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**THE UNITED STATES AND PEACE OPERATIONS IN BOSNIA
FOREIGN POLICY VICTORY OR DEFEAT**

BY **DTIC QUALITY INSPECTED 2**

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USAWC Strategic Research Project

The United States and Peace Operations in Bosnia

Foreign Policy Victory or Defeat?

by

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ABSTRACT

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The author contends the United States faces a major foreign policy defeat in Bosnia. He examines why the US sent troops to Bosnia, what the objectives were, whether the administration followed its own guidance, and what the probable outcome will be. The author concludes the Clinton administration is perched on the horns of a dilemma. The President will be forced to choose between breaking his promise to the American people and extending the presence of US ground forces beyond one year or bringing them home and failing to achieve US objectives. In the first case, relations with Congress will become increasingly antagonistic and public trust will be damaged. In the second case, virtually every national interest President Clinton sought to enhance will be diminished. The author finds superficial harmony between the current deployment of 20,000 US troops to Bosnia and national strategy documents but also logical inconsistencies between withdrawing US forces in one year and attaining US objectives. The close identification of the United States with the Bosnian peace accord and implementation plan means the US will also be identified with failure of the plan.

The Clinton administration's most ambitious foreign policy initiative to date has been to broker a peace agreement for the Bosnian conflict and deploy 20,000 US ground troops as part of a multinational peacekeeping force (IFOR) to help implement the agreement. In sending those troops, the President chose to commit scarce national resources to a cause that enjoys marginal support from the American public. This paper explores four issues in an attempt to achieve a higher level of understanding of what the Bosnian initiative means to the United States. The first subject explored is national interest--why did the United States send troops to Bosnia? Second, what are the US objectives in Bosnia? Third, in sending troops to Bosnia, did the administration follow its own published strategy guidance? Finally, what is the likely outcome of the Bosnian initiative?

This author contends the United States faces a major foreign policy defeat in Bosnia. At best, the Clinton administration is perched on the horns of a dilemma. The President will be forced to choose between breaking his promise to the American people and extending the presence of US ground forces beyond one year or bringing them home and letting Bosnia descend back into chaos. In the first case, relations with Congress will become increasingly antagonistic and public trust will be damaged. In the second case, virtually every national interest President Clinton sought to enhance will be diminished. While there is superficial harmony between the current deployment of 20,000 US troops to Bosnia and strategy guidelines for doing so, there are also logical inconsistencies between the stated intention to withdraw US forces in one year and attainment of the United States' multi-level objectives. The close identification of the United States with the Bosnian peace accord and implementation plan

means the US will also be identified with failure of the plan. Indications, at this point, are that such an event is likely.

The President's Speech, November 27, 1995--Why, What, How

President Clinton addressed the nation on Monday evening, November 27, 1995, to tell the American people why it was necessary to send American troops to Bosnia and what their mission would be.¹ President Clinton's remarks can be classified as falling into three fundamental categories: values, interests, and mission particulars--what our troops would do and how they would do it. Significantly, as he sought to explain the US course of action in Bosnia, he invoked the theme of American values first and more often than he spoke of other issues. Based on the President's speech, one would suspect defense of American values is at the core of US policy in Bosnia.

In fact, President Clinton's remarks to the American public were dominated by values based references. Little more than 100 words into his speech, he cited the vision held by our nation's founders as the essence of our values, "Our ideal is life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."² He used potent word pictures to describe the suffering caused by the war and, no less than three times, Mr. Clinton simply told the American public, "It is the right thing to do."³ He claimed that American ideals are becoming universal saying, ". . . America's ideals--liberty, democracy and peace--are, more and more, the ideals of humanity."⁴ The President explained the mission in terms of upholding those ideals immediately following his opening remarks: "In fulfilling this mission, we will have the chance to help stop the killing of innocent civilians, and especially children, . . ."⁵ Perhaps the most poignant word picture offered by Mr. Clinton in justification of the US mission occurred at mid-speech:

Implementing the peace agreement in Bosnia can end the terrible suffering of the Bosnian people--the warfare, the mass executions, the ethnic cleansing, the campaigns of rape and terror. Let us never forget: one quarter of a million men, women and children have been shelled, shot and tortured to death. Two million people--half of Bosnia's populations--were forced from their homes and into a miserable life as refugees. These faceless numbers hide millions of personal tragedies. Each of the war's victims was a mother or a daughter, a father or a son, a brother of a sister. Now, American leadership has created the chance to implement the peace agreement--and stop the suffering.⁶

The graphic images conjured by the President's words no doubt stirred many Americans and indeed convinced them that it was the right thing to do.

However, Mr. Clinton cited other national interests, as well--maintaining US leadership of NATO, maintaining NATO's strength and credibility, and promoting stability in Europe. The President directly referred to American leadership 20 times during his speech and most of those references were in the context of leading NATO. Many of these references implied US leadership of NATO and the strength of the alliance itself would erode unless we participated in the implementation force. While stability of the region was also a clear concern, President Clinton referenced that issue only five times. At one point, the President blended all of his themes for the evening into a few short sentences:

If we're not there, NATO will not be there. The peace will collapse. The war will reignite. The slaughter of innocents will begin again. A conflict that already has claimed so many victims could spread like poison throughout the region and eat away at Europe's stability, and erode our partnership with our European allies.⁷

Having told the American public why they must send forces to Bosnia, the President proceeded to explain how this would be done.

