

3 The International Community and War

In the following, I shall first give an account of the Bosnian War, concentrating on battlefield events and developments. Then, in a separate section, I shall recapitulate the events of the war, but now just concentrating on IC involvement. Mirroring this approach, I shall then recount the events in Mostar: first the developments on the battlefield, then the efforts of the IC in Mostar.

3.1 Geograhpy and Demography of Bosnia

Before turning to the events of the war from 1992-1995 some brief notes are necessary on the geography and demography the country. Bosnia-Herzegovina is located on mostly mountainous terrain belonging to the Dinaric Mountain Range. The terrain is rugged and difficult to negotiate. Only the north of the country along the Drina and Sava rivers is characterized by the flatlands of the Pannonian Basin. Along the Adriatic the climate is Mediterranean, further inland continental. Bosnia-Herzegovina borders in the east the Yugoslav Republics of Serbia and Montenegro (rump Yugoslavia) and in the north, west and south the Republic of Croatia. It possesses a short stretch of 15km coastline at Neum.

At the beginning of the war Bosnia-Herzegovina had, according to the last reliable census in 1991, a population of 4,364,574 inhabitants of whom 43.7% identified themselves as a Muslims, 31.4% as Serbs, 17.3% as Croats and 5.5% as Yugoslavs. Towards the end of the war the ethnonym Muslim was changed to Bosniac and this term is already used in the Dayton Agreement. Accordingly, in the following the term "Bosniac" will be used to refer to Bosnian Muslims. In most municipalities of the country the national groups lived in strongly mixed communities. Absolute majorities of a national group could only be found in some areas: Bosniacs around Bihač in the far western corner of the country and in some Central and Eastern Bosnian municipalities, Croats in the southwestern areas called Western Herzegovina and along the northern borders of Croatia; Serbs in the west around Drvar and in Eastern Herzegovina along the border with Montenegro and in some other East Bosnian municipalities. The high degree of ethnic mixture and the fact that almost half of the

country's population (31.4% Serbs and 17.3% Croats) carried the ethnic identity of a neighbouring state, i.e. Serbia and Croatia bode ill for the independence of the country.

3.2 The War in Bosnia

The war in Bosnia forms part of the conflicts that accompanied the dissolution of Yugoslavia. The first free elections in November 1990 in Bosnia-Herzegovina already took place in an all-Yugoslav atmosphere of tension and nationalist agitation. The predictable victory of three nationalist parties, the Serb Democratic Party (*Srpska demokratska stranka*, SDS), the Bosniac Party of Democratic Action (*Stranka demokratske akcije*, SDA) and the Croat Democratic Community of Bosnia-Herzegovina (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica Bosne i hercegovine*, HDZ BiH) boded ill for further developments in the country.

The outbreak of the war in Croatia in the summer of 1991 increased tensions further. Worrying for the non-Serb nations of the rest of Yugoslavia was the way in which the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) openly sided with the Serb rebels in Croatia. It was becoming obvious that, in what remained of Yugoslavia, Serbia and the Serbs were establishing themselves as the hegemons. With the Slovenes and the Croats leaving, the numerical superiority of Serbs within Yugoslavia was of course further increasing. In addition, the aggressive nationalist policies of Milošević boded ill for the remaining non-Serb nations. These Serb hegemonic aspirations prompted an increasingly outspoken movement among the Bosniacs and Croats of Bosnia-Herzegovina to declare the country's independence in order to forego Serb dominance in what remained of Yugoslavia.

This was the hour of the Bosnian Serb nationalist party, the SDS, and its notorious leader, Radovan Karadžić. They in turn began a hate campaign mobilizing Bosnian Serbs against the secession of the country from Yugoslavia. The language the SDS was using conjured up pictures of World War II when Serbs suffered genocide under

the Croatian fascists called *ustaša* and the German forces. A psychosis of fear spread among the Serbs who now began arming themselves "to avoid what had happened [to them] 45 years previously" as the SDS demagogues put it. In their preparations for a fight they could count on the full support of the JNA.

Everything was pointing towards a war. As fear and distrust spread in the country and faced with open Serb preparations for an armed conflict, also the national parties of Croats and Bosniacs, the HDZ BiH and the SDA, began organizing the clandestine armament of their electorate and the nations they claimed to represent. Serb paranoia created by irresponsible politicians triggered an escalation, which eventually resulted in war.

