹⁶⁰ B. Jović. *The Last Days of the SFRY*, (ICYT, Belgrade, 1992; p.325) <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1-M87Kce4RWVHDAOj9Md2ssh5CnFTxUc5>: Accessed 11 June 2019.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*

¹⁶² *Ibid*. Jovic p.325;

¹⁶³ "Josephine Baker was right about Yugoslavia" Cable Ambassador Zimmerman to Washington May 20th 1991 p.2 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/9-30-FY2013/F-2009-07813/DOC_0C17588424/C17588424.pdf: Accessed March 20th 2018

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid*. p.5.

Croatian leadership believed that the Presidency's destruction would merely free up the army to attack Tadjman's government, as confirmed by Kadrijević's memoirs.¹⁶⁵ Tadjman was fully aware that Croatia was in no position to resist such a move.¹⁶⁶ Zimmerman allowed his obsession with Milošević to cause him to ignore the Slovenes' behaviour, who by this point were pursuing independence without "regard for what they knew would be tragic consequences for others", according to David Gompert of the US National Security Council.¹⁶⁷ They had announced their intention to leave Yugoslavia on June 26th 1991 back in December 1990, long before Mesić's seating had ever become an issue, and Mesić's non-election is not even mentioned on the Slovene government's official timeline of Yugoslavia's dissolution.¹⁶⁸

This was the context in which Secretary of State James Baker arrived in Belgrade on June 19th. Hitherto, Yugoslavia had attracted scant high-level attention. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney's planned visit to Belgrade in 1990 had been scrapped out of concern regarding the behavior of the army in Croatia and Kosovo.¹⁶⁹ On May 20th, President Bush spoke with Prime Minister Marković on the phone, pledging full US support for Yugoslav unity, but this was followed by a suggestion that Marković should look elsewhere for action. Bush proposed that Marković seek EC or other international mediation, asking if there was anything in his power that he could do to assist.¹⁷⁰ Baker's visit was not a result of this discussion, but rather of a diplomatic accident. Secretary of State Baker had been planning to visit Albania following a CSCE summit in June, and was informed that failing to visit Belgrade while stopping in Tirana would be seen as an insult. Consequently, he added a day-long trip to the Yugoslav capital to his

¹⁶⁵ Domazet-Loso, Davor, 'How Aggression Against Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina Was Prepared or the Transformation of the JNA into a Serbian Imperial Force', *National Security and the Future*, 2000, 1:1, pp.107-152. 2017 <http://hrcak.srce.hr/file/28763>: Accessed September 11th 2019

¹⁶⁶ Sadkovich, James J., 'Croatian Views of the Wars of the Yugoslav Succession', *Europe-Asia Studies*, 2009, 61:3, pp.519-534. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/27752257: Accessed 17 May 2019

¹⁶⁷ Gompert, David, 'How to Defeat Serbia', *Foreign Affairs*, July 1994, 73:4, pp.30 <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/yugoslavia/1994-07-01/how-defeat-serbia>: -47 Accessed June 10 2017

¹⁶⁸ *From the Plebiscite to the Declaration of Independence*, Slovenia: 10 Years of Independence, <http://www.slovenija2001.gov.si/10years/path/chronology/>: Accessed October 15th 2019

¹⁶⁹ Wiebes, Cees. *Intelligence And the War In Bosnia, 1992-1995*. Münster: LIT Verlag, 2003. <https://niod.nl/sites/niod.nl/files/II%20%20Intelligence%20and%20the%20war%20in%20Bosnia%201992%20-%201995%20-%20The%20role%20of%20the%20intelligence%20and%20security%20services.pdf>: Accessed 11 June 2019

¹⁷⁰ "Transcript of Call Between President Bush and Ante Markovic" May 20 1991 Bush Presidential Library <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/memcons-telcons/1991-05-20--Markovic.pdf>: Accessed June 20 2017

itinerary.¹⁷¹ Zimmerman, in his memoirs, implies that Baker arrived with the authority to make a concrete offer of economic aid, debt forgiveness, and with European consent, the prospect of accelerated entry to the European Community if Yugoslavia remained united.¹⁷² This *ad hoc* origin squares more with the confused messages delivered over the course of the Secretary's visit, which was undertaken without a full staff.¹⁷³ As for the "authority", economic aid, debt forgiveness, and possible EC membership were for Europe to grant, not America. Congress did not authorize any new aid and, having refused to do so when Kosovo was the only issue at stake in 1990, was highly unlikely to do so when conflict in that province had been compounded by fighting in Croatia. Baker was in Belgrade publicly as a representative of the CSCE, and only informally of the US.

The ambiguous origins of Baker's mission help to explain its message's ambiguous interpretation. Over a period of fewer than 24 hours, Baker met with Marković, along with the six republics' leaders. His remarks often seemed more like a stream of frustrated consciousness than a fully scripted message. He warned Slovenia against unilateral secession; Croatia that Yugoslavia's breakup posed a military threat to the republic's security; and Milošević that "in his opinion, Milošević had scuppered Marković's program and blocked the appointment of the Croat Stipe Mesić, and was responsible for the civil war that the country was heading for".¹⁷⁴ While all of this may well have been true, as Baker did not propose to do anything himself, or have the US do anything, it was reasonable for those whom he addressed to assume that he wished them to take action. By rebuking every interlocutor and actor in turn for their actions, he failed to clarify what they should do or, more importantly, what the US reaction to any further actions would be. Montenegrin President Momir Bulatović recalled that, in Baker's briefing notes, "there were just two lines [about Montenegro]:—the smallest republic in

¹⁷¹ Letica. Slaven, 'The Last or the Lost American Ambassador?', *Croatian International Relations Review* p.19 <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/10919>:Accessed 17 May 2019

¹⁷² Zimmermann, Warren, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and its Destroyers* (Times Books: New York, 1996, p.133).

¹⁷³ Klemencic, Matjaz, *The International Community and the FRY Belligerents Part II*, The Scholars' Initiative: Confronting the Yugoslav Controversies 2001-2005, 2005 <http://www.theslovenian.com/articles/klemencic2a.htm>: Accessed 18 June 2018

¹⁷⁴ Zimmermann, Warren, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and its Destroyers* (Times Books: New York, 1996, p.134).

Yugoslavia.—a possible fifth vote for Mesić”. Bulatović recalled being informed that “if we didn't vote for Mesić, there would be a great crisis and war would start. I agreed with him that war would start, but I didn't expect Mesić's election would stop it”.¹⁷⁵ The then-Slovenian Defense Minister Janez Janša recalls how “we received a report from the intelligence department according to which [US Secretary of State] Baker, after being presented with the ratio of forces between the defense capabilities of Slovenia and the units of the JNA, which was preparing itself for intervention, convinced himself of the possibility that the federal forces could put Slovenia in order in a little over two hours”.¹⁷⁶ When fighting broke out, “the JNA generals believed, they claimed, that they were ‘only doing what Mr. Baker told them.’”¹⁷⁷ Drnovšek claims that the Secretary's remarks served “as a signal that the international community would turn a blind eye if the federal authorities wanted to settle the situation in Yugoslavia and ensure the continued functioning of the federation”.¹⁷⁸ Baker himself insists that he argued against the use of force with Marković and the Army: “Resorting to force will be exploited by those who want to break up the union. The use of force would also lose for Yugoslavia the support of most of the international community”.¹⁷⁹ Baker claims that he foresaw declarations of independence, but not military efforts to realise them. “I told the President [Bush] that we'd need to work with the Europeans to maintain a collective non-recognition policy against any republic that unilaterally declared independence, as a lever to moderate behavior”, Baker later wrote,¹⁸⁰ but he had told Bulatović that what he wanted was Mesić's election and Slovenia to remain in Yugoslavia, merely cautioning against the risk of using of force. Even within the Administration, there were those who felt that the nuance of any such message had been lost in translation. Hutchings, who admits to advocating for the visit, concedes that this was a “mistake”, and that “by warning equally against unilateral declarations of independence and the use of force to hold

¹⁷⁵ Silber, Laura and Little, Allan, *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation* (Penguin: London, 1997, p.151).

¹⁷⁶ Jansa, Janez, *The Making of the Slovenian State 1988-1992: The Collapse of Yugoslavia* (Mladinska Knjiga Publishing House: Ljubljana, 1994, p.93).

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p.98.

¹⁷⁸ Drnovšek, Janez, *Escape From Hell*, p.281 [http://www2.gov.si/up-rs/2002-2007/jd.nsf/b66cde3ba98a76c7c1256f870030f873/b5c36aa78a51806fc1256f94000691e7/\\$FILE/29.pdf](http://www2.gov.si/up-rs/2002-2007/jd.nsf/b66cde3ba98a76c7c1256f870030f873/b5c36aa78a51806fc1256f94000691e7/$FILE/29.pdf): Accessed June 19 2018

¹⁷⁹ Baker, James, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace 1989-1992* (Perigee: New York, 1995, pp.478-483).

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

the federation together, we seemed to be sanctioning the latter if the Slovenes and Croats resorted to the former".¹⁸¹ Even German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher, who was later among the strongest champions of recognition for Slovenia and Croatia, only warned his Yugoslav counterpart, Budimir Lončar, "the YPA [JNA] should not act rashly or irresponsibly".¹⁸² By warning them against "rash or irresponsible" action, he also implied that "action" itself could be justified. At most, Baker, by issuing warnings but failing to make demands, allowed his interlocutors to believe what they wished to believe, a dangerous error when dealing with desperate men. At a meeting with Jović and Milošević following Baker's visit on June 21st, Kadijević declared "that Yugoslavia could be saved because Ante Marković was willing to help", adding that "The only reason why the international community is against us is the Mesić issue. We have to rectify the situation. Tomorrow we have to appoint Mesić".¹⁸³

Baker's visit did result in the election of Mesić to the Presidency. Nonetheless, it was universally considered a failure because avoiding conflict rather than Mesić's election was the US goal. Baker's failure to convey that message was to lead directly to the outbreak of violence upon Slovenia's secession. That violence would then be used to justify a policy of disengagement on the part of the US. American officials who would blame Yugoslav politicians for failing to listen, rather than themselves for failing to speak clearly. "The United States went in there in the person of Jim Baker and said, 'Here is how you should handle this. We don't need a war in the heart of Europe, etc.' But they were not going to listen", recalled Margaret Tutwiler.¹⁸⁴ "I think Baker knew at the time he came that the odds were long against his success", Zimmerman spun in his usual manner, conceding that Baker "did the best he could with a very bad hand of cards, and he failed."¹⁸⁵ "The real impact of the visit was on U.S. policy, because the intractability of the conflict and the bloody-mindedness of republic leaders led

¹⁸¹ Hutchings, Robert, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War* (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1997, pp.309-11)

¹⁸² Gugo, Ante, *In the Eye of the Storm: Political, Diplomatic, and Military Struggle for Croatian Independence* (Createspace Independent Publishing Platform: Amazon Kindle, 2016; p. 391)

¹⁸³ *ibid* p.391

¹⁸⁴ Interview with Margaret Tutwiler by Charles Kennedy" May 4, 1991, Institute for Diplomatic Studies p.88, <http://www.adst.org/OH%20TOCs/Tutwiler,%20Margaret%20D.toc.pdf>: Accessed 14 June 2015

¹⁸⁵ Interview with Ambassador Warren Zimmerman by Charles Kennedy" December 10th 1996 p.136-37. <http://www.adst.org/OH%20TOCs/Zimmerman,%20Warren.toc.pdf>: Accessed 14 June 2015

Secretary Baker and others to wash their hands of the whole mess”, Hutchings recalled.¹⁸⁶ Baker “thought they [Yugoslav leaders] were all to a greater or lesser extent, mostly greater, lying to him, dissembling”, Rackmales recalled later, adding “He also felt that he had gotten some assurances from the Slovenes that the Slovenes later said was just a misunderstanding on his part. So when the Slovenes a few days later went ahead and announced their independence, he felt personally betrayed.”¹⁸⁷ “It was a war only extreme nationalists such as Slobodan Milošević and Franjo Tudjman could want”, Baker reflected, adding “Once unleashed the conflict acquired a perverse logic of its own.”¹⁸⁸

Was Failure Inevitable?

It is easy to ascribe blame for Yugoslavia’s breakup, and various individuals have been attributed with responsibility for this. Slobodan Milošević’s takeover of the governments of Kosovo, Vojvodina, and Montenegro, along with their seats in the collective Presidency, created a security dilemma for the other republics. The victory of the HDZ at the Croatian elections and the subsequent provocations of Franjo Tudjman’s government created fear among the Serbian minority in Croatia, undermined moderates, and fed the flames of rebellion while provoking the Federal Army into barely concealed hostility. The Army, by repeatedly contemplating a coup but never acting, ensured that neither Croatia nor Slovenia could view the military as a neutral party and, as a consequence, its power seemed unlikely to survive any political settlement. The situation was arguably exacerbated by the changing international environment in which Yugoslavia’s importance was rapidly declining, there were global macroeconomic forces in the 1980s against which Belgrade had no defence, and the outside actors appeared unwilling, particularly the US, to invest more than words in mitigating them. More tragically, the Gulf War,

¹⁸⁶ Hutchings, Robert, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War* (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1997, pp.309-11).

¹⁸⁷ Interview with Robert Rackmales by Charles Kennedy” May 11, 1995, in “Yugoslavia Country Reader” p.533 <http://www.adst.org/Readers/Yugoslavia.pdf>: Accessed October 13th 2015

¹⁸⁸ Baker, James, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace 1989-1992* (Perigee: New York, 1995, pp.478-483).

and the rapidly-deteriorating situation in the Soviet Union meant that interested parties within the American Administration never took the time to reconcile their opposing views or to standardize the policy, with the result that, for over a year, Warren Zimmerman was allowed to run a borderline personal policy in which he appeared to view himself not as an outside referee but as a participant in the Yugoslav drama.

If these factors made Yugoslavia's collapse probably, it is unclear if any of them were responsible for its failure on June 26th 1991. Had Milošević not come to power, or the Serbs not seized control of four votes in the Federal Presidency, the threat of Serbian domination would have been removed, but the Yugoslav institutions would still have remained far too strong for the Slovenes yet far too weak for any serious economic reform of the type pushed by the international community. Had Tudjman and the HDZ failed to win the Croatian elections, or been less provocative once they did so, it would have been harder for Serbian radicals to find support and Croatia's international image would have improved, but this may merely have delayed events rather than change them. Any Croatian government may have been forced to demand greater autonomy if not outright independence from a Yugoslavia lacking the Slovenes. Serbian radicals who identified any independent Croatian state with the Ustaše would still have pushed for "Serbian minority in Croatia" autonomy, still drawn support from a Serbian government that was anxious to avoid alienating nationalist opposition groups, and the border issue would still have become zero-sum. Moreover, it was unlikely that a military coup, had the Army leadership summoned the will to execute it, would have achieved anything more than provoking the conflict it wished to avoid.

Only one actor had both the ability to decide whether Yugoslavia would self-destruct on June 26th 1991, and the motive to light the match. Slovenia had neither the internal divisions present in Croatia, nor the reason to fear, as Slobodan Milošević did, that it would be punished if it unilaterally defied the international community by seceding. Unlike Tudjman and Milošević, the Slovenes never took any interest in the talks about saving Yugoslavia. Had they decided to delay their declaration of independence, it is impossible to see how the Croats would not have followed, and the crisis could have been postponed, perhaps indefinitely. It was to the Slovenes

that Baker aimed his appeal in Belgrade, and it was their rejection which made any action or desires by the other actors irrelevant.

CHAPTER 2: From War to Recognition back to Cold War

On the night of June 25th 1991, Slovenia declared independence, seizing control of the border posts. For Ljubljana, the move seemed low-risk. With Mesić still unseated, there was no constitutional civilian commander-in-chief, and Slobodan Milošević had pledged not to oppose Slovene secession.¹⁸⁹ This calculation proved flawed. Persuaded by Baker's visit that the US opposed secession, the JNA command turned to Prime Minister Marković, who ordered the JNA to retake control of the frontier posts on the Slovenian border.¹⁹⁰ Marković's dubious assumption of executive power in ordering the army into Slovenia might have paid dividends had the operation proved successful. Even a stalemate might have lent prestige to both his cabinet and army command, creating an alternative centre of authority to the republican leaders. Instead the military operation was a fiasco. At 3,000, the JNA force was far too small to pose any serious threat to the more than 30,000-strong Slovenian territorial defense forces, which rapidly blocked JNA columns on the roads and blockaded barracks throughout Slovenia. The JNA's morale, already low, collapsed, accelerating the Yugoslav army's disintegration.

If success has many fathers, failure is an orphan, and the fiasco launched a round of recriminations between Marković and Kadijević in which they competed to deny any responsibility for, and implicitly control over, events. Kadijević blamed Marković for pushing the JNA into an adventure for which they were poorly-prepared and could never win.¹⁹¹ This was unfair. Kadijević and his generals alone were responsible for the military failures of an operation of which Marković had no role in planning. Marković's mistake was to compound the political damage caused by Kadijević failures, first by approving the operation, then by denying this action. The latter was particularly insidious. Had Marković stood by the operation even after it "failed" to defeat the Slovenes, he would have been able to enter subsequent negotiations over

¹⁸⁹ "Descent to Dissolution, March–June 1991." In Glaurdić, Josip,, *The Hour of Europe: Western Powers and the Breakup of Yugoslavia* (Yale University Press: New Haven, 2011, pp.148-72).

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5vm608.11.>: Accessed March 11th 2019.

¹⁹⁰ *Escape From Hell*, p.281 <http://www2.gov.si/up-rs/2002->

[2007/jd.nsf/b66cde3ba98a76c7c1256f870030f873/b5c36aa78a51806fc1256f94000691e7/\\$FILE/29.pdf](http://www2.gov.si/up-rs/2002-2007/jd.nsf/b66cde3ba98a76c7c1256f870030f873/b5c36aa78a51806fc1256f94000691e7/$FILE/29.pdf): Accessed June 11th 2019

¹⁹¹ Doder, Dusko and Branson, Louise, *Milošević: portrait of a tyrant* (Free Press: New York, NY, 1999, p.94).

Yugoslavia's future as a key player with influence over the Army. The Generals would have found a source of legitimate authority separate from the state presidency, allowing them to support Yugoslavia without allying itself with Milošević's Serbian ambitions. Markovic's refusal to commit himself had exposed the Army command to charges of mutiny. Despite contemporary awareness from Zimmerman that "He [Marković] was a party to the army's attack on Slovenia", the Prime Minister tried to throw the blame onto a "rogue" military command:¹⁹² "Everybody supported this. This was the right kind of policy and it is a very bad thing that we did not stick to that policy longer than we did".¹⁹³ "The son of a gun acted as usual — washing his hands off of everything", Kadijević complained of Marković.¹⁹⁴ Zimmerman labelled the Slovenes' handling of the conflict "the most brilliant public relations coup in the history of Yugoslavia", but it was Markovic's failure to disclaim responsibility which exposed the Army leadership to charges of mutiny and helped legitimise the subsequent hostile behaviour of the Croats and later the Bosnian Muslims towards the JNA.¹⁹⁵

Another casualty of Markovic's alibi regarding the Army having gone "rogue" was the international effort to keep Yugoslavia together under its existing institutions. Mesić was finally elected President on June 30th, while the EC negotiated an agreement between the Republic's leaders at the Croatian resort of Brioni on July 7th, under which the declarations of independence of Slovenia and Croatia would be suspended for three months while talks were held on Yugoslavia's future. In the meantime, the *status quo* of June 25th would be restored, implying that the JNA would be able to reoccupy positions along the Austrian border.¹⁹⁶ Slovene acceptance of the Brioni Accords had been a close-run thing, and it was only after personal

¹⁹² Interview with Ambassador Warren Zimmerman by Charles Kennedy" December 10, 1996 in "Yugoslavia Country Reader" Accessed June 14th 2014 p.510 <http://www.adst.org/Readers/Yugoslavia.pdf>; Zimmermann, Warren, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers* (Times Books, New York, 1996, pp.142-143); Silber, Laura and Little, Allan, *The Death of Yugoslavia* (Penguin: London, 1996, pp.154-155, 161).

¹⁹³ Milošević trial p.458 http://www.icty.org/x/cases/slobodan_Milošević/trans/en/020218IT.htm

¹⁹⁴ Kreso, Muharem, *The Aggression against the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina – Planning, Preparation, Execution*, (Institute for the Research of Crimes Against Humanity and International Law, Sarajevo 2005. P.395) Accessed June 10th 2019 http://www.institut-genocid.unsa.ba/pdf/E_knjiga1.pdf

¹⁹⁵ Zimmermann, Ambassador, p.13; idem, Zimmermann, Warren, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers* (Times Books: New York, 1996, p.145).

¹⁹⁶ Joint Declaration of the EC Troika and the Parties directly concerned with the Yugoslav Crisis (Brioni Accord) Accessed December 9th 2018.

https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/HR%20RS%20SI_910707_Brioni%20Declaration.pdf

appeals by Hans Dietrich Genscher and Dutch Foreign Minister Hans Van De Broek that it was passed by the Slovene Assembly.¹⁹⁷ As a concession to critics, second resolution requiring the Janez Drnovšek to introduce a proposal in the Yugoslav Presidency for the withdrawal of the Army from Slovenia. According to Drnovšek, “The Slovene leadership was sceptical, believing it to be very unrealistic, although they agreed that it would not hurt to propose such a resolution in the Assembly.”¹⁹⁸ To the shock of the Slovenes, the Serbs themselves embraced the resolution. Alleging that Marković was issuing “illegal orders” to the JNA, Borislav Jović at the July 12th meeting of the Federal Presidency embraced the Slovenian proposal to withdraw the JNA from Slovenia.¹⁹⁹ The proposal was passed on July 18th with the four “Serbian” votes plus that of Slovenia, with Bosnia and Macedonia abstaining and Mesić in opposition.²⁰⁰ The move consolidated Serbia’s control over both the military, where it “invalidated the legitimacy of all those within the Yugoslav Army who had been willing to take up the cause of Yugoslav unity”, and the civilian institutions which the Slovenes soon abandoned.²⁰¹

The Slovene-Serb move transformed Croatia’s position. Zimmerman, in his otherwise alarmist wire of 20 May, had noted that Tudjman was playing “smart” by avoiding any sort of provocation on Croatian territory, although the Ambassador was concerned about the pressure that the Croatian president was under from his own hardliners.²⁰² Tudjman’s determination to avoid being drawn into open conflict was reinforced by international warnings to “hold back Slovenia since the EC prefers Yugoslavia because its disintegration would spark the fires of conflict throughout the Balkans and would also potentially stimulate the disintegration of the

¹⁹⁷ Drnovšek, Janez *Escape From Hell*, p.271. [http://www2.gov.si/up-rs/2002-2007/jd.nsf/b66cde3ba98a76c7c1256f870030f873/b5c36aa78a51806fc1256f94000691e7/\\$FILE/28.pdf](http://www2.gov.si/up-rs/2002-2007/jd.nsf/b66cde3ba98a76c7c1256f870030f873/b5c36aa78a51806fc1256f94000691e7/$FILE/28.pdf): Accessed November 25 2019

¹⁹⁸ Ibid p. 272

¹⁹⁹ Testimony of Borislav Jović, November 20th 2003. CTY transcript of Slobodan Milošević’s trial, p.29423

http://www.icty.org/x/cases/slobodan_Milošević/trans/en/031120IT.htm: Accessed November 25 2019

²⁰⁰ Libal, Michael, *Limits of Persuasion: Germany and the Yugoslav Crisis, 1991–1992* (Greenwood Publishing Group: Westport, Connecticut, 1997, p.22).

²⁰¹ Gunneriusson, H. *Bordieuan Field Theory as an Instrument for Military Operational Analysis. New Security Challenges*. Palgrave Macmillan London, 2017) https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-65352-5_7

²⁰² “Josephine Baker was right about Yugoslavia” Cable Ambassador Zimmerman to Washington May 20th 1991 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/9-30-FY2013/F-2009-07813/DOC_0C17588424/C17588424.pdf: Accessed November 25 2019

USSR”.²⁰³ According to Croat historian Dusan Bilandzic, only reluctantly was Tudjman forced to “hold onto Kučan by his coattails because if he [ran] off, Croatia [would] be doomed”²⁰⁴. The [Croatian] declaration of independence on June 26th was nominal, and Tudjman failed to withdraw Croatia’s representatives from the federal institutions. The three-month moratorium on independence already set an expiration date regarding Croatia’s ability to utilise those institutions. If Slovenia left at the end of the three-month period, Mesić would again find himself in a minority in the Presidency, and Croatia would probably have to follow Slovenia out of the Federation, regardless of its immediate preferences. A Presidency without Slovenia was one in which “centralists” controlled a majority via the votes of Kosovo, Serbia, Montenegro, and Vojvodina.

The events of July 12th made Slovenia’s departure a certainty after three months. Frustratingly for Mesić, with the JNA withdrawing, the Slovenes increasingly wanted nothing further from Yugoslavia’s central institutions, even while nominally remaining members. Janez Drnovšek recalls that, throughout July and August, Mesić “called us [SFRY Presidency] together over every minor conflict, and every clash between the Serbs and Croats. The sessions were endless, even running through the night, and with a permanent impasse of four votes to four.”²⁰⁵ Drnovšek’s suggestion that it was too much trouble for Slovenia’s representative to concern himself with “every clash between the Serbs and the Croats” is a fitting epithet for Slovenia’s role in the breakup of the country. Tudjman himself would bemoan, a decade later, how cleanly the Slovenes had got away with destroying Yugoslavia. “That Tribunal was formed to be against us, then against Milošević and others”, the Croatian President complained in 1999, shortly before his death. “No mention of Kučan, who contributed the most to the breakup of

²⁰³ Dušan Bilandžić, *Povijest izbliza: Memoarski zapisi 1945-2005* (Zagreb: Prometej, 2006; p.363) Glaurdić, Josip *The Hour of Europe: Western Powers and the Breakup of Yugoslavia*, pp.119-47. Yale University: New Haven, 2011, p. 144). www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5vm608.9: Accessed August 30th 2019

²⁰⁴ Glaurdić, Josip, *Ibid.* p. 144

²⁰⁵ Drnovšek, Janez *Escape From Hell*, p.284. [http://www2.gov.si/up-rs/2002-2007/jd.nsf/b66cde3ba98a76c7c1256f870030f873/b5c36aa78a51806fc1256f94000691e7/\\$FILE/29.pdf](http://www2.gov.si/up-rs/2002-2007/jd.nsf/b66cde3ba98a76c7c1256f870030f873/b5c36aa78a51806fc1256f94000691e7/$FILE/29.pdf): Accessed November 25 2019

Yugoslavia, etc.”²⁰⁶

Without the Slovenes, Mesić faced a hostile majority, which vastly reduced his ability to influence the military or wider federal government’s policy. Croatia, which had every interest in preventing fighting in June 1991, from July onwards had an interest in not allowing it to end lest the international community should decide it preferred Croatia in a Slovenia-less Yugoslavia, especially if it had a Croat President in Mesić, to the chaos of secession. On July 18th 1991, when Tudjman visited German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Foreign Minister Genscher, the Germans refused to discuss recognition and merely repeated their opposition to any party’s use of force.²⁰⁷ Tudjman now needed to “internationalize the conflict in Croatia, rather than to fight back with military force, hoping that the European Community and the United States would recognize Croatian independence, and put pressure on Belgrade to halt its aggression against Croatia”.²⁰⁸ That required two actions; establishing that the situation was unstable, and, secondly, placing the blame for this on the JNA, with the implication that, as long as the army remained on Croatian soil, the fighting would continue.

²⁰⁶ Meeting between the President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr. Franjo Tudman, and the Ministry of Defence on April 13th 1999, Annex III p.625 <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed June 11 2019

²⁰⁷ Libal, Michael, *Limits of Persuasion: Germany and the Yugoslav Crisis, 1991–1992* (Greenwood Publishing Group: Westport, Connecticut, 1997, pp.24-25).

²⁰⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis (2002). *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995*. Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency vol 1 p.91.

Yugoslavia on Washington's Backburner

The outbreak of fighting in Yugoslavia came at a bad time for the US. Events in the Soviet Union, on edge since the bloodshed in Lithuania in early 1991, along with fighting in the Caucasus between Azeris and Armenians, seemed to be reaching its culmination with the completion of a new Union treaty.^{209 210} On August 1st, even before the failed coup in Moscow, President Bush made a speech in Kiev to Ukrainian legislators warning that "Americans will not support those who seek independence in order to replace a far-off tyranny with a local despotism. They will not aid those who promote a suicidal nationalism based upon ethnic hatred".²¹¹ European elites also shared these concerns, even in Germany, where Helmut Kohl had informed the Lithuanian Prime Minister earlier in 1991 "With [Gorbachev], we know where we stand; what comes afterward, we have no idea".²¹² The Balkans situation was viewed mostly from the perspective of its potential impact on these more important concerns elsewhere, by either setting a precedent or providing a distraction. James Baker later reflected that "unlike in the Persian Gulf, our vital interests were not at stake" in Yugoslavia, so "the greater threat to American interests at the time lay in the increasingly dicey situation in Moscow, and we preferred to maintain our focus on that challenge, which had global ramifications for us, particular with regard to nuclear weapons".²¹³ This was echoed in Britain: "If at the end of the

²⁰⁹ [UNION TREATY DRAFT COMPLETE -- GORBACHEV - ADVISOR NOW SEES USSR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC - "REFORMATION" STRENGTHENING.](https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/Dec16Jan17\F-2008-02192\DOC_0C17572100\C17572100.pdf) U.S. Department of State
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/Dec16Jan17\F-2008-02192\DOC_0C17572100\C17572100.pdf: Accessed August 30th 2019

²¹⁰ [WGZB01: BALTIC WORKING GROUP SITUATION REPORT NO. 130 - AS OF 1500 EDT 05/29/91](https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/MarApr2016\F-2013-19468RIF\DOC_0C05604675\C05604675.pdf) U.S. Department of State
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/MarApr2016\F-2013-19468RIF\DOC_0C05604675\C05604675.pdf: Accessed August 30th 2019.

²¹¹ [Goldgeier, James M.](#); McFaul, Michael, *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy Toward Russia After the Cold War* (Brookings Institution Press: Washington DC, 2003, p.26).

²¹² "Challenges of Democracy, 1990." *The Hour of Europe: Western Powers and the Breakup of Yugoslavia*, by Glaurdić, Josip (Yale University Press: New Haven, 2011. P.91), www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5vm608.9: Accessed June 14th 2019

²¹³ Baker, James, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace 1989-1992* (Perigee: New York, 1995, p.636).

day, the Serbs and the Croats and the Slovenes have decided they're going to have a civil war", commented British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd, adding "it's not something at the end of the day we can prevent".²¹⁴ In the 36-page National Security Strategy issued by the Bush Administration in July of 1991, the only mention of Yugoslavia lies in observation that "powerful centrifugal forces in Yugoslavia are particularly worrisome."²¹⁵

The US had also recently committed to an open-ended humanitarian intervention in Iraq. Following the American victory in the Persian Gulf War, opponents of Saddam Hussein's regime had risen in rebellion only to be brutally crushed by the Iraqi army. The result was a humanitarian catastrophe, especially in the north, home to Iraq's Kurdish population. On April 5th 1991, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 688, demanding that the Iraqi government cease attacking its civilian population, two days after which Secretary of State James Baker visited Northern Iraq.²¹⁶ The US launched Operation Provide Comfort to ensure the delivery of humanitarian supplies, which involved a commitment to deploy up to 8,000 troops.²¹⁷ This would be succeeded by Operation Provide Comfort II on July 24th, which would involve more than 42,000 sorties by US aircraft by 1996.²¹⁸ There was little desire to set precedents for Soviet hardliners or ex-Soviet Republics' nationalists by rewarding either "unilateral secession" or "rogue military action".²¹⁹ The Soviets themselves vetoed discussion of OSCE action in

²¹⁴ Kempster, Norman, "U.S Condemns Use of Force to Preserve Unity" *The Los Angeles Times*, July 3rd 1991 http://articles.latimes.com/1991-07-03/news/mn-1554_1_united-states: Accessed December 10th 2018.

²¹⁵ *National Security Strategy of the United States*, The White House, July 1 1991, P. 12

<https://bush41library.tamu.edu/files/select-documents/National%20Security%20Strategy%20Report%201991.pdf>: Accessed November 25, 2019

²¹⁶ Friedman, Thomas A., "AFTER THE WAR; Baker Sees and Hears Kurds' Pain In a Brief Visit at Turkish Border" *The New York Times*, April 9th 1991

<http://www.nytimes.com/1991/04/09/world/after-the-war-baker-sees-and-hears-kurds-pain-in-a-brief-visit-at-turkish-border.html?pagewanted=all>: Accessed August 30th 2019.

²¹⁷ "Operation Provide Comfort II" Global Security.org

http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/provide_comfort_2.htm: Accessed June 14th 2015

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ United States. Congress. (1992). *Command and control of Soviet nuclear weapons: dangers and opportunities arising from the August revolution : hearing before the Subcommittee on European Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Second Congress, first session, September 24, 1991*. Washington: U.S. G.P.O.

<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007608480>: Accessed November 20 2019

Yugoslavia on July 3rd due to a fear that this might set a precedent for the Baltic states.²²⁰

The Bush Administration was also coming under increasing pressure over foreign policy by the opposition Democratic party. Having spent fifteen years attacking Republicans as warmongers for believing that the Cold War could be won instead of embracing peaceful coexistence, the Democrats had, in early 1991, begun demanding American support for the breakup of the Soviet Union. Senators Joseph Biden of Delaware and Claiborne Pell of Rhode Island had taken the lead in holding hearings attacking the Bush Administration's failure to support the Baltic States' independence.²²¹ In June, they held hearings alleging that the Administration's failure to support Boris Yeltsin (who was cold-shouldered during visits to the US), combined with putting all of America's eggs in the Gorbachev basket, was inviting disaster.²²² Following the failure of the August coup in Moscow, the Democrats claimed that the failure to recognize the Soviet collapse's inevitability was undermining the planning for the potential fallout. In mid-September, when Yeltsin and Gorbachev were still trying to patch up some form of Union, the Democratic-controlled Senate Foreign Relations Committee pressed the Administration to focus on the control of nuclear weapons in the event of a Soviet breakup.²²³ For decades, the Democrats and much of the American left had argued that the efforts to subvert or undermine the Soviet Union posed the greatest threat to world peace.

²²⁰ Zeitler: Deutschlands Rolle bei der völkerrechtlichen Anerkennung ..., pp.119-120 p. 28

Quoted <https://www.cla.purdue.edu/si/Team5Report.pdf> Accessed March 22nd 2019

²²¹ United States. Congress. (1991). *Soviet disunion: the American response : hearings before the Subcommittee on European Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Second Congress, first session, February 28 and March 6, 1991*. Washington: U.S. G.P.O.

<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007608454>: Accessed November 20 2019

²²² United States. Congress (1991). *The Soviet crisis and the U.S. interest: future of the Soviet military and future of the Soviet economy : hearings before the Subcommittee on European Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Second Congress, first session, June 6 and 19, 1991*. Washington: U.S. G.P.O.

<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007608468?type%5B%5D=all&lookfor%5B%5D=soviet%20crisis%20&ft=:>
Accessed November 20 2019

²²³ United States. Congress. (1992). *Command and control of Soviet nuclear weapons: dangers and opportunities arising from the August revolution : hearing before the Subcommittee on European Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, One Hundred Second Congress, first session, September 24, 1991*. Washington: U.S. G.P.O.

<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007608480>: Accessed November 20 2019

Now, they argued, that it was the Administration's attempts to keep it together that threatened violence.

Privately, Bush Administration officials admitted, by autumn 1991, that the Soviet Union was unlikely to survive in its current form. A briefing prepared for President Bush on the eve of the October Middle East Peace Conference, held in Madrid, painted a picture of a Soviet Union whose collapse was no longer in question. "The authority of the central government is probably in irreversible decline", the briefing declared, and "the rise in nationalist sentiment is reaching dangerous proportions. Unless handled carefully by the Center, Ukraine, and Russia, there is a rising fear among many here that Civil War could threaten, before concluding at some point we may have to recognize that the Soviet/Russian empire has collapsed and that efforts to maintain a union whose time has passed could themselves become a source of instability."²²⁴ In particular, Ukraine posed a problem. As Baker observed "The Baltics, maybe you could have another little Finland up here. But, if Ukraine were to go, that would clearly mean the end of the Soviet Union and it might trigger conflict between Ukraine on the one hand and Russia on the other".²²⁵ The Ukraine had an extensive Russian population, and was the base of the Soviet Black Sea Fleet. Events in Yugoslavia had demonstrated how dangerous nationalist tensions could be when arbitrary legal borders ran along national lines, and where extensive military and strategic assets created incentives for ill-intentioned actors to exploit such tensions. Soviet officials played up these fears, with Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze informing US Ambassador Strauss that "all Russia might rise up with demands, including the return of the Crimea".²²⁶

There were many in the Administration who feared that even if recognition of the Ukraine was inevitable, it should be conditioned on concessions regarding Russian minority

²²⁴ What to tell Gorbachev at Madrid, US Embassy Moscow to Secretary Baker October 24th 1991. https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/OctNov2014/F-2009-02091/DOC_0C17558477/C17558477.pdf: Accessed March 13th 2016

²²⁵ Interview with James Baker by Sara Sievers, September 25th 1996, End of the Soviet Union Oral History Project, <http://oralhistory.org.ua/en/interview-en/599/>: Accessed July 29th 2018.

²²⁶ Ambassador's Meeting with Shevardnadze regarding Ukraine Referendum, US Embassy Moscow to Washington https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/OctNov2014/F-2009-02091/DOC_0C17558558/C17558558.pdf: Accessed July 29th 2018.

rights and Soviet military installations on its territory. "I took the position that this was political leverage that we should retain to use against the new Ukrainian leadership, the leadership of the independent Ukraine to make sure that Ukraine agreed to the norms of behavior involving nuclear weapons which were stationed on their soil, that we were very anxious to see Ukraine and Kazakhstan and others agree to", Baker recalled, "President Bush went with my view on that as opposed to the view of the Defense Department say, my friend Dick Cheney, who wanted to see us recognize Ukraine the minute after the vote occurred".²²⁷

Cheney's position had the enthusiastic support of both parties in Congress. On November 21st, the Senate passed a resolution by Dennis DeConcini of Arizona calling for the administration to recognize the Ukraine.²²⁸ Three days later, the President received a letter from the Congressional leaders declaring "It is vitally important that the America side with the people of Ukraine, in favor of freedom and democracy, instead of helping to prop up a Kremlin still being run by barely reconstructed communists."²²⁹ The presence of signatories Newt Gingrich and Rick Santorum, two Republican Congressmen associated with the right of the party, indicated serious conservative discontent. At a Heritage Foundation event held on November 27th, leading conservative foreign policy thinkers demanded that the Bush Administration abandon Gorbachev and provide greater support and recognition for Yeltsin.²³⁰ Conditioning recognition would therefore have required the Bush Administration to oppose both parties in Congress and a large portion of their own political supporters on an issue where the outcome, Ukrainian independence, was already certain. At the end of November 1991, the US announced that it would recognize the Ukraine even before the December 1st referendum on secession which passed with 90% support.²³¹

The decision of the German leaders to embrace the cause of Slovene and Croat

²²⁷ Interview with James Baker by Sara Sievers, September 25th 1996, End of the Soviet Union Oral History Project, <http://oralhistory.org.ua/en/interview-en/599/>: Accessed July 29th 2018

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ "Yeltsin's First Hundred Days" Report, Heritage Foundation, November 27th 1991

<http://www.heritage.org/europe/report/boris-yeltsins-first-100-days>: Accessed September 3rd 2019

²³¹ John Thor-Dahlberg "Ukraine Votes to Quite the Soviet Union" *The Los Angeles Times*, December 3rd 1991 http://articles.latimes.com/1991-12-03/news/mn-504_1_soviet-union: Accessed October 14th 2019

recognition closely mirrored how the Bush Administration had been driven by domestic pressure to embrace that of Ukraine. In 1990, left-wing Social Democrats and Greens had appeared lukewarm regarding German reunification, and been rewarded with defeat and destruction at the 1990 elections. The Greens even failed to reach the threshold for election to the Bundestag.²³² Having missed the train of history once, they were determined not to allow it to leave the station without them a second time. The Yugoslav crisis provided a chance to outflank Kohl's Christian Democrats and Genscher's Free Democrats' ruling coalition as champions of national self-determination for Eastern Europeans living under Communist rule. In February, Greens' leader Hans-Christian Ströbele had suggested that the only viable solution for Yugoslavia was a "confederation of sovereign states based on the principle of self-determination".²³³ After June 26th, they were joined by the Social Democrats, who denounced aggression by the "Serbian" army. The fact that the military campaign in Slovenia had been ordered by Marković and was opposed by the Serbian leadership was beside the point. The fighting or "aggression" by the "Serbian" army had to end.

Left to their own devices, Bush and his advisors would have clearly preferred a Yugoslav settlement on the model of abortive Brioni accords, deferring questions of constitutional reform, borders, and independence to some future date while restoring the *status quo* of Yugoslavia's existing institutions in the interim. While such an option would have been welcomed by Tudjman, Markovic, and Kadijevic, albeit for different reasons, neither Milošević nor the Slovene leadership had any interest in accepting such an outcome and had all but killed it on July 12th. Nevertheless, the Bush Administration clearly hoped to salvage something from Brioni even after this date and remained sufficiently strong politically to reject feelers from Zagreb and Ljubljana throughout the summer. These included an awkward effort by Margaret Thatcher to act as a go-between for Slovenian Prime Minister Peterle. "Thatcher told us she was not asking for a meeting with the President for Peterle, but only wanted us to note

²³² Williams, Carol J. "[Greens, E. German Leftists Join Election Forces](https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1990-09-24-mn-955-story.html)" *The Los Angeles Times* September 24th 1990 <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1990-09-24-mn-955-story.html>: Accessed October 14th 2019

²³³ Crawford, Beverly, 'German Foreign Policy and European Political Cooperation: The Diplomatic Recognition of Croatia in 1991', *German Politics & Society*, 1995, 13:2(35), pp.1-34, p.6, www.jstor.org/stable/23736387: Accessed September 3rd 2019

he would be in Washington and wanted to meet someone; she had suggested the Vice President ", read a State Department cable.²³⁴

The US policy nevertheless depended on the local actors themselves cooperating to impose a "Brioni" solution. Here the prospects were doubtful. The Slovenes had been uncooperative prior to June 26th and, with the JNA gone, Mesić's struggle to retain them in Belgrade seemed futile. Milošević, by backing the JNA's withdrawal from Slovenia, may not have played to his historical reputation as a warmonger, but reinforced the existing preconceptions in Washington that he constituted a primary obstacle to a settlement. It was now almost inevitable that, when American efforts breathe life into Brioni failed, Milošević (fairly) and the Serbs (perhaps unfairly) would receive a large share of the blame. Milošević's obstruction was probably an assumption of any policy by this point. More serious were questions about the commitment of the actors on whom the US policy had counted to support such an approach: Markovic, Mesić, Kadijevic, and, on the periphery, Tudjman. All four had an interest in Brioni succeeding once it had been agreed yet, over the course of the summer, the commitment of each one of them to making it work appeared increasingly dubious.

Official US statements in July accepted Marković's line that the operations in Slovenia had been rogue, with President Bush on July 3rd urging President Mesić to "ensure that civilian control over the military is re-established and peace restored", even, as a senior State Department official stated that the Administration was unaware whether or not the army were out of control.²³⁵ Tudjman's actions indicated that the question was immaterial to the Croatian leader. On July 17th, the same day as the public announcement of the vote to withdraw the JNA from Slovenia, Tudjman appointed a nine member crisis staff and formed a national unity government.²³⁶ When Slovenia left, Croatia would have to follow and, at that point, would have to fight the Army or abandon the areas claimed or controlled by Serbian forces. Both Tudjman and his Serbian foes were aware of this and, over the summer, efforts were made to

²³⁴ Hurd Puts Off Recognition of Slovenia and Croatia in the Near Term 27 August 1991 US Embassy London p.3 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/MarApr2016/F-2013-19468RIF/DOC_OC05604754/C05604754.pdf: Accessed December 10th 2018

²³⁵ Norman Kempster "U.S Condemns Use of Force to Preserve Unity" *The Los Angeles Times*, July 3rd 1991. http://articles.latimes.com/1991-07-03/news/mn-1554_1_united-states: Accessed December 10th 2018

²³⁶ ('Army pledge: no attack plan against Croatia'), NRC Handelsblad, July 18th 1991.

gain possession of territory, a conflict into which the Army units stationed on Croatian territory could not help but be drawn. On July 28th, regular forces provided artillery support for the shelling of Vukovar while, on the weekend of August 26th, regular JNA units under Ratko Mladić shelled and took the Croat town of Kijevo.²³⁷ Tudjman appeared hopeful, like the Europeans and Americans, that Mesić would be able to assert some authority over the Army. Unlike the Americans, he must have known this control could only be temporary, and unlikely to survive long beyond the Brioni deadline. While the international actors hoped, in summer 1991, that Mesić, by remaining in place as President could “control” the Army and end the fighting, Tudjman hoped that Mesić, by remaining President and failing to control the Army, would demonstrate to the US and Europe the futility of any efforts to keep Yugoslavia together. This failure would leave the Western powers no choice but to pressure the Army and Serbs to leave Croatia.

As for Mesić, the Yugoslav President seemed to go out of his way to inform every listener that his efforts were doomed. On August 17th, Mesić accused the Army of “pure aggression”, warning that his “further role in the presidency legalizes this dirty war in Croatia”.²³⁸ Mesić made a few gestures towards mediation, but even these seemed designed to fail. When, on August 31st, Tudjman issued an ultimatum demanding the full withdrawal of the JNA within 24 hours, Mesić persuaded the Presidency to accept EC mediation in exchange for Tudjman’s suspension of the ultimatum. This served the Croatian objective of involving the European Community in internal Yugoslav affairs at little cost. Tudjman ominously warned, on September 6th, that this was the last chance for a peaceful outcome.²³⁹ A week later, Mesić staged a theatrical stunt of his own. On September 12th, Mesić informed the international diplomatic corps and media that he had given the Army 48 hours to return to barracks, an instruction which had no legal force without approval by a majority of the Presidency. Mesić had not even bothered to submit it for consideration. “We regard this as an attempt to create

²³⁷ Harden, Blaine, ‘30 Reported Dead in Croatia After Night of Battles’, *The Washington Post*, July 28th 1991.

²³⁸ More Yugoslavs Roll into Croatia; Civilian Leader Ponders his role,” *The New York Times*, August 17th 1991 <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/08/19/world/more-yugoslavs-roll-into-croatia-civilian-leader-ponders-his-role.html>: Accessed December 10th 2018

²³⁹ Office of Russian and European Analysis, *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990–1995* (Central Intelligence Agency: Washington, D.C., 1991, p.111).

reasons for an attack against the military in Croatia”, Jović recorded on September 12th, adding “If the military does not obey, it will be declared an outlaw and an occupying force in Croatia.”²⁴⁰ In his efforts to demonstrate his lack of responsibility for anything that was taking place, Mesić found an unlikely ally in Prime Minister Ante Marković. Whether Marković was engaged in a cynical game of reputation salvaging in preparation for a post-Yugoslav career or had genuinely convinced himself that the army acted in Slovenia against his will, he had by now adopted the position he would maintain for the next two decades, even in the face of overwhelming evidence at the ICYT.²⁴¹ The Marković of 2002 was a pathetic figure, disoriented by evidence that contradicted truths of which he seemed to have convinced himself. In autumn 1991, those “truths” were a propaganda coup for Mesić. Marković’s assertion that the Army’s move against Slovenia was the result of a plot with the Serbian leadership was absurd, and Mesić, who had voted against Milošević’s proposal to withdraw the Army from Slovenia, knew this better than anyone, but the narrative that the Army was a “Serbian Army” in league with the Serbian leadership rebutted claims that it was a “national” army, and Marković’s pronouncements about a “RAM” plan between the Army and the Serbian leaders to break up Bosnia counteracted Western concerns about Tudjman’s own ambitions in regards to Bosnia.²⁴² Rather than working to save Yugoslavia, Marković also did what he could to torpedo the so-called “Belgrade Initiative” during summer 1991, a compromise which would have seen a united Bosnia remain in Yugoslavia, characterizing it as an effort to “coerce” the Bosnian Muslims into remaining in a Serb-dominated state.²⁴³ On October 7th 1991, the Yugoslav Airforce bombed the Presidential Palace in Zagreb, ostensibly in response to a blockade of the Zagreb barracks, while the Prime Minister was meeting with Tudjman and Mesić, an act Marković described as “attempted murder”. Kadijević and the Defense Ministry denied the

²⁴⁰ Ibid., p.112.

²⁴¹ CTY transcript of Slobodan Milošević’s trial, November 18th.

²⁴² "Ante Marković's Testimony". Bosnia Report. Bosnian Institute (36). October–December 2003.

http://www.bosnia.org.uk/bosrep/report_format.cfm?articleid=1020&reportid=162: Accessed March 23rd 2016

²⁴³ Situation Update September 20th 1991 US Embassy Belgrade p.6

https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/september2014/F-2010-02559/DOC_OC17517597/C17517597.pdf: Accessed 23 August 2019

authorization of any such action, and no one was even injured.²⁴⁴ The commander of the Yugoslav Air Force at the time was Zvonko Jurjević, a Croat who remained loyal to Yugoslavia until his suspension in January 1992, after five EC observers were killed by helicopters under his command.²⁴⁵ For Marković, this attack constituted “proof” that the Army was “out of control”. By autumn 1991, Marković had, perhaps unwittingly, become a propaganda tool in Croatia’s effort to portray the fighting as the result of Serbian aggression rather than the army’s response to the attacks on its barracks in Croatia. When Mesić was removed from the Presidency, no calls for Marković to resign emanated from Zagreb.

Far from colluding, the Serbian leadership remained in the dark for much of 1991 regarding the Army’s goals. “The military...is intoxicated with the idea of a Yugoslavia which no longer exists”, Jović complained on June 27th.²⁴⁶ On September 12th, two days before the blockade of the JNA barracks by Croatian forces, Jović recorded that “I once again raised the key question, for the umpteenth time, the question that constantly preoccupies me: Is our goal to defend, with the military, the new borders of the nations that want to remain in Yugoslavia, or is it to overthrow the Croatian Government?”²⁴⁷ Nor did international observers believe these charges. In May 1991, Zimmerman had wired Washington to say that “the Army is not in Milošević’s pocket, particularly now that he is clearly trying to destroy Yugoslav unity while, on July 7th, Kadijević was profiled approvingly in the *New York Times* as a “moderating force within the military” with a “propensity for compromise”, whose initial appointment Slovenia welcomed, and who was “described as a keen on keeping the army out of politics”.²⁴⁸ As the

²⁴⁴ “Yugoslav Planes Attack Croatian Presidential Palace” *The New York Times*, October 8th 1991 <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/10/08/world/yugoslav-planes-attack-croatian-presidential-palace.html>; Accessed June 28th 2019

²⁴⁵ Landay, Jonathan “Preliminary report on EC helicopter downing expected Friday” UPI January 9th 1992

<https://www.upi.com/Archives/1992/01/09/Preliminary-report-on-EC-helicopter-downing-expected-Friday/4847694933200/>; Accessed October 14th 2019

²⁴⁶ Jović Entry February 25th 1991. From ICYT Translation Uploaded to Daniel Berman Google Drive, <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1-M87Kce4RWVHDAOj9Md2ssh5CnFTxUc5>; Accessed June 11th 2019

²⁴⁷ Ibid. Jović entry for September 12th 1991.

²⁴⁸ John Tagliabue “Conflict in Yugoslavia: How Yugoslav Hold off Full-Fledged Civil War”, *The New York Times*, July 7th 1991 <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/07/07/world/conflict-in-yugoslavia-how-yugoslavs-hold-off-full-fledged-civil-war.html>; Accessed May 7th 2019; Josephine Baker was right about Yugoslavia” Cable Ambassador Zimmerman to Washington May 20th 1991.

fighting spread, international observers retained their confidence in Kadijević's desire to deescalate, even if they were losing faith in his ability to do so. DJ Van Houten, who headed the EC mission from September 13th, blamed the Croats for raising the tensions, warning that the "JNA, which seems to have been rather reticent in places like Vukovar, does not seem prepared to accept further provocation".²⁴⁹ "Fietelaars [the Dutch Ambassador] repeated the Dutch view that the Croats are most responsible for the latest fighting, and he downplayed the Genscher/De Michealis appeal for a JNA withdrawal as intended for a domestic audience", Zimmerman wired to Washington on September 16th.²⁵⁰ On September 17th, the deputy head of the EC mission informed a US Official that "the past weekend represented "the three worst days" he has seen in Croatia."²⁵¹

"Although Kadijević displayed some astute behavior during the crisis of the early 1990," a later American officer would conclude the general "was not prepared for partisan politics," and particularly ill-equipped to manage international public opinion.²⁵² In June, German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher's plane was prevented from landing at Ljubljana by the JNA, laying the groundwork for a needless grudge.²⁵³ Kadijević also made an enemy of Gorbachev. After telling Soviet Defense Minister Dimitry Yazov during a visit to Belgrade in 1989 that his "first task should be the removal of the treacherous forces headed by Gorbachev."²⁵⁴ According to his adjunct Dragan Vuksic, "Kadijević repeated several times that

https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/9-30-FY2013/F-2009-07813/DOC_0C17588424/C17588424.pdf: Accessed May 7th 2019

²⁴⁹ Libal, Michael, *Limits of Persuasion: Germany and the Yugoslav Crisis, 1991–1992* (Greenwood Publishing Group: Westport, Connecticut, 1997, p.51).

²⁵⁰ Situation Update 16 September 1991 p.2 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/september2014/F-2010-02559/DOC_0C17517588/C17517588.pdf: Accessed September 3rd 2019

²⁵¹ Deputy EC Mission Chief Gives Downbeat Yugoslav Combatants, Zagreb Consulate to US Department of State, September 17th 1991 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/september2014/F-2010-02559/DOC_0C17517591/C17517591.pdf: Accessed September 3rd 2019

²⁵² Boyce, Brian "Political Soldiers and Democratic Institution Building in Bosnia-Herzegovina" Thesis for Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey CA, September 2006 p. 56 <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a456931.pdf>: Accessed December 3 2019

²⁵³ Crawford, Beverly, 'German Foreign Policy and European Political Cooperation: The Diplomatic Recognition of Croatia in 1991', *German Politics & Society*, 1995, 13:2(35), pp.1-34, p. 6 www.jstor.org/stable/23736387: Accessed September 3rd 2019

²⁵⁴ Vuksic, Dragan "Political – Military Relations Between the Republic of Serbia and the Russian Federation in the Process of Dismemberment of Yugoslavia" in Third Report of the Monitoring Serbia-Russia Relations, Forum for International relations from Belgrade, p.63 https://www.isac-fund.org/download/Monitoring_Russia-Serbia_relations_Report%20III.pdf : Accessed September 3rd 2019

the Russians are in the mud up to their knees and that they are in no shape to help themselves, let alone us”, but the relationship earned the JNA the hostility of the fading Soviet leader as well as Boris Yeltsin.²⁵⁵

Mentally trapped in the Second World War, Kadijević saw the world through the lense of great power rivalries and failed to grasp that the international community prioritized ending the fighting in Yugoslavia above all else. If it were impossible to preserve Yugoslavia without the prospect of continued violence, then virtually every external actor would abandon support for Yugoslav unity. Germany and the US were united on this issue. What separated them was disagreement as to whether recognizing Slovenia and Croatia’s unilateral declarations of independence would end the fighting as Germany came to believe, or intensify it by encouraging the parties to dig in, as Washington believed. The historical German links with Croatia in the region may have influenced these calculations on the margin but, ultimately, they were a result of a cost-benefit analysis. That meant that, although the US continued to believe that recognition would provoke increased conflict, as the fighting increased even without recognition, the American motivation for opposing recognition declined.

Under Kadijević, the JNA decisively lost this political war. During a visit to Washington in July, Prime Minister Antall of Hungary raised concerns about the fighting’s impact on ethnic Hungarians, but blamed the Croats and Slovenes for moving too early.²⁵⁶ By the following month, when his Foreign Minister visited Washington, the Hungarians were urging the US to restrain the JNA in order to prevent further violence, a point made at meetings with Vice President Quayle and Eagleburger.²⁵⁷ German journalist Egon Scotland’s death in Croatia ten days after Tudjman’s visit to Bonn on July 22nd galvanized domestic opinion in Germany, while the Yugoslav army’s withdrawal from Slovenia created concerns even among the supporters of

²⁵⁵ Vuksic, Dragan “Political – Military Relations Between the Republic of Serbia and the Russian Federation in the Process of Dismemberment of Yugoslavia” in Third Report of the Monitoring Serbia-Russia Relations, Forum for International relations from Belgrade, p.63.
https://www.isac-fund.org/download/Monitoring_Russia-Serbia_relations_Report%20III.pdf : Accessed September 3rd 2019

²⁵⁶ Jezensky, Geza, ‘Hungary and the Break-up of Yugoslavia - a Documentary History Part 1’, *Hungarian Review*, 2011 http://www.hungarianreview.com/article/20110310_hungary_and_the_break-up_of_yugoslavia_-_a_documentary_history_part_i: Accessed September 3rd 2019

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

Yugoslav unity in some form that this was no longer viable.²⁵⁸ On September 4th, Genscher informed both Tudjman and Kučan that, if the conference on Yugoslavia failed and the violence continued, Germany reserved the right unilaterally to recognize their independence.²⁵⁹ “With every shot by your cannons and tanks, the hour of recognition moves closer”, Genscher announced publicly later that same day.²⁶⁰ This was a curious remark to make if he wished the conference to succeed, regardless of whether Tudjman had ever desired a peaceful settlement. The Germans had shifted from believing that some form of Yugoslav unity was the best way of restoring peace, to a conviction that only a recognition of the seceding Republics, Slovenia and Croatia, could bring an end to the conflict.

American officials, however, retained faith in Kadijević even after they abandoned Mesić and Marković but, by September, their communications were sounding more like ultimatums. On September 18th, Zimmerman urged Chief of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell to make a personal appeal by phone to Defense Minister Kadijević to restrain his forces in Croatia. Conceding that “it is impossible to determine which side was responsible for setting off the fighting in Zagreb”, he warned that the “Yugoslav national army bears a special responsibility to exercise maximum restraint given its constitutional obligations to protect the lives of all Yugoslav citizens.”²⁶¹ Two days later, Admiral Stane Brovet met with the American charge, Robert Rackmales, whom he informed “that the army had launched a major offensive against Croatia, which he justified on the basis of Croatia’s complete disregard for the EC-brokered cease-fires of September 1st and 19th, and the JNA soliders’ intolerable conditions, trapped in garrisons in Croatia. Brovet initially claimed that the JNA objectives were limited to freeing the blocked garrisons, but later stated that the JNA aims to take back army facilities seized by Croatia.” Brovet stressed that Kadijević had apparently telephoned Tudjman three

²⁵⁸ Libal, Michael, *Limits of Persuasion: Germany and the Yugoslav Crisis, 1991–1992* (Greenwood Publishing Group: Westport, Connecticut, 1997, p.25).

²⁵⁹ Tanner, Marcus, *Croatia: a nation forged in war* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 2001, pp.261-263).

²⁶⁰ Libal, Michael, *Limits of Persuasion: Germany and the Yugoslav Crisis, 1991–1992* (Greenwood Publishing Group: Westport, Connecticut, 1997, p.44-45.)

²⁶¹ Recommended Demarche to the JNA September 18th 1991 US Embassy Belgrade p.5
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/september2014/F-2010-02559/DOC_0C17517596/C17517596.pdf:
Accessed September 3rd 2019

times to secure the lifting of the JNA garrisons' blockades, "showing emotion in his voice when speaking of the trapped JNA soldiers, Brovet left no doubt that the JNA has reached its limit and has decided to use all force necessary to achieve its limited goal".²⁶² On September 21st, Kadijević rejected Tudjman's appeal for another cease-fire, on the basis that "Tudjman had consistently failed to implement cease fire agreements in the past".²⁶³ That same day, US Consul General in Zagreb Michael Einck had urged Mario Nobile, a senior aide to Tudjman, to end the blockade of the JNA military court in Zagreb to ensure the safety of the nearby American consulate, but received no response, adding credibility to Kadijević's complaint.²⁶⁴ "Aware that support for the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia was growing in Germany, he [Tudjman] made sure that a number of the cease-fire arrangements that Carrington and Wijnaendts had negotiated with him and General Kadijević of the JNA would not work", Glenny wrote two years later, highlighting that "Tudjman not only failed to keep his word but on the day that one of the agreements was to take effect, Croatian forces *Stormed* the barracks in Bjelovar and confiscated the JNA's equipment."²⁶⁵ US officials, under increasing domestic pressure from the Democrats, and already angry at Milošević' behavior, lashed out publicly at the Army. On September 25th, James Baker delivered a speech to the UN in New York City, where he accused the JNA of seeking to create a "little Yugoslavia" by ousting Slovenia, and dividing Croatia.²⁶⁶ Despite these accusations, the speech also implied that the US objection regarding the JNA was not to keep Slovenia in Yugoslavia but rather, to the extent to which it cooperated with a "Serb plot", to kick Slovenia out and divide Croatia. Even at this late date, Baker held out hope for a return to Brioni.

²⁶² Admiral Brovet Confirms General JNA Offensive against Croatia, September 21st 1991 US Embassy Belgrade, from Robert Rackmales
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/september2014/F-2010-02559/DOC_0C17517599/C17517599.pdf: Accessed September 3rd 2019

²⁶³ Yugoslavia Update: September 21st 1991 1300 Hours, Robert Rackmales, US Embassy Belgrade p.2
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/september2014/F-2010-02559/DOC_0C17517602/C17517602.pdf: Accessed September 3rd 2019

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Glenny, Misha, *Yugoslavia: The Great Fall* New York Review of Books March 23, 1995 Issue ,
<http://www.nybooks.com/gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/articles/1995/03/23/yugoslavia-the-great-fall>: Accessed September 3rd 2019

²⁶⁶ Baker's speech in New York. See, Europa Archiv 21/1991, S.D 552; and Archiv der Gegenwart, November 8th 1991,

Baker's speech, and US contacts with the JNA, may have convinced Tudjman that the dangers posed by continued US support for any zombie Brioni policy which invested legitimacy in the JNA and Federal government in Belgrade outweighed the benefits of keeping Mesić in Belgrade. "There is a scenario of overthrowing of our authorities in Croatia", the Croatian President characterized US policy to his cabinet the following spring, adding that "Tudjman in Croatia, Milošević in Serbia are the main causes of disintegration of Yugoslavia, and therefore, if we removed them, the circumstances would be created for the restoration of Yugoslavia in some form."²⁶⁷ Tudjman responded by withdrawing Mesić from the Presidency. If neither the Americans nor the Army bothered treating him as President, there was little to gain from Mesić remaining in Belgrade. If Mesić remained in office, Croatia legally remained part of Yugoslavia, inviting international pressure for settlement based on a continued common state. Mesić ceased arranging meetings after September and, on October 3rd, he and the Slovenian representative ceased attending meetings altogether. Taking the Croats and Slovenes at their word that they were no longer part of Yugoslavia, a majority of the remaining members representing the Serb-dominated governments of Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia and Vojvodina then voted to allow the Presidency to function with a reduced quorum.²⁶⁸ The Croats implicitly recognized this "coup" as legal by withdrawing all of their remaining representatives from the Yugoslav institutions. The Croats and Slovenes nevertheless contested the Serb claim that the two republics had seceded from a Yugoslav state which continued to exist, instead insisting that their withdrawal represented the dissolution of the entire state. The continued existence of the Presidency therefore represented a "Serbian Coup", designed to seize Yugoslavia's assets.²⁶⁹ The Croats were engaged in as much of a coup against Yugoslavia as the Serbs, with Bosnia as the target. Having come under fire for refusing the JNA's requests to provide reservists for

²⁶⁷ Presidential Transcript of Meeting of the HDZ Presidency on 10 March 1992. Annex III p.37, <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed June 11 2019

²⁶⁸ Binder, David, "Yugoslav Presidency Splits: Another Truce is Unheeded" *The New York Times*, October 4th 1991 <http://www.nytimes.com/1991/10/05/world/yugoslav-presidency-splits-another-truce-is-unheeded.html>: Accessed September 3rd 2019

²⁶⁹ *ibid*

action in Croatia, the Izetbegović government now had to decide whether it accepted the Serbian interpretation by continuing to attend the Presidency, recognizing a rump government dominated by Serbia, or the Croatian argument that the state no longer existed, which represented a decision for independence and inevitable war.²⁷⁰

Washington faced the same dilemma after the Croat withdrawal from the Presidency. Recognizing a Presidency controlled by Slobodan Milošević would have been domestically toxic even had it not been repugnant to policy-makers still smarting over his cooperation with the Slovenes to undermine Brioni. Recognizing the Croatian withdrawal meant accepting that there was no Yugoslav Presidency, nor could there be one without Croatia. While not quite a recognition of Croatian independence, it recognized a Croatian right to destroy Yugoslavia, amounting to the same thing in Tudjman's hands. If Yugoslavia was destroyed, the only alternative would be recognition of the Republics. Tudjman grasped this position's fundamental logic, as did former British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington when he opened his conference in London to mediate the conflict by accepting the "only proper starting point, namely that Yugoslavia was already on the verge of collapse, as neither Slovenia nor Croatia would give up their desire for independence".²⁷¹ Resisting recognition, the US still found itself driven by the unacceptability of recognizing a rump Serbian Yugoslavia in the same anti-Serb direction.

²⁷⁰ Tus, Anton (2001). "The war up to the Sarajevo Ceasefire". In Magaš, Branko and Žanić, Ivo, *The War in Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina 1991-1995* (Frank Cass Publishers, London, 2001, p.58).