The remainder of the President's speech dealt with details of the mission--what was to be accomplished and how the United States would use its troops. The President defined the mission simply: "Our troops will make sure each side withdraws its forces behind the front lines--and keeps them there. They will maintain the cease fire to prevent the war from accidentally starting again . . . Our Joint Chiefs of Staff have concluded that this mission should

and will take about one year."⁸ He addressed the issue of command and control: "American troops will take orders from the American general who commands NATO."⁹ He explained preparation of the troops: "They will be heavily armed and thoroughly trained."¹⁰ Lastly, he made it clear that rules of engagement would not pose an impediment to self defense: "They will have the authority to respond immediately--and the training and equipment to respond with overwhelming force--to any threat to their safety or violations of the military provisions of the peace agreement."¹¹ Having described a seemingly simple mission and a timetable for completion, the President told the American people, "In Bosnia, we can succeed because the mission is clear and limited. Our troops are strong and very well prepared."¹² By the end of the evening, President Clinton had addressed why our troops must go to Bosnia, what their mission was and how they would accomplish their mission. Four national interests were threatened: values, leadership of NATO, the power and prestige of the NATO alliance, and the stability of Europe.

Previously, various administration officials and foreign policy experts had cited each of the interests addressed in the President's speech. Their comments, however, had no unifying theme: suggesting the reality of the situation was more complex than the President made it sound. The most often officially cited interest for US involvement, prior to the president's speech, was to limit the war that would inevitably widen if US resources were not brought to bear. Secretary of State Warren Christopher expressed his fears, "The lights so recently lit in Sarajevo would once again be extinguished, death and starvation would once again spread across the Balkans . . . threatening the region and perhaps Europe itself."¹³ Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott speculated on how that might occur, "Albania could intervene to protect the

ethnic Albanians who live in the Serbian southern province of Kosovo. Warfare there could unleash a massive flow of refugees into Macedonia . . . potentially drawing in . . . on opposite sides Greece and Turkey."¹⁴ Two days before peace talks began, US peace envoy Richard Holbrooke spoke of values: "We knew from the beginning that Srebrenica was a war crime of historic proportions. The nature of the crime is clear. Each detail only increases our horror. . ."¹⁵ Henry Kissinger offered the most compelling argument when he suggested the true national interest extended beyond the conflict proper to alliance damage, "if America failed to back an agreement it had negotiated on behalf of NATO."¹⁶ President Clinton, as we have seen, chose to focus on values when making his case to the American people--a human issue easily understood and not likely to be debated.

The Dayton Peace Accords--US Objectives in Bosnia

The President's speech, designed to convince the American people that sending troops to Bosnia was the right thing to do, said relatively little about US objectives. In a single paragraph of his speech, the President proclaimed that the three belligerents had made a commitment to peace, agreed to preserve Bosnia as a single state, investigate and prosecute war criminals, protect the human rights of its citizens, and build a democratic future.¹⁷ To determine fully US objectives in Bosnia, one must examine the Dayton Peace Accords.

The Dayton Peace Accords consist of the "General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina," (GFA) and 11 lengthy annexes--each an agreement in its own right.¹⁸ The accords are signed by the Republic of Bosnia Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. One would expect the accords to reflect US objectives, since US diplomats, including Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Deputy Secretary of State

Richard Holbrooke, played key roles in bringing the belligerents to the table and in drafting the document. If the accords' objectives are fully realized, US interests should be served. The end state conditions should be consistent with our values, enhance the United States' leadership role in NATO, create the perception that NATO is as strong as or stronger than it was before the Bosnia mission, and add to the stability of Europe.

Annex 4 to the GFA is entitled "Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina." The new constitution calls for a tolerant, democratic, pluralistic society with a bicameral legislature, a presidency and guaranteed rights without discrimination on any ground including sex, race, color, language, religion, national origin, and many more. The preamble for the constitution declares that the people desire "to promote the general welfare and economic growth through the protection of private property and the promotion of a market economy."¹⁹ While reflective of US values and economic philosophy, this is a tall order for peoples with a long history of inter-ethnic warfare, no democratic tradition, and 40 years of communist rule. Such a country, were it to emerge, would indeed enhance the prestige of the United States and NATO.

The constitution, in essence, creates a new state which assumes the UN seat of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina is named Bosnia and Herzegovina. It consists of two political entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a Muslim-Croatian federation, and the Republika Srpska, a Serbian republic. The ethnic ratio of legislators is prescribed at 1:1:1--Muslim:Serbian:Croatian. The presidency is not one person but a triumvirate with a Muslim, Serbian, and Croatian. The Chair of the Presidency for the first election will be the individual who receives the most votes. The method of selecting the Chair of the Presidency beyond the first election remains to be worked out. There are constitutional procedures whereby

any of the three ethnic groups can prevent passage of legislation if they feel threatened by such legislation. Considering the brutal nature of the war just fought, it would be a true triumph of ideals and intellect for this political arrangement to function.

The GFA enhances regional (European) stability in several ways. GFA, Article X provides for mutual recognition of borders and sovereignty between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is important as it is widely held that President Milosovic of Serbia, the largest entity of what is now called the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, encouraged Bosnian Serb rebellion in an effort to create a greater Serbia.²⁰ If the new Bosnia and Herzegovina survives, this pledge of mutual recognition may prevent a future war or at least provide the UN a starting point for mediating a future conflict. Other aspects of the General Framework Agreement address stability, as well.