In the early autumn of 1991, at a time when the war still had not broken out, Bosnian Serbs began to establish so-called SAOs (Serb Autonomous Regions - *Srpska autonomna oblast*). The HDZ BiH reacted with the establishment of similar entities: the Croat Communities of Bosanska Posavina (12 November 1991) and of Herceg-Bosna (18 November 1991). The central administration of Bosnia-Herzegovina was falling apart.

The Croat Community of Bosanska Posavina (*Hrvatska zajednica bosanske posavine*) was located in the north of the country where Bosnian Croats were living in large numbers. At the beginning of the war its territory was taken over by the JNA and Serb irregulars. There is little doubt that it was sold out to them by President Tuđman as part of a secret deal with Milošević. Herceg-Bosna, however, should become infamous as it came to represent Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats and dominate their separatist politics. It was dominated by Herzegovinian Croats who, even though relatively small in numbers, had an overwhelmingly powerful lobby in Zagreb.

Just a few days prior to the founding of the Croat Community of Herceg-Bosna an extremist circle of HDZ BiH members is said to have come together for a secret meeting in Grude, a small town in Croat dominated West-Herzegovina (Feral Tribune 13 October 1997). They were mostly Herzegovinian and Central Bosnian Croats and

enjoyed the full support of President Franjo Tuđman. In a secret document they signed they committed themselves to do everything to achieve the unification of Bosnian Croat territories with the Republic of Croatia. This necessarily meant an inner-party take-over of the Bosnian-Herzegovinian branch of the HDZ as its leadership under Stjepan Kljuić was strongly committed to a unified Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The intrigues of these extremists were successful. In a style of a coup Kljuić was replaced as head of the HDZ BiH on 2 February 1992. Nevertheless, as Bosnia moved towards open war in the following month, officially Croats and Bosniacs still stood united against the Serb aggression. But the fragility of the Bosniac-Croat alliance was becoming clear (Halilović 1997) and should later decisively influence events in and around Mostar.

With the republic descending into chaos, Izetbegović displayed a marked political naivety. Though Izetbegović originally (1990-1991) tended to oppose the dissolution of Yugoslavia – it was obvious that a secession of Slovenia and Croatia would put Bosnia-Herzegovina in a very difficult position – after the independence of these two republics he too had to endorse a course of independence. With the “counterweights”, Slovenia and Croatia, leaving the Yugoslav Federation Serb dominance of the smaller republics and nationalities became unbearable. SDA leadership supported by the main Bosnian Croat nationalist party, HDZ, thus also embarked on a course of secession.

In spite of political messages to the contrary, Izetbegović seems to have firmly believed the West would somehow come to the aid of his country and thus continued with a hard-line course of independence firmly sticking to the concept of a centralized republic. Very much along the same lines, while subscribing to an independentist, often also hard-line nationalist, rhetoric he for a long time opposed arming Bosniac resistance groups. In hindsight it is almost incomprehensible, but in the chaotic phases of final escalation Izetbegović turned repeatedly to the JNA for help – and this despite the fact that already in summer 1991 in Croatia the JNA had outed itself as a Serb army.

With no willingness to compromise on certain autonomy issues, but also not well prepared for a fight, the Bosniacs were unprepared for the conflict that unfolded itself in the spring of 1992. The actual fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina broke out around the beginning of March 1992. Previously, the Bosnian government had set up a referendum to vote on the independence of the Republic. This was boycotted by the Serbs. As the results of the two-day referendum, lasting from 29 February to 1 March 1992, were counted it showed that 99.4% of the votes opted for full independence. There was only one problem: the voter turnout was 63% indicating that Serbs, constituting 31% of Bosnia's population, headed the SDS's call for an election boycott.

Almost overnight the first clashes between the rival groups occurred in Sarajevo. As the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina declared its independence the fighting soon escalated. Feeble attempts by the European Community to broker a last-minute agreement between the rival factions in Lisbon (24 February 1992) and Sarajevo (18 March 1992) failed miserably. Then, around the end of March 1992, Serb irregulars aided by the JNA unleashed a ferocious assault on the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The strategy of the Serbs was similar to what had already been experienced in Croatia. Following the military seizure of a town Serb irregulars, the most infamous of which were the Arkanovci, moved in and "ethnically cleansed" it. Muslims and Croats were expelled from their houses and apartments and hounded into concentration camps. Many of them were killed, many women raped and their houses pillaged. This is also the time when the notorious "rape camps" were established which were later uncovered by journalists like Alexandra Stiglmayer (1993).

