

**Peace with Honor:  
Enduring Truths, Lessons Learned  
and Implications for a Durable Peace in Bosnia**

**by**

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**The Institute of Land Warfare  
ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY**

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### **LAND WARFARE PAPER NO. 33, SEPTEMBER 1999**

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# Contents

Foreword.....	v
Introduction.....	1
The Road to Dayton.....	2
Enduring Truths and the Logic of Intervention.....	4
Lessons Learned? .....	5
The Way Ahead .....	7
Epilogue .....	11
Endnotes .....	13



## **Foreword**

American troops, together with our NATO and Partnership for Peace allies, have been keeping the peace in Bosnia since 1996. Militarily, this mission has been an overwhelming success. The warring factions have been separated and peace restored, and the people of Bosnia have resumed their lives without fear of massacre or atrocity. Politically, however, Bosnia is no closer to an enduring peace than it was when the Dayton Accords were first signed. The mission of the NATO peacekeepers continues.

This paper offers thoughts on a way ahead for, or a way out of, of the Bosnia mission. Its central premise is that further actions are needed now to transform the NATO-imposed military peace of today into an enduring political–social peace for tomorrow. Along the way, the author outlines a series of peacekeeping lessons learned from the Bosnia deployment and explains the impact of history on the current situation.

As the United States Army continues to be deployed on peacekeeping and peace-enforcement operations throughout the world, it is important to learn how to implement an exit strategy tailored to each situation so that temporary missions do not become permanent occupations. This work is an important analysis of the things done right and the things done wrong in the Bosnia peacekeeping mission. The author's conclusions may be useful in furthering the process in Bosnia and as a starting point for future peace operations.

GORDON R. SULLIVAN  
General, U.S. Army Retired  
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September 1999

## **Peace with Honor: Enduring Truths, Lessons Learned and Implications for a Durable Peace in Bosnia**

After nearly four years in Bosnia, we are really no closer to establishing a self-sustaining peace there than when we started. This essay offers an option for breathing new life into the Dayton *process* based both on “enduring truths” in the country and lessons learned from the experience of our extended deployment there. One thing is fairly certain. We cannot continue indefinitely on our current course in Bosnia and realistically hope to either preserve NATO’s credibility or achieve the high goals set forth in the Dayton Accord.

*Based on recent experience . . . U.S. participation in smaller-scale contingency operations must be selective, depending largely on the interests at stake and the risk of major aggression elsewhere. . . . They also require that the U.S. government, including both the military and other agencies, continuously and deliberately reassess both the challenges we encounter in such operations and the capabilities required to meet those challenges.*

— Quadrennial Defense Review, May 1997

### **Introduction**

During his testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee late last year, General Hugh Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was asked, unfairly, to estimate how long the U.S. military will be in Bosnia. The senator’s question, a political one, would have been much more appropriately directed to the President. In truth, NATO had implemented the military provisions of the Dayton Accord within 120 days of its enactment. Implementation of the civilian aspects of the Accord, the responsibility of the civilian International Community, has been glacially slow. But, since the subject was raised, perhaps it *is* time to reassess deliberately the challenges we face in Bosnia and the capabilities required to achieve our goals there. This is all the more important in view of NATO’s expanding role in the Balkans.

Many would argue that the results of Bosnia’s September 1997 presidential election—when “moderate” Bosnian Serb incumbent Biljana Plavsic was defeated by “ultranationalist” Nikola Poplasen—simply underscored the fact that we’re not much closer to a durable peace than when we started. More recently, uncertainty over the future of Bosnian Serb political leadership, and the anti-Dayton behavior that precipitated it, should be cause for even greater concern. In practical terms, however, nearly four years after NATO’s deployment to Bosnia, it doesn’t matter whether the decision to take on this mission was a good one—the reality is that we’re still there, with no end in sight. The key, yet unanswered, question is, Where are we going with this mission? Any attempt to arrive at a vision of

Bosnia's future should include a view of *how* and *why* the decision to intervene there was taken in the first place.

## **The Road to Dayton**

Countless volumes have been written about the history of conflict in the Balkans. As with any history, one must take great care to achieve even a semblance of objectivity. An attempt to provide a few paragraphs describing the events leading to the deployment of American ground forces to Bosnia, even if imperfect, is both worthwhile and necessary.<sup>1</sup>

Marshal Josip Tito temporarily settled the volatile historical problem of Yugoslavia's different ethno-religious groups by creating a federal system of ethnically based republics, dividing the largest group, the Serbs, and thereby preventing them from dominating the country the way they had between the century's two world wars. By 1974, Yugoslavia's constitution designated six republics (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro and Macedonia) and two autonomous provinces within Serbia (Vojvodina and Kosovo). The autonomous provinces had nearly as much self-governing authority as that of the full republics, and all eight units had a vote on the Federal Presidential Council.