Annex 1B to the GFA, entitled "Agreement on Regional Stabilization," focuses on creating an arms balance in the region of the former Yugoslavia. The signatories must reach agreements on the lowest arms level consistent with security requirements in certain categories of military equipment. Should the parties fail to agree on those limits within 180 days of signing, the agreement prescribes an arms ratio of 5:2:2 (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia : Croatia : Bosnia). The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is allowed to retain 75% of current holdings with Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina each allowed 30% of Yugoslavia's current holdings. This agreement also specifies the level of arms allowed within Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and The Republika Srpska must have equal armament levels. The fundamental principal is that the conflict is less likely to recur with levels of armaments sufficient for defense but insufficient to mount an offense.

The majority of the necessary physical and societal construction work is to be accomplished by civilian agencies. Much of this aspect of the peace agreement is spelled out in annexes 10 and 11 to the GFA. Annex 10, entitled "Agreement on Civilian Implementation of the Peace," simply agrees that there shall be a High Representative, appointed by the UN Security Council, who shall be the final arbiter in deciding matters of implementation. The High Representative and his staff and their families shall be accorded the same rights and privileges enjoyed by corresponding members of diplomatic staffs in accordance with the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations. The High Representative will chair a Joint Civilian Commission in Bosnia and Herzegovina and may establish other such commissions at local levels as he deems appropriate. The High Representative is currently Mr. Carl Bildt, a former Swedish Prime Minister.

Annex 11, entitled "Agreement on International Police Task Force," establishes an international police task force (IPTF) whose commissioner is appointed by the Secretary General of the UN. The IPTF commissioner receives his guidance from the High Representative. The main functions of the IPTF are to monitor, observe, train, and inspect law enforcement activities. They can also assist by joining the local police force in their duties if the IPTF deems it appropriate.

Tellingly, annex 1A, entitled "Agreement on the Military Aspects of the Peace Settlement," is nearly three times as long as annexes 10 and 11 together. This is discomfiting because lasting peace must come from civil reform not military separation. Annex 1A and its attached letters define IFOR's obligations and privileges and, in its first paragraph, states "a period of approximately one year"²¹ as the expected duration of its presence. Annex 1A is

specific in its provisions, leaving little to interpretation and clearly states that military force will be used if necessary to enforce its provisions. In short, annex 1A is a well defined military mission whereas annexes 10 and 11 lack the same degree of clarity and specificity.

Taking the totality of the General Framework Agreement into consideration, the US objectives in Bosnia appear to be none other than creating a pluralistic, multi-ethnic democracy, respectful of human rights, with a market economy that enjoys and welcomes peaceful relations with its regional neighbors. By brokering a peace agreement where previous efforts have failed and then leading the effort to enforce the peace, the United States gains in international prestige and remains firmly in control of the NATO alliance. The alliance itself is seen as a force with the will and capability to engage beyond its traditional bounds of defending NATO territory, thus enhancing the world's perception of NATO potency. Successful creation of a Bosnia Herzegovina that is a multi-ethnic, democratic, market economy would be a triumph of American values on a world scale. Lastly, successfully reducing armament levels to limit offensive capability will decrease the attractiveness of military solutions to regional problems thereby improving the stability of Europe.

The Underpinnings of Strategy--The NSS and the NMS

Thus far we have examined why President Clinton sent troops to Bosnia; that is, which national interests the President said were threatened. We also investigated the Dayton Peace Accords to determine what the US objectives are in Bosnia. Our next inquiry delves into the strategic basis of US actions in Bosnia.

The Clinton administration published its strategy for leading the United States into the 21st century in February, 1995. The document, entitled A National Security Strategy of

Engagement and Enlargement (NSS), defines the challenges and opportunities the United States faces in the post cold war world. The NSS provides the foundation upon which other mutually supporting strategies build. One such strategy document is The National Military Strategy of the United States of America, (NMS). The two companion documents thoughtfully address the twin issues of when and how the United States should commit military forces to advance and enhance the nation's security. Failure to adhere to NSS and NMS guidelines increases the attendant risk associated with foreign policy initiatives and may ultimately result in failed policy. Therefore, one would expect the administration's Bosnia initiative to fully conform with those guidelines.

The author accepts the validity of the NSS and NMS and focuses on those areas where the Bosnian reality diverges from those carefully constructed strategy templates. The reader should be aware, however, that the NSS was published in February, 1995--well after the Clinton administration became involved in attempts to resolve the Bosnian conflict. Therefore, the language of the NSS may have been colored by an anticipated need for direct involvement in any future Bosnian peace settlement.

No one who listened to President Clinton on the night of November 27, 1995 should have been surprised that he chose to emphasize values as the dominant theme of his appeal to the American people. President Clinton unmistakably established a values based justification for foreign policy initiatives in his preface to the NSS. In fact, he placed protection of human rights on a higher plane than sovereignty itself.

Our global interests and historic ideals impel us to oppose those who would endanger the survival or well being of their peaceful neighbors. Nations should be able to expect that their borders and their sovereignty will always be secure. At the same time, this does not mean we or the international community must tolerate gross violations of human rights within those borders.²²

President Clinton's values based focus on November 27th provided affirmation that these were more than mere words. In fact, President Clinton's speech reflected the NSS in remarkable detail.