²⁷¹ Stoltenberg, Thorvald, *A Thousand Days, Peace Negotiators in the Balkans* p.35
<http://sorryserbia.com/2012/stoltenberg-english/>: Accessed September 3rd 2019

From Yugoslav to Croat-Serb Conflict Management

By mid-October 1991, American policy-makers had concluded that Yugoslavia's breakup was inevitable. The US "almost certainly will not recognize Slovenia or Croatia in the absence of a negotiated settlement", Deputy Secretary of State Thomas Niles reiterated to Austrian Foreign Minister Mock on October 19th, adding "The USG does not require that Yugoslavia remain whole, but we will not support recognition of a unilateral act of secession."²⁷² Recognition now became a bargaining chip. "Earned recognition was one of our key points of leverage over the combatants", Baker recalls.²⁷³

US policy required asymmetric concessions from the parties involved. While Croatia would be required to make concessions on minority rights, the Serbs would be required to relinquish Serb-populated territory in exchange. Serbian claims, whether justified or not, in Washington's eyes, were seen to conflict directly with the goal of general settlement, which singled out the Serbs as a particularly obstructive force, deserving of specific punishment. When the US backed an arms embargo on Yugoslavia in September at the UN, this could be seen as much (if not more) of an anti-Croatian move as an anti-Serb one, given that it was the former who had made greater use of the international arms market.²⁷⁴ On October 15th, the US had joined the EC in imposing selective sanctions on the republics of Serbia and Montenegro, indicating that Washington increasingly viewed their behaviour as the cause of destabilization.²⁷⁵

²⁷² Yugoslavia and the EC Mediation Effort, October 10th US Department of State
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/5-FY2014/F-2013-09365/DOC_0C05418479/C05418479.pdf
Accessed September 3rd 2019

²⁷³ Baker, James, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace 1989-1992* (Perigee: New York, 1995, p.638).

²⁷⁴ UN Security Council, *Security Council resolution 713 (1991) [Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia]*, September 25th 1991, S/RES/713 (1991), available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f16f1c.html> [accessed February 16th 2017]

²⁷⁵ Jovanovic, Predrag and Sukovic, Danilo (2001). "A decade under sanctions". Transparentnost..
<http://www.transparentnost.org.rs/stari/dokumenti/d012.html>: Accessed September 3rd 2019

Congressional pressure exacerbated this anti-Serb shift in policy. On October 25th, Senator Alfonso D’Amato (R-NY) introduced a resolution calling for Croatia and Slovenia’s immediate recognition.²⁷⁶ Three days later, the Senate passed without dissent a resolution by Senators Claiborne Pell (D-RI) and Al Gore (D-TN), urging the administration to work with the UN to support a peacekeeping force in Croatia.²⁷⁷ Yugoslavia, Gore argued, “no longer reflects the concept of self-determination, but rather the reappearance of imperialism in all its arrogance. It no longer serves any geostrategic purpose for us”.²⁷⁸ On November 7th, Gore, Pell, and D’Amato introduced a resolution calling for Croatia and Slovenia’s outright recognition and an economic embargo on Serbia if “Serbian aggression” continued, which was referred to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.²⁷⁹ The term “Serbian aggression” had now entered the US politicians’ lexicon.

Congressional sentiment had always been anti-Serb, especially over Kosovo, but two things had changed. First, the actors were different. The leading hawk on Kosovo, Senator Robert Dole of Kansas, was not only a Republican, but the Republican Party’s leader in the US Senate. Whatever criticisms he made of the Bush Administration, he was inherently invested in its success, and therefore his goal was always to pressure the Administration to change its policy rather than use criticisms of the Administration’s foreign policy towards Yugoslavia to damage it politically. While D’Amato was a Republican, Gore and Pell were Democrats, and Gore had run for President in 1988. It was the Democratic Party’s decision to adopt an anti-Belgrade position which proved crucial. Anti-interventionist, and often sympathetic to left-leaning regimes in the developing world, Congressional Democrats were the natural constituency for an “impartial” line, friendly towards Belgrade. The Democratic Party’s decision to adopt an aggressive position in favour of the secessionist republics created a situation in which Dole, having represented the leading pro-Albanian voice for years in the Senate, now

²⁷⁶ US Senate, “The War in Croatia,” Congressional Record, vol. 137, October 25th 1991, S15244

²⁷⁷ US Senate, “Senate Resolution 210: Relative to Violence in Yugoslavia,” Congressional Record, vol. 137, October 28th 1991, S15299.

²⁷⁸ US Senate, “The War in Croatia,” Congressional Record, vol. 137, October 25th 1991, S15244

²⁷⁹ US Senate, “Senate Resolution 216: Relative to Recognition of Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosova, and Macedonia,” Congressional Record, vol. 137, November 7th 1991, S16283

symbolised the most pro-Administration position within Congress. The split was now between those, like Dole, who might accept American support for a continued Yugoslavia that met their (by this point) impossible demands for Kosovar autonomy and constitutional reform, and those in the Democratic Party who saw Croatian and Slovene independence as a fight for freedom, and would accept nothing less than the independence of any republic which wanted it. The chance to cause difficulties for the Bush Administration may have provided as much motivation to Democrats as passion for Zagreb.

The Bush Administration had at least two reasons to oppose early recognition. First, it undermined the existing efforts to reach a settlement between the parties by conditioning it on concessions or a settlement between them. Secondly, Germany's unilateral efforts, threatened seriously to split structures such as NATO and the European Community which the US held dear. These problems were exacerbated by the perceptual gulf between Bonn and other actors. Ostensibly, German Foreign Minister Genscher believed that his government's willingness to back Carrington's efforts in the Hague, and forgo recognition in order to avoid removing pressure on Croatia to make concessions, represented a major German gesture towards the American, French, and British position.²⁸⁰ The German government believed that it had agreed to support the Hague process in September on the understanding that, should this fail, recognition would inevitably follow. European and American officials, along with diplomats on the ground, believed that the Germans had agreed to forgo the push for early recognition entirely, with recognition at most something to be considered if Lord Carrington's efforts failed. Evidently misinterpreting what his counterparts had agreed to in September, Genscher saw the French, British, and American efforts to forestall recognition as an effort to renege on their promises.²⁸¹ Even had Genscher been correct about what had been agreed with other Western leaders, Germany's own embracing of the Hague process was open to question. Genscher had told Tudjman that Germany would grant unconditional recognition in the event efforts towards

²⁸⁰ Crawford, Beverly, 'German Foreign Policy and European Political Cooperation: The Diplomatic Recognition of Croatia in 1991', *German Politics & Society*, 1995, 13:2(35), pp.1-34. p.25. www.jstor.org/stable/23736387: Accessed September 3rd 2019

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.6

a settlement failed as early as September 4th.²⁸² Chancellor Kohl confirmed to Tudjman by telephone on November 12th that “Austria, Germany and Italy would go for the separate recognition of Croatia, if the European Community do not accept it”.²⁸³ Secretary Baker, in his memoirs, recalls confronting Hans Genscher at the November 28th 1991 NATO summit, alleging that Germany was openly assuring Croatia of recognition behind both NATO and the EC’s backs.²⁸⁴

The German government’s attitude enraged their international counterparts. Former US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, in the process of negotiating a cease-fire between the Croatians and Serbs, told Zimmerman “My friend Genscher is out of control on this. What he is doing is madness”.²⁸⁵ British Ambassador in Belgrade Sir Peter Hall described Genscher as “almost fanatical in his support for an independent Croatia”.²⁸⁶ This was a view shared by almost all EC representatives in Belgrade, including the German Ambassador to Yugoslavia, who protested against his own government’s policy.²⁸⁷ UN Secretary General Perez De Cuellar denounced it as an “insane step” in a letter to the Dutch Foreign Minister and current EC President Hans Van De Brock, prompting Genscher to reply that “encouraging those forces in Yugoslavia who were already then fighting against a successful end of the peace process in Yugoslavia”.²⁸⁸ Zimmerman wired back on December 6th that “Recognition of Croatia would set off an unpredictable chain-reaction which could derail eventual deployment of peace-keepers and spread fighting outside Croatia to Bosnia and, perhaps, beyond”, Zimmerman informed

²⁸² Tanner, Marcus, *Croatia: a nation forged in war* (Yale University Press: New Haven and London, 2001, pp.261-263).

²⁸³ Presidential transcript of the Minutes of 36th session of the State Supreme Council, held on November 12th 1991. Annex III p.4 <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed November 22 2019

²⁸⁴ Baker, James, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace 1989-1992* (Perigee: New York, 1995, p.638).

²⁸⁵ Zimmermann, Warren, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers* (Times Books: New York, 1996, pp.177)

²⁸⁶ Interview with Sir Peter Hall, British Diplomatic Oral History Project, Churchill p.35. <https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/media/uploads/files/Hall.pdf> : College Accessed September 3rd 2019

²⁸⁷ Zimmermann, Warren (1996). *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers*. (Times Books: New York, 1996, pp.176-177.)

²⁸⁸ Wortlautauszüge aus dem Briefe des UNO-Generalsekretärs an Genscher. DPA, December 15th 1991; Zeitler: Deutschlands Rolle pp.168–169.. Quoted p.36 <https://www.cla.purdue.edu/si/Team5Report.pdf>: Accessed June 15th 2019

Washington on December 6th.²⁸⁹ The US managed to push a resolution through NATO, calling for recognition to be granted only as part of an overall settlement, but this proved a hollow victory, as the Germans quickly indicated that they did not believe that the NATO resolution bound them to refrain from lobbying for EU recognition.²⁹⁰ The US also pushed its views with the British, whose Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd indicated that he agreed with the American position, but not to the extent of undermining the ongoing Maastricht negotiations, and as such expected recognition to go through.²⁹¹

Resistance to the German pressure was handicapped by a lack of credible alternatives apart from delay. Director for European Affairs at the NSC Robert Hutchings conceded that “Absent a credible military alternative that the United States was willing to propose and then support, however, we had no answer to the German argument that recognition was preferable to passivity in the face of brutal aggression”.²⁹² If the US had ceased to recognize the rump Presidency, imposed sanctions which discriminated against Serbia, and signaled out the JNA as the aggressor, was there much prospect of any settlement maintaining Yugoslavia? If not, was there any scenario in which Croatia and Slovenia did not receive recognition? Even Baker considered this unlikely.²⁹³ The US and UN resented Germany giving away Bonn’s recognition for free, thereby devaluing the rest of the international community’s leverage.

German recognition may have been shortsighted but was an accomplished fact, and American policy-makers now had to decide whether to follow it. While conceding in January 1992 how “an argument can be made that non-recognition gives Washington credibility as a neutral arbiter – and unique leverage in Serbia”, CIA analysts concluded “that Serbian leaders

²⁸⁹ Yugoslavia: Heading Off Recognition of Republics, Zimmerman to US Department of State, December 6th 1991 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/5-FY2014/F-2013-09365/DOC_0C05418493/C05418493.pdf: Accessed September 3rd 2019

²⁹⁰ Baker, James, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace 1989-1992* (Perigee: New York, 1995, p.639).

²⁹¹ FCO Opposes Early, Selective Recognition of Yugoslav Republics but fears Germany will drive EC Decision on December 16th State Department Cable, AMEmbassy London, December 13th 1991 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/5-FY2014/F-2013-09365/DOC_0C05418503/C05418503.pdf: Accessed June 18th 2019

²⁹² Hutchings, Robert, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War* (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1997, p. 315)

²⁹³ Baker, James, *The Politics of Diplomacy: Revolution, War, and Peace 1989-1992* (Perigee: New York, 1995, p.639).

would view it primarily as a means of playing Washington off against the Europeans”.²⁹⁴ Furthermore, “it would reinforce the inclination of Slovenia and Croatia to focus on sorting out their relationship with European states”, while “some Europeans – especially in France and Germany – would see it as evidence supporting their suspicion that Washington's engagement in Europe is lessening”.²⁹⁵ By contrast, “the Serbs, as well as the Croats and Slovenes, probably would view US recognition as a simple acceptance of the new realities”, and “it might help counter the view that the US is less focused on European problems these days”.²⁹⁶

If the US was going to “get anything out of recognition”, the perception had to be fostered that recognition was not inevitable. This was undermined by the dynamics in Congress, where Democrats championed recognition to embarrass the Administration, and Republicans, rather than defending the Administration’s conditional line, joining with the Democrats on the issue to avoid being outflanked. In late January, Republican Senate leader Robert Dole of Kansas introduced a resolution demanding Croatia and Slovenia’s immediate recognition, co-sponsored by 28 Senators including almost the entire Republican leadership.²⁹⁷ “Merely applauding the collapse of Communist states such as the Soviet Union, or passively observing the dissolution of Communist states like Yugoslavia, does not represent an effective American policy”, Dole, who had previously taken a leading role in agitating on Kosovo, wrote to George Bush, adding “We have learned that in dealing with the new republics of the former Soviet Union. We must re-learn it in forging a sensible, realistic policy towards Croatia and Slovenia”.²⁹⁸ If recognition were inevitable, and conditional recognition a depreciating commodity, then the Administration needed to rapidly find conditions it could exchange for recognition before the latter lost all value to the combatants. The discussion within the Bush Administration from January 1992

²⁹⁴ Implications of US Posture on Recognition of Former Yugoslav Republics. Office of European Analysis, Central Intelligence Agency, January 15th 1992. Declassified October 1st 2013, pp.1-2.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/5235e80d993294098d517509>: Accessed June 18th 2019

²⁹⁵ Ibid., p.2

²⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 2

²⁹⁷Robert Dole Archive, University of Kansas,

http://dolearchivecollections.ku.edu/collections/press_releases/920100res.pdf: Accessed June 20th 2019

²⁹⁸ Recognize Croatia and Slovenia, Letter from US Senator Robert Dole(R-KS) to President George H. W. Bush, January 23rd 1992

https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/July2014/F-2013-09365ER2/DOC_0C05522171/C05522171.pdf: Accessed September 3rd 2019.

onwards became less a debate over recognition, and more a search for conditions on which it could be granted, and it was as an answer to this question which no one had forced the US to ask that American officials settled on Bosnia. Germany may have made the eventual recognition of Slovenia and Croatia inevitable, and the Congressional pressure mounted on the Administration to grant that recognition quickly. “Croatia was the first nation to acknowledge the United States as a legitimate nation during the Revolutionary War. It is time we reward that courageous action with an equally bold gesture – recognize the independent Republic of Croatia today!”, declared Congressman William Tauzin of Louisiana with no sense of historic accuracy, given that Croatia had not been an independent state and the Habsburg monarchy of which it was part not grant recognition until 1797.²⁹⁹ “In my view, it is in our national interest at this time to extend immediate diplomatic recognition to Croatia and Slovenia, and to establish mutually beneficial relations with these new countries”, wrote Senator David Durenberger in early March.³⁰⁰ Noticeable by its absence in the Congressional rhetoric is a concern for Bosnia. Even Senator Dole, who had championed the Muslim Kosovar Albanians’ cause for years, excluded any demand for Bosnia’s recognition from his Senate resolution. Nor were the European powers keen on forcing the issue of Bosnian recognition, with even Germany sceptical.³⁰¹ Only Kučan, impatient to resolve the question of recognition and be done with Yugoslavia split the difference, urging that “Bosnia be recognized as soon as possible”, albeit with a strong system of local autonomy.³⁰²

²⁹⁹ Letter From Congressman Billy Tauzin to President George Bush, January 16th 1992
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/July2014/F-2013-09365ER2/DOC_0C05521995/C05521995.pdf
<https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3165.htm>: Accessed September 3rd 2019

³⁰⁰ Letter from Senator David Durenberger to President George H W Bush, March 5th 1992
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/July2014/F-2013-09365ER2/DOC_0C05522157/C05522157.pdf:
Accessed September 3rd 2019

³⁰¹ Gow, James, *Triumph of the Lack of Will: International Diplomacy and the Yugoslav War* (Hurst, London 1997, p.88).

³⁰² Slovenia: Constructively Disengaging, Building for the Future, Cable US Embassy Belgrade to State Department, February 3rd 1992
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/5-FY2014/F-2013-09365/DOC_0C05418549/C05418549.pdf:
Accessed September 3rd 2019

Who then pushed for recognition of Bosnia, far less insisted that the question of Bosnia's future be decided not through negotiations but as prerequisite for any other Republic's recognition? The answer was the Bush Administration.³⁰³ Why? "My concern all along has been that a half-way policy on recognition would invite Slovenian and Croatian adventurism in B-H and in Macedonia. That is still my concern", wrote Lawrence Eagleburger to James Baker, adding "Anything short of recognizing all four republics seriously weakens the principles upon which questions of recognition have been dealt with by us over the past months".³⁰⁴ "Early and decisive Western action to recognize Bosnia-Herzegovina would present both Belgrade and Zagreb with a situation which would be difficult to overturn at the present juncture", read Secretary of State Baker's notes for a March 10 summit with EC leader."³⁰⁵ "We should lift sanctions on Bosnia, Croatia and Slovenia at the same time we recognize their independence", wrote Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Thomas Niles, even as he conceded "There are in fact some doubts as to Croatian President Tudjman's commitment to human rights in Croatia and the territorial integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina".³⁰⁶ US recognition of Bosnia would, according to Zimmerman, "give Milošević a strong signal on both Bosnia and Croatia, and restrain Tudjman from military adventurism. In setting conditions for establishing diplomatic relations with all the successor states, including Serbia/Montenegro, we should insist on an explicit commitment to recognize the other republics within 1974 borders."³⁰⁷

US suspicion of Milošević was longstanding by this point. Birted in the fights over Kosovo, and nurtured by Zimmerman's feud with the Serbian leader, it seems to have infected

³⁰³ Gow, James, *Triumph of the Lack of Will: International Diplomacy and the Yugoslav War* (Hurst, London 1997, p.88).

³⁰⁴ Letter from Lawrence Eagleburger to James Baker, February 27th 1992
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/July2014/F-2013-09365ER2/DOC_0C05521920/C05521920.pdf:
Accessed September 3rd 2019

³⁰⁵ *Briefing Memo: Recognition of Yugoslav Republics: Your Meeting with EC Foreign Ministers, Brussels, March 10*, Deputy Secretary of State for European Affairs Thomas Niles, March 6th 1992
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/July2014/F-2013-09365ER2/DOC_0C05521926/C05521926.pdf:
Accessed September 3rd 2019

³⁰⁶ Recognition of Yugoslav Republics, Lifting Sanctions, Thomas Niles to Secretary of State Baker, April 2nd 1992
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/July2014/F-2013-09365ER2/DOC_0C05521955/C05521955.pdf:
Accessed September 4th 2019

³⁰⁷ Yugoslavia: Thoughts for our post-recognition strategy, Warren Zimmerman to Washington, March 26th 1992
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/5-FY2014/F-2013-09365/DOC_0C05418586/C05418586.pdf:
Accessed September 4th 2019.

the top Administration due to the conviction that he had sabotaged the post-June 26th 1991 efforts to achieve a Yugoslavia-wide settlement. As for Tudjman's interest in Bosnia, the Croatian leader made no secret of his thoughts. "Tudjman told visiting German politicians that Bosnia-Herzegovina was absurdly large and that, in principle, he favored dividing it", the CIA reported, guessing that "Tudjman may be calculating that picking up parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina will make it easier politically to give up some Croatian territory under Serb occupation in an eventual settlement."³⁰⁸ This was echoed by US diplomats. "Croatian President Tudjman devoted virtually all of a 90 minute, January 14th call by the ambassador on the reasons why the US should support a Serb-Croat accommodation dividing up Bosnia", US Consul General Michael Einik reported to Washington on January 16th 1991, adding "Using arguments that can only be defined as racist, Tudjman warned of the demographic threat of a Muslim fundamentalist state linking Bosnia via the Sandjak and Kosovo with the near east."³⁰⁹ In January, Tudjman told Zimmerman that "he and Milošević are again discussing this issue as well as Serb and Croat leaders in B and H", and "that the army supports such a solution to avoid war in Bosnia", prompting Zimmerman to ask "how can Croatia expect the US to hold the line on rejecting Serbian efforts to change borders in Croatia, when Croatia embarks on similar action in Bosnia?"³¹⁰ Discussions with Croatian officials other than Tudjman, including Foreign Minister Šeparović, who claimed that "a large majority within the Croatian leadership understand the danger of such an approach", led Zimmerman to believe that, if the US took a strong stand against partition, this "silent majority" of Croatian officials would push Tudjman into abandoning his Bosnian plans.³¹¹ US Ambassador to the UN Thomas Pickering reiterated to Croatian Prime Minister Gregurić a week later that "the US was shocked to hear Tudjman advocate the dismemberment of Bosnia in a recent conversation with Ambassador

³⁰⁸ Bosnia-Herzegovina: On the Edge of the Abyss, Office of European Analysis, Central Intelligence Agency, December 19th 1991, Declassified October 1st 2013 p.4
<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/5235e80c993294098d5174d7>: Accessed September 4th 2019.

³⁰⁹ Tudjman Again Advocates the partition of Bosnia with Milošević, Cable, Warren Zimmerman to State Department, January 16th 1992
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/5-FY2014/F-2013-09365/DOC_0C05418540/C05418540.pdf: Accessed September 4th 2019

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Ibid.

Zimmerman”, and “the United States strongly believed that if such sentiments represented Croatia’s policy, they were a serious mistake, and contrary to Croatia’s interests as they would legitimize changes in borders by force”.³¹² Gregurić “assured Pickering that Croatia had no claim to Bosnian territory, and to repeat such “follies of the past” would be akin to the claim by some Serbs that almost all of Yugoslavia is Serbian.” Senior Adviser to the Croatian President Mario Nobile insisted that Tudjman has been “talking as a historian” in his conversations with Zimmerman.³¹³

It is worth asking why the prospect of a Serb-Croat accommodation at the expense of Bosnia was so horrifying to American officials, especially if might resolve the issue of the Krajina without the need for further conflict. For one thing, Zimmerman’s hostility towards Milošević and Tudjman had now spread to the rest of the Administration. Milošević, with his actions in Kosovo, his undermining of Markovic, and his sabotage of Brioni, was seen if not as the prime cause of Yugoslavia’s problems, then doubtless as a prime cause of America’s problems in Yugoslavia. Tudjman’s provocations of the JNA, sabotage of the presidency, and intrigues with Berlin had effectively extorted recognition. If Yugoslavia survived, there would be no need to do anything about Bosnia. Secondly, the Gulf War had left America the predominant power in the Middle East, while Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir’s defeat by Yitzhak Rabin after President Bush had cut off aid to Israel brought to power a Prime Minister willing to push for a peace deal with the Palestinians.³¹⁴ The perception that America was party to “selling out” Bosnia’s Muslim population would have undermined America’s credibility in the Islamic world, and made American officials reluctant to pressure Sarajevo into concessions.³¹⁵

Focused on Zagreb, Belgrade, Riyadh and Jerusalem, American policy-makers gave too

³¹² Ambassador Pickering meeting with Croatian Prime Minister Greguric, US Mission to the United Nations to Department of State, Cable, January 24th 1992
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/5-FY2014/F-2013-09365/DOC_0C05418541/C05418541.pdf:
Accessed September 4th 2019.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Christison, Kathleen, ‘Splitting the Difference: The Palestinian-Israeli Policy of James Baker’, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 1994, 24:1, pp.39-50. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/2537981.

³¹⁵ Bosnia-Herzegovina: On the Edge of the Abyss, Office of European Analysis, Central Intelligence Agency, December 19th 1991, Declassified October 1st 2013 p.6
<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/5235e80c993294098d5174d7>: Accessed September 4th 2019.

little consideration to whether their policy would *help* Bosnia. Vitally, they failed to reach a consensus regarding the degree to which Bosnia's problems were homegrown, the result of organic desires among the indigenous actors not to live together, and to what extent those conflicts were being artificially stirred up from outside: if the former, then the priority was to reach a settlement between the Bosnian parties; if the latter, then the prerequisite to any settlement was either deter Croatia's Tudjman and Serbia's Milošević's ambitions to divide Bosnia between them or to appease them elsewhere. The policy of recognition was justified on the grounds of deterring external threats, but at the cost of exacerbating the internal tensions by removing the Muslim government's incentive to compromise. Simultaneously, the recognition offered Tudjman something he already had from Europe and expected to receive anyway from the US within good time; little to Milošević, who was already isolated; and nothing at all to Bosnia's Serbs.

The Central Intelligence Agency was sceptical that Bosnia's problems were primarily external, fearing "Bosnia-Herzegovina's prospects are dim, even if Serbia and Croatia move towards a settlement"³¹⁶...Serbs in several regions, including the Bosnian Krajina, Old Herzegovina, and scattered smaller areas have declared autonomy, adopted constitutions, and elected their own officials", while notwithstanding their supposed view of Muslims as 'allies', "Croats in west Herzegovina have done the same".³¹⁷ The Republic's "200,000 strong territorial defense force" had "fractured along ethnic lines", while "the bulk of TO units are probably responding only to local commanders, increasing the risk of clashes between TO units with Army troops".³¹⁸

Arguing that Bosnia had already fractured on the ground, the CIA suggested that a voluntary partition held out better prospects of avoiding conflict than trying to force a phantom multi-ethnic government's recognition, that was already seen as just another ethnic party to the conflict. "The most positive outcome we foresee", the Agency's Office of European Analysis wrote, "is one in which the moderates manage to guide the republic through a "negotiated

³¹⁶ Ibid., p.4.

³¹⁷ Ibid., p.3.

³¹⁸ Ibid., p.4.

division” with Serbian areas uniting with Serbia, Croatian enclaves joining Croatia, and the Muslims either joining Croatia or carving out a Muslim state from what remains.”³¹⁹ The CIA conceded “this outcome would be extremely difficult to achieve given the republic's patchwork ethnic distribution”, and that “even assuming that all of the players have the best intentions, it could not be carried out without extensive population shifts”. “Unless a solution can be found to the broader Yugoslav problem which preserves economic links between the Yugoslav republics, an economically viable Bosnia seems unobtainable”, the CIA report emphasised, Bosnia would “either fall under the sway of Serbia or Croatia, or look beyond the Balkan peninsula to Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, or Libya for economic, political, and perhaps military support.”³²⁰

That final line regarding a non-viable Bosnia looking “beyond the Balkan peninsula” to Iran or Libya for economic support shows the Central Intelligence Agency’s engagement with a question that had been hitherto mainly ignored by the US policy-makers when deciding what to do about Yugoslavia. Just how important was Yugoslavia, or in this case Bosnia, to the US? For the new Director of the Central Intelligence Agency Robert Gates, was less concerned over the ownership of villages in the Balkans than the fear that “some Bosnians might turn to Qadhafi and other radical Islamic states if help were not immediately forthcoming from other sources”, which would “add an Islamic-Christian element to the bubbling Balkans cauldron”.³²¹ In an agency traditionally led by directorate of operations graduates, Gates, a master of internal politics, was the first analyst ever to rise to the top. While Gates had begun his career as Scowcroft’s assistant during the Nixon Administration, and returned as his deputy under Bush, Gates ingratiated himself with both parties. By 1992, he had served five Administrations and would eventually increase this to seven by serving as Secretary of Defense under George W. Bush and Barack Obama from 2007 to 2010. One did not generally achieve this degree of longevity without an inclination to bow to the inevitable rather than fight lost battles. A unitary, sovereign Bosnia looked quite lost by early 1992.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

³²⁰ Ibid., p.6.

³²¹ Bosnia-Herzegovina: On the Edge of the Abyss, Office of European Analysis, Central Intelligence Agency, December 19th 1991, Declassified October 1st 2013 p.6
<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/5235e80c993294098d5174d7>: Accessed September 4th 2019.

The CIA's proposals were met with moral indignation, often with wishful thinking sufficing for cost-benefit analysis. "As to the nature of a settlement", the April 1992 National Intelligence Estimate began, "some Intelligence Community agencies", which it identified as the CIA and National Security Agency, "maintain that negotiated and internationally supervised border changes and population transfers within Yugoslavia will be required."³²² As for the opposing view, "Other agencies", which it identified as the State Department, Marine Corp, Army, and Air force, in effect the Departments of State and Defense, "hold that negotiated border and population shifts are generally unworkable and will result in additional violence, economic dislocation, and violations of minority and individual human rights".³²³ This argument neatly bypassed the question of whether such unwelcome developments were inevitable if recognition were to be granted to Bosnia without partition. Partition was rejected because it would not resolve every problem in Bosnia, in favor of a policy of recognition which was not predicted to any.

Under Gates, the CIA showed a cold realism. Conceding the Muslims faced a choice between "the plague and cholera" they tried to identify the best option given the reality of limited American interests and Muslim weakness.³²⁴ The Muslims faced the choice of opting independence against a Serb minority's will, which made up nearly a third of the population, with the Bosnian Croats's dubious support, who opposed a Muslim-dominated Bosnia almost as much as the Serbs, or remaining in Yugoslavia as a minority. Izetbegović's deputy Eyjub Ganić justified the rejection of Yugoslav option to Warren Zimmerman in December 1991 with the argument "We've had plenty of time to see how Milošević deals with minorities in Serbia the Hungarians, the Muslims, and the Albanians. We'd be crazy to make ourselves vulnerable to that kind of oppression."³²⁵ Yet according to Stoltenberg, Ganić "was among the most unforgiving" in identifying with those who felt that the party of Bosnia's Muslims should seek

³²² A Broadening Balkan Crisis: Can It Be Managed? NIE 29-15-92. National Foreign Intelligence Board. April 1992. Declassified October 1st 2013 pp.1-2.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/5235e80d993294098d517508>: Accessed June 11 2019

³²³ Ibid., p.IV.

³²⁴ Stoltenberg, Thorvald *A Thousand Days, Peace Negotiators in the Balkans* p.46

<http://sorryserbia.com/2012/stoltenberg-english/>: Accessed June 11 2019

³²⁵ Sell, L., *Slobodan Milošević and the destruction of Yugoslavia* (Duke University Press: Durham NC, 2002, p.177).

solutions on the battlefield in order to seek an Islamic state³²⁶ If self-determination was defined in terms of civic rights to vote and work, then that might be possible in a rump Yugoslavia but, if defined as Bosnia's Muslims' ability to build an Islamic state, that could only be accomplished through independence. Fatally, it could only be accomplished through independence as a unitary state, and therefore on terms unacceptable to Bosnia's both Serbs and Croats. If the US policy-makers prime concern, from Zimmerman to the State Department, had been to safeguard the Bosnian Muslims' interests, they would have seen their role as aiding them in making the best choice from the available options.

American policy's greatest casualty was the Lisbon Peace Conference of March 1992 where the Muslims, Croats, and Serbs reached an agreement mediated by Portuguese Foreign Minister Cutileiro, only for the Muslims to withdraw their consent. Ambassador Zimmerman conceded, in his memoirs, that the deal was "not all that bad", and probably the best the Muslims would get".³²⁷ "In the hindsight of history", Zimmerman wrote years later, "Cutileiro's plan, although it introduced for the first time the concept of Bosnia's division", would probably have worked better for the Muslims than any subsequent plan including the Dayton formula, since the divisions would have closely followed the actual ethnic percentages of the population, and "drawing on my instructions to support whatever could be worked out between the European Community and the three Bosnian parties, I encouraged Izetbegović to stick by what he'd agreed to."³²⁸ Zimmerman is contradicted by other sources. In 1993, a senior State Department source noted that "while it was never committed to paper, the policy was to encourage Izetbegović to break with the partition plan", and when Izetbegović agreed to the Lisbon terms "we were very surprised he did that".³²⁹ According to Richard Johnson, who was

³²⁶ Stoltenberg, Thorvald *A Thousand Days, Peace Negotiators in the Balkans* p.130

<http://sorryserbia.com/2012/stoltenberg-english/>: Accessed September 4th 2019

³²⁷ "Case: Slobodan Milošević Trial Transcript" September 26th 2002 ICYT Website

http://www.icty.org/x/cases/slobodan_milošević/trans/en/020927ED.htm: Accessed September 28th 2015

; Zimmermann, Warren, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers* (Times Books: New York, 1996, pp.190-191).

³²⁸ Zimmermann, Warren, *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers* (Times Books: New York, 1996, pp.190).

³²⁹ Binder, David "US Policymakers on Bosnia Admit Errors in Opposing Partition in 1992" *The New York Times*, August 29th 1993, <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/08/29/world/us-policymakers-on-bosnia-admit-errors-in-opposing-partition-in-1992.html>: Accessed May 5th 2019

the Yugoslav desk officer at the State Department, Secretary Baker "told the Europeans to stop pushing ethnic cantonization of Bosnia".³³⁰ British diplomat Anthony Parsons argued that Izetbegović "should have been denied recognition until he could demonstrate that the structure of the new state was acceptable to all three communities", and even Ganić himself would take to suggesting that it had been a mistake to side with the Croats against the Serbs, rather than *vice versa*.³³¹ Even then-National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft believed "If we had sat down with the Europeans and said look, let's agree on what we'll do and what we won't do, and let's go to the Yugoslavs and say look, we don't think you ought to break up, it doesn't make any sense, but if you insist, here are the rules that we're going to insist on, it might have been prevented."³³² That was not the policy adopted at the time. Zimmerman and other American officials may be telling the truth when they claim that they did not tell Izetbegović to reject the deal, but they had already determined that US policy was to oppose Bosnia's partition, and the Lisbon agreement *de facto* represented partition. Izetbegović failed to grasp that the American officials had not rejected partition because they supported a unitary Bosnian state in general or the Muslims' cause in particular, but due to concerns that had little to do with Bosnia *per se*. American officials, perhaps not wholly comprehending their actions, were using Izetbegović to spite the Serbs and Croats, a course for which his people would pay dearly.

Any chance of the policy of recognition working as a deterrent was dependent either on backing it with force or, failing that, creating the impression that force was on the table. While the CIA observed how "an imposed settlement by the international community would provide a positive model for resolving ethnic conflicts in the Balkan region and elsewhere", recognition was not "imposing" much of anything on its own.³³³ Hutchings reflected that "like

³³⁰ Ibid.

³³¹ Croatian Presidential Transcript of a conversation of the President of the Republic of Croatia Dr Franjo Tudjman with Mr Fikret Abdic on December 19th 1993. Annex III p.413

<http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed June 11, 2019

³³² *Transcript*; James A. Baker III Oral History Collection, MC212, Public Policy Papers, Department of Special Collections, Princeton University Library.

https://webspace.princeton.edu/users/mudd/Digitization/MC212/Scowcroft_final.pdf: Accessed June 11, 2019

³³³ A Broadening Balkan Crisis: Can It Be Managed?. NIE 29-15-92. National Foreign Intelligence Board. April 1992. Declassified October 1st 2013 p.IV

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/5235e80d993294098d517508>: Accessed June 11, 2019

the Germans, we had no strategy to accompany the “internationalization” of the conflict, only the vague belief, or vain hope, that this course was preferable to denying recognition and consigning Bosnia-Herzegovina to mercies of Milošević in a rump Yugoslavia”.³³⁴ Assistant Secretary of State Ronald Johnson would defend the policy in similar terms to Tudjman, conceding that “international recognition is not the guarantee for the stabilization of the situation”, but nevertheless arguing that “that this would be a signal with which we would show that we care of the importance of the borders and the integrity of Bosnia.”³³⁵ Johnson undermined that signal’s potency by proceeding to tell Tudjman, on April 20th, in Zimmerman’s presence, “I cannot see any chances that the NATO might intervene in the situation in Bosnia”.³³⁶ The Croats were understandably confused as to what the US wanted from them. Washington, having been pushed into recognising Croatia begrudgingly due to domestic pressure and the realities of the international situation, could not answer this question. The decision to press forward with Bosnia’s recognition under the Izetbegović government had been an act of spite, undertaken without a wider strategic plan, as Hutchens conceded. Intended to deter Croatia and Serbia, it left America even more dependent on Croatia for its policy in the region.

³³⁴ Hutchings, Robert, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War* (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1997, p. 315)

³³⁵ Presidential Transcript April 20th 1992 Annex III p.29.
<http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>:Accessed June 11 2019

³³⁶ Ibid.

Recognition of Neutrality's Failure

Engaging in counterfactuals is dangerous for historians, not least because it is so tempting. With the benefit of hindsight, it is easy to believe that we can identify not just what the actors did wrong, but what they could have done to succeed. In the case of American policy towards Yugoslavia, engaging in such speculation seems gratuitous. The options available to policy-makers are a product of at least two variables: the goals that a policy is designed to achieve and the resources available to pursue them. A policy of supporting Marković with a loan of several billion dollars might well have made a difference to his reform programme's fate, but that money was unavailable. That should have resulted in a decision either to find the money, or to set a different objective that did not require it. Instead, American policy-makers went out of their way to adopt a proactive stance, trying to freeze conflicts and mitigate tensions rather than promote any sort of viable settlement. Initially the primary concern had been Yugoslav unity, followed by fears of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.³³⁷ After that came a resolution of the conflict in Croatia between Zagreb and the rebel Serbs, which following the EU recognition of Croatia, which most American policy-makers accepted would have, at least nominally, to be within the context of Croatian sovereignty.³³⁸ At all stages, the goal was to restore the *status quo ante* or, failing that, freeze the conflicts at the next stable level without any concern regarding whether this actually resolved the underlying causes.

Nowhere was the gap between objectives and means greater than during the decision-making process which led to Bosnia's recognition. Robert Hutchings laments how "the United States rejected lead of its own Intelligence Agencies by accepting the preferences of the parties themselves for partition", because of the drawbacks of the idea of partition, without giving any

³³⁷ "Interview with Ambassador Warren Zimmerman by Charles Kennedy" December 10th 1996 pp.121-122. <http://www.adst.org/OH%20TOCs/Zimmerman,%20Warren.toc.pdf>: Accessed September 4th 2019

³³⁸ Zimmermann, Warren, *The Choice in the Balkans* New York Review of Books, September 21st 1995 Issue <http://www.nybooks.com/gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/articles/1995/09/21/the-choice-in-the-balkans/>: Accessed September 4th 2019

real consideration to the merits of the alternative that the policy-makers embraced by default.³³⁹ A unitary Bosnia could only be accomplished by a Muslim military victory, while a united Bosnia within Yugoslavia would provoke a Croat-Serb war, as Alija Izetbegović himself later conceded.³⁴⁰ The only option that might be accomplished without bloodshed (though it also would be the logical consequence of conflict) was partition. Hence Tudjman's stated position that, after discussions with Milošević, Karadžić and the Army leadership, they "agree that the only solution is to divide up Bosnia between Serbia and Croatia".³⁴¹ The agreement that Tudjman envisioned may have taken little account of the Bosnian Muslims' interests, as he was only "willing to leave the Muslims a small area around Sarajevo", but he made a relevant point that the Muslims "may not like it, but a stable Balkans is possible only if there is a change in Bosnia's borders, no matter what the Muslims think".³⁴² By contrast, the US decision to obstruct a consensual partition may have allowed officials to feel that they had washed their hands of a dirty business, striking a blow against Tudjman and Milošević's ambitions, but in regards to the Bosnian people, this was a moral abdication of astounding proportions.

While the "moral" commitment to Bosnia led figures like Warren Zimmerman to adopt a position of hostility towards Franjo Tudjman before 1992, after that year, it increasingly created the impression that those most responsible for the "aggression" against Bosnia, the Serbs, were the villains, and that the Croats, by virtue of being their enemies, were not their equals. Rather, they provided the only hope for a Serbian defeat. Richard Holbrooke might term the Croats America's "junkyard dogs" but it was Tudjman and his government who would turn the American officials' desperation to help Bosnia into an embracing of the Croatian cause.³⁴³ In order to win Croatian support for Bosnia, Americans would embrace the idea that Croatia's own rebel Serbs were the equivalents of their Bosnian compatriots, and that support for Croatia's

³³⁹ Hutchings, Robert, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War* (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1997, p. 315)

³⁴⁰ Izetbegović, Alija, *Inescapable Questions: Autobiographical Notes* (The Islamic Foundation: London, 2007).

³⁴¹ Zimmerman, Warren *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers*. Times Books: New York, 1996, p.182).

³⁴² *Ibid.*, pp.190-191.

³⁴³ Holbrooke, Richard, "To End a War: Excerpt" *The New York Times* May 20th 1998
<http://www.nytimes.com/books/first/h/holbrooke-war.html>: Accessed September 3rd 2019

victory over them would lead to the government's victory in Bosnia.

CHAPTER 3 Foreign Policy in the 1992 Election and the Clinton Experiment

When George Bush was defeated in America's first post-Cold War election in 1992, few blamed his loss on the scenes of carnage that were then unfolding in Sarajevo. Historical judgments of the 1992 elections have tended to embrace a perspective encapsulated by Bill Clinton's campaign slogan "It's the economy, stupid". In this narrative, a President with a successful foreign policy was brought down by an overwhelming tide of economic discontent, as Americans, after five decades of politics defined by geopolitical threats across the ocean (first Nazi Germany and then worldwide Communism), retreated into the domestic isolationism that had defined their early history. Contemporary works of triumphalism, such as Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*, have been recast with the hindsight that has emerged following the events of September 11th 2001 as evidence that the 1990s represented a "vacation from history", with historians such as Haynes Johnson and William O'Neil adopting titles such as the *Best of Times* and a *Bubble in Time* for their chronicles of the decade.³⁴⁴ Robert Kagan implicitly accepted this view when he entitled his own book on American Foreign Policy during the second Bush Administration *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*.³⁴⁵

Was this truly a "vacation from history"? As much as it makes for a dramatic narrative for historians to view the 1990s as an era when America's foreign policy problems were solved, and the 2000s as the time when history "returned with a vengeance", the early 1990s were far from a time of American exuberance. Far from viewing their world as a time of opportunity, Americans in 1992 expressed in polls, focus groups, and their November ballots an anxiety about the future that was consistent with that expressed during the crisis years of 1932 and 1980, and again in 2008. Missing was the expected sense of triumphalism. Americans in 1992,

³⁴⁴ Fukuyama, Francis, *The End of History and the Last Man* (Hamish Hamilton: London, 1992); Johnson, Haynes, *The Best of Times: America in the Clinton Years* (Harcourt: San Diego, 2001); O'Neil, William, *A Bubble in Time: America During the Interwar Years, 1989-2001* (Ivan R. Dee: Chicago, 2012).

³⁴⁵ Kagan Robert, *The Return of History and the End of Dreams* (Atlantic: London, 2008).

far from feeling exuberant over winning the Cold War, were increasingly convinced that George Bush and James Baker were in the process of rapidly losing the peace.

How had this happened? How had the President who won the Gulf War less than two years before and presided over the Iron Curtain's fall and the Soviet Union's breakup persuaded Americans that he was incapable of managing the ensuing peace? The answer lies partially in Vilnius, Kiev, and Zagreb, but most prominently by 1992 in Sarajevo, where Bosnia's collapse and the Bush Administration's ineffectual response increasingly came to define a failed, immoral, and ineffective foreign policy. Equally importantly, these failures provided the Democrats, in the person of their 1992 ticket of William Jefferson Clinton and Albert Gore Jr., with something they had lacked for decades - the ability to present themselves as possessing a foreign policy capable of solving America's problems where the Republicans proved incapable. Contrary to the view that Americans voted for isolationism in 1992, they cast their ballots for a candidate who called for airstrikes and direct military intervention in Bosnia, rejecting an incumbent whose Secretary of State had said, regarding Bosnia, that America had "no dog in that fight".³⁴⁶ Focus groups showed that Bush was remarkably vulnerable, as "the public does not believe that the Cold War ended under President Bush's watch, nor do they credit the President with being the primary motivator behind the Cold War's demise".³⁴⁷ Seeing the "end of the Cold War as a process", many felt that "now we must/should care for our former Cold War enemies".³⁴⁸

There was another, equally ominous warning for George Bush that emerged from the campaign focus groups. In contrast to former President Jimmy Carter, whom voters viewed as a hard-working but ultimately incompetent chief executive, voters viewed Bush as a highly competent leader who could have resolved America's economic and security problems "*if he had cared to try*".³⁴⁹ Ironically, George Bush's earlier successes, whether in the Gulf, former Soviet Union, or as Vice President, worked against him, by raising questions regarding why the

³⁴⁶ R. W. Appel "CRISIS IN THE BALKANS: NEWS ANALYSIS; Clinton's Positive Thinking: The NATO Alliance Is Alive and Kicking" *The New York Times* April 26th 1999 <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/04/26/world/crisis-balkans-analysis-clinton-s-positive-thinking-nato-alliance-alive-kicking.html>: Accessed May 11th 2014

³⁴⁷ Goldman, Peter, *Quest for the Presidency* (Texas A&M Press: College Station, 1994, p.668)

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

same management was not being duplicated elsewhere in 1992. If Bush and Baker genuinely deserved credit for managing the Soviet Union's breakup in a manner that did not result in violence, why did they seem so utterly incapable of doing likewise for Yugoslavia? Was it simply not important enough for them to invest the effort? Did they simply not care? Comments, such as James Baker's famous remark that America had "no dog in that fight", certainly reinforced this perception.³⁵⁰

Bush's apparent indifference regarding Bosnia fed into a wider anxiety that had been building for some time, arguably since before he had even been sworn into office. The US economy had begun to slow down in the middle of Reagan's second term, with real GDP growth falling from 4.45% in 1987, to 3.84% in 1988, and to 2.78% in 1989, before bottoming out at 0.65% in 1990. With domestic economic "fundamentals", poor,³⁵¹ even at his apogee, Bush was seen as a President "whose foreign policy triumphs have outshone a sparse domestic record".³⁵²

Yet, the explanation that George Bush's political travails came down to the "economy, stupid", as would become Bill Clinton's 1992 campaign slogan, is too simplistic and not actually supported by the underlying data. After hitting rock bottom in 1990, GDP growth then rebounded to 1.23% in 1991, and to 4.33% in 1992.³⁵³ George Bush's popularity had been highest in the aftermath of the January 1991 Persian Gulf War, when the economy was at its lowest point, and the best year of his presidency economically, 1992, was the worst politically. It is true that 12 years of Republican rule made Bush at least partially responsible for the problems that had emerged before his inauguration, and the term "Reagan-Bush" proved

³⁵⁰ R. W. Appel "CRISIS IN THE BALKANS: NEWS ANALYSIS; Clinton's Positive Thinking: The NATO Alliance Is Alive and Kicking" *The New York Times* April 26th 1999 <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/04/26/world/crisis-balkans-analysis-clinton-s-positive-thinking-nato-alliance-alive-kicking.html?mtrref=www.google.com&gwh=66DAD947AE17F47F546427D39B4D6984&gwt=pay>; Accessed May 11th 2014

³⁵¹ For an overview of the argument see Fair, Ray, 'The Effects of Economics on Votes for President', *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, May 2nd 1978; LX. For post-2000 criticism, see Bartels, Larry and Zaller, John, 'Presidential Vote Models: A Recount', *Political Science and Politics*, 2001, March

³⁵² Douglas Jehl "Bush, Evoking Gulf War, Opens Reelection Drive" *The Los Angeles Times* February 13th 1992 <https://www.latimes.com/sitemap/1992/2?p=23>; Accessed May 11th 2015

³⁵³ "National Data" Bureau of Economic Analysis, US Department of Commerce, <http://www.bea.gov/iTable/iTable.cfm?ReqID=9&step=1#reqid=9&step=1&isuri=1>; Accessed May 17th 2014

almost as much of a disadvantage in 1992 as it had been an asset four years earlier. It seems that the real problem was not Bush's failure to revive the economy, but that the American public's negative mood had fallen so low that few were inclined to believe the White House's claims that the recession had ended. In 1992, Bush was not fighting a well-considered critique of his economic policies so much as a general sense of discontent at where the last 12 years had brought the country, like that faced by Margaret Thatcher's Tories in Britain. In an era in which the 1980s' enterprising entrepreneurs became the sleazy trader of Wall Street, the real estate developer Donald Trump, or indicted junk bond kingpin Mike Milken, Reagan and Thatcher's free-market policies began to appear to many like the indulgence of greed.³⁵⁴ While it would have been an amusing irony if America and Britain had turned against the free-markets and capitalism at the very moment when the Eastern Bloc was turning towards them, that does not appear to have been the case, as evidenced by the US Democratic Party's decision (and the UK's Labour Party) to embrace the Reagan-Thatcher revolution's essential principals. Rather, Americans were inclined to see Bush and his team as not up to the task, and their doubts preceded their vocalization by opposition politicians. As early as September 1991, the same polls which gave Bush lopsided leads against potential Democratic challengers also showed less than half of voters favouring his reelection.³⁵⁵

It is misguided to see the 1992 election as a battle between a "successful" foreign policy record for the incumbent administration and a dismal "domestic" one. Foreign policy was subject to the general feeling of malaise. What was important electorally was not just what Bush did in specific cases, but what he was perceived as doing in general. When the narrative was one of triumph, he appeared politically invincible but, when it was one of decline versus Japan, with many Americans unable to appreciate the Soviet Union's collapse out of fear that America was following in its footsteps, his position disintegrated. The major question hanging

³⁵⁴ Demos, Telis (September 21st 2007). "Oliver Stone: Life after *Wall Street*". *Fortune*. Accessed August 22nd 2018
Johnston, David Kay (April 30th 2016), "Donald Trump's bankruptcy dodge: This is how lawyers and regulators helped him fudge solvency and avoid collapse". Salon. Accessed August 22nd 2018
https://www.salon.com/2016/04/30/donald_trumps_bankruptcy_dodge_this_is_how_lawyers_and_regulators_helped_him_fudge_solvency_and_avoid_collapse/; Eichenwald, Kurt (February 20th 1991). "Judge Who Gave Milken 10 Years Wants Him Eligible for Parole in 3". *The New York Times*. Accessed May 31st 2019

³⁵⁵ Paul West "Economic fears clouding Bush prospects, polls show" *The Baltimore Sun*, October 24th 1991
Accessed May 10th 2014

over the 1992 election was never going to be whether foreign policy was important but, rather, which foreign policy was going to matter, and how it would be assimilated into the overarching narrative which would define how Americans viewed the incumbent.

Bush obviously preferred a campaign that focused on what had happened on his watch as much as what he had done. On that metric he should have been unassailable. He had not only won *Desert Storm* but had also presided over the extinction of every major Democratic foreign policy issue of the last decade. The Soviet Union was gone, as were the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, while Apartheid in South Africa was on its way out. There was even reason to believe that the Arab-Israeli conflict might be ending. Democrats had been on the wrong side of these issues, against Contra Aid, the Reagan Doctrine, and the Persian Gulf War. A November 1991 memo from Bush communications manager Fred Malek put this in stark terms: “The President needs a strategy that neutralizes Democrats on domestic issues so his foreign policy successes can be the deciding factor in the 1992 elections”.³⁵⁶

If George Bush was looking for a strategy that “neutralized” domestic issues so that foreign policy issues could serve as “the deciding factor” in the campaign, Democrats sought the opposite - some way to neutralise Bush’s foreign policy successes in order to focus on his measly domestic record. Even better, from a Democratic perspective, would be if Bush’s conduct of foreign affairs could somehow be tied directly to his domestic failings. Events, and the Bush Administration’s attitude itself provided a lifeline. The charge against the Bush Administration’s domestic record was one of ineffectiveness, which made any perception that American foreign policy was ineffective particularly dangerous. While it may seem intuitive to see the Soviet Union’s collapse as a geopolitical triumph for the US, it was far from clear that this was the case for the Bush Administration. Since the Administration had been hesitant to back the secessionist movements in the Baltic States, and later the Ukraine, and seemed to desire Soviet Union’s preservation, the Soviet collapse could be portrayed as having happened despite rather than because of American policy. The same was true of Bosnia. Not only had the US backed a united Yugoslavia’s preservation over the Albanians, Croats and Slovenes’ national

³⁵⁶ Goldman, Peter, *Quest for the Presidency* (Texas A&M Press: College Station, 1994, p.620)

claims, but it had failed in doing so. Even on its own merits, the policy looked mistaken. Rather than a moral case, it had been cast as a *realpolitik* one. A unified Yugoslavia made war less likely but, having prioritised unity over the risk of war, the Bush administration had ended up without unity and with a war, which it now appeared unable to stop, in Bosnia. Defense Secretary Richard Cheney would concede that with “the benefit of hindsight”, the US should have been more open to partition³⁵⁷ but even in doing so he was still thinking in terms of *realpolitik*. That was the defense Condoleezza Rice, then at the NSC would make to charges that the Bush Administration was not doing more to prevent humanitarian tragedies. “Global communication has contributed to this sense of having to be in all kinds of places at once, Rwanda one day, Somalia another, Haiti another, she told an interviewer in 1994, warning “if we run from humanitarian disaster to humanitarian disaster, we will be all over the map with nothing to show for it in a very few years.”³⁵⁸ This perspective might have been realistic, as Clinton and his officials would come to learn themselves over the following years, but in 1992 Democrats were more interested in discussing morality.

The perception of Presidential indifference to “human” concerns had dogged George Bush for years and, in 1992, participants told a Democratic focus group that Bush “had no understanding or commitment to ordinary people”.³⁵⁹ Bosnia tied these threads together, creating a narrative that Bush’s foreign policy, rather than functioning as a refuge from his domestic indifference, actually encapsulated it. That the charge had some basis in fact, insofar as many in the Bush Administration did not see the conflict as black and white, increased its effectiveness. Defense Secretary Richard Cheney, a dedicated Cold Warrior if there ever was one, recalled years later that it was a “very difficult conflict” with “no good guys and bad guys”, mocking those who had seen the conflict in moral terms. “There were those like Maggie Thatcher, who to this day I’ve heard her argue the case”, Cheney paraphrased as “This is

³⁵⁷ Cheney, Richard B., Oral History, Secretary of Defense, Interviewed March 15th-16th 2000, Presidential Oral Histories, Miller Center, University of Virginia, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/richard-b-cheney-oral-history-secretary-defense>: Accessed May 10th 2019

³⁵⁸ *Condoleezza Rice*; James A. Baker III Oral History Collection, MC212, Public Policy Papers, Department of Special Collections, Princeton University Library. https://webpace.princeton.edu/xythoswfs/webview/_xy-4215541_1: Accessed November 23 2019

³⁵⁹ Goldman, Peter, *Quest for the Presidency* (Texas A&M Press: College Station, 1994, p.687)

Germany, 1939. You've got to stop the Serbs. They're going to overrun Western Europe if you don't take them out,'" before noting, "I never believed that."³⁶⁰ However accurate, this nuance was ineffective politically. Anti-Communist Eastern Europeans who had formed a major base for the Republican party for decades, and had overlapped heavily with those blue-collar workers suffering due to Republican policies on trade, only added to the linkage. Croatian Americans had donated heavily to the insurgent challenge to President Bush launched by Patrick Buchanan in the Republican primaries and, according to the President of the Croatian-American Association, "They are so angry that they would rather vote for Tito, if he were alive, than for Bush".³⁶¹ Patrick Glynn saw the failure in Yugoslavia as part of a wider flaw in American policy: "U.S. handling of the Yugoslav crisis is in fact a case study in how not to conduct foreign policy in the post-Cold War world, combining lack of intellectual rigor and carelessness with what Senator Al Gore has termed 'moral obtuseness' about the conflicts and issues at stake".³⁶²

"Moral obtuseness" was the challenge levied at the Administration's handling of Bosnia, implying at once both indifference to the conflict's moral dimension, and the apparent incomprehension displayed by realists like James Baker that such a dimension could even exist or matter. The words were those of Al Gore, who had been one of the few Democrats to support the Gulf War in 1990, and over the course of 1991 had become a leading hawk, backing the termination of all US aid to Serbia, and even floating the prospect of dispatching US peacekeepers to Croatia in October.³⁶³ "Yugoslavia no longer serves any geostrategic purpose for us" Gore informed the Senate on October 28th 1991, advocating a total embargo on Serbia.³⁶⁴ With Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole, the following month, he co-sponsored a

³⁶⁰ Cheney, Richard B., Oral History, Secretary of Defense, Interviewed March 15th-16th 2000, Presidential Oral Histories, Miller Center, University of Virginia, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/richard-b-cheney-oral-history-secretary-defense>: Accessed May 10th 2019

³⁶¹ Terry Atlas "US Set to Recognize 3 Yugoslav Republics" *The Chicago Tribune*, April 7th 1992, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1992-04-07/news/9202010106_1_yugoslav-republics-slovenia-president-bush: Accessed August 30th 2018

³⁶² "The Crisis in Kosovo" U.S. Senate, Subcommittee on European Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations, May 6th 1998 <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007608888>: Accessed May 25th 2014

³⁶³ US Senate, "The War in Croatia," Congressional Record, vol. 137, October 25th 1991, S15244

³⁶⁴ US Senate, "Senate Resolution 210: Relative to Violence in Yugoslavia," Congressional Record, vol. 137, October 28th 1991, S15299.

resolution urging US recognition of Slovenia and Croatia which received the support of 52 out of 100 Senators.³⁶⁵ After the Bush Administration finally followed Germany in granting recognition to Croatia and Slovenia in early 1992, he blamed American policy for causing the conflict in the first place. "If we had summoned the moral courage to act", says Gore, "we could have saved thousands of lives."³⁶⁶

Without testimony from the former Vice President himself, either in the form of interviews on the subject or published memoirs, Gore's full motivations for embracing Croatia's cause remain a matter of speculation. Gore had pragmatic reasons for the decision. His support of the Gulf War, while saving him from the stigma of having opposed an ultimately successful, cheap, and victorious conflict, nevertheless put him on the same side as George Bush and in opposition to the vast majority of Democrats. Gore, who had already run for President in 1988 with Richard Holbrooke as his foreign policy adviser, clearly had higher ambitions, which meant he needed to break with the Bush Administration while maintaining his hawkish image.³⁶⁷ His future national security adviser, Leon Fuerth, had also served in the Zagreb consulate.³⁶⁸ While these factors no doubt contributed to Gore's anti-Serb position, they seem insufficient *per se*. The deepest reason may lie in his character which will be elaborated on later in this chapter. Gore saw himself as a man of action, and the unifying theme throughout his life was opposition to orthodoxy. That was true not just of foreign policy in the 1980s, but later in his life when he embraced the cause of fighting climate change. Perhaps no greater example exists than centre-right Democrat Gore's decision to endorse left-wing Vermont governor Howard Dean in the 2004 presidential primaries.³⁶⁹ In 1991-1992, there could be no more ossified orthodoxy than

³⁶⁵ US Senate, "Senate Resolution 216: Relative to Recognition of Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosova, and Macedonia," Congressional Record, vol. 137, November 7th 1991, S16283, S.1793 - A bill to restrict United States assistance for Serbia or any part of Yugoslavia controlled by Serbia until certain conditions are met, and for other purposes. <https://www.Congress.gov/bill/102nd-Congress/senate-bill/1793/cosponsors> Accessed May 31 2019; Atlas, Terry, "US Set to Recognize 3 Yugoslav Republics" *The Chicago Tribune*, April 7th 1992, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1992-04-07/news/9202010106_1_yugoslav-republics-slovenia-president-bush: Accessed August 30th 2018

³⁶⁶ Congressional Record, January 3rd-February 20th 1992 p.1357.

³⁶⁷ Holbrooke, Richard, *To End A War*, (Random House: New York, 1997, pp.39-43)

³⁶⁸ "Conversation with Leon Fuerth" *Conversations with History* by Harry Kreisler, February 5th 2005 <http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people5/Fuerth/fuerth-con2.html>: Accessed on September 10th 2017

³⁶⁹ "United States: The Anointed; Lexington" *The Economist*, 2003, 369:8354, p.33.

Yugoslavism among foreign policy hands and, after 1993, that Western and American policy's goal must be to prevent rather than utilise violence. The very strength of those orthodoxies might well have motivated Gore to seek alternatives.

Gore's charges were, of course, unfair, relying on overly-simplistic characterisations, but this hardly set them apart from foreign policy criticisms by opposition politicians dating back to the Peloponnesian War.³⁷⁰ What mattered was less their truth or fairness than their, at least perceived, effectiveness, and that the Democratic party rated that effectiveness highly enough to make them central to their 1992 critique. As we have seen, as early as autumn 1991, Democrats in Congress, traditionally the opponents of intervention, had moved to outflank their Republican rivals on first the Soviet Union, and then Yugoslav policy. Now, in 1992, the Party cemented the strategy by Governor William Jefferson Clinton of Arkansas's nomination. As a governor, Clinton had not been party to the foreign policy battles of the 1980s. On the Gulf War, he had hedged enough to claim that he had been in favor, at the time saying that he agreed with the arguments offered by opponents but would have voted with the majority out of deference for Presidential authority over foreign affairs.³⁷¹ While he would continue to be dogged by questions about his Vietnam War draft record, the Bush campaign's decision to focus on personal attacks rather than Clinton's policy's "flexibility" allowed Clinton to establish himself as a hawk. With the Gulf War neutralised, Clinton could then go on the offensive in the foreign policy field, endeavouring to advance a narrative where the voters' own doubts about Bush's disengagement from the domestic field were extended to the foreign realm.

For the Clinton campaign, the strategy was obvious; to portray the Administration's failures as the result of indifference rather than incompetence, and thereby turn its assets such as the Gulf War into liabilities. The war in Bosnia, combined with the lack of enthusiasm shown by the Bush Administration towards Croatia, Slovenia, and the Ukraine's secession played a key role in this strategy. It ensured that the most prominent foreign policy issue of the Presidential

³⁷⁰ Strassler, Robert B. and Crawley, Richard. *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War* (Free Press Trade Pbk; New York, 2008)

³⁷¹ Kornacki, Steve, "The War that Made Bill Clinton President" *Salon*, January 23rd 2011.

https://www.salon.com/2011/01/23/clinton_gulf_war/: Accessed May 10th 2014 "Is Clinton Trying to Have it Both Ways on the Gulf War?" *The Christian Science Monitor* March 17th 1992

<https://www.csmonitor.com/1992/0317/17182.html>: Accessed May 26th 2014

campaign would be an Administration failure, allowing the Clinton campaign to exploit longstanding criticism of the Administration for prioritising stability over democracy and human rights. "I think there is an inconsistency in a lot of his actions", Clinton said of his opponent, "because of the pull between the impulse, the deep American impulse, to support freedom and democracy and his own preference for stability in his relationships with foreign leaders in a given area."³⁷² "We were trying to be proactive and out in front of Bush", recalled Clinton's Foreign Policy Adviser Sandy Berger, who would go on to serve as Deputy National Security Adviser, adding, "In a sense we got to the right of Bush on Bosnia, and we were tougher on Bosnia than Bush was."³⁷³

Clinton, in announcing his selection of Tennessee Senator Al Gore as his Vice Presidential candidate, warned against losing the Peace after winning the Cold War: "What we need to elect in 1992 is not the last president of the twentieth century, but the first president of the twenty-first century".³⁷⁴ Gore's selection ensured that the campaign would take a strong stand on Yugoslav issues. "I think on Bosnia, Clinton was heavily influenced by Gore, who was very hawkish about the fact that we needed to be more interventionist with respect to Bosnia", Berger recalled.³⁷⁵ With Gore and Clinton as their standard bearers, the Democrats were taking the offensive on foreign policy for the first time in decades, warning that the new world order was in danger of being smothered in its bed through George H.W Bush's indifference. Interviewed by the *New York Times* in June 1992 when he was still polling in third place behind Bush and independent Ross Perot, Clinton painted a picture of an Administration that had abandoned its moral moorings. President Bush had been "a little slow on the uptake" on Bosnia

³⁷² Ifill, Gwen, "CAMPAIGN 1992: Interview; Clinton Seeking Forceful Image As a Leader in Foreign Affairs" *The New York Times* June 28th 1992 <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/06/28/us/campaign-1992-interview-clinton-seeking-forceful-image-leader-foreign-affairs.html>: Accessed May 25th 2015

³⁷³ Berger, Samuel R., Oral History, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs; National Security Advisor, Miller Center for Presidential History, Interview March 24th-25th 2005, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/samuel-r-berger-oral-history-deputy-assistant-president>: Accessed September 6th 2019

³⁷⁴ Chollet, Derek and Goldgeier, James, *America Between the Wars: From 11/9 to 9/11 The Misunderstood Years Between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the start of the War on Terror* (Public Affairs US:New York, 2009;p.57).

³⁷⁵ Berger, Samuel R., Oral History, Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs; National Security Advisor, Miller Center for Presidential History, Interview March 24th-25th 2005, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/samuel-r-berger-oral-history-deputy-assistant-president>: Accessed September 6th 2019

and “too cozy” with China according to Clinton, while he had “engaged in foot-dragging” in providing aid to the ex-Soviet Republics.³⁷⁶ Clinton even suggested that the US should “shoot its way into Sarajevo” if the Serbs continued to obstruct humanitarian operations.³⁷⁷ Clinton went even further in August, calling for direct military intervention in Bosnia through the UN Security Council. Under the UN Security Council umbrella, “the international community would charge Serbian leaders with crimes against humanity, such as genocidal and ethnic cleansing”, while the US Navy would tighten the UN embargo against Serbia, and the US would participate in air strikes “against those attacking the [U.N.] relief effort in Sarajevo”.³⁷⁸

White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater’s called Clinton’s remarks “reckless”, suggesting that the Governor had “better do some more homework on foreign policy”, and concluding “It’s clear [Clinton] is unaware of the political complications in Yugoslavia”.³⁷⁹ This response may well have been prescient but, in the context of the campaign, it looked like the Democrats were promising to at least try to do something, while in Al Gore’s words “Bush and Quayle have nothing to offer except more of the same”.³⁸⁰ Clinton adviser and former Carter Assistant Secretary of State Lesley Gelb even challenged the idea that the Bush Administration had an exclusive claim to support of the Gulf War, or Democrats sole ownership of its opposition, writing in a *New York Times* Op-Ed piece in October 1992 that “Few put up stiffer resistance to military action in Iraq and Bosnia than Defense Secretary Richard Cheney and Gen. Colin Powell”.³⁸¹ That a senior figure such as Gelb could credibly make such an accusation against two individuals widely considered to be Gulf War heroes, and that the *New York Times* would publish this, demonstrated the degree to which the Clinton campaign had succeeded in

³⁷⁶ Ifill, Gwen, “CAMPAIGN 1992: Interview; Clinton Seeking Forceful Image As a Leader in Foreign Affairs” *The New York Times* June 28th 1992 Accessed May 25th 2015

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

³⁷⁸ “Statement by Governor Bill Clinton On the Crisis in Bosnia” July 26th 1992 Ibiblio Online Library <http://www.ibiblio.org/pub/academic/political-science/speeches/clinton.dir/c7.txt>: Accessed May 24 2014

³⁷⁹ Rosenthal, Andrew “THE 1992 CAMPAIGN: The Republicans; Clinton attacked on Foreign Policy” *The New York Times* July 28th 1992 Accessed May 24th 2014

³⁸⁰ Ibid.

³⁸¹ Gelb, Leslie “Foreign Affairs; No More Hawks and Doves” *The New York Times* October 8th 1992 <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/10/08/opinion/foreign-affairs-no-more-hawks-and-doves.html>: Accessed on May 24th 2014

using the lack of intervention in Bosnia to obscure the lines that had traditionally separated the internationalist Republicans from their Democratic foes.