Fault lines between Yugoslavia's ethnic groups, however, reemerged quickly after Tito's death in 1980. The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe at the end of the decade created an ideological vacuum that democracy threatened to fill. Somewhat ironically, in view of today's headlines, Serb Communist Party President Slobodan Milosevic discovered, during an inflammatory April 1987 speech amidst Serb-Albanian violence in Kosovo, that nationalism could provide an effective source of political legitimacy. Milosevic soon revoked autonomy in Kosovo and Vojvodina, and the Yugoslav Communist Party fractured along ethnic lines. Slovenians and Croats became convinced that remaining a part of a Milosevic- and Serb-dominated Yugoslavia would be dangerous, and nationalists in those two republics, including Croatia's Franjo Tudjman, won overwhelmingly in 1990 elections. Meanwhile, Milosevic's rhetoric about a "Greater Serbia" prompted Slovenia and Croatia to organize local militia and to arm police, moves which alarmed Serb minorities in those republics. In March 1991, Serbs, who were a majority in Croatia's Krajina district, declared autonomy, and ethnic clashes led to the first deaths in that area. Yugoslavia was on the brink of war.

Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence in June 1991. Brief fighting between the Slovene militia and the Federal Yugoslav Army (JNA) resulted in a stalemate. Perhaps because there were so few Serbs in Slovenia, the republic was allowed to secede and the JNA withdrew. In Croatia, however, the fighting intensified and, in August 1991, the JNA first employed its "ethnic cleansing" tactics in Vukovar, setting a pattern for the rest of the war. As more than 40,000 Croats were systematically driven from their homes by the JNA, reprisals began. Some would argue that Croatian atrocities against the Serbs were of a lesser scale, but they were atrocities nonetheless. Meanwhile, under intense pressure from the Vatican and public opinion, Germany led member states of the European Community (EC) in recognizing Slovenia's and Croatia's independence in January 1992. Shortly after, United Nations envoy Cyrus Vance brokered a cease-fire, which allowed the deployment of UN peacekeepers to the region. The fighting, however, would soon spill over into Bosnia.

Muslims (commonly referred to as Bosniaks) made up just under half of the population of pre-war Bosnia, with the remainder being 17 percent Croat and one-third Serb. The Serbs, being mostly farmers, already lived on and occupied a disproportionate amount of Bosnian territory, while Muslim and Croat populations were concentrated in towns and cities. In a March 1992 plebiscite largely boycotted by Bosnian Serbs, 63 percent of the electorate voting opted for independence from Yugoslavia. The Serbs responded with a JNA-backed effort to seize as much territory as possible and, by the end of summer, two-thirds of Bosnia was under their control.

At the same time President Tudjman, who twice in 1991 tried to make a deal with Milosevic partitioning Bosnia between Croatia and Serbia, was backing Bosnian Croat attacks on Muslim districts. Ethnic cleansing was widespread. All three sides committed atrocities, but those committed by the Bosnian Serbs, under the leadership of Premier Radovan Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic, were particularly brutal and broad in scope. UN forces were deployed to Bosnia, and the United States and the EC recognized Bosnia's independence in April. Writing in 1993, Dusko Doder observed that there were two clear choices:

. . . the division of Bosnia between Serbia and Croatia or the imposition of a UN protectorate on Bosnia. The first would ease the fighting and bring a certain measure of peace, but it would reward aggression and eventually obliterate a distinct Muslim identity. The second course [would be] costly, dangerous, uncertain; it would require *decades*<sup>2</sup> of military and political presence.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, under severe economic pressure at home, Milosevic wanted to end the war and convinced Karadzic to accept a partition that would give the Serbs about 51 percent of Bosnia's territory. The Bosniaks, however, under President Alija Izetbegovic, resisted settlement and pursued international sympathy through a fairly effective media campaign. Diplomatic efforts failed to resolve the crisis.

In February 1994, a Serb mortar attack on a Sarajevo market killed 68 people, precipitating increased Western action in Bosnia, including the downing of four Serb aircraft by NATO warplanes under Operation Deny Flight.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile, the gradually improving Bosnian army was making gains against the Bosnian Croats which, after a brief intervention by Tudjman's Croatian army, helped pave the way for a March 1994 agreement between Croats and Bosniaks on guidelines for a federated Bosnia, enabling the two sides to pool their strength against the Serbs. With Croat help, in October 1994, the Bosnian Army drove Serb-backed Muslim separatists out of Bihac. When Serb forces counterattacked into this UN Safe Area, NATO jets bombed them. The Serbs retaliated by taking UN peacekeepers hostage and using them as human "shields." Although the peacekeepers were eventually released, the Serbs would repeat this tactic in 1995 in response to escalating NATO airstrikes. In July, the situation would take a critical turn.