The National Security Strategy

Section II of the NSS, which explains the US strategy, identifies three primary strategic objectives: enhancing our security, promoting prosperity at home, and promoting democracy. Maintaining a strong defense capability is an element of enhancing our security. To be strong, US forces must be trained and ready to perform a variety of tasks. Within the context of the NSS, the Bosnian mission is categorized as a peace operation--one of the tasks US military forces must prepare for to support engagement and enlargement:

When our interests call for it, the United States must also be prepared to participate in multilateral efforts to resolve regional conflicts and bolster new democratic governments. Thus our forces must be ready to participate in peacekeeping, peace enforcement and other operations in support of these objectives.²³

Therefore, the NSS clearly envisioned the need for peace operations similar to Bosnia. The difficulty comes in defining at what point, "our interests call for it."

In a subsection entitled "Deciding When and How to Employ US Forces," the NSS explains that three levels of national interest may merit the use of military force: vital, important, and humanitarian. The same subsection defines a vital interest as, ". . . interests which are of a broad, overriding importance to the survival, security and vitality of our national entity--the defense of US territory, citizens, allies and economic well-being."²⁴ An important interest is one, "where interests at stake do not affect our national survival, but they do affect importantly our national well-being and *the character of the world in which we live* (italics added by author)."²⁵ Having thrown open the door of military involvement to such a broad range of affairs, the NSS

clearly qualifies the use of that force as being, ". . . dictated first and foremost by our national interests."²⁶ Examples of areas that most affect our national interests are identified: "areas where we have a substantial economic interest or commitments to allies, and areas where there is a potential to generate substantial refugee flows into our nation or our allies."²⁷ In the text of his speech, the President identified the stability of Europe as a vital national interest and told the American public the war had generated 2 million refugees.²⁸ In 1993, the President had made a commitment to our NATO allies pledging 25,000 ground troops to enforce any future peace agreement reached in Bosnia.²⁹ Therefore, Bosnia is, by NSS definition, an area that most affects our national interests.

Commitment of military force is a weighty matter and the NSS poses several difficult questions in all cases where the use of military force is contemplated:

In every case, however, we will consider several critical questions before committing military force: Have we considered non-military means that offer a reasonable chance of success? Is there a clearly defined, reasonably achievable mission? What is the environment of risk we are entering? What is needed to achieve our goals? What are the potential costs--both human and financial--of the engagement? Do we have reasonable assurance of support from the American people and their elected representatives? Do we have timelines and milestones that will reveal the extent of success or failure, and in either case, do we have an exit strategy?³⁰

The issue of public support is so critical, that it is repeated elsewhere in stand alone text: ". . . the United States cannot long sustain a fight without the support of the public. This is true for humanitarian and other non-traditional interventions, as well as war."³¹ If one accepts the validity of the NSS, one can then assume that given the preconditions of national interest, public support, and satisfactory answers to the seven questions posed above, military force is indeed appropriate and likely to succeed.

How to Employ Force--The NMS

In contrast to the NSS, the NMS deals primarily with the "how to" questions of military force. It offers guidelines aimed at improving the prospects for military success. The NMS envisions the use of military forces as occurring across a spectrum of situations starting with normal peacetime engagement. The second level of the spectrum is deterrence and conflict prevention and the third level is fighting wars. The significance of this classification with respect to the Bosnian situation is that peacekeeping is a subset of peacetime engagement and peace enforcement as a subset of deterrence and conflict prevention.

Peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations are similar in nature and share similar guidance. The NMS provides the following peacekeeping guidance: "When the United States does participate, we will follow the guidelines of Presidential Decision Directive 25, to include seeking a clear delineation of the objectives of each operation, ensuring an unbroken chain of command to the President, and ensuring rules of engagement to protect our forces and permit the proper execution of assigned tasks."³² The peace enforcement guidelines also stress objective:

- ... when significant US forces are directed to participate in a major peace enforcement operation likely to involve combat, our guidelines will continue to be to:
 - Commit sufficient forces to achieve clearly defined objectives;
 - Plan to achieve those objectives decisively; and
 - Reassess and adjust, as necessary, the size, composition, and disposition of our forces to achieve our objectives.³³

Once again, as in peacekeeping, peace enforcement guidelines also stress command and control of US forces: "During peace enforcement operations, command and control arrangements are critical. Ordinarily in such instances, a US command will be established or the mission will be

conducted through a competent, established regional organization such as NATO or an ad hoc coalition."³⁴

Did the Administration Follow Its Own Guidelines?

Comparing the guidance found in the NSS and NMS with what President Clinton told the American people on the evening of November 27, 1995, one finds superficial harmony, but also troubling inconsistencies. Perhaps, the most troubling inconsistency was the lack of public support both before and after the President's speech. Although the President cited what he held as vital and important interests in Bosnia--European stability, NATO's strength, US leadership of NATO--Congress and the public were not convinced.

If one accepts the notion that the will of the people is reflected through their congressional representatives, public support prior to the President's address was shallow indeed. Reflecting an appreciation of the danger of actually requesting congressional approval prior to ordering the deployment, the administration alternated between assuring critics that President Clinton would seek congressional approval before deploying troops and statements emphasizing the President's authority to deploy the troops without congressional approval. In the month of November, scarcely a day went by without news reports of non-support. For example, the Washington Times printed this report on November 2, 1995: "Congressional leaders went to the White House yesterday and bluntly told President Clinton he has failed to sway lawmakers and the public on his pledge to send 20,000 US ground troops to Bosnia-Herzegovina . . . House Republicans want to enact binding legislation soon that would prevent Mr. Clinton from sending troops, . . ."³⁵ In mid-November, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 2606 flatly prohibiting the President from spending funds on the Bosnian deployment that were not

specifically appropriated for that purpose--and none were. Ultimately, the bill failed in the Senate but not because the Senate agreed with the president's action.