If the first months of the campaign had been used to exploit the Bosnia issue to obscure the traditional lines between the Democratic and Republican visions of the world, in the final month before the election, Clinton moved to take ownership for himself of the Reagan legacy. In a speech delivered at Milwaukee's Institute of World Affairs, Clinton recalled that a year earlier, in the Ukraine, Bush had "lectured a people subjected to genocidal starvation in the Stalin era, warning that their aspirations for independence constituted, and I quote, 'suicidal nationalism'".³⁸² On Yugoslavia, the Governor went further, assailing American policy's very basis of the previous year: "[Bush had sent James Baker to Belgrade], where, in the name of stability, he had urged the dying members of the Yugoslav Federation to resist disunion".³⁸³ In Clinton's words, this "would have required the peoples of Bosnia, Croatia, and Slovenia to knuckle under to Europe's last Communist strongman". He concluded by declaring "I believe our nation has a higher purpose than to coddle dictators and stand aside from the global movement toward democracy".³⁸⁴

The perceived lack of the "higher purpose" of which Governor Clinton spoke, or what Vice President Bush had termed four years earlier "that vision thing", proved possibly the Bush campaign's greatest liability. Ultimately, neither Bosnia specifically nor the foreign policy generally defeated George Bush; what defeated him was the perception that he did not care while Bill Clinton did. Doubtless, being perceived as insensitive to Americans' economic struggles hurt George Bush considerably. Yet attacks on Bush's foreign policy, which were reinforced in the voters' minds by constant scenes of shell damage in Sarajevo, played a key role in allowing Clinton and the Democrats to portray the incumbent as someone for whom indifference to suffering was core policy. At the same time, Clinton used Bosnia as a way of establishing credibility with an electorate "that had given up on George Bush", by establishing

³⁸² Clinton, William Jefferson "American Foreign Policy and the Democratic Ideal" Speech at The Institute of World Affairs Milwaukee, Wisconsin October 1st 1992; quoted from *Clinton's Foreign Policy: A Documentary Record*, (Kluwer Law International, Madison, 2003, pp.3-11)

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Ibid.

himself as a credible alternative who did care, not just about suffering children in Sarajevo, but also about the suffering of children and their parents at home.³⁸⁵ Bush could never divert the focus of the election away from the economy to foreign affairs, because the Democrats had managed to argue that the wider picture of an uncaring, myopic chief executive applied across the board, and thereby had added foreign policy to the ledger against the President. Clinton himself remarked that “It's a desperate thing to say this election ought to be about foreign policy when America is being ridiculed around the world”.³⁸⁶

The Clinton-Gore team won conclusively in November 1992, in large measure because they promised a government that would care in place of one that obsessed over “complications” in the manner that Marlin Fitzwater had snidely remarked the previous summer. Yet, having won, they would have to come face to face with some of those same “political complications” to which Fitzwater had referred. Clinton entered office seemingly with a mandate to care about the war in Bosnia, and presumably to do something about it, but exactly what that “something” would be had been left up in the air. Would Clinton and his Administration push for airstrikes, even over European opposition? Would they favour action, if it meant having to “shoot their way into Sarajevo”? And what compromises would be required in order to achieve these goals? While Clinton had run on America’s failure to manage the world, he had simultaneously benefitted from the perception that George Bush was too obsessed with it and that he and Baker were far more comfortable with Gorbachev or Kohl than with American voters. Having been chosen due to his connection with those voters, Clinton would have to manage a team capable of working with Kohl and Yeltsin as well, if he truly sought to change matters on the ground in Bosnia. With a limited pool of talent to draw from in Little Rock, and a 12-year gap separating him from the last time Democrats had held the

³⁸⁵ Lake, Celinda “The Debates are a Naked Event” Clinton Campaign Memorandum, October 10th 1992 p.726

³⁸⁶ Ifill, Gwen “The Democrats: Clinton Counter on Foreign Policy” The New York Times, 29 July 1992 https://books.google.com/books?id=6VPpWzcfq2gC&pg=PA266&lpg=PA266&dq=Ifill,+Gwen+%E2%80%9CThe+Democrats:+Clinton+Counter+on+Foreign+Policy%E2%80%9D&source=bl&ots=zUtgYn3ahQ&sig=ACfU3U1JfmROXBz1b5QObAVjO-6QRnRgmQ&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKewjlgf_t647hAhVjTt8KHbkTAJAQ6AEwAHoECAEQAAQ#v=onepage&q=Ifill%20Gwen%20%E2%80%9CThe%20Democrats%3A%20Clinton%20Counter%20on%20Foreign%20Policy%E2%80%9D&f=false: Accessed May 27th 2014

presidency, much would depend on how Clinton staffed his Administration. It was also where he would rapidly discover that words were easier than actions.

Staffing an Administration

Not since the 70-year old Dwight Eisenhower had given way to the 43-year old John F. Kennedy had America seen the sort of generational change that occurred when 68-year old George Bush handed power to 46-year old Bill Clinton. The transition was all the greater, however, due to the fact that the Democrats had been so long out of office. Normally, an Administration can count on three groups of talent: talent from the winning candidate's inner-circle, which usually includes staffers who worked on their gubernatorial or senate staff; talent from previous Administrations of the same party; and talent from academia or the private sector.

George H. W. Bush's Administration had drawn personnel from all three sources, although not always in a manner that allowed them to work in concert as a team, instead relying on an inner circle of loyalists who ran the day-to-day policy. James Baker's entry into politics had been managing Bush's 1970 Senate campaign, while Scowcroft, Eagleburger, and Cheney had all served with Bush during the Ford Administration. The result was a cohesive team that was intensely loyal to the President, but also one where the loyalty was returned in full. Bush was remarkably reluctant to sack anyone, and resisted pressure to remove either his controversial Chief of Staff, John Sununu, or his chief economic adviser, Richard Darman, until he had suffered significant political damage. This was compounded by one of the oddities of modern American politics. Because the majority of Bush's previous political career, and hence his potential pool of loyal talent, had been in Washington rather than at the state level, they had extensive experience of policy-making. At the same time however, the inner circle's limited political experience, since none of the senior figures except for Cheney had been involved in a campaign for decades other than Bush's 1988 election, left the Administration woefully deaf to the political sentiment in the country. For Clinton, the reverse would be true.³⁸⁷

³⁸⁷ King, James D. and James W. Riddlesperger, 'Presidential Management and Staffing: An Early Assessment of the Clinton Presidency', *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, 1996, 26:2, 1996, pp.496–510 www.jstor.org/stable/27551594

Clinton would, be an almost complete inversion of his predecessor. The future President grew up poor, in a trailer park, before working his way to Georgetown, Oxford, and Yale Law School. Having overcome so much to achieve success, Clinton perhaps found it difficult to feel empathy for those who had failed, even if he seemed to feel genuine compassion for those suffering from adversity. Clinton had experienced one setback in his career, defeat in his 1980 reelection campaign to become governor of Arkansas, for which he blamed Jimmy Carter's decision to place Cuban refugees in his state. "He screwed me", Clinton would remark of his Democratic predecessor, with whom he would never enjoy a warm relationship.³⁸⁸ Occurring in a state which had elected Democratic Governors for 102 out of the previous 106 years, it seems to have conditioned the future President always to place domestic considerations first with regards to foreign policy. Clinton also arrived in Washington convinced that the Washington Democratic elite had contributed little to his success, and done much to obstruct his path. Even as Clinton led in the polls, most Washington Democrats backed Nebraska Senator Bob Kerrey's last minute candidacy early in 1992 and, as late as December 1991, seemed to be pining for New York Governor Mario Cuomo to enter the race.³⁸⁹ Clinton would need some members of the Democratic elite to staff his Administration, but they would never be fully part of the team, and, when political expediency demanded sacrifices, it would almost invariably be the elder statesmen who were offered up. Their most prominent representatives, 1988 Vice Presidential nominee Lloyd Benson at the Treasury, former Arizona Governor Bruce Babbitt at the Department of the Interior, and Mississippi Congressman Mike Espy at Agriculture, would all be gone by mid-1995. Other would-be appointees failed to make it even that far. Having promised to appoint a female Attorney General, the President was quick to abandon his first two choices when they fell foul of the immigration laws. Two academics with close ties to the First Lady also saw their nominations derailed when they made the mistake of trying to fulfill their duties too diligently. Jocelyn Elders, who was Clinton's first nominee for Surgeon General, did not make it to confirmation after publicly musing that

³⁸⁸ Halberstam, David, *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals* (Bloomsbury: London, 2002, p.269.)

³⁸⁹ Daley, Steve "Finally, the Day of Decision is at Hand" *Chicago Tribune* December 10th 1991;
http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1991-12-10/news/9104210127_1_democratic-party-democratic-voters-maryland-state-party-chairman: Accessed May 31st 2019

masturbation could be healthy for teenagers, while Dr. Lani Gurnier, nominated to head the Civil Rights division, withdrew after being dubbed the “quota queen” by the press. Gurnier, a political scientist from Harvard University, had focused her research on the role of racial, ethnic and religious minorities within democratic societies, and had publicly mused about ways of granting them representation, including a suggestion regarding guaranteed influence for white South Africans above their pure mathematical strength.³⁹⁰ In the process, the Administration lost the chance to employ the world’s foremost experts on ethnic and religious strife in democratic systems when it confronted many of the same issues in Bosnia. Clinton, in withdrawing Gurnier’s nomination, referred to her views as “indefensible”. Gurnier, reflecting on the experience during a commencement address at Hunter College a year later, argued that avoiding issues does not make problems go away, and remarked that “I believe that if silence is the price of admission, it is also the cost of doing the job”.³⁹¹ Silence on key issues could be expected from many of Clinton’s intimates, including his first Chief of Staff Mack McLarty, an classmate from kindergarten with no prior governmental experience, and Strobe Talbott and Sandy Berger, two of Clinton’s Oxford classmates who became head of Policy Planning at the State Department and Deputy National Security Adviser respectively. Assistant Secretary of State for Policy was considered the premier intellectual position within the foreign policy apparatus, having previously been held by George Kennan, the author of the doctrine of containment. Talbott would arguably grow into the role in a way in which McLarty, who would last less than a year, and Berger, who would end his career pleading guilty to charges of smuggling classified documents out of the National Archives, never would.³⁹²

³⁹⁰ Gurnier, Lani, *The Tyranny of the Majority* (Free Press: New York, 1994)

³⁹¹ Newman, Maria, “Commencements; Guinier, Lani at Hunter: 'Silence Is Not Golden” *The New York Times* June 2nd 1994; <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/06/02/nyregion/commencements-lani-guinier-at-hunter-silence-is-not-golden.html?mtrref=www.google.com&gwh=81A3A78155B1C7411A4D46BA49BDAA8A&gwt=pay>; Accessed June 6th 2014

³⁹² August, Melissa, et al. “PLEADED GUILTY. SANDY BERGER.” *Time*, vol. 165, no. 15, 2005, p.16.

The Clinton Administration's First Foreign Policy Team

With the benefit of hindsight, the challenge that Bill Clinton faced in constructing his foreign policy team was enormous. It is unsurprising, then, that the end product was perhaps less than the sum of its parts in terms of effectiveness, and often seen as ideologically incoherent. Not only was it divided between Clinton's longstanding allies, refugees from academia and Washington insiders but there was the additional burden of bridging the gap between a Democratic party which had voted 46-8 against using force to remove Saddam Hussein from Kuwait, and a new President who had promised that, if elected, he would make America a "catalyst for a collective stand against aggression".³⁹³ Which type of Democrat would the voters get? The New Democrat that Reagan's UN Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick had considered supporting? Or the second coming of James Earle Carter III?³⁹⁴

As a former Governor with limited foreign policy experience and no history within Washington politics, it is hardly surprising that Clinton opted to avoid committing to any particular foreign policy vision, instead preferring to balance the competing factions and outlooks. Time would prove that this was a decision to prioritize domestic considerations in foreign policy formulation, one which would leave the Administration vulnerable to *fait accompli* by Tadjman and even its own rogue officials. In January 1993, however, no one seemed less likely to go rogue than the men whom Clinton selected to serve as Secretaries of Defense and State.

For Defense, Clinton tapped Les Aspin, who had served as Chair of the House Armed Services Committee since 1985. He had been outspoken as a Clinton surrogate on Bosnia during the campaign, declaring in Congress in October 1992 "If we say it is all or nothing and then walk

³⁹³ Chollet, Derek and Goldgeier, James, *America Between the Wars: From 11/9 to 9/11 The Misunderstood Years Between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the start of the War on Terror* (Public Affairs US, New York, 2009) p.3.

³⁹⁴ Frohnmayer, John, 'Conservatives For Clinton', *New Republic*, 1992, pp.22-23. The New Republic Archive. <https://www.unz.com/print/NewRepublic-1992nov02-00022a02> : Accessed April 19th 2014

away from the use of force in the Balkans, we are sending a signal to other places that there is no downside to ethnic cleansing. We are not deterring anybody”.³⁹⁵ Rather than advancing these views in office, the charge against Aspin was that he was too weak, and he would be “faulted for not reigning in Powell, especially on using American forces in Bosnia. Aspin neither challenged Powell's strong opposition nor tried to muzzle him”. Having spent seven years interrogating Pentagon officials on everything from procurement to promotions, a political appointee with no military record like Aspin could not compete with Powell for the top brass’s loyalty. He found himself out of the loop, most embarrassingly when he announced a suspension of humanitarian flights in Bosnia after consulting Powell but not the President.³⁹⁶ Aspin would be fired after less than a year following a disastrous raid in Somalia which saw 18 Americans killed.³⁹⁷

Aspin’s successor, William Perry, had served as Undersecretary of Defense for Research and Engineering under Carter, but in contrast to the long-serving politician Aspin, Perry had never held public office. Regardless of his knowledge of military issues, Aspin had views on politics, being sceptical of intervention in Bosnia and one of the strongest voices against NATO expansion.³⁹⁸ Perry was a far less politically sophisticated actor, occasionally to the point of naivety, as when he was the sole American representative at the May 1998 funeral of Croatian Defense Minister Gojko Sušak whom Perry eulogized as a man who brought democracy to Croatia and peace to the region, before quoting Shakespeare: “now there goes a man, we shall never see his like again”.³⁹⁹ In 1998, Croatia was an international pariah, and

³⁹⁵ “Powell Delivers a Resounding No on Using Limited Force in Bosnia” *The New York Times* September 28th 1992, <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/09/28/world/powell-delivers-a-resounding-no-on-using-limited-force-in-bosnia.html?mtrref=www.google.com&gwh=E35DCB0D36D0D47B6D8720E5F96F843F&gwt=pay> : Accessed May 24th 2014

³⁹⁶ Barnes, F., ‘You’re Fired’, *New Republic*, 1994, 210(2/3), pp.12-14.

<http://search.ebscohost.com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=9312307556&site=ehost-live> (Accessed: June 13th 2019).

³⁹⁷ Halberstam, David, *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals* (Simon & Schuster: New York, 2001) p.261.

³⁹⁸ Goldgeier, James, *Not Whether but When: The US Decision to Enlarge NATO* (Brookings Institution Press: Washington DC, 1999) p.41.

³⁹⁹ Hockenos, Paul, *Homeland Calling: Exile Patriotism and the Balkan Wars* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca: London, 2003). *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctv2n7n6f.9. p.17

Perry caused serious embarrassment to a Clinton Administration that preferred to forget its past relationship with Zagreb.

New Secretary of State Warren Christopher had led both Clinton's Vice Presidential and Foreign Policy search committees, and served as Cyrus Vance's deputy under Carter. He seemed to perceive the conflict in Yugoslavia as an inconvenience that had been forced upon him, musing in June 1993 how Germany "'bears particular responsibility" for the conflict in Bosnia through its "premature" recognition of Croatia and Slovenia.⁴⁰⁰ Christopher had received the position as much for what he was not, as for what he was. "Mention Christopher", the *New Republic* wrote of him, "and the adjective that comes back again and again is "able" though another is "uncharismatic"--though not always in a pejorative sense."⁴⁰¹ Liberal internationalists and those on the right were to be less charitable. William Safire suggested that "Warren Christopher may be the most inept secretary of state since Edward Stettinius"⁴⁰² while Christopher Hitchens, writing in 2008, recalled Clinton Adviser Sidney Blumenthal referring to Christopher as "a blend of Pontius Pilate with Ichabod Crane".⁴⁰³

Head of the Council on Foreign Relations Peter Tarnoff, who became Christopher's deputy, attracted greater controversy. In August 1991, Tarnoff had argued "Any Western insistence on what amounts to unconditional surrender by Iraq will only complicate Arab efforts to resolve the crisis peacefully".⁴⁰⁴ Tarnoff also advocated foreign policy in which the US shifted resources to domestic affairs in a journal article published in summer 1992.⁴⁰⁵ "This is no longer a matter of hawks versus doves", wrote the Editors of the *New Republic*, adding "These appointments leave us fearing that the mind that led him to side with the majority of

⁴⁰⁰ Neumann, Johanna, "Christopher Raps Germany on Bosnia" *USA Today* June 17th 1993

⁴⁰¹ Lane, Charles. "A Man of Good Intentions. (Cover Story)". *New Republic* 215.5 (1996): pp15-19. The *New Republic* Archive. <https://newrepublic.com/article/85488/man-good-intentions>: Accessed April 18th 2014

⁴⁰² Safire, William, "A Sad State Of State: Christopher's Deep Fog at Foggy Bottom." *New York Times Op-Ed* June 6th 2014 <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1993-06-04-9306040032-story.html>: Accessed May 31st 2019

⁴⁰³ Hitchens, Christopher, "The Tall Tale of Tuzla" March 31st 2008 *Slate* <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2008/03/the-real-harm-hillary-clinton-inflicted-on-bosnia.html>: Accessed May 25th 2014

⁴⁰⁴ Barnes, F. (1993) 'Neoconned', *New Republic*, 208(4), pp.14-16. Available at: <http://search.ebscohost.com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=12084097&site=ehost-live> (Accessed: June 13th 2019).

⁴⁰⁵ Tarnoff, P. 'An end to foreign policy', *Harvard International Review*, 1992, 14(4), p.4. Available at: <http://search.ebscohost.com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=9701050427&site=ehost-live> (Accessed: June 13th 2019).

Congressional Democrats against the Gulf war was in fact the truer one. He [Clinton] has created the foreign policy apparatus that Michael Dukakis would have created.”⁴⁰⁶

Clinton attempted to balance fears about excess dovishness by making James Woolsey, a prominent hawk who had worked for Reagan, the new head of the CIA. Woolsey soon found himself isolated when “the President quickly gave up on the daily intelligence briefings by the CIA Director, preferring to read the intelligence himself”.⁴⁰⁷ Woolsey would not meet with Clinton privately even once during the first two years of the Administration, leading him to joke that “It wasn't that I had a bad relationship with the president. It just didn't exist”.⁴⁰⁸ Robert Gates later reflected that “more than any other government department, CIA's influence and role are determined by its relationship to the President and National Security Adviser, a relationship that finds expression almost exclusively in the CIA Director's personal relationship with those two individuals”.⁴⁰⁹ George Bush had mistrusted his first CIA Director, William Webster, a Reagan appointee, partially leading him to discount warnings about the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.⁴¹⁰ As a Republican, Woolsey was also isolated from other members of the President's foreign policy team, most of whom had served together under the Carter Administration.

National Security Adviser Anthony Lake epitomised the Carter Alumni. He had served on Henry Kissinger's staff, before becoming Director of Policy Planning under Carter.⁴¹¹ Instead of moving to either Wall Street or a Think Tank after Reagan's victory, he had instead retreated to the tiny Mount Holyoke College in Western Massachusetts, where he taught for the next decade. The job of the National Security Adviser was to bridge factional gaps in order to provide

⁴⁰⁶ ‘The Quiet Man’ (1993) *New Republic*, 208(3), p.7. Available at: <http://search.ebscohost.com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=12141019&site=ehost-live>: Accessed: June 13th 2019

⁴⁰⁷ Chollet, Derek and Goldgeier, James, *America Between the Wars: From 11/9 to 9/11 The Misunderstood Years Between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the start of the War on Terror* (Public Affairs US: New York, 2009) p.58.)

⁴⁰⁸ Halberstam, David, *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals* (Simon & Schuster: New York, 2001) p.190.

⁴⁰⁹ Gates, Robert M., *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insiders' Account of Five Presidents and How They Won The Cold War* (Simon & Schuster: New York, 1996) p.17.

⁴¹⁰ Andrew, Christopher, *For the President's Eyes Only: Secret Intelligence and the American Presidency from Washington to Bush* (HarperCollins, London, 1995), pp.505, 513, 518.

⁴¹¹ Chollet, Derek and Goldgeier, James, *America Between the Wars: From 11/9 to 9/11 The Misunderstood Years Between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the start of the War on Terror* (Public Affairs US: New York, 2009) p.27.

the President with the information necessary to make decisions and Lake shared the President's frustration with the battles of the past. "In the 1970s and 1980s, every four years we refought the Vietnam within the party", Lake would explain later.⁴¹² During the Carter Administration, he had witnessed Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski tear the administration apart through their rivalry. Lake made "internal collegiality" his highest principle, and helped to kneecap both Holbrooke and Brzezinski's bids for senior roles because he felt them to be anything but collegial.⁴¹³ After the 1992 election, Lake expressed to incoming Clinton appointees his "hope to see a year from now and beyond a group of senior national security officials who are as collegial and amicable as they are today".⁴¹⁴

A Georgetown professor and daughter of Czechoslovakia's pre-1948 Ambassador to Yugoslavia who had fled to the US after the Communist coup in 1948, the new UN Ambassador Madeline Albright would test Lake's patience.⁴¹⁵ Albright had studied for her PhD under Brzezinski and seemed to follow her mentor in antagonising colleagues, several of whom seem to have regarded her as having been "inflicted upon them by an unannounced, yet very real government affirmative action committee".⁴¹⁶ With Holbrooke, who shared her antipathy to Lake as well as most of her ideological views, she would develop a deep rivalry that was more "about politics, personality, and power", as the two battled to succeed Christopher as Secretary of State.⁴¹⁷ Albright won that battle, but the war continued through leaks. One Administration insider leaked of Albright, "He [Holbrooke] was in Vietnam when she [Albright] was raising babies. So why should he defer to her?" Albright's friends gave as good as they got in turn,

⁴¹² Ibid.

⁴¹³ Halberstam, David, *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals* (Simon & Schuster: New York, 2001) pp.178-181.

⁴¹⁴ Heilbrunn, J., 'Lake Inferior', *New Republic*, 1993, 209(12/13), pp.29-35. Available at: <http://search.ebscohost.com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=12084021&site=ehost-live> : Accessed: June 13th 2019

⁴¹⁵ Dobbs, Michael, "Josef Korbels's Enduring Foreign Policy Legacy" *Washington Post* December 28th 2000. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2000/12/28/josef-korbels-enduring-foreign-policy-legacy/8d31958e-07e6-4aff-a3a5-0426f487c9fe> : Accessed May 31st 2019

⁴¹⁶ Halberstam, David, *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals*. (Simon & Schuster: New York, 2001) p.191.

⁴¹⁷ Traub, James, "Holbrooke's Campaign" *The New York Times*, March 26th 2000 <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/03/26/magazine/holbrooke-s-campaign.html?mcubz=3>: Accessed June 20 2019

noting that Holbrooke's diplomacy was "done in such a neuralgic and transparent way that it's icky".⁴¹⁸ During the 2000 election, Albright was heard to remark, "I hope Gore gets elected, but I'll be damned if Holbrooke is going to succeed me".⁴¹⁹

In January 1993, Albright was personally isolated, and Holbrooke, the youngest Assistant Secretary of State in American history under Carter, was only offered the Ambassadorship to Germany through Strobe Talbot's efforts, and then only after an agonizing nine month wait.⁴²⁰ In ordinary circumstance, Albright's isolation would have resulted in an early resignation on some issue of principle, and Holbrooke's sinecure a quick return to the private sector, as real influence would have been blocked by Lake's hostility, who controlled access to the President. Holbrooke and Albright, however, did have access to one figure who mattered immensely, namely Vice President Albert Gore Jr. and it was this connection that would allow them to bypass and eventually displace Christopher, Lake, and Woolsey's influence. Gore was one of the most skilled bureaucratic infighters in an administration with no institutionalized system for decision-making, aided by direct access to the President. "The Vice President was usually the last person he [President] talked to before reaching a foreign policy decision. Which not a bad place to be when you are trying to persuade the ever-persuadable Clinton", observed *Time Magazine* in a glowing 2000 profile.⁴²¹ Unlike Secretary of State Christopher, whose priority was risk avoidance, or Anthony Lake, who prioritised consensus, Gore wielded this influence in favour of a clear policy agenda. James Woolsey recalled "my hunch is that, had he been President, we would not have waited two-and-a-half years, if I may put it in blunt terms, to kick Serbian butt in the former Yugoslavia".⁴²²

⁴¹⁸ Warren Bass "Cold War: The Albright-Holbrooke Feud" *The New Republic* December 13th 1999
<https://newrepublic.com/article/79878/cold-war-holbrooke-albright>: Accessed May 10 2019

⁴¹⁹ O'Donnell, Michael, "The Hustling, Sweating, Flawed Greatness of Richard Holbrooke" *The Washington Monthly*, May 6th 2019,
<https://washingtonmonthly.com/2019/05/06/the-hustling-sweating-flawed-greatness-of-richard-holbrooke/>:
Accessed May 13th 2019

⁴²⁰ Halberstam, David, *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals* (Simon & Schuster: New York, 2001) p.178.

⁴²¹ Tumulty, K., The Secret Passion of Al Gore. *Time Magazine*. May 16 1999,
<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,24841-1,00.html>: Accessed June 11 2018

⁴²² Woolsey, R. James, Oral History, Director of Central Intelligence, Interviewed January 13th 2000, Presidential Oral Histories, Miller Center, University of Virginia,

Gore adopted a hands-on role regarding policy formation, often attending National Security Council meetings, and sending a representative if absent. “I included Leon Fuerth, the Vice President’s National Security Adviser in everything—in my small morning staff meetings, and—well almost everything” Lake later recalled, adding “If, occasionally I forgot to include him, it was the one time that I can recall where the Vice President would get testy. I might get a call from the Vice President, saying, ‘No, I want Leon there.’”⁴²³ Fuerth was the only senior administration figure with a background in the Balkans, albeit from early in his career when, as a professional foreign service officer, he had served as Consul General in Zagreb. This may have influenced both Fuerth and the Vice President’s approach to the region.⁴²⁴ The Vice President’s office demonstrated a clear interest from the start. “When Clinton took office he appointed Leon Fuerth, Vice President Gore’s Security Advisor, as his Czar for handling the sanctions aspects of what was to be this new policy of sanctions enforcement”, recalled Victor Comras who oversaw the sanctions enforcement for the State Department.⁴²⁵ For the next two and a half years, Fuerth and Gore would fight all efforts to trade any form of sanctions relief on Belgrade for political concessions, and ultimately even oppose confidence-building measures such as economic exchanges between the Croatian government and Serb-controlled territories if this meant weakening the sanctions on Belgrade and Pale.⁴²⁶ When not only Fuerth, but later Richard Holbrooke and the Vice President himself, took a leading role in the region, especially in terms of relations with Croatia, this would prove vital. By 1995, Gore would in effect be running his own American policy in the region, which would go a long way towards supplanting the official one.⁴²⁷

<https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/r-james-woolsey-oral-history-director-central>: Accessed May 10 2019

⁴²³ *Anthony Lake Oral History (2004), National Security Advisor, Interviews with the Administration* | Bill Clinton Presidency. <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/interviews-with-the-administration/anthony-lake-oral-history-2004-national-security>: Accessed February 21st 2019

⁴²⁴ “Conversation with Leon Fuerth” *Conversations with History* by Harry Kreisler, February 5th, 2005 <http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people5/Fuerth/fuerth-con2.html>: Accessed September 10th 2017

⁴²⁵ Interview with Victor D. Comras” *The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project* April 16th 2002

<https://cdn.loc.gov/service/mss/mfdip/2007/2007com01/2007com01.pdf>: Accessed March 14th 2018

⁴²⁶ See Chapter 5.

⁴²⁷ Heilbrunn, Jacob, ‘President Gore’s Foreign Policy’, *World Policy Journal*, 2000, 17: 2, pp.48-55. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/40209691: Accessed March 29th 2019

Richard Holbrooke had served as Gore's foreign policy adviser during his ill-fated 1988 campaign, and would have played a key role in 1992 had Gore had his way.⁴²⁸ Holbrooke made repeated efforts to break in, a process that took the form of gushing missives, informing Governor Clinton that "your public statements have made real difference, especially in pushing the Bush Administration into doing more than they otherwise would have done", and positioning himself as a "Bosnia" specialist.⁴²⁹ Holbrooke, who had no previous background in the region, but warned that Bosnia "would be George Bush and Larry Eagleburger's revenge if Clinton Wins", claims that his interest in the area developed following a trip to Croatia and Bosnia (but not Serbia) at the invitation of Winston Lord, Vice Chair of the International Rescue Committee, in August 1992.⁴³⁰ Holbrooke wrote a feature in *Newsweek*, warning "the US, and, to an even greater extent, the European Community may be undermining not only the dreams of a post-Cold War common European house, but also laying the seeds for another era of tragedy in Europe".⁴³¹

After the election, Holbrooke lobbied aggressively for "a special trouble shooter role" for Bosnia, approaching the Clinton transition team in the weeks after the election, and Tony Lake in person during mid-December 1992, who promised to "keep in close touch".⁴³² This lack of official endorsement did not prevent Holbrooke from embarking on a trip of his own to the region over New Year, including a meeting with Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granić, who warned him that, if the UN "did not restore the Krajina to its rightful owners, another war between Serbia and Croatia was inevitable".⁴³³ The Administration, however, showed little interest in sending Holbrooke to Bosnia. When a job offer came, it was for the Ambassadorship to Germany, and it arrived in June 1993, partially in response to a *New York Times* story reporting rumours that Holbrooke was being considered for the Ambassadorship to Japan.⁴³⁴ While Holbrooke would eventually play a key role in Bosnia, his return to favour would be

⁴²⁸ Holbrooke, Richard, *To End A War*, (Random House: New York, 1999; pp.39-43)

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.42.

⁴³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.34.

⁴³¹ *Ibid.*, p.39.

⁴³² *Ibid.*, p.45.

⁴³³ Wolfowitz, Paul, and Paul H. Nitze, 'The Man Who Saved the Day—Sort of...', *The National Interest*, 1998, 53, pp.102-108. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/42897166.: Accessed May 31st 2019

⁴³⁴ Holbrooke, Richard, *To End A War*, (Random House: New York, 1999), p.45.

conditional. Gore's efforts to secure Holbrooke the office of Secretary of State in 1997, after the resignation of Warren Christopher, failed.⁴³⁵ Gore remained loyal to Holbrooke, and it is likely that only 527 votes in Florida prevented Richard Holbrooke from achieving his lifelong ambition of serving as Secretary of State after the 2000 election.⁴³⁶

Michael Mandelbaum, a prominent Professor at John Hopkins who had helped to guide the Foreign Policy team during the campaign and studied with Clinton in England, turned down the post of Policy Planning Chief at the State Department. Mandelbaum was a realist, sceptical of the changes that the end of the Cold War had brought, and may have felt out of place in Clinton's team.⁴³⁷ Mandelbaum was to become a leading critic of several Administration policies, most prominently its efforts to expand NATO to the East. The fact that he was to dissent from outside the Administration rather than from one of its most important perches was to have a significant impact on policy development.⁴³⁸ It also illustrated one of the weaknesses of Lake's approach to staffing. As with Holbrooke, Lake seemed hostile to allowing any major rival centres of authority to develop, and those likely to dissent were either not hired (Holbrooke), discouraged (Mandelbaum) or sidelined (Woolsey). In 1993, this served to render the decision-making inefficient, and their implementation, in the rare cases where decisions were made, ineffective. In attempting to secure his own power in his office of National Security Adviser, Lake would ultimately undermine the office's power itself, with consequences which would sink his bid for leadership of the Central Intelligence Agency in 1997.⁴³⁹ After 1994, this would allow the official National Security Council to be increasingly bypassed, as its inability to reach decisions either positively or negatively encouraged officials to pursue their own agendas in the absence of any clear policy to the contrary.

⁴³⁵ Traub, James, "Holbrooke's Campaign" *The New York Times*, March 26th 2000, <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/03/26/magazine/holbrooke-s-campaign.html?mcubz=3>: Accessed May 17th 2019

⁴³⁶ The margin by which Al Gore lost the state of Florida, and the US Presidential election that year.

⁴³⁷ Chollet, Derek and Goldgeier, James, *America Between the Wars: From 11/9 to 9/11 The Misunderstood Years Between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the start of the War on Terror* (Public Affairs US: New York, 2009. p.114.)

⁴³⁸ Goldgeier, James, *Not Whether but When: The US Decision to Enlarge NATO* (Brookings Institution Press: Washington, 1999).

⁴³⁹ "The Dossier On Anthony Lake" *The New York Times*, January 17th 1997, <https://www.nytimes.com/1997/01/17/opinion/the-dossier-on-anthony-lake.html>: Accessed June 5th 2019

Policy in the Balkans in the Early Months of the Clinton Administration: The Limits of American Power

The Clinton Administration took office at a moment when a clear US position was more vital than ever if the Vance-Owen process were to succeed. The outgoing Bush Administration's actions were a poor guide. James Baker's departure and replacement by Lawrence Eagleburger, who was far less able to resist pressure from within the government and public opinion, led to a drift of American rhetoric in what appeared to be an anti-Serbian direction, especially after Slobodan Milošević defeated Serbian-American businessman Milan Panić in the December Serbian elections. Zimmerman had been no friend of Slobodan Milošević or the Bosnian Serbs but had combined this with a distaste for Franjo Tudjman, and an abiding distrust of Croatian motives. Many younger officers, with no experience of a unified Yugoslavia, lacked Zimmerman's hostility towards Croatia and increasingly saw the Serbs as the outright villains of the conflict. American Consul General in Zagreb Ronald Neitzke was a prime example. Until the US recognized Croatia in April 1992, the consulate in Zagreb was subordinate to the Embassy in Belgrade, a situation that Neitzke resented, regarding Zimmerman's operation as Yugoslavist if not Serbophile, and objecting to the suggestion that "Croatia's and Serbia's 1992 human rights reports should be drafted "in tandem".⁴⁴⁰ "I was reporting frankly what I saw, much of it ugly, based on the enormous number of sources available in Zagreb at that time" Neitzke recalled, "but it was not the way Embassy Belgrade saw things, and they were used to being better informed, or thinking themselves better informed, and prevailing."⁴⁴¹ This outlook was evident in a March cable that Neitzke sent regarding the human rights situation in Croatia, in which he conceded that, "Although the Croatian Government continues to view Human Rights issues as political questions", it seemed "Western pressure on this issue has had some success, at least in terms of attitudinal shifts by Croatian leaders". The cable noted that, "in

440 "Cable: 1992 Croatia Human Rights Report – Embassy Comments on Department's Re-draft" US Diplomatic Cable Wikileaks Release. <https://wikileaks.org/cable/1992/12/92ZAGREB2863.html>: Accessed August 30th 2015

441 Interview with Ronald Neitzke by Charles Kennedy, December 1st, 2006, Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project p.41

http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Neitzke-Ronald-J.toc_.pdf: Accessed August 31st 2017

recent, Tudjman has continued his human rights offensive, holding cordial meetings with delegations from Helsinki Watch, the EC, and a local Amnesty Committee made up of Serbs and opposition figures”.⁴⁴² Recognition, and the failure to dispatch a full-time Ambassador, gave Neitzke the freedom to pursue his conviction that Zimmerman had been wrong about Croatia. “Tudjman had come a long way in 1992, or so it seemed, from the erratic, ultra nationalist greedily eyeing Bosnia that Warren Zimmerman thought he was dealing with, to the more measured and reserved man I found on my arrival, to the Tudjman as self-perceived statesman following the London Conference of August 1992, where he had first tasted international respectability – and liked it”, recalled Neitzke.^{443 444} In an end of the year summary, US diplomats in Zagreb assured Washington that “The highest levels of the Croatian government have pledged that all crimes against citizens will be punished to the full extent of the law”. By contrast, ‘International legal experts who queried the Serbians regarding their ‘so-called’ legal system found the answers evasive, inaccurate, and mendacious.’ According to a reliable source, the legal system there ‘does not exist...So-called judges carry out extremist policies directly against non-Serbian minorities.’⁴⁴⁵ Regarding freedom of religion, the report noted that there were “two mosques, a synagogue, and orthodox churches” in Zagreb, whereas “there is virtually no freedom of religion for non-orthodox believers in Serbian-controlled areas of the UNPAS”.⁴⁴⁶ The embassy staff rejected the use of the term ‘ethnic cleansing’ for Croatian actions, suggesting it be replaced with “forced resettlement”, as “the term ‘ethnic cleansing’ should be reserved for the specific pattern of terrorist clearing actions of Bosnian Serbs”.⁴⁴⁷

98 “CYGOOL: Approaching the Breaking Point: Croatia and the Bosnian Refugee Problem” 131609Z Nov 92 Geneva for RMA and USDEL ICYF -Jackovich November 13th 1992 Wikileaks

<https://wikileaks.org/cable/1992/11/92ZAGREB2392.html>: Accessed August 31st 2015

⁴⁴³ “Interview with Ronald Neitzke by Charles Stuart Kennedy” December 1st 2006, in “Yugoslavia Country Reader” The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project p.608

<http://www.adst.org/Readers/Yugoslavia.pdf>: Accessed 31st August 2015

444 “CYGOOL: Approaching the Breaking Point: Croatia and the Bosnian Refugee Problem” 131609Z Nov 92 Geneva for RMA and USDEL ICYF -Jackovich November 13th 1992 Wikileaks

<https://wikileaks.org/cable/1992/11/92ZAGREB2392.html>: Accessed 31st August 2015

445 “Cable: 1992 Croatia Human Rights Report – Embassy Comments on Department's Re-draft” US Diplomatic Cable Wikileaks Release <https://wikileaks.org/cable/1992/12/92ZAGREB2863.html>: Accessed August 30th 2015

446 Ibid.

447 Ibid.

Lawrence Eagleburger had once remarked that, while US policy provoked dissent, “it never got above the fifth floor of the State Department – this above the desk officer level”.⁴⁴⁸ In autumn 1992, a senior political appointee, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, added his voice. Wolfowitz, who would later play a key role in the 2003 American Invasion of Iraq, was not one to be moved by Neitzke’s moral arguments. He was, however, concerned that, if a Serbian military victory were unacceptable and the US did not enable the Bosnians to buy arms in order to “defend themselves”, Washington would find itself with little choice but to send ground troops, risking their lives in the future. Wolfowitz claims that his arguments made an impression on Powell, as they did not require direct action by the US military, but were derailed by a State Department worried about the legal precedent of unilaterally abandoning the arms embargo.⁴⁴⁹ The US military supported action as long as it involved diplomatic and not military consequences (i.e. lifting or evading the arms embargo), while the State Department favoured military action but opposed diplomatic costs (i.e. air strikes or action by the US military, but no unilateral violations of the arms embargo). This deadlock between the option of dropping the arms embargo, or direct military action, would persist until a mixture of both was imposed on the US decision-makers in 1995, almost against their will.

While both military action and ending the arms embargo were ruled out by the Departments of Defense and State respectively, Eagleburger made two moves which would influence the options available to the Clinton Administration in the Balkans. The first had a directly bearing on the Yugoslav conflict, while the second, although seemingly unrelated, would end up undermining any prospect of serious military intervention in the region. The first was the “Christmas Demarche”, on December 25th 1992, delivered by Robert Rackmales as an “oral message” from George Bush to Slobodan Milošević warning him that “in the event of conflict in Kosovo caused by Serbian action, the US will be prepared to employ military force against Serbians in Kosovo and in Serbia proper”.⁴⁵⁰ The message, which was also delivered to Albanian

448 Sell, L., *Slobodan Milošević and the destruction of Yugoslavia* (Duke University Press: Durham, NC, 2002, p.205)

449 Wolfowitz, Paul, and Paul H. Nitze. “The Man Who Saved the Day—Sort of...” *The National Interest*, no. 53, 1998, pp.102–108. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/42897166

450 Sell, Louis, Milošević p.264.

leader Ibrahim Rugova, made it clear that the threat of US intervention would not apply in the event that an Albanian insurrection was the trigger for conflict.⁴⁵¹ How this would be parsed was left unclear, even to the authors.⁴⁵² While never required to be put into effect, the Clinton team found they had taken on a preexisting American commitment to employ military force over Kosovo, but not, for some reason, Bosnia. At best, this was an exercise in conflict limitation. War had already broken out in Bosnia, but had yet to spread to Kosovo, and there may have been hope that, by warning Milošević off, they could prevent this from happening. The second development was President Bush's decision to deploy American marines to Somalia as part of a UN mission to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid. The decision attracted broad support from leaders in both Houses of Congress, and in public at least from President-elect Clinton, but involved the American military in a peace-keeping operation that would rapidly descend into "peace-making".⁴⁵³ This commitment would make American leaders, both military and civilian, reluctant to undertake another as long as the Somalia mission lasted. When the American attitude towards the Vance-Owen process was raised in early 1993, President Clinton asked his advisers "can we get out of Somalia first?" before making any commitment to sending troops to Bosnia.⁴⁵⁴

The media were, with a few exceptions, almost unanimously anti-Serb, influencing not only Congress but also policy-makers. Richard Holbrook records, in a footnote to his memoirs, that "as journalists reported at the time, the American government had concluded by the early summer of 1992 that the Serbs had carried out close to 90% of all the atrocities in Bosnia and Croatia", without citing any specific statement or article.⁴⁵⁵ Holbrooke, was probably one of the less partisan interventionists, insofar as he did not hold the Serbs responsible for the breakup of

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² Interview with Robert Rackmales by Charles Kennedy" May 11th 1995, in "Yugoslavia Country Reader" p.533 <http://www.adst.org/Readers/Yugoslavia.pdf>: Accessed May 29th 2019

⁴⁵³ Whines, Michael, "Mission to Somalia: Bush Declares Goal in Somalia to save thousands" *The New York Times*, December 5th 1992 <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/12/05/world/mission-to-somalia-bush-declares-goal-in-somalia-to-save-thousands.html?pagewanted=all>: Accessed May 31st 2019

⁴⁵⁴ NSC Meeting Minutes on 5 FEB 1993 Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1993-02-05.pdf>: Accessed October 12th 2017

⁴⁵⁵ Holbrooke, Richard, *To End A War*, (Random House: New York, 1999 pp.25.)

Yugoslavia, instead critiquing the German decision to recognise Slovenia and Croatia.⁴⁵⁶ Other future officials did not make even these concessions. Madeline Albright and Richard Shattuck travelled to Croatia in early January 1993, visiting Zagreb and, after some obstruction by the Serb authorities, Vukovar.⁴⁵⁷ The trip followed on the heels of a series of Congressional visits championed by Democratic Congressman Frank McCloskey of Indiana, who had already played a key role in lobbying for Croatia's recognition.⁴⁵⁸ While McCloskey had at least met with Serbian leaders in Belgrade during his previous trips, as had Senator Joseph Biden of Delaware who spoke with Milošević during his own late 1992 trip, the future Clinton officials made no effort to do so.

This media campaign and the change of perceptions it helped to promote were due in no small part to the able assistance of the PR firm, Ruder Finn. The new contract marked a sea change from the amateurish efforts that Croatia had made in 1990 in Washington. Tudjman's official representative in Washington, Frane Golem, had become famous in émigré and political circles for buffoonery. One Congressman described meetings with Golem "as analogous to asking someone for the time and receiving a lecture on how to make a clock instead".⁴⁵⁹ An editorial in the daily newspaper *Danas* noted that "A well-qualified staff of public relations experts in the US is much more effective than two well-trained divisions in Croatia".⁴⁶⁰ Zagreb arguably got more than two-well trained divisions-worth from the contract with Ruder Finn. In a 1993 interview, James Harf, who managed the portfolio for Tudjman, described "managing to get Jewish opinion on our side" as his greatest achievement, especially given that "reading his [Tudjman's] writings, one could accuse him of antisemitism". According to Harf, "We won by targeting Jewish audience. Almost immediately there was a clear change of language in the press, with the use of words with high emotional content, such as 'ethnic cleansing & concentration camps', etc., which evoked images of Nazi Germany and the gas chambers of

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., p.28, 31.

⁴⁵⁷ "Me: Re Trip to Zagreb, John Shattuck to Acting Secretary Tarnoff, January 11th 1993, <https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/foiadocs/5500.PDF>: Accessed September 1st 2018

⁴⁵⁸ Albright, Madeleine *Prague Winter: A Personal Story of Remembrance and War, 1937–1948* (Harper Perennial. New York. 2012)

⁴⁵⁹ Blaskovich, Jerry, *Anatomy of Deceit* (Dunhill Publishing: New York, 1997).

⁴⁶⁰ Sunić, Tomislav and Goss, Vladimir, P., "Defanziva," *Danas*, August 6th 1991.

Auschwitz".⁴⁶¹ This new line of highlighting Serbian "atrocities" was typified by the video coverage of Britain's ITV news of the Trnopolje internment camp on August 7th 1992 which, arriving on the back of a special by Roy Guttman in *Newsday* the preceding week, focused attention on the purported parallels between the Serbian camps in Bosnia and those used by the Nazis during WWII.⁴⁶² Harff took personal credit for the Nazi comparison: "When the Jewish organizations entered the game on the side of the [Muslim] Bosnians, we could promptly equate the Serbs with the Nazis in the public mind".⁴⁶³

The Croatian effort did not go uncontested. In 1991, Slobodan Milošević had contracted the London firm of Saatchi & Saatchi which had run Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Party's campaigns during the 1980s.⁴⁶⁴ In the long run, this proved a poorer choice than that made by Zagreb. Saatchi specialised in influencing elite opinion in London, and arguably succeeded in pushing both the Conservative Party and the civil service in a Pro-Serb direction, but it had no history of lobbying work within the US.⁴⁶⁵ Furthermore, Milošević rather than the Bosnian Serb leadership was Saatchi's client, and he had less interest in defending them, as opposed to establishing a distance from them. The net effect was to leave the public relations war uncontested over Bosnia, especially after Ruder Finn was also retained by the Izetbegović government.⁴⁶⁶

The success of the Croatian PR effort was reinforced by American decision-making's peculiarly political nature. Unlike in the UK, where most officials below the cabinet level are

⁴⁶¹ Harff, James, Director of [Ruder Finn](#), Global Public affairs section, in the Jacques Merlino interview, April 1993. (reprinted in a book in October 1993). https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/James_Harff: Accessed November 25th 2019

⁴⁶² "The US and the Yugoslav Catastrophe", *The New York Review*, November 20th 1997.

<https://www.nybooks.com/articles/1997/11/20/the-us-and-the-yugoslav-catastrophe>: Accessed May 30th 2016

⁴⁶³ Harff, James, Director of [Ruder Finn](#), Global Public affairs section, in the Jacques Merlino interview, April 1993. (reprinted in a book in October 1993) https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/James_Harff: Accessed November 25, 2019

⁴⁶⁴ Glaurdić, Josip. *Hour of Europe: Western Powers and the Breakup of Yugoslavia* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 2011). pp.215-48. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt5vm608.13>. p.236

⁴⁶⁵ Salatan, William, "Yankee Go Home" *Slate Magazine* May 7th 1999 Accessed 21 May 20 2019

<https://slate.com/news-and-politics/1999/05/yankee-go-home.html>; "Autonomy for Kosovo Isn't Worth American Blood", *Wall Street Journal* op-ed by Rep. Tom DeLay, March 9th 1999.

⁴⁶⁶ Harff, James, Director of [Ruder Finn](#), Global Public affairs section, in the Jacques Merlino interview, April 1993. (reprinted in a book in Oct. 1993) https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/James_Harff: Accessed November 25, 2019

permanent civil servants, and the Ministers are themselves elected officials, every member of the American national security apparatus apart from the President is appointed. Even the Vice President, often a prominent figure in his or her own right previously, is elected on a ticket with the President. Except for the Vice President, who can be either a pivotal figure or a ceremonial-figurehead, excluded from all real power depending on relations with the President, every figure can be sacked by the President. This creates a system where not only is loyalty to the President, but also the priority is the President's political interests rather than national ones. This tendency was partially restrained under George H. W. Bush because many of the key figures – Scowcroft, Baker, Cheney – had all worked together for years, but Bush's 1992 defeat had reinforced the lesson. A foreign policy which is incognisant of the President's political interests will prove short-lived.

Bill Clinton had won the election defining "Serbian Aggression" as a problem, and Bush's failure to respond to this as a justification for removing the incumbent. Whether this reflected the factual reality was beside the point. Clinton's political credibility was tied up with this vision of the Balkans being the reality. Clinton and his Administration needed to defeat "Serbian Aggression". If the facts were more complicated, then it was the new national security team's task to reconcile them with the facts that Clinton needed.

That the Clinton team considered Serb responsibility for the Yugoslav conflict a closed question was illustrated by the questions that the transition team submitted to the Intelligence Communities Joint Balkan Task Force after the election. Established on June 12th 1992, its positions did not always match those advanced by Robert Gates or, later, James Woolsey.⁴⁶⁷ Headed by Norman Schindler, who would later become DCI (Deputy Director of Central Intelligence) for Nonproliferation, in charge of assessing the Iranian and Iraqi efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction, it was designed to be a resource for political decision-makers, rather than an advocate for the intelligence community.⁴⁶⁸ The Administration did not request

⁴⁶⁷ Memo: Establishment of Interagency Balkan Task Force June 12 1992

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1992-06-12.pdf>: Accessed March 3rd 2018

⁴⁶⁸ Iran's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs, Statement by Deputy Director, DCI Nonproliferation Center, "A. Norman Schindler on Iran's Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs to the International Security", Proliferation and Federal Services Subcommittee of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee (as prepared for

an analysis of the possible solutions to the conflict and, unlike in 1991, the intelligence analysts made no attempt to offer one. There would be no discussion of partition's merits this time around. Instead, all potential options involved means of either aiding Bosnian Muslim forces or exerting pressure on the Serbs, with concerns focused on the players' possible responses, such as the European allies, the Islamic world and Russia, as well as the effectiveness of the current sanctions regime.⁴⁶⁹ The responses echoed the media in concluding that Slobodan Milošević was set on creating a "greater Serbia".⁴⁷⁰ While the European nations' concerns about their troops' security on the ground, which would lead them to resist air power alone as a mechanism, were flagged, it was almost assumed they would fall into line with whatever Washington decided. Greater concern was reserved for Russia's domestic situation.⁴⁷¹ Whether forceful action was desirable went unquestioned. The question was "how" to accomplish the goal of "rolling back Serbian aggression" rather than "what" the goal should be.⁴⁷² Even had they wished to, potential objectors, like Mandelbaum, were on the outside looking in, while the campaign's rhetoric committed the new national security team to a view of the conflict in which the Serbs were primarily at fault. Ironically, this was to leave the Administration without either a "how" or a "what" when it sought to abandon the Bush Administration's belated acceptance of Vance-Owen.

When the Clinton Administration's "Principals" gathered to take stock of American policy in the region on January 28th 1993, the parameters of the discussion had already been so constrained as to render the meeting more like an administrator board meeting than a discussion of high policy.⁴⁷³ This may explain why, over the course of the next few months, the "Principals"

delivery) September 21st 2000 https://www.cia.gov/news-information/speeches-testimony/2000/schindler_WMD_092200.html: Accessed May 29th 2019

⁴⁶⁹ CIA Responses To Clinton Transition Team Questions on The Balkans Dec 28th 1992 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1992-12-28.pdf>: Accessed May 29th 2019

⁴⁷⁰ CIA Directorate of Intelligence Memorandum: Greater Serbia: A Balkan Troublemaker for the 1990s January 27 1993 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1993-01-27A.pdf>: Accessed May 20th 2017

⁴⁷¹ National Intelligence Council Memo To DCI: Serbia And The Russian Problem January 25th 1993 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1993-01-25.pdf>: Accessed October 12th 2017

⁴⁷² CIA Directorate of Intelligence Memorandum: Greater Serbia: A Balkan Troublemaker for the 1990s January 27 1993 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1993-01-27A.pdf>: Accessed May 20th 2017

⁴⁷³ Consisting of the Principal National Security officials including CIA Director James Woolsey, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Chair of the Joint Chiefs Colin Powell, the Vice President, President, and Ambassador to the UN Madeline Albright), and chaired by National Security Adviser Anthony Lake.

increasingly left the discussions to their deputies rather than attending them in person. General Colin Powell, the most senior Bush Administration holdover, opened the proceedings with a description of the Bush policy's baselines: "to deliver humanitarian assistance (using air power if necessary), support UN/EC mediation (but not necessarily the Vance-Owen proposals), refuse to accept borders changed by force or to legitimize ethnic cleansing, condemn war crimes, seek No-Fly enforcement, and arm the Bosnian Muslims".⁴⁷⁴ Deputy National Security Adviser Sandy Berger then attempted to reconcile this with the highlights of the Clinton campaign's promises of "enforcing No-Fly, being more aggressive about delivering relief assistance, and considering lifting the arms ban on Bosnia".⁴⁷⁵ It was a repeat of the discussion that Paul Wolfowitz had experienced with Powell and Eagleburger three months earlier. The result was similarly negative. It had been determined what the US could not do rather than what it could. A lone voice in the room was the new CIA Director, James Woolsey, who urged the principals not to isolate Serbia when no serious alternative means of influencing the Bosnian Serbs existed, a dissent which may have been a further step towards his own isolation.⁴⁷⁶

Woolsey's wider point, that it was perfectly acceptable to feel unhappy about the available options but that the imperfection of the options that did exist was not a reason to reject them when potentially preferable alternatives such as air strikes had already been ruled out, was especially pertinent to the Administration's attitude towards the Vance-Owen peace process. In theory, Clinton's Democratic Administration, in which one of Vance's former Deputies served as Secretary of State and another as National Security Adviser, should have been more sympathetic to his efforts than the Republican Administration which had appointed him. Yet, Vance's relations with his former Deputies were poor to nonexistent. In 1980, Christopher had been briefed about Desert One, the Carter Administration's plan to use military force to rescue the hostages from Iran, and been instructed not to inform Vance of the operation. Upon discovering the deception, Vance resigned, thereby publicising dissent within

⁴⁷⁴ CIA Post-Meeting MFR on 28 Jan 1993 Principals Committee Meeting on the Former Yugoslavia January 29th, 1993

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1993-01-29.pdf>: Accessed October 12th 2017

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

the Administration's highest ranks amidst an election campaign.⁴⁷⁷ Vance had, nevertheless, recommended Christopher for the office of Secretary of State. Therefore, the fact that one of his protégés would help to torpedo his plan was "particularly painful to Vance".⁴⁷⁸ For Brzezinski's student Albright, Vance's image as a well-meaning but naïve appeaser of autocrats would have come naturally and she could have easily been the source cited by the *New Republic* when it reported "Vance stands in particularly low esteem for pusillanimity in facing down the Iranian mullahs in the 1970s and for appeasing the Serbs today".⁴⁷⁹ Vance's British partner David Owen recalls that he was "shattered to arrive in the US at the end of January 1993 to discover that informed opinion, even among many good friends, believed that Vance and I were somehow rewarding ethnic cleansing and aggression". Owen, never one to avoid the spotlight, returned this partisan tone willingly, both at the time and later in his memoirs. "The Clinton administration is perfectly entitled to have its own policy on the Balkans", Owen told Foreign Affairs, adding "But the United States, particularly now that it is the sole superpower, also needs continuity in its foreign policy."⁴⁸⁰

The Clinton Administration's public statements about the Vance-Owen plan were far more moderate than Owen's tone implies, with Christopher telling a Senate Sub-Committee that the US supported the "process" without necessarily supporting the results.⁴⁸¹ This position was not far from that of Eagleburger, who had told both Vance and Owen in December that their plan "was likely to end the bloodshed and was the best possible solution for nations unwilling to take stronger methods".⁴⁸² Even much of the media conceded that "the Vance-

⁴⁷⁷ Halberstam, David, *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals* (Simon & Schuster: New York, 2001) pp.198-199.

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., p.199.

⁴⁷⁹ Heilbrunn, J., 'Clothed Ambition', *New Republic*, 1993, 208(5), pp.24-28.

<http://search.ebscohost.com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=12082782&site=ehost-live>: Accessed: June 13th 2019; "The Man Inside Bill Clinton's Foreign Policy" *The New York Times* August 20th 1995 <https://www.nytimes.com/1995/08/20/magazine/the-man-inside-bill-clinton-s-foreign-policy.html>: Accessed March 18th 2018

⁴⁸⁰ "Interview with David Owen on the Balkans." *Foreign Affairs*. March 1st 1993.

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1993-03-01/interview-david-owen-balkans>: Accessed April 20th 2014.

⁴⁸¹ Halberstam, David, *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals* (Simon & Schuster: New York, 2001) p.198.

⁴⁸² Ibid.

Owen plan was hardly perfect, but its imperfections matched the imperfections of Bosnia – and Yugoslavia – as countries”.⁴⁸³

In his memoirs, Owen alleges that the Administration exaggerated the differences between itself and the Vance-Owen team, noting “In July 1992 I had argued publicly that selective air strikes should be used to tip the balance against the Bosnian Serbs, almost exactly at the same time as candidate Clinton was arguing the same case during the election campaign”.⁴⁸⁴ Here lies the rub. Owen’s actual objection appears less that the US somehow “opposed” his plan, and more that the Clinton Administration was unwilling to use military force to compel the parties to accept his plan. The US did ultimately support the plan diplomatically and, further, was willing for the first time to provide peacekeepers in the event of the parties agreeing to the plan. Whatever misgivings they had about the Vance-Owen plan, the Administration “Principals” reached an agreement in January and February 1993 that it was the only game in town and that the US should support it, including indicating a willingness to provide troops for enforcement.⁴⁸⁵ What the Clinton Administration refused to do was to commit to using American military power to *impose* the plan on the parties, something there was never much chance of at a time when the US was not even using force to protect humanitarian operations.⁴⁸⁶ Owen knew that this meant that the plan was doomed, for the very reasons that Vice President Al Gore expressed on February 5th: “The current Vance/Owen plan would need to be not only enforced but imposed. Then we would have the worst of both worlds. Vance/Owen has a terrible map, and would require lots of American blood and treasure”.⁴⁸⁷ Even Serb agreement to the Vance-Owen plan was seen as something that would do little to increase its viability without enforcement, as the Joint Balkan Task Force concluded on March 10th: “Barring the introduction of an external force strong enough to compel them to desist, the Serbs are unlikely to stop until they have achieved that goal. If the Vance-Owen talks

⁴⁸³ Ibid., p.197

⁴⁸⁴ "Interview with David Owen on the Balkans." Foreign Affairs. March 1st 1993. Accessed April 20th 2014. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1993-03-01/interview-david-owen-balkans>

⁴⁸⁵ NSC Meeting Minutes on 5 FEB 1993 Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia; <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1993-02-05.pdf>: Accessed October 12th 2017

⁴⁸⁶ Owen, David, *Balkan Odyssey* (Victor Gollancz: London, 1995).

⁴⁸⁷ NSC Meeting Minutes on 5 FEB 1993 Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1993-02-05.pdf>: Accessed October 12th 2017

have had an influence on Serb actions, it more likely is in persuading them to accelerate the pace of their efforts to achieve their goals before a settlement is reached...The Serbs are not likely to withdraw from any territory they occupy barring the arrival of an international force able and willing to compel them to do so".⁴⁸⁸ Therein lay the conundrum. The Vance-Owen plan could not be implemented, except through the use of American force, but, if they were to use American force, the Clinton Administration wanted a better map in exchange.

American officials can be forgiven for failing to evince enthusiasm for a process which required the US to pay the lion's share of the cost for a plan that it had not created. No decision was made to reject Vance-Owen, privately or publicly. Christopher expressed this ambiguity. On February 5th, he argued "We should be more aggressive in describing our negative position about the current Vance/Owen plan and the only way we would get people to agree is to be prepared to enforce a settlement". At the same time, however, he maintained that "we should not throw out Vance/Owen at this point and do it ourselves. If an agreement can be reached, we should commit the U.S. to a greater degree of enforcement".⁴⁸⁹ The US did not doom Vance-Owen; the need for the US to intervene for the plan to work did. Owen may or may not have had a point when he bitterly lamented that the US did eventually assert itself in 1995 in order to enforce a plan at Dayton which was in some ways less attractive than his own, but what he misses is the fact that the key assertion in 1995, as we will see, came not from Washington but from Zagreb.

The Clinton Administration did not kill the Vance-Owen plan; it refrained from investing military resources in compelling compliance, seeing the cost as too high for the settlement on offer. Such a decision was perfectly defensible if the US was prepared to invest greater resources to achieve a more favourable settlement for the Bosnian Muslims, coerce the Bosnian Muslims and Croats into accepting a settlement which would not require American military imposition, or indifferently allow the conflict to continue indefinitely. What made the Clinton Administration's rejection of Vance-Owen a mistake was that the Administration

⁴⁸⁸ BTF Assessment: Serb War Aims 23-Mar-93 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1993-03-23B.pdf>: Accessed October 12th 2017

⁴⁸⁹ NSC Meeting Minutes on 5 FEB 1993 Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1993-02-05.pdf>: Accessed October 12 2017

rejected all of these options. The Administration wanted a better map which would nevertheless require less American effort to impose on the parties. This was impossible. The Vance-Owen trade-offs were inherent to every other plan which did not reflect the existing balance of military force on the ground. The Clinton Administration discovered this when tasked with devising their own alternative. They produced a plan which had all the weaknesses of Vance-Owen but none of the strengths.⁴⁹⁰ In May 1993, Clinton sent Christopher to Europe to present the concept of “lift and strike”, a lifting of the arms embargo which was perceived as disadvantaging the Muslim forces, followed by the launch of air strikes on Serb forces. If the objections to Vance-Owen were the justifiable belief that the plan was inviable without the “stick” of the US force, then what was “lift and strike” other than the missing component of the Vance-Owen effort, denuded of a map, plan, or clearly-defined objective? What were the air strikes supposed to hit? What would the US require the Serbs to agree to in order to stop them? Was the US committed to a Muslim military victory? Would it even work? The CIA thought not, arguing that supplying “weapons to the Bosnian Muslims and launching multinational airstrikes against Serb positions would not have any lasting effect on the Bosnian Government's military situation, but would probably lead to the breakdown of the Vance-Owen talks and the shutdown of UN humanitarian relief missions”.⁴⁹¹

Proposing to flood Bosnia with large quantities of weapons in pursuit of no clear purpose could hardly have been expected to be warmly welcomed in Europe. “Britain is ready to risk a full-scale confrontation with the US if President Bill Clinton tries to lift the United Nations arms embargo on Bosnia” warned the *Independent*.⁴⁹² Sir Jeremy Greenstock, then heading Yugoslav policy in Whitehall, recalled how the British “thought that that would just prolong the war, would not bring people to the table. The Americans would end up supplying

⁴⁹⁰ Bosnia, 1992–95: Keeping the U.S. Military from ‘Owning’ It.” Recchia, Stefano, *Reassuring the Reluctant Warriors: U.S. Civil-Military Relations and Multilateral Intervention* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca; London, 2015) pp.107-146. p.126. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt1h4mjh5.9: Accessed: January 12th 2019.

⁴⁹¹ BTF Assessment: Likely Consequences of Partially Lifting the Arms Embargo In Conjunction With Air Strikes 23-Mar-93 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1993-03-23E.pdf>: Accessed October 12th 2017

⁴⁹² Marr, Andrew, “Britain set to break with US over Bosnia: Major ready for air strikes but will veto any move to lift arms embargo” *The Independent* April 29th 1993 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/britain-set-to-break-with-us-over-bosnia-major-ready-for-air-strikes-but-will-veto-any-move-to-lift-1458172.html>: Accessed May 17th 2014

the Bosnians with arms; the Serbs would be very difficult to defeat militarily, but the Bosnians would never let go, so you'd have a much longer Civil War in Yugoslavia than if you got them to negotiate".⁴⁹³ French President Mitterrand informed Christopher of his belief that there was no need for a policy which would see more weapons flooding into the Balkans.⁴⁹⁴ It is possible that the European leaders might have been more receptive to the proposed air strikes without a lifting of the arms embargo. The *Independent* had also reported that "Mr. Major, Douglas Hurd, the Foreign Secretary, and Malcolm Rifkind, Secretary of State for Defense, will tell Cabinet colleagues today that they are prepared to back air strikes", as a "lesser evil" if the US was resolved on "lift and strike".⁴⁹⁵

If the British were willing to let the Americans experiment with a policy of air strikes that lacked any clear military or political objectives, there was someone who was far less cavalier about risking American lives simply because no one had any better ideas. "Our main problem, in addition to everything else", Madeline Albright later recalled, "was Colin Powell."⁴⁹⁶ "He saw Bosnia as another Vietnam and he was going to stop it", Nancy Soderberg explained.⁴⁹⁷ Powell's "constant, unwelcome message at all the meetings on Bosnia was simply that we should not commit military forces until we had a clear political objective".⁴⁹⁸ Powell had little patience with others in the Administration who saw military action as a substitute for a political settlement in the region. At one point early in the Administration, Madeline Albright cornered him and asked "What are you saving this superb military for, Colin, if we can't use it?' I thought I would have an aneurysm... American GIs were not toy soldiers to be moved around on some sort of global game board", Powell wrote later.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹³ Greenstock, Jeremy, British Diplomatic Oral History Project, Churchill College Cambridge, p.26
<https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/media/uploads/files/Greenstock.pdf>: Accessed November 25, 2019

⁴⁹⁴ Marr, Andrew, "Britain set to break with US over Bosnia: Major ready for air strikes but will veto any move to lift arms embargo" *The Independent* April 29th 1993
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/britain-set-to-break-with-us-over-bosnia-major-ready-for-air-strikes-but-will-veto-any-move-to-lift-1458172.html>: Accessed May 17th 2014

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁶ Riley, Russell, E., *Inside the Clinton White House: an Oral History* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2016) p.218.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ Powell, Colin, *My American Journey* (Random House: New York, 1995) pp.575-78.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid.

When confronted with the idea of “lift and strike”, Powell could easily have turned Albright’s question back to her: “what are you planning to use this superb military for, madam ambassador? What map do you wish to impose, what peace plan do you envision, what demands will you make?” Powell perhaps underestimated the options that a series of Muslim/Croat military successes might open as they did in 1995, but in 1993, that was neither US policy nor anyone’s proposed policy. When proposed by Paul Wolfowitz the preceding autumn, Powell had come out in favour of it, only to have it scotched by the State Department.⁵⁰⁰ In Powell’s view, the problem in Bosnia was political; namely, *what did the US want to happen*, and the military could solve that problem by making it happen only after the politicians had defined what “what” was.⁵⁰¹ All other military hypotheticals involved lobbing bombs and then waiting to see if that produced a political solution, and any American officer who had lived through Vietnam could be forgiven for feeling sceptical about *that*.