The Bosnian towns, which, in the course of March and April 1992, first suffered this fate were Bijeljina, then Zvornik, Bratunac, Srebrenica, Višegrad and Foča. Ethnic cleansing was carried out with such a speed that already towards the end of July 1992, the UNHCR estimated the number of refugees and displaced people around 1.9 Million - and this in a country of 4,270,824¹⁴ total population.

¹⁴ These are the results of the last 1991 census.

The Serb strategy became evident very soon, namely, to establish corridors between Serb majority areas first in Eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina (Trebinje, Nevesinje, Gacko, Foča, Srebrenica, Goražde, Žepa, Višegrad, Zvornik, Bijeljina etc.) and then between the already cleansed Eastern and Western (Drvar, Banja Luka etc.) parts of the country. Two corridors were foreseen in order to connect the eastern and western Serb majority areas: one was leading through the Bosanska Posavina and Brčko in the north and the other was planned to go through Kupres, Čapljina in the South of the country and was meant to hook up with a similar thrust from the East seizing Stolac and Mostar. At the same time a siege was laid around Sarajevo, which was to last for three-and-a-half years until the end of the war.

In the course of the following 10-12 months the front lines solidified themselves with the Serbs controlling some 70% of the country's territory. West Bosnia-Herzegovina ranging from Drvar via Jajce to Banja Luka and the East ranging from Trebinje to Bijeljina were firmly in Serb hands. These two large Serb-held areas were connected to each other only through a corridor in the north, which around Brčko narrowed down to a mere 5 km in width. The security of this corridor was enhanced by the seizure of the Bosanska Posavina in October 1992. The southern offensive of Serb forces to establish a link between the Drvar area in the south-west and the area around Trebinje and Nevesinje in the south-east was given up around June 1992 when Serb forces withdrew along the line Mostar-Čapljina-Stolac towards the East. Both events, the Serb retreat from Mostar and the Croat retreat from the Posavina, are claimed to be the result of secret negotiations between President Tuđman and Milošević.

3.2.1 The Bosniac-Croat Conflict

While the fighting between the Serbs and the still allied Bosniacs and Croats reached a temporary status quo as the Serb advance halted, the Croat leadership was making preparations for an assault on their Bosniac ally. A Croat "appetite" to annex parts of Bosnia to Croatia was no secret. First concrete plans to carve up the country

were most probably drafted as early as March 1991, still before the outbreak of war in Yugoslavia, at a secret meeting between Tuđman and Milošević. Creating a "greater Croatia" became an obsession of the historian Tuđman, who believed in the historical inevitability of nations creating their nation states. In this context he reportedly saw himself as something of a Croat messiah.

This view was not shared by all in his party and he thus had to overcome powerful opposition within his own party, the HDZ, both in Croatia and in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Accordingly the first steps were undertaken in a clandestine manner (Globus, 10 January 1993). Then, as already mentioned, in November 1991, a secret meeting took place in Grude where a select group of HDZ hard-liners under the leadership of Mate Boban signed a "manifesto" to actively work for a unification with Croatia. Just a few days later, the Croat Community of Herceg-Bosna was founded, the forerunner of the later Bosnian Croat separatist para-state, the Croat Republic of Herceg-Bosna (Hrvatska republika Herceg-Bosne - HR Herceg-Bosna or HR HB). The leader of the Community became Mate Boban.