Warren Bass makes an interesting case that, in the spring of 1995, Washington "blundered into boldness," having unwittingly committed itself to intervention by approving Operational Plan (Oplan) 40104, which called for a NATO evacuation force to assist, should it become necessary, the withdrawal of UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Force), the UN peacekeeping mission already in Bosnia. Bass argues that



As the war worsened, the specter of Oplan 40104 loomed larger. The Serb massacres of thousands of Muslims in July 1995 in the UN-designated “safe areas” of Srebrenica and Zepa—the worst war crimes in Europe since those of the Nazis—made UNPROFOR’s ignominy complete. European countries participating in UNPROFOR began warning that they would soon pull their forces out, triggering what American policymakers referred to as the 40104 “doomsday machine”—intervention triggered by humiliation.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, in August, Tudjman’s Croatian Army launched a brutal campaign against Serbs in the Krajina. Within days, nearly 150,000 refugees were driven from land occupied by Serbs for hundreds of years. Bosnian Serbs resumed mortar attacks on Sarajevo, which triggered escalated NATO airstrikes. By September, the Croat-Muslim federation controlled just over half of Bosnia. More than 250,000 people had been killed in the fighting there, and half of the country’s prewar population of 4.4 million had become refugees. Exhausted, at least temporarily, the sides appeared ready to negotiate and the stage for Dayton was set.

## **Enduring Truths and the Logic of Intervention**

Troops in the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division (1AD), who would comprise the bulk of U.S. participation in NATO’s Implementation Force (IFOR), learned that they would likely deploy to Bosnia in October 1995. Immediately, a seminar was convened to educate division leaders on the situation in which they would soon find themselves.<sup>6</sup> A parade of intelligence officers, scholars, veterans of the UN effort in Bosnia, and others were the primary instructors in this crash course. It is well, now, to recall some of the things that were said then, as they turned out to be absolutely true. There is no reason whatsoever to believe that they will not continue to be so. These enduring truths included:

- ◆ Among the Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks, the Former Warring Factions, “there are no good guys and no bad guys.”
- ◆ Before the war, the ethnic harmony in Bosnian cities was not reflected in rural areas.
- ◆ Ethnic problems in Bosnia are territorial problems, not social problems.<sup>7</sup>
- ◆ Nationalism is not rational.<sup>8</sup>
- ◆ This was a war of warlords and generals; it was not a people’s war.
- ◆ Western politicians simply don’t have the answer. Even so, the goal to minimize conflict is a noble one.
- ◆ U.S. security interests at stake in Bosnia were:
  - ◆ to prevent the violence in Bosnia from spreading,
  - ◆ to prevent the collapse of Europe’s security structure, and
  - ◆ to define NATO’s role in the post-Cold War era.
- ◆ Bosnia, like Humpty Dumpty, cannot be put back together again.

Dr. William Perry, then U.S. Defense Secretary, echoed this rationale for NATO's intervention in Bosnia when he addressed the 1AD leadership in Bad Kreuznach, Germany, on 24 November 1995. He discussed three issues—*why* we were getting involved, *what* we were going to do, and *how long* we would be there.

The *why*, he explained, was founded on “iron logic.” He stated that the United States has *vital* interests in *Europe*, and that the war in Bosnia would threaten Europe (and, by extension, the United States) if it expanded. This would also be the first operation in years undertaken to *end* a war. Further, the opportunity to redefine NATO for the post-Cold War era had to be seized, and the United States had to assume its rightful leadership role in that process. Finally, the risks to U.S. forces would be minimized and the risks of *not* intervening in Bosnia were even greater.

As to the *what*, the mission would be to *implement* and then enforce the peace to provide a secure environment for nation re-building. Finally, as to *how long* we would be in Bosnia, Dr. Perry would commit to nothing more specific than “about a year,” though he did expect all U.S. troops to be out of Bosnia by early 1997, with any follow-on peacekeeping operation conducted by the Europeans themselves. Ultimately, however, the “litmus test of the impact of withdrawal on stability, and concomitantly, on nation rebuilding,” would determine the duration of NATO's involvement.

## Lessons Learned?

As always, the lessons learned about a particular episode depend on one's perspective. The challenge is to learn the correct lessons. We seem to thrive on looking at the same set of facts and drawing widely disparate conclusions. Domestic political partisanship must end where national security begins. Needed is focused debate on this national security issue that contributes to consensus on and, thereby, implementation of, policy decisions. Although we're not finished in Bosnia, some early lessons may be drawn. These lessons are applicable both to Bosnia and, very likely, to future, yet unimagined peace operations.<sup>9</sup>

**Peace cannot be forced on political leaders or people who don't want it (without potentially prohibitive investments of blood, treasure and time).** The failure of former warring factions to take advantage of the breathing space they've been afforded does not automatically constitute NATO's failure. Rather, any failure may ultimately be their own.