A hero after the success of the Gulf War, Powell was widely rumoured to be a potential Republican candidate for President in 1996. Clinton trod carefully around the General, giving Powell neither cause for complaint nor any issue that could serve as pretext for a principled resignation. When Powell expressed public opposition to plans to allow gay people to serve openly in the military, Clinton dropped the proposal. “They’re terrified of him”, stated a White House official, adding “He’s too independent.”⁵⁰² The consequences of a principled Powell resignation in objection to a mission in Bosnia that then suddenly went wrong, providing a political “I Told You So” moment, was too risky for a President who was not known for risk-taking. Powell “was not a constructive player on Bosnia”, according to Nancy Soderberg, who “effectively tied Clinton’s hands, because you can’t get this done if you don’t have a Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman who will come up with options for you”.⁵⁰³

⁵⁰⁰ Wolfowitz, Paul and Nitze, Paul, H., “The Man Who Saved the Day—Sort of...” *The National Interest*, no. 53, 1998, pp.102–108. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/42897166: Accessed November 26, 2019

⁵⁰¹ Powell, Colin, *My American Journey* (Random House: New York, 1995 pp.575-78)

⁵⁰² Barnes, F. (1994) ‘You’re Fired’, *New Republic*, 210(2/3), pp.12-14. Available at:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=9312307556&site=ehost-live>: Accessed: June 13th 2019

⁵⁰³ Soderberg, Nancy, Oral History, Foreign Policy Director for the Clinton/Gore 1992 Campaign; Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs; Alternate Representative to the United Nations

Political constraints left Clinton administration without a policy, as US support for Vance-Owen or any other plan was equally dependent on solving the Gordian knot of enforcement/implementation. “President Clinton believes that we must move toward a settlement, building on the [former Secretary of State Cyrus] Vance - [Lord David] Owen plan, that is just, workable, and durable, and that preserves Bosnia as a state. US participation comes with the expectation that Europe, which is most directly affected, will play a leading role and redouble its concerted efforts”, the Secretary of State declared after his doomed trip to Europe to sell “Lift and Strike”.⁵⁰⁴ This was, however, in and of itself, an admission that the US did not see “Lift and Strike” so much as an alternative to the Vance-Owen plan as something that was a prerequisite in order for any sort of settlement to work. “None held high hopes for Vance-Owen”, the minutes of a two and a half hour Principals meeting on Bosnia, held on April 7th, recorded, but “No decisions were taken on the future direction of Yugoslavia policy should Vance-Owen fail.”⁵⁰⁵ Tony Lake floated air support for the Bosnian Muslims without lifting the arms embargo, while Powell advocated pressuring the Muslims to accept a deal, but neither was able to gain much support from any other power centre.⁵⁰⁶ Yet even this was merely a process without the all critical objective; namely, a settlement that the US wished to work towards. Powell noted this, arguing that air support made no sense, as even if it proved, to

Interview, Miller Center for Presidential History, May 10th-11th 2007, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/nancy-soderberg-oral-history-foreign-policy-director>: Accessed September 6th 2019

⁵⁰⁴ Warren Christopher Speech to NATO Council, Brussels, February 26th 1993, Quoted from Snežana Trifunovska, *Yugoslavia Through Documents: From Its Creation to Its Dissolution*, (Martinus Nijhoff Publishers; Amsterdam; 1994) p.845

<https://books.google.com/books?id=PvjLRzgyKKkC&pg=PA846&lpg=PA846&dq=%22that+is+just,+workable,+and+durable,+and+that+preserves+Bosnia+as+a+state.+US+participation+comes+with+the+expectation+that+Europe,+which+is+most+directly+affected,+will+play+a+leading+role+and+redouble+its+concerted+efforts%22&source=bl&ots=6W7AgoNFrg&sig=ACfU3U0XGjVOa7U6FBxG4K6oYkf-mxxwog&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj42KqRxMbiAhWBm-AKHQ0TDw0Q6AEwAHoECAAQAQ#v=onepage&q=%22that%20is%20just%2C%20workable%2C%20and%20durable%2C%20and%20that%20preserves%20Bosnia%20as%20a%20state.%20US%20participation%20comes%20with%20the%20expectation%20that%20Europe%2C%20which%20is%20most%20directly%20affected%2C%20will%20play%20a%20leading%20role%20and%20redouble%20its%20concerted%20efforts%22&f=false>: Accessed May 31st 2019

⁵⁰⁵ 1993-04-09 - CIA Post-Meeting MFR on 9 APR 1993 Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1993-04-09.pdf>: Accessed October 12th 2017

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

some degree, effective in shifting the military balance in favor of the Muslims, that would be just as likely to raise their demands as to encourage the Serbs to accept a current deal. If it failed, it would leave the US committed to escalating its commitments. "The 'do-something' group really have an obligation to say what it is ought to be done" Christopher exclaimed in response to a *New York Times* op-ed criticising his performance in Europe. "I've yet to hear a plausible basis for dealing with the situation in Bosnia that would not require hundreds of thousands of troops."⁵⁰⁷

Advocates of intervention could point to a successful landing in Haiti the following February, where the mere threat of force sufficed to remove a military junta. While encouraging "the minority of Clinton advisers who regard military action as a necessary tool of foreign policy", US action in Haiti succeeded because it met Powell's test.⁵⁰⁸ The US objective in Haiti, the reinstatement of a democratically-elected President, was both clear-cut and, by definition, limited. Ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide's restoration was non-negotiable; everything else, including an amnesty for the military and civilian plotters who had ousted him along with placing restrictions on his authority, was open to discussion. The real analogy in Bosnia would have been to a limited effort to coerce Serbian acceptance of the Vance-Owen plan through a threat of force, paired with a threat to abandon the Muslims to their fate if they rejected the terms (as the US did to Aristide). Yet, considering Vance-Owen insufficiently desirable to justify the cost of greater American involvement, the Administration declined either to define a settlement or to reduce their goals to bring them in line with the resources available. In the process, the mistakes made by the Bush Administration during 1989-1992 were repeated. The US still needed to decide between scaling back its ambitions or finding additional resources. Ultimately, those at the top never would, leaving it to Al Gore, Richard Holbrooke, and others, such as soon-to-be Ambassador to Croatia Peter Galbraith, to do so, dragging the rest of the US government along in their wake. Their approach would be to square the circle not

⁵⁰⁷ Neumann, Johanna "Christopher returns critics' fire, Defends vision of US role" *USA Today* June 18th 1993 Accessed June 5th 2014

⁵⁰⁸ Barnes, F. (1994) 'Oh, All Right Then', *New Republic*, 211(15), pp.11-12. Available at: <http://search.ebscohost.com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=9410037739&site=ehost-live> (Accessed: June 13th 2019).

by investing greater US resources but by borrowing Croatia's military power. As with all borrowing, this would come at a cost far greater than the loan's proponents anticipated.

The End of the First Year

“There has been a tendency to shift responsibility - crucial to successful leadership” Wolfowitz wrote of the Clinton Administration’s approach to foreign policy, “away from the President and toward subordinates; away from the US and to its allies, for example the Europeans on Bosnia or the Japanese and South Koreans on North Korea; and away from this administration and toward its predecessor with the rhetoric of ‘inherited crises’.”⁵⁰⁹ This was a poignant observation. The Clinton Administration had, doubtlessly, inherited the situation in Yugoslavia from its predecessor, but Bill Clinton had explicitly run against George Bush in 1992 on the basis that he could do a better job of managing such “crisis”. The obstacles that Clinton and his team identified were not imaginary. Colin Powell did oppose military action without a political objective; America’s allies had doubts about the wisdom of lifting the arms embargo on the Muslims alone; and the Vance-Owen plan demanded a lot from the US for an imperfect outcome, but politics is about reconciling objectives with the means available. Instead, obstacles became excuses for inaction. The Clinton Administration failed to define a foreign policy for the US. They had rejected Bush’s focus on “stability” but had not found anything to replace it with, much as they had rejected Vance-Owen, but also rejected “unilateral force”, the only viable alternative. “They tried, and failed, to turn American foreign policy into a branch of social work” Mandelbaum lamented.⁵¹⁰ Thomas Friedman wrote, in the *New York Times*, that “In Bosnia, failure has left Mr. Clinton in an exquisite bind. He can escalate, introducing American ground troops—something he has pledged to avoid. Or he can reconcile himself to the fact that his attempts at humanitarian intervention have produced bloody, unforeseen consequences”.⁵¹¹

⁵⁰⁹ Wolfowitz, Paul “Clinton’s First Year.” *Foreign Affairs*. 1 Jan. 1994.

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1994-01-01/clinton-s-first-year>: Accessed May 1st 2014.

⁵¹⁰ “Foreign Policy as Social Work.” *Foreign Affairs*. January 1st 1996.

<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/haiti/1996-01-01/foreign-policy-social-work>: Accessed May 1st 2014

⁵¹¹ Kaus, M. (1993) ‘Virtual president’, *New Republic*, 208(26), p.6. Available at:

<http://search.ebscohost.com.gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/login.aspx?direct=true&db=bth&AN=11929606&site=ehost-live> (Accessed: June 13th 2019).

Reflecting on the 1992 Presidential campaign, Colin Powell recalled, three years later, that there was no foreign policy issue upon which the Clinton Administration had been more critical of its Republican predecessor than the war in Bosnia.⁵¹² Facing a President who was considered a national hero following the Gulf War, and who seemed to have won the ideological contest against the Soviet Union globally, the Clinton campaign sought to use Bosnia to turn Bush's strength into a liability. The Bush Administration's management of foreign affairs, detached, dispassionate, and conducted in terms of leaders, governments, and backroom deals, was portrayed as an immoral approach that subordinated human rights and democracy to short-term deal-making. Bosnia had tied a number of these threads together. The Bush Administration's penchant for stability and support of Gorbachev and the Chinese leadership in Beijing portrayed the Administration as the enemy of the "people" of the communist and former communist world. Bush, rather than becoming the man who won the Cold War became the man who sought to preserve its relics, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, and seemed determined to allow an unprecedented historical opportunity to pass America by. Moreover, if anyone doubted Bush's actions' moral consequences, one only had to turn on CNN to view Sarajevo's ruins. In effect, Yugoslavia allowed the Clinton Administration to take credit for the end of the Cold War over which Bush had presided.

One reason why Bosnia worked so effectively for Clinton in 1992 was that Bush's freedom of action was limited by the fact that he was already President and could not promise undeliverables. Once President, Clinton came face to face with many of the same challenges that Bush had faced. In addition, Clinton inherited a deeply-divided party. Hawks and doves coexisted with difficulty within an Administration that tried to pursue coherent policy outcomes while unwilling to pay the price for success, domestically or internationally. The result, perhaps predictably, was the perception of failure which dogged the first year of Clinton's foreign policy, whether in Somalia or Yugoslavia. A side-effect of the failures of 1993 was a number of senior figures' departure and the side-lining of others, such as Secretary of State Christopher. In their place would rise a new generation of policy-makers who would first bypass their superiors in order to implement policy in Bosnia, and then use success in the Balkans as currency in their

⁵¹² Powell, Colin, *My American Journey* (Random House: New York, 1995) p.575.

struggle to control the Administration. For the opponents of intervention, the victory won in 1993 would prove to be both fleeting and pyrrhic in nature.

Chapter 4: From the Ashes of Failure: US-Croatian Relations 1993-1994 and the Reinvention of American Policy in the Former Yugoslavia

When the Clinton Administration took office in January 1993, US policy towards Croatia appeared non-existent. Amidst the efforts to create a coherent foreign policy team and reach some sort of consensus on policy towards Bosnia and the Vance-Owen process, the Clinton Administration had little time to spend determining a policy towards Croatia, which in January 1993, more than eight months after recognition, still lacked a nominated Ambassador. Ronald Neitzke continued to represent American interests in Zagreb, yet it was increasingly the Croats rather than the US policy-makers who were taking the initiative. After a slow start in 1991, and a mixed record of success with the Bush Administration, Zagreb was determined to avoid repeating the mistakes it had made with the new Clinton team. Throughout autumn and winter 1992, Tudjman personally hosted Richard Holbrooke, Madeline Albright, and a Congressional delegation led by Frank McCloskey in Zagreb.⁵¹³ McCloskey had played a leading role in the House as an advocate of first Croatia and then Bosnia. The erstwhile champion of the Kosovo Albanians, Republican Senate leader Robert Dole of Kansas, had been transformed by the November 1992 election from the White House's lieutenant to leader of the opposition in the Senate.⁵¹⁴ At the end of his December 1992 trip to Zagreb, McCloskey had praised Tudjman's "contributions to peace" while declaring that "genocide is raging unchecked in Europe. Western policy based on negotiations, sanctions and peacekeeping has failed. We need a more forceful and coherent strategy which confronts, instead of acquiescing in Serbian

⁵¹³ "Me:Re Trip to Zagreb, John Shattuck to Acting Secretary Tarnoff, January 11th 1993, <https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/foiadocs/5500.PDF>: Accessed November 22 2019

⁵¹⁴ Hamza Karčić (2016) An unlikely hawk: Congressman Frank McCloskey and the Bosnian war, *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 15:1, 18-40, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14794012.2016.1265348?src=recsys&journalCode=rjts20>: Accessed November 22 2019

aggression". Assisting McCloskey to draft his remarks was the Democratic Staff Director for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and future US Ambassador to Croatia, Peter Galbraith.⁵¹⁵

Tudjman had bigger plans than simply entertaining guests. The Croats were planning a military operation within Croatia which would not only violate the cease-fire terms but also take advantage of its conditions. Serb gains in 1991 had left parts of Croatia almost isolated, and the Maslenica bridge's destruction, northwest of the city of Zadar, had left Dalmatia accessible to the rest of Croatia only by ferry.⁵¹⁶ When Cyrus Vance mediated an agreement between Croatia and Belgrade in December 1991, the bridge and surrounding area had remained under Serbian control. Other aspects of the agreement had been more favourable towards the Croats. The JNA had withdrawn from internationally-recognised Croatian territory while the Krajina Serbs had turned their heavy weapons over to UN control. UN Peacekeepers would patrol the demarcation line between Krajina Serb- and Croatian-held territory. Over the following 12 months, the strategic picture envisioned by the December 1991 agreement had altered dramatically. In December 1991, the JNA remained just over the border in Bosnia, able to intervene on the Serbian side if fighting resumed. Following Bosnia's secession in April 1992, the former JNA units had either been withdrawn into Serbia proper, or been converted into Bosnian Serb units which were fighting within Bosnia itself. By January 1993, only "Sector East" the area of Slavonia, mainly around the devastated city of Vukovar, which was directly adjacent to Serbia, remained directly subject to JNA (now renamed Yugoslav Army - VJ) intervention.⁵¹⁷ It is hardly coincidental that the cease-fire would hold until December 1995 in Sector East, despite the sabre-rattling on both sides.

⁵¹⁵ McCloskey Trip - Croatia, Macedonia - Follow-up, Nov 17-30 1992, Frank McCloskey Congressional Papers Box 1, Indiana State University, <http://fedora.dlib.indiana.edu/fedora/get/iudl:1750497/OVERVIEW>: Accessed June 20th 2018

⁵¹⁶ D1797 (Mate Granić, witness statement, May 12th 2009), para. 17. Quoted in IT-06-90-T (Gotovina) Judgement, April 15th 2011 <https://www.legal-tools.org/doc/86922c/pdf/>: Accessed August 20th 2019

⁵¹⁷ On May 20th 1992, the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) was renamed the Yugoslav Army (Vojska Jugoslavije, or VJ) with the establishment of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia between Montenegro and Serbia. Although the US did not officially recognize the Federal Republic as the successor to the old Socialist People's Republic of Yugoslavia, the term "Yugoslav" was applied to its armed forces by almost all official American documents to avoid confusion with the Bosnian and Krajina Serb units.

The Maslenica Bridge was located on the opposite side of Croatia, as geographically distant from Sector East as possible, and so offered a juicy target for Tudjman. In the event of an attack, the Krajina Serbs would not have immediate access to their heavy weaponry, while the VJ was no longer able to retaliate, leaving only the international community in a position to intervene.⁵¹⁸ To blunt international criticism, Zagreb could argue that the Serbs had violated their obligations under the Vance Plan to open transport routes and facilitate the return of refugees.⁵¹⁹ Admittedly the argument about refugee return applied more strongly to Sector East where the pre-war Croatian population amounted to nearly two thirds of the total than to the historically Serb-majority area around Maslenica.⁵²⁰ Zagreb's real target was as much Washington as Knin. With Clinton's victory, Neitzke speculated "Tudjman hoped for a change in U.S. policy... but, as all the signals out of the early Clinton Administration pointed to continued U.S. reluctance to get involved, Tudjman was quicker than many to see that those hopes were misplaced; Croatia was going to have to take the initiative".⁵²¹ Operation Maslenica would imply to Washington that a failure to resolve the UNPAs issue to Zagreb's satisfaction risked the resumption of fighting and perhaps a wider conflict. The experience of autumn 1991 had taught the Croatian leadership that the absence of fighting, rather than the nature of any peace, motivated Western leaders. Tudjman had used that knowledge to portray the JNA's presence in Croatia as the cause rather than the result of the Croatian-Serb conflict. To prevent Washington from becoming too comfortable with the post-Vance *status quo*, it was vital to show that some fighting was inevitable unless Croatia's demands were met. Moreover, starting a war with

518 Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis, *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990–1995* (Central Intelligence Agency: Washington, D.C., vol 1, 2002) pp.267-268.

519 "Testimony: Milan Babić", December 6th 2012, p.14019

http://www.icty.org/x/cases/slobodan_milošević/trans/en/021206IT.htm: Accessed June 18th 2018,

520 The percentage of Serbs in the various UN (i.e. Serbian controlled regions in Croatia), according to the 1991 census, was 67% in Sectors North/South (the Krajina), 60% in Western Slavonia, and only 32% in Sector East. If refugee return was the motivation, then the focus should have been on Sector East. [The Prosecutor of the Tribunal Against Slobodan Milošević Archived](#) May 31st 2012 at [WebCite](#). International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.. http://www.icty.org/x/cases/slobodan_milošević/ind/en/mil-2ai020728e.htm: Accessed September 13th 2019

521 "Interview with Ronald Neitzke by Charles Stuart Kennedy" December 1st 2006, in "Yugoslavia Country Reader" The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p. 609 <http://www.adst.org/Readers/Yugoslavia.pdf>: Accessed November 22 2019

Belgrade, for which Croatia would be blamed and probably defeated in, would prove counterproductive.

“Operation Maslenica” was finely calibrated to achieve this middle ground, with the Croatian Army aiming to seize the bridge along with the buffer zone around it and then push for a cease-fire that would consolidate those gains.⁵²² It was launched on January 22nd 1993, 36 hours after Bill Clinton was sworn into office and during Defense Minister Sušak’s pre-scheduled visit to Washington, ensuring that he would be available to offer explanations to the Administration in the unexpected event that America objected forcefully to the Croatian move.⁵²³ Croatian forces advanced more than seven kilometers, securing both the bridge and adjacent airport, after which the operation ceased. With their heavy weapons under UN control, the Serbs were only able to field light military police.⁵²⁴ “We limited our operation to that area only because of the international circumstances”, Tudjman told his advisers, noting that the operation “has a much greater meaning than just opening of the route. Serbs have been forced out of the area, which is for them most fertile, which was in their hands, and on which they based their concept that that could be their coastal area.”⁵²⁵

The UN Security Council condemned the Croatian action, and threatened sanctions.⁵²⁶ The EC was displeased at observers’ treatment, who were detained. “It is clearly stated that EC monitors are to have clear freedom of movement”, complained an EC representative, adding “This breaks a memorandum of understanding between the EC and the Croatian

522 IT-95-11:Martić *All My Battles*, General Janko Bobetko p.382 Uploaded by Daniel Berman in PDF form <https://drive.google.com/file/d/13s1exgGfyZD5DpjkAWFFGa7x7uDeAr4/view?usp=sharing>: Accessed August 20th 2019

⁵²³ Presidential Transcript February 9th 1993. Annex III pp.189-190
<http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed June 11 2019

⁵²⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis, *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990–1995* (Central Intelligence Agency: Washington, D.C., vol 1, 2002, pp.267-268.)

⁵²⁵ Presidential Transcript of the 8th Presidential Council meeting held on 25/01/1993 Annex III p.182
<http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed June 11 2019

⁵²⁶ ["Croats Battle Serbs for a Key Bridge Near the Adriatic". *New York Times*. January 24th 1993.](https://www.nytimes.com/1993/01/24/world/croats-battle-serbs-for-a-key-bridge-near-the-adriatic.html?scp=3&sq=maslenica&st=cse)
<https://www.nytimes.com/1993/01/24/world/croats-battle-serbs-for-a-key-bridge-near-the-adriatic.html?scp=3&sq=maslenica&st=cse>: Accessed December 25th 2010

government”.⁵²⁷ Tudjman, however, was more attentive to lack of response from friendlier quarters. Helmut Kohl did not cancel an upcoming trip to Zagreb, while British Ambassador David Heny insisted “that the solution of the status of the so-called Krajina must be sought within the Republic of Croatia”.⁵²⁸ In Belgrade, President Dobrica Ćosić called for intervention but, more importantly, Milošević “did not say a word”.⁵²⁹ Washington’s reaction was what truly interested the Croats. “The European bureau at State reacted with near-hysteria...they didn’t want the Croats stirring things up, rekindling another hot front, as it were” Neitzke recalled.⁵³⁰ These fears did not seem to extend to the top. Sušak met with Assistant Secretary of State Graham Engley, who advised the Croat “not to stretch military actions further than Maslenica, and not to advance more than that far”.⁵³¹ The Croatians were free to repulse fierce Serb counterattacks from January 27th until early February before a cease-fire emerged. The Croatians would probably have had to cease their advance in any case, as their superiority in firepower diminished, as Serb forces retook the heavy weapons that they had previously handed over to the UN.⁵³²

‘Operation Maslenica’ proved a geopolitical triumph for Zagreb because Tudjman grasped the fears that motivated US policy-makers as well as the domestic limitations under which they operated.⁵³³ Maslenica had shown how easily an unhappy Zagreb could provoke

⁵²⁷ Pitter, Laura, “Fighting Continues despite Tudjman pledge” UPI, January 25th 1993 <http://www.upi.com/Archives/1993/01/25/Fighting-continues-in-Croatia-despite-Tudjman-pledge/1874727938000/>: Accessed June 11 2019

⁵²⁸ Presidential Transcript, dated February 24th 1993. Annex III p. 202 Accessed June 11 2019 <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed June 11 2019

⁵²⁹ Presidential Transcript of the 3rd Defence and National Security Council meeting held on February 2nd 1993 Annex III pp.189-190 <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed June 11 2019

⁵³⁰ Interview with Ronald Neitzke by Charles Stuart Kennedy” December 1st 2006, in “Yugoslavia Country Reader” The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p. 126 http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Neitzke-Ronald-J.toc_.pdf: Accessed June 11 2019

⁵³¹ Presidential Transcript February 9th 1993 Annex III pp.189-190 <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed June 11 2019

⁵³² Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis, *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990–1995* (Central Intelligence Agency: Washington, D.C., vol 1, 2002) pp.267-268.

⁵³³ Darnton, John, “Croatia Offers a grim precedent for Bosnian Peace” *The New York Times*, February 7th 1993 <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/02/07/weekinreview/the-world-croatia-offers-a-grim-precedent-for-bosnian-peace.html>: Accessed June 11 2019

exactly that outcome. Equally important, Tudjman sensed that Washington would have a harder time selling sanctions on Zagreb domestically. Shortly before the Maselnica operation, Tudjman had feted a visiting Congressional delegation of Senator Dennis DeConcini(D-AZ) and Congressman Frank McCloskey(D-IN), after which the latter informed reporters "If the U.S. were to take care, proportionally speaking, of the same number of refugees, it would have to provide for 45 million people, which is quite unconceivable".⁵³⁴ Senator DeConcini "congratulated President Tudjman on his commitment to democracy, human rights and the freedom of the press and praised his efforts to find a political solution to the crisis".⁵³⁵ In April, Senator Joseph Biden of Delaware, a leading Democratic member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, submitted a report on human rights in the region, but this focused on the US failure to take a stand against Serbian atrocities, while citing the Croatian government as a reliable source.⁵³⁶ After the failure of "lift and strike", McCloskey accused the Administration of being an accomplice in the genocide in Bosnia, stating that "when it comes to real action to get the arms embargo lifted from the Bosnian Government, the administration opts out".⁵³⁷ In this environment, any effort to sanction Croatia in order to deter escalation would involve the Clinton Administration clashing with Congress. Tudjman calculated correctly that, provided that Croatia stopped short of open conflict with the VJ, Washington would find it cheaper to appease rather than coerce Croatia.

If Tudjman and his government were the winners of Operation Maslenica, the losers were the Krajina Serbs. The Croatians' blatant violation of the Vance Agreement had failed to prompt intervention from either Belgrade or the international community. On the contrary, the

⁵³⁴ McCloskey Trip - Croatia, Macedonia - Follow-up, Nov 17-30 1992, Frank McCloskey Congressional Papers Box 1, Indiana State University, <http://fedora.dlib.indiana.edu/fedora/get/iudl:1750497/OVERVIEW>: Accessed June 20th 2018

⁵³⁵ Ibid.

⁵³⁶ Biden, Joseph R, and United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. To Stand Against Aggression: Milošević, the Bosnian Republic, And the Conscience of the West : a Report to the Committee On Foreign Relations, United States Senate. Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 1993.

<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007608879>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁵³⁷ 139 Cong. Rec. H4262 (No. 93. June 29th 1993) (Statement of Rep. Frank McCloskey).

US appeared to respond, not by punishing the Croats, but by trying to appease them.⁵³⁸ Washington increasingly viewed Knin's continued autonomy as a destabilising element, much as the JNA's presence had been perceived in autumn 1990. The only resolution which promised to remove the risk of conflict was reintegration with Croatia.⁵³⁹ In March 1992, Assistant Secretary of State Ronald Johnson had told the Croatian President that the "question of the long-lasting status of the minorities in Croatia will be very important" for to its US relations.⁵⁴⁰ A year later, when the question arose of whether Tudjman should be invited to the US to attend the Washington DC Holocaust Memorial Museum's opening, no mention was made of Croatia's treatment of its Serbian minority.⁵⁴¹

Tudjman's attendance at the Holocaust Museum's opening was a subject of controversy, one that was related not to Tudjman's actions as Croatian President, but rather to his writings as a historian, which appeared to excuse antisemitism. "Tell me who asked Tudjman to come to Washington for the opening of the museum", asked famed Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal, on learning of the Croatian President's scheduled attendance.⁵⁴² Ronald Neitzke was at least one answer to Wiesenthal's question, having worked to secure the Croatian President an invitation through a series of cables to Washington. "I later learned, I think Reggie Bartholomew told me, he was then Special Envoy for the former Yugoslavia, that that cable had been carefully read at senior levels and had had an impact. No one offered a *mea culpa* – Eagleburger and Scowcroft were by then out of the picture. Tudjman was invited and did attend the ceremony, where, as it turned out, he was roundly condemned by Elie

⁵³⁸ Martić (IT-95-11), International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, <http://www.icty.org/case/Martić/4>: Accessed December 5th 2018

⁵³⁹ Testimony: Hvroje Šarinić, The Trial of Slobodan Milošević (IT-02-54), January 22nd 2004, p.31323 http://www.icty.org/x/cases/slobodan_milošević/trans/en/040122ED.htm: Accessed June 18th 2018

⁵⁴⁰ Transcript of Meeting of the HDZ Presidency on March 10th 1992. in Vila Zagorje with Ron Johnson, Warren Zimmerman, Annex III p.110 <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed June 11, 2019

⁵⁴¹ Schemo, Dean Jean, "Anger Greets Croatian's Invitation To Holocaust Museum Dedication" *The New York Times*, April 27th 1993 <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/04/22/us/anger-greets-croatian-s-invitation-to-holocaust-museum-dedication.html>: Accessed August 28th 2018

⁵⁴² Ibid.

Wiesel” recalled Neitzke.⁵⁴³ The museum was quick to corroborate the State Department pressure. “We were advised by the State Department to invite the Bosnians, the Slovenians and the Croatians”, a spokesman noted, adding that the State Department also advised that no Serbian representatives should be invited. The Serbs’ exclusion added a touch of irony to the Museum’s claim that “We’re well aware of Mr. Tudjman’s book and statements, but we’re not opening the museum to preach to the choir”.⁵⁴⁴ Elie Wiesel, who had spent time in a concentration camp as a young boy, commented that Tudjman’s “presence in the midst of survivors is a disgrace”.⁵⁴⁵ Wiesel might have been even more outraged had he known that, prior to the trip, the Croatian President had informed his advisers “I am going to Washington, at the invitation of Jews, for the opening of the Holocaust Museum...with the purpose of normalization of relations with the Jews”.⁵⁴⁶ Tudjman’s reaction showed how the Croats viewed the enthusiasm of Neitzke and those like him for engaging with Zagreb. Ironically, Neitzke himself was about to be supplanted by someone who would make Neitzke look like a Tudjman sceptic for, in summer 1993, the Clinton Administration finally got around to dispatching a full Ambassador to Zagreb. It would be a fateful choice.

⁵⁴³ “Interview with Ronald Neitzke by Charles Stuart Kennedy” December 1, 2006, in “Yugoslavia Country Reader” The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p.582

<http://www.adst.org/Readers/Yugoslavia.pdf>: Accessed August 28th 2018

⁵⁴⁴ Schemo, Dean Jean, “Anger Greets Croatian’s Invitation To Holocaust Museum Dedication” *The New York Times*, April 27th 1993 <https://www.nytimes.com/1993/04/22/us/anger-greets-croatian-s-invitation-to-holocaust-museum-dedication.html>: Accessed August 28th 2018

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁶ Presidential Transcript of the 7th Defence and National Security Council meeting held on April 15th 1993 Annex III p. 224 <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf> : Accessed November 30th 2018

The New Team in Zagreb

Peter Galbraith, who would arrive in Zagreb in July 1993, was not a career Foreign Service officer, like Neitzke or Zimmerman. The son of the famed economist John Kenneth Galbraith, the younger Galbraith had spent a decade with the Democratic Staff on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He had traveled to Iraqi Kurdistan after the Gulf War, forging links with the Iraqi opposition, and in the process becoming a fierce critic of the decision to leave Saddam Hussein in office.⁵⁴⁷ This was representative of a personality which valued personal interaction and first-hand observation over research or expertise. “I think one of the advantages I had as an ambassador was I really approached it free from any of these prejudices” Galbraith reflected of his tenure in Croatia, adding “I didn’t have any emotional attachment to any side in the conflict before I became an ambassador there.”⁵⁴⁸ This was an odd claim by the co-author of a Senate Foreign Relations Committee report on ethnic cleansing by Serbian forces in Bosnia that Galbraith had produced after a single trip to the region in 1992⁵⁴⁹ but, to Galbraith, his lack of background in the region beyond that trip made him a more impartial arbiter than professionals who had worked on Yugoslav issues all their lives. Galbraith’s critics, of whom there would be many, found different terms than “impartial” to describe him, including “abrasive”, “self-important” and “pompous”, in a profile of his 2012 campaign for governor of Vermont.⁵⁵⁰

⁵⁴⁷ Andy Bromage, “The Rogue Diplomat” Seven Days, March 28th 2012

<http://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/the-rogue-diplomat/Content?oid=2183901>: Accessed June 11 2019

⁵⁴⁸ “Interview with Peter Galbraith” by Charles Stuart Kennedy” March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p.95 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁵⁴⁹ United States. Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. The Ethnic Cleansing of Bosnia-Hercegovina: a Staff Report to the Committee On Foreign Relations, United States Senate. Washington: U.S. G.P.O., 1992 <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/007608879>: Accessed July 16th 2019

⁵⁵⁰ Andy Bromage, “The Rogue Diplomat” Seven Days, March 28th 2012

<http://www.sevendaysvt.com/vermont/the-rogue-diplomat/Content?oid=2183901>: Accessed June 11th 2019

Galbraith had met Neitzke when he visited Zagreb as a representative of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. “No lack of self-confidence, and a tinge of early Charlie Wilson”, Neitzke recalled, adding “But also smart and determined to ferret out evidence of what he too had heard was happening in Bosnia.”⁵⁵¹ There was something ominous about this comparison. Charlie Wilson had been a Texas Congressman who, believing US policy was too passive in opposing Soviet moves in Afghanistan, had taken it upon himself to develop personal relationships with Mujahedeen leaders and then use his position in Congress to funnel money and weapons to them.⁵⁵² Wilson had seen his role not merely as advising on policy but also as setting it and, if dissatisfied, following his own, but Wilson had been elected. Galbraith had been appointed to every office he had ever served in, including the Ambassadorship to Zagreb. Even before arriving in Zagreb, Galbraith had concluded that the Croatians were being unfairly stigmatised, complaining that “Tudjman had never been popular at all with the State Department or with the Bush administration or with the Clinton administration”.⁵⁵³ As someone who believed that “the only way out of the Bosnia wars was through Croatia”, Galbraith “was convinced that you didn’t need to like Tudjman to be able to do business with him”.⁵⁵⁴ Conceding that Tudjman “believed in greater Croatia meaning that he basically felt that about half of Bosnia really belonged to Croatia, not only Herzegovina which is almost entirely a Croat area, but central Bosnia, Sarajevo possibly, and Banja Luka which is the principal Serb town”, Galbraith believed that Tudjman would be a better partner than Milošević because he was “an extremely principled man”, and it “was very difficult for him to engage in any guile whatsoever because his beliefs would always come through”. While “The war of the Bosnian Serbs was reasonably popular [in Serbia]”, he explained, “The Croatia war in Bosnia was unpopular with

⁵⁵¹ “Interview with Ronald Neitzke by Charles Stuart Kennedy” December 1st 2006, in “Yugoslavia Country Reader” The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p. 574

<http://www.adst.org/Readers/Yugoslavia.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁵⁵² Cornwell, Rupert, “Charlie Wilson: Congressman whose support for the Mujahedeen helped push the Soviet Union out of Afghanistan” *The Independent* February 13th 2010

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/charlie-wilson-Congressman-whose-support-for-the-mujahideen-helped-force-the-soviet-union-out-of-1898180.html>: Accessed June 9th 2019

⁵⁵³ Interview with Peter Galbraith” by Charles Stuart Kennedy” March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p.121 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.95.

the Croatian public”.⁵⁵⁵ Tudjman’s top priority was Croatian authority’s restoration over the United Nations Protected Areas (UNPA), and it was an article of faith in Washington that, as Senator Orrin Hatch of Utah put it, Tudjman’s highest priority was acquiring American support.⁵⁵⁶ It was also one that the US was willing to support fully on the same basis that Washington had pushed for Bosnia’s recognition the previous year - the sacrosanct status of international borders. However, the policy’s purpose was now different. In 1992, there had been hope that, if Bosnia were recognized within its own borders, the Serbs and Croats would realize that fighting would achieve nothing. Similarly, in 1992, the US had recognised the Krajina as part of Croatia and hoped that Zagreb would reach a settlement with the Serbs and behave in Bosnia. By 1993, American officials like Galbraith were less naïve. What they now hoped was that recognising a principle which tied Zagreb’s claims to the Krajina to the Izetbegović government’s pretensions to speak for all of Bosnia would give Zagreb an incentive to support the Bosnian Muslims, even at the cost of abandoning the Bosnian Croats.

Galbraith’s preconceptions were strengthened by his personal interactions with State Department officials. Policy towards Croatia was the only issue that he had “encountered where people within the Foreign Service were so openly in disagreement and so open about expressing their disagreement”.⁵⁵⁷ This was reinforced by a meeting with State Department's Desk Officer for Croatia Steve Walker, who would soon resign in protest at the Administration’s “Pro-Serb” policy, along with Bosnia Desk officer Marshall Freeman Harris and deputy Desk officer for Yugoslavia George Kenney.⁵⁵⁸ Walker warned Galbraith of hostility to Croatia in

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid., p.132, 137.

⁵⁵⁶ Senate Hearing 105-424—Hearing on Nomination of Anthony Lake to be Director Central Intelligence (March 11th, 12th, 13th 1997). p.101

<https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/hearings/105424.pdf>: Accessed August 23rd 2019

⁵⁵⁷ “Interview with Peter Galbraith” by Charles Stuart Kennedy” March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training p. 95 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed June 11 2019

⁵⁵⁸ Sciolino, Elaine “U.S. Balkan Expert Resigns Over Job and Policy Disputes” January 7th 1994

<http://www.nytimes.com/1994/01/07/world/us-balkan-expert-resigns-over-job-and-policy-disputes.html>: Accessed August 28th 2015

Washington and that, if Galbraith “didn’t get out quickly the decision would be made not to send an ambassador at all”.⁵⁵⁹

Galbraith accepted from Walker a draft introduction for Tudjman including “clear support by the United States for the territorial integrity of Croatia within its internationally recognized boundaries, as well as calling on the Croatians to support the territorial integrity of Bosnia Herzegovina”.⁵⁶⁰ Stressing that “Croatia has an important role to play in resolving the crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina”, Galbraith told Tudjman at their first meeting “we hope and expect that Croatia will do everything in its power to stop the senseless violence and bring about a peaceful solution to the conflict that will address the concerns of all parties, including the Bosnian government”.⁵⁶¹ Rather than a rogue initiative, Galbraith’s instructions reflected the mood at the top of the Administration, even if Walker had not realized it when briefing Galbraith. At the UN, the new US Ambassador, Madeline Albright, whom Tudjman noted “is very highly placed in the American Cabinet”, had visited Zagreb during the transition.⁵⁶² In March 1993, the US sponsored and carried a Security Council resolution declaring that the UNPAs were “integral parts of Croatia”.⁵⁶³ “What this episode signaled to me was that Washington – which knew well the legal merits of the UNPA issue – was so determined to keep the lid on at least one Balkan problem that they were willing to go from threatening sanctions on Zagreb to endorsing the Croatian position nearly in the blink of an eye” Neitzke recalled.⁵⁶⁴ The linkage of the “UNPAs/Krajina” issue with Croatian cooperation in Bosnia was already

⁵⁵⁹ Interview with Peter Galbraith” by Charles Stuart Kennedy” March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p 123 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁶¹ “Statement: US Ambassador Peter W. Galbraith at the Presentation of His Credentials” June 28th 1993 The United States and Croatia: A Documentary History 1993-1997, US Department of State <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Exhibit/NotIndexable/IT-06-90/ACE80099R0000318671.pdf>: Accessed August 30th 2019

⁵⁶² Record of a conversation of the President of the Republic of Croatia, January 5th 1994 Annex III pp.448-49 <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁵⁶³ UN Security Council, *Security Council resolution 815 (1993) [Croatia]*, March 30th 1993, S/RES/815 (1993), available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f15b50.html> [accessed August 12th 2019]

⁵⁶⁴ Interview with Ronald Neitzke by Charles Stuart Kennedy” December 1st 2006, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project P. 164 [http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Neitzke-Ronald-J.toc .pdf](http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Neitzke-Ronald-J.toc.pdf): Accessed June 11th 2019

Administration policy, with future-Assistant Secretary of Defense Graham Engley telling Sušak during the transition that “those two were connected”.⁵⁶⁵ President Tudjman informed Bosnian President Alija Izetbegović in March that Vice President Al Gore “told me on three occasions that they expected Croatia and BH to cooperate most closely, to make things easier for them in that way, and it would also make reconstruction easier for us”.⁵⁶⁶ Even if Galbraith doubted that the “Balkans were a personal priority for Tony Lake or for Warren Christopher”, they clearly were for other senior officials,⁵⁶⁷ and they now had someone, Tudjman, on the ground pushing their preferred policy, albeit an individual with an active reputation for rogue initiatives and exaggeration - and the perfect fall guy if things went wrong.

⁵⁶⁵ Presidential Transcript September 2nd 1993 Annex III pp.189-190
<http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁵⁶⁶ Croatian Presidential transcript March 3rd 1993. Annex III p. 210
<http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed August 12 2019

⁵⁶⁷ Interview with Peter Galbraith” by Charles Stuart Kennedy” March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project p. 139 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed April 18th 2017

Policy in Action: Galbraith in Croatia

Galbraith followed up his arrival with a trip to Vukovar, producing banner headlines in the Croatian press, and within a month becoming one of the most popular diplomats in Zagreb.⁵⁶⁸ In contrast to Vance, who had seen his role as mediating a conflict between two parties without prejudice in December 1991, Galbraith did not believe that the US was in the region to enforce a settlement on the Knin Serbs and the Croatian government, but to assist the parties to reach a compromise, should they wish to do so. Nevertheless, in order for the US to help them, they would have to accept that their future lay within Croatia.⁵⁶⁹ Galbraith's precondition for mediation with the Croatian Serbs was that they accept the Croatian position, with only the details of the implementation subject to potential compromise. Active American military support was still ruled out, as Neitzke learnt in early 1994 when he travelled to Washington only to be told that "while some in the White House wanted to hit the Serbs hard, no one in the White House had been able to convince the JCS to use 'their army' to do so".⁵⁷⁰ Galbraith's strategy did not require American force, instead recognising that there was no shortage of force in the region. What there was, however, was a shortage of legitimacy. In a land under an arms embargo, the weapons used to fight were illegal. With repeated UN cease-fires, the military operations and the gains and losses amounting from them were illegal. In fact, even the combatants themselves were, arguably, illegal. These layers of illegality piled up to form a knot. What the US could do, by action or inaction, explicit support or implicit silence, was to provide a different source of legitimacy which could legitimize others' actions; namely,

⁵⁶⁸ Kinzer, Stephen, "A U.S. Envoy To the Croats Uses Candor." *New York Times* (1923-Current File), 1993, p.A5.

⁵⁶⁹ Interview with Peter Galbraith" by Charles Stuart Kennedy" March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project p. 126 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁵⁷⁰ Interview with Ronald Neitzke by Charles Stuart Kennedy" December 1st 2006, in "Yugoslavia Country Reader" The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p.170 http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Neitzke-Ronald-J.toc_.pdf: Accessed June 11th 2019

the Croatian Army when it took upon itself the sort of actions that the US was unable to persuade its allies to support. For the first time in American policy towards Yugoslavia, policy was being constructed around the means available to implement it.

Given the connections that the Croatian government had developed in Washington since 1991, it would have been difficult for Galbraith to have bluffed Tudjman and his inner circle into acting on the threat of sanctions unless that threat was real. He detected in Washington a real “desire to impose sanctions on Croatia from those who were the idealists and who had taken up the cause of Bosnia”. Galbraith saw his role as avoiding three bureaucratic pitfalls: “On one hand I had to demonstrate that Croatia was capable of doing better; two, I had to demonstrate that sanctions would be harmful; three, I had to be damn sure that I wasn’t seen as an apologist for Croatia. The moment I began to excuse Croatian actions or to deny that they were taking place, then the immediate response would be that Galbraith has gone local, clientelist, let’s just miss what he has to say”.⁵⁷¹

Neitzke, in Galbraith’s view, had gone local, or at least drafted cables which raised serious questions in Washington regarding his conclusions’ reliability. “He [Neitzke] would rewrite them at great length, delaying them from going out for days and would take out the criticisms of Croatia” Galbraith recalled. Yet the problems went beyond mere bias or advocating for Tudjman to attend the Holocaust Museum. Neitzke had also sent cables causing Washington to question, not his information’s objectively, but its very reliability. Neitzke had wired Washington at the end of August 1992 to warn “There are conflicting reports as to the extent to which HV (Croatian Army) forces may be deployed in B-H, ranging from the Croatian government position that no units are deployed to allegations that at times many thousands of such troops have been present in Bosnia”.⁵⁷² The cable urged the State Department to “ensure that the term ‘soldiers’ really meant the Croatian Army (HV) rather than criminals and extortionists dressed in khaki”.⁵⁷³ Galbraith believed that Neitzke acted in this way for two

⁵⁷¹ Interview with Peter Galbraith” by Charles Stuart Kennedy” March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project p.129 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf> Accessed June 11th 2019

⁵⁷² “Cable: 1992 Croatia Human Rights Report – Embassy Comments on Department's Re-draft” US Diplomatic Cable Wikileaks Release <https://wikileaks.org/cable/1992/12/92ZAGREB2863.html>: Accessed August 30th 2015

⁵⁷³ Ibid.

reasons: “First, I think he [Neitzke] felt that Croatia was not as bad as Serbia. I think he was reacting to the old establishment, the Yugoslav hand phenomena. I think he was concerned also that by reporting lots of bad things that the Croatians were doing, this might lead to sanctions on Croatia”.⁵⁷⁴ By contrast, “My [Galbraith’s] view was the opposite. I figured the more critical my cables were of Croatia, the more credibility I would have in Washington in making the case against sanctions on Croatia. I can tell you, as a tough-minded person taking on the Croatians, that this approach of sanctions will do more harm than good”.⁵⁷⁵ Galbraith “also realized that it would be deeply demoralizing for the staff to have an ambassador that they saw as an apologist for Tadjman”.⁵⁷⁶ Neitzke himself would later come to view Galbraith as excessively “chummy” with the Croatian President, “for example, vacationing alone with the Tadjmans, the whole Tadjman family, at Tito’s old villa on Brioni, an intimacy that Peter revealed in, and his using a [Croatian] Defense Ministry villa on the Adriatic for private getaways”.⁵⁷⁷ Echoing this charge, the *National Review* would later suggest that the 2007 testimony Galbraith would provide to the US Senate in favour of partitioning Iraq would be influenced by his status as a Kurdish regional government consultant.⁵⁷⁸

Galbraith is defensive about such criticisms. “People raised the issue of why we didn’t protest against Croatia human rights violations which was constantly raised during my time as ambassador” he recalled, adding “I had to point out that certainly I was under no illusions about the character of Tadjman, but until 1995 he didn’t have his hands on anybody. After he got his hands on people [presumably Krajina Serbs, though Tadjman exercised control over the nearly half of Croatia’s Serbs who lived outside the UNPAS], he demonstrated his character, and

⁵⁷⁴ Interview with Peter Galbraith” by Charles Stuart Kennedy” March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p.129 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>; Accessed June 11th 2019

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁷ Interview with Ronald Neitzke by Charles Stuart Kennedy” December 1st 2006, in “Yugoslavia Country Reader” The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p.175 http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Neitzke-Ronald-J.toc_.pdf; Accessed June 11th 2019

⁵⁷⁸ Michael Rubin “Galbraith’s Problems Deepen: His lie to the Senate” *National Review Online: The Corner*, October 15th 2009, <http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/188718/galbraiths-problems-deepen-his-lie-senate-michael-rubin>; Accessed March 12th 2019

at that point I protested in the most vehement way possible.”⁵⁷⁹ Both Galbraith and Neitzke shared the Americans’ tendency to view Tudjman as possessing less agency than appears to have been the case, an impression that the Croatian President encouraged. “The expat Herzegovinians played an outsized role in Croatia’s defense effort and were disproportionately represented in Tudjman’s wartime Government.”⁵⁸⁰ This was a questionable deduction. Stipe Mesić was later to testify that, rather than the Herzegovinian tail wagging the Croatian dog, all of the major decisions regarding Bosnian Croat policy were made in Zagreb.⁵⁸¹ Mesić recalled that, when he “repeatedly told Mate Boban that they had a single enemy and needed the support of the international community”, Boban responded that “he had no politics, they were made in Zagreb”.⁵⁸²

Neitzke was concerned that Galbraith’s arrogance made him gullible. In contrast to his earlier attitude, Neitzke began to distrust the Croats, remarking after the Maslenica operation “This was a dance that would be repeated several times in the following two years – Tudjman saber-rattling and threatening to move if the international community didn’t do something to get him back the UNPAs – and we or the UN giving him enough, just enough, to get him to stand down for a while”.⁵⁸³ This did not make the Croatian leader unique in a region where leaders gambled aggressively with Western patience as a matter of routine. It did, however, make him manipulative. “He read the situation correctly, took major but prudent risks, and in the end got most of what he wanted. He certainly read us right, what he could and couldn’t get away with”, Neitzke recalled of the Croatian President.⁵⁸⁴ Galbraith not only believed in the policy of forging a Muslim-Croat alliance to push back the Serbs in Bosnia, but also that the

⁵⁷⁹ “Interview with Peter Galbraith” by Charles Stuart Kennedy” March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p.95 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁵⁸⁰ Interview with Ronald Neitzke by Charles Stuart Kennedy” December 1st 2006, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p.168 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Neitzke-Ronald-J.toc.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁵⁸¹ Testimony of Stepan Mesić, Trial of Blaškić (IT-95-14), International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia p.7108 <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/blaskic/trans/en/980316IT.htm>: Accessed March 11th 2019

⁵⁸² *Ibid.*, p.7156.

⁵⁸³ Interview with Ronald Neitzke by Charles Stuart Kennedy” December 1, 2006, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p.164 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Neitzke-Ronald-J.toc.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁵⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

Croatians saw this as being in their own interests as well. “He [Galbraith] proposed to me that we decide on the borders, and after that to get the weapons and go against the Serbs” Granić informed the Croatian cabinet in January 1994. As for Galbraith, Tudjman informed Prime Minister Nikica Valentić “Yes, yes, he is not level headed, as a man. But he is pursuing the policies that she [Madeline Albright] has talked about”,⁵⁸⁵ presumably a reference to Albright’s discussions with Croatian officials at the UN, where she was outspoken in her view that “Serbian Aggression” represented the major threat to peace in the region.

If Galbraith placed too much trust in his Croatian associates, he was prone to distrust the officials within his own government. The Ambassador saw most State Department Yugoslav experts as biased. “These were people who knew the old Yugoslavia, who loved the old Yugoslavia and felt that it had an important role in the Cold War”, was how Galbraith described them, adding, “They regretted its breakup, and felt that sanctions on Serbia were justified, but that Tudjman was also responsible for the breakup.”⁵⁸⁶ Seeing these ‘Yugo-nostalgists’ as hostile to his policy, Galbraith tended to interpret their viewpoints or advice as attempts to undermine or block his policies, developing a penchant for personal diplomacy and secrecy which would prove problematic for him in the future.

That penchant for running a one-man show, combined with the “tinge of early Charlie Wilson”, were on full display when it came to Galbraith’s interest in seeking ways to provide greater support for the Bosnian Muslim forces. Shortly after arriving in Zagreb, on August 1st 1993, Galbraith visited Šefko Omerbašić, a Muslim cleric and prominent leader of the Zagreb Muslim community.⁵⁸⁷ While Galbraith claimed that this meeting was purely courtesy, and Omerbašić denied to the Congressional sub-committee that he saw Galbraith again, the

⁵⁸⁵ Record of a conversation of the President of the Republic of Croatia on January 5th 1994 Annex III pp.448-49 <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁵⁸⁶ Interview with Peter Galbraith” by Charles Stuart Kennedy” March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p. 128 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁵⁸⁷ Select Subcommittee Deposition of Susan Hovanec August 14th 1996 pp.31-33 (hereinafter *Hovanec Dep."). [Final report of the Select Subcommittee to Investigate the United States Role in Iranian Arms Transfers to Croatia and Bosnia, Committee on International Relations, U.S. House of Representatives](#)" p.86 <https://archive.org/details/finalreportofsel00unit>: Accessed March 14th 2014

investigators found evidence that “Galbraith and Omerbašić met a number of times between August 1993 and April 29th 1994”.⁵⁸⁸ Omerbašić was believed to play a key role in coordinating support for Bosnian Muslim forces from the wider Islamic world, and Gojko Sušak had complained to Tudjman about the cleric’s efforts to recruit fighters in Croatia.⁵⁸⁹ He had also been a major presence in securing Croatia’s invitation to the Organization of the Islamic Conference in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in December 1992, where efforts to end the arms embargo on Bosnia were the main topic of discussion.⁵⁹⁰ Galbraith reported to Omerbasic that he had no issues with Islamic fundamentalism during their initial meeting, which would have been news to the CIA.⁵⁹¹At the time, these arguments were purely academic in nature. Weapons would only help the Muslims push back the Serbs if used against the Serbs and, in early 1993, the Serbs in Bosnia were increasingly bystanders to the fighting between Muslim and Croat forces. Finding a way to end this conflict and unite both against the Serbian enemy would become the focus of American policy for the next nine months.

⁵⁸⁸ [Final report of the Select Subcommittee to Investigate the United States Role in Iranian Arms Transfers to Croatia and Bosnia, Committee on International Relations, U.S. House of Representatives](https://archive.org/details/finalreportofsel00unit)" p.83

<https://archive.org/details/finalreportofsel00unit>: Accessed March 14th 2014

⁵⁸⁹ Presidential Transcript September 26th 1992, pp.14-16, Annex III p. 118 Accessed June 11th 2019

⁵⁹⁰ Presidential Transcript December 10 1992 Accessed June 11th 2019

Annex III p.144 <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>

⁵⁹¹ [Final report of the Select Subcommittee to Investigate the United States Role in Iranian Arms Transfers to Croatia and Bosnia Committee on International Relations, U.S. House of Representatives](https://archive.org/details/finalreportofsel00unit)" p.84

<https://archive.org/details/finalreportofsel00unit>: Accessed March 14th 2014

The Art of the Deal

US policy towards the Arms Embargo was moot while the primary fighting in Bosnia was between Muslim and Croat forces. Why would Zagreb act as a pipeline for the supply of arms to Muslim forces who would use them against Croats? The US was not alone in seeing its interests threatened by the Muslim-Croat conflict. What is striking is how little reason the Croats or Muslims themselves had for the conflict. A Muslim defeat in Bosnia would be a disaster for Croatian hopes to retake the Krajina, as it would free up Bosnian Serb forces to support their compatriots in the event of a Croatian offensive. Croatia's status as a major destination for Muslim refugees provided Zagreb with a further reason to fear Sarajevo's total collapse.⁵⁹² The Bosnian Muslims, in turn, depended on Croatia for military supplies and the Bosnian "government" of Alija Izetbegović had signed a military pact with Zagreb in 1992, legitimising the Croatian army's presence on Bosnian territory.⁵⁹³

Nonetheless, clashes between Croat and Muslim units were already common in 1992. They often involved foreign Mujahidin who had arrived to fight for the Bosnian government and seemed disinclined to differentiate between Catholic allies and Orthodox enemies in what they believed to be a holy war against Christians.⁵⁹⁴ Tensions also arose over the distribution of supplies entering from Croatia, with one of the early clashes being a fight between two mafias over a fuel shipment.⁵⁹⁵ Different interpretations of the causes and responsibility regarding the outbreak of the Muslim-Croat fighting in Bosnia can be found in Charles Schrader's *The Croat-Muslim Civil War in Central Bosnia 1993-1994* and the Central Intelligence Agency's *Balkan Battlefields*, with the former portraying the conflict as the result of deliberate Muslim

592 92ZAGREB2392_a, Cable US Embassy Zagreb 1992 November 13th 16:09 (Friday), Published by Wikileaks https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/92ZAGREB2392_a.html: Accessed May 15th 2019

⁵⁹³ Harden, Blaine, "Bosnian Leader Declares Alliance with Croatia" *The Washington Post*, June 17th 1992 https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1992/06/17/bosnian-leader-declares-alliance-with-croatia/1a1dfef7-7269-44a8-8745-bc8298c4a73f/?utm_term=.e3d407b81205: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁵⁹⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis, *Balkan Battlefields: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995* (Central Intelligence Agency: Washington, D.C., vol 1, 2002) p.144.

⁵⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.148.

aggression and the latter arguing that it started at the local level without the explicit decision of either leadership. The truth probably lies somewhere between the two. It seems implausible that either the Izetbegović or Tudjman governments would have deliberately sought a war in 1993, and there were too many clashes followed by patched up agreements for the fighting to have been centrally directed *initially*. Yet the dynamics of the conflict, an inability to defeat the Serbs on the battlefield, and the fact that the Muslim-Croat alliance was negative, i.e. anti-Serb, with the Croats and Muslims holding opposite views on the prospect of a unitary Bosnia, meant that a failure to reach a settlement, especially if due to the dissatisfaction of one party with a deal that satisfied the other, would inevitably produce a conflict at some point.

The Bosnian Croats and Muslims had fundamentally different war aims, united only by their opposition to the Serbian goal, both in Croatia and Bosnia, of establishing a right to secede and join Serbia. The vast majority of Croats and Serbs in Bosnia (Tudjman estimated nearly 90%) were uninvested in an independent Bosnian state.⁵⁹⁶ Still, for most Croats, some form of Bosnia was living under Serbian rule, especially after the bloodshed of autumn 1991 and, if union with Croatia was impossible due to the international community's commitment to the state borders' sanctity and Zagreb's own need to uphold that principle, they would fight for a "Bosnia". By contrast, Bosnian Muslims were fighting not just to avoid Serb rule, but for a "state", preferably a unitary one governed by majority rule, which as a large plurality they would probably dominate.⁵⁹⁷ Many Muslims increasingly favoured an Islamic state, including Izetbegović himself who, according to his own public relations expert in Washington, "strongly supported the creation of a fundamentalist Islamic state".⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁶ Presidential transcript of a meeting held on September 17 1992
Annex III p 99 <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁵⁹⁷ Spajic, Darko **Muslim-Croat Relations in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1987-1997**. M.A. Thesis. Monterey, CA; Naval Postgraduate School, 1998. <https://archive.org/details/muslimcroatrelat00spajpdf/page/n8>: Accessed November 25, 2019

⁵⁹⁸ Harff, James, Director of [Ruder Finn](#), Global Public affairs section, in the Jacques Merlino interview, April 1993. (reprinted in a book in Oct. 1993) https://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php/James_Harff: Accessed June 11th 2019

The prospect of an Islamic state was as horrifying to many Bosnian Croats as a Serbian victory, as most Croats had no more desire to be a powerless minority in a Muslim state than a Serbian one. Tudjman feared “that small [Islamic] state would be a center of terrorism for the next 50 years, but also a center for expansion of Islam in Europe”.⁵⁹⁹ While both Muslims and Croats had an interest in preventing a Serbian victory on the battlefield, when it came to peace, both the Croats and Serbs had more in common, preferring as decentralized a state as possible. The release of the Vance-Owen plan brought these differences into the open. The Plan fulfilled all of the Bosnian Croats’ political objectives. It avoided both a union with Serbia and a unitary Bosnia under Muslim rule. For the Croats, continuing the war to “defeat the Serbs” as the Bosnian Muslim leadership seemed to wish, would not only cost lives and money, but to do so would be to pursue an objective, a unitary and potentially Islamic Bosnia, which was antithetical to Croatian interests. Tudjman told Bosnian Muslim leader Alija Izetbegović in January 1993 “we do not see a possibility of a military resolution to the problem to the advantage of the Muslims and the Croats”, and warned him “you cannot wage this war bypassing Croatia and without Croatia”.⁶⁰⁰ Tudjman believed that he had the majority of Europe’s support, and read aloud [to the Croatian leadership] a letter purportedly from British Prime Minister John Major to Douglas Hurd defending a policy of obstructing the arming of the Bosnian Muslims as a “realistic policy that is in the best interests of a stable Europe in the future, whose value system must remain based on a Christian civilization”.⁶⁰¹ The letter itself had been denounced by the British government as a hoax, and Tudjman’s presentation of it to his cabinet as reliable provides an insight into his perceptions of British policy.⁶⁰²

⁵⁹⁹ Presidential Transcript November 5th 1993 Annex III p.243
<http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁶⁰⁰ Presidential transcript January 15th 1993. Annex III p.157
<http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁶⁰¹ Presidential transcripts, Tudjman Franjo meeting. Annex III p.282
<http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁶⁰² Savill, Annika “No 10 denounces anti-Muslim letter: Hoax highlights Bosnian Muslims' fear of abandonment by the West” *The Independent* June 15th 1993,
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/no-10-denounces-anti-muslim-letter-hoax-highlights-bosnian-muslims-fear-of-abandonment-by-the-west-1491727.html>: Accessed October 17th 2019

The Croatians did not “withdraw” from the war following the Vance-Owen agreement due to some sort of secret plot by Tudjman or Sušak. The Vance-Owen agreement, along with various other plans proposed throughout 1993 by the international community, and Owen fulfilled Croat strategic and political objectives better than a Muslim-Croat military victory would. Izetbegović’s refusal to accept any of these agreements was increasingly seen by Zagreb as the main impediment to ending the war and a threat to the efforts to reintegrate the Krajina. Both Bosnian Croat leaders and Zagreb accepted the Vance-Owen plan, and it was unclear to many Bosnian Croats why the Serb Assembly’s refusal to ratify the agreement should negate its provisions regarding the Croats and Muslims, both of whom had accepted it. Bosnian Croat leaders thus moved quickly to try and take control of territory within the proposed cantons thought to contain Croat majorities, demanding that the Muslim units within those territories either withdraw or agree to subordinate themselves to Croat authority.⁶⁰³ The Bosnian Muslim leadership, on the other hand, had signed the agreement only under international pressure in the hope that doing so would result in either Serb concessions or greater support for their own cause following a Serb rejection. They saw no reason to cede large parts of Bosnia to the Croats when they had received neither the territory promised from the Serbs nor increased international support following the Serb rejection. Increasingly dubious of the Croat alliance’s military value, especially after Serbs took the city of Jajce in late 1992 amid accusations of Croatian “betrayal”, the Muslims [or ‘the Izetbegović government] felt that, if it could not strengthen its political position through victories over the Serbs, it could do so at the expense of the Croats.⁶⁰⁴

The Muslims possessed overwhelmingly superior manpower, while the support that the Croatian Army was able to provide to the Bosnian Croats through artillery and incursions into Bosnian territory was only available in the regions adjacent to Croatia. Croats in central Bosnia, where the Muslims had an overwhelming superiority, often resorted to cooperation

603 Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis, *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990–1995* (Central Intelligence Agency: Washington, D.C., vol 1, 2002).

604 Sudetic, Chuck, “Once Again, Bosnian Peace Talks Crumble” *The New York Times*, September 21st 1993 <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/09/21/world/once-again-bosnian-peace-talks-appear-to-crumble.html>: Accessed June 11th 2019

with the Serbs.⁶⁰⁵ Proximity to Croatia allowed the Bosnian Croat Army (HVO) to hold onto much of the Mostar area with HV support. The conflict elsewhere adopted a pattern of isolated Croat detachments being surrounded in villages by overwhelmingly superior Muslim forces, forcing the villages in question's evacuation.⁶⁰⁶ On June 18th 1993, Mate Boban's deputy Dario Kordić revealed that the HVO had suffered 2, 000 casualties while more than 60, 000 Croats had been driven from their homes, leading the Bosnian Croat leadership to call for all Croats aged between 18 and 60 to report for military service.⁶⁰⁷ ""As their troops advance against the Croatian forces, Bosnian Government officials said they saw little reason to sign any plan that does not meet their territorial demands" *The New York Times* reported in September, going on to note "The Bosnian official said that the Sarajevo Government hopes its military can seize Mostar, which the Bosnian Croats have named as the capital of their republic and Prozor farther north". "Mostar is the key", the official said."⁶⁰⁸

For the US, it did not matter why the fighting had started, but merely that it needed to end. This fighting made a mockery of the Administration's "Lift and Strike" proposal, not least because it was evident that no alternative policy existed. "What was possible in '91 and '92 was no longer possible in '93. Once the UN had deployed extensively to Bosnia, it wasn't possible easily to do the lift and strike policy – lift the arms embargo and strike at the Serb forces attacking Bosnia cities for a number of reasons" Galbraith reflected.⁶⁰⁹ As for airstrikes, whom would they hit? Neither the Croats nor the Muslims were free to launch attacks on the Serbs that would take advantage of them. As such, the Croat-Muslim war had to end before anything else could be accomplished, so this became the US priority and, if the Muslim rejection of the peace proposals was the problem, then, contrary to the European conclusion that this required

⁶⁰⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis, *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990–1995* (Central Intelligence Agency: Washington, D.C., vol 1, 2002 pp.202-207.)

⁶⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p.196.

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid* p. 207

⁶⁰⁸ Sudetic, Chuck, "Once Again, Bosnian Peace Talks Crumble" *The New York Times*, September 21st 1993 <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/09/21/world/once-again-bosnian-peace-talks-appear-to-crumble.html>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁶⁰⁹ Interview with Peter Galbraith" by Charles Stuart Kennedy" March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p.140 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed June 11 2019

pressure to be applied on Izetbegović and his government, it meant that the Croats had to be pressured into making concessions against their interests in Bosnia.

The US policy, beginning with the March 30th UN resolution 815 declaring the Krajina an intrinsic part of Croatia, and aggressively implemented by Galbraith after his arrival, sought to trade Croatian concessions in Bosnia for support for Zagreb's objectives in the UNPAS.⁶¹⁰ Gone was any ambiguity about Croatia's borders; suggestions that Croatia was at fault for the secession of the Serb-held regions due to its own policies; or that its sovereignty over the regions might be contingent on either its treatment of minorities or winning over the rebel Serb leadership. The US would not abandon pressure on these points – it would continue to push Tudjman on human rights matters and seek to arrange some sort of autonomy for the Krajina Serbs, but within the context of a mediator. As far as the US was concerned, the Krajina was part of Croatia; Zagreb's authority must be established there and while the US, as Croatia's friend and as a party that was concerned about the Krajina Serbs' well-being, hoped that it would be achieved peacefully and with guarantees of autonomy, that reintegration would not be contingent on some minimum level of concessions or the Krajina Serbs' consent. This message was communicated through the Serbian press, whom Galbraith informed "The only acceptable solution is to return the territory to Croatia so that the people who lived there can return", along with "a system of compensation for the damage to the property paid for by Serbia".⁶¹¹ This was hammered home by Galbraith a month later when he visited the Prevlaka peninsula next to Montenegro to "underscore the commitment of the United States to the territorial integrity of a country which does extend down the Danube to this beautiful Kotor bay".⁶¹² American officials doubted that Tudjman would give up his claims to any of this

⁶¹⁰ Interview with Ronald Neitzke by Charles Stuart Kennedy" December 1st 2006, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p.126 http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Neitzke-Ronald-J.toc_.pdf: Accessed June 11th 2019 UN Resolution 815 [https://undocs.org/S/RES/815\(1993\)](https://undocs.org/S/RES/815(1993)): Accessed June 11th 2019

⁶¹¹ Remarks: US Ambassador Peter W. Galbraith "The Destruction of Vukovar is a War Crime" Osijek, Croatia, July 15th 1993 *The United States and Croatia: A Documentary History 1993-1997*, US Department of State <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Exhibit/NotIndexable/IT-06-90/ACE80099R0000318671.pdf>: Accessed August 30th 2019

⁶¹² Statement: US Ambassador Peter W. Galbraith During his visit to Prevlaka Peninsula, Croatia, August 19th 1993, *The United States and Croatia: A Documentary History 1993-1997*, US Department of State

territory willingly, and there was a further hope held by many in Washington that strong international diplomatic support for reintegration would make it less likely that Zagreb would resort to unilateral force, as it had in January, or at the very least that it would force Croatia to consult with the US before doing so.⁶¹³

If, in the eyes of US policymakers, the military balance between the Croatian government and the Krajina Serbs ultimately foreordained an ultimate settlement on Zagreb's terms, and it was America's duty to persuade Knin of that fact, then the inverse was true in Bosnia. There, the military balance, combined with the international community's sentiments, meant that the Bosnian Croats could only lose. They lacked the ability to defeat the Bosnian Muslim military, and more importantly, would not be allowed to defeat the Bosnian Muslims militarily even if they could manage to do so. US policy was not about simply persuading Zagreb of the morality of cooperating with the Muslims but, rather, about clarifying the lack of alternatives. In this sense, events on the ground, namely the series of defeats suffered by the Bosnian Croat forces, facilitated this task.