As this group of hard-liners began to take over the HDZ BiH, moderate politicians were removed. Most prominent such removal was that of Stjepan Kljuić, the then president of the HDZ BiH. Shortly after Kljuić's removal in February 1992 Boban took over the Presidency of the HDZ BiH and, closely supervised by Tuđman, began to prepare the further division of Bosnia through a pact with the Serbs. Sometime probably still in April 1992 Boban met for a clandestine "probing" meeting with Božidar Vučurević, the Serb Mayor of Trebinje, the "war-lord of East-Herzegovina" and close associate of Karađzić. In an interview with the Croatian investigative weekly, *Nacional*, Vučurević recounts the good laughs he and Boban had when negotiating the total division of the country leaving the "Muslims" squeezed in between them in the Neretva (*Nacional* 22 October 1997). After they established that both sides shared common interests¹⁵ a follow-up meeting was organized. Such a meeting, with Boban and Karađzić both present, took place on 6 May 1992 in Graz –

¹⁵ Vučurević states in the interview that "both of us [i.e. he and Boban] understood that our war was leading nowhere. Croats and Serbs are Christian peoples and original inhabitants of the country - our killing and expelling one another was leading nowhere. We both believed that there was enough space in this region for both peoples, and that only an unfortunate configuration of circumstances had brought us to war against each other" (*Nacional* 1997, <http://bosnia.org.uk/bosrep/novdec97/unholy.cfm>).

obviously to discuss a future alliance. The meeting received strong international criticism.

While the HDZ BiH was now pretty much in line with Tuđman's and Boban's policy of division, in the person of Blaž Kraljević, the leader of the pro-ustasa militia called HOS (*Hrvatske obrambene snage* - Croatian Defence Forces), there still existed prominent resistance to this stance. As an opponent of Tuđman's policy, Kraljević was assassinated on 8 August 1992 in the vicinity of Mostar. As it is meanwhile widely accepted, his assassins were members of Tuta's *Kaznjenička bojna* ("Convicts' Brigade" as most of its members were former criminals). Mladen Naletilić, called Tuta, was the most dreaded Croat warlord and was strongly pro-divisionist. With its leader dead, the HOS, consisting of both Bosniacs and Croats, fell apart. Its members joined the HVO or the Armija RBiH. The last significant opposition to Tuđman's plans for a "Greater Croatia" was removed.

Preparations for an open conflict between Bosniacs and Croats now slowly began to manifest themselves openly – both sides became increasingly suspicious of each other. According to one report, the HVO began a "discreet" (meaning low-profile) campaign of ethnic cleansing around Prozor and Kiseljak - obviously with the aim of establishing an "ethnic corridor" towards Central Bosnia. The entire master plan was, however, much bigger and more ambitious and included large-scale ethnic engineering as a letter of Boban to Vinko Puljić, Archbishop of Bosnia, makes it clear. In this letter Boban reportedly "requested [Archbishop Puljić] to organize the emigration of Bosnian Croats to parts of the country where, according to the plan, they would form a majority" (Jergović 1998).

Also clashes between the HVO and ABiH began to occur more and more frequently. According to Glenny (1995:194) the first such incident between the two militias occurred on 17 July 1992 in Kopaonik, near Busovača about the control of a Serb ammunition dump. The next clash took place in October 1992 in the strategically important town of Prozor. Prozor means "window" as the town controls one of the main, and in 1992-93 the only access route from Croat-majority Herzegovina to Central Bosnia. Fighting allegedly broke out as ABiH units hoisted the RBiH flag and

were subsequently driven out of town. There were also some skirmishes in Jablanica, but all these confrontations were probably more an expression of the general distrust between the two military organizations and had no larger strategic significance as yet.

The first battle of strategic significance took place on 12 and 13 January 1993 in the central Bosnian town of Gornji Vakuf between Muslim and Croatian forces. The fighting erupted as HVO forces claimed control of the town which was, so they argued, allocated to them by the then running Vance-Owen Peace Negotiations. The Vance-Owen Plan's approach of cantonizing the country and giving the Croats cantons of their own control fully satisfied the Croat side.¹⁶ Tensions soon spread all over Central Bosnia - in Vitez, Travnik, Busovača and Kiseljak - while the Croat dominated South (mainly Herzegovina) remained calm. The fighting subsided after a few days and contacts with the Bosniac side were resumed as the Peace Negotiations dragged on in New York.

At the heart of the matter was the control of territory. Accordingly, the

“Bosnian Defense Minister Božo Raić [a Croat and Tuđmanite] ordered soldiers loyal to the Sarajevo government to submit to Bosnian Croat military authority in areas the Geneva peace plan would place under predominantly Croat influence [...]. Raić also ordered a reciprocal rationalization in the military chain of command in Muslim-influenced provinces, where he said Croat troops should submit to Bosnian army authority” (UPI, Sunday 17 January 1993, <http://www.bosnet.org/>).