**Self-sustaining peace is more difficult to achieve if intervention to stop armed conflict occurs before there is a clear military decision.** Among the most common criticisms we heard in the early days of peace implementation was that “IFOR was too late, NATO should never have allowed the war to start in the first place,” or that “NATO arrived too early, it didn't let us finish the job.” These dual themes, rhetoric and bluster aside, were repeated frequently by military leaders of all three of the ethnic factions. Though the armies and people on all sides were tired of fighting, they weren't ready to give it up. Dayton ended the war before there was a clear military decision—no victor, no vanquished. Durable peace became all the more elusive once Dayton's details became widely known. As a result, an armistice condition, rather than real peace, exists in Bosnia today. On the positive side, no faction suffered the shame of total defeat, which should make more feasible peace with honor for the sides themselves, should they choose that course.

**The political will and consensus to do the hard right over the easier wrong is the only route to peace with honor for intervening nations, regardless of how noble the objective.** All along, our fundamental goal in Bosnia has been to achieve a self-sustaining peace. Peace with honor for the entities has been the foundation of NATO's efforts there. In the background, less obvious but no less important, has been peace with honor for NATO. Preserving NATO credibility, as much as any other single factor, has compelled us to stay the course in Bosnia. Failure to achieve a lasting peace in Bosnia, if that's the way it turns out, will be interpreted as failure only if NATO lacks the resolve to do everything necessary to bring peace about—even if it means the use of force and the casualties that might result. *If public and legislative support for a peace operation is so shallow that the military arm of an intervention is rendered impotent by the prospect of casualties, the operation should not be undertaken in the first place.*

There is no more room for half-stepping, politically or militarily, in peace operations than there is in high-intensity combat. In contemplating any future peace operation, the credibility of the intervening force should be a primary consideration across a spectrum of potential outcomes that ranges from success to failure. Likewise, inaction has a credibility pricetag. This critical issue should have been central to the debate over any possible role for NATO ground forces in Kosovo. What if there are casualties, even after unopposed entry? If casualties would render this, or any other future mission, unsustainable, it should not be undertaken.<sup>10</sup>

**Peacebuilding is a very long-term process.** Sustained political will and financial support are essential. If one or the other wanes, the mission becomes untenable. These are political, not military decisions. Ultimately, the most important element of any strategy is the political will to implement it. In peace operations, senior policymakers and heads of state must be committed to sustained, decisive action over the duration of the mission, not just during the periods of crisis.

**The ability to sustain military involvement in peacekeeping operations depends on the international security environment.** Those outside the military are only now coming to appreciate fully the cumulative effect of multiple, simultaneous peace operations on readiness. The ability to see a peace operation through presumes that there is no larger, more pressing security challenge elsewhere. It is doubtful that the international community has contemplated a strategy to cope with an unexpected withdrawal of NATO troops from Bosnia to respond to a crisis elsewhere. Along the same line, our sustained presence in Bosnia has a potentially decisive effect on what we are willing to do elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> The possibility of committing NATO ground forces to Kosovo is an excellent example of this phenomenon.

**The goals of a peace operation often defy translation into specific, obtainable military objectives.** Despite our clear and oft-stated preconditions for employing military force, we've not adhered to that guidance in our deployments to Somalia, Haiti or Bosnia. The Weinberger-Powell Doctrine<sup>12,13</sup> simply may not be applicable to peace operations. We have yet to determine a new set of criteria by which to judge the advisability of military employment *and its linkages* to other required components for successful peace operations (e.g., the United Nations, nongovernmental organizations, the International Police Task Force, etc.).

**The International Community, comprising government, nongovernment and private volunteer organizations, can be both ineffective and inefficient.** The outstanding, committed men and women of these organizations, in most cases, lack everything from direction and guidance to an ability to move and communicate across the country in which they are operating. Needed is a superstructure or headquarters to tie together the efforts of all these otherwise independent groups. In military terms, this superstructure would have the responsibility, authority and means to provide the command, control, communications and information necessary to integrate and synchronize the operations of the international community. The already-protracted duration of peace operations makes international community inefficacy unacceptable. The diversity of the military forces participating in NATO's peace operations in Bosnia has been mitigated by a single chain of command. The international community should not overlook that lesson.

## **The Way Ahead**

Clearly, there was a critical humanitarian dimension in NATO's decision to intervene in Bosnia—the CNN factor—as there was in Somalia and in Kosovo. It is equally clear that this mission has had, from its beginning, at least as much to do with holding NATO together as it did with the Bosnians themselves. It still does. NATO's credibility is on the line, which explains our willingness to persist in the mission despite clear indications that success may not be achievable under current conditions. The question becomes then, What must be done to move substantively toward a self-sustaining peace in Bosnia? We have three courses of action—maintain the status quo, including indefinite participation of NATO troops; cut our losses and withdraw; or take firm steps to reshape the conditions in a way that enables the next steps toward a lasting peace to be taken. The first option is untenable, mainly because sustained public and legislative support for the mission cannot be guaranteed. Moreover, we don't know what we don't know about future international security threats or crises. The risk of a resumption of hostilities in Bosnia, combined with NATO's loss of face, makes the second option equally insupportable. We are left, then, with the need for a concerted, comprehensive effort to set new conditions in and around Bosnia so that peace may take hold. In doing so, there are two critical actions that must be taken.