Until the end of 1993, Sušak and Tudjman seem to have assumed that the West would eventually be forced to recognize the Bosnian state's collapse as a *fait accompli* if the Sarajevo government failed to defeat the Bosnian Serbs. The consequence would be acceptance of a *de facto* partition. The Vance-Owen plan was followed by tacit American support for a joint Zagreb-Belgrade proposal which amounted to a *de facto* three-way partition, a proposal that was then explicitly endorsed by David Owen and Vance's replacement Thorvald Stoltenberg in the form of the "Invincible plan" of autumn 1993 that was signed on a British Aircraft carrier.⁶¹⁴ Both proposals were rejected by the Bosnian Muslims and, despite the endorsement by the US, Britain, and France, and the role played by Owen and Stoltenberg, the international actors

<http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Exhibit/NotIndexable/IT-06-90/ACE80099R0000318671.pdf>: Accessed August 30th 2019

⁶¹³ 1993-07-01a - National Intelligence Estimate 93-26: Croatia When Will Fighting Resume? 01-Jul-93

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1993-07-01a.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁶¹⁴ Lewis, Paul, "Serb-Croat Plan to Split Up Bosnia Worries Mediators" *The New York Times*, June 24th 1993

<http://www.nytimes.com/1993/06/24/world/serb-croat-plan-to-split-up-bosnia-worries-mediators.html>: Accessed June 11th 2019

made few efforts to pressure Izetbegović to change his mind.⁶¹⁵ Instead, they responded to Sarajevo's rejections by pressuring the Croats for further concessions, giving the Bosnian Muslims an effective veto on any settlement. No settlement was worth making for the Bosnian Serbs unless it secured international recognition, without which Belgrade could not escape economic sanctions, and no settlement could secure that international recognition without Muslim acceptance. This gave the Izetbegović government perhaps its only major point of leverage. The Muslims could offer an end to the war to the Serbs and, most importantly, an end to economic sanctions to Belgrade. The Croats could add little or nothing beyond local military cooperation when the Serbs already held the military advantage. While the Bosnian Serb leadership might have accepted a deal with the Croats to partition Bosnia in theory, Belgrade needed something that Zagreb could not offer.

In 1992 and early 1993, Tudjman consulted regularly with David Owen, who acted as a source on supposed international preferences.⁶¹⁶ The proposals to Milošević were made contingent on American approval.⁶¹⁷ Tudjman grasped that any such a deal would be worthless without international ratification. The main change over the course of 1993 was the realization that this could only come from the US. "The Germans had done what the Croatians had wanted in '91. They had secured international recognition, but the Germans didn't have either the will or the military resources that the United States did" Galbraith explained, adding "So, when the Croatians looked for somebody to rescue them, they knew that that rescuer wouldn't be Germany. They knew the only country that was capable of rescuing them was the United States."⁶¹⁸

⁶¹⁵ Vranić, Igor, 'The International Community's Peace Plans in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991-1995', *Croatian studies*, 2013, review 9:1, 17-72. <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/182006>: Accessed October 17th 2019

⁶¹⁶ Talks Between President of the Republic of Croatia, Dr. Franjo TUDJMAN, the CoChairmen of the Conference on the Former Yugoslavia held on January 20th 1993. Annex III p.167

<http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁶¹⁷ Burns, John, "Serbian Plan would deny the Muslims any state" *The New York Times*, July 18th 1993 <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/07/18/world/serbian-plan-would-deny-the-muslims-any-state.html?pagewanted=all>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁶¹⁸ Interview with Peter Galbraith" by Charles Stuart Kennedy" March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project p.135 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

In September 1993, Galbraith told the BBC that the Bosnian Croat Army “have committed crimes in the prison camps, which are identical to those crimes committed this past year in Serbian prison camps”, and declared that “it is impossible to have normal civil relations with organizations who commit such crimes as have been committed in camps run by the HVO in Bosnia”.⁶¹⁹ Then Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights John Shattuck recalls that, when he visited Vukovar in January 1994 with US Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright, “Galbraith encouraged Albright and me in our meetings and press comments to focus on the issue of Serb war crimes against Croats. By demonstrating U.S. concern for the Croatian victims of Serb atrocities in Vukovar, we might be able to persuade Tudjman to cooperate with the new war crimes tribunal, which was simultaneously beginning to investigate Croat atrocities in Bosnia”.⁶²⁰ Albright, obliged and, after a meeting with President Tudjman in which he boasted about “liberating Bosnia from barbaric Muslims”, commented that “he [Tudjman] is very much aware of the concern of the United States about the activities of the HVO in Bosnia”.⁶²¹ ⁶²² The US was not the only power sending this message. In September, Tudjman bemoaned to Mate Boban that “Over the past 14 days, I received at least five or six official notes from the European Union, the United States of America, France and Germany. They all requested that we make as many concessions to the Muslims as possible and they all threatened us with sanctions because of the Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina”.⁶²³

619 Interview: Ambassador Peter W. Galbraith BBC Radio on its Newsletter Programme, September 8th 1993 *The United States and Croatia: A Documentary History 1993-1997*, US Department of State <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Exhibit/NotIndexable/IT-06-90/ACE80099R0000318671.pdf>: Accessed August 30th 2019

⁶²⁰ Shattuck, John, *Freedom on Fire : Human Rights Wars and America's Response* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 2005). ProQuest Ebook Central, P.133

<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hws/detail.action?docID=3300365>: Accessed February 20th 2019

⁶²¹ News Conference: US Ambassador Peter W. Galbraith, US Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine K. Albright, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights John Shattuck Following a visit to Zagreb, Croatia, January 6th 1994

The United States and Croatia: A Documentary History 1993-1997, US Department of State <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Exhibit/NotIndexable/IT-06-90/ACE80099R0000318671.pdf>: Accessed August 30th 2019

⁶²² Shattuck, John, *Freedom on Fire : Human Rights Wars and America's Response* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 2005). ProQuest Ebook Central,

<http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/hws/detail.action?docID=3300365>: Accessed February 20th 2019

⁶²³ Record of the talks between the President of the Republic of Croatia, Franjo TUDJMAN, and the President of the Republic of Herceg-Bosna on September 15th 1993.

To Tudjman, sanctions represented something far more terrifying than their potential economic cost. They implied an abandonment of Western support for Croatia's territorial integrity, which Galbraith warned "has been significantly undermined by the government of Croatia. While insisting on respect for its territorial integrity and the reintegration the Krajina, Croatia has worked to undermine the territorial integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina".⁶²⁴ Yet while observing how "Croatia's actions have served to undermine the very principles in which Croatia has an enormous stake; territorial integrity and the non-recognition of gains from ethnic cleansing", Galbraith held out the prospect that, if it cooperated with the Bosnian Muslims, "Croatia will take a big step on the way to becoming our partner in the Western community".⁶²⁵

Unlike the Serb public, who often failed to distinguish between the Serbian state and the places where Serbs lived, Croatian nationalists, especially those in Croatia, drew a far clearer line between the Croatian state for which they had struggled and Croatians who happened to live outside its current borders. The state rather than the people was the focus of Croatian nationalism, dating back to Ante Starčević's concept of Croatian "state right".⁶²⁶ When push came to shove, Croatians would sacrifice their compatriots in Bosnia for the benefit of Croatia itself, an outlook shared not only by their President, but even by Sušak, the ostensible spokesperson of the "Herzegovinian lobby". "Sušak, whatever you may think of him, has realized that people lived a normal life in Croatia even before he returned to Zagreb", the Croatian President observed to his then Prime Minister in late 1992, lamenting that "Many of our politicians from the diaspora still do not understand this".⁶²⁷ Tudjman had not wavered

Annex III p.347 <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed January 12th 2019

⁶²⁴ "US Policy Towards Croatia" Address by Ambassador Peter W. Galbraith at Lisinski Concert Hall, Zagreb Croatia February 17th 1994 *The United States and Croatia: A Documentary History 1993-1997*, US Department of State <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Exhibit/NotIndexable/IT-06-90/ACE80099R0000318671.pdf>: Accessed August 30th 2019

⁶²⁵ Ibid.

⁶²⁶ Bartulin N. (2012) From Independence to Trialism: The Croatian Party of Right and the Project for a Liberal "Greater Croatia" within the Habsburg Empire, 1861–1914. In: Fitzpatrick M.P. (eds), *Liberal Imperialism in Europe* (Palgrave Macmillan: New York) https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781137019974_6#citeas: Accessed June 7th 2019

⁶²⁷ Presidential transcripts, Tudjman Franjo meeting

Annex III p.281 <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed February 12th 2019

since 1990 in his belief that international ratification was the prerequisite for any lasting gains in the region.

Neither Tudjman nor Sušak were opposed then to a settlement in Bosnia that was more favourable to the Muslims than the one they had pursued in 1992, nor to coercing their Bosnian Croat protégés into accepting it, if they could be persuaded it was favoured by the major powers. In 1991, 1992, and early 1993, they did not believe this, instead remaining convinced that “neither the world nor Europe can accept the existence of an Islamic state in Europe”, and that the Russia and Germany were committed to a greater Serbia as a stabilising regional force.⁶²⁸ Croatian political objectives in Bosnia reflected Zagreb’s view of the great power preferences more than any long-standing metahistorical national ambitions. They believed that the great powers did not want a unitary Muslim state and therefore opposed one, while seeking an accommodation with Serbia. In 1992, this meant pushing for a decentralised yet independent Bosnia with strong enough Muslim-Croat cooperation to prevent absorption into Serbia. In 1993, informed by the Vance-Owen and subsequent “Invincible” plans and believing that the Europeans and international mediators favoured a Croat-Serb accommodation, Croatia pursued that end. After all, it was the international mediators who focused on bringing Karadžić and Milošević onboard. Tudjman correctly noted that the Croats had accepted every international proposal.⁶²⁹ When Tudjman presented a joint peace plan with Milošević, this was not *per se* an effort to partition Bosnia between them, but rather an attempt to please international opinion, as he believed that this was what the international

⁶²⁸ Tudjman also believed this was a preference shared by George Bush. “One circle of states which can feel that in the American administration - to talk in a completely simplified manner - a tendency still exists to wrap up, in a way, and using diplomatic makeup, an existing greater Serbia - at least in Bosnia and Herzegovina - and then to find compromise with that.” Presidential Transcript: 6th session of Presidential Council dated 10/12/1992. Annex III p.154 <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed February 12th 2019

⁶²⁹ Mate Granić was to tell Tudjman that the Union of Three Republics was favoured by the Americans, Vatican, Russians, and EU; Presidential Transcript of the 20th Defence and National Security Council meeting held on September 2nd 1993 Annex III p.352 <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

community wanted.⁶³⁰ In late 1993, however, when Izetbegović's government showed an interest in accepting a partition for the first time, provided it included sea access, Tudjman was outraged to see the international community embrace a proposal that could only be fulfilled at Croatian expense. "Access to the sea" for any Muslim sub-state meant control of Bosnia-Herzegovina's only internationally recognized port of Neum, which was 98% Croat according to the 1991 census.⁶³¹ "The fact is that Bosnia and Herzegovina will be divided" a Bosnian official explained to *The New York Times*, adding "We can do nothing against the Serbs militarily. The Croats are not only weaker, they sold us out to the aggressor".⁶³² Galbraith went so far as to inform Tudjman that, if sanctions were imposed on Croatia, the cost of lifting them would be Neum's cession.⁶³³ Tudjman expressed anger at the international mediators' betrayal during a meeting with US Ambassador to the UN Madeline Albright on January 6th 1994 in Zagreb. The proposal seems to have contributed to the Croatian decision to abandon the pursuit of an international mediated settlement in favour of the military option of an alliance with the Muslims, as favoured by the US.⁶³⁴ If the results of a successful mediation, whether by David Owen or anyone else, were no better than the consequences of military defeat, then there was far less reason to avoid the military option.

An internationally-mediated settlement might also cost Croatia the Krajina. Zagreb's military and diplomatic ascendancy over the Krajina Serbs arguably depended on the conflict's continuance in Bosnia. While the fighting there lasted, the Bosnian Serb Army was in no position to defend their compatriots in Croatia militarily. Furthermore, if the West did achieve a settlement in Bosnia, they would be committed to its maintenance, and likely to look

⁶³⁰ Burns, John, "Serbian Plan would deny the Muslims any state" *The New York Times*, July 18th 1993
<http://www.nytimes.com/1993/07/18/world/serbian-plan-would-deny-the-muslims-any-state.html?pagewanted=all>: Accessed June 5th 2019

⁶³¹ "www.statistika.ba". Accessed May 15th 2019

⁶³² Sudetic, Chuck, "Once Again, Bosnian Peace Talks Crumble" *The New York Times*, September 21st 1993
<http://www.nytimes.com/1993/09/21/world/once-again-bosnian-peace-talks-appear-to-crumble.html>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁶³³ Presidential Transcript for September 15th 1993. Annex III p.347, 352 Accessed May 15th 2019
<http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>

⁶³⁴ 94ZAGREB335_a, Cable, January 25th 1994, Wikileaks,
https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/94ZAGREB335_a.html: Accessed May 15th 2019

unfavourably on Croatian military actions against Knin, which might restart the fighting in the region. As long as the Croatian President remained convinced that, if he held out long enough, the West would either enforce, or be forced to accept, a settlement that allowed for a partition of Bosnia without any corresponding concessions regarding the Krajina, he had no reason to make concessions to Sarajevo. Once Tudjman was convinced that the US would tolerate a Serbian-Muslim settlement at Croatian expense before accepting a Croat-Serb partition of Bosnia, Croatia would be faced not with a choice but an imperative: to escape a Serb-Muslim agreement at all costs. It was un surprising that, when faced with this prospect, Zagreb folded. What was more surprising is that Zagreb, faced with impending disaster, managed to demand payment from the US for any agreement with the Bosnian Muslims, an implied support for Zagreb's recovery of the Krajina.

The Washington Agreement of 1994

During his early months in Zagreb, Galbraith's major point of contact was Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granić. "Whenever I would go to see Granić and read demarches some of which had very strong language, complaining about Croatian behavior, he never got angry. The response was always, 'Oh, yes, well, we recognize that there are problems. We're trying to correct them. We just haven't been able to do so. We'll try to do better'" reflected Galbraith,⁶³⁵ adding, "Whether the Croatian Foreign Minister was in a position to deliver changes in policy was less clear". "Granić was always personable, pleasant to deal with, and very bright", Neitzke recalled, adding "But he wasn't a Tudjman insider, at least not in the sense that Sušak and others were. Granić was not one of the HDZ, the ruling Croatian Democratic Union, hard-liners. There were times when Granić seemed a bit too ready to please, appearing to support positions that didn't quite reflect Tudjman's, and certainly not Sušak's, views."⁶³⁶

Defense Minister Gojko Sušak, as a Herzegovinian, may have wanted Herzegovina in Croatia but cared even more, on some level, about the Croats's survival there, and the best guarantee for them was a powerful Croatia. "Sušak was himself a proud Herzegovinian, and he kept a close eye on Bosnian Croat interests. When Sušak perceived Herzegovinian interests threatened, he was not averse to straying from Tudjman's guidelines" Neitzke recalled, noting "Tudjman and Sušak knew by then that if they were ever to get the UNPAs back they'd have to do it themselves, militarily."⁶³⁷ These "pipelines" had been a major source of supply for the Croats in 1992 and even into early 1993, with effective US acquiescence. "The Americans never protested. When they asked, we would say that our original weapons were simply

⁶³⁵ Interview with Peter Galbraith" by Charles Stuart Kennedy" March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p.141 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁶³⁶ Interview with Ronald Neitzke by Charles Stuart Kennedy" December 1st 2006, in "Yugoslavia Country Reader" The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p.176 http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Neitzke-Ronald-J.toc_.pdf: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁶³⁷ Ibid., p. 179.

hatching babies” Sušak recalled in a 1996 interview.⁶³⁸ With the Bosnian-Croat war raging, the US and Europe had no reason to turn a blind eye to these shipments, while the Islamic nations which Tudjman had wooed so aggressively in 1992 had no desire to see the weapons used against the Bosnian Muslims.⁶³⁹ By late 1993, Sušak concluded that the arms embargo was unlikely to be formally lifted until a general peace was declared and that, if Croatia wished to go into that general peace holding the Krajina, then it needed the weapons beforehand. This meant that the US attitude was important, and the US desire that weapons and supplies should reach the Bosnians was clear by the end of 1993.⁶⁴⁰ Sušak may have shared Tudjman’s scepticism about a Bosnian Muslim state’s viability in the long run, but it was apparent to him that the best way of securing American support, or at least indifference to Croatia’s military build-up, was to sell it as a means of supporting the Muslims.⁶⁴¹

If the Bosnian Croats had little leverage remaining over the Muslims, Zagreb held plenty over Sarajevo. Bosnia's weapon supply lines ran through Croatia, and the Muslims had seen their arms supplies slow to a trickle.⁶⁴² A victory over the Bosnian Croats would only slightly enlarge the rump that the Muslims would be left with after a settlement with the Serbs, and they would pay for those marginal gains with the enmity of neighboring Croatia. Muslim Prime Minister Haris Silajdžić had become increasingly alarmed by what he saw as a willingness on the part of others around the Bosnian President to settle for a partition that would leave a rump Bosnian state, provided that it would be Islamic in character, and viewed an agreement

638 Risen, James and McManus, Dolly “US Had Options to let Bosnia get Arms, Avoid Iran” *Los Angeles Times* July 14th 1996 http://articles.latimes.com/1996-07-14/news/mn-24196_1_iranian-arms-shipments/3: Accessed March 11th 2019

639 Ibid.

⁶⁴⁰ Presidential Transcript, August 5th 1993, Annex III p. 496.

<http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed March 12th 2019

641. Final report of the Select Subcommittee to Investigate the United States Role in Iranian Arms Transfers to Croatia and Bosnia ("the Iranian Green Light Subcommittee"), with minority views : report prepared for the Committee on International Relations, U.S. House of Representatives p.5, 86 <https://archive.org/details/finalreportofsel00unit>: Accessed March 14th 2014

⁶⁴² Sudetic, Chuck, “Once Again, Bosnian Peace Talks Crumble” *The New York Times*, September 21st 1993 <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/09/21/world/once-again-bosnian-peace-talks-appear-to-crumble.html>: Accessed June 11th 2019

with the Croats as the last chance to save a unified, multiethnic, secular Bosnia.⁶⁴³ Viewed by “most American officials”, as “the Bosnian leader with the broadest vision - an eloquent advocate of a multiethnic state”, according to Richard Holbrooke, Silajdžić was the “only Bosnian official who seemed genuinely to care about economic reconstruction of his ravaged land”.⁶⁴⁴ According to Galbraith “in September of ’93, the Croats called me, the German ambassador and the Turkish ambassador and announced a surprise. The Bosnian Croats and the Bosnian Muslims had agreed to form a federation and that that federation would be confederated with Croatia”.⁶⁴⁵

There may have been some truth to this story, at least insofar as the actors’ motives were concerned. Both the Croats and Muslims knew that America wanted an agreement and both wished to please Washington. However, the American involvement appears to have gone further, including the provision of a ready-made draft agreement for the parties. Granić, when presenting the proposal to Tudjman, observed “these are completely developed documents, evidently done by experts”, noting that “Redman [US Representative to the Contact Group] has indicated that he is very familiar with their content”.⁶⁴⁶ Croatian Deputy Foreign Minister Miomir Žužulj informed Tudjman that “this was an American initiative from the very top, which means it comes from President Clinton and that he is informed”, while another US Envoy Reginald Bartholomew “mentioned in passing that if you didn't accept it, you surely knew that solitary rooms were waiting for you somewhere down there”.⁶⁴⁷ “There” almost certainly meant the Hague, and Bartholomew’s statement was a threat to prosecute the Croatian leadership for “crimes” in Bosnia alongside their Serbian counterparts. This implied that Tudjman and his government could be treated in the same way as Milošević, who was currently

⁶⁴³ Interview with Peter Galbraith” by Charles Stuart Kennedy” March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁶⁴⁴ Holbrooke, Richard, *To End a War*, p.188

⁶⁴⁵ Interview with Peter Galbraith” by Charles Stuart Kennedy” March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p.144 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

⁶⁴⁶ Croatian Presidential Transcript February 13th 1994; Annex III p.508 <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed June 11 2019

⁶⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.509.

facing crushing sanctions to force the Bosnian Serbs to make concessions. Other American officials made no secret of Washington's role. "Redman's effort, which produced the Washington Agreement of March 1994, was one of the very few energetic, disciplined U.S. diplomatic undertakings in the whole ex-Yugo mess prior to Dayton", reflected Neitzke, perhaps unwittingly undermining the official line that the Federation was a purely indigenous effort. Neitzke was more sceptical of Galbraith's own view of his centrality to the process, "But the suggestion that he [Galbraith] was the key player in achieving the Washington Agreement, and that he worked against the backdrop of many months of continuing Croatian atrocities as Tudjman sought to carve out a Greater Croatia, is way over the top", he later claimed. Nonetheless, he also added that "Peter [Galbraith] did have a small but important role in the Washington Agreement, however".⁶⁴⁸

Silajdžić stood at the most conciliatory end of the Bosnian Muslim political spectrum, at least when it came to cooperation with Croatia. "I have never mentioned this before, but on the eve of the signing of the [Washington] agreement creating the Federation of B-H, Haris Silajdžić told me in Washington that the SDA, at a secret meeting, had divided between 55% who favored the Federation and 45% who preferred a tripartite division" Granić recalled more than a decade later.⁶⁴⁹ He also alleged that "the only people who up to then had been for a unified Bosnia-Herzegovina were Silajdžić, Krešimir Zubak and myself".⁶⁵⁰ In opposition stood Bosnian Vice President Ejup Ganić, who now championed the idea that Bosnian Muslims should have made common cause with the Serbs in 1991, and had threatened that "terrorism would start all over Europe", if Bosnia was abandoned.⁶⁵¹ However much Ganić might desire a unitary

⁶⁴⁸ Interview with Ronald Neitzke by Charles Stuart Kennedy" December 1st 2006, in "Yugoslavia Country Reader" The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p.169 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Neitzke-Ronald-J.toc.pdf>: Accessed May 24th 2019

⁶⁴⁹ Interview with Mate Granić by *Dani* (Sarajevo) June 24th 2005, translated in Bosnian Report, New Series No: 45-46 May-August 2005 Accessed

http://www.bosnia.org.uk/bosrep/report_format.cfm?articleid=3003&reportid=168: Accessed May 24th 2019

⁶⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁵¹ Tudjman recalled that Izetbegović had lobbied him in favour of a partition despite American pressure for Federation. "And so that you know, Muslim leadership, that Muslim leadership that now agreed to recommendation and pressure from West to come into the federation with us, that Muslim leadership wanted its independent Muslim state, even if it's smaller. Mr IZETBEGOVIĆ told me - you could immediately join West Herzegovina to Croatia. Further, he told me in a friendly discussion - well, he says, it would be in our interest, for

Islamic Bosnia, he had no more chance of achieving it without American support than Tadjman did of regaining the Krajina, and the Americans made clear to both that they wanted a Croat-Muslim agreement.⁶⁵² Whatever their military successes against the HVO, the Muslims continued to lose ground against the Serbs, who had successfully conquered the valley of the Drina river earlier that year. This left the enclaves around Goražde, Srebrenica, and Žepa isolated and the Muslims had little prospect of reversing these Serb gains while also fighting the Croats. Sarajevo had even less chance of continuing the war without military supplies or even essentials like food, which the conflict with the Croats had closed off along Croatia's border. As Galbraith would tell the US House Foreign Relations Committee in 1996, "The Bosnian people, left unarmed against the Serb aggressors, had barely survived the winter of 1993-94. Without help, we doubted they could survive another year", views echoed by Charles Redman and, a year later, by Anthony Lake, who informed the Senate that the Bosnians were "in deep trouble" and while they "probably were not in danger of imminent collapse, it was certainly heading that way".⁶⁵³ It is unnecessary to play up the precariousness of the Muslim position to explain Sarajevo's acceptance of the Washington Agreement. It was a good deal for the Bosnian Muslims. While failing to meet their maximum ambitions, it was as favourable to them as Vance-Owen had been to the Bosnian Croats, and offered far more than the Muslims could have hoped to win on their own on the battlefield or through a deal with the Serbs. The agreement saw a Bosnian Croat submission to remaining in a Bosnian Muslim-dominated state, in exchange for Western diplomatic support and the Bosnian Muslims failure to make a

Muslim leadership to become, to be independent, to be international subject, therefore, to directly receive help from Islamic countries." Presidential transcripts March 4th 1994 Annex III p.556
<http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>; Accessed June 11th 2019 , "Divided Bosnian Leadership Delays Talks on Partition" *The Washington Post*, June 23rd 1993, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1993/06/26/divided-bosnian-leadership-delays-talks-on-partition/79b28b2c-58bb-4ce5-b903-2d04f0b5b641/>; Accessed August 24th 2019

⁶⁵² Presidential transcripts March 4th 1994 Annex III p.558

<http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>; Accessed March 12th 2019

⁶⁵³ Friday May 3rd 1996. UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT: HIRC HEARING ON IRANIAN/BOSNIA ARMS MAY 30, 1996 Witnesses: Ambs. Charles Redman & Peter Galbraith)

<https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/eur50031.htm>; Accessed August 24th 2019 (; Senate Hearing 105-424—Hearing on Nomination of Anthony Lake to be Director Central Intelligence (March 11th, 12th, 13th 1997 p.101
<https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/hearings/105424.pdf>; Accessed August 23rd 2019

separate peace. The Muslims had no interest in making a separate peace if they had Western diplomatic support, and therefore conceded nothing of substance. The Croats were making concessions to the Muslims, not reaching a compromise, and it was Washington which was in turn compensating, or hinting that it would compensate, Zagreb.

As the Croats were making their concessions directly to the Muslims in exchange for prospective future “compensation” from the US, it was critical for the US to stress the value of that compensation while also making it clear to Tudjman that his preferred options, a decentralised Bosnia on tripartite lines or a partition with the Croat areas going to Croatia, were incompatible with American interests. Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs Peter Tarnoff told Granić “that Croatia can get a lot from the resolution of this war”, but adding “if Croatia is not able to play the role, which will help it, we will have to apply pressure”.⁶⁵⁴ David Owen echoed these warnings, suggesting that “the Serbs will be let go at a price they must pay, but you must stay with the Muslims and if you know how to, more or less, you can profit too”.⁶⁵⁵ Even the Vatican applied pressure, with the Pope telling Granić of a papal “great fear of Lebanonisation, Palestinianisation” of Bosnia, and that “if we(Croatia) found a solution with the Muslims, it would be a good balance towards Serbia”.⁶⁵⁶ Tudjman told his Cabinet:

““Well, Gentlemen, what we have heard about this reversal, in the sense that America would attempt to impose such a solution, is not really anything new for us. Because we have always known that the West was interested - as was evident in the case of Germany - in punishing Serbia, if possible, and forcing us to cooperate with the Muslims”.⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵⁴ Croatian Presidential Transcript February 13th 1994; Annex III p. 505
<http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed March 12th 2019

⁶⁵⁵ Ibid., p.510.

⁶⁵⁶ Ibid., pp.505-506.

⁶⁵⁷ “Miomir Zuzul Testimony to the ICYT, trial of Pusic” July 22nd 2008, ICYT p.31443
<http://www.icty.org/x/cases/prlic/trans/en/080722ED.htm> Accessed May 24th 2019

Tudjman quickly grasped the implications of this. “Tudjman believed that the English and the French wanted to divide Bosnia and Herzegovina but that the division was indeed not possible or only possible if the USA agreed to it” Miomir Žužulj later told the ICYT, adding “He would only have been convinced about this at the beginning of the Washington negotiations.”⁶⁵⁸

One of the concessions that Tudjman was more than happy to make was that of the Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban, whom Tudjman believed had become a public relations liability for Croatia. Tudjman bemoaned to his Cabinet that “Mate alone is to blame for this and, to a certain extent, he has done me wrong too, because the entire world from Europe to America and the United Nations has been on my back”.⁶⁵⁹ Galbraith, who had long disliked Boban, took pleasure and credit in this denouement. “A major focus of my effort from September of ‘93 on was to get rid of Mate Boban as the leader of the Bosnian Croats” Galbraith recalled, noting that, in September 1993, when “interviewed by the BBC [I] basically said that Mate Boban might be guilty of war crimes”, comments which were run on page one on the Croatian state-controlled press.⁶⁶⁰ Unlike Milošević, who also found Karadžić an embarrassment, Tudjman and Sušak had no difficulty in dispensing with Boban when they decided this was necessary. “Sušak had the trust of hard-line Herzegovinian elements, which regarded him as their defender and advocate, and also had the authority, at key moments, to secure Bosnian Croat acceptance of compromises such as the Washington Agreement and the DPA”, according to a 1998 report.⁶⁶¹ Whereas Milošević was publicly repudiated by Karadžić

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁵⁹ Croatian Presidential Transcript February 13th 1994; Annex III p. 524 <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed March 12th 2019

⁶⁶⁰ Interview with Peter Galbraith” by Charles Stuart Kennedy” March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p.148 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed May 24th 2019

⁶⁶¹ Changing Course? ICG Balkans Report No 39, August 13th 1998 https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/27954/039_bosnian_croat_politics.pdf: Accessed May 24th 2019

and Mladić over the Vance-Owen plan and left with imposing a “blockade” on the Bosnian Serbs, Boban had little ability to resist when he became perceived as a liability by Zagreb.⁶⁶²

The Croats continued to demand reassurance. A senior Croatian official complained to an American official after the January 5th 1994 talks in Geneva that “thanks to the Clinton Administration” the Muslims “are intransigent” while Granić expressed fears they had not abandoned their ambitions for a unitary state.⁶⁶³ As for Tudjman, Galbraith was concerned that the Croatian leader’s “heart was not in it” as late as the signing ceremony, and urged US officials to use Tudjman’s Washington visit itself to highlight the advantages that the US was willing to offer.⁶⁶⁴ For the Croats, this was made explicit during a meeting with Vice President Albert Gore, Defense Secretary William Perry, and Chair of the Joint Chiefs John Shalikashvili before the signing of the Washington Agreement where they commented on “problems” with the Croatian army, and made an offer to Tudjman and Granić to take care of financing and any other military needs Croatia might have”.⁶⁶⁵

The Bosnian-Croat Federation did not end the “war” in Bosnia. On the contrary, it was a deal to ensure that the war would continue, motivated by Croat and American fears that it might end on undesirable terms. While at the press conference announcing the Agreement, Secretary of State Warren Christopher took pains to stress that the Agreement did not exclude the Serbs, this seemed unlikely in the near future. Two years later, Administration officials would tell the Senate that the Agreement’s major goal was to enable the Bosnian government

⁶⁶² Interview with Mate Granić by *Dani* (Sarajevo) June 24th 2005, translated in *Bosnian Report*, New Series No: 45-46 May-August 2005 http://www.bosnia.org.uk/bosrep/report_format.cfm?articleid=3003&reportid=168: Accessed May 24th 2019

⁶⁶³ “Bosnian-Croat Talks in Vienna January 4-5 1994” State Department Cable, January 6th 1994 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp\DOCUMENTS\FOIA_May2017\F-2015-16745\DOC_0C06227433\C06227433.pdf: Accessed August 28th 2019

⁶⁶⁴ “Tudjman’s March 18th-19th Talks in Washington – Background and Suggested Themes” Cable Zagreb to Washington March 16th 1994 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp\DOCUMENTS\FOIA_Jun2017\F-2015-16745E4-6\DOC_0C06241506\C06241506.pdf: Accessed August 28th 2019

⁶⁶⁵ Presidential transcripts March 4th 1994 Annex III pp.558-559 <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed March 12th 2019

to fight the Serbs more effectively.⁶⁶⁶ This shows that the Agreement was more of a military alliance than a peace agreement, and that the US role was central, as was the fact that both the Bosnian and Croatian governments clearly expected a *quid pro quo* of some sort. After acknowledging that “this would not have been possible without the American leadership actively seeking a negotiated settlement in Bosnia”, Silajdžić expressed a wish that “American involvement will continue in order to try and keep our countries within the family of democratic nations”.⁶⁶⁷ Granić was blunter: “We expect in the future very strong support for peaceful reintegration of the occupied territory in Croatia, from the international community, especially from the United States”.⁶⁶⁸

From a Croatian viewpoint, Zagreb had made a down-payment and Washington was now obligated to deliver. Almost immediately, the US followed through on the promises that Gore and Perry had made to Tudjman in Washington, recommending a contract with MPRI (Military Resources Incorporated), a company founded by former high level US military personnel including former Chief of Staff (1987-1991) Carl Vuono, to train Croatian officers in “democratic institution building”.⁶⁶⁹ One officer would argue that “democratic institution building” was more than a euphemism, crediting the influence of American training on the Croatian officer corps with helping to preempt a coup when the HDZ fell from power after Tudjman’s death.⁶⁷⁰ If so, that must have seemed an unanticipated benefit to Tudjman and

666 US Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdžić, Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granić, Bosnian Croat Representative Kresimir Zubak at the Signing Ceremony of The Framework Agreement for a Bicomunal Federation in Bosnia, Washington DC, March 1st 1994 from *The United States and Croatia: A Documentary History 1993-1997*, US Department of State

<http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Exhibit/NotIndexable/IT-06-90/ACE80099R0000318671.pdf>: Accessed August 30th 2019

Testimony to Senate Foreign Relations Committee: Ambassador Charles Redman, Peter W. Galbraith” 1996 <https://archive.org/details/usroleiniraniana00unit>: Accessed May 24th 2019

667 Ibid.

668 Ibid.

⁶⁶⁹ Fred Bayles, “Company looking for a few good Generals” Tulsa World November 25th 1995, https://www.tulsaworld.com/archive/company-looking-for-a-few-good-generals/article_c7d05dea-36dd-5875-a6be-4fd0d64f666f.html: Accessed May 4th 2019

⁶⁶⁹ Singer, *PW Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry, Updated Edition* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca; London, 2008, pp.119–135, p. 122), www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt7v6vh.11: Accessed August 24th 2019

⁶⁷⁰ Wheaton, Kristen, ‘Success! Security Assistance and Its Impact in Croatia, 1995-2000’, *The DISAM Journal*, Fall 2000, 23:1, pp.67-73 <https://apps.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a497266.pdf>: Accessed August 24th 2019

Sušak, who would hardly have desired to see their Army “depoliticized” in 1994, much less sacrifice the Bosnian Croats for that purpose. Another US officer remarked after Operation *Storm* the following year, “The Croatians did a good job of coordinating armor, artillery and infantry. That’s not something you learn while being instructed about democratic values.”⁶⁷¹

It was not only training with which the Croatians expected assistance. “The plain truth is”, Anthony Lake informed the Senate three years later, adding “we expected that arms would flow through for the sake of the Federation. Absolutely. I have no apologies for that at all.”⁶⁷² The question of who would supply the weapons was a complicated question for the US. Even with its remit restricted to “democratic institution building” and a requirement that its work be certified as complying with the UN Arms Embargo on a monthly basis by the US Embassy, headed by Galbraith of course, the MPRI’s activities probably exceeded what was legal. Any direct supply of weapons to the Croats would be tantamount to a unilateral lifting of the arms embargo. Having decided that American policy objectives required a militarily-strong Croatia, the Clinton Administration now had to decide just how far they would go, and how many lines they would cross, to bring that outcome about.

⁶⁷¹ in Singer, *PW Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry, Updated Edition*,. (Cornell University Press, Ithaca; London, 2008, pp.119-135) p.122 www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt7v6vh.11.

⁶⁷² Senate Hearing 105-424—Hearing on Nomination of Anthony Lake to be Director Central Intelligence (March 11th, 12th, 13th 1997). p.141 <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/hearings/105424.pdf>: Accessed August 23rd 2019

The US, the Arms Embargo, and Iran

The failure of “Lift and Strike” in early 1993, left the Administration’s policy towards the embargo unclear. The US had clearly advocated the lifting of the arms embargo, ostensibly to help the Bosnian Muslims in a conflict in which the Serbs were implicitly identified as the “aggressors”. Did the US support the lifting of the Arms Embargo because it should not have existed, in which case the US should welcome efforts to evade it by opponents of the Serbs, or was it as part of a wider goal of containing the conflict, in which case America should seek to contain any violations? Democrats and Republicans would split over this issue in 1996 when asked to investigate whether the Clinton Administration encouraged these violations. The Democrats claimed that it had always been the Clinton administration’s policy not only to push for an end to the embargo but also to oppose one *per se*. “When the Clinton Administration came in, we had a very different policy from the Bush Administration”, Galbraith would tell the House in 1996, adding, “The Bush Administration had supported, and, in fact, cast a decisive vote in favor of the international arms embargo against the Bosnians and had worked hard to enforce that embargo.”⁶⁷³ “By contrast”, Galbraith testified, “President Clinton felt...that the embargo was fundamentally wrong, that it resulted in a situation where the aggressors, the Bosnians Serbs, who had all the weapons, were able to attack cities, villages, and engage in ethnic cleansing with impunity”, and hence, “the position of the Administration was, in fact, to be against the arms embargo, and, in fact, from January 20th, 1993, we were not urging other countries to enforce it.”⁶⁷⁴

Clinton had indeed campaigned on a platform of lifting the arms embargo, and at least initially favoured a policy of “lift and strike”. This opposition was echoed by senior officials although often in a more nuanced form. Madeleine Albright had expressed such an understanding of the US attitude towards the arms embargo. “The United States has always

673 Testimony: Ambassadors Peter Galbraith and Charles Redman to the House Committee on International Relations: US Actions Regarding Iranian Arms Shipments to Bosnia” May 30th 1996 p.49

<https://archive.org/details/usroleiniraniana00unit>: Accessed August 30th 2019

674 Ibid.

supported, and continues to support, the lifting of the arms embargo”, she informed a crowd in Zagreb on January 6th 1994, adding “The arms embargo has been imposed, as you know, by the United Nations, by the Security Council. It is not possible to get a vote lifting the arms embargo. We tried and it is not possible.”⁶⁷⁵

What then of Nunn-Mitchell, the Senate's own legislative proposal for the US to lift the embargo unilaterally? According to Talbott, “We in the Administration were convinced at the time, and we remain convinced now, that a unilateral lift of the embargo would have been a disaster. It would have encouraged others to pick and choose the resolutions they would abide by, such as for example, sanctions against Saddam Hussein”.⁶⁷⁶ It would have had, in Redman's view, “very severe ramifications for our European allies...They had told us very clearly that if we lifted the arms embargo that they were going to leave Bosnia...and I think we all believe that under those circumstances the Bosnian Government would have been virtually defenseless”.⁶⁷⁷ Furthermore, President Clinton had made commitments that, if necessary, the US would send in troops to support such a withdrawal if necessary, which seemed likely to be the case. “There was certainly going to be a need for US involvement to get them out”, Redman told the US House, and that meant that the cheapest way politically of doing so was to avoid the matter. Consequently, the Administration continued to hold a veto threat over Congressional action to lift the arms embargo unilaterally until summer 1995, when Congressional support for such measures surpassed the two-thirds needed to override a Presidential veto.⁶⁷⁸ As late as 1996, the National Security Council press office prepared press guidance “that the United States had

⁶⁷⁵ News Conference: US Ambassador Peter W. Galbraith, US Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine K. Albright, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights John Shattuck Following a visit to Zagreb, Croatia, January 6th 1994 from *The United States and Croatia: A Documentary History 1993-1997*, US Department of State <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Exhibit/NotIndexable/IT-06-90/ACE80099R0000318671.pdf>: Accessed August 30th 2019

⁶⁷⁶ Testimony: Assistant Secretary of State Strobe Talbott to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence: US Actions Regarding Iranian Arms Shipments to Bosnia” May 22nd 1996 p.62 <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/hearings/hearingsonusacti00unit.pdf>: Accessed November 26 2019

⁶⁷⁷ Testimony: Ambassadors Peter Galbraith and Charles Redman to the House Committee on International Relations: US Actions Regarding Iranian Arms Shipments to Bosnia” May 30th 1996 p.69 <https://archive.org/details/usroleiniraniana00unit>: Accessed November 27, 2019

⁶⁷⁸ Ibid.

always made clear we expected other countries to abide by the terms of the embargo”.⁶⁷⁹ That seems to run counter to Anthony Lake’s 1997 explanation of the policy to the Senate, where he argued that the US publicly supported the arms embargo because other countries urged it to do so, since the concern “was that if you lifted then United States took on the responsibility for what happened there”.⁶⁸⁰ Lake’s justification echoed concerns that the CIA expressed in August 1994 regarding the value of a unilateral lift, after which “the Bosnian Government's war aims would escalate, leading it to defer diplomatic solutions to the conflict. Bosnian Serb forces would strike quickly after a US decision by launching major attacks to disrupt arms deliveries and would harass, detain and perhaps attack remaining UNPROFOR units. Belgrade would resume full support to the Bosnian Serbs to prevent their defeat”.⁶⁸¹

Subtly ignoring violations of the arms embargo without openly repudiating it allowed the Clinton Administration to have their cake and eat it. It would allow weapons to reach the Croats and Bosnians, but without providing a precedent for future embargoes. In the event that the Bosnians were caught, the only precedent set would relate to attempting to evade an embargo, something attempted by any nation subject to them already, rather than the unilateral denunciation of UN embargoes altogether. Galbraith argued that the US position was no secret, as “based on my conversations with European ambassadors, that they too knew – including the Russians – that they, too, knew that the arms were transiting Croatia to the Bosnians, and, to the best of my knowledge, not one of these countries objected to the Croatian government”.⁶⁸² Questioned later by Senator Hatch (R-Utah), as to whether this involved America “lying” to its allies, Lake insisted that “there is a difference between secrecy

679 US Actions Regarding Iranian and Other Arms Transfers to the Bosnian Army, 1994-1995, Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence, United States Senate together with Additional Views, November 1996, p.5

⁶⁸⁰ Senate Hearing 105-424—Hearing on Nomination of Anthony Lake to be Director Central Intelligence (March 11th, 12th, 13th 1997). p.160

<https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/hearings/105424.pdf>: Accessed August 23rd 2019

⁶⁸¹ Ending US Compliance with the Bosnian Arms Embargo: Military and Political Implications, Special Estimate, National Intelligence Council, August 1994, p.4

http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1817859/1994-08-01.pdf: Accessed August 25th 2019

⁶⁸² Testimony: Ambassadors Peter Galbraith and Charles Redman to the House Committee on International Relations: US Actions Regarding Iranian Arms Shipments to Bosnia” May 30th 1996 p.46

<https://archive.org/details/usroleiniraniana00unit>: Accessed November 27, 2019

and lying”.⁶⁸³ Some allies were less sanguine about the American officials’ behavior in the region. “Holbrooke behaved like a latter-day Metternich, endlessly wheeling and dealing and not entirely trusted by anyone, including and indeed especially perhaps by his so-called Allies”, recalled Sir Ivor Roberts the British representative to the Contact Group, adding “and, indeed subsequent events demonstrated that I was right not to trust him. He was telling us one thing and doing something quite different”.⁶⁸⁴ Events would more than justify Roberts’ view.

An additional reason why the US adopted this approach was Croatia’s attitude. “Croatia would be crucial to any plan to lift the arms embargo”, the CIA noted in August 1994, insightfully observing that “Croatian support can be had for a price; it will expect compensation in weaponry, increased political and economic assistance from the West, and US help to regain the Krajina”.⁶⁸⁵ A senior Pentagon official would capture this line of thinking in 1995: “There are many marriages of convenience in the Balkans, and our relationship with Croatia has been one of them. Let's face it, you can't get to Bosnia without going through Croatia. You need their ports, you need their lines of communication”.⁶⁸⁶ Despite these optimistic, and arguably condescending pronouncements, Tudjman was distinctly cool regarding any lifting of the arms embargo on Bosnia and told Holbrooke as much in September 1994. The Croatian President was concerned that this would not only lead to more intense fighting, but would also leave the Bosnian Croats at a disadvantage against the suddenly better armed Muslim forces.⁶⁸⁷ By contrast, a situation in which arms were transferred to Bosnia illegally through Croatia with

⁶⁸³ Senate Hearing 105-424—Hearing on Nomination of Anthony Lake to be Director Central Intelligence (March 11, 12, 13, 1997) p.141 <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/hearings/105424.pdf>: Accessed August 23rd 2019

⁶⁸⁴ Interview with Sir Ivor Roberts, British Diplomatic Oral History Project, Churchill College Cambridge, pp.26-27 https://www.chu.cam.ac.uk/media/uploads/files/Roberts_Ivor.pdf: Accessed November 26 2019

⁶⁸⁵ Ending US Compliance with the Bosnian Arms Embargo: Military and Political Implications, Special Estimate, National Intelligence Council, August 1994, p.3 http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1817859/1994-08-01.pdf: Accessed August 25th 2019

⁶⁸⁶ Roger Cohen “US Cooling Ties to Croatia After Winking at Buildup” *The New York Times*, October 28th 1995 <http://www.nytimes.com/1995/10/28/world/us-cooling-ties-to-croatia-after-winking-at-its-buildup.html?pagewanted=all>: Accessed June 11th 2018

⁶⁸⁷ “TSROL: September 5 Meeting Between Ambassador Holbrooke and Croatian President Franjo Tudjman” Cable Embassy Zagreb, September 7th 1994 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/FOIA_Jun2017\F-2015-16745E4-6\DOC_0C06241515\C06241515.pdf: Accessed August 28th 2019

American connivance would allow Zagreb to control which weapons reached the Muslims, in addition to taking a share. The very illegality would also leave Zagreb with potential material for blackmail against future American pressure. The Croatians therefore sought not only to promote an arms pipeline that they controlled, but also to draw American officials into the process in order to compromise them, a project that began within a month of the March 20th signing of the Washington Agreement.

On April 22nd 1994, Richard Herrick, the American military attaché in Zagreb, was summoned to a meeting with Gojko Sušak. Sušak had a question for him. A “third country” had offered to supply weapons and support to the Bosnian Muslims with the Croatians taking a share as “payment” and would the US object? The third country happened, however, to be Iran, which the US Department of State's 1993 “Patterns of Global Terror” report described as “the most active state sponsor of terrorism in 1993”, which “was implicated in terrorist attacks in Italy, Turkey and Pakistan; Iran still surveils US missions and personnel; Tehran's policymakers view terrorism as a valid tool to accomplish their political objectives, and acts of terrorism are approved at the highest levels of the Iranian government”.⁶⁸⁸ Sušak had raised this question previously with American officials. In September 1992, when an Iranian 747 loaded with weapons had landed in Zagreb, it had provoked a vigorous response from the Bush Administration, especially due to rumors that the plane had brought David Owen to Zagreb to investigate.⁶⁸⁹ In April 1993, with the Clinton Administration now in office, Sušak tried again, approaching US Special Envoy Reginald Bartholomew with an inquiry regarding the American attitude to Croatia transshipping Iranian Arms. Neitzke counseled a strong negative response, as he had when both the Turkish and Iranian governments had floated the idea earlier, in February.⁶⁹⁰ This did not prevent President Tudjman from raising the issue directly in a meeting

688 “Patterns of Global Terrorism 1993” U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE Office of the Secretary, Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism Department of State Publication 10136 APRIL 1994

https://fas.org/irp/threat/terror_93/statespon.html#Iran; Accessed August 25th 2019

⁶⁸⁹ Select Subcommittee Deposition of Ronald Neitzke. August 7th 1996, pp.13-23, Report from Croatian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Iranian cargo plane carrying arms arriving in Zagreb, Republic of Croatia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, No. 521-052/92-4566-3 Zagreb, September 9th 1992 included in Owen, David (ed.). *Bosnia-Herzegovina: The Vance Owen Peace Plan* (Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 2013) p.50.

⁶⁹⁰ Department of State Cable. Zagreb 1479. April 27th 1993. [Final report of the Select Subcommittee to Investigate the United States Role in Iranian Arms Transfers to Croatia and Bosnia \("the Iranian Green Light Subcommittee"\)](#).

with Neitzke on May 7 1993, stating that “Iran was knocking at the door”, leading Neitzke to reply under instructions from Washington that “the United States did not want Croatia to develop a relationship with Iran”.⁶⁹¹ Galbraith, however, showed signs almost from the start of failing to share Neitzke’s reservations about allowing arms from dubious sources to enter the region. One of his first actions in Zagreb was to seek out Sefer Omerbašić who was widely believed not only to be involved in smuggling arms to the Muslims but, according to Gojko Sušak, also in recruiting foreign Islamic fighters.⁶⁹² Galbraith would tell the Senate that he saw Iran as an international menace, sponsoring terrorism worldwide, but in 1993 he assured Neitzke that Iran would not use its newfound influence in the region to attack the US because this would not serve Iran’s strategic interests.⁶⁹³ “Peter’s view of the Iranian threat was always tempered by his Iran-Iraq prism and the role he had played in helping to expose the horrors that Saddam Hussein had perpetrated on the Kurds”, Neitzke recalled.⁶⁹⁴

According to the 1996 Senate report “in late 1993 and early 1994, a senior US Government official in Croatia indicated interest in a covert action to aid the Bosnian Muslims”. “At one point”, according to the report, “the senior US official suggested a cover action program in which the US would let Croatia know that we would look the other way if they would let arms for the Muslims transit their territory on terms arranged between Zagreb and the parties involved.” Most ominously, “the senior US official suggested that the Iranians could be the suppliers”. At the time, the CIA moved aggressively to block the proposal, suggesting that approval would have to come from the White House, and that “those aspects of the

[with minority views : report prepared for the Committee on International Relations, U.S. House of Representatives](#)" p.79 Accessed March 14th 2014

⁶⁹¹ Neitzke Dep. at 23-30

From [Final report of the Select Subcommittee to Investigate the United States Role in Iranian Arms Transfers to Croatia and Bosnia \("the Iranian Green Light Subcommittee"\), with minority views : report prepared for the Committee on International Relations, U.S. House of Representatives](#): Accessed August 25th 2019" p.80

⁶⁹² Ibid., p.83

⁶⁹³ Ibid., p.84 Accessed March 14th 2014; Testimony: Ambassadors Peter Galbraith and Charles Redmanto to the House Committee on International Relations: US Actions Regarding Iranian Arms Shipments to Bosnia” May 30th 1996

<https://archive.org/details/usroleiniraniana00unit>: Accessed November 27, 2019

⁶⁹⁴ Interview with Ronald Neitzke by Charles Stuart Kennedy” December 1st 2006, in “Yugoslavia Country Reader” The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p. 190 http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Neitzke-Ronald-J.toc_.pdf: Accessed August 25th 2019

proposal disguised to hide the US hand would place it squarely into the cover action arena”.⁶⁹⁵ It now appears that the ‘senior official’ was Peter Galbraith. At the time, however, these efforts proved largely fruitless. That was not due to a lack of interest on the Croatian side. This did not, by any means, represent the end of Iran's efforts to support the Muslim cause in Bosnia. Ambassador Galbraith would later tell the House that “all through this period [1993-1994], and during the Muslim-Croat war, there were arms flowing in. They were coming in through Croatia. As to the degree of Croatian Government complicity” Galbraith could only speculate, but “I presume that they knew about at least some of it”.⁶⁹⁶ Sušak himself would visit Tehran in November 1993.⁶⁹⁷ The nature of the Muslim-Croat war, and the uncertainty it created both about the American attitude to Croatia, and to what settlement might develop in Bosnia limited the extent of these exchanges. The Washington Agreement transformed the situation. Suddenly the US was committed to Muslim-Croat cooperation against the Serbs, and American officials had all but accepted an obligation to assist Zagreb with military rearmament. It was in this environment that Sušak appears to have decided to try again.

When confronted with Sušak’s question, Herrick quickly recognised that he was in trouble. The American attitude towards an arms pipeline was a policy question, and he informed Sušak that the question needed to be posed to Galbraith, who was currently in Bosnia. Upon Galbraith’s return on April 27th, Herrick informed the Ambassador that Sušak and Tudjman wished to see him and made clear the purpose of the meeting. That evening, Sušak and Tudjman informed the Ambassador that the Iranians had reached an agreement with Izetbegović to supply arms through Croatia, and that Sarajevo had requested as a favour that Croatia look the other way. By framing the inquiry as a request from the Muslims in Bosnia, the Croats placed Galbraith in a position where a negative reply would undermine not just the US-

695 US Actions Regarding Iranian and Other Arms Transfers to the Bosnian Army, 1994-1995, Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence, United States Senate together with Additional Views, November 1996 p.4

<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CRPT-105hrpt804/html/CRPT-105hrpt804.htm>: Accessed August 25th 2019

696 Testimony: Ambassadors Peter Galbraith and Charles Redman to the House Committee on International Relations: US Actions Regarding Iranian Arms Shipments to Bosnia” May 30th 1996 p.47

<https://archive.org/details/usroleiniraniana00unit>: Accessed November 27, 2019

697 Interview with Ronald Neitzke by Charles Stuart Kennedy” December 1st 2006, in “Yugoslavia Country Reader” The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p.179 http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Neitzke-Ronald-J.toc_.pdf: Accessed November 27, 2019

Croatian relations but also the far more fragile Croat-Muslim Federation. While claiming to prefer a negative reply out of distaste for Iran, despite his recent visit, Sušak suggested that Croatia could take a “tax” of 30%, and additionally seize any other weapons that looked particularly dangerous. The weapons were going to be used by the Bosnian Muslims to kill Bosnian Serbs, and the more members of both groups who killed each other the better, in Sušak’s view.⁶⁹⁸ Galbraith informed Tudjman and Sušak that he had “no instructions” which “elicited uncertainty as to what our position was” from the Croats, and was unable to provide clarification without cabling Washington, which he promptly did upon returning to the Embassy.⁶⁹⁹

The question had placed Galbraith in a difficult position. Aware that Washington generally favoured such shipments if they could be facilitated, Galbraith was reluctant to reject the Croats’ request but, simultaneously, was unwilling implicitly to provide a positive response without higher authorisation. As Galbraith told Strobe Talbott a week later, “anything short of a statement that the Croats should not facilitate the flow of Iranian arms to the Bosnians would be understood as a US Green light”.⁷⁰⁰ In a testimony to the House Committee, he underlined that “if the US said no to the Croatian inquiry regarding Iranian Arms, I think the very fragile Muslim-Croat Federation would have collapsed, as the Bosnians would have doubted the sincerity of their Croatian allies”.⁷⁰¹ The initial meeting not only failed to resolve the Croatian question but also moved the dispute to the White House, where the Clinton National Security team had to determine their position. The ideal option, where the Croats and Bosnians cooperated to establish the pipeline themselves without American knowledge, was now off the table. The US would have, at the very least, to register no objections if it wished it to go through, and in such a manner that denied policymakers the option of claiming ignorance of such a statement’s consequences. Alternatively, if they wished to block it, Galbraith would have

698 Select Subcommittee Deposition of Richard Holbrooke. September 27th 1996, pp.25-31.
<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CRPT-105hrpt804/html/CRPT-105hrpt804.htm>: Accessed November 27, 2019

699 Testimony: Ambassadors Peter Galbraith and Charles Redman to the House Committee on International Relations: US Actions Regarding Iranian Arms Shipments to Bosnia” May 30th 1996 p.5
<https://archive.org/details/usroleiniraniana00unit>: Accessed November 27, 2019

700 Ibid., p.47.

701 Ibid. p.45.

to return to make this explicit to the Croat leaders, placing the full responsibility on the US. Galbraith could not simply request a meeting in order to provide a non-answer to a question that “officially” had not been asked. He needed to be invited by Tudjman and Sušak, and their actions would depend on their degree of satisfaction with the answer. If satisfied, they had no reason ever to raise the issue again, and America could only directly raise it if intended to provide an explicit reply.

The April 29th “Incident”

Galbraith's request for instructions received a reply from Alexander “Sandy” Vershbow, misidentified by Galbraith in his House testimony as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs but actually Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for European Affairs at the National Security Council.⁷⁰² Aged 42 in 1994, Alexander Vershbow was a career Foreign Service Officer, who had graduated from Yale with a degree in Russian and Eastern European Studies before gaining an MA from Columbia's Russian Institute. Between 1988 and 1991, he had served as the State Department's Desk Officer on the Soviet Union before being appointed by President Clinton to serve in a staff position on the NSC, coordinating Russian and Balkan policy with the State Department. Later, he would become Ambassador to Russia, from 2001-2005.⁷⁰³ Vershbow informed Galbraith that, when he returned with instructions, he would be “clearly speaking for the Administration”.⁷⁰⁴

On April 28th Zagreb time, President Clinton was returning from Richard Nixon's Funeral in Yorba Linda, California, which had been held the previous day. Traveling with him were Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott and

702 Ibid., p.53.

703 Embassy of the United States -Moscow” http://moscow.usembassy.gov/alexander_r_vershbow.html: Accessed September 11th 2015

704 Testimony: Ambassadors Peter Galbraith and Charles Redman to the House Committee on International Relations: US Actions Regarding Iranian Arms Shipments to Bosnia” May 30th 1996 p.69. <https://archive.org/details/usroleiniraniana00unit>: Accessed November 27, 2019

National Security Adviser Anthony Lake. While some members who might have favoured aid to the Bosnians, such as Madeline Albright, were absent, so too were any Pentagon or CIA representatives, who might have opposed any decision that might have the potential of drawing the US further into the Bosnian conflict. The presumption of the policy was that America's goal was to see the Bosnians receive arms, which coloured the subsequent debate by ruling out a negative reply. "Had we done that", Talbott later told the Senate, "we would have exacerbated the already desperate military situation of the Bosnians and very likely doomed the Federation of Muslims and Croats."⁷⁰⁵ Strobe Talbott later testified that "This was a specific exchange that moved our policy in a direction it was already moving in", concluding that "what would have changed something, big time, would have been if our answer to the Croats had been no, we are flat against your letting these arms flow to the Bosnians".⁷⁰⁶ A decision was taken to get the weapons to the Bosnians if at all possible. The question was now how to communicate this to the Croats while limiting US complicity.

An affirmative reply was also ruled out. "If we had said yes to the Croats, that is, if we had explicitly, affirmatively approved the transshipment", Talbott recalled, "it would have put us in the position of passively and unilaterally supporting a violation of the arms embargo."⁷⁰⁷ This would pose a serious threat to the US relationship with its allies, and potentially force it into greater involvement in the region. "The public disclosure of such a posture", Talbott continued, "would have caused severe strains with our allies who had troops on the ground in Bosnia as part of UNPROFOR", and "had we gone that course it would have triggered the precipitous withdrawal of UNPROFOR, and that in turn would have required a substantial US troop deployment as part of a potentially very dangerous and costly NATO extraction effort."⁷⁰⁸

705 Testimony: Assistant Secretary of State Strobe Talbott to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence: US Actions Regarding Iranian Arms Shipments to Bosnia" May 22nd 1996 p.64.
<https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/hearings/hearingsonusacti00unit.pdf>: Accessed November 26 2019

706 Ibid., p.76.

707 Ibid., p.62.

708 Ibid.

The Administration settled on a formula of “no instructions” which allowed the US to communicate a lack of objections without technically indicating a preference. Deputy Secretary Talbott informed Congress clearly that the US was not providing an answer. “The Croatians came to us with a question”, Talbott later told the Senate, “the question was, we are thinking about doing thus and such. What’s your view on that? Our answer was, we do not have a view. We are giving you a non-answer.”⁷⁰⁹ Nonetheless, “we expected that hearing a carefully considered response from us which was a non-response, the Croatians would go ahead with what they clearly intended to do and what the Bosnian government very much wanted them to do”.⁷¹⁰

The formula placed Galbraith in a difficult position. The Administration had delivered its instructions to him in a manner, technically vague and through oral rather than written channels, which enabled Washington to maintain deniability towards him. If things went wrong, he could be accused of exceeding his authority, interpreting his lack of instructions as a yes, and set up as a “fall guy”, the rogue Ambassador who went off on his own. The way in which he received the instructions was, arguably, illegal. The 1974 Hughes-Ryan Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, passed in response to Watergate and the Nixon Administration’s perceived excesses, required a “Presidential finding” to authorise covert action by the Central Intelligence Agency. This requirement was extended to “covert actions” by non-CIA government departments when a new Title V was added to the National Security Act of 1947.⁷¹¹ The latter specified that “except in emergencies, when oral finding may be used for up to 48 hours, presidential findings must be in writing...specify each US Government entity that will participate in any significant way in a program's implementation, must state whether any third party will participate in the program in any significant way, and may not authorize any violations of the Constitution or any US statute”.⁷¹² The purpose was not to deter covert action generally, but rather to ensure that this was properly documented, with a clear chain of

709 Ibid. p.64.

710 Ibid. p.63.

711 US Actions Regarding Iranian and Other Arms Transfers to the Bosnian Army, 1994-1995, Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence, United States Senate together with Additional Views, November 1996 p.2.

712 Ibid.

accountability. Without such a chain, US officials on the ground, whether State Department or CIA, could use vague oral instructions or general statements of policy intent from the President, or someone purportedly representing him, to justify covert actions including support for governments' overthrow. By requiring a clear "Presidential finding", the law ensured that there could be no ambiguity. If "covert action" were to occur, it would not be justified on the basis of advancing the Administration's policy goals, but rather because the President himself approved it. Importantly, there were no laws "specifying in any greater detail how the Executive branch should handle the process of considering and adopting presidential findings".⁷¹³ The Executive branch and its representatives could do what they liked, as long as they were on record. The problem for Galbraith was that none of the instructions he received were on record anywhere.

Luckily for Galbraith, US Representative to the Contact Group Charles Redman arrived in Zagreb the following day, who had "negotiated the Federation agreement in March", had recently spent four days with Secretary of State Christopher, and would be returning to Washington the following day to brief senior officials on the Contact Group's work. He was also already scheduled to meet with Tadjman and Sušak that evening. Galbraith contacted Redman as soon as he landed. "When I arrived in Zagreb", Redman recalled, "Ambassador Galbraith asked that I come to his residence before going on to the meeting with the Croatian officials."⁷¹⁴ After briefing Redman on the question "concerning the transshipment of arms for the Bosnian government", Galbraith placed a "call to Washington to ascertain the response to that question".⁷¹⁵ Together, Galbraith and Redman spoke with the "responsible Washington official" in Redman's words, who "provided the 'no instructions' guidance". According to Redman, only Galbraith discussed the arms issue: "I spoke to the same official to pass on a

713 US Actions Regarding Iranian and Other Arms Transfers to the Bosnian Army, 1994-1995, Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence, United States Senate together with Additional Views, November 1996 p.2

714 Testimony: Assistant Secretary of State Strobe Talbott to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence: US Actions Regarding Iranian Arms Shipments to Bosnia" May 22nd 1996 p.39

<https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/hearings/hearingsonusacti00unit.pdf>: Accessed November 26 2019

715 Testimony: Ambassadors Peter Galbraith and Charles Redman to the House Committee on International Relations: US Actions Regarding Iranian Arms Shipments to Bosnia" May 30th 1996 p.5

<https://archive.org/details/usroleiniraniana00unit>: Accessed November 27, 2019

short debriefing on the work of the Contact Group in Sarajevo and Pale but did not discuss the arms issue which I had not been involved".⁷¹⁶

Armed with "no instructions" from the National Security Team, Galbraith and Redman returned to the Presidential Palace the following day, April 29th 1994. When Tudjman again asked what the US position would be on the Bosnian proposal, Galbraith responded that "he had no instructions". This time, however, he went further, adding, "Mr. President, pay very close attention to what I am not saying". As the group entered the dining room for dinner after the meeting, Redman made his contribution, adding to Tudjman, "It's your decision to make. We don't want to be put in a position to say no". According to Redman, "there was no response, no further conversation. I was never engaged on the issue again".⁷¹⁷ With Ambassador Redman leaving for Washington shortly after dinner, he and Galbraith had agreed that Redman would deliver a report on the meeting with the Croats in person on arriving back in the US, and that Galbraith would hold off filing any sort of cable. This might well have been the end of the matter, at least as far as the US was concerned. Sušak was happy. Redman had managed to do something for the Bosnians after having been present in Sarajevo throughout the battle for Goražde. On May 4th 1994, the first transshipment would arrive "with sixty tons of explosives and military equipment on board". Two days later, on May 6th, Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati visited in Zagreb before traveling to Sarajevo where he presented Izetbegović with a \$1 million cheque.⁷¹⁸

The entire matter had been handled entirely within the National Security Council and a compartmentalised selection of the nominal State Department officials who were functionally part of the President's inner circle, such as Talbott. The CIA and Department of Defense were left out, despite CIA Director Jim Woolsey and Defense Secretary William Perry being members

⁷¹⁶ Ibid. p. 5

⁷¹⁷ Testimony: Assistant Secretary of State Strobe Talbott to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence: US Actions Regarding Iranian Arms Shipments to Bosnia" May 22nd 1996 p.54
<https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/hearings/hearingsonusacti00unit.pdf>: Accessed November 26 2019

⁷¹⁸ Wiebes, Cees, *Intelligence and the War In Bosnia, 1992-1995* (LIT Verlag: Münster, 2003). p.148
<https://niod.nl/sites/niod.nl/files/II%20%20Intelligence%20and%20the%20war%20in%20Bosnia%201992%20-%201995%20-%20The%20role%20of%20the%20intelligence%20and%20security%20services.pdf>: Accessed June 11th 2019

of the National Security Council. This would not been unproblematic had they been informed of a change in policy, but those involved were dedicated both to discretion and to the line that what they had done did not involve any such change. Had the events of April 29th proved the end of the matter, these conflicts might not have mattered. Instead, the Administration's efforts to kill any further discussion of the events backfired spectacularly, and involved instructions that Galbraith received from Vershbow not to file any cable with the State Department regarding his discussions with Tadjman or the "no instructions" policy.