The United States Senate reached closure on the issue of US troop deployments to Bosnia, on December 13, 1995. As the Senate debated H.R. 2606, American troops had already started flowing into Bosnia and it was this fact that carried the day for the President. Senator Robert Dole, R-Kansas, the majority leader and a presidential contender, understood that to deploy soldiers without nominal congressional approval of both the mission and the troops invited disaster. Addressing his peers before the vote on H.R. 2606 Senator Dole said:

I will vote against H.R. 2606, sponsored by Representative Hefley, which was passed by the house last month . . . There has been no appropriation for this operation, so the effect would be to cut off funds to our troops who are on the way or already on the ground in Bosnia. I do not believe we should limit the funds for food, supplies, and ammunition for our troops. It was wrong during Vietnam, and it is wrong now.³⁶

The bill was decisively defeated 77 to 22. As subsequent debate and votes that night would underline, Senator Dole was not supporting the President but rather the troops.

Following the vote on H.R. 2606, the Senate began debate on Senate Concurrent Resolution 35 (S Con 35) which expressed support for the US troops ordered to implement the Bosnia peace agreement but also expressed opposition to the President's decision to deploy US troops. Again, Senator Dole may have been the decisive voice as the last speaker before the vote was called. He argued against the mixed signal such a resolution would send to the troops.

I understand a that a number of senators support the resolution (S Con 35) . . . That resolution emphasizes very clearly that we oppose the decision to deploy troops. No doubt about it. We disagree, we oppose. It is his decision, . . . However, . . . It does not make the job our forces have to do any safer or any easier, nor does it provide a plan to achieve a military balance in Bosnia or increase the chances for successful completion of our mission.³⁷

This resolution was narrowly defeated 52 to 47.

Following defeat of S Con 35, a vote was taken on S.J. Res. 44 that called for support of the troops but expressed reservations about the deployment. Senator Dole was one of the

sponsors of this bill which sought to limit deployment duration to about one year, limit the scope of US troops' mission to enforcement of military provisions of the Dayton agreement, and required the President to provide an exit strategy and mount an international effort to provide arms to Bosnia to achieve a military balance. The key difference between the two resolutions was the emphasis S.J. Res. 44 placed on establishing an exit strategy and achieving a balance of power deemed more likely to ensure the Bosnians could fend for themselves in the future. The resolution passed on a vote of 69 to 30.

The American people consistently showed minimal support for the President's plan to deploy American troops even after the President's speech on November 27. For instance, the Associated Press conducted a poll from November 29 to December 3 among a random sample of 1016 adult Americans. The poll found that 30 percent favored, 57 percent opposed, and 14 percent did not know or had no answer when questioned, "Do you favor or oppose sending 20,000 US ground troops to Bosnia as part of a NATO peacekeeping force?"³⁸ In similar polls conducted by ABC News, following the President's speech Monday night, 57 percent of their respondents disapproved of the troop deployment; by Friday, 58 percent disapproved.³⁹

President Clinton forged ahead with the deployment despite the lack of public support and a Congress that greeted his plan with underwhelming approval. He chose to disregard the wisdom he had so recently endorsed with his name and office:

Our national security requires the patient application of American will and resources. We can only sustain that necessary investment with the broad, bipartisan support of the American people and their representatives in Congress.⁴⁰

There were other deviations from bedrock NSS guidance, as well. The President had told the American people the mission would take about a year but he had not identified an exit strategy, a key requirement of all military operations. Senator Dole speaks on

December 13, 1995, "Let us be clear, setting a date is not an exit strategy. In fact, many will argue that if we set a date nothing will happen until that date expires, and then hostilities will recur."⁴¹ No senator, of either party, rose to challenge this assertion or claim that an exit strategy did exist. If the President had an exit strategy, the United States Senate didn't understand what it was.

The Ground Truth -- Probable Outcomes

As the deployment continues into its fourth month, there is little evidence of significant domestic protest. This may well be the result of the deployment's military success. There have been few reported instances of violence against American soldiers to raise the public ire. Through the third month of the deployment, no American serviceman has been killed as a result of direct action by a previous belligerent. To a large extent, the administration made their own good fortune through meticulous use of the "how to" force employment criteria of the NMS. They recognized the potential for combat and, therefore, deployed a large, well-armed force with sufficiently robust rules of engagement under the command of a US general. IFOR has operated within the confines of its military mission and, so far, the logic of maneuver dominance and fire power superiority has dissuaded armed opposition other than occasional sniper fire. Since the Bosnian Serbs do not consider the United States or IFOR as a neutral in the conflict, this is a significant achievement.