**Detach Milosevic and Tadjman from Bosnia's peace process.** No peace agreement stands a chance of succeeding without taking whatever steps are necessary to bring these two ultranationalists to heel. Until this is done, NATO is merely treating symptoms in Bosnia, while the real disease is in Belgrade and Zagreb. If diplomatic and economic measures are insufficient to this task, military action is appropriate. Milosevic and Tadjman must either become full partners in Bosnia's peace or their debilitating influence must be permanently diminished, and experience tells us that the former scenario is highly unlikely.

When diplomacy and economic sanctions fail, NATO must be prepared to use military force to achieve its political objectives. This is the key to peace with honor. If we're not ready to use force to deal with the real threats to regional stability (Tadjman and Milosevic, in this case), then we must reevaluate our definition of vital interests. Indeed, Tadjman and Milosevic have hindered peace in Bosnia much as Saddam Hussein has obstructed UN arms inspectors in Iraq. President Clinton's decision to seek alternatives to Saddam should similarly inform our policy in the Balkans. Further, in view of current NATO operations in

Kosovo, although the specific conditions in Bosnia and Kosovo are significantly different, as long as Slobodan Milosevic plays a potentially decisive role in achieving lasting peace in both areas, those two situations are inextricably linked.

**Convene Dayton II.** The peace accord initialed at Dayton in November 1995 accomplished much. Most significantly, it brought an end to armed conflict among the Serbs, Bosniaks and Croats. Without diminishing that achievement, however, the Accord has proven inadequate in bringing real peace to Bosnia. The Dayton Accord is fundamentally, if not fatally, flawed.

First, the Bosnian Serbs were never part of the Dayton negotiations. Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic represented their interests and signed the Accord on their behalf. As a result, Bosnian Serbs feel no obligation to abide by the agreement and have fought its implementation at every turn. (For their part, so have the Bosniaks and Croats; see enduring truth number one.)

Second, the Dayton Accord stipulates that Bosnia and Herzegovina will continue to exist as a single country consisting of two entities—the Federation and the Republika Srpska—under a shared, multiethnic national-level presidency. This provision exposes one of Dayton’s most fundamental weaknesses. The Federation, comprised of Bosniaks and Croats, is not a viable political entity. The wartime Bosniak-Croat alliance was based solely on the common Serb threat. Bitter fighting between the Bosniaks and Croats preceded their marriage of convenience and is reflected in their relations today. Unjustified is any hope that the three ethnic groups, with a depth of hatred toward one another that is incomprehensible to most Americans, could put their differences aside and cooperate in a multiethnic government. No ethnic group won the war and, since the end of the fighting, each of the three has been trying to “win the peace.”

Third, although the Dayton negotiators didn’t want to ratify Serb ethnic cleansing with the creation of an independent Serb state, this is, however, the effect achieved with the creation of the Republika Srpska (see enduring truth number three). Specifically, the Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL) is perceived by the entities as a “border,” with the concomitant impression of “nationhood.”<sup>14</sup> Even more important is Dayton’s failure to adequately deal with the military forces of the former warring factions. Instead of disarming and demilitarizing the factions, each was allowed to maintain “balanced and stable defense force levels at the lowest numbers consistent with their respective security.”<sup>15</sup> In other words, Dayton allowed the entities to impose “voluntary limits on military manpower.”<sup>16</sup> The accord created a Standing Committee on Military Matters under the presidency, envisioning an eventual common defense policy. The committee hasn’t been up to the task. Arguably, with an “over-the-horizon” security guarantee from NATO, Bosnia doesn’t need standing military forces to dissuade possible land grabs by either Croatia or Serbia. A multiethnic police force, trained and equipped in accordance with internationally recognized standards, is adequate for law enforcement and domestic stability.

Finally, the Dayton Accord postponed a decision on the extremely contentious issue of which entity would control the strategically critical city of Brcko, which sits astride the three-mile-wide passageway between the divided halves of the Republic of Srpska. Brcko also provides access to the Sava and Danube Rivers and Central Europe. Before the war the

city's population was comprised mainly of Bosniaks and Croats, but the Serbs ethnically cleansed it during the war.

Because no agreement on the "ownership" of Brcko could be achieved at Dayton, the issue was handed to an Arbitral Tribunal, led by American attorney Roberts Owen. Serbs and Bosniaks alike have consistently threatened the resumption of hostilities if the decision didn't go in their favor, and a final decision on the city had been postponed until March 5, 1999.