Already uneasy, Galbraith consulted Neitzke, who advised the Ambassador to draft a cable without submitting it, thereby establishing a paper trail, an act which appeared to Congress much like an effort to blackmail his superiors, not to mention an admission that Galbraith himself considered his instructions improper.⁷¹⁹ Reassured, Galbraith's belief that his actions now represented official policy was reinforced by a meeting between Tadjman and Richard Holbrooke that he attended in autumn 1994, where "Holbrooke suggested to Sušak that 'we should go to other countries that might be willing to provide arms to the Bosnians or money and basically say to them, we do not object if you decide to violate the arms embargo by assisting the Bosnian Muslims or we do not object if you decide to provide money'."⁷²⁰ Galbraith himself now approached the local CIA Station Chief. Unbeknownst to the Ambassador, Neitzke had already voiced his reservations with the local CIA chief of mission who, along with Director of the Croatian Intelligence Service Miroslav Tadjman, was increasingly as worried about Islamic fundamentalism as the military threat posed by the Serbs.⁷²¹ Already suspicious, the CIA Station Chief reported Galbraith's requests to Director

⁷¹⁹ Interview with Peter Galbraith" by Charles Stuart Kennedy" March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf> p 158, Interview with Ronald Neitzke by Charles Stuart Kennedy" December 1st 2006, in "Yugoslavia Country Reader" The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Neitzke-Ronald-J.toc_.pdf pp.181, Report of the Select Committee on Intelligence US Senate, U.S Actions Regarding Iranian and Other Arms Transfers to the Bosnian Army, 1994-1995, Washington DC, 1996, p.4.

⁷²⁰ Interview with Peter Galbraith" by Charles Stuart Kennedy" March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Accessed p. 162 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>:November 25, 2019

⁷²¹ [Final report of the Select Subcommittee to Investigate the United States Role in Iranian Arms Transfers to Croatia and Bosnia \("the Iranian Green Light Subcommittee"\), with minority views : report prepared for the Committee on International Relations, U.S. House of Representatives](#)" p.84 Accessed March 14th 2014

James Woolsey in Washington. “My station chief in Croatia had the Ambassador approach him and say, ‘Would you help me look the other way as these arms come through?’” then CIA Director James Woolsey recalled. He further concluded “My station chief was exactly right in coming back and saying, ‘Hey, I can’t do this, right?’” and that “while conceding that’s the decision the President gets to make”, he “did not think that was very wise because it ended up getting the Iranians into the Balkans in more ways than anybody wanted”.⁷²²

Concerned about whether this was a rogue operation, Woolsey confronted Lake and Talbott, both of whom denied that any change of policy had occurred, a position Lake would struggle to explain to the Senate during his own confirmation hearings for CIA Director. Lake blamed Talbott, alleging “There was apparently a misunderstanding. Director Woolsey did not get a clear view of what that decision was, I wasn't there. I can't sit in judgment on that”. Lake then defended his own handling, stating “I think I did the right thing by saying, no, our instructions were that that should not happen. I assured him that I was unaware absolutely of any covert action program”.⁷²³ Woolsey disagreed “The CIA did not move weapons to Bosnia. We were perfectly willing to do that. We had enough experience in this field, but the policy level did not want the CIA to do that”.⁷²⁴ Woolsey resigned at the end of the year, angered by both the policy and the decision to sideline his agency

Woolsey himself may have been unaware of the extent of his own agency’s involvement. In 1999, President Tudjman was recorded as informing a Cabinet meeting, “let me remind you, we were under an embargo, while the CIA practically cooperated with our service,

⁷²² Woolsey, R. James, Oral History; Director of Central Intelligence, Interviewed January 13th 2000 , Presidential Oral Histories, Miller Center, University of Virginia, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/r-james-woolsey-oral-history-director-central>; Accessed May 10th 2019

⁷²³ Senate Hearing 105-424—Hearing on Nomination of Anthony Lake to be Director Central Intelligence (March 11th, 12th, 13th 1997). p.157.

<https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/hearings/105424.pdf>; Accessed August 23rd 2019

⁷²⁴ Interview with James Woolsey, August 8th 2000; Wiebes, Cees. *Intelligence And the War In Bosnia, 1992-1995*. (LIT Verlag: Münster, 2003). p.148.

<https://niod.nl/sites/niod.nl/files/II%20%20Intelligence%20and%20the%20war%20in%20Bosnia%201992%20-%201995%20-%20The%20role%20of%20the%20intelligence%20and%20security%20services.pdf>; Accessed June 11th 2019

even going so far as to give us some technical material which they did not give to others”.⁷²⁵ That cooperation could have occurred after Woolsey left, Tudjman could be in error, or Woolsey could be lying, although it is hard to see why he would do so more than a decade later and after becoming a political opponent of the Administration. What is clear is that Tudjman was clear about the intended signal of the US regarding arms shipments. “As far as I know, Washington was never even close to making Croatia’s arms buildup a bilateral issue”, Neitzke recalled, adding “On the contrary, at least by mid-1994, Washington tacitly accepted the buildup and by the early summer of 1995 had all but embraced it.”⁷²⁶

Whether Washington played a larger role in the build-up is unclear. Rumours abounded not just among the diplomatic community, as Galbraith alleged, but also within the American Embassy itself. Neitzke was a major source for the local CIA Station Chief, although not the only source as the Democratic Congressional staff sought to portray him in the subsequent investigation. On May 14th 1994, the Station Chief reported to Washington that Neitzke had informed him of how Galbraith and Ambassador Redman had intervened to secure a convoy’s release that had been stopped trying to enter Bosnia from Croatia at the Bosnian Ambassador’s prompting. Redman conceded in his testimony to Congress that such an intercession did in fact take place but that he had no knowledge of any weapons that may have been present in the convoy, was uncertain whether his intervention was decisive in its release, and was primarily concerned with the “impact on the negotiations” as Contact Group representative if the Bosnians were angered. The Democratic “Minority concludes that had it not been for this rampant speculative reporting, the May 1994 convoy would have been no more significant than the thousands of other convoys that traversed the region during the

⁷²⁵ Presidential transcript: Meeting of April 13th 1999 International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia “Prlić et al. (IT-04-74)” Annex III: Presidential Transcript Evidence November 3rd 2008, p.618 <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf> Accessed November 30th 2018

⁷²⁶ Interview with Ronald Neitzke by Charles Stuart Kennedy” December 1st 2006, in “Yugoslavia Country Reader” The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p. 174 http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Neitzke-Ronald-J.toc_.pdf: Accessed May 20 2018

war”.⁷²⁷ While all of this may have been true, and legally none of it may have constituted a “covert action” under US law, it seems implausible that Redman would not have suspected that weapons were involved. It is highly likely that thousands of other convoys which traversed the region during the war did carry weapons, many of them Iranian. Otherwise, why would the CIA headquarters have been sufficiently concerned to instruct the Zagreb Station Chief to pay especially close attention to anything which could be construed as US officials’ involvement in arms shipments?⁷²⁸ Similar non-denials and ambiguous “clarifications” suffice to discredit other reports from Neitzke and the Station Chief. When, prior to a visit by Secretary of Defense Perry to Zagreb in summer 1994, the Station Chief “received a telephone call from the Department of Defense inquiring about the number of arms shipments the Bosnians were receiving and the frequency of those deliveries”, he concluded that the Department of Defense was in the dark. The Democratic report’s response was accurately to note that conjecture is not fact, and then suggest that “even if the Department of Defense was unaware of the policy response, it was not the responsibility of the responsibility of the Station Chief to make an issue of something that the Department of Defense had not chosen to raise on its own”.⁷²⁹ There was no mention of how the Department of Defense could raise an issue about something of which it was unaware. On September 7th 1994, the Station Chief reported that Neitzke “told him that Holbrooke is ‘driving a plan to arm the Bosnian Muslims’, and that \$50 million has been set aside for that purpose”. According to the minority staff, this sum merely referred to funding allocated in the event of the lifting of the embargo, and further signifies Neitzke’s tendency to spread, and the Station Chief to report, “gossip”. While Woolsey was apparently satisfied with the response he received from Holbrooke in person, the Director had other sources. On July 4th 1994, Galbraith apparently asked the CIA for an opinion on whether \$250 million would be enough to arm the

⁷²⁷Final report of the Select Subcommittee to Investigate the United States Role in Iranian Arms Transfers to Croatia and Bosnia (“the Iranian Green Light Subcommittee”), with minority views : report prepared for the Committee on International Relations, U.S. House of Representatives pp.462-466

<https://www.Congress.gov/CongressionalCongressional-report/105th-Congress/house-report/804/1 pp.378-79>

Accessed May 14th 2019

⁷²⁸ ibid

⁷²⁹ Ibid., pp.452-453.

Bosnians, a request that was passed on to Washington. Holbrooke himself would also inquire of the CIA, in early October, whether such a program would be legal.⁷³⁰

Two questions arise from this entire affair. The first is whether the US directly supplied weapons to Croatia and Bosnia in a manner which was contrary to American law; i.e., using taxpayers' money or with full foreknowledge that embargo violations were being endorsed. The second is whether weapons reached Bosnia through Croatia with American connivance and, if so, how many. The answer is that they did, but how many is far harder to establish. In 1995, there was almost unanimous support across American policy and the political spectra for the Bosnians receiving arms, and the major divisions were simply over the methods for achieving this and the desired degree of US involvement. Hence, the CIA's concern was not how many weapons the Croats were receiving, but whether US officials played a role. By 1996, with Dayton having ended the war in Bosnia, and the Krajina ancient history, the Congress investigators' priorities were even more parochial. Neither the Republican majority nor the Democratic minority on the investigating committee showed much interest in the scale of support or its impact on the ground in Croatia. During an election year, the Republicans focused on uncovering evidence of direct cooperation between Clinton Administration officials and Iran and, failing that, of criminal activity. By contrast, the Democratic minority focused their ire not on Galbraith for his actions, nor the Administration officials for leaving the Ambassador exposed, but rather on Neitzke and the CIA Station Chief, along with Miroslav Tudjman, for their role in exposing the operation. Bizarrely, the Democratic minority report alleges a conspiracy involving the sharing of gossip between Neitzke, the local CIA station chief, and the leader of the Croatian Intelligence Service, Miroslav Tudjman, "an ultra-nationalist who had strong reasons to oppose any arms for the Bosnians in order to maximize Croatian territorial gains in Bosnia".⁷³¹ The precise target of this conspiracy was unclear, given that Miroslav Tudjman was also the Croatian President's son who had requested approval Galbraith's approval for the Iranian Arms transfers in the first place. Neitzke and the Station Chief were condemned for spreading "rank hearsay that amounts to little more than gossip and rumor

⁷³⁰ Ibid., pp.523-531.

⁷³¹ Ibid. p. 116

mongering with respect to the tales told by the DCM about the Special Envoy. This reporting of such gossip and rumor about U.S. officials is not intelligence gathering and, when it contains an accusation of illegal activity, is absolutely wrong”.⁷³² Needless to say, this conclusion was at odds with Woolsey’s, who maintained that “my station chief was exactly right” in reporting such “gossip”.⁷³³ As for Neitzke, after the Iranian agents’ activities forced a partial American evacuation from Zagreb in 1995, he would denounce Galbraith and the Administration as follows:

“How low had we sunk as an Embassy and as a government if we were afraid to take eminently sensible measures to defend our own people because that might offend an anti-American, terrorist-backing Tehran regime whose arms flow made it possible for the Clinton Administration to stand aside watching genocidal slaughter?”⁷³⁴

How important were the above incidents in preparing the way for Operation *Storm* and ultimately the Dayton settlement? Without a full inventory of what was transported, it is impossible to know but it is unlikely that the Iranian weapons played a decisive role for the Croats in the sort of combined operations they undertook in autumn 1995, which were heavily reliant on the coordination of arms, air support, and artillery, none of which are mentioned in reference to the shipments. Zagreb had other sources of heavy weaponry in the former Eastern bloc states’ armouries, such as the Czech Republic and Ukraine. The MPRI contract was probably far more important in providing the Croatian officer corps with the means to utilise the weapons they had acquired, and would have acquired regardless. What was far more significant what signal Galbraith and the other officials’ actions represented. If we reject the hypothesis that the “No Instructions” incident was a one-off, and that the Iran was Croatia’s only source of arms, the whole affair takes on a new light. Like an iceberg, where only 10% or

⁷³² Ibid. p. 116

⁷³³ Woolsey, R. James, Oral History; Director of Central Intelligence, Interviewed January 13th 2000 , Presidential Oral Histories, Miller Center, University of Virginia, <https://millercenter.org/the-presidency/presidential-oral-histories/r-james-woolsey-oral-history-director-central>: Accessed May 10th 2019

⁷³⁴ Interview with Ronald Neitzke by Charles Stuart Kennedy” December 1st 2006, in “Yugoslavia Country Reader” The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p. 189 [http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Neitzke-Ronald-J.toc .pdf](http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Neitzke-Ronald-J.toc.pdf): Accessed September 1 2019

so is visible above water, the entire affair of the Iranian Pipeline offers merely a glimpse of a more general policy, significant only because, through fortuitous (or unfortunate in Galbraith's case) circumstances, it happened to become public knowledge. That iceberg was an American policy of strengthening the military power of not just the Bosnians but also the Croats to exert pressure on the Serbs without the need for American troops. Whether anything came of Holbrooke or Galbraith's specific proposals, that happened to be reported to the CIA, is irrelevant. We know that they were regularly floating such ideas so, doubtless, the vast majority would have remained hypothetical. It is possible, though unlikely, that the convoy for which Charles Redman intervened to allow into Bosnia was not, in fact, carrying any weapons, but the Bosnians and Croats felt confident about appealing to American diplomats to intercede regarding convoys in the expectation that there would be no requests for evidence concerning their contents.

Richard Holbrooke, Peter Galbraith, Wesley Clark and Charles Redman doubtlessly wished for weapons to reach both the Bosnians and Croats. They explored a multitude of ways to achieve that end. Some failed, but even this was due, not to policy or moral concerns, but legalistic ones. The Iran Affair reveals that, for many officials, the American policy was no longer in question, the only debate now being which technical means should be used to accomplish it. Moreover, the largely effective efforts to ignore Woolsey, who would be gone by the end of 1994, and Neitzke, showed that what opposition remained could now be bypassed. This was to have enormous implications for the following year.

After the Washington Agreement

The episode over Iranian arms demonstrated both how far American policy had exceeded the limits which had confined it from 1989 to 1993, and also how those limits continued to constrain it into 1995. The US finally had a policy which was in accord with the resources available: to do everything possible to strengthen the Bosnian Muslim and Croatian forces, offer diplomatic cover for the actions of both provided they cooperated, and ensure that neither reached a separate peace with the Serbs. By early 1994, it was unanimously agreed that the Serbs were the aggressors, that, in Tony Lake's words "successful negotiations proceed from balance of power realities", and that, in order to achieve better terms, that balance had to be changed.⁷³⁵ Nonetheless, the those objectives' precise nature remained as elusive as when Colin Powell had posed the question during the debates over Vance-Owen and "lift and strike". Did the US wish to pressure the Krajina Serbs into making a settlement through the threat of Croatian military action, or desire that action itself? Was the goal to force the Bosnian Serbs to make concessions for a compromise peace or to enable their defeat and prosecute their leaders for war crimes? American officials were not in agreement themselves, as would become evident when Peter Galbraith launched his own initiative for a Croatian-Serb agreement. These divisions would allow the Croatians, who did have clear objectives of which they never lost sight, to manipulate American policy. If in autumn of 1994, no one expected 1995 to be an *annus horribilis* for the Serbs, fewer still saw it as one in which Tudjman would make himself arbiter of the Balkans, and the US would emerge with international credit for finally "ending" the wars of the Yugoslav succession.

⁷³⁵ Senate Hearing 105-424—Hearing on Nomination of Anthony Lake to be Director Central Intelligence (March 11, 12, 13, 1997). p.102 <https://www.intelligence.senate.gov/sites/default/files/hearings/105424.pdf>: Accessed August 23rd 2019

CHAPTER 5: Winning Croatia's War

By autumn 1994, the US and Croatia had become, as Tudjman had predicted to James Baker back in June 1991, allies. It was a peculiarly 'Balkan' alliance, of the sort that the historian within Franjo Tudjman would have appreciated. While Croatia needed things from the US, such as diplomatic support and weaponry, Croatia's value to the US required Zagreb to possess a military capable of taking offensive action, and the diplomatic confidence to use it in pursuit of American objectives. Those objectives, themselves, moreover, were becoming indistinguishable from those of Croatia. American officials like Peter Galbraith might credit American strength with coercing Tudjman to change course in Bosnia but the Croatian leader had also been persuaded by a perception of American weakness. The Clinton Administration remained prisoner to the principles it had adopted towards Yugoslavia at the start of its term in office. To the conviction that the Serbs were the aggressors and that a settlement on Serbian terms was unacceptable morally, had now been added the loss of domestic prestige in front of Congress and the American public if the Administration were perceived as backing down on this principle. Even if they did not admit it, what the Clinton Administration now needed was less specific terms in a peaceful settlement than for this to be preceded by a Serbian military defeat that was sufficiently dramatic to enable the Serbs to be portrayed as "defeated" to the American public. With the use of American combat troops ruled out, such a defeat could only be inflicted by the Muslim or Croatian forces. Even had the American officials referred a primarily Muslim victory over the Serbs within Bosnia itself, the Muslims had less ability to inflict such a defeat than the Croats, and the latter had even less reason to choose Bosnia as their preferred site of victory. The US needed a Serbian defeat, and therefore required a Croatian army capable of inflicting one. Over the course of 1995, the fear that the Croats might not fight at all predominated in American councils over concern that they might fight in the wrong places.

By embracing the Croatian military buildup, along with a policy of Croat-Muslim military cooperation, America abandoned diplomacy in order to gamble on military success. Muslim leaders who had themselves admitted they had little alternative but a compromise settlement at the start of 1994, now had even less reason to negotiate before their military

position improved.⁷³⁶ US and European officials opposed to the formal lifting of the arms embargo had always highlighted the risk that the fear of a shifting balance would give the Serbs an incentive to seek to win the war quickly, potentially leading to them overrunning UN “Safe Areas” especially the isolated eastern enclaves of Srebrenica and Žepa.⁷³⁷ Furthermore, by the time new weapons were ready for use, presumably the Bosnians and Croats would feel they could accomplish more on the battlefield than at the negotiating table. The CIA warned in autumn 1994 that lifting the arms embargo would “likely remove any remaining willingness on the part of the Croatian government to negotiate a compromise settlement [with Krajina Serbs].⁷³⁸

Time was Croatia’s ally not just against the Serbs, but also against their Muslim allies and American sponsors. The longer the Croatian build-up continued, the less Zagreb needed active US support, or feared its withdrawal. In early 1994, the Croats had faced in Bosnia the choice between a military defeat and accepting US-sponsored mediation with the Bosnian Muslims. From late 1994 onwards, they would prove more than able to ignore international pressure to accept similar mediation with the Krajina Serbs, confident in the knowledge that, if delayed even for a few months, such a compromise might become redundant. Even American support was, if not expendable, less necessary. The Croats increasingly needed the US not to intervene actively, (in fact, active intervention might give the US too much influence in defining a settlement) but merely to prevent Belgrade or anyone else from intervening against them. As the Muslim situation in Bosnia deteriorated in spring 1995, it would be the Americans who would increasingly need Croatian intervention to balance out the Serbs’ battlefield successes, a situation which would leave Washington poorly placed to squabble over any intervention’s nature.

⁷³⁶ UNOFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT: HIRC HEARING ON IRANIAN/BOSNIA ARMS MAY 30th 1996 (Witnesses: Ambs. Charles Redman & Peter Galbraith)

<https://fas.org/irp/offdocs/eur50031.htm>: Accessed November 25, 2019

⁷³⁷ 1994-10-17b - BTF Assessment: Bosnia And Croatia: The Next Six Months October 17th 1994

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/5235e80d993294098d517546>: Accessed November 25, 2019

⁷³⁸ Implications of Lifting the UN Arms Embargo against Croatia, Slovenia, and Macedonia, Office of European Analysis, Central Intelligence Agency, November 3rd 1994 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1994-11-03A.pdf>: Accessed September 1st 2019

The altered leverage within the Croat-American relationship shifted power within the US policy community away from the Zagreb Embassy towards Washington itself. Galbraith and Neitzke's very success in winning Washington over to their policy meant that it was no longer *their* policy, but rather *Washington's*. In 1995, what had been *Galbraith's* policy became *Holbrooke's* or *Al Gore's*. Occupied with the wider conflict in Bosnia and its potential impact on both the domestic credibility of an administration that was facing elections in a little over a year's time and also on America's international credibility, Gore and his circle had little time to worry about "internal Croatian matters", which is how they viewed the Knin-Zagreb conflict. Bill Clinton's likely 1996 Republican opponent, Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole of Kansas had been one of the most vocal supporters of military intervention against Serbia since 1989, when he championed the Kosovo Albanians' cause. By autumn 1994, Dole was the only force holding back the Nunn-Mitchell bill unilaterally lifting the arms embargo on the Bosnian Muslims.⁷³⁹ Dole's personal commitment to his version of a just outcome in the region outweighed the political advantages that he would accrue by forcing a unilateral end to the embargo on the Administration, as long as he believed that US policy was leading somewhere.⁷⁴⁰

⁷³⁹ Introduced by Senators Sam Nunn (D-Georgia) and George Mitchell (D-Maine, and Majority leader until January 1995), the bill would unilaterally lift the arms embargo on Bosnia six months after the passage of the bill. The Administration disliked this as it would cause a crisis with the European allies who would withdraw their troops from Bosnia, enrage the Russians, and act as cover for any country wishing to justify a refusal to obey the UN embargos on Iraq or Iran. There was also fear that it would provoke the Bosnian Serbs into destroying the Muslims before any arms could arrive, which would force the US either to intervene militarily on the Muslim side or stand by and watch their destruction. See: Bert, W., *The Reluctant Superpower: United States' Policy in Bosnia, 1991-95* (Springer: New York, 1997) p.216.

⁷⁴⁰ Karčić, Hamza, 'Saving Bosnia on Capitol Hill: the case of Senator Bob Dole', *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, 2015, 13:1.

The Limits of Initiative: Galbraith, Gore and Operation 'Flash'

One reason for the caution of US policy-makers was that, throughout 1994 and 1995, the US intelligence agencies consistently overestimated Krajina Serb military capabilities, and Belgrade's willingness to intervene directly to their aid. In October of 1994, the CIA warned that the "Croats are confident, even overconfident of their military capabilities", and that while the "Bosnian Serbs are on the defensive against the Muslims in Bosnia, thereby less able to assist the Krajina Serbs", the CIA predicted that the "Yugoslav Army [Belgrade's] will intervene if the Krajina Serbs begin to lose significant ground".⁷⁴¹ There was a tendency to over-emphasise the influence of equipment, and underestimate the role played by the men who would have to utilise that equipment. In mid-1994, the SVK had 300 tanks, 295 armoured vehicles, and 360 artillery pieces of 100-plus mm caliber, compared with a December 1994 total for the HV of 320 artillery support 105 to 203 mm pieces, and 393 armoured vehicles, out of which 232 were tanks.⁷⁴² This parity in equipment was belied by the manpower situation whereby a Croatian army whose standing strength was 96,000 faced a SVK which could field 43,000 at full mobilisation, but could muster only 20-25,000 on the eve of Operation 'Flash'.⁷⁴³ While Croatia could remedy its defects through training and arms supplied under the benevolent eye of the US, the Krajina economy's collapse meant that the region was actually losing population.⁷⁴⁴ As part of a deliberate strategy to exhaust the Krajina Serb Army's resources, the Croatian military engaged in a pattern of sabotage, raids, and mobilisations

⁷⁴¹ 1994-10-17b - BTF Assessment: Bosnia And Croatia: The Next Six Months October 19th 1994

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/5235e80d993294098d517546>: Accessed July 1st 2019

⁷⁴² Croatian Ministry of Defense Estimates p.46

http://centardomovinskograta.hr/pdf/izdanja2/1-400_engleski_oluja_final_25_05_10-opt.pdf: Accessed August 28th 2019

⁷⁴³ Ibid., p.47.

⁷⁴⁴ 1995-05-01a *Croatia's Ethnic Serb Controlled Areas: A Geographic Perspective*, CIA Intelligence Report, May 5th 1995 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-05-01A.pdf>: Accessed August 30th 2019

designed to force the Krajina Serb forces to remain on high alert.⁷⁴⁵ Knin exacerbated matters by expanding its limited manpower to operations in Bosnia.⁷⁴⁶

As late as October 1994, the CIA put the likelihood of a Croatian attack on the Krajina at only 20% and predicted that the Croats could not win a military confrontation.⁷⁴⁷ That helps to explain Washington's reaction when, in early November 1994, Sušak expressed concerns to Galbraith that, if Bihać fell, "Knin could focus all of its military efforts on Croatia" and "an influx of up to 200,000 mostly Muslim refugees", before informing the Ambassador that "Zagreb would attack the Krajina Serbs if Bosnian government forces in the Bihać enclave appear close to defeat".⁷⁴⁸ Bordering Croatia, the Bihać region had become the scene of a power struggle between the Bosnian Fifth Corps, loyal to the Izetbegović government, and forces of Fikret Abdić, a Muslim leader who favoured accommodation with the Serbs and had proclaimed an "Autonomous Province of Western Bosnia". Under Adif Dudaković's command, the Bosnian 5th Corps not only ejected Abdić's forces, sending him and his supporters into exile in the Krajina, but also undertook a highly successful offensive against the Bosnian Serbs over the course of July and August 1994.⁷⁴⁹ The Bosnian Serb forces counterattacked in October, not only reversing the Bosnian gains, but also threatening to overrun the entire enclave.⁷⁵⁰

Galbraith claims to have lobbied for support for a Croatian attack only to have been instructed by Holbrooke "to tell him [Tudjman] under no circumstances would we support

⁷⁴⁵ Rear Admiral Davor Damazet –"Loso" "The Military Aspect of the Strategic Determinants for Operations to Liberate the Occupied Areas of the Republic of Croatia" *Hrvatski Vojnik*, October 1996 pp. 6-13. Quoted in Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis, *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995* (Central Intelligence Agency: Washington, D.C., 2002, vol. 1) p.277.

⁷⁴⁶ "Kronologija rata 1989-1998" (Chronology of the War 1989-1998); Hrvatski informativni centar, Zagreb, 1998, 360.

⁷⁴⁷ 1994-10-17b - BTF Assessment: Bosnia And Croatia: The Next Six Months October 17th 1994
<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/5235e80d993294098d517546>: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁷⁴⁸ "Croatia: Army Pushing for Krajina Offensive" DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force, November 17th 1994,
<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1994-11-17.pdf>: Accessed August 28th 2019

⁷⁴⁹ Lischer, Sarah Kenyon (2007) "[Militarized Refugee Populations: Humanitarian Challenges in the Former Yugoslavia](#)". MIT: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁷⁵⁰ Filip Svarm "Spider's Web" Bosnia Report New Series No: 55-56 January-July 2007
http://www.bosnia.org.uk/bosrep/report_format.cfm?articleid=3176&reportid=173: Accessed September 1st 2019

widening the war. We wouldn't support a military campaign to relieve the siege of Bihać".⁷⁵¹ Instead, the US dispatched a *demarche* to Milošević, threatening dire consequences if the Krajina Serbs did not cease their operations.⁷⁵² While Washington was concerned about the prospects of the Yugoslav Army's intervention, a greater hint regarding the motivations behind Galbraith's instructions may lie within Tudjman's response.⁷⁵³ "When informed America opposed Croatian intervention, Tudjman was quick to agree", according to Galbraith, "one of the few times that I'd seen that Šušak and Granić had gotten together and they didn't actually have Tudjman on board, which the Ambassador cited as evidence Tudjman "was not a bloodthirsty character".⁷⁵⁴ US intelligence had a different view, believing that, while some Croatian generals were eager for action, Tudjman himself was opposed to it, preferring to wait until after January 20th 1995, when the UN peacekeeping mission in Croatia was due for renewal.⁷⁵⁵

Galbraith might have been less quick to absolve the Croatian President from having a taste for blood had he been aware of the directive issued on December 5th, 1994 by General Janko Bobetko, the Croatian commander-in-chief, for "Operation *Flash*" which would see the Croatian Army "rescue" Bihać by attacking Western Slavonia.⁷⁵⁶ Tudjman trusted the West to prevent Bihać's fall and grasped that it was Muslim military vulnerability rather than Muslim security which guaranteed American support for Croatia. The day when the Bosnian Muslims were not in danger of defeat without the prospect of Croatian intervention was the day when

⁷⁵¹ Interview with Peter Galbraith" by Charles Stuart Kennedy" March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training p.168 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁷⁵² Demarche to Belgrade: Krajina Serb Involvement in Bosnia, US Department of State, December 29th 1994 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/3-FY2014/F-2007-03885ER1/DOC_OC17798492/C17798492.pdf: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁷⁵³ "Bihać: Implications of the Worst Case Scenerio" DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force November 15th 1994, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1994-11-15.pdf>: Accessed August 28th 2019

⁷⁵⁴ Interview with Peter Galbraith" by Charles Stuart Kennedy" March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training p. 168 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peterdf>: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁷⁵⁵ "Croatia: Army Pushing for Krajina Offensive" DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force, November 17th 1994, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1994-11-17.pdf>: Accessed August 28th 2019

⁷⁵⁶ IT-95-11: Martić *All My Battles*, general Janko Bobetko (English, 41 Pages) p.382 Uploaded by Daniel Berman in PDF form <https://drive.google.com/file/d/13s1exGfyZD5DpjAWFfFGa7x7uDeAr4/view?usp=sharing>: Accessed. August 20th 2019

Washington could afford to exert pressure on Zagreb. In the meantime, Tudjman did not wish to commit his forces fully to a stalemate in Bosnia when they could be reserved for the *fait accompli* in the Serb-controlled areas of Croatia under the cover of fulfilling American requests to assist the Bosnian Muslims against the Serbs.⁷⁵⁷ American officials do not appear to have grasped Tudjman's unwillingness to "save Bihać". He did not want it to fall to the Serbs, but also did not want to end the Serbian threat to the enclave entirely until he had used it as a justification for reconquering Knin. When the Americans clarified, in December 1994, that what Washington was vetoing was not a general attack on the Krajina, but the prospect of sending forces that could be used to attack the Krajina into Bosnia, he was relieved to be able to call the whole thing off. He had received credit for having made the offer in line with the 1994 Washington Agreement without the burden of having to take any action.

Tudjman had other considerations by the end of 1994. Two matters were due to come to a head in January; UNPROFOR renewal and the presentation of an international peace plan for the Krajina. Co-developed by the Ambassadors of Russia, France, the US and the European Community (hence the "Zagreb 4" or "Z-4" name for the process and plan), the Z-4 plan provided the Krajina Serbs with extensive autonomy including their own legislature, courts, schools, and the ability to utilise their own currency (or at least their own version of the Croatian Kuna). Galbraith later joked that the only Croatian institution present would be the "Post Office".⁷⁵⁸ According to Hrvoje Šarinić, Tudjman believed that accepting the plan would mean political suicide for himself and his Party but, calculating that the Serbs were unlikely to agree, declined to reject the terms outright.⁷⁵⁹ While raising reservations that the "the issue was defined as a controversy between two equal sides, while it actually involved an issue regarding a minority in a national state, and even not the entire minority but only a smaller part

⁷⁵⁷ Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis, *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990–1995* (Central Intelligence Agency: Washington, D.C., 2002,) p.272.

⁷⁵⁸ Interview with Peter Galbraith" by Charles Stuart Kennedy" March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training p.157 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁷⁵⁹ Marijan, Davor (2010). *Storm* (PDF). Zagreb, Croatia: Croatian Homeland War Memorial & Documentation Centre http://centardomovinskograta.hr/pdf/izdanja2/1-400_engleski_oluja_final_25_05_10-opt.pdf p.49: Accessed September 1st 2019

of it”, Tudjman agreed to consider the plan on January 30th.⁷⁶⁰ Meanwhile, HDZ supporters began organising a hostile campaign in the Croatian press against the Z-4 plan.⁷⁶¹ Washington initially appeared to be fooled. “The Croats will accept the principles of the plan”, Christopher wrote to senior officials on February 16th, “Tudjman’s problems are with some of the specifics.” The important thing was that “the Croats must not get the idea that they can escape the very real compromises the Z-4 plan demands of them as the price of reuniting their country”.⁷⁶² Sensing an opportunity, opposition politicians, including Stipe Mesić, who had broken with Tudjman’s HDZ the preceding year, embraced the effort.⁷⁶³

By the time the Z-4 plan was presented, Tudjman had already taken steps to render it stillborn. In early January, he made it known to Washington through Galbraith that he had no intention of renewing the mandate of the UN peacekeeping mission in Croatia.⁷⁶⁴ UN Security Council Resolution 743, passed on February 21st 1992, did not authorise Croatia to take this action unilaterally and included text which “reaffirms that the United Nations peace-keeping plan and its implementation is in no way intended to prejudge the terms of a political settlement”.⁷⁶⁵ However, it was superseded by UN Resolution 815, passed on March 30th 1993, clarifying that for the purposes of “resolution 743 (1992) and all subsequent resolutions relating to the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR)”, that “those territories comprising the United Nations Protected Areas (UNPAs), are integral parts of the territory of the Republic of Croatia”.⁷⁶⁶ Overnight, UNPROFOR had ceased to be keeping the peace between two conflicting parties on the international community’s behalf, and instead was charged with performing a

⁷⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁷⁶¹ Ibid.

⁷⁶² “Official Informal” From US Department of State to US Embassy Belgrade/Zagreb February 16th 1995 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/3-FY2014/F-2007-03885ER1/DOC_OC17798531/C17798531.pdf: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁷⁶³ Ahrens, Geert-Hinrich, *Diplomacy on the Edge: Containment of Ethnic Conflict and the Minorities Working Group of the Conferences on Yugoslavia* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press: Washington, D.C., 2007) p.166.

⁷⁶⁴ Interview with Peter Galbraith” by Charles Stuart Kennedy” March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training p.167 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁷⁶⁵ UN Security Council, *Security Council resolution 743 (1992)* [Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia], February 21st 1992, S/RES/743 (1992), available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f1693a.html> [accessed August 12th 2019]

⁷⁶⁶ UN Security Council, *Security Council resolution 815 (1993) [Croatia]*, 30 March 1993, S/RES/815 (1993), available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3b00f15b50.html> [accessed August 12th 2019]

peacekeeping service at the request of a member state (Croatia) entirely within its sovereign territory, a service which could be terminated at will by that member state. When Resolution 815 had been passed in 1993, the Croatians were struggling to retain their limited gains around Maslenica Bridge, and the resolution presented a cheap way for Clinton Administration officials, prominently Madeline Albright, to demonstrate they were doing something about “Serb aggression”. In turn, the Resolution was passed due to the Russia and China’s abstention, a price that at the time may have appeared far cheaper than acquiescing in the lifting of the arms embargo on the warring parties. By 1995, the military situation had changed, and Tudjman was ready to collect interest on the slip of paper that Albright had handed him so casually two years before. As Neitzke later explained: “The main problem that anyone faced trying to broker a deal between Zagreb and Knin in the late 1994-1995 timeframe is that, as I earlier mentioned, the Security Council had already resolved the central issue; the UNPAs belonged to Croatia, period. ...that was unacceptable to Knin”.⁷⁶⁷

When Tudjman first sent his signals regarding UNPROFOR’s future, Peter Galbraith was in Washington to brief American leaders on the Z-4 process. At the January 11th “Deputies” meeting, Zagreb’s strongest advocates played down Tudjman’s actions’ significance and the “Deputies” asked Zagreb to delay any official announcement of the decision.⁷⁶⁸ Holbrooke prompted Galbraith to propose that the UNPROFOR issue be resolved at a private meeting between Tudjman and Vice President Al Gore at the UN Conference in Copenhagen, in exchange for extending the mandate for three months. Galbraith later elucidated that “He [Tudjman] could say that he had done something at the request of the Vice President and the Croatians agreed to extend, well, they agreed to a new UN mandate with a different name...However, they were fundamentally dissatisfied because they had wanted to force the issue with the Krajina Serbs”.⁷⁶⁹ The full significance of Tudjman’s move on the Z-4 process

⁷⁶⁷ Interview with Ronald Neitzke by Charles Stuart Kennedy” December 1st 2006, in “Yugoslavia Country Reader” The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training p. 174 [http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Neitzke-Ronald-J.toc .pdf](http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Neitzke-Ronald-J.toc.pdf): Accessed September 1st 2019

⁷⁶⁸ Summary of Conclusions of Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia and Croatia on January 11th 1995, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-01-11B.pdf>: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁷⁶⁹ Interview with Peter Galbraith” by Charles Stuart Kennedy” March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training p. 171 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed September 1st 2019

appeared to elude US officials for the time being. On January 13th, National Security Adviser Anthony Lake circulated a letter to the President, Vice President and other “Principals warning: “Our Ambassador believes Tudjman has consciously opted for retaking the Krajina by force. The intelligence community, however, believes the chances of success are low – particularly if Milošević’s forces intervene in support of the Krajina Serbs, as they are likely to do”. Nonetheless, Lake opposed applying too much pressure in order not “to drive Tudjman into an unholy alliance with Milošević to carve up Bosnia. Thus we will proceed with ongoing plans to accelerate diplomatic efforts aimed at a settlement that reintegrates the Krajina while providing substantial autonomy for the Serbs”.⁷⁷⁰ On January 18th, “The deputies decided for now to avoid a hard approach, and that carrots would be more productive than sticks”, and that “the US would encourage formally tabling the Z-4 Plan”.⁷⁷¹ A week later they “endorsed the three-pronged approach outlined in the Croatia strategy paper: seek to maintain the essential functions of UNPROFOR in Croatia; launch a negotiating process between Serbs and Croats on a political settlement; and prepare to respond to the worst-case scenario, of renewed hostilities”.⁷⁷²

The Deputies could fool themselves into believing that the Z-4 process was alive because, for the rest of January, Tudjman behaved as if he was fully satisfied. Mate Granić later admitted that establishing a direct line to the White House had been one of the goals of refusing to extend the UNPROFOR mandate.⁷⁷³ Tudjman could now afford to accept the Z-4 in “in principle” on January 30th because he knew that that it was already dead as became clear when the Krajina leaders refused to receive the Z-4 proposals unless Tudjman extended the UNPROFOR mandate.⁷⁷⁴ The process descended into farce when Galbraith several times attempted to hand a copy of the plan to Krajina President Milan Martić who refused to touch

⁷⁷⁰ 1995-01-13 - Memo, Anthony Lake to President Clinton, SUBJ: Update on Bosnia and Croatia, January 13th 1995 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/document/523c39e5993294098d517642>: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁷⁷¹ 1995-01-18 - CIA Post-Meeting MFR on January 11th 1995 Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia Jan 18th 1995 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-01-25.pdf>: Accessed September 1st

⁷⁷² 1995-01-25 - Summary of Conclusions on January 25th 1995 Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia and Croatia <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-01-25.pdf>: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁷⁷³ <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/gotovina/trans/en/091117ED.htm>: pp.221-222

⁷⁷⁴ Ramet, Sabrina P., *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918-2005* (Indiana University Press: Bloomington, IN, 2006) p.458.

the papers, while in Belgrade, the following day, Milošević also refused to see the diplomats or receive the plan.⁷⁷⁵ Martić subsequently convened the Krajina Serb “Parliament” on February 8th, where it formally rejected the plan.⁷⁷⁶ Had Martić been in league with Tudjman, he could not have delivered a greater service to the Croatian President. By tying the plan’s rejection to the Croatian decision not to renew UNPROFOR, Martić also tied the question of whether there would be a new outbreak of fighting in Croatia, something the international community wished to avoid at all costs, to a decision that lay solely in Tudjman’s hands. Only Tudjman could extend the UNPROFOR mandate, and the Krajina Serbs, by their rejection of the Z-4 plan, rendered themselves bystanders to the diplomatic dance that would follow as the international community steadily tried to buy Tudjman’s acquiescence. The Z-4 plan was not even discussed at “Principals” meeting following the Serbian rejection on February 21st and only briefly mentioned at the “Deputies” meeting the following day in the context of the need for a US role in a UNPROFOR withdrawal.⁷⁷⁷ The CIA concluded that the plan was dead on February 23rd, concluding: “Despite fractious personal differences, the Krajina Serb leadership adamantly refuses any form of reintegration, including the limited ‘autonomy’ Zagreb is willing to offer”. As for the Croats, “Guided by a vision of his personal historical role, mounting nationalist/political pressures which he has helped generate, and frustration with the international community, President Tudjman is now prepared to initiate large-scale military action to reintegrate the Krajina into Croatia. We do not have evidence Tudjman is working with a specific time schedule”.⁷⁷⁸

⁷⁷⁵ Ahrens, Geert-Hinrich, *Diplomacy on the Edge: Containment of Ethnic Conflict and the Minorities Working Group of the Conferences on Yugoslavia* (Woodrow Wilson Center Press: Washington, D.C., 2007) p.166.

⁷⁷⁶ Marijan, Davor (2010). Storm (PDF). Zagreb, Croatia: Croatian Homeland War Memorial & Documentation Centre pp.221-222 http://centardomovinskograta.hr/pdf/izdanja2/1-400_engleski_oluja_final_25_05_10-opt.pdf: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁷⁷⁷ 1995-02-21 - Summary of Conclusions on February 21st 1995 Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia And Croatia <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-02-21.pdf>; 1995-02-22 - Summary of Conclusions on February 22nd 1995 Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia and Croatia <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-02-22.pdf>: Accessed August 18th 2019

⁷⁷⁸ 1995-02-23 - BTF Assessment: The Balkans The Next Three Months February 23rd 1995 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-02-23.pdf>: Accessed August 18th 2019

The sense of crisis abetted Al Gore and his circle's efforts to portray themselves as heroes riding to the rescue of peace when they achieved Tudjman's agreement in Copenhagen to extend the UN presence under a new title, UNCRO. Announced at a joint press conference with the Croatian President and American Vice President, UNCRO would receive a new mandate to patrol Croatia's international borders rather than the lines of actual control dividing the Krajina Serb and Croatian positions.⁷⁷⁹ Having described the initial Croatian refusal to extend the UN presence as "the most dangerous situation Europe has seen since 1945", Holbrooke would congratulate himself in front of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in April, on "avoiding a rockslide" in Croatia and preventing a "third Balkan war".⁷⁸⁰ Galbraith was now "free to go ahead with the Z-4 negotiations to reconcile substantial Serb autonomy in the Krajina with the establishment of Croatian *sovereignty over all of its territory*".⁷⁸¹ Gore's actual discussions in Copenhagen which led to the agreement were less of a victory for peace than a stay of execution and rendered futile any further efforts that Galbraith might undertake to promote the Z-4 process. In Copenhagen, Gore promised support for the "reasonable" reintegration of the Krajina, recognising that the present situation was "untenable", evidently without Galbraith's knowledge, as Sušak remarked later that month. He recalled that "Galbraith came to see me but he doesn't know anything about this".⁷⁸² By pledging support for a resolution of the Serb-controlled regions of Croatia's status on Zagreb's terms at an opportune moment, Gore *de facto* removed any reason for Tudjman to agree to the Z-4 terms.⁷⁸³

⁷⁷⁹ Denmark - Tudjman & Gore On Special Border Force March 12 1993, AP Archive, Uploaded July 21st 1995, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1d6tVEUq9Ao>: Accessed August 30th 2019

⁷⁸⁰ Art Pine "U.S. Reports Progress in Effort to Keep Croatia From Ousting U.N. : Balkans: American officials fear a pullout of peacekeepers would widen war. Cease-fire violations increase urgency." *Los Angeles Times* March 10th 1995 http://articles.latimes.com/1995-03-10/news/mn-41185_1_cease-fire-violations: Accessed August 18th 2019

⁷⁸¹ United States. Congress. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe. (1995) *The United Nations, NATO, and the former Yugoslavia: hearing before the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, One Hundred Fourth Congress, first session, April 6, 1995*. Washington: U.S. G.P.O.

<https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/008524265>: Accessed 17 July 2019

⁷⁸² Record from the extraordinary meeting of the Defence council and Security Council of Croatia of April 29th 1995 IT-95-11 Martić ICYT <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Exhibit/Notindexable/IT-9511/ACE55077R0000202072.tif>: Accessed August 18th 2019

⁷⁸³ Holbrooke would remind Tudjman of the scale of this concession and how much Gore had to fight for it in August: "There were those who wanted Gore to tell you to pull out, we said again "continue"...by helping us and the Federation we will then help you with the situation in Slavonia".

Long before Holbrooke spoke to the Senate about Gore's success in Copenhagen, it was evident the Gore-Tudjman agreement had solved very little. While it had agreed on the existence of a new force and mission, the question of the logistics of such a mission had been ignored, nor did it secure in advance the agreement of either the UN, which would have to execute that mission, or the Krajina and Bosnian Serbs on whose border the mission would have to be carried out. Only five days after the Gore-Tudjman press conference in Copenhagen, the "Principals" "noted the "continuing difficulties-reported by Ambassador Albright with the Croatians on defining a realistic understanding of the mission of 'controlling' the international borders".⁷⁸⁴ The State Department concurred: "We must try to meet minimum Croatian expectations that Zagreb gets something out of all the recent fuss besides a name change", observing that "the UN redeployment out of the UNPAs and onto their periphery, i.e. the separation zone and the international border, is important. What the border force actually does is less important, provided it at least puts more soldiers at checkpoints than UNPROFOR did".⁷⁸⁵ The Croatians, however, had a different view, leading the BTF to warn in April that "senior policymakers do not appear as concerned as they should be about developments in Croatia", as "UN negotiators have given up efforts to negotiate details of the new UNCRO force with Croatian and Krajina Serb authorities".⁷⁸⁶ In a region renowned for a culture of haggling, Tudjman had managed the ultimate feat. He had sold the US an agreement to renew the UN peacekeeping mandate on conditions which required American policy-makers to abandon any serious efforts to pressure Croatia into accepting the Z-4 plan. Yet Tudjman had not in fact agreed to extend the existing UN mandate at all but rather accepted a different one with Gore. That new mandate, requiring the UN forces to patrol, not the border between the Serb- and Croatian-controlled territory within Croatia, but instead the international Bosnia-Croatian

Record of Franjo Tudman's conversation with American representatives Holbrook on 18 August 1995. IT-02-54:Milošević <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Exhibit/NotIndexable/IT-02-54/ACE18419R0000101071.TIF>: Accessed August 18th 2019

⁷⁸³ IT-03-69: Stanistic & Simatovic

⁷⁸⁴ 1995-03-17 - Summary Of Conclusions on March 17th 1995 Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia and Croatia <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-03-17.pdf>: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁷⁸⁵ 1995-04-14b - State Department Discussion Paper, "Croatia" April 14th 1995

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-04-14B.pdf>: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁷⁸⁶ 1995-04-13a - CIA Pre-Meeting Memo on April 14th 1995 Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia and Croatia 13-Apr-95 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-04-13A.pdf>: Accessed September 1st 2019

border between the areas controlled by the Krajina and Bosnian Serbs was one which could never be implemented. The Serbs had no reason to agree, as it removed peacekeepers from the border they valued and moved them to one whose existence they did not recognise. With their refusal, Tudjman now had a justification for claiming that the Serbs were in violation of the new UN agreement at any time through demanding substantive rather than nominal border control. There is also an important symbolic gain Tudjman obtained from agreement on UNCRO: The acronym UNRPOFOR (UN Protection Force) had not prejudiced the Krajina's status, while the new force being called UNCRO (UN Croatia) explicitly placed Krajina within Croatia.

It is hard to believe that Tudjman managed to get the better of Gore to this degree at Copenhagen. Gore himself had a vested interest in substantive rather than nominal control of the borders between the Krajina and Bosnian Serbs. His National Security Adviser, Leon Fuerth, had been placed in charge of coordinating the US efforts to isolate the Bosnian Serbs economically through sanctions. By early 1995, Fuerth was increasingly troubled by the growing international pressure to trade sanctions release on Belgrade for concessions from Milošević. Madeline Albright recalled how, in early 1995, "Fuerth told us that, in his view, sanctions were going to run out in the summer. It was so difficult to maintain them that eventually they weren't going to work anymore. And that it was going to be tough to keep the Allies on board. Their shelf-life was coming to an end".⁷⁸⁷ Fuerth perceived the open border between the Krajina and Bosnian Serbs as a backdoor around sanctions, one which had been worsened by efforts to promote trade between the Croatian-held territories and the Krajina. Such trade had been championed by Peter Galbraith who promoted "confidence building measures" in the form of economic links between the territories controlled by the two sides, including the opening of the Zagreb-Belgrade highway. "I considered this highway to be very important because it was breaking down the barriers between the Croats and the Serbs. After all, these people had lived together. They knew each other", Galbraith explained.⁷⁸⁸ At the February 13th

⁷⁸⁷ Interview with Madeline Albright, Dayton History Project, Central Intelligence Agency, October 28th 1996 p. 23 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1996-10-28.pdf>: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁷⁸⁸ Interview with Peter Galbraith" by Charles Stuart Kennedy" March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training p. 171 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf> Accessed September 1st 2019

Principals meeting, almost a month before the Gore-Tudjman UNCRO deal, Fuerth demanded “that we secure Tudjman's agreement to terminate economic relations with the Krajina Serbs, since this could undermine the effects of Milošević's cut-off of support to the Bosnian Serbs”.⁷⁸⁹ The implication is clear. A month before meeting Tudjman, Gore’s national security adviser had demanded that the US should pressure Croatia to step up the enforcement of its international border with Bosnia. If the terms of the UNCRO agreement were Tudjman’s and designed to be unacceptable to the Krajina Serbs they were not forced onto Gore by Tudjman. If Tudjman had not already desired terms that would make acceptance by the Krajina Serbs impossible, Gore insisted on them.

Gore and Fuerth were aware that there was little chance of the Krajina Serbs accepting that sort of enforcement. Indeed, Martić rejected it on March 13th.⁷⁹⁰ That did not stop them from pushing ideas for a border enforcement that could not be imposed peacefully.⁷⁹¹ On April 27th, the Principals heard “Leon Fuerth's idea to close the back-door on sanctions-traffic through the Krajina-by deploying Treasury Customs officials to Croatia as Sanctions Assistance Monitors”.⁷⁹² In early 1995, Gore and Fuerth would gain nothing from improved relations between Knin and Zagreb. On the contrary, a successful rapprochement within Croatia would, at worst, free up Serb resources for use in Bosnia and, at best, undermine the Bosnian Serbs’ economic isolation. As the confidence-building measures were based on economic integration, as was Galbraith’s Z-4 strategy for peaceful political integration, that meant more goods flowing to the Krajina Serbs, which in turn flowed to the Bosnian Serbs, thereby undermining the effectiveness of the policy of sanctions that Fuerth was charged with enforcing. In the political climate of Washington foreign policy-making, this created a commonality of interest with Tudjman and made him a particularly appealing partner. American national security officials

⁷⁸⁹ 1995-02-13b - Summary of Conclusions on February 13th 1995 Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia and Croatia <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-02-13B.pdf>: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁷⁹⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis, *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995* (Central Intelligence Agency: Washington, D.C., 2002, vol. 1) p.295.

⁷⁹¹ 1995-04-25 - Office of the Vice President Discussion Papers on Sanctions Enforcement Issues April 25th 1995 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-04-25.pdf>: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁷⁹² 1995-04-27b - CIA Pre-Meeting Memo on April 28th 1995 Principals Committee Meeting On Bosnia and Croatia April 27th 1995 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-04-27B.pdf>: Accessed September 1st 2019

outside the State Department are rarely diplomats and, except for a brief period in the 1970s when he had served in Zagreb, Fuerth had functioned as a political fixer, the Vice President's voice on the National Security Council. Gore and Fuerth were used to "getting things done". Like all politicians they were not opposed to bargaining and horse-trading to get their way. US politics is particularly prone to this, a tendency which was particularly evident under a Clinton Administration with a National Security Adviser as "weak" as Anthony Lake.⁷⁹³ What they expected was that, when they reached an agreement after the horse-trading was over, that it would be implemented and that whatever "problem" that existed would be solved. The experience in the Balkans was that, whatever agreements Milošević signed, the "problem", namely the Bosnian Serbs' behavior and the conflict in Bosnia, was never solved, and Fuerth, who oversaw the US-side of the international efforts to trade sanctions relief for Belgrade's help with various issues, must have been particularly aggrieved by this unreliability. When faced with another problem, that of the supply of the Bosnian Serbs through the backdoor of the "Krajina", the choices were to rely on the UN, Milošević, or the Contact Group, all of whom had failed in the past to solve problems, or on Tudjman who had demonstrated a commitment to following through with action. Tudjman's own self-interests gave him an incentive to solve this particular "problem". There is little doubt that, when given the choice of approaching the issue through the Z-4 process or Tudjman, Gore and Fuerth gambled on Tudjman. In Copenhagen, they had explained the problem they wanted solving. It is unlikely that they specified military action as the solution. This was unnecessary. As the author himself was informed during an interview, the job of a staffer at the NSC is to inform superiors that problems have been resolved, not to bring them to their attention. Gore and Fuerth had made it clear to Tudjman

⁷⁹³ The weakness or strength of a figure in a Presidential Administration is often demonstrated by their ability to have people fired who defy them. In 1993, Lake's decision to block Holbrooke may have had a personal motive (it is alleged in a 2019 biography that Holbrooke had slept with Lake's wife) but it was also a demonstration of power. By 1995, Lake not only had the power to fire Gore, but also could not touch Holbrooke, who worked at State, or Fuerth. Furthermore, despite chairing the National Security Council, the strong implication of the sources quoted both here and in Chapter 3 is that he could not exclude Fuerth from its meetings despite Fuerth not being a "principal" nor could he keep Holbrooke out. Even on his own turf, regarding control of attendance at the meetings he ran, he was powerless; Packer, *George Our Man: Richard Holbrooke and the End of the American Century* (Knopf: New York, 2019).

that, when they met in the future, they expected the “problem” of the Zagreb-Belgrade highway to have been “resolved”.

If the above speculation is correct, Tudjman more than vindicated Gore and Fuerth’s confidence in his ability to deliver on his promises. By May 1st, the highway along with all of UN Sector North would be in Croatian hands following the Croatian army’s Operation ‘Flash’. The Croatian attack had been triggered by a series of events that probably served more as pretexts than actual causes. On April 28th, a Croatian refugee stabbed a Serb at a Croatian petrol station. In retaliation, a group of Serbs, including the victim’s brother, opened fire on drivers using the highway, killing three civilians, while Krajina Serb soldiers took five more prisoners and closed the road.⁷⁹⁴ The prisoners were released the following morning and the Krajina Serb army promised to reopen the road on May 1st, only for this decision to be cancelled late on April 30th after several rockets had been fired on Croatia. Hrvoje Šarinić, then head of Tudjman’s Presidential administration, later admitted to the Hague tribunal that Croatia had considered staging an incident but insisted that, in this case, this proved unnecessary as it occurred organically.⁷⁹⁵ Whether true or not, neither the rockets nor the decision to keep the highway closed could have provoked the attack, as Tudjman had already informed his Cabinet the previous day that Croatia would set impossible conditions and, if the Serbs met these, would immediately set new ones.⁷⁹⁶ It also explains why the Croatians were ready to attack at 4:30am on May 1st, only eight and a half hours after the Serb decision to delay reopening the highway. Sušak was dismissive of Galbraith’s efforts to avoid a clash claiming, as usual, that “[Croata] want a peaceful solution, a clear sign that the Croatian leadership had received other indications from the United States regarding its likely reaction to military action.⁷⁹⁷ Gore and Fuerth had not only provided a legal pretext for Tudjman to act in the form of the March 12th agreement on UNCRO, but also actively encouraged the Croatians to do so by requiring the

⁷⁹⁴ Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis, *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995 vol 1* (Central Intelligence Agency: Washington, D.C., 2002) pp.296-297.

⁷⁹⁵ "[ICTY Trial of Slobodan Milošević – Transcript](#)". International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. 22 January 2004. Accessed January 27th 2018

⁷⁹⁶ Record from the extraordinary meeting of the Defence Council and Security Council of Croatia of April 29th 1995 IT-95-11 Martić ICYT <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Exhibit/NotIndexable/IT-9511/ACE55077R0000202072.tif>: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁷⁹⁷ Ibid.

policing of the Bosnian-Croatian border. While it is unclear whether Fuerth pushed Tudjman to attack when he did, as previously attested, Fuerth had no qualms about sharing his impatience to see the highway closed to the Bosnian Serbs with colleagues in Washington. American intelligence expected an attack, predicting on April 28th that “Croatia would soon launch an attack to retake the highway if the Krajina Serbs try to close it”, before concluding “even with a new UN mandate in place, the fundamental interests of Croatia and the Krajina Serbs almost certainly cannot be reconciled through negotiations, making a renewed conflict almost certain”.⁷⁹⁸ The most likely explanation, which reconciles Croatian motives, Šarinić’s testimony, and what we know from American sources, is as follows. The Croatians had long wanted to seize the highway. After March 12th, they knew that Gore and Fuerth wished them to do so and, by April 28th, they had been under American pressure for a month to do so. Tudjman was perfectly willing to stage an incident soon if one were required for justification, but the almost random and unimportant shootings, combined with the highway’s closing, provided sufficient pretext, rendering provocation unnecessary. The subsequent Serbian decision to delay the highway’s re-opening was irrelevant. No course of action by the Serbs would have prevented Tudjman from acting, lest the highway issue, in Croatian Prime Minister Nikola Valentić’s words, should “perpetuate itself”.⁷⁹⁹

The UN Security Council condemned the Croatian operations on May 1st, demanding both sides cease fighting.⁸⁰⁰ By this point, such condemnation was almost a matter of routine. On May 4th, with the Croatian campaign a success, the Security Council relegated itself to urging both sides to exercise restraint and avoid escalation.⁸⁰¹ The Croatian cause was aided inordinately, both in Washington and at the UN, by the Krajina Serbs’ reaction. Unable to respond conventionally to “Operation *Flash*” on the battlefield, the Krajina Serb leaders fired

⁷⁹⁸ 1995-04-28b - BTF Assessment: Croatia Security Situation For Sanctions Monitors April 28th 1995

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-04-28B.pdf>: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁷⁹⁹ Record from the extraordinary meeting of the Defence council and Security Council of Croatia of April 29th 1995 IT-95-11 Martić ICYT <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Exhibit/NotIndexable/IT-95-11/ACE55077R0000202072.tif>: Accessed November 26, 2019

⁸⁰⁰ “[Statement by the President of the Security Council \(S/PRST/1995/23\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PRST/1995/23)”. United Nations Security Council. May 1st 1995. http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PRST/1995/23: Accessed February 3rd 2013

⁸⁰¹ “[Statement by the President of the Security Council \(S/PRST/1995/26\)](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PRST/1995/26)”. United Nations Security Council. May 4th 1995. http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/PRST/1995/26 : Accessed February 3rd 2013.

missiles at downtown Zagreb, damaging several buildings including the American Embassy. Blind to the political implications, the Krajina leaders reveled in the destruction, even though it provided Gore and Fuerth with the basis for portraying Serbian retaliation rather than further Croat advances as the major threat to peace in the region.⁸⁰² It helped Gore and his allies to blunt any American response at the May 4th Deputies meeting by redirecting anger towards the Serbs, who were warned “of the consequences of attacks on U.S. personnel in Zagreb”. At the same meeting, Fuerth pushed through a conclusion “directing that the Croatians be immediately informed of our deep concerns and endorsed a Vice Presidential meeting with President Tudjman in London as a useful forum for registering U.S. concerns about Tudjman's military actions”.⁸⁰³ Some in Washington seemed dissatisfied about leaving the matter entirely to Gore. “The main element of the strategy is to press all parties to halt military operations and exercise restraint”, wrote the BTF’s Director Norman Schindler to new CIA Director John M. Deutch after the May 4th meeting, adding in brackets “(I know what you're thinking!)”.⁸⁰⁴ It showed his awareness of the irony of what followed, which placed the onus for any future escalation not on the Croat actions, but on the Krajina Serb response, and suggested US action against them if they persisted. “The NSC proposes that we consult with NATO and the UN about the possibility of threatening to use NATO airstrikes against Krajina Serb targets in the event of future attacks on Zagreb or bombing missions out of Udbina Airfield”, Schindler observed.⁸⁰⁵ Schindler was evidently not alone, as the conclusions of the May 4th meeting were partially reversed three days later, when the “The Deputies agreed that Croatian President Tudjman was not getting the message that the US Government disapproved of Croatia's actions; they decided that steps should be taken to communicate US concern”.⁸⁰⁶ A State Department *demarche*, which expressed concern about the refugees’ treatment and reminded Croatia of its obligations

⁸⁰² [SVK Main Staff document no. 37-331, regarding the situation in western slavonia. 2 May 1995.](#) IT-04-81:

Perisic <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Exhibit/NotIndexable/IT-04-81/ACE85816R0000345257.TIF>: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁸⁰³ 1995-05-04b - Summary of Conclusions on May 4th 1995 Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia And Croatia <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-05-04B.pdf>: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid. <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-05-04A.pdf>

⁸⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁰⁶ 1995-05-07 - CIA Post-Meeting MFR on 4 MAY 1995 Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia and Croatia May 7th 1995 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-05-07.pdf>: Accessed September 1st 2019

to abide by its international commitments as well as those with the Krajina Serbs, followed. Nonetheless, Tudjman could not have been excessively concerned about the *demarche*. It also stressed the close Croatia-US cooperation, as well as American support for full Croatian sovereignty's restoration within its internationally-recognised borders.⁸⁰⁷ The impact was further limited by the decision to issue a *demarche* to Belgrade simultaneously, warning against any intervention in Sector East.⁸⁰⁸

An examination of the Croatian sources for the Gore-Tudjman meeting reveals why the Vice President may have provoked ire in Washington: "You had just justification for a military operation in Western Slavonia, and I kept defending it in Washington. You will recall that the two of us met in London immediately afterwards, and then we went to the US embassy to meet Gore", Holbrooke reminded Tudjman in August, "Some people wanted Gore to tell you – tell us that you would be withdrawing from Western Slavonia and we said absolutely not. You have to stay there".⁸⁰⁹ "Some people" sounds like a reference to the "Deputies", on whose authority Gore was, in theory, communicating with Tudjman about their "deep concerns", and Holbrooke's statement is all but an admission that Gore ignored their decision, requiring the follow-up *demarche*. The rebuke that Gore suffered was limited, and mostly constituted what must have been a humiliating experience for Fuerth at the May 7th and 9th Deputies meetings. The *demarche*, to Tudjman, could only have been effective had it been followed by concerted action, which was not the case. If anything, the decision to pair it with threats to Belgrade had the reverse effect. The backlash against Gore and Fuerth appears to have been motivated less by ideological opposition to his policy than by bureaucratic resentment at a power-play to seize control of US policy in the region, excluding the State Department, NSC, and the Pentagon. The lesson does not appear to have been lost on Gore. In the lead-up to 'Flash', Gore and his team

⁸⁰⁷ "Demarche to Croatia on Sector West Follow Up" April 11th 1995

https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/3-FY2014/F-2007-03885ER1/DOC_0C17798718/C17798718.pdf: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁸⁰⁸ 1995-05-08 - CIA Pre-Meeting Memo on 9 MAY 1995 Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia and Croatia May 8th 1995 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-05-08.pdf>: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁸⁰⁹ [ICTY Trial of Slobodan Milošević – Transcript](#)". International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. January 22nd 2004.. [Record of Franjo Tudman's conversation with American representatives Holbrook on August 18th 1995](#)) <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Exhibit/NotIndexable/IT-02-54/ACE18419R0000101071.TIF>: Accessed January 22nd 2013

appear to have kept other Washington actors in the dark. Holbrooke “used” Galbraith’s presence at the January 11th Principals meeting to push the Gore-Tudjman summit in Copenhagen, unwittingly causing the Ambassador to ruin the Z-4 plan that he was in Washington to promote. While the evidence is inconclusive, the discussions surrounding the creation of UNCRO imply that Gore and Fuerth led Washington to believe that the mission of patrolling the Bosnian-Croatian border would be purely symbolic, only to spend the following month demanding its enforcement. How else could the State Department conclude as late as April 11th: “What the border force actually does is less important, provided it at least puts more soldiers at checkpoints that UNPROFOR did?”⁸¹⁰ Even Albright was ambushed by the Croatian demands.⁸¹¹ True or not, it then appeared that Gore and Fuerth approved Croatian military action without informing their colleagues, as there is no documentary evidence of any awareness at either the Principals or Deputies meetings of impending Croatian action. There is, however, evidence of Milošević’s awareness. On April 28th, US representative in Belgrade Rudolf Perina received a message, stating: “President Milošević wishes to have the government of the United States send to Belgrade Mr. Leon Fuerth, the Assistant to the Vice President for National Security Affairs and Congressman Bill Richardson of New Mexico to meet with him and discuss in private the current Balkan crisis and possible solutions to it”. Perina described the message as “interesting” and expressed surprised as he “assumed Milošević would shed light on the reasons for the request”, a clear implication that suspicion already existed regarding the Vice President’s actions in the region.⁸¹² Given this suspicion, it is easy to see how Gore and Holbrooke’s decision openly to flout the Deputies’ May 4th instructions by praising rather than reprimanding Tudjman in London caused patience to snap. It seems equally clear that the anger was not directed against Tudjman or even Gore’s policy, but against Gore and his team personally. They would learn their lesson. Whereas the lead-up to ‘Operation *Flash*’ appears to

⁸¹⁰ 1995-04-14b - State Department Discussion Paper, "Croatia" April 14th 1995

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-04-14B.pdf>: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁸¹¹ 1995-03-17 - Summary Of Conclusions on March 17th 1995 Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia and Croatia

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-03-17.pdf>: Accessed September 1st 2019

⁸¹² Message from Milošević, Cable Belgrade to Washington, April 28th 1995,

https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS\3-FY2014\F-2007-03885ER1\DOC_OC17798669\C17798669.pdf: Accessed September 1st 2019

have been conducted in a freelance capacity, the process whereby American officials would later approve 'Operation Storm' would be strictly by the book. Key decisions would be made collectively.