Normally a peacekeeper or peace enforcer must be accepted as neutral or suffer the risk of engagement. However, United States' policy is seen as championing the cause of the Muslim side. While US officials have repeatedly pointed out Serbian atrocities, they have been remarkably silent concerning Croatian and Muslim atrocities. This does not support a neutral

stance. One individual whose vantage point was unrestricted by Western press accounts is the recently retired General Charles G. Boyd, United States Air Force, Retired. In July 1995, General Boyd retired from the post of Deputy Commander in Chief, United States European Command. General Boyd writes concerning press coverage of the war:

To take one example: recently more than 90 percent of the Serbs in western Slavonia were ethnically cleansed when Croatian troops overran that U.N.-protected area in May. As of this writing the Croatian operation appears to differ from Serbian actions around the UN safe areas of Srebrenica and Zepa only in the degree of Western hand-wringing and CNN footage the latter have elicited. Ethnic cleansing evokes condemnation only when it is committed by Serbs, not against them.⁴²

From the Bosnian Serb viewpoint, the United States is a peace enforcer not a peacekeeper.

Even President Clinton's speech made it clear the United States identifies the Serbians as aggressors: "The United States led NATO's heavy and continuous airstrikes--many of them flown by skilled American pilots. Those air strikes, together with...the Bosnian and Croat gains on the battlefield, convinced the Serbs to start thinking about making peace."⁴³ No doubt, the Bosnian Serbs responded to force of arms. The peace was imposed on them by forces beyond their control--a Croatian-Muslim ground offensive, NATO airstrikes and a material loss of support from The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Among Serbs, hostility towards the United States is evident. Continuous News Network treated the American viewing public to taped footage of rebel Serbs in Vukovar, Croatia jeering and stoning the entourage of Madeleine Albright, United States' ambassador to the UN while Serb policemen stood by smiling.⁴⁴ The Dayton Peace Accords were negotiated and signed by Yugoslavian Serbs as representatives of the warring faction. The rebel Serbs must accept the presence of the United States and IFOR but hardly view them as neutrals.

The popular Western impression of the rebel Serbs is that of a people mindlessly bent on destruction of Muslims and Croats but the Serbs themselves feel they have historic justification

for their actions. Henry Kissinger offers the following observation: "While the Serbs initiated the present round of slaughter, they would no doubt hark back to comparable depredations inflicted by Croats and Muslims within the memory of most family groups . . . but by now too many brutalities have been wrought by all groups against their enemies to envision coexistence under a single government as a realistic option."⁴⁵ None-the-less, this is exactly what the

Dayton Peace Agreement envisions. General Boyd writes about land disputes:

Much of what Zagreb calls the occupied territories is in fact land held by Serbs for more than three centuries, . . . The same is true of most Serb land in Bosnia, what the Western media frequently refers to as the 70 percent of Bosnia seized by rebel Serbs...In short, the Serbs are not trying to conquer new territory, but merely to hold on to what was already theirs.⁴⁶

Regardless of whether American troops are engaged by Bosnian Serbs during their one year deployment, one must doubt whether the mission will achieve administration objectives.

It is not reasonable to believe a short term presence of IFOR can right the injustices born of hundreds of years of ethnic battles. The territory designated as the Republika Srpska is far less than what the Serbs view as rightfully theirs and it is not an ideal settlement in the Bosnian Muslims' and Croatians' eyes. It legitimizes a huge land grab. Nearly 50% of the former Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina is now a legal Serbian entity--albeit joined in a tenuous political union.

Although the separation of the belligerents and the land exchange has been relatively free of violence against IFOR, it has been an orgy of destruction and violence of ethnic group against ethnic group. The scene in Grbavica, the last Serb held suburb of Sarajevo to be turned over to the Muslim-Croat federation, was described by Chris Hedges of the New York Times. With much of the town burning, Milenk Karisik, the deputy interior minister of the Bosnian Serbs spoke: "We saved this area militarily but we lost it at Dayton...Maybe this generation of Serbs won't come back, but in future generations the Serbs will return."⁴⁷ The scene described is

typical of the many land exchanges mandated by the Dayton agreement. Neither the destruction, nor the depth of emotion, is unique to the Serbs. Following the handover of Grbica, all but a few thousand of the 60,000 Bosnian Serbs were gone from areas of Sarajevo and suburbs, putting the lie to the multi-ethnic culture envisioned at Dayton.

It isn't just the Serbians who doubt lasting peace has arrived. American military leaders are nearly as pessimistic, as Karisik. Lieutenant General Patrick M. Hughes, director of the Defense Intelligence Agency, testified to the Senate Intelligence Committee that the prospects for the Bosnia envisioned at Dayton is unlikely once IFOR departs without massive international programs to rebuild the economy and infrastructure.⁴⁸ There are fundamental problems between the Muslims and Croats in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well. Admiral Leighton Smith, the NATO commander of the Bosnian peace force, commented in London: "The fundamental fact is that the whole peace agreement is built on the federation's survival. I've seen very little evidence of political will within the country to draw the federation together."⁴⁹ General Shalikashvili, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, uneasy over the implementation of civil aspects of the accord, spoke to the National Security Council: "We need to make sure we understand that it is equally important to the overall effort--and also to the safety of the troops--that we get on with the civilian functions that need to be performed."⁵⁰

The United Nations High Representative, Carl Bildt, is not optimistic about the civil reconstruction project or the shape of the emerging political entities:

We need money. We don't have the money. The election is not funded. Refugee returns are not funded. There are an estimated 3 million uncleared land mines scattered all across the country. More than 60% of all housing units are damaged, and 18% are destroyed. All of these problems take many years and a lot of money to solve, and I don't see where it's coming from.⁵¹

According to Mr. Bildt, preservation of a multi-ethnic Sarajevo was important to the overall peace plan. "The Sarajevo area has been the area where you had Serbs, Bosnians and Croats

living closely together. The entire idea was to here resurrect a multi-ethnic Bosnia. But what we have been seeing during the last few weeks has clearly been a setback, to put it mildly."⁵² The mass exodus of Serbs from areas held by Muslims and Croats has resulted in a de facto partition along ethnic lines. The Bosnia and Herzegovina that is taking shape is not the state envisioned by United States' negotiators at Dayton.