That decision, really the only one practical, established Brcko as a special autonomous district with a single multiethnic local government. The newly created Brcko district, which has been under Serb control since fighting stopped in 1995, is also to be demilitarized, and implementation of the Dayton Accord will remain the responsibility of an international supervisor, currently retired U.S. Ambassador Robert Farrand.<sup>17</sup>

In announcing this decision on Brcko, it was made clear that the severe, consistent anti-Dayton policies and actions of Bosnian Serb President Nikolai Poplasen, a Milosevic protégé, precluded a decision to give exclusive control of Brcko to the Serbs. High Representative Carlos Westendorp<sup>18</sup> simultaneously dismissed Poplasen from office. Moreover, citing the Federation's continuing resistance to implementing the Dayton Accords, it was also made explicitly clear that "if there should be serious noncompliance or a gross pattern of misbehavior by one entity or the other, [Brcko] could move from being a special district with condominium sovereignty to being part of the other entity entirely."<sup>19</sup>

In short, the Brcko decision was a clear slap at Milosevic and anti-Dayton Bosnian Serb hard-liners. It remains to be seen what impact this decision will have on both politics in Bosnia and, in broader terms, ongoing negotiations over Kosovo. In effect, however, Brcko has now formally become a microcosm of the overall challenges of implementing multiethnic rule in the country.

With nearly four years of experience to draw from, it is time for Dayton II—free of influence from either Milosevic or Tudjman and, this time, with Bosnian Serbs at the table. Each ethnic group must have an equal stake in Bosnia's future and commensurate responsibility for it. Dayton II would also include appropriate members of the international community. At a minimum, the result of Dayton II would be a fresh affirmation by each participant of its commitment to implement the Accord. It would also fix clearly the responsibilities of all parties, address the most contentious issues in identifying concrete steps to a durable peace, and outline associated implementation timelines. For its part, NATO should insist on agreement by the three sides, but not necessarily the terms of the agreement. The Serbs, Bosniaks and Croats themselves must be compelled to identify areas of practical compromise—a modus vivendi. The key issues to be readdressed at Dayton II must include:

- ◆ a commitment to implement the Brcko decision.
- ◆ a genuine commitment by all three ethnic groups to enable the return of refugees to their homes, including the return of an agreed number of Serbs to Croatia.
- ◆ a single constitution for the country.

- ◆ a genuine acceptance by the entities of the rule of law and their responsibility to provide a safe, secure environment for nation rebuilding. This includes a commitment to a multiethnic police force that operates in accordance with internationally accepted law enforcement standards. Indeed, combined with sufficient economic reconstruction to discourage a resumption of armed conflict, this is the key to the withdrawal of NATO troops from Bosnia.
- ◆ a commitment to move ahead with accountability for war criminals, particularly former Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, as these are the two indictees who really matter in terms of Dayton.
- ◆ a blueprint for a single national military. An even better alternative to a single national military, which is too loosely defined by the Dayton Accord, would be disarmament and demilitarization—a removal of the means to wage war. Every dollar spent on sustaining the militaries is lost to economic and social reconstruction programs.
- ◆ a viable plan for equitable economic reconstruction. In the end, economic incentive may be the most compelling reason for the three ethnic groups not to resume fighting, as well as the key to the process of real social reconciliation.

Before reopening Dayton negotiations, we should keep firmly in mind that, given the enormous contrast in frames of reference, there are significant differences among the goals of the three ethnic groups and what we in the West would want for them. A genuine agreement among the Serbs, Bosniaks and Croats on any issue, however, is better than a solution imposed by the West. Indeed, the matters on the table are Bosnian issues that demand Bosnian solutions (see enduring truth number four). Again, *we should compel agreement among the sides, including the implementation requirements and timelines, but not necessarily the terms of agreements themselves*, even if they fall short of our expectations for the country. A less-than-desirable agreement is preferable to either the resumption of hostilities or an open-ended commitment of NATO troops.

To move the peace process ahead, the contact group<sup>20</sup> must devise a strategy both to *compel agreement* and enforce the *conditions and timelines required to implement that agreement*. Equally important is the *political will* to implement the strategy, which should resemble a “carrot and stick” approach applied with surgical precision. The critical elements of such a strategy might include economic aid as the carrot and dismantlement of the military as the stick. In any event, the strategy must contain clear, direct linkages to measurable progress toward implementation goals and timelines, and be practiced with due alacrity and utter objectivity. Again, most important is the political will to implement the strategy. If the Bosnia problem is important to solve, it demands as high a level of attention by heads of state in quasi-peace as it received in war.

It is no accident that the issues outlined above also comprise most of the elements of NATO’s exit strategy. Realistically, Dayton II will also likely fall short of achieving our ultimate goals in Bosnia, but it is necessary now to move the peace process forward. Eventually, a Dayton III or even IV may be required. Peace in Bosnia is a process, not an event. Nevertheless, each real step forward allows us to reassess and refine the requirement for NATO troops there.