One reason why whatever reprimand Gore received following 'Flash' did not extend to his policy was that, measured on the Clinton's team's terms, the Croatian action was a spectacular success. "The offensive "sent a very clear message that there was a new sheriff in town, and his name was Tudjman. He was going to take some names and clean things up", commented former Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Niles.⁸¹³ Tudjman had gained not just territory from 'Flash' but had also successfully auditioned for the role that the interventionist policy-makers had been seeking in vain. The greatest obstacle to the previous proposal for intervention, from arms, to training, to air support, was the lack of an obvious party to back this. Now Tudjman had demonstrated that, at no cost in terms of Western lives, he could deliver results on the ground. Having faced "virtually no Serbian military resistance and no response either from Mladić and the Bosnian Serbs or from Milošević", Galbraith thought "at that point the Croatians understood that they could take the Krajina".⁸¹⁴ BTF Director Schindler echoed those thoughts on May 8th, predicting "The Sector West operation has made all-out war between Knin and Zagreb a virtual certainty, although not necessarily in the immediate future".⁸¹⁵ So why did Tudjman wait?

The answer was probably the risk of Yugoslav intervention in Sector East. If Tudjman's own *fait accompli* in Krajina was matched by Milošević's own one in Vukovar, the international critics and US policy-makers, who would have been unable to enforce a reversal of Tudjman's seizure of the Krajina, might have accepted Milošević's of Sector East. Such an exchange would have been seen as "resolving" the Croatian-Serbian conflict in a way that was seemingly fair to

⁸¹³ "Interview with Thomas Niles by Charles Stewart Kennedy" The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, June 5th 1998 p. 228

www.adst.org/OH%20OCs/Niles,%20Thomas%20M.T.toc.pdf: Accessed November 26 2019

⁸¹⁴ Interview with Peter Galbraith" by Charles Stuart Kennedy" March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training p. 171 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed June 20 2018

⁸¹⁵ 1995-05-08 - CIA Pre-Meeting Memo on 9 MAY 1995 Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia and Croatia May 8th 1995 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-05-08.pdf>: Accessed November 26 2019

Belgrade and the international community, and would be advocated as late as July 20th by Deputy National Security Adviser Sandy Berger.⁸¹⁶ Tudjman could take the Krajina whenever he chose. Only Washington, or Milošević himself, could deliver Sector East to the Croatian President. It was the Bosnian Serbs' actions, strategically understandable but breathtaking in their blindness to public relations, which paved the way to, not partial, but total victory for Tudjman.

⁸¹⁶ 1995-07-21b - BTF Assessment: Croatia Major Conflict Likely This Autumn July 21st 1995
<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-07-21B.pdf>: Accessed June 10 2018

The Indian Summer of the Serbian Cause

If the Krajina Serbs were facing inescapable doom, this was not apparent for the Serbian cause overall at the time. In Bosnia, where international attention soon returned after the brief distraction of 'Operation *Flash*', it was the Serbs who seemed to be on the move. "I think basically Mladić decided that the summer of '95 was when he had to win the war and the way he wanted to win the war was to clean up the enclaves, particularly those in the east, Srebrenica, Žepa, Goražde", Galbraith reflected years later.⁸¹⁷ If the West, which along with Russia had invested so much effort in the Z-4 plan and extending the UN mandate, had stood aside when the Croats moved to settle a long-running political dispute on the battlefield, then it was only logical to assume that the international community might welcome a similar situation in Bosnia, especially given that it was the Bosnian government which had violated the nationwide cease-fire at the end of March with a general offensive, and the enclaves which had torpedoed various proposed settlements.⁸¹⁸

After the Bosnian Muslim forces abandoned the cease-fire, the Bosnian Serbs responded by seizing heavy weapons which they had agreed to place under UN control around Sarajevo and resumed shelling the city along with Bosnian army positions.⁸¹⁹ In response, the UN approved NATO air strikes on an ammunition dump near the Bosnian Serb capital of Pale on May 25th and 26th.⁸²⁰ In retaliation, Bosnian Serb forces seized 377 UN peacekeepers including

⁸¹⁷ Interview with Peter Galbraith" by Charles Stuart Kennedy" March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training p. 171 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed June 10 2018

⁸¹⁸ Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis, *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995* (Central Intelligence Agency: Washington, D.C., 2002, vol. 1) pp.333-335.

⁸¹⁹ Beale, Michael, *Bombs over Bosnia: The Role of Airpower in Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Air University Press: [Maxwell Air Force Base](#), Montgomery, 1997) p.33.

⁸²⁰ Ripley, Tim, *Conflict in the Balkans, 1991-2000* (Osprey Publishing: London, 2001) p.23.

French personnel, forcing the bombing campaign to stop and a humiliating crisis as Western governments were forced to bargain with Milošević their personnel's release.⁸²¹ By taking French hostages, the Serbs provoked the newly-elected French President Jacques Chirac's wrath, who ordered French forces to seize a bridge from Bosnian Serb forces outside Sarajevo, taking several POWs of their own.⁸²² France now became an advocate for a more forceful role in asserting the "international community"'s authority against the Serbs and a move away from UNPROFOR's focus on defensive peacekeeping.⁸²³ UNPROFOR would be withdrawn from "Safe Areas" where they were potential "hostages" to Serb forces, not to mention obstacles to a more aggressive bombing campaign, and be concentrated in a mobile "Rapid Reaction Force", able to take the offensive against Serb forces as the French had on May 27th.⁸²⁴ That this implied an abandonment of responsibility for areas like Srebrenica was something that would become evident later.⁸²⁵

The French policy threatened to usurp America's leadership role in Europe. Since taking office, the Clinton Administration had based its policy of "lift and strike" on the premise that a combination of arms supplies to the Bosnian Muslim forces and air strikes on Bosnian Serb targets would suffice to coerce the Serbs on the battlefield without the need either for ground troops or a compromise settlement with the Serbs. Within a period of slightly over a month, the Serbs and French had combined to reveal the US policy premises as illusory in nature. Years of arms supplies had not enabled the Muslims to hold their own on the battlefield; on the contrary, a year after the Washington agreement, they were closer to defeat than ever. The taking of hostages had neutralised the air strikes' effectiveness precisely as

⁸²¹ Bucknam, Mark, *Responsibility of Command* (Air University Press: Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, 2003) p.215.

⁸²² "The day the Serbs went a bridge too far" Emma Daly. *The Independent*, June 7th 1995
<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/the-day-the-serbs-went-a-bridge-too-far-1585305.html>: Accessed September 4th 2019

⁸²³ Meeting between President William J. Clinton and French President Jacques Chirac on June 14th 1995, William J. Clinton Presidential Library & Museum <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/collections/show/103>: Accessed May 13th 2019

⁸²⁴ Moisi, Dominique *Chirac of France: A New Leader of the West?* Foreign Affairs November/December 1995 Issue <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/1995-11-01/chirac-france-new-leader-west>: Accessed May 13th 2019

⁸²⁵ Chollet, Derek H. and ProQuest (Firm), *The road to the Dayton accords: a study of American statecraft* (Palgrave Macmillan US: New York, 2005).

Europeans had warned Secretary Christopher would happen during his 1993 trip. Moreover, the French had demonstrated that the use of ground troops could work and, with French proposals for a Rapid Reaction Force, the Clinton Administration faced the prospect of either being dragged into the deployment of American ground troops or having their purported hawkishness revealed as a cowardly façade by Paris.

With Chirac scheduled to visit Washington on June 14th, Clinton officials scrambled, not to build support for the French idea of a Rapid Reaction Force, but to find excuses to oppose it. At a June 13th meeting, the Deputies “expressed concern that the Rapid Reaction Force would not lead to the more robust UNPROFOR originally anticipated, but still would cost some \$300 million”, and “agreed to tell Chirac that the Administration generally views the RRF favourably, but as a democracy it is essential for prior Congressional consultations before making a commitment”.⁸²⁶ The following day, the Principals “preferred to explore ways to delay the US response on the UN resolution, perhaps by telling the French that generally the US approves of the initiative and wants to vote for it, but needs time to get Congress on board”, while at the same time “the group agreed to inform Congress that the Administration is exploring ways to reduce its share of the funding”.⁸²⁷ Chirac called this bluff by taking his case to the American Congress and public. “The quicker we can do this, the quicker the Serbs will realize that they cannot get away with murder”, he told journalists, adding “It is up to the U.S. Congress to give the green light to this initiative.”⁸²⁸ The French President also met with the new Republican leaders of both houses of Congress, House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole. While both had a long reputation for being anti-Serb, in Dole’s case dating back to the fights over Kosovar autonomy in the 1980s, neither could easily sell the prospect of spending more money on the UN to their caucuses, that had been elected on

⁸²⁶ 1995-06-20a - CIA Post-Meeting MFR on June 13th 1995 Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia June 20th 1995 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-06-20A.pdf>: Accessed September 4th 2019

⁸²⁷ 1995-06-20b - CIA Post-Meeting MFR on June 14th 1995 Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia June 20th 1995 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-06-20B.pdf>: Accessed September 4th 2019

⁸²⁸ Michael Dobbs and John Harris “French President Chirac Asks Congress to Fund More Peacekeepers in Bosnia” *The Washington Post*, June 14th 1995 https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1995/06/15/french-president-chirac-asks-Congress-to-fund-more-peacekeepers-in-bosnia/0932b07a-beac-49e0-8cdc610971514d71/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.d5493cbd2f7d: Accessed May 13th 2019

opposition to government spending and international commitments. Unilaterally lifting the arms embargo on the Bosnian Muslims, cost Congress nothing in terms of fiscal appropriations, and left the political and diplomatic costs of enforcement in the hated Clinton Administration's hands. On July 1st, before the full implications of Srebrenica's fall had reached the press, the Senate rejected a unilateral lifting of the arms embargo on a tied 50-50 vote.⁸²⁹

⁸²⁹ [Congressional Record Volume 140, Number 87 (Friday July 1st 1994)], Government Printing Office, <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CREC-1994-07-01/html/CREC-1994-07-01-pt1-PgD.htm>: Accessed. August 18th 2019

The Man and the Hour have met: Operation *Storm* and the Art of Indispensability

At the Deputies meeting on June 19th, Leon Fuerth presented a request from Bosnian Prime Minister Harris Silajdžić for American air support for a new offensive that the Muslims were planning near Sarajevo. Fuerth argued that the recent decline in fighting was probably “because the Bosnians are consolidating their gains to date and prepositioning for the major offensive”, and that the Serbs were on the verge of defeat.⁸³⁰ Unconvinced, the Deputies rejected this request, informing the Muslims that, in the event of failure, they would “be on their own”.⁸³¹ The following day, Fuerth “asked several CIA analysts to come down to his office for a brainStorming session on Bosnia”. According to the minutes, “he feels the fighting in Bosnia could open prospects for a negotiated settlement”. Revealingly, “he asked us[analysts] to keep our meeting with him confidential and not to tell others, probably State, that he was asking these questions”, implying that the Vice President’s office may have been once again freelancing.⁸³² Fuerth may genuinely have believed in Muslim military prospects, or may have been trying to recover the influence lost in ‘Operation *Flash*’s aftermath. His freelancing would have tragic consequences for the Srebrenica’s residents, as it meant that Washington neither discouraged the Bosnian offensives, nor took steps to deter retaliatory Serb moves against the Eastern enclaves. Emboldened by the UNPROFOR “hostage” conflict, and having used the

⁸³⁰ 1995-06-19a - CIA Pre-Meeting Memo on June 19th 1995 Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia June 19th 1995 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-06-19A.pdf>: Accessed September 4th 2019

⁸³¹ 1995-06-20a - CIA Post-Meeting MFR on June 13th 1995 Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia June 20th 1995 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-06-20A.pdf>: Accessed September 4th 2019

⁸³² Memorandum for the Director of Central Intelligence: Meeting of the President's Foreign Policy Team, At the Oval Office, June 21st 1995 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-06-20C.pdf>: Accessed September 4th 2019

momentum to fend off Bosnian Serb President Karadžić's efforts to reign him in, Mladić moved to eliminate the Srebrenica enclave.⁸³³

The enclave's fall need not have proved disastrous, nor been considered a tragedy. The CIA's history of the conflict describes "Nasir Orić's [Muslim commander of Srebrenica] Srebrenica" as "a Hobbesian world of black-marketers and gun-toting quasi military commanders", where "for the vast majority of the populace, life was miserable indeed".⁸³⁴ The CIA concluded that Srebrenica was militarily indefensible, economically unsustainable and, if anything, "a political liability" for the Bosnian government, while for the "UN, the safe areas had become embarrassments that it could neither properly defend nor justifiably abandon".⁸³⁵ For reasons which remain controversial, however, Srebrenica's fall was followed by a widespread massacre of men and boys, the first rumours of which reached Washington in mid-July.⁸³⁶ Whatever military or diplomatic significance the enclave had held was quickly overwhelmed by these rumours' impact on domestic American and international opinion. Srebrenica quickly became a household name, and the words "never again", whether or not they could fairly be applied to the events that took place on the Drina that summer, became a byword for Clinton Administration policy. For its own electoral prospects, the Clinton Administration could not see ever to allow Srebrenica to happen again.⁸³⁷

The harder line reflected the President's frustrations who, in July, informed Lake's staff "We should bust our ass to get a settlement within the next few months...We've got to exhaust every alternative, roll every die, take risks...We must commit to a unified Bosnia. And if we can't get that at the bargaining table, we have to help the Bosnians on the battlefield".⁸³⁸ In response to the French initiatives, National Security Adviser Anthony Lake had already proposed a

⁸³³ Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis, *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995* (Central Intelligence Agency: Washington, D.C., 2002, vol. 1) pp.316-340 Chapters 80-85.

⁸³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 317.

⁸³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.318.

⁸³⁶ 1995-07-18a - BTF Assessment: The Bosnian Army in Srebrenica What Happened, July 18th 1995

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-07-18A.pdf>: Accessed August 31 2019

⁸³⁷ Edward Herman (Editor) *The Srebrenica Massacre: Evidence, Context, Politics*, 2011, IL

http://resistir.info/livros/srebrenica_massacre_rev_3.pdf: Accessed August 31st 2019

⁸³⁸ Chollet, Derek, *The Road to the Dayton Accords: A Study of American Statecraft* (Springer: New York, 2007) p.40.

general review of US policy in Bosnia, which would culminate on July 20th with the “Endgame Strategy”.⁸³⁹ Despite the mythology that has grown up around it, the new strategy was heavy on wishful thinking but light on practical ideas.⁸⁴⁰ The NSC’s July 25th discussion paper on the plan merely listed American objectives, called for greater assertiveness and coordination with the allies, and increased “pressure” on the Bosnian Serbs and Muslims for a settlement.⁸⁴¹

By July 1995, there were only two places from which “pressure” could come: either directly from the US in the form of participation in the sort of Rapid Reaction Force proposed by France, or from Croatia. With the Administration still determined to avoid direct involvement, Croatia was the only option. As early as May, Washington’s concerns in Croatia had shifted from support for any sort of peace process with Knin to fears of the Croats cutting their own deal with the Serbs at Muslim expense. After cabling Washington about a proposed meeting between Tudjman and Milošević on May 21st, Galbraith was instructed to inform Tudjman that while “the US commitment to Croatian reintegration remains as strong as ever...support for the Bosnian Federation and respect for the territorial integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina are the centerpiece of US policy in the Balkans”.⁸⁴² While there was a chance of Muslim military success, American policy-makers did not want a pretext being created for Belgrade to intervene in Bosnia, which they feared an attack on Knin might entail. On June 14th, the “Principals” agreed that a strong message should be sent to Zagreb and the Croatian Ambassador to the UN urging the ‘Croats to exercise restraint in their ongoing offensive operations near Knin lest they provoke another major clash with the Krajina Serbs’.⁸⁴³ Schindler’s briefing to Deutch included a warning about the possibility of the war expanding to Croatia: “Undoubtedly you have noticed that some of the Principals and Deputies continue to focus on either the war in

⁸³⁹ 1995-07-20a - NSC Discussion Paper, "Bosnian Endgame Strategy" July 20th 1995

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-07-20A.pdf>: Accessed September 4th 2019

⁸⁴⁰ Chollet, Derek, *The Road to the Dayton Accords: A Study of American Statecraft* (Springer: New York, 2007).

⁸⁴¹ 1995-07-25a - NSC Discussion Paper, "Schematic of Endgame Strategy" July 25th 1995

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-07-25A.pdf>: Accessed September 4th 2019

⁸⁴² “Concerns over possible Milošević-Tudjman Summit” US Embassy Zagreb to Washington May 21st 1995

https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/3-FY2014/F-2007-03885ER1/DOC_OC17798760/C17798760.pdf

⁸⁴³ 1995-06-06 - Summary of Conclusions on June 6th 1995 Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia and Croatia

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-06-06.pdf>: Accessed September 4th 2019: Accessed September 4th 2019

Bosnia or in Croatia without considering the linkages between the two”.⁸⁴⁴ This reference was probably to the majority at the June 14th meeting, who seemed merely grateful that they had not been forced to confront a Knin-Zagreb conflict when dealing with a series of “crises” in Bosnia. The problem, as Schindler noted, was that this was a mistake, and one which was not shared by all. Gore and Fuerth had already turned once to Zagreb to provide a “military” solution to a political impasse in Bosnia (the enforcement of sanctions on the Bosnian Serbs). Once Fuerth’s bid to use the Bosnian Muslims to provide military muscle in June had failed, it was only logical that he, and the circle around the Vice President, would turn to Tudjman once more.

The Croatians also understood the linkage with the conflict in Bosnia, at least insofar as how it played out in Washington. As the prospect of having to take politically difficult choices mounted for the Clinton Administration through pressure from Congress to raise the arms embargo unilaterally and from France for the Rapid Reaction Force, the Administration was bound to become more desperate to reach a settlement. Even without knowledge of the development of the “Endgame” strategy, it was obvious that the only two ways for the Clinton Administration to reach such a settlement would be militarily or through diplomatic concessions. Fears in Zagreb began to rise that Croatia might be “sold out”, and that the US might agree to lift sanctions on Belgrade in exchange for a cease-fire in Bosnia without requiring a settlement of the Krajina. In June, Foreign Minister Granić wrote to President Clinton expressing concern over rumours that the US might agree to sanctions reduction on Belgrade without either Yugoslav recognition of Croatia within its borders, or a general settlement, and expressing worry over the Krajina and Bosnian Serbs’ moves towards the creation of a “United Serb Republic”.⁸⁴⁵ On June 8th, Strobe Talbot informed the Croats that the US would insist on Croatia’s recognition within its borders as a precondition for sanctions relief and would oppose any move towards unity between the Krajina Serbs and their Bosnian

⁸⁴⁴ 1995-06-20c - CIA Pre-Meeting Memo on June 21st 1995 President’s Foreign Policy Team Meeting June 20th 1995 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-06-20C.pdf>: Accessed September 4th 2019

⁸⁴⁵ “Reply to Foreign Minister Granić” Strobe Talbot to US Embassy Zagreb June 8th 1995 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/3-FY2014/F-2007-03885ER1/DOC_OC17798857/C17798857.pdf: Accessed September 4th 2019

compatriot. Granić also received a letter from Secretary of State Christopher, the contents of which remain classified.⁸⁴⁶

Whatever reassurance Secretary Christopher's letter contained, the Croats began working on their own "Endgame strategy", in this case to resolve their outstanding differences with Knin before any general settlement were imposed by the international community.⁸⁴⁷ General Janko Bobetko issued orders on June 26th to Croatian commanders including Ante Gotovina for an "Operation Oluja" or "*Storm*", which they were to be prepared to undertake no later than July 15th.⁸⁴⁸ Ostensibly, the pretext was Bihać, which was once more under threat and, years later, Mate Granić would maintain that Zagreb was fearful of another Srebrenica. This appears implausible. June 26th was well before any information about Srebrenica could have influenced the decision, nor did Tudjman think the Serbs would take Bihać itself, remarking at Bobetko's retirement ceremony on July 17th that the Serbs were primarily interested in the Eastern enclaves. What concerned the Croats was the strategic implications. The Croats believed that the Serbs' goal was to neutralize the 5th Muslim corps in Bihać, thereby improving the Krajina's ability to face a Croatian attack. If that presented a risk, they also felt that Bihać's fall presented an opportunity to launch that attack on the Krajina, not on their own initiative, but at the Americans' request. Hence their goal became somehow to use the threat to Bihać to generate a US request to intervene without any preconditions regarding the nature of such intervention.⁸⁴⁹

Despite Bobetko having issued orders for "*Storm*" on June 26th, and Tudjman's remarks on July 17th, it appears that, as late as July 20th the American officials were unaware of Croatia's intended attack on Knin within the next fortnight. There is no mention at all of the prospect of

⁸⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁷ Interview with Mate Granić by *Dani* (Sarajevo) June 24th 2005, translated in Bosnian Report, New Series No: 45-46 May-August 2005 http://www.bosnia.org.uk/bosrep/report_format.cfm?articleid=3003&reportid=168: Accessed September 4th 2019

⁸⁴⁸ HV General Staff order addressed to General Gotovina signed by Janko Bobetko, dated June 26th 1995. <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Exhibit/NotIndexable/IT-06-90/ACE80403R0000319169.pdf>: Accessed August 20th 2019

⁸⁴⁹ "Presidential Transcript Transcript of a Meeting dated 17/07/95 with President Franjo TUDJMAN and senior Military officials, IT-06-90: Gotovina et al. <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Exhibit/NotIndexable/IT-06-90/ACE80236R0000318879.TIF>: Accessed November 26 2019

fighting in the Krajina, or potential Croatian action in the instructions that Assistant Secretary of State Peter Tarnoff drafted for Richard Holbrooke for the upcoming London Conference on July 19th.⁸⁵⁰ On July 20th, the CIA concluded “Croatian President Tudjman believes there is almost no chance of restarting serious economic and political negotiations with Knin”, but did not expect the Croats to attack before the autumn to take advantage of the harvest season.⁸⁵¹ Simultaneously, Washington must have been aware of Croatia’s military preparations. It is conceivable that, while Washington was aware that the Croats were preparing for an anti-Knin offensive, its actual date was unknown as late as July 20th, perhaps because Tudjman himself had not yet decided upon a final timeline. His instructions had been for the Croatian Army to prepare for an attack on July 15th, but the actual attack came 18 days later. It is plausible that, with a different course of events over the following ten days, Tudjman might have delayed ‘*Storm*’ by weeks or even months, nor was it clear that all in Washington favoured action. Deputy National Security Adviser Sandy Berger circulated a memo on July 20th to the Principals in which he advocated that the US “broker a Belgrade-Zagreb deal whereby Milošević would abandon the Krajina (Sectors North and South) to Tudjman in return for a piece of Sector East and assurances regarding Bosnian Serb confederation with the FRY following a settlement”, while “strengthening UNCRO and providing increased economic assistance to Croatia to discourage Tudjman from launching a full-scale war in Krajina in the near term”.⁸⁵² Berger’s memo was ominous for both the Krajina Serbs and Tudjman, albeit in different ways. For the Krajina Serbs, it indicated that Washington had abandoned any hope for a future beyond reintegration on Tudjman’s terms, and now sought to trade them. Tudjman, however, cannot have welcomed any indications that America’s preferred reintegration method was a peaceful exchange that would cost Croatia Sector East. If the “peaceful” option included the loss of Sector East, then a military option was far more attractive. The Croats had already shown concern in June over US initiatives in Belgrade, and demanded reassurance that

⁸⁵⁰ “Your Participation in the London Ministerial on Bosnia July 21 1995 – Scope Paper” Tarnoff to Holbrooke, July 19th 1995 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/OctNov2014\F-2007-05000ER2-3\DOC_0C17553638\C17553638.pdf: Accessed August 28th 2019

⁸⁵¹ 1995-07-21b - BTF Assessment: Croatia Major Conflict Likely This Autumn July 21st <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-07-21B.pdf>: Accessed September 4th 2019

⁸⁵² “Subject: Bosnia Strategy” Sandy Berger, July 20 1995, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-07-20A.pdf>: Accessed August 30th 2019

Croatia's international borders were not up for discussion.⁸⁵³ If Tudjman was encouraged to consider military action by his support in certain American quarters, other US officials' efforts to reach an agreement with Milošević were an equally compelling reason to preempt any "trade" through unilateral action, even if Zagreb was unaware of how explicit Berger had been.

On July 21st, Galbraith was summoned to Brioni for a meeting with President Tudjman, Defense Minister Sušak, and Turkish President Suleiman Demirel. Arguing that "the BiH 5th army corps estimated it could only last three more weeks under the current assault", Sušak informed Galbraith that "President Tudjman had taken the decision to prevent the fall of the Bihać Safe area through direct military intervention". At the meeting, Tudjman himself joked with Demirel that, like Knin, Bihać had once been a Croatian "capital".⁸⁵⁴ On July 22nd, Tudjman was joined in split by Bosnian President Alija Izetbegović, Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdžić and Federation President Krešimir Zubok, where Croatia concluded a formal mutual defence pact with Bosnia-Herzegovina, requiring Croatia to prevent attacks on Bosnian positions from within Croatian borders; i.e., the Krajina.⁸⁵⁵ Galbraith witnessed the agreement's signing along with the German Ambassador, delaying his report to Washington for two days.⁸⁵⁶ On July 24th, Galbraith was received again by Deputy Foreign Minister Miomir Žužulj, who warned him that "Croatia could not tolerate the fall of Bihać", which was "even more important than Knin."⁸⁵⁷ "War appears imminent", Galbraith recorded on July 24th, but "unlike November 1994, we will

⁸⁵³ "Reply to Foreign Minister Granić" Strobe Talbot to US Embassy Zagreb June 8th 1995

https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/3-FY2014/F-2007-03885ER1/DOC_OC17798857/C17798857.pdf:
Accessed June 11 2018

⁸⁵⁴ "Tudjman Decides for Direct Intervention to save Bihać says Sušak" Cable from Galbraith to Washington, July 24th 1995

https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/3-FY2014/F-2007-03885ER1/DOC_OC17798937/C17798937.pdf:
Accessed August 18th 2019

⁸⁵⁵ Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis, *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of the Yugoslav Conflict, 1990-1995* (Central Intelligence Agency: Washington, D.C., 2002, vol. 1) pp.363-364.

⁸⁵⁶ "Tudjman Decides for Direct Intervention to save Bihać says Sušak" Cable from Galbraith to Washington, July 24th 1995

https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/3-FY2014/F-2007-03885ER1/DOC_OC17798937/C17798937.pdf:
Accessed August 18th 2019

"Croat-Bosnian Agreement: Reluctant Allies". *Transitions Online*. July 31st 1995. Accessed August 21st 2019

⁸⁵⁷ "Croatia Welcomes US Demarche" Galbraith Cable to Washington, July 25th 1995

https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/August2014/F-2009-08525/DOC_OC17591047/C17591047.pdf:
Accessed August 21st 2019

not tell the Croats not to do it. Holbrooke bought my arguments and advanced them with the White House.”⁸⁵⁸

July 24th was a significant day in Washington also. Denouncing opposition to the lifting of the arms embargo as an “elaborate exercise in buying time”, Senator Majority Leader Dole rejected pleas for delay from the White House to announce plans to bring legislation to the floor the following week, unilaterally ending American compliance with the arms embargo on Bosnia.⁸⁵⁹ Discussing the Croatian request on July 25th:

“Deputies noted that the Croatian government had notified Ambassador Galbraith of its intention to launch an attack into the Bihać sector during the early morning of July 25. They agreed that, given the deteriorating military situation in Bihać and the inability immediately to apply the London agreement to Bihać, it would be inappropriate to attempt to dissuade the Croats from their plans”.⁸⁶⁰

The Americans felt the need to add what appears to have been a last ditch effort to dictate the Croatian intervention’s scope, determining “that the Croats should be warned against taking this opportunity to launch an attack against Knin, with the accompanying risk of a multifront campaign and possibly drawing Serbian Government forces into the conflict”.⁸⁶¹ According to Tudjman’s *confidant*, Hrvoje Šarinić, American officials dropped their objections to military action when assured that the Croats were confident of success.⁸⁶² Instead of urging the Croats to desist, Christopher ordered US chief of mission in Belgrade Rudolf Perina to

⁸⁵⁸ “Entry July 24” Extracts from the Diary of US Ambassador to Croatia Peter Galbraith July 1995-September 1995, National Defense University, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB535-Srebrenica-genocide-on-road-to-Dayton-accords/Documents/DOCUMENT%2014.pdf>: Accessed April 30th 2019

⁸⁵⁹ Congressional Record – Senate, July 24th 1995, <https://www.Congress.gov/crc/1995/07/24/CREC-1995-07-24-pt1-PgS10537.pdf>: Accessed August 18th 2019

⁸⁶⁰ Tudjman Decides for Direct Intervention to save Bihać says Sušak” Cable from Galbraith to Washington, July 24th 1995 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/3-FY2014/F-2007-03885ER1/DOC_OC17798937/C17798937.pdf: Accessed August 18th 2019

⁸⁶⁰ Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Russian and European Analysis, *Balkan Battlegrounds: A Military History of*

⁸⁶¹ 1995-07-24 - Summary of Conclusions on July 24th 1995 Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia

<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-07-24.pdf>: Accessed June 5th 2019

⁸⁶² Testimony of Hrvoje Šarinić, Milošević Trial, January 24th 1994, ICYT

http://www.icty.org/x/file/About/OTP/Milošević%20Feature/High%20level%20witnesses/Milošević_Šarinić_fulltestimony2_en.doc: Accessed June 5th 2019

inform Milošević that “In light of the Bosnian government request for Croatian government assistance to halt attacks against Bihać from Croatian territory, we do not dispute Zagreb’s right to intervene militarily to protect the enclave”.⁸⁶³ This clearly indicated that, if a “wider war” broke out following a Croatian offensive and Serbia intervened, Washington would hold the Serbs rather than the Croats responsible.

The last week of July 1995 saw the departure of Neitzke and US Military Attaché Lt. Col. Richard Herrick, both of whom left Zagreb on July 22nd 1995.⁸⁶⁴ While the former’s departure had been scheduled nearly a year in advance, the latter was a regular guest at General Gotovina’s headquarters and sufficiently familiar with the Croatian command structure to act as an expert witness at General Gotovina’s trial for Operation *Storm*.⁸⁶⁵ By this point, the evidence of America’s knowledge of the Croatian military preparations is overwhelming. Contrary to the MPRI mission’s conditions, “in the five days prior to the offensive, local press reported that Vuono and his men had at least ten meetings with Croat officers involved in the operation”, and it is hard to imagine that the former US Army Chief of Staff failed to keep Washington updated.⁸⁶⁶ Herrick, for one, treated Vuono almost as a replacement in his final reports. On July 28th, he informed the Pentagon that “Croatian analysts were surprised at the lack of depth of Serb defenses”, during operations around Bosanko Grahovo and Glamoč in Bosnia. In his final cable, Herrick praised the MPRI’s work but confessed to warning the Croatians “not to expect miracles”, a strange comment had Zagreb’s actions not appeared to need one.⁸⁶⁷

⁸⁶³ “Urging Serb Restraint in Belgrade and ICFY Caution in Serbia” Cable Christopher to US Embassy Belgrade July 29th 1995 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/August2014/F-2009-08525/DOC_OC17591054/C17591054.pdf: Accessed November 26 2019

⁸⁶⁴ Interview with Ronald Neitzke by Charles Stuart Kennedy” December 1st 2006, in “Yugoslavia Country Reader” The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Oral History Project p. 193 http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Neitzke-Ronald-J.toc_.pdf :Accessed June 11 2018

⁸⁶⁵ Transcript: Trial of Ante Gotovina et al, ICYF Testimony of Richard Herrick <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/gotovina/trans/en/090709ED.htm> Accessed August 27th 2019

⁸⁶⁶ The Military Consulting Firm: MPRI.” *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry, Updated Edition*, by P. W. Singer, 1st ed., (Cornell University Press, Ithaca; London, 2008), pp.119-135. www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt7v6vh.11

⁸⁶⁷ Transcript: Trial of Ante Gotovina et al, ICYF Testimony of Richard Herrick <http://www.icty.org/x/cases/gotovina/trans/en/090709ED.htm>: Accessed August 27th 2019

The Croats had no desire for miracles at the end of July 1995. On the contrary, what they feared most was a diplomatic miracle which could deny them the pretext for 'Operation Storm'. On July 30th, an agreement was reached between UN Representative Yasushi Akashi, Bernard Janvier of UNPROFOR, and the Knin leadership to withdraw the latter's forces from Bihać in exchange for a cease-fire in the enclave.⁸⁶⁸ In response to the July 30th agreement, Tudjman declared "that the Croatian Serb proposal was not a satisfactory basis for negotiations", demanding "serious negotiations about the return of Krajina; opening the Split-Knin-Zagreb railway, and opening an oil pipeline from the Adriatic Sea that runs through Serbian-held territory".⁸⁶⁹ In the unlikely event that Knin was inclined to accept these conditions, Tudjman also ruled out negotiations with Milan Martić due to his indictment by the ICYT.⁸⁷⁰

Tudjman had cause for alarm. The agreement "saved" Bihać by removing any strategic value the area had for Croatia, and denied Zagreb a pretext for action against the Krajina. The cease-fire removed the Muslim 5th corps as a military factor, freeing up Serb forces to concentrate elsewhere and, with no threat to Bihać, there would be less urgency in Sarajevo and Washington regarding Croatian action. From a Croatian perspective, Bihać's fall followed by a massacre on Srebrenica's model would have been preferable, providing as it would political cover for 'Storm'. A cease-fire in Bihać which required the Bosnian 5th Corps to cease offensive operations against the Serbs was potentially worse than the enclave's fall.

The question for Tudjman was whether Croatia could, rather than should, reject the July 30th agreement and proceed with 'Storm'. Would the US still stand by Zagreb, or withdraw from the agreement as an excuse for delay? Already, Galbraith was showing signs of cold feet. Galbraith recorded in his diary on July 27th that Holbrooke "assessed my view as a reluctant

⁸⁶⁸ "Six Points From July 30th Negotiations in Knin" US Embassy Belgrade, July 30th 1995
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/August2014/F-2009-08525/DOC_0C17591061/C17591061.pdf:
Accessed August 27 2019

⁸⁶⁹ Raymond Bonner "[Croats Confident As Battle Looms Over Serbian Area](https://www.nytimes.com/1995/07/31/world/croats-confident-as-battle-looms-over-serbian-area.html)". *The New York Times* July 31 1995
<https://www.nytimes.com/1995/07/31/world/croats-confident-as-battle-looms-over-serbian-area.html>: Accessed
November 24 2019

⁸⁷⁰ "President Tudjman responds to Akashi on the Six Points from Knin Negotiations" US Embassy Zagreb, August
1st 1991. https://drive.google.com/open?id=1gdLwus5GuwDDtR_68hmd9h6rvac6WGrE: Accessed August 27th
2019

belief that Croatian entry into the war is better than a continuation of the *status quo*". His championing, however, seemed to envision Croat 'entry into war' in the form of intervention in Bosnia, illustrated by the subsequent line that "if the UN won't save Bihać, then it is better for the Croats to save it".⁸⁷¹ When it became clear that Knin was the target, the Ambassador recorded meeting Tudjman on July 29th "to press our point that Croatia should withhold military action", which "represented a light change on our earlier position that any Croatian military action should be limited".⁸⁷² Tudjman and his inner circle did not need the US to tell them to attack the Krajina nor to help plan such an attack. Rather, they required indications that such moves would be viewed favourably by at least some key American figures, and that the US would not take any punitive action if Croatia launched an attack.

The following day, July 31st, Miomir Žužulj met with Richard Holbrooke, Chris Hill, and Frasure in Washington, and received the indication Tudjman needed, along with a promise that the three would back Croatia in US policy circles.⁸⁷³ Equally importantly for Tudjman, they all but disavowed Galbraith. During the meeting, Žužulj was informed that the "request for restraint [came] largely due to request from Galbraith".⁸⁷⁴ By clarifying that the requests for restraint were inserted at Galbraith's instigation, Tudjman was all but instructed to ignore any requests for restraint by America's Ambassador to Croatia. "We publicly said that we were concerned", Holbrooke reminded Tudjman three weeks later, adding "However, privately, you knew what we wanted."⁸⁷⁵

⁸⁷¹ "Entry July 27" Extracts from the Diary of US Ambassador to Croatia Peter Galbraith July 1995-September 1995, National Defense University, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB535-Srebrenica-genocide-on-road-to-Dayton-accords/Documents/DOCUMENT%2014.pdf>: Accessed April 30th 2019

⁸⁷² Ibid., "Entry July 29"

⁸⁷³ Meeting with Holbrooke, Frasure, Chris Hill in Washington, dated 31 July 1995. Exhibit D01489.E 08/06/2009 IT-06-90:Gotovina et al.

<http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Exhibit/NotIndexable/IT-06-90/ACE83539R0000323918.TIF>: Accessed November 26 2019

⁸⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁷⁵ [Record of Franjo Tudman's conversation with American representatives Holbrook on 18 August 1995](#) IT-02-54:Milošević - January 22nd 2004 - page 31373, line 8 http://www.icty.org/x/cases/slobodan_Milošević/trans/en/040122ED.htm: Accessed August 18th 2019

That evening, Tadjman and his generals, meeting at Tito's old retreat at Brioni, decided to proceed with the attack, after which all pretence was dropped.⁸⁷⁶ A CIA briefing memo for the August 1st Principals meeting observed that "All indications are that the Croatians still plan to launch a major attack against Sectors North and South. While State has been inclined to accept Croatian assurances to Ambassador Galbraith that a strike would be limited to relieving pressure on Bihać, most other agencies accept our view--supported by intelligence--that the attack will be broader". The CIA argued that there was more to fear from a failed, rather than a successful, Croatian attack: "If the Croatians get bogged down, Tadjman may be more inclined to cooperate with Milošević to secure a grand deal for Croatia and Bosnia at the expense of the Muslims", whereas "If the Croatians do well, Zagreb might be more inclined to cooperate with the Muslims in an effort to weaken the Serbs and eventually regain Sector East".⁸⁷⁷ Madeline Albright echoed these views in an August 3rd Memo, arguing that, without substantial military defeats, the Bosnian Serbs were unlikely ever to negotiate on the basis of the Contact Group map, perhaps forgetting that Knin lay within Croatia.⁸⁷⁸

Galbraith was aware that a Croatian attack was imminent with implicit American support, but ignorant of exactly how explicit that support had become. On August 1st, he passed Akashi a note for the Krajina Prime Minister Milan Babić, requesting a meeting: "I said, 'For Christ's sake, Yasushi, there's going to be a war in a couple of days, we've got to do something'", he recalled.⁸⁷⁹ Akashi's meeting with Krajina Serb President Milan Martić proved frustratingly unproductive. Martić subjected Akashi "to the expected histrionics throughout the meeting", while, more worryingly, making demands of the Croats lest he (Martić) "escalate the

⁸⁷⁶ Minutes from the meeting between Franjo Tadjman and his Supreme Commander, dated July 31st 1995 (English, 34 Pages), <http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Exhibit/NotIndexable/IT-02-54/ACE36633R0000184233.TIF>: Accessed September 4th 2019

⁸⁷⁷ 1995-07-31b - CIA Pre-Meeting Memo on 1 AUG 1995 Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia and Croatia July 31st 1995. A Norman Schindler, BTF <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-07-31B.pdf> : Accessed September 4th 2019

⁸⁷⁸ 1995-08-03b - Memo, Ambassador Albright to National Security Advisor on Why American Must Take the Lead August 3rd 1995 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-08-03B.pdf> Accessed August 28th 2019

⁸⁷⁹ Interview with Peter Galbraith" by Charles Stuart Kennedy" March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training p.181 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed April 30th 2019

fighting”.⁸⁸⁰ Whether a delusion or a bluff disguised as bravado, Martić gave no impression of understanding that the Croatians merely needed the international community’s inaction to occupy Knin by force, whereas he needed their active support to deter a Croatian move. While concessions at this point may have been insufficient, as with the decision to reject the Z-4 plan, Martić again played into Tudjman’s hands, freeing the Croatian President from the onus of having to justify the rejection of a settlement. Babić, however, indicated that, while hostility prevented Galbraith from being welcome in Knin, he (Babić) would be willing to meet with Galbraith in Belgrade.⁸⁸¹ Galbraith’s efforts for a last-minute settlement brought him into conflict with Holbrooke, who told the Ambassador “any mediation effort that I[he] undertook would not be helpful”, and “that I [he] shouldn’t go to Belgrade”. Holbrooke and Fraser, Galbraith recalled, “had agreed that Croatian military action could be a good thing and that if this decision which had been a hard pressed one to get through the deputies and the principals, if it were reversed, that the opportunity might be lost”.⁸⁸² Galbraith was not entirely isolated in his efforts. Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights John Shattuck visited Zagreb on August 2nd, ostensibly to investigate reports of Bosnian Serb atrocities in Srebrenica and Žepa.⁸⁸³ At a joint press conference with Shattuck, Galbraith made a final plea that “negotiated settlement represents a—by far—better alternative to a war, that is going to involve many casualties, much destruction, and, which, even if it were successful in Krajina, would leave the problem of Eastern Slavonia unresolved.”⁸⁸⁴

On August 2nd, Galbraith flew down to Belgrade to meet Babić at a near-empty US embassy. “We had a very good discussion and basically he accepted all of Tudjman’s conditions including to accept that there would be a political settlement on the basis of Krajina being within Croatia”, he recalled later. Babić agreed to make a public announcement supporting the

⁸⁸⁰ Coded cable - Meeting in Knin, dated August 1st 1995 Akashi to Annan, IT-06-90: Gotovina et al, ICYT p.32 <https://www.icj-cij.org/files/case-related/118/18216.pdf>: Accessed May 11th 2019

⁸⁸¹ Interview with Peter Galbraith” by Charles Stuart Kennedy” March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training p. 182 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf> :Accessed November 24, 2019

⁸⁸² Ibid., p.184.

⁸⁸³ “News Conference by Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights John Shattuck” Zagreb Airport, August 1st 1995 <https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/foiadocs/62fd.PDF>: Accessed April 30th 2019

⁸⁸⁴ Ibid.

deal, but for it to work, Galbraith believed that he needed Milošević onboard. This proved a snag. Despite Babić having met with Milošević that morning to inform him what had happened during his meeting with Galbraith, the Serbian President had gone on holiday by that afternoon. According to Galbraith's account, "Milošević wouldn't see Perina and indeed he had refused to see Babić, which I think, was a pretty clear sign, well, was a clear sign that he had written off the Krajina Serbs, possibly further evidence of a deal with Tudjman".⁸⁸⁵ At his trial, however, Milošević alleged that the Americans and French, whose Ambassador was also involved in the effort, made no further effort to follow this up, exclaiming "There's a saying in Serbia, Mr. Galbraith, and it says that a person requests something and prays to God not to get it".⁸⁸⁶ Milošević's explanation here seems too pat by half, and misaligned with the instructions that Perina received from Tarnoff to request a meeting with Milošević "urgently".⁸⁸⁷ Babić managed to reach him that morning and, by his own admission, Milošević was aware of and endorsed the talks. He may not have been in Belgrade on the afternoon of August 3rd 1995, but there was no reason why not and every reason why he should have been had he been invested in the outcome. He had, after all, lobbied personally for the Vance-Owen plan in Pale two years previously. It is hard not to see his absence as deliberate. By the time Milošević finally received Perina, on August 4th, events had overtaken the *demarche* urging the Babić plan's endorsement. Instead, Milošević was warned to keep the Yugoslav Army out of an operation that was already in progress.⁸⁸⁸

Milošević's motives remain shrouded in controversy. By 1995, the Krajina had become a liability. It was evident from the way Croatian protests to the United States had foiled the prospect of sanctions relief for Belgrade that no agreement with the United States was possible

⁸⁸⁵ Interview with Peter Galbraith" by Charles Stuart Kennedy" March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training P. 186 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf> : Accessed November 24, 2019

⁸⁸⁶ Milošević trial transcript - June 26th 2003 - page 23169, line 22
http://www.icty.org/x/cases/slobodan_milosевич/trans/en/030626IT.htm : Accessed August 18th 2019

⁸⁸⁷ "Request for Urgent Demarche Regarding Croatia" Tarnoff to US Charge Belgrade August 3rd 1995
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/3-FY2014/F-2007-03885ER1/DOC_OC17798951/C17798951.pdf:
Accessed April 30th 2019

⁸⁸⁸ "Krajina Conflict: Demarche to Milošević" Tarnoff to US Charge Belgrade August 4th 1995
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/3-FY2014/F-2007-03885ER1/DOC_OC17798953/C17798953.pdf:
Accessed April 30th 2019

without satisfying Zagreb, and the United States was unwilling to push Tudjman to accept even the Z-4 terms drafted in-part by America's own Ambassador. Milošević had either been unable to coerce the Krajina leadership into accepting even these, or unwilling to pay the political price to do so, and absent even greater concessions, the prospects for a negotiated settlement were zero. Without such a settlement between Knin and Zagreb, there could be no peace in Bosnia, a prerequisite to ending sanctions on Belgrade. Furthermore, cooperation between the Bosnian Croats and Serbs against the Muslims would be important in any post-settlement Bosnia. All in all, Milošević needed Tudjman more than he needed Knin. Even if the Babić-Galbraith talks held out the prospect of a settlement it was just that, a prospect. As much as Tudjman, Milošević may well have preferred certainty in August of 1995. That does not mean Milošević did not take steps to keep his options open. Montenegrin President Momir Bulatović recalled that, on August 4th, the Yugoslav High Command "sent a cable to General Mrkšić [commander of the Krajina Serb forces] encouraging him to organize firm resistance for at least two more days. After that Yugoslavia would be able to help him with all possible assistance."⁸⁸⁹ This does not indicate any commitment to "rescuing" the Krajina Serbs. It may instead be a sign of opportunism. If the Croatian offensive dragged on for several days or a week, there would be nothing militarily and very little diplomatically to prevent Milošević from seizing Eastern Slavonia. Tudjman would lack the forces to resist, and the international community would struggle to force a Yugoslav withdrawal from Sector East without requiring a similar withdrawal by Croat forces. As that would be unlikely, the result would either be the Serbian acquisition of Sector East, or the ability to trade it for something else at the peace table, most likely in Bosnia.

Galbraith found little more support in Washington than he had in Belgrade. When he warned Peter Tarnoff "that the war in Croatia would be a terrible tragedy, that it would lead to the departure of 100,000 Serbs", Galbraith only gained permission inform Tudjman that while "Knin's intentions must be measured by actions not words", if "the Krajina Serbs follow up the Babić announcement with actions, we believe that these points when implemented, would

⁸⁸⁹ Momir Bulatović, *Pravila ćutanja: istiniti politički triler sa poznatim završetkom* (Belgrade: Narodna knjiga Alfa, 2004, pp.181-82)

meet all your key concerns”.⁸⁹⁰ In his diary, Gailbraith complained that the *demarche* “seemed to indicate we were only going through the motions” and “could only be understood as a green light”. Galbraith concluded that “the people in the Krajina should not be punished to *this extent* for their bad leaders”.⁸⁹¹

This did not indicate that the negotiations were a farce on Galbraith’s part. The negotiations with Babić were not announced as having broken down, which is what Galbraith would have done had he wished to ensure both a pretext for a Croatian attack and an alibi for American support. Galbraith did everything possible to indicate that they had been successful, not only advising Babić to speak publicly but also informing the press himself “There is no cause for war now”.⁸⁹² The US needed to tell Tudjman this, however, and failed to do so. Galbraith’s actions indicate that he was already aware of the US government’s decision that the Croatians’ failure to launch ‘*Storm*’ was worse than what Galbraith had told them “would be a terrible human tragedy involving thousands of dead, and a 100,000 refugees...produce an ethnically pure Croatia, and undermine the hope for multi ethnicity in the Balkans”.⁸⁹³ If Galbraith did everything possible to shame his superiors and Tudjman out of that choice in the final hours before ‘*Storm*’, he had spent most of the preceding two years making it possible for Tudjman to ignore his pleas.

By the time of Galbraith’s meeting with Babić, other governments had concluded that any efforts to prevent Croatian action were futile. The British Embassy in Zagreb advised London, on August 3rd, that “A Croatian attack on the Krajina now appears imminent. We have done what we can to dissuade the Croatian government from taking such action, including two

⁸⁹⁰ “Message to Tudjman on Babić Meeting” Peter Tarnoff to USUN Mission, US Embassy Belgrade August 3rd 1995 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/3-FY2014/F-2007-03885ER1/DOC_OC17798948/C17798948.pdf: Accessed April 30th 2019

⁸⁹¹ “Entry August 3” Extracts from the Diary of US Ambassador to Croatia Peter Galbraith July 1995-September 1995, National Defense University, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB535-Srebrenica-genocide-on-road-to-Dayton-accords/Documents/DOCUMENT%2014.pdf>: Accessed April 30th 2019

⁸⁹² Raymond Bonner, “Serbs Said to Agree to Pact with Croatia” *The New York Times* August 4th 1995, <https://www.nytimes.com/1995/08/04/world/serbs-said-to-agree-to-pact-with-croatia.html> : Accessed May 12th 2019

⁸⁹³ “Entry August 3” Extracts from the Diary of US Ambassador to Croatia Peter Galbraith July 1995-September 1995, National Defense University, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB535-Srebrenica-genocide-on-road-to-Dayton-accords/Documents/DOCUMENT%2014.pdf>: Accessed April 30th 2019

demarches. We must now consider how to respond to such an attack”.⁸⁹⁴ The Germans did not even go that far. “We are not in a position to prevent the Croats from doing what they consider to be correct and necessary”, German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel told reporters in Bonn.⁸⁹⁵ Such remarks added a sense of inevitable anticlimax when Kinkel’s representative on the spot, German Ambassador Horst Weisel was summoned along with Galbraith by Hrvoje Šarinić at 10.00pm on August 3rd. Šarinić informed the diplomats that “the GOC would initiate police and military action against the Krajina on August 4th”, declaring that Croatia “did not consider Babić to be able to take the decisions that he had announced”, and that “it was his[Šarinić] government’s judgement that the Krajina could not be reintegrated by any other means”.⁸⁹⁶ The Ambassadors were also handed letters from President Tudjman to President Clinton and Chancellor Kohl, outlining the justifications for the Croatian action.⁸⁹⁷ Weisel remarked that “it was sad to see a decision for war at a time when the Krajina Serbs had been forced to concede”, with Galbraith declaring that “many Croats would die for something the Croatian people could have received without fighting”, and warning “that the GOC had likely ensured that it would never recover Sector East”.⁸⁹⁸ “I tried to point out that the Serbs were Croatian people as well, were Croatian citizens as well, but obviously I made no headway”, the American Ambassador recalled.⁸⁹⁹

⁸⁹⁴ *Krajina: Responding to a Croatian Offensive*, Internal minutes British Embassy, August 3rd 1995, <https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/121561/response/311455/attach/4/Part%201%20of%202%20Digest%20Text.tif>: Accessed November 24, 2019

⁸⁹⁵ Raymond Bonner, “Serbs Said to Agree to Pact with Croatia” *The New York Times* August 4th 1995, <https://www.nytimes.com/1995/08/04/world/serbs-said-to-agree-to-pact-with-croatia.html>: Accessed May 12th 2019

⁸⁹⁶ “Croatia informs USG of decision to begin war, provides unconvincing justification” Cable Galbraith to Washington, August 4th 1995, https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/August2014/F-2009-08525/DOC_OC17591065/C17591065.pdf : Accessed November 24, 2019

⁸⁹⁷ “Tudjman Letter to Clinton” Cable Galbraith to Washington August 4th 1995 , https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/August2014/F-2009-08525/DOC_OC17591063/C17591063.pdf: Accessed May 12 2019

⁸⁹⁸ “Croatia informs USG of decision to begin war, provides unconvincing justification” Cable Galbraith to Washington, August 4th 1995 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/August2014/F-2009-08525/DOC_OC17591065/C17591065.pdf: Accessed November 24, 2019

⁸⁹⁹ Interview with Peter Galbraith” by Charles Stuart Kennedy” March 19th 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training p. 187 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf>: Accessed February 20th 2019

The Croatians had no reason to listen to Galbraith's objections, as he no longer spoke for Washington regarding the offensive. President Clinton would state bluntly in his memoirs that "'I was rooting for the Croatians...[I knew] that diplomacy could not succeed until the Serbs sustained some serious losses on the ground".⁹⁰⁰ Secretary Christopher echoed such thoughts in his usual understated way, remarking that "In hindsight, one can see that there were some useful results accomplished by these offensives in the Krajina", and by Secretary of Defense Perry, who felt that, after 'Storm', "it must have been evidently clear to the [Serbs]—with the threat of bombing being real now and with the loss to the Croats on the ground—that they had already passed their high-water mark and were better off by making peace".⁹⁰¹ While British officials were concerned "that events in the Krajina have reduced the prospects for progress in the political process, and made intensified fighting in Bosnia more likely", American officials, both present and retired, celebrated the Croatian success as a step towards peace.⁹⁰² Former Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Niles, who had overseen Yugoslav policy under the Bush Administration saw *Storm*, ironically, as a vindication of the decision not to intervene directly, and implicitly of that to arm Croatia. "General Powell was right: you have to have ground forces. The difference between 1992 and 1995 was that in 1992 the only ground forces available would have been from the United States. In 1995, the Croatians did it", reflected Niles.⁹⁰³ Warren Zimmerman, now a private citizen, observed in the *New York Review of Books* how the situation had changed:

"The lightning Croatian victory in the Krajina region of Croatia has changed the face but not necessarily the essence of the war in the Balkans. By force of arms, as impressive as it was illegal, the Croats have accomplished what years of negotiation could never have achieved for them—they have recovered the gateway to the Dalmatian coast, with its

⁹⁰⁰ Clinton, Bill, *My Life* (Knopf: New York, 2004) p.667.

⁹⁰¹ Christopher interview, October 22nd 1996; Perry interview with BBC, January 16th 1996; in Chollet, Derek, *The Road to the Dayton Accords: A Study of American Statecraft* (Springer: New York, 2007) pp.36-37.

⁹⁰² *Former Yugoslavia: Political Implications of the Krajina Offensive*, Internal Minutes, August 11th 1995, <https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/121561/response/311455/attach/4/Part%201%20of%20%20Digest%20Text.tif>: Accessed November 24 2019

⁹⁰³ "Interview with Thomas Niles by Charles Stewart Kennedy" The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project, June 5th 1998 p. 193 www.adst.org/OH%20TOCs/Niles,%20Thomas%20M.T.toc.pdf: Accessed November 24 2019

lucrative tourist industry, without having to give political autonomy to the Krajina's Serbian population".⁹⁰⁴

The question now was Washington could regain the initiative from Zagreb.

⁹⁰⁴ Zimmermann, Warren, *The Choice in the Balkans* New York Review of Books, September 21st 1995 Issue , <http://www.nybooks.com/gate3.library.lse.ac.uk/articles/1995/09/21/the-choice-in-the-balkans/> : Accessed November 24 2019

From Tudjman's *Storm* to Dayton

The success of Operation *Storm* marked the beginning of America's real "Endgame" strategy in Yugoslavia. In eliminating the Krajina, Operation *Storm* eliminated something more important than a Serb presence in Croatia, as it eliminated an obstacle that would have to be overcome for there to be any settlement in the region. Zagreb would reject any agreement which did not return the Krajina to its control and, without an agreement in Bosnia, Milošević could not escape international sanctions. *Storm* was a brutal method of eliminating the obstacle posed by Knin, but was also a method which was convenient for all parties. It is unclear if Milošević could have secured Knin's agreement to return to Croatian rule under the Z-4 conditions, far less the terms Tudjman was likely to offer realistically, and *Storm* saved the Serbian leader the trouble of trying. Washington, when faced with the choice of prioritising a settlement in Croatia or the Bosnian Serbs' isolation, had chosen the latter when it encouraged Tudjman to undertake Operation *Flash*. Every party except the Knin leadership had accepted that the Krajina would return to Zagreb's rule on Tudjman's terms ultimately. Operation *Storm* merely established that end-state practically overnight.

Most importantly, Operation *Storm* set a precedent for how military force could be used on a wider scale to accomplish what diplomacy had failed to do. Previous efforts at negotiated settlements in the region had generally failed not because the parties (with the exception of the Muslims) disagreed on the proposed agreement's principles, but because it was almost impossible for the parties to sign away at the conference table territory that they physically controlled on the ground. By contrast, cease-fires which guaranteed existing territorial control had often proved far more successful. The model presented by Operation *Storm* thereby provided a precedent whereby military force, in this case Croatian, could be used to establish a territorial settlement initially, after which the diplomats would merely ratify it. The final agreement would require few concessions, as the contested territory would, by and large, already be under the control of the party for whom it was intended and, if not, additional territory would be available for an exchange. By demonstrating that territory could be removed

from Serbian control by force, albeit Croatian force, in Washington's view, this paved the way for Serbian acceptance of a settlement on the lines of Vance-Owen. Gore had spoken with both Tudjman and Izetbegović following *Storm*.⁹⁰⁵ According to the then President of the Croatian Parliament Nedjeljko Mihanović, "Vice-president Gore expressed in most unequivocal fashion his praise and appreciation, what *Storm* meant for the international community and the unsuccessful, impotent UNPROFOR efforts to protect Bihac and its 'pink zones,' thus greatly contributing to the realization of the American peace initiative on the territory of former Yugoslavia".⁹⁰⁶ This settlement, which would be ratified at Dayton, would already exist on the ground by the time the Balkan leaders gathered in Ohio. Dayton would merely enshrine the existing cease-fire and implement systems for its maintenance. The actual agreement would already have been established on the ground by the Croatian army, and this segment of the Thesis will illustrate why, for the purposes of the US-Croatian relationship, Dayton itself was ultimately a post-script. It was the process that led up to it that matters.

The American peace initiative was envisioned as a process, involving diplomacy and force, designed to end with a settlement. The actual shape of that settlement would depend on events. While committed to the principle of the 51%-49% division contained within the Contact Group Plan, American officials were not committed to the "Contact Group Map" or any specific map for that matter. The primary American goal would be to construct and maintain a "process". In practice that meant a situation in which the Bosnian Serbs remained under military pressure, the Croats remained engaged in Bosnia but would not threaten Sector East, and sanctions would remain imposed on Belgrade until a settlement was reached. The "process"-based approach allowed US officials to embark on their policy almost immediately without the need to reach consensus among themselves on all points, far less with the actors themselves. For instance, an agreed position on sanctions was not reached in Washington until September 5th, when the "Principals agreed that we would not provide any further sanctions

⁹⁰⁵ 1995-08-14a - Summary of Conclusions on 14 AUG 1995 Deputies Committee Meetings on Bosnia , <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-08-14A.pdf>: Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹⁰⁶ Nedjeljko Mihanović, PhD "PARADOXES AND ABSURDITIES OF THE HAGUE INDICTMENT" from Hrvoje Hitrec, CROATIAN GENERALS ARE NOT GUILTY, Croatian Cultural Council, Zagreb 2011, p. 16 https://www.hkv.hr/images/stories/Documents/HKV_ZBORNIK_GENERALS_NOT_GUILTY.pdf: Accessed June 11 2019

relief for the FRY in return for interim steps such as mutual recognition”.⁹⁰⁷ By that point, US policy had been active for over a month.

Another element separated this American effort from its predecessors. While American policy towards the Croat-Muslim war, the Federation Agreement, and various embargo-busting arms flows had presumed the commonality of Sarajevo and Zagreb’s military interests, Washington now recognised that, when it came to a political settlement, it was the Muslims who were out on a limb. By contrast, neither the Croats nor Serbs had any interest in a unitary Muslim-dominated Bosnia, and both shared Washington’s desire for a quick settlement. On August 5th 1995, as Croatian forces entered Knin, the US Charge in Belgrade Rudolf Perina was summoned by Yugoslav Foreign Minister Jovanović to receive a *démarche*. Jovanović refrained from threatening to occupy Sector East or demanding a Croatian withdrawal, merely complaining that the attack represented a double standard, and implying that compensation would be the loosening of sanctions on Belgrade.⁹⁰⁸ Describing Operation *Storm* as “shock therapy”, Perina argued, in a cable that he sent to Washington after the meeting, “At this key moment we have an obligation to do whatever we can to show the Serbs the right direction to take, both for their sake’s and everyone else’s”.⁹⁰⁹ Also on August 5th, a “visibly exuberant” Granić informed Galbraith that Croatian forces, now crossing into Bosnia, were “creating conditions for a peace agreement without a single American soldier on the ground”, and that “new realities in Bosnia could mean an end to the war by fall”.⁹¹⁰

The Bosnian Muslims defined peace differently. On August 15th, the Muslim Vice President Ejup Ganić delivered a sermon to the US Ambassador to Austria in which he argued that, of the 1.4 million Serbs who had lived in Bosnia in 1991, 200,000 lived under the Sarajevo

⁹⁰⁷ 1995-09-05a - Summary of Conclusions on 5 SEP 1995 Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia
<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-09-05A.pdf> : Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹⁰⁸ “Démarche from “FRY” Foreign Minister Jovanović on the Krajina Crisis” US Embassy Belgrade August 5th 1995,
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/6-FY2014\F-2007-03885\DOC_0C17799113\C17799113.pdf:
Accessed August 27th 2019

⁹⁰⁹ “Pointing the Serbs in the Right Direction” Perina Belgrade Embassy to Christopher, August 5th 1995,
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/FOIA_Aug2017\F-2007-05000E1\DOC_0C17552052\C17552052.pdf: Accessed August 28th 2019

⁹¹⁰ “Foreign Minister says GOC and GOBH Cooperation will End Bosnian War by Fall” US Embassy Zagreb Cable,
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/August2014\F-2009-08525\DOC_0C17591070\C17591070.pdf:
Accessed August 6th 2019

government's control, while 700,000 had fled, leaving a mere 500,000 under Karadžić's rule, who should not be treated as Bosnia's Serbs' legitimate representative in any negotiations.⁹¹¹ Ganić's insistence that Karadžić be denied recognition as Bosnia's Serbs' representative would have killed any prospect for a near term settlement, and perhaps prolonged the war for years. Washington would have been denied the settlement it now needed, Milošević his promised sanction relief, and any prospect of implementing such a plan would have relied on the Croats using their military for an objective that they opposed -- a unitary Bosnia under Muslim rule. Muslim intransigence was hardly a new feature; what was new was a US decision to prioritise the securing of Belgrade and Zagreb's support for the peace initiative.

On August 9th, as Galbraith was dealing with Operation *Storm's* humanitarian fallout in the Krajina, Anthony Lake set out on a tour of European capitals to explain the new US policy. Unlike Christopher's proposal offered to Europeans during his trip in 1993, which even the ex-Secretary now conceded "was not consistent with global leadership", Lake described his offer as "part invitation, part ultimatum".⁹¹² On the same day, Washington instructed the Belgrade Embassy to deliver a *démarche* to Milošević urging him to show restraint especially with regards to Sector East, and promising that the US would launch a new peace initiative within the ensuing few weeks. A promise was made to send a high-level team to Belgrade to brief Milošević in person.⁹¹³ To sweeten the deal for the Serbs, the US decided to commit to keeping Kosovo off the table at any future conference. "If the discussion turns to Kosovo--there is concern downtown that Belgrade's efforts to resettle Krajina Serb refugees there will heighten ethnic tensions", BTF Chair Schindler wrote to the CIA Director before the August 18th Principals meeting, warning that the perception of "heightened international concern" might lead Albanian activists to create "trouble" in a bid to attract "international attention".⁹¹⁴ Richard

⁹¹¹ "My Fourth Meeting with Dr. Ejup Ganić" US Embassy Vienna Cable, August 15th 1995, https://foia.state.gov/searchapp\DOCUMENTS\FOIA_Aug2017\F-2007-5000E1\DOC_OC17552072\C17552072.pdf: Accessed August 27th 2019

⁹¹² Chollet, Derek, *The Road to the Dayton Accords: A Study of American Statecraft* (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2005, p. 41)

⁹¹³ "Message for Milošević" Tarnoff to Belgrade Embassy, August 9th 1995, https://foia.state.gov/searchapp\DOCUMENTS\3-FY2014\F-2007-03885ER1\DOC_OC17798963\C17798963.pdf: Accessed August 27th 2019

⁹¹⁴ 1995-08-17 - CIA Pre-Meeting Memo on August 18th 995 Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia and Croatia <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-08-17.pdf>: Accessed November 24, 2019

Holbrooke's position "was that one had to resolve Bosnia first, that if the two issues [Kosovo and Bosnia] became intertwined they would create a Gordian knot much more difficult to untangle", recalled US representative in Belgrade Rudolf Perina.⁹¹⁵

As for Croatia, the US was prepared to pretend that the Krajina had never existed. Any perception that the US had played a role in Operation *Storm* could serve to justify Serbian demands for compensation from Washington, and therefore it became imperative to insist that the US had played no part in "Croatia's recent military offensive," which was "not endorsed by any of us", according to talking points issued on August 8th 1995.⁹¹⁶ Washington was determined to keep American officials as far away from the Krajina as possible, even if both sides requested their presence. Galbraith recalls a particularly galling example: "There were about 40,000 people that were trapped around Topusko by the Croatian forces. Topusko being a town in the northern part of the Krajina and Šušak, the Croatian defense minister, asked if I would help arrange a cease fire that would enable these people to, it was military forces and civilians that would enable these people to be evacuated. Washington didn't want any U.S. role in any of this and they didn't want any help, didn't want me to help on arranging the cease fire either".⁹¹⁷ In his diary, Galbraith described the deputies' attitude as "obscene", and expressed his unhappiness to Frasure when the latter called him on the 7th in "something of an apology for my treatment over the past few days".⁹¹⁸ Nonetheless, the Ambassador would be relegated to the status of the often-sullen chaperone to Holbrooke and other senior officials who came to meet with Tudjman. During a meeting between Holbrooke, Frasure, and Tudjman on August 16th, after the Croatian President expressed his view that Bosnia lacked a future and faced inevitable partition, Galbraith passed a note to Frasure stating "here is your fundamental

⁹¹⁵ "Interview with Rudolf Perina by Charles Stuart Kennedy" The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project December 2006 p.72

<http://www.adst.org/OH%20TOCs/Perina,%20Rudolf%20V.toc.pdf>: Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹¹⁶ Chollet, Derek, *The Road to the Dayton Accords: A Study of American Statecraft* (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2005.p.43-44).