This most ambitious foreign policy adventure of the Clinton administration may well end badly. Warfare is likely to resume without the continued presence of an international armed force that possesses overwhelming firepower. Because no one won the war, to some extent, all are losers with scores to settle. Large areas of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Croatia lie in ruins with little hope of the damage being repaired in the near future. What is more important, the psychological damage done during the recent conflict will take generations to repair. If the US forces withdraw as scheduled, the British and French forces may well follow. According to the US Ambassador to NATO, Robert Hunter, "We went in together, and we're going to leave together."⁵³

The Dayton plan calls for regional stabilization by achieving an armed balance at reduced levels, but this is not likely within one year. Part of the US plan to achieve this balance is an \$800 million proposal to arm and train the Muslim-Croat federation. The United States has pledged \$100 million toward the effort but has found few co-sponsors. The United States European partners aren't convinced of the wisdom of infusing more weapons into the area.⁵⁴ Failure to achieve this armed standoff means that, like it or not, the only way peace will endure in the former Yugoslavia is through the presence of an international peace enforcer with a big stick.

If IFOR departs prematurely and the country descends back into chaos, the United States position in Europe will be weakened. Our national interests--values, European stability, leadership of NATO, and credibility of NATO--will again be threatened. Not only that, but the Dayton peace plan itself will be seen retrospectively as unrealistic and too ambitious--in other words, a US-led diplomatic fiasco with NATO participation. This is hardly an outcome that will imbue our NATO allies with enthusiasm for US leadership or enhance the stature of the alliance.

Even if President Clinton keeps US forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it is unknown how long it will take or how much it will cost to reconstruct civil, political, and economic institutions. There are wide variances in the estimates of reconstruction costs between the West and the governments of the Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia--\$6-16 billion. Whatever the cost, physical security is a bedrock requirement to accomplish reconstruction tasks and attract the necessary capital. Therefore, the presence of a large well-armed peacekeeping force remains a requirement for the foreseeable future.

There are options for maintaining an armed presence in the region without US ground troops but they all include our main NATO allies. European countries making relatively small troop contributions, including Norway, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden have indicated a willingness to stay, if others will. Larger contributors, including Britain and France, have yet to make a commitment beyond the current deployment. The cost of the yearlong US military operation in Bosnia is around \$2 billion.⁵⁵ American influence within NATO will diminish if Britain and France must shoulder the enormous human and financial burden of maintaining a large troop commitment to enforce a peace brokered by the Americans.

President Clinton is faced with a number of unpleasant choices. He can withdraw US troops on schedule without a follow on peace force and face the likely prospect of a renewed war. If he does so, the United States will damage every interest it sought to enhance. He can break his promise to the American people and keep American troops in place. If he pursues this policy, he will face an increasingly antagonistic Congress and gradual erosion of public support as the indefinite duration of the mission becomes clear. The President can pressure our NATO allies to shoulder the burden on the ground bolstered by American airpower and logistic support. This policy may succeed domestically but will ultimately strain our NATO relationships. None of his choices will attain all the United States' objectives in Bosnia.

No matter which course the President pursues, he will be hampered by his early failure to promote widespread popular and bi-partisan political support for his Bosnian initiative. There was no grand and informed public debate prior to making this commitment. The President used his power to order American troops into Bosnia without widespread support, thus violating one of the primary dictates of the NSS. There has been little public protest because, so far, the military operation has been a success. US forces deployed in accordance with NMS guidance--a well-defined mission, sufficient force, American command, robust rules of engagement. Unfortunately, there are no corresponding rules of thumb for the civil reconstruction necessary to repair a state torn by ethnic hatred and destruction. One year is a wildly optimistic estimate to achieve a functional society following the carnage witnessed in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The President appears to have substituted a date for an exit strategy. Failure to devise a logical exit strategy geared to attainment of overall national objectives leaves the last of the critical

questions posed by the NMS unanswered. "Do we have timelines and milestones that will reveal the extent of success or failure, and, in either case, do we have an exit strategy?"⁵⁶

Few undertakings are as complex as reassembling a state following civil and ethnic warfare. If all the US interests cited by the President are indeed threatened by warfare in the Balkans, then an open ended commitment is implied. Vital and important interests today, logically remain vital and important tomorrow and, in President Clinton's words, "Our national security requires the patient application of American will and resources."⁵⁷ The administration's most important tasks at this point are to build public consensus for continued military, economic, and civil support of the peace process and to identify a realistic exit strategy. Unless this is accomplished, it will be difficult to understand why the United States ever thought deploying 20,000 soldiers to Bosnia would ultimately make a difference or enhance its security interests.

¹ Clinton, William J., President of the United States, Speech on Bosnia delivered from the Oval Office, Washington, DC, via network television to the American people, 27 November 1995. Official text can be found in "U.S. Support for Implementing The Bosnian Peace Agreement," U.S. Department of State Dispatch Supplement, December 1995, vol. 6, no. 5, p. 19-21. Note: The author used an Associated Press transcript of the address. There are minor variations between the quotations cited in this paper and the U.S. Department of State Dispatch Supplement because the supplement contains the official text prepared for the president's remarks rather than the words used by the president. The variations are minor and do not change the meaning.