## Epilogue

In sum, our efforts in Bosnia to date have done great good. The fighting has stopped, much of the physical war damage has been repaired, children are back in schools, and farmers are back in the fields. Nevertheless, regardless of how noble, these are superficial achievements. What exists now is the “absence of war,” an armistice, which is quite different from real peace. The psychological scars of the war remain fresh—hardly a family was untouched, either by the loss of a home or loved ones, or both. The ethnic groups still refer to one another pejoratively as Chetniks (Serbs), Ustasha (Croats), and Turks (Bosniaks), anachronisms from World War II and earlier. It will take generations for the hatreds to subside and, arguably, the historical wounds will never truly heal. It is unlikely that Western patience will outlast ethnic animosity; it is now time to move toward a peace the Bosnians themselves define, even if it appears unpalatable by Western standards.

The disruptive, counterproductive influence of neighboring Presidents Tudjman and Milosevic must be negated, one way or another. Dayton II should be convened to revitalize and reaffirm the peace process begun by the Dayton Accords. These two actions, in full view of a now first-hand understanding of Bosnia’s “enduring truths” and our three-plus years of peacemaking experience there would be positive steps toward self-sustaining peace and, ultimately, the SFOR’s withdrawal.

We have learned that many aspects of complex emergencies may not be best addressed through military measures. Furthermore, given the level of U.S. interests at stake in most of these situations, we recognize that U.S. forces should not be deployed in an operation indefinitely.

— **Presidential Decision Directive 56 White Paper, May 1997**



## **Endnotes**

1. The following summary is derived from a variety of sources, including: Dusko Doder, "Yugoslavia: New War, Old Hatreds, *Foreign Policy* 91 (Summer 1993); Richard Bondi, "What's Going on in (Ex-) Yugoslavia, Anyway?!", *Charlottesville Review* (Charlottesville, Virginia), 16 September 1991; Steven W. Sowards, "The Yugoslav Civil War," Lecture 25 in *Twenty-Five Lectures on Modern Balkan History (The Balkans in*

*the Age of Nationalism*), found on-line at <http://www.lib.msu.edu/sowards/balkan/lect25.htm>; “A Complete Summary of the War in Yugoslavia,” found on-line at <http://www.zzapp.org>; and various documents from the U.S. Department of State found on-line at <http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eur/bosnia>.

2. Emphasis added.
3. Doder, “Yugoslavia: New War, Old Hatreds,” p. 20.
4. NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control System (AWACS) aircraft began monitoring operations in October 1992 in support of UN Security Council Resolution 781, which established a no-fly zone over Bosnia. On 31 March 1993, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 816, which authorized enforcement of that no-fly zone, extended the ban to cover flight by all fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft except those authorized by UNPROFOR, and authorized UN member states to take all necessary measures to ensure compliance. A NATO enforcement operation called Deny Flight began on 12 April 1993. On 28 February 1994, NATO aircraft shot down four warplanes violating the no-fly zone over Bosnia. This was the first military engagement ever undertaken by the alliance.
5. Warren Bass, “The Triage of Dayton,” *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 77, Number 5 (September/October 1998), p. 100.
6. This was the first of several unique training events for the Division in preparation for deployment. Following traditional livefire exercises and gunnery qualification on Grafenwoehr ranges, a myriad of specific peace operations tasks were taught at the individual soldier- to crew/small unit-levels. Subjects included everything from mine awareness and the Rules of Engagement to the conduct of checkpoints and crowd control techniques. A mission rehearsal exercise (dubbed “Mountain Eagle”) at the Combat Maneuver Training Center in Hohenfels, Germany, schooled entire brigades in the emerging art of peace implementation. High-intensity combat exercises were also included, just in case the former warring factions chose not to cooperate. This superb training contributed directly and significantly to the IFOR’s success in Bosnia and, improved steadily from lessons learned through practical experience, has served as the model for all units who have subsequently deployed to the region.
7. Truth be told, this is an oversimplification. The problems in Bosnia are a volatile combination of territory, ethnicity, religion and history.
8. This appearance of “irrationality” is caused by the vast disparity among the three sides’ frames of reference, and is compounded by the differences in the frames of reference between them and the West.
9. This paper was written prior to NATO’s intervention in Kosovo. Lessons learned in Bosnia, as it turns out, have been equally applicable to that area as the Alliance expands its involvement in the Balkans.
10. Any debate over a possible ground invasion into Kosovo was truncated by the President’s public “decision” not to consider that option. In retrospect, there appears to be a consensus that ruling out a ground option was unwise and probably prolonged the air campaign. Indeed, another emerging “lesson learned” from Kosovo is that airstrikes