⁹¹⁷ Interview with Peter Galbraith" by Charles Stuart Kennedy" 19th March 1999, The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training p. 188 <http://adst.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Galbraith-Peter-W.pdf> : Accessed November 24 2019

⁹¹⁸ Galbraith Diary Entries for August 5th and 7th 1995" National Security Archive, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB535-Srebrenica-genocide-on-road-to-Dayton-accords/Documents/DOCUMENT%2014.pdf>: Accessed August 28th 2019

reshuffle of the deck,” and pressed for human rights abuses to be brought up. Holbrooke, however, promptly instructed the Ambassador “not here, not yet”.⁹¹⁹ Holbrooke, at the same meeting, conceded to Tudjman that the Z-4 plan was now “in the past”. According to the Croatian notes on a meeting on August 18th, Holbrooke reminded Tudjman of the time when “the issue of Knin and of sectors North and South emerged. Peter was preoccupied with that conversation with Babić about the plan Z-4, there was a lot of confusion...You went ahead. From a political and a military point of view, that was a triumph. Refugees are the only problem”.⁹²⁰

While Holbrooke and Frasure took the secret of what they actually believed about whether or not Storm qualified as ethnic cleansing to the grave, the exchanges on the 16th and 18th of August, 1995, provide a hint into the source of their dispute with Carl Bildt on this point.⁹²¹ For Bildt, writing his memoirs, it was a live issue, for which “the Tribunal has so far not considered anyone responsible for the massive and brutal ethnic cleansing of the Krajinas in August 1995.”⁹²² For Holbrooke, however, it was by the 18th of August, 1995, already a dead issue. The Krajina was gone, and no one, not the United States, not Croatia, not even Milošević, had any wish to bring it back. The plight of refugees was “the only problem,” and then a problem not in the sense that something needed to be done to ameliorate their plight because it was bad, but because it might pose a problem for the issues Holbrooke thought mattered in mid-August of 1995.⁹²³

Holbrooke displayed recognition of Croatia’s pivotal position for any prospective Bosnian settlement. The Bosnian Muslims could not continue the war without Zagreb’s support. By providing military support to Sarajevo, Zagreb could enable the Muslims to obstruct

⁹¹⁹ Galbraith Diary Entry for August 16th 1995” National Security Archive, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB535-Srebrenica-genocide-on-road-to-Dayton-accords/Documents/DOCUMENT%2014.pdf>: Accessed August 28th 2019

⁹²⁰ [Record of Franjo Tudman's conversation with American representatives Holbrook on 18th August 1995. \(English, 39 Pages\)](#) IT-02-54:Milošević :Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹²¹ Carl Bildt, *Peace Journey: The Struggle for Peace in Bosnia*, (London: Weidenfeld Orion, 1998. P. 80)

⁹²² [Record of Franjo Tudman's conversation with American representatives Holbrook on 18th August 1995. \(English, 39 Pages\)](#) IT-02-54:Milošević :Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹²³ [Record of Franjo Tudman's conversation with American representatives Holbrook on 18th August 1995. \(English, 39 Pages\)](#) IT-02-54:Milošević :Accessed November 24, 2019

Washington and Belgrade's efforts to reach a settlement. By cutting off that aid, Zagreb could force the Muslims to the table more effectively than Washington by making it impossible for Izetbegović to continue the war. Tudjman was happy to deliver Muslim agreement to a settlement in Bosnia that he desired in any case, but only at a price: first, that no action was taken regarding "*Storm*"'s humanitarian aftermath; second, that Sector East's future would be settled before any peace conference on the basis of its unconditional return to Croatia without the prospect of a referendum which, as we shall see, some members of the US government favored; and, third, that whatever settlement occurred in Bosnia would leave both the Bosnian Muslims and Serbs too weak to pose a threat to the Bosnian Croats.

Sector East resembled the Krajina in many respects. Internationally-recognised as part of Croatia, it was hard to envision a settlement where it did not return to Croatian rule. In late 1995, however, it was under Serbian rule and, unlike the Krajina, it directly bordered Serbia. The Croatian military conquest of the Krajina had saved Belgrade the political cost of acquiescing to its return to Croat control. It would be far harder for Belgrade to justify similar inaction in the case of Sector East where a Serbian military response was clearly logistically possible. Tudjman's solution was to threaten to start a war he probably did not want and was unlikely to win, knowing that it would risk sinking US regional policy, in an effort to show that anything short of Sector East's unconditional return would lead to continued war. This sabre-rattling succeeded in unnerving Washington. Secretary of Defense Perry had offered to "call [Croat] Defmin Sušak (on) August 11th "to warn him of the dangers of military movements at this time, whether in Sector East, inland toward Montenegro from Dubrovnik, or around Banja Luka".⁹²⁴ Three days later, the CIA warned that "The main worry we have right now is that Croatia will miscalculate, go too far, and inadvertently provoke Yugoslav intervention and broaden the war, worsened by uncertainty about the threshold that would cause Yugoslav Army intervention, which could lead to Croatian miscalculation".⁹²⁵ On August 25th, the Croatia Desk Officer at State Chris Hoh wrote to Holbrooke advising him that either he or Chris Hill

⁹²⁴ 1995-08-11 - Summary of Conclusions on 11th August 1995 Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-08-11.pdf>: Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹²⁵ 1995-08-14b - CIA Pre-Meeting Memo on 15th August 1995 Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-08-14B.pdf>: Accessed November 24, 2019

should call Carl Vuono, so that the latter might inform Tudjman that “Croatia has pushed the Serbs close to the limit of what Milošević can tolerate for now without the VJ coming in. The current sabre-rattling, over Sector East may be necessary to preserve Croatia's negotiating position in upcoming talks, but if this explodes accidentally, there will be hell to pay in relations with Washington”.⁹²⁶ In addition to revealing former US General Carl Vuono’s continuing close links with American officials even as he ran MPRI, nominally a private firm, the memo also shows an awareness that Tudjman’s priority remained firmly Sector East, not Bosnia. Vuono was also informed that “the conduct of Operation *Storm* has damaged Croatia's standing in Washington. We were disappointed by the burning, looting, and atrocities confirmed by our people and credible international observers. The fact that the Serbs behave worse does not help. To repair the damage, Croatia must help the War Crimes Tribunal and others bring the perpetrators to justice”.⁹²⁷ US officials were sceptical that Milošević would ultimately attach much value to Sector East, which remained an “economic wasteland” except as a bargaining chip with Tudjman or the US.⁹²⁸ This would not stop Tudjman from using American fears that he might attack Sector East as a bargaining chip against the US. After Peter Galbraith informed Secretary of State Christopher on September 11th that “the GOC attitude and conduct towards the Krajina Serb refugees has been appalling”, Christopher protested the following day to Foreign Minister Granić in New York.⁹²⁹ According to Granić, “President Tudjman’s strong message was that there would be no peace without solving the Eastern Slavonia problem,” and

⁹²⁶ “MPRI Back in Zagreb” Chris Hoh to Richard Holbrooke, 25th August
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/OctNov2014/F-2007-05000ER2-3/DOC_0C17552398/C17552398.pdf: Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹²⁷ “MPRI Back in Zagreb” Chris Hoh to Richard Holbrooke, August 25th 1995
https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/OctNov2014/F-2007-05000ER23/DOC_0C17552398/C17552398.pdf: Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹²⁸ Bosnia and Croatia: Facing Costly Economic Rehabilitation, DCI Interagency Task Force, August 21st 1995,
<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-08-21B.pdf>: Accessed August 30th 2019

⁹²⁹ “A Topic for your meeting with FM Granić: Croatia’s appalling treatment of the Krajina Serbs” Peter Galbraith to Warren Christopher, September 11th 1995 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/August2014/F-2009-08525/DOC_0C17591074/C17591074.pdf: Accessed November 24, 2019

that while Croatia preferred to do so through negotiation, a recourse to force was not off the table”.⁹³⁰

If American officials were forced to haggle with Belgrade and Croatia, they did not even bother to do so when it came to Bosnia where, given the lack of constructive Muslim participation, unilateral decisions were made in American policy circles.⁹³¹ To sustain any settlement, the American policy-makers embraced the concept of “Arm and Train”, a program in which NATO would arm and train Bosnian-Croat federation forces to a level of “parity” with Bosnian Serb forces. America’s was “to ensure that there is a rough balance of power between the Federation and the Bosnian Serbs by the end of the one-year peace implementation period,” and “that the United States should take the lead in organizing the equip-and-train effort so that [it] can exercise control over the types of weapons provided to the Federation and limit the involvement of Iran and other radical states”.⁹³² MPRI, which had worked in Croatia for a year before “*Storm*” would be granted the contract for the Federation forces.⁹³³

Debates about whether the US commitment to any settlement should involve a promise to protect Federation territory from Serb attack and, if so, whether this should involve ground troops or merely air cover divided policy-makers⁹³⁴ The military feared the prospect of defending the Eastern enclaves, Muslim-controlled areas along the Drina River surrounded by Serb territory, should be exchanged. Srebrenica and Žepa’s fall in July 1995 reduced the enclaves issue to Goražde. The Department of Defense, which would have to enforce any agreement, wanted the Bosnians to trade Goražde for concessions elsewhere, while the Department of State argued that, after Srebrenica, the symbolic cost of ceding it would be too

⁹³⁰ “Granić tells Christopher Croatia needs Slavonia settlement, will support US peace initiative” Cable Christopher to Department of State, September 14th 1995 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/August2014/F-2009-08525/DOC_0C17591079/C17591079.pdf: Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹³¹ 1995-08-14b - CIA Pre-Meeting Memo on August 15th 1995 Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia Accessed <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-08-14B.pdf> :Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹³² 1995-10-04 - Summary of Conclusions on October 4th 1995 Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-10-04.pdf> : Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹³³ The Military Consulting Firm: MPRI, *Corporate Warriors: The Rise of the Privatized Military Industry, Updated Edition*, by P. W. Singer, 1st ed. (Cornell University Press, Ithaca; London, 2008, pp.119–135). *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctt7v6vh.11

⁹³⁴ 1995-08-18a - Summary of Conclusions on 18 AUG Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-08-18A.pdf> : Accessed November 24, 2019

high. At an August 22nd meeting, “Secretary Perry stated that Goražde could not be included in Bosnian territory - too expensive and difficult to defend. Holbrooke stated the issue had to be worked jointly with the Bosnians who had publicly stated they would insist on inclusion of Goražde”.⁹³⁵ The DOD felt that “the United States should help the Bosnians consolidate the territory they had, but not support any efforts to recover lost territory”, while Madeline Albright and the National Security Council “supported the view that any initiative should seek to preserve Bosnia along lines broadly consistent with the Contact Group Plan—as a single state with roughly 51–49 percent territorial breakdown in favor of the Muslims. Anything less”, Lake wrote to the President, “would be tantamount to ratifying aggression and would, in any case, be rejected by the Muslims”.⁹³⁶ On September 4th, the Secretary of Defense and Joint Chiefs reiterated their view that defending Goražde “will require a significant augmentation of the peace implementation force, not to mention a significant bolstering of federation forces to defend it once the implementation force leaves” and “they do not believe Goražde is worth this effort”.⁹³⁷

Then, on August 19th 1995, the Armored Personnel Carrier carrying Bob Frasure, Joe Kruzal, and Nelson Drew went over a cliff outside Sarajevo, igniting its ammunition and killing all occupants.⁹³⁸ “In terms of staffing a new Bosnia team, it will be very difficult in the near-term to replace the area expertise and creativity of Bob Frasure, Joe Kruzal, and Nelson Drew--all of whom were regular BTF contacts”, the CIA directors briefing notes for the August 22nd Principals meeting noted, speculating that “Holbrooke may decide to carry on talks in the

⁹³⁵ 1995-08-23 - CIA Post-Brief MFR on 22 AUG 1995 Principles Committee Meeting on Bosnia <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-08-23.pdf> : Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹³⁶ Ibid.

⁹³⁷ 1995-09-04 - CIA Pre-Meeting Memo on 5 SEP 1995 Principles Committee Meeting on Bosnia [cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-09-04.pdf](https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-09-04.pdf) : Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹³⁸ Frasure was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs with particular responsibility for Bosnia, and had handled direct US talks with Milošević. Kruzal, and was Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for European and NATO affairs, while Drew was an Air Force Colonel and National Security Council aide. O’Conner, Mike, “3 US Diplomats Killed in Bosnia” *The New York Times* August 20th 1995 <https://www.nytimes.com/1995/08/20/world/3-us-diplomats-killed-in-bosnia.html>: Accessed May 5th 2019

region over the next few weeks largely by himself, accompanied by Chris Hill, who has served as Bob Frasure's key action officer on Bosnia."⁹³⁹

Holbrooke's consolidation meant that the Balkan leaders would only deal with a single American voice, which would prove vital when it came to the settlement's trickiest aspect from Washington's perspective. That was ensuring that the war stopped at a moment that Washington felt was acceptable to itself and the Muslims, not merely when it was most convenient for Zagreb and/or Belgrade. It was a vital part of the American plan for the Croats and Muslims to capture territory from the Serbs which could then be included in the Muslim-Croat Federation in a final settlement or traded for other territory that remained in Serbian hands. This would avoid the trap into which previous peace plans had fallen, in which the Serbs had been asked to make vast concessions of the territory they held. Yet, the US wanted a settlement, not Muslim victory, which would alienate the Serbs and Croats. Excessive success might tempt the Muslims into continuing the war to press for a total victory. Once NATO airstrikes against the Serbs began as part of Operation Deliberate Force at the end of August, the CIA feared the impression that the US was providing "air support" for the warring parties, warning that "if the first NATO airstrikes in Western Bosnia take place today as scheduled at the same time as a Croatian offensive, this will be interpreted by the Serbs as a coordinated attack, and the Croats may interpret it as a green light".⁹⁴⁰

More concerning, from Washington's perspective, was the risk that the Muslims might interpret Operation Deliberate Force as a green light to reject any settlement in favor of pursuing total military victory. The CIA briefing for the September 8th Deputies meeting warned that "the Bosnians have now received what they have tried to get for the last two years, Western airstrikes on their behalf. There are already signs that Sarajevo has hardened its positions over confederal issues and in no way is receptive to yielding Goražde . Without Goražde, it removes the key attraction for the Bosnian Serbs to accept the current package".⁹⁴¹

⁹³⁹ 1995-08-21a - CIA Pre-Meeting Memo on 22 AUG 1995 Principals and Deputies Committee Meeting On Bosnia and Croatia <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-08-21A.pdf> : Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹⁴⁰ Chollet, Derek, *The Road to the Dayton Accords: A Study of American Statecraft* (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2005.p.94).

⁹⁴¹ 1995-09-07 - CIA Pre-Meeting Memo on 8 SEP 1995 Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia 07-Sep-95 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-09-07.pdf> : Accessed November 24, 2019

At the CIA's urging, the Deputies, alarmed by the "Croatian offensive inland from the Dalmatian coast toward Jajce," agreed "that démarches should be made to Croatian leaders to urge restraint, especially as there were signs that the Serbs perceived the Croatian offensive as occurring in concert with the ongoing NATO strikes".⁹⁴² In a memorandum for the President, Lake reported "We (along with the French and British) have sought to convince them [Serbs] to comply by pressing Izetbegović for clear assurances that Bosnian Government forces will not take advantage of the air campaign to gain ground around Sarajevo", continuing, "with Mladić still obdurate, we may want to approach the Bosnian government again and call for concrete measures of restraint, such as a 'no offensive action commitment' in and around Sarajevo".⁹⁴³ Two weeks later, the CIA noted that "The Croatians seemed to have stopped their offensive in western Bosnia, but this seems to be as much as the failure of the offensive thus far as US demarches" and warned that "the Bosnians are sniffing a victory and becoming increasingly disinclined to any concessions to bring peace".⁹⁴⁴ On September 27th, the BTF argued that "recent Croat-Muslim military successes, while improving the perception of Bosnian leaders of their negotiating position, have made it more difficult for the Bosnians to unify behind one plan".⁹⁴⁵

Military success served to make the Muslims obstinate while simultaneously widening the divergence between their objectives and those of their Croat "allies". On September 11th, the BTF observed that "in the near term, Croatia is focused on extending Bosnian Croat territory and its control in Bosnia, preventing the establishment of a strong Muslim-dominated Bosnian state, balancing and normalizing ties with Serbia, and achieving a peace agreement conducive to long-term stability".⁹⁴⁶ Banja Luka's military fate, the largest Serb-held city in Bosnia, which

⁹⁴²1995-09-08 - Summary Of Conclusions on 8 SEP 1995 Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia [cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-09-08.pdf](https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-09-08.pdf): Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹⁴³ 1995-09-11c - Memo, Anthony Lake to President Clinton, SUBJ: Drop-By at the September 11th Principals Meeting on Bosnia Accessed <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-09-11C.pdf>: Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹⁴⁴ 1995-09-20 - CIA Pre-Meeting Memo on 21 SEP 1995 Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia 20-Sep-95 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-09-20.pdf>: Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹⁴⁵ 1995-09-27b - BTF Assessment: The Bosnian Government Divisions Show Confusion In Peace Negotiations <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-09-27B.pdf>: Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹⁴⁶ 1995-09-11a - BTF Assessment: Croatia's Vision of Bosnia, September 11, 1995 <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-09-11A.pdf>: Accessed November 24, 2019

looked poised to fall without external intervention, highlighted all of these concerns. On September 11th, the CIA concluded that it did not “see Milošević intervening if Banja Luka appeared ready to fall. Should it go, however, the rest of western Bosnia becomes untenable and the northern corridor becomes irrelevant. A major refugee flow to Serbia could strengthen the hardline nationalists and complicate Milošević’s lift, but we think he can still hold on”.⁹⁴⁷ The question then was less whether the Croats and Muslims could take the city but whether they wished to. They both gave every indication of doing so at the end of September, with the CIA reporting that “both V Corps Commander Dudaković and the Croats have said that their forces would attack Banja Luka—similar to the race for Berlin?”⁹⁴⁸ The “race” for Banja Luka had one similarity with the “race for Berlin” insofar as only one of the participants was interested in taking the city. In 1945, the American leaders, concluding that the cost of capturing Berlin would be too high, forfeited the “race” to the Soviets. The difference in Bosnia was that, while its capture of the city would primarily benefit the Muslims it was only the Croats who could take it and it was far from clear whether it would serve their interests to do so. The Croats clearly felt no regret at eliminating any vestiges of Serb political autonomy within Croatia, the collapse of the Serb would pave the way for a unitary Bosnian state. As for the US, Washington wanted a stable settlement, which meant a government in Belgrade that was capable of enforcing a settlement. That required avoiding a massive refugee flow into Serbia, which would undermine Milošević or spark a fresh conflict in Kosovo. A report by the State Department’s Intelligence and Research division on the fate of the Krajina refugees, published on September 21st, noted that “despite Serbian government promises that these refugees would be evenly disbursed throughout Serbia’s multiethnic state, Belgrade has settled more than half in the Vojvodina and Kosovo Provinces, a move that threatens to upset delicate ethnic balances and broaden ethnic conflict in the Balkans”.⁹⁴⁹ Croatia also had little to gain

⁹⁴⁷ 1995-09-20 - CIA Pre-Meeting Memo on 21 SEP 1995 Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-09-20.pdf> : Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹⁴⁸ 1995-09-29b - CIA Pre-Meeting Memo On 30 SEP 1995 Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-09-29B.pdf>: Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹⁴⁹ “Warning: Serbia: Krajina Serb Resettlement threatens broader Balkan conflict” INR, Department of State 21 September 1995 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/OctNov2014/F-2007-05000ER2-3/DOC_0C17552996/C17552996.pdf: Accessed November 24, 2019

from Milošević and Serbia's destabilization, which would make it harder for Tudjman to normalise ties with Belgrade and secure recognition of his gains in the Krajina.

Tudjman was ready to adopt an accommodating approach when Holbrooke arrived in Zagreb on September 17th, bearing instructions to urge the Croatian President to forgo the taking of Banja Luka.⁹⁵⁰ According to his diary, Galbraith dissented, arguing that encouraging the Croatians to seize the high ground around Banja Luka would place the city in a position "analogous to Sarajevo", allowing for a trade to provide both cities with hinterland. In response, Holbrooke "angrily accuses me [Galbraith] of trying to micromanage the military operation, which I deny since I am just offering my assessment". Holbrooke rapidly obtained Tudjman's agreement not to take Banja Luka in exchange for assurances regarding Sector East's future, leading Galbraith to remark "It is obvious Holbrooke knows little about the issue [Sector East] and has not read my cable explaining how far we have gotten".⁹⁵¹ Galbraith lamented that all this must have "made the Croatian leader feel as if he were co-directing US policy and without uttering a single threat, got what he wanted".⁹⁵² On September 20th, *The Los Angeles Times* reported that the Croatian offensive had been halted at America's request.⁹⁵³

Tudjman now needed to demonstrate that America's desire for a stable settlement required arrangements for the return of Sector East to Croatia, and he needed to prove that anything else threatened resumed conflict. As he slowed his advance in Bosnia, Tudjman stepped up his sabre-rattling, managing to convince the CIA that "Croatian leaders are committed to reintegrating Sector East into Croatia this year and will proceed with military

⁹⁵⁰ Galbraith, Peter (December 14th 2010). "Richard Holbrooke: A Force for Good". *The Guardian*<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/cifamerica/2010/dec/14/richard-holbrooke-dayton-bosnia>: Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹⁵¹ Galbraith Diary Entry for September 17th 1995" National Security Archive, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB535-Srebrenica-genocide-on-road-to-Dayton-accords/Documents/DOCUMENT%2014.pdf>: Accessed August 28th 2019

⁹⁵² Galbraith, Peter (December 14th 2010). "Richard Holbrooke: A Force for Good". *The Guardian*<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/cifamerica/2010/dec/14/richard-holbrooke-dayton-bosnia>: . Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹⁵³ Wilkinson, Tracy; Kempster, Norman (September 20th 1995). "Bosnians, Croats Will Halt Assault on Serbs, U.S. Says; Balkans: Combined Offensive Nears Rebel Stronghold. But it is Jeopardizing Washington-Brokered Peace Plan". *The Los Angeles Times*. Accessed November 24, 2019 http://articles.latimes.com/1995-09-20/news/mn-47992_1_bosnian-serbs

force if the issue is not resolved to their satisfaction through negotiation”.⁹⁵⁴ The establishment of a cease-fire in Bosnia as a prelude to the Dayton talks forced Tudjman to step up these efforts, lest Washington or Sarajevo be tempted to offer some sort of compromise over Sector East as an inducement for Serb concessions in Bosnia. Croatia used the Bosnian cease-fire to ratchet up military preparations, with an October 16th briefing for the CIA Director arguing that “The Croats sense they have the leverage and may prefer war over peace because it allows them to cleanse Sector East of Serbs”.⁹⁵⁵ Perhaps embarrassed by missing the timing for both “Flash” and “Storm”, on October 19th, the CIA reported that “although the timing of the attack remains uncertain, it is clearly going to happen. Tudjman reportedly promised Holbrooke he wouldn't attack before December 1st, but we could not rule out the Croatsians ‘finding’ before then a pretext, some Serbian provocation that they simply cannot resist”.⁹⁵⁶ Warning that “past démarches to Croatia concerning Sectors West and then later Sectors North and South have not succeeded”, the agency argued, “those démarches did not carry the threat of sanctions as previous démarches had, the Croatsians interpreted all sorts of green amber lights, missing the red lights intended to be sent”.⁹⁵⁷ “Tudjman and other Croatian leaders are increasingly prone to arrogant and authoritarian behavior, in both domestic and foreign policy, according to diplomatic and press reports”, the BTF complained on October 20th, while “Zagreb has done little or nothing to offer even minimal guarantees of rights to its Serb population and appears intent on creating a largely mono-ethnic state, according to US diplomats.”⁹⁵⁸ Tudjman could bear American frustration, as he had borne Zimmerman’s hostility during 1990-1992, provided that America understood that Tudjman was indispensable. US policy’s goal was a settlement in Bosnia, and that required Croatia’s cooperation. Ultimately, the questions of human rights in Croatia or how insolently Tudjman behaved over Sector East were irrelevant to

⁹⁵⁴ 1995-10-12b - BTF Assessment: Resolving Sector East By Pen or Sword;
<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-10-12B.pdf>; Accessed: November 24, 2019.

⁹⁵⁵ 1995-10-13a - CIA Pre-Meeting Memo on 16 OCT and 17 OCT 1994 Deputies Committee Meetings on Bosnia
<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-10-13A.pdf>: Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹⁵⁶ 1995-10-19b - CIA Pre-Meeting Memo on 19 OCT 1995 Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia
<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-10-19B.pdf>: Accessed November 24, 2019

⁹⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁵⁸ 1995-10-20a - BTF Assessment: President Tudjman Stacks The Elections
<https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/1995-10-20A.pdf>: Accessed November 24, 2019

whether a settlement was acceptable to the US. The US had no objection to Croatian control of Sector East, but rather to a war fought over it. By threatening a war, Tudjman made Croatia's willingness to accept Sector's East's "peaceful" return a concession. Before the Croatian President left for Dayton, he had already received Administration's assurances for the return of Sector East to Croatian control after an 18-month transition period under American administration.⁹⁵⁹

As stressed in the Introduction it was impossible for this Thesis to allocate space to discussion on Dayton conference and its results for a number of reasons. Most importantly, the topic and the focus of this Thesis are the US – Croatian relations from the collapse of Yugoslavia to operation *Storm* and the evolution of US policy towards ex-Yugoslavia during this period. Also, the word limit imposed by Thesis regulations mandated strict adherence to focal themes of the Thesis. Furthermore, everything argued in this Thesis supports author's firm conviction that Dayton Conference was only the concluding act of the reality created on the ground in Croatia and Bosnia with the *Storm* and in its immediate aftermath. Notwithstanding above constraints, the author of this Thesis felt compelled to make at least limited and few in number references to the Dayton conference contextualized within the Thesis' concluding observations. This Thesis concludes its narrative before Dayton precisely because from the perspective of Zagreb, Croatian diplomacy had already concluded its work prior to conference. This was true not only with regard to the future status of Sector East, which Tudjman was not willing to leave subject to discussion at Dayton and therefore vulnerable to whatever haggling might arise, but on the shape of the final settlement itself. Croatia's objectives in the region had been to secure recognition of its independence within its Yugoslav-era borders not just in the form of diplomatic relations, but with universal acceptance that the status of anyone who lived within the territory claimed by Zagreb were a domestic Croatian concern, not subject to the consent of Washington, Belgrade or the United Nations. It was therefore not enough for Croatia to regain

⁹⁵⁹Subject: The Sector East Situation" INR Tobt Gati to the Assistant Secretary, November 5th 1995 https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/OctNov2014/F-2007-05000ER2-/DOC_0C17552479/C17552479.pdf; Accessed September 1 2019 "East Slavonia Issues" Chris Hoh to Richard Holbrooke, November 12th 1995, [https://foia.state.gov/searchapp\DOCUMENTS\OctNov2014\F-2007-05000ER2-\DOC_0C17553397\C17553397.pdf](https://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/OctNov2014\F-2007-05000ER2-\DOC_0C17553397\C17553397.pdf); Accessed September 1st 2019

control of Sector East, it was vital that all parties accepted that the question of Sector East was not subject to international discussion. Only when this principle was accepted did Croatia deign to attend Dayton conference. This was made possible because Croatia's military power was vital for the framing and enforcing of the wider settlement in Bosnia that both Washington and Belgrade desired. The Dayton conference could only be held after a settlement that Zagreb and Belgrade could live with and which Washington was prepared to impose on the Muslims already existed on the ground, created firstly by the Croatian advance, and secondly by the cease-fire that the Muslims had no choice but to accept when the Croats threatened to advance no further. That Croatian arms determined the point beyond which the Muslims could not continue the conflict. Zagreb could set that line at a point well short of a unitary Muslim Bosnia.

The Dayton conference largely ratified a situation which already existed on the ground. In Holbrooke's words, Tudjman was its "king" insofar as he had created the situation on the ground which the Conference ratified.⁹⁶⁰ Nonetheless, the conveying of the Conference and the agreement signed there by all parties was important. As the experience of the Bosnian Serbs had shown, territorial conquests were only valuable insofar as they could be legally ratified after the fact. Tudjman understood he needed legal ratification of his ownership of Sector East and the former Krajina. Unlike some of his regional counterparts, he was clever enough to gain that recognition before attending, when his vital military position provided him with the greatest leverage, rather than risking seeing his winnings bargained down in Ohio. Dayton is only of secondary interest to our story, because by the fall of 1995 Tudjman had lost faith in international diplomatic processes, and had therefore taken deliberate steps to ensure that nothing important concerning Croatia's interests could happen at Dayton before he allowed the conference to proceed.

Tudjman was able to accomplish this objective because whatever its flaws, Dayton served American priorities in 1995 quite well. If concerned by the refugee flow, American officials were relieved that Knin's fall removed the Krajina from the issues that needed to be

⁹⁶⁰ Chollet, Derek, *The Road to the Dayton Accords: A Study of American Statecraft* (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2005. p.161).

settled at any conference. American officials relied on Croatian intervention in Bosnia to achieve the 51%-49% division envisioned in the Contact Group map. Milošević and Clinton's need for a settlement in Bosnia outweighed their concerns about either Sector East or a specific map. The Bosnian Muslims, as usual, did not want a settlement. This left Tudjman in a position to deliver Clinton and Milošević's desired settlement, while extracting his price in the form of Sector East. By allowing his forces to advance in Bosnia, he occupied enough territory to shape the map that was ratified at Dayton. By halting his forces' advance, he left the Muslims no choice but to accept a cease-fire and whatever map with which they were presented. Milošević had been ready to accept almost any terms that lifted sanctions. US policy-makers among themselves had then determined the enclaves' fate and the Bosnian Federation's future through "Train and Equip." They enforced the final Bosnian map by allowing the Croats to advance and then asking them to halt at Banja Luka. The task at Dayton then was not to negotiate an agreement, but merely to secure Muslim adherence to one which was already largely formed.

It is possible to perceive in Tudjman's intransigence an effort to lock in the gains Croatia had already won, motivated by a fear that indispensability which had enabled those gains might come to an end with a genuine peace. Tudjman might have been "King of Dayton", as Holbrooke remarked, but he was able to fulfill that role, as Holbrooke also noted, because America had used him to make Dayton possible. A map acceptable as a basis for Muslim agreement would have been impossible without the Croatian army, as would bringing the Muslims to the table., The Croatian Army had fulfilled the role that the US had assigned it by its advance earlier in autumn 1995, and its final duty had been to cease its advance and not take Banja Luka. The greatest US preoccupation was not what Washington wanted the Croats to do, but what it did not want them to do; namely, use force against Sector East. Washington wanted Croats to do nothing more, especially in Bosnia. The American goal up to and including Dayton had been achieving a settlement in Bosnia and the wider region. Only with Croatian cooperation had that been possible. The Clinton Administration had cared more about having a settlement which could be sold as successfully ending the fighting in Yugoslavia domestically than what form that settlement took. Now those same domestic considerations made it a

priority for Washington to have Dayton Settlement produce a peace in Bosnia which could be sold as successful, with the importance reinforced by the presence of American troops. The idealistic metrics by which the American electorate were likely to judge success – refugee return, free elections, the construction of functional Bosnian national institutions – were very different from the metric by which Tudjman judged success in Bosnia. Namely the position of the Bosnian Croats. This divergence would lead to conflict between Tudjman and Washington’s interests in the years to come when Tudjman tried to protect the position the Bosnian Croats had held in 1995 from erosion. For the purpose of this Thesis, it establishes why the story of this phase of the US-Croatian relationship ends where it does, with Tudjman’s *Storm*, and the process by which it made a settlement possible. That was a culmination of the role that Tudjman sought to play from 1990 onwards, and the part envisioned for him by the US policy-makers from 1993 until autumn of 1995. If the next phase of the relationship turned sour, it is not because Tudjman failed to fulfill the role envisioned for him by American policy makers during these years, but because they quite simply envisioned no further role for him. His role, as chronicled by this Thesis, was now done.

Conclusion

In December 2000, during an interview with *Rolling Stone* magazine, President Bill Clinton made an illuminating remark about his own role in Yugoslavia. “It took me two years to build a consensus among our allies for military action in Bosnia”, Clinton explained, adding “and, as you know, what happened there was, we did a few airstrikes and, all of a sudden, we were at Dayton holding peace talks.”⁹⁶¹ The soon-to-be former President was unsure how the Balkan leaders had ended up at Dayton in autumn 1995, but was nevertheless certain that it must have been the result of US military action. The suggestion that all that was needed was a

⁹⁶¹ Wenner, Jann, S., “Bill Clinton: The Rolling Stone Interview” *Rolling Stone* December 28th 2000 Accessed October 29th 2019 <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/bill-clinton-the-rolling-stone-interview-2-40256/>

few air strikes and “all of sudden” the combatants in a long-running conflict were talking peace implied that such actions might have proved equally effective in 1991 or 1993 as in 1995. It also insinuated that it was America’s European allies’ opposition and, implicitly, internal critics like General Colin Powell, who prevented Dayton from being accomplished sooner. While Clinton’s memoirs acknowledge Operation *Storm*’s role, Clinton felt “diplomacy would not succeed until the Serbs sustained some significant losses.”⁹⁶² The conflict in Yugoslavia was not about its peoples, their claims, or their suffering, but the process of establishing a form of “peace” that was acceptable to the US.

By summer 1995, a peace process ending in an agreement had become an end unto itself for the Clinton Administration. What separated Dayton from the earlier Vance-Owen and Owen-Stoltenberg efforts was not the shuttle diplomacy, a field where David Owen arguably put Richard Holbrooke to shame, nor the clarity of purpose. The Vance-Owen plan outlined a detailed vision of Bosnia that put to shame anything in the “Endgame” paper. The vision of Bosnia outlined at Dayton was put together in an *ad hoc* manner by American policy-makers with almost no input from the Bosnian Muslims. What made Dayton possible was the US officials’ decision to abandon any particular vision in favor of a process, and then embrace as a settlement wherever that process lead.

The 1995 American initiative was conjured by providing Franjo Tudjman with the power militarily to eliminate the obstacles to a settlement on the ground to his liking, and then politically impose it on the Muslims, without the need for the US to dirty its hands on either point. By ruling out the use of American force, but nevertheless defining the threshold for an “acceptable” settlement in Bosnia in terms which required a Serbian military defeat, US officials left themselves little choice. The U.S-Croatian relationship and the policy process which culminated in 1995 demonstrated not the extent of American power but its limitations. The US had the power to deliver victory or defeat to one side or the other in conflicts but not to halt them. Kosovo, the successful example that Bill Clinton cited to *Rolling Stone*, was merely the US-Croat example in accelerated form. The US could back the Albanians in wrestling Kosovo

⁹⁶² Clinton, Bill, *My Life* (Alfred A. Knopf,: New York, 2005): p.635.

from Serbia in 1999, but as events would show, could not force them to live together afterwards.

An original argument of this Thesis has been that it was American weakness, rather than strength, which was the consistent factor in Washington's policy-making towards the former Yugoslavia. It was only when American officials reconciled their objectives to the limitations imposed by their weakness by working through Franjo Tudjman's Croatia, as this Thesis demonstrates, that they were able to bend events to their will. The concept of American weakness still seems paradoxical, as it also appeared at the time to many of the actors on both sides. Weakness, however, takes many forms. The possession of overwhelming military and economic power can represent strength, but only if it is possible for policy-makers to use that power. What Marković, and later Izetbegović failed to grasp was that the limitations imposed by the wider strategic interests and domestic interests meant that American policy-makers never had the ability to bring much of their potential power to bear in Yugoslavia. Although the US was more powerful than Germany, it was never going to prioritise its preferences in Yugoslavia over its economic, political, and military relations with Bonn. Although America possessed overwhelming military might, the military was unwilling to use it at the beck and call of policy-makers whom it did not respect. The ending of the Cold War exacerbated these problems, by reducing the strategic risks of Yugoslavia's collapse. Factors like the influence of the Albanian American and Croatian lobby, and of the Catholic Church, came to the fore. Zimmerman's own predecessor had fallen foul of Congressional sentiment for appearing insufficiently to champion the Kosovar Albanians' cause. Yugoslavia's collapse was less dangerous to US Congress members than running foul of the powerful domestic lobbies, as would have happened had they voted to provide Marković with the funding he sought for his program without offering concessions on Kosovo.

It would be easy to explain the US policy's failure in 1989-1993 solely in terms of the absence of a sufficient investment of political capital in Yugoslav policy. What this Thesis demonstrates is that this was not in fact the case but, rather, it was the failure to adapt American objectives to the resources which were available to accomplish them, a failure which was a personal one on the part of the policy-makers during the Bush years. Much can be

accomplished through the power of bluff, especially by a US representative. Peter Galbraith's experiences, as shown in Chapter 4, together with those of Richard Holbrook and Leon Fuerth, presented in Chapter 5, demonstrate what can be achieved by an accomplished poker player who is aware of the cards he holds. Warren Zimmerman proved to be a poor poker player, bluffing himself as much as the Yugoslavs. Ante Marković mistook Zimmerman's friendship and support for a US commitment to his economic and political programme. Milošević perceived Zimmerman's hostility and persistent focus on Kosovo as the cause rather than the consequence of America's hostility to Serbia. The greatest victim was Alija Izetbegović, who took American opposition to the partition of Bosnia as implied American support for a unitary Bosnian state, and embarked on a war that very destroyed his people, based on the delusion that, if he did what America wanted, then America would support him.

When I first embarked upon this Thesis, I expected to produce a different conclusion, one which contrasted the Bush administration "realism" with their successors' idealism. That Thesis would have concluded that the eventual American embracing of Operation *Storm* represented the Clinton team's abandonment of idealism and recognition that their Republican predecessors had been correct. As my research continued, I came to understand that US policy progressed in a far more continuous manner than I had first believed. While the Clinton Administration's fitful efforts to engage with the former Yugoslavia in the first half of 1993 were marked by failure, unlike the Bush Administration, Clinton's team learnt from their failures.

For all the charges that he was a romantic nationalist lost in the past, Croatian President Franjo Tudjman showed a much better grasp of realism than either the Bush Administration or his supposedly Machiavellian Serbian counterpart. Tudjman's grasped that Slovenia was intent on departing Yugoslavia, and that other issues, whether Kosovo's status, Marković's reform programme, or relations with his own Serbs, would be rendered redundant if Slovenia left. Debates over whether Tudjman intended to destroy Yugoslavia and on what timescale are irrelevant. The choice never presented itself. Once Tudjman was convinced that the US would not prevent a Slovene secession, the only choice to be made was whether Croatia could remain in Yugoslavia without Slovenia. If not, the question was not whether Croatia would become independent but how and on what terms.

This grasp of cold realism also drove Tudjman's policy towards the Serb minority within Croatia, prioritising the Croats' national mobilisation over the Serbs' appeasement. Reconciliation might have averted conflict within Croatia while it remained within Yugoslavia; no policy could have reconciled the Serbian population of the Krajina to embracing citizenship in an independent Croatia over remaining in Yugoslavia. Tudjman consequently did not even try. Rather than seeking to avoid conflict, he accepted it as inevitable and did his best to win it.

Tudjman understood that Yugoslavia was dead by July 1991. His challenge was to convince international leaders, namely the US and German governments, that this was the case. The two strongest constituencies in both the US and Germany were a foreign policy elite loyal to the dream of a united Yugoslavia, if increasingly sceptical of its prospects, and a public that engaged when the horrors they witnessed through the media led them to demand intervention by their government. Contrary to legend, Tudjman placed little stock in the Croatian expatriates' ability to exert an influence. Tudjman so much believed that the Western elites were wedded to the idea of Yugoslavia that, in 1997, he had a prohibition on "Croatian participation in any future Balkan regional grouping or new Yugoslavia" written into Croatia's constitution.⁹⁶³ Tudjman's strategy was to appeal to this sentiment. In the first half of 1991, Tudjman played the good Yugoslav, seeking to appear to be trying to make Yugoslavia work at a time when everyone else had given up. This was a safe approach for a Croatian nationalist precisely because it was almost certain to fail, especially after the JNA's withdrawal from Slovenia on July 12th 1991. When Yugoslavia's central institutions nevertheless proved impotent, it would demonstrate to the international community that Yugoslavia could not be reconstituted, and that the only way to end the fighting would be to recognise Croatian independence.

Germany gave up on Yugoslavia by the beginning of September 1991. The US was still expressing its support for the State Presidency and seeking to work directly with the Yugoslav Army three weeks later. American opposition to recognition was doomed, because the US policy-makers failed both to determine whether and to what extent prevailing on Yugoslavia

⁹⁶³ Moore, Patrick, "Croatia: Changes In Constitution Lead To Dispute Over Minorities" Voice of America December 9th 1997 Accessed October 24th 2019 <https://www.rferl.org/amp/1087639.html>

was important to them and, if it was, to come up with a viable alternative. As Robert Hutchings of the NSC was quoted as reflecting in Chapter 2, “Absent a credible military alternative that the United States was willing to propose and then support, however, we had no answer to the German argument that recognition was preferable to passivity in the face of brutal aggression”.⁹⁶⁴ The Croatians were not innocent victims of JNA attacks, and both American and European observers were fully aware of that fact. Nonetheless, the JNA could withdraw from Croatia as they had from Slovenia only a few months before, whereas the Croatians could hardly be expected to withdraw from their own country. If Yugoslavia could not survive as a single state, then a conflict in Croatia was inevitable unless Zagreb conceded to the territorial demands set by the Serbs as the price for a peaceful departure. The JNA were the “aggressors” insofar as their continued presence in Croatia was identified by the international community as the cause of continued violence. It was Tadjman’s success in framing matters in this way which made Croatian independence inevitable. This would be a prelude to what was to come. For all the failures of policy implementation, the United States remained not just the most powerful actor in the conflict but the vital one. Only United States recognition could legitimize any settlement or confirm any gains as permanent. Persistent resistance to recognition of Croatia and Slovenia represented not American ineffectualism, but necessity of adhering to American objectives in order to receive the endorsement of Washington. Tadjman grasped this. He framed Croatia’s pursuit of independence not in terms of “right” but rather as a prerequisite for a cessation of hostilities, understanding that Washington would ignore the former but required the latter. Tadjman’s room to maneuver existed not because Washington was willing to be flexible on its objectives for a political settlement, but because its absolute refusal to be left American officials with little choice but to settle for reducing conflict where they could.

Defeat over recognition failed to make American policy-makers aware of the weakness of their position in the region, much less reconsider their goals. Instead, egged on by Warren Zimmerman, who was writing cables mocking Slobodan Milošević’s parents’ suicides,

⁹⁶⁴ Hutchings, *American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War* (Johns Hopkins University Press: Baltimore, 1997 p.315)

Washington determined to tie Slovenia and Croatia's recognition to that of Bosnia, and in turn recognize only Bosnia's Muslim leadership as that country's official representatives. Rather than using this as leverage against the Muslim leadership to urge a compromise domestic settlement, American officials from James Baker downwards made clear their opposition to any partition of Bosnia. Alija Izetbegović could easily be forgiven for mistaking American opposition to partition as a promise of American support for a Muslim-dominated unitary Bosnia. It would seem irrational for American policy-makers to urge on the Muslim leader a policy which would lead to a war he could not win if they had no plan to help him survive their advice's consequences, yet that is precisely what they did. Bosnia-Herzegovina's recognition was the culmination of the errors of the Bush Administration's approach to Yugoslavia, combining all of the flaws in one misguided policy.

The perception of political bankruptcy which permeated US policy towards Yugoslavia in the latter half of 1992 was echoed by the American electorate's view of the Bush Administration. The Democratic Party had already tried to erase memories of opposition to the Gulf War by championing the cause of Baltic independence from the Soviet Union, and of Boris Yeltsin against Mikhail Gorbachev. In autumn 1991, with the Soviet Union and Gorbachev both spent forces, the Democrats moved their focus to Yugoslavia. Tying the Bush Administration's reluctance to embrace Slovene and Croat independence to the earlier reluctance to champion the Baltic States, the Democrats attacked the Administration for showing weakness in the face of aggression. As George Bush had his nemesis in the form of Saddam Hussein, Democrats needed a villain and found ready-one in the form of the Serb leaders, whether obliging (in the case of the Bosnian Serb leaders) or inadvertently in Milošević's case. Arkansas Governor Bill Clinton and Tennessee Senator Albert Gore Jr.'s campaign made criticism of "moral obtuseness" the core of their charges against the incumbent's record in Yugoslavia.

The victorious Clinton Administration found putting words into action hard. Early debates within it were characterised by indecision, which sent out mixed messages both at home and abroad, resulting in the Vance-Owen plan's failure and an abortive effort to implement "Lift and Strike". By mid-1993, the Clinton Administration's Balkan policy seemed to have been a greater failure than its predecessors. However, it was a different sort of failure.

From the start, the Clinton Administration was aware of American weakness. Conflicts erupted over whether allies would support the US efforts to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia's Muslims, and whether the military under Colin Powell would be willing to draw up plans to use ground troops or believed that air power could be of any use. It would have been hard for any Clinton Administration official to emerge from these debates believing that American policy had been successful six months into the new Administration. It would have been impossible for them to conclude that the greatest problem was not the weakness of the tools that America had available to use in the region. Furthermore, dispelling a perception of American weakness was itself now an objective of American policy in the region. The debates during the transition and early days of the Administration never obsessed over what the US wanted to do; by now victory was defined as a Serbian defeat. The American policy's repeated failures had become a problem in and of themselves, threatening to undermine American prestige and humiliating US policy-makers, so it was increasingly felt that this impression could only be resolved by a dramatic, public Serb defeat. The Clinton Administration's disinterest in the Vance-Owen process is explained by the fact that, while such an agreement might be able to deliver territorial or political concessions, it could not deliver the prestige boost of a Serbian defeat that the American leaders increasingly sought.

American officials knew what they wanted by mid-1993; a Serbian defeat. The challenge was how to accomplish that with the limited means available. There were differences over how to solve the problem, but its nature was understood. This difference from the Bush Administration was to prove decisive, and nowhere more so than in Croatia. The conflation of the "enemy" America was facing in the region, with "Serbian Aggression" and the relative accessibility of Zagreb compared with Sarajevo, led to the US officials and politicians' constant pilgrimage to the Croatian capital. Tudjman was always ready to receive such delegations. Figures like Madeline Albright, who visited Zagreb during the transition, and who mocked Colin Powell over his refusal to use American force against the Serbs, clearly felt that Croatian force could function as a supplement. When Croatia launched Operation Maslenica in early 1993, she helped to secure UN recognition of Croatia's legal authority over all of the UN-patrolled territory. When Peter Galbraith arrived as Ambassador to Zagreb, he grasped how Croatia could

be used to exert pressure on the Serbs that the US could not. There was only one problem. Rather than being allies, the Muslims and Croats were increasingly at war in Bosnia in 1993.

That war was resolved by the creation of the Muslim-Croat Federation in Bosnia in March 1994. For the first time, American policy-makers developed a policy around the resources they had to hand rather than developing one only to discover that the resources needed for its successful implementation were non-existent. The US could offer unconditional support to Croatia for the recovery of the Krajina, as well as diplomatic immunity from UN sanctions provided it cooperated in Bosnia. Tudjman ultimately cared little for the Bosnian Croat leader Mate Boban and only slightly more for the Bosnian Croats than he did for expatriates. Tudjman embraced the Federation agreement when it became clear that the US, or at least several US officials, saw the Serbs' defeat as America's goal, and were willing to see if the Croats could do what the American military insisted it could not.

The Federation Agreement represented a consensus among American policy-makers that US policy should henceforth be to use Croatia to exert pressure in Bosnia. Where that consensus broke down was over precisely what the policy-makers wanted the Croatians to do, and how much in turn they were willing to concede to Zagreb in order to do it. Zagreb would abandon support of the Bosnian Croats, and end the Muslim-Croat war, and in exchange would avoid the sanctions which had befallen Serbia. Several US officials went further. At the signing of the Federation Agreement, US Secretary of Defense Perry and Vice President Gore offered to help reequip the Croatian army, a clear sign that they saw the Croatian Army as a tool to further their goals. Other officials may have preferred the Bosnians to fight their own battle but even they understood that Croatia was vital to aiding the Bosnians to avoid the arms embargo and openly encouraged the Croats to allow the passage of weapons, even from countries like Iran. Peter Galbraith championed doing everything possible for the Bosnian cause, including pushing Croatia to allow the flow of arms from Iran and provide military support, and was willing to back Croatia's military buildup. Nevertheless, Galbraith seemed to have hoped that Zagreb's strongly increased military power would negate the need for its use, as it would convince the Serbs in the Krajina to accept peaceful reintegration with autonomy. Galbraith's plan might well have worked had it been fully committed to, but it clashed directly

with both Tudjman, who wanted to avoid those concessions, and those in Washington's interests, who primarily saw the relationship with Croatia in terms of what Zagreb could do for America in terms of providing muscle in Bosnia. When the entire system of sanctions threatened to collapse in spring 1994, the Vice President's National Security Adviser Leon Fuerth, turned to the Croats as the solution. In March 1995, Vice President Gore, at his meeting with Tudjman, all but pressured the Croatian President into taking military action against the Zagreb-Belgrade highway. When Operation *Flash* occurred, it both saved and destroyed Fuerth's sanctions policy. It saved it by allowing its enforcement to continue but destroyed it by revealing it could only be effectively maintained by Croatian military force. For Fuerth and Gore, the cost was worth it, but other US officials appear to have revolted. While the Croats were not forced to withdraw, it was made clear that no further action was desired. The revulsion was not against the recourse to Croatian military action, but against the way in which Fuerth and Gore sought to use it to solve challenges in their own sphere of sanctions enforcement rather than as part of the wider US policy. The larger lesson for American policy-makers of all persuasions was not the process whereby the Croats were given the go-ahead for Operation *Flash*, but the success with which the Croatian move was met, as well as the Serbs and the wider international community's lack of response. Henceforth, American policy-makers could prefer to find alternative methods to pressure the Serbs than the Croatian army. They could not credibly argue that the Croatian army was not up to the task.

After Operation *Flash*, it was therefore assured that, if American officials failed to find an alternative means of defeating the Serbs, they would inevitably be forced to choose between accepting "failure" in Yugoslavia, unthinkable for a superpower's leaders with an election impending, or embracing the use of the Croatian army. A series of military disasters in the first half of 1995 revealed not only the bankruptcy of any hopes that the Bosnian Muslims might be able to inflict defeats on the Serbs using their own forces alone, but rebounded after Srebrenica's fall in a way which humiliated the Administration in the public's eyes. The new French President was hinting at a more aggressive approach, going so far as to repeat his call in Washington itself. Congress was moving towards a unilateral lifting of the arms embargo which would lead the Bosnian Muslims to abandon any prospect of a negotiated solution in favour of

pursuing military victory which would either extend the war past the 1996 or elections, or more likely, given the past experience of Muslim military effectiveness, result in a potential collapse that the US would be forced to intervene to prevent. By July 1995, the US needed to bring the war in Bosnia to an end and, to do that on acceptable terms, it needed to inflict defeats on the Serbs sufficient to appease Western opinion and bring them to the table, and then impose a settlement on the Muslims. An explicit *quid pro quo*, when everyone wanted the same thing, was unnecessary.

While American officials did not support “*Storm*”’s humanitarian cost they welcomed its geopolitical implications. As Holbrooke would remark, everything about it was a success except for the refugee “issue”. Subsequent Croatian advances in Bosnia brought the Serbs to the table based on the 51-49% division that the US sought. The Croatian abandonment of the drive on Banja Luka at the US request left the Muslims with no choice but to accept. The Dayton settlement was defined on the ground with the Croatian Army as a demarcation tool. The Croatian Army was not merely an American policy tool. While Tudjman had no need to be defiant in Bosnia, where his and the US interests coincided, this did not apply in Sector East’s case. Tudjman threatened to start another war which would wreck any prospect of peace until the US agreed to the region’s unconditional return. It was only when the battle-lines were aligned with the intended settlement in Bosnia, and Tudjman had achieved his aims, that peace talks began in Ohio.

With the final settlement already determined beforehand, Dayton was ratification. It involved late nights, last-minute phone calls, and exciting personal anecdotes. Most of it involved gaining the Bosnian Muslims’ signature to a deal which was already acceptable to the US, Croatia and Serbia. The suspense, of which there was plenty, dealt not with what sort of settlement would emerge but whether the Bosnians would agree to the one which was predetermined for them. Had they rejected it, Dayton would have failed, but there was never much prospect of it “succeeding” in producing a settlement that differed substantively from that which emerged.

That settlement marked a capstone on a five-year period during which Tudjman had exploited American weakness to make a strong Croatia an American priority, and Croatia’s

interests America's. Having secured those interests, he was content to allow President Clinton, Holbrooke and other American officials to claim Dayton as their own triumph, possibly in the hope that, by doing so, he would ensure that America saw Croatia's role in the Post-Dayton Balkans in the same way as Washington had perceived it in paving the road to Dayton; namely, as the guarantor of the settlement and America's enforcer on the ground. If so, he was to be disappointed. While Croatia was rewarded, Tudjman himself would rapidly find himself discarded. The 20 years following Dayton would see the international position that Croatia won in 1990-1995 consolidated by EU and NATO membership. Tudjman's remaining years, however, would see a succession of defeats and setbacks, and he would die a bitter, isolated man. The traits which had served him well in wartime led him to approach the challenges of peace as if it was another type of war, where the enemy was the domestic opposition, critical voices in the media, NGOs, and any foreign diplomats who questioned him. Croatia was belatedly paying the price for the tactics Tudjman had used to secure his earlier successes. Tudjman had always resorted to manipulative tactics which contained elements of blackmail and extortion. His approach to achieving recognition during autumn 1991 involved provoking the JNA into armed conflict in order to demonstrate that the Yugoslav federal institutions could no longer maintain order. Nonetheless, Tudjman had at least paid *lip service* to the idea that he sought only to cooperate. Croatia kept Mesić in the Presidency for months after declaring independence and accepted every peace deal when one was offered, seeking to create the impression that the international mediators, whether David Owen or later American officials like Galbraith, had no more cooperative friends. In 1995, however, the mask had slipped, culminating in sabre-rattling in autumn 1995 that bordered on outright extortion. Tudjman had technically accepted the Z-4 plan, but many were not fooled by the maneuver, and those who were, such as Secretary of State Christopher and Madeline Albright, felt that Tudjman, in alliance with Gore, had *fooled* them. The changing of the guard was swift. Holbrooke was exiled to the private sector until being belatedly appointed UN Ambassador in 1999.⁹⁶⁵ Both Anthony Lake and Secretary of Defense Perry also left following the 1996 election. Perry would remain steadfastly Pro-Croat,

⁹⁶⁵ James Traub, "Holbrooke's Campaign" The New York Times, March 26th 2000, Accessed 31 May 2019 <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/03/26/magazine/holbrooke-s-campaign.html?mcubz=3>

and was the highest-ranked American to attend Sušak's funeral, where he would eulogize Sušak as the man who brought democracy to Croatia and peace to the region, before quoting Shakespeare: "now there goes a man, we shall never see his like again".⁹⁶⁶ As this Thesis proved, there is more truth to this quote than was recognised at the time. Neither America nor Croatia had any further need for a man "like" Susak, who was an embarrassment.

Peter Galbraith never seems to have forgiven Tudjman for his treatment during summer 1995. By the time he left Zagreb in December 1997, the man who had once been the most popular diplomat in Croatia was, according to *The New York Times*, "despised".⁹⁶⁷ Tudjman and Susak may have felt they had no more need of Galbraith but would rapidly realise that they would need the type of friend the Ambassador had been in 1993-1994 before they discarded and humiliated him. The dominant voice in Clinton's second term was that of new Secretary of State Madeline Albright, who appeared barely able to be in the same room with the Croatian President and openly consorted with the Croatian opposition. In May 1997, she admitted to having "frank disagreements" with the Croatian President, insisting that "we hold Croatia to the standards of that community, not to the standards of this region's autocratic and violent past". Albright then declared "I believe that it is the appropriate role of the leadership of every country to provide the moral direction for the reintegration of these societies, and I asked President Tudjman to provide that kind of leadership", implying strongly that he was failing to do so. Personal needling would become typical of Albright's relationship with Tudjman, with almost every interaction including some form of attack on the Croatian President. The following year she described the Croatian elections as "neither free nor fair" in the official communiqué of a meeting with Granić, and pressed for WWII Jasenovac concentration camp commander Dinko Šakić's extradition and trial. Given the association of Tudjman's academic career with Jasenovac's historiography, the US government's decision to make a final accounting for the

⁹⁶⁶ Hockenos, Paul, *Homeland Calling: Exile Patriotism and the Balkan Wars* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca; London, 2003, p.17). *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/10.7591/j.ctv2n7n6f.9.

⁹⁶⁷ Hedges, Chris, "A Despised US Envoy Stands Proud" *The New York Times*, December 24th 1997, Accessed October 23rd 2019 <https://www.nytimes.com/1997/12/24/world/a-despised-us-envoy-stands-proud.html>

NDH's crimes an issue inevitably appeared personal.⁹⁶⁸ In a meeting with Croatian independent media representatives in Zagreb in August 1998, Albright warned "that Croatia's standing and image in the world depend on the extent to which it welcomes the diversity of peoples, cultures, and beliefs that have long coexisted here" and openly compared Tudjman's regime to the post-1968 rulers of her native Czechoslovakia.⁹⁶⁹ In a joint press conference with President Tudjman, she openly confessed to having a disagreement over "the relationship of Croatia to the Bosnian Croats and we believe that it is very important for the Bosnian Croats to be able to act independently and to be a part of their country in such a way that they can contribute to the development of Bosnia itself." An enraged Tudjman proceeded to rant for several minutes, asserting that "at the end of 1993 and the beginning of 1994, Mr. Izetbegović personally offered annexing certain Croatian areas to Croatia, which I refused in the name of the Croatian leadership". He further implied that the Bosnian Croats were facing demographic genocide and that it was a double standard if "Serbian republic officials are received in capitals from Vienna to Washington, while Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in many ways, feel endangered and they are not allowed national insignias, neither in cantons, which was guaranteed by the Dayton agreement."⁹⁷⁰

Tudjman tried to fight back, withdrawing his support from American interests, for instance, by vigorously opposing NATO intervention in Kosovo.⁹⁷¹ He purged moderates, including two former Prime Ministers, from the HDZ.⁹⁷² Ultimately, this was irrelevant. The US

⁹⁶⁸ Joint Statement by Secretary of State Albright and Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs Granić, Press Statement by James P. Rubin, Spokesman

July 22nd 1998 Accessed October 23rd 2019 <https://1997-2001.state.gov/briefings/statements/1998/ps980722.html>

⁹⁶⁹ Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright

Meeting With Independent Media Representatives, Hotel Sheraton Zagreb, Croatia, August 30th 1998

As released by the Office of the Spokesman, U.S. Department of State, Accessed October 23rd 2019 <https://1997-2001.state.gov/statements/1998/980830b.html>

⁹⁷⁰ Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright And Croatian President Franjo Tudjman

Press Conference, Zagreb, Croatia, August 30th 1998 As released by the Office of the Spokesman Accessed October 23rd 2019

U.S. Department of State <https://1997-2001.state.gov/statements/1998/980830c.html>

⁹⁷¹ Marko Cucic "Tudjman Lectures the West" AIM Zagreb June 1st 1999, Accessed October 24th 2019

<http://www.aimpress.ch/dyn/trae/archive/data/199906/90607-001-trae-zag.htm>

⁹⁷² Oh, Seung Eun, 'The Fourth Party Convention of the HDZ and the Internal Power Struggle', *SEER: Journal for Labour and Social Affairs in Eastern Europe*, 1999, 2:2, pp. 37-56. *JSTOR* Accessed April 10th 2019, www.jstor.org/stable/43291785.

no longer needed Croatia. As a consequence of a policy which identified Croatia's interests with those of the US, Croatia increasingly not only did not need Tudjman, but needed to be rid of him. Like Moses, Tudjman had led his people to the "promised land". The "thousand year dream" of an independent Croatia, linked politically and culturally to Western Europe, beckoned yet, also like Moses, Tudjman was too compromised by the means which he had used to qualify for entry into that "promised land". Had he lived, he would have faced the choice of sacrificing himself to justice in the Hague or sacrificing Croatia's dreams of European integration. Tudjman's death in 1999, before the opposition ousted him in the elections scheduled for the following year, saved Croatia from extensive political in-fighting.

Even in the timeliness of his death, Tudjman outfoxed his Serbian counterpart. Milošević, with control of the old Federation's largest Republic, almost half the votes in the Federal Presidency, and extensive influence over the military, had managed to lose first Yugoslavia, then the Krajina, then half of Bosnia, and finally Kosovo itself. Montenegro was already on its way to independence when he fell. Some of that may have been due to luck and positioning but, fundamentally, Tudjman, driven by a historian's belief that human motivations were universal, approached his rivals, whether Milošević, the Europeans, or Americans, as if they were driven by the same factors that drove his own actions. In the ruthless world of the Balkans during the early 1990s, this served him well, and ultimately made him a perfect partner when American policy fell into the hands of individuals desperate for a settlement and willing to be as ruthless and amoral in pursuing it as he was. If Tudjman understood some American officials, he erred in assuming that this meant he understood all Americans. Seeing Galbraith's concern for human rights as alternatively pathetic or the troublemaking of an official who had been sidelined in an internal power struggle, Tudjman failed to realise that some Americans did care and, even if they did not, they cared about how they were treated. Above all, having established himself as the region's arch-realist, using and discarding individuals such as Mesić and Galbraith at will, he failed to expect the same treatment from the US.

Tudjman, as a historian, would have appreciated that public favor comes and goes, and that ultimately he would be judged on his achievements, if not internationally, then domestically. Croatia did regain the Krajina and Sector East, and no amount of needling by

Albright or Galbraith could or sought to reverse that. Not even Tudjman's most diehard opponents would have dreamt of undoing his achievements even if Stipe Mesić was more than happy to blacken his predecessor's reputation after succeeding to the Presidency. Having been a participant in Tudjman's assault on the common Yugoslav state, and later on the receiving end of Tudjman's treatment of domestic opponents, Mesić had more motivation than almost anyone else to disassociate his country from the shadow of his predecessor. For a time, it seemed, Mesić and fellow Tudjman-critics might succeed. Mesić himself had testified before the ICYT as early as 1997, and in the climate of the early 2000s, Croatian public discourse was dominated by what seemed almost a sense of embarrassment about some of the events of the 1990s. Tudjman's inner circle found themselves politically isolated, and even General Gotovina, fresh off his acquittal at the Hague, felt that the proper tone to strike was not defiance, but of reconciliation. In 2012, he urged the Serbs who had fled Operation Storm to return. "They are citizens of Croatia, this is their homeland in the same way it is mine... This is their home and they should be here if they want to," said Gotovina.⁹⁷³ In the end, however, it became increasingly untenable to embrace the achievements of Tudjman's tenure while condemning the means by which they were achieved. By 2011, Croatia had joined the EU and NATO and did so as a homogenous, independent nation in the Republican borders of 1991, something most observers would have thought impossible. Tudjman had won, his vision had won while both the victims and increasingly the perpetrators faded into history. If Gotovina and Mesić were too ashamed to take pride in the 1990s, a younger generation of Croats were more than ready to do so on their behalf. The popularity of the pro-Ustaša musician "Thomson" and the revival of Ustaše symbolism, a symbolism that whatever accusation existed about his private sympathies, Tudjman expressed consistent contempt for in both his public and private utterances, began to adore concerts and sporting events. It is not only his critics and victims who have been forgotten by history. He was now the idol of those he described in 1991 as "misled youth or

⁹⁷³ Pavelic, Boris, "Gotovina Calls Croatian Serbs to Return" Balkan Insight November 19, 2012 <https://balkaninsight.com/2012/11/19/josipovic-serbian-reactions-not-important/> Accessed June 15, 2020

fanatics".⁹⁷⁴ As then Secretary of War Stanton said while kneeling over the corpse of Abraham Lincoln, "now he belongs to the ages."⁹⁷⁵

Today, Tudjman's name adorns Zagreb's international airport. When one contrasts Croatia's fate with that of Bosnia, mired in corruption and poverty, Serbia, still awaiting EU ascension talks, or Montenegro, Milo Đukanović's personal fiefdom, even if the latter has managed to coat it in Pro-Western paint to disguise the underlying autocracy. Perhaps Slovenia has escaped more cleanly, but it already held stronger cards. Janez Janša, Tudjman's closest Slovene counterpart, has alternated between jail terms and the leadership of disruptive far-right parties. No one today would call him the father of his country.

What of American policy? Was it a success? That depends on how one defines the term. Is a Croatia which is democratic, united, and part of NATO and the EU a success for American policy or Croatian? It is claimed as the latter, even if the terms on which the US insisted (refugee return and war criminals' prosecution) were quietly dropped. Bosnia is technically a single nation and peace has reigned since 1995. That is a success for US policy insofar as this sought to end the war in Bosnia. Whether Bosnians today feel that it was particularly successful is open to question. Herein lies Tudjman's greatest achievement. American policy objectives became so tied to those of Croatia during 1991-1995 that it is impossible to separate them after the fact. Arguably, they never diverged. It was Tudjman's own personal objectives and interests which diverged from those of the US and Croatia, and the common interests of the latter in seeing Croatia join the EU and NATO as a full democracy. When that occurred, Tudjman was undone by his own achievement. US interests had become so intertwined with those of Croatia that, when Tudjman himself became an obstacle to Croatia's success, he was judged disposable. That, perhaps, is the greatest testament to the Croatian policy's success during the period 1989-1995.

⁹⁷⁴ Presidential transcript of a meeting attended by Franjo TUDJMAN and Commanders of the Army of Republic of Croatia held on 04/03/1992 Annex III p. 15

<http://icr.icty.org/LegalRef/CMSDocStore/Public/English/Motions/NotIndexable/IT-04-74/MOT7245R0000324738.pdf>: Accessed 12th January 2019

⁹⁷⁵ Adam Gopnik, "Lincoln's Language and its legacy" The New Yorker 21 May 2007

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2007/05/28/angels-and-ages> : Accessed June 15, 2020

American policy's success or failure, and those who made it, was undermined by the American policy-makers' inability to learn the right lessons. Dayton was a success, but only because America had adapted its objectives to the resources available. Interviews like the one that Bill Clinton gave to *Rolling Stone* showed a lack of appreciation of precisely why and how his Administration had succeeded where Bush's had failed. The belief in American air strikes' key role, to the exclusion of the Croatian Army's actions, and most importantly the decision to use the Croatian army to accomplish limited objectives designed to produce a settlement, led to a belief that US military power was invincible. If so, then American political objectives did not have to prioritise anything. There were many lessons that should have been learnt from Yugoslavia. I learnt many in the course of writing this Thesis. The failure to remember the right lessons contributed to the disastrous US invasion of Iraq and, arguably, subsequent failures in Afghanistan and Syria.

This Thesis is an effort to share the lessons I learnt by reviewing the course of US-Croatian relations during the period 1989-1995, in the hope they can correct the misconceptions which have falsified historical memory. This is an important story. It is one that has been told repeatedly in distorted form. It is one that I felt it was vital to tell correctly. Over the preceding three hundred pages, I hope I have done so.

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