² Ibid., 19.

³ Ibid., 19.

⁴ Ibid., 19.

⁵ Ibid., 19.

⁶ Ibid., 20.

⁷ Ibid., 20.

⁸ Ibid., 20.

⁹ Ibid., 20.

¹⁰ Ibid., 20.

¹¹ Ibid., 20.

¹² Ibid., 21.

¹³ Michael Dobbs, "Bosnian Talks Open With Warning to Leaders," Washington Post, 2 November 1995, p. 1.

¹⁴ Martin Sieff, "Talbot warns of blood bath if Balkan peace fails to hold," Washington Times, 2 November 1995, p. 10.

¹⁵ Martin Sieff, "U.N. thwarted effort to save Muslims, U.S. envoy says," Washington Times, 31 October 1995, p. 1.

¹⁶ Henry Kissinger, "What Is the Mission?," Washington Post, 22 October 1995, p. C-1.

¹⁷ Clinton, Speech on Bosnia.

¹⁸ General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Document initialed in Dayton, Ohio November 21, 1995 and signed in Paris, December 14, 1995. [electronic document]; available from; <http://www.state.gov/current/bosnia/bosagree.html>; Internet; accessed 10 January 1996. Note: U.S. Department of State will publish full text of peace accords in U.S. Department of State Dispatch Supplement, December 1995, vol. 6, no. 1.

¹⁹ Ibid., Annex 4.

²⁰ U.N. Security Council Resolution 757 was adopted 30 May 1992. This resolution placed an embargo on the The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for fomenting war and remained in effect until after the Dayton Peace Accords were signed. President Milosovic was in office when Res. 757 was adopted and still holds office as of this writing.

²¹ General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Annex 1A.

²² President of the United States, A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, (The White House, February 1995), ii.

²³ Ibid., 9.

²⁴ Ibid., 12.

²⁵ Ibid., 12.

²⁶ Ibid., 12.

²⁷ Ibid., 13.

²⁸ Clinton, Speech on Bosnia.

²⁹ U.S. Congress, Senate, Senator Grams speaking against President Clinton's plan to send American troops to Bosnia. Senator Grams did not want Congress to rubber stamp the president's decision., Congressional Record, vol. 141, no. 198, daily ed. (13 December 1995) S18451.

³⁰ President of the United States, A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, (The White House, February 1995), 13.

³¹ Ibid., 13.

³² Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, National Military Strategy of the United States of America, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1995), 9.

³³ Ibid., 12.

- ³⁴ Ibid., 12.
- ³⁵ Rowan Scarborough and Paul Bedard, "GOP plans vote to halt Bosnia move," Washington Times, 2 November 1995, p. 1.
- ³⁶ U.S. Congress, Senate, Senator Dole speaking against H.R. 2606 which sought to prohibit the president from spending funds not specifically appropriated for US troops in Bosnia., Congressional Record, vol. 141, no. 198, (13 December 1995) S18470.
- ³⁷ U.S. Congress, Senate, Senator Dole speaking against S. Con. 35 which expressed support for the troops but oppose to the president's decision to deploy the troops. At the same time, he was arguing for S.J. Res. 44 which expressed support of the troops and expressed reservations about the deployment. S.J. Res. 44 also limited the deployment duration to approximately one year and required the president to limit the use of US troops to enforce only military provisions of the peace agreement and provide for an exit strategy. Another key provision of the resolution called for the US to lead an international effort to train and arm the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina., Congressional Record, vol. 141, no. 198, pt. II, (13 December 1995) S18550.
- ³⁸ Associated Press, "Poll finds persistent opposition to U.S. deployment in Bosnia," Poll conducted by telephone by ICR Survey Research Group of Media, Pa., part of AUS Consultants. Poll taken on November 29, 1995 through December 3, 1995 among a random sample of 1016 adult Americans. Results weighted to represent the population by key demographic factors such as age, sex, region and education. Margin of error is 3 percent.
- ³⁹ Reuters, "Support for Clinton's Bosnia policy drops in poll," Poll conducted by ABC news on Wednesday, November 29, 1995. 523 adult Americans interviewed. Margin of error is 5 percent.
- ⁴⁰ President of the United States, A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, (The White House, February 1995), iii.
- ⁴¹ U.S. Congress, Senate, Senator Dole speaking for passage of S.J. Res. 44., Congressional Record, vol. 141, no. 198, pt. II, (13 December 1995) S18550.
- ⁴² Charles G. Boyd, "Making Peace with the Guilty: The Truth about Bosnia," Foreign Affairs, September/October 1995, 23.
- ⁴³ Clinton, Speech on Bosnia.
- ⁴⁴ For a written account of events see; "Serbs Stone Albright's Motorcade," New York Times, 22 March 1996, A3.
- ⁴⁵ Henry Kissinger, "What Is the Mission?," Washington Post, 22 October 1995, p. C-1.

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- ⁴⁷ Chris Hedges, "Fiery Farewell in Bosnian Land Transfer," New York Times, 19 March 1996, p. A6.
- ⁴⁸ Philip Shenon, "Pentagon Report Predicts Bosnia Will Fragment Without Vast Aid," New York Times, 20 March 1996, p. 1.
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