against Milosevic's troops in Kosovo were ineffective until the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) launched its ground offensive on 26 May 1999. Now, however, the real effectiveness of the KLA's efforts, and the concomitant destruction of Milosevic's formations by NATO air forces, have become a subject of considerable controversy. In the end, the real lesson of this phase of the conflict may be that professional, sophisticated air forces must work with professional, properly equipped, well-trained ground forces to achieve real effectiveness and synergy in joint and combined operations. These "debates" have taken the focus off of the President's original decision to forsake a ground campaign. Assuming the Serb Army fought with more intensity than its Iraqi counterparts in 1991, an invasion likely would have been costly in terms of casualties—and the support of neither Congress nor the American people could be assured as the administration groped to justify NATO's military intervention in a sovereign country. (Milosevic did NATO leaders a favor when he intensified his ethnic cleansing campaign against Kosovar Albanians, allowing NATO heads of state to use the "human factor" to muster public support for a military intervention already underway.) Moreover, serious pursuit of a NATO ground campaign may well have fractured the alliance, a potential cost the U.S. administration was unwilling to risk. Time will ultimately judge the wisdom of NATO's engagement in Kosovo. Once again, however, NATO troops are left trying to win peace, this time without even the pretense of a peace accord between the still-warring sides. Most important, at the beginning of this open-ended operation, the lesson of "sustainable political will" has been ignored. There is no consensus, either in the United States or in NATO, on how much blood, treasure or time Americans or their allies are willing to invest to achieve their political ends. We would hope for the best, but "hope" is a poor course of action and no source of optimism.

11. The military campaign in Yugoslavia was, for the U.S. Air Force, extremely resource intensive, resembling the level of intensity one would expect in a Major Theater War (MTW). Had there been a ground invasion, the same likely could have been said for the U.S. Army. Two key points derive. First, our thinking about MTWs as "large-scale, cross-border aggression" may be too narrow for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It may be more appropriate to think of MTWs in terms of the resources and commitment they require to solve. Second, as we broaden and deepen our involvement in peace operations around the world, our ability to fight and win two nearly simultaneous MTWs is questioned by some. That capability is based on the premise that, if necessary, we would disengage from "less-essential" operations like Bosnia and Kosovo and redeploy formations to MTW theaters. The difficulty in doing this, politically and physically, should not be underestimated. At the same time, NATO's campaign for Kosovo underscored the fact that the United States is disconcertingly shallow in certain high-demand, low-density capabilities. There is sound and compelling logic for the United States to maintain its two, nearly-simultaneous MTW strategy. It follows that the U.S. Armed Forces should have the capabilities and resources needed to fulfill this strategy.
12. Spurred by America's Vietnam experience, then-Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger outlined in a 1984 speech six criteria for the employment of U.S. forces abroad. These "tests" were formalized in Secretary Weinberger's 1986 *Report to the President and Congress*, and stipulated that:

- ◆ Forces should not be committed unless vital U.S. interests are at stake.
- ◆ The commitment of troops should be made with sufficient numbers and support to win.
- ◆ Political and military objectives must be clearly defined.
- ◆ The relationship between U.S. objectives and forces must be continually reassessed and adjusted accordingly.
- ◆ The use of force must have the clear support of the American people and Congress.
- ◆ The use of force should be an option of last resort, after all other means have failed.
- ◆ After the end of the Cold War and in view of U.S. military successes in Grenada, Panama and the Persian Gulf, U.S. doctrine on the application of force was modified. Known as the Powell Doctrine, it espoused four criteria:
  - ◆ Force should be used only as a last resort.
  - ◆ Military force should be used only when there is a clear-cut military objective.
  - ◆ Military force should be used only when we can measure that the military objective has been achieved.
  - ◆ Military force should be used only in an overwhelming fashion.

13. Although similar to the Weinberger Doctrine, the Powell Doctrine clearly rejects the notion that military force should only be used in pursuit of “vital” U.S. interests. For more on this discussion see Edwin J. Arnold, Jr., “The Use of Military Power in Pursuit of National Interests,” *Parameters* (Spring 1994), pp. 4-12.
14. The IEBL was envisaged by the Dayton Accord to provide a boundary between the two entities, with freedom of movement by all citizens across it, much like the boundaries between states in America. The advent of the common license plate in Bosnia has improved the situation along the IEBL, but not enough to overcome either its perception as a border or restrictions by both sides on freedom of movement.
15. The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Annex 1B, in *Bosnia and Herzegovina Essential Texts*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition, Office of the High Representative, January 1998, p. 28.
16. *Ibid.*
17. Because of the contentious nature of the Brcko issue and repeated violations of the Dayton Accord, the International Supervisor was created under the Office of the High Representative (OHR) to supervise the implementation of the provisions of the Accord there.
18. As High Representative, Mr. Westendorp is charged in Annex 10 of the Dayton Accord with overseeing its implementation. He is the final authority on the interpretation of the Bosnia Peace Agreement and is responsible for all matters regarding implementation of the civilian aspects of the Accord.

19. Comment by an unidentified Senior Administration Official during a background briefing on Dayton Accord Implementation, U.S. Department of State, March 5, 1999.
20. Originally comprising France, Germany, Russian, the United Kingdom and the United States, and subsequently joined by Italy, the Contact Group was established in 1994 to broker a peace agreement between the Federation and Bosnian Serbs and remains active in policy formulation for the Balkans.