Rathfelder even claims that later in February an ultimatum was added by Boban to the order for ABiH troops to submit themselves to HVO-command (1998:118). The deadline was allegedly 15 April 1993. ABiH units refused to submit themselves to the HVO in the name of a Peace Agreement that had only the unconditional signature of the Croat side. It was only conditionally endorsed by the Bosniac side and not accepted by the Serb side at all.

¹⁶ The Vance-Owen plan intended to divide the republic into 10 mostly self- ruling provinces linked by a weak central government. The 1.9 million Muslim Slavs, 1.4 million Christian Orthodox Serbs and 750,000 Roman Catholic Croats were each planned to dominate in three provinces, and the 10th around Sarajevo would have been neutral. The plan ruled out the acceptance of the self-declared Serbian state that Yugoslav army-equipped Serbian forces set out to conquer in late March on 70 percent of Bosnia-Herzegovina, igniting the civil war.

Whatever the truth concerning the ultimatum, on 16 April 1993, a special HVO unit (according to Tihomir Blaskić it was the 4th Battalion of the Military Police of the HVO) attacked the Bosniac majority village of Ahmici in the Lasva River valley near Travnik and "a total of 118 Muslims, mostly women, children and the elderly, were reportedly massacred, and the entire village then burnt to the ground" (The Tribunal Update 18-22 August 1997). Continuing Testimony in Blaskic. Institute of War and Peace Reporting. No. 42, August 18 - 22, 1997 http://www.iwpr.net/index.pl?archive/tri/tri_042_1_eng.txt). The gruesome attack had apparently no other military objective than to alienate the Bosniac and Croat communities from each other and force them into a war.

Fighting, followed by mostly HVO-led ethnic cleansing, now swept all over Central Bosnia. Obviously the aim of the Croat forces was to link up Croat majority areas in Central Bosnia militarily by expelling the non-Croat population. All this time the mostly HVO-controlled West Herzegovina remained calm and by the end of April 1993 a shaky ceasefire was in place between Croat and Bosniac forces.

These were also the days in which the success or failure of the Vance-Owen Peace Plan was to be decided. The Croat side fully supported it as it gave them vast powers of self-rule in three out of ten cantons. The Bosniac side interpreted the plan as a sell-out of their interests, but due to their very weak position they were forced to sign it. The Serb side was the most reluctant. They felt they would have to settle for something that was far less than they actually already had. Internationally everything was set for the signing of the Peace Agreement. However, on 6 May 1993, the self-proclaimed Serbian parliament of Bosnia, meeting in Pale, refused to ratify the Vance-Owen peace plan and decided to submit the final decision to a referendum to be held on 15-16 May 1993. Such a referendum meant the definite rejection of the Peace Plan.

Just a little more than two days later, at dawn on 9 May 1993, Croat forces launched an all-out offensive on the town of Mostar and the rest of West Herzegovina. The war between Bosniacs and Croats had fully broken out. This war with the Bosniacs would

prove to be fatal – the HVO suffered serious losses of territory in Central Bosnia where they were strongly outnumbered by Bosniacs and even in the Herzegovina around Mostar their military positions were severely threatened and could only be held with great effort.

The question now is what caused the delay among the HDZ-led Bosnian Croats turning on their former Bosniac allies when they had all the agreements already a year previously ready with the Serbs and had destroyed organized resistance within their own ranks. And what caused them to turn against a foe, i.e. the ABiH, which largely outnumbered them. In fact Hoare (1997) even speaks of an irrational political decision.

The Vance-Owen Peace Initiative seems to have been the single most important factor for the Croat side to postpone its assault on the Bosniac government. The Vance-Owen Plan (VOPP) was announced on 3 September, i.e. less than one month after Blaž Kraljević, the last powerful opponent of an alliance with the Serbs, was murdered. Soon it also became clear that the proposed cantonization of the country would suit the Croat national interest as defined by the HDZ. Fluctuations in the chances of the VOPP to succeed directly correlated with the aggressiveness of the HVO towards Bosniac militias. Finally, once the plan had obviously failed when the Serb parliament in Pale rejected it, the HVO began its all-out war against the Bosniacs.

Furthermore, initially there must have been widespread, though not organized, grass-roots resistance among Croats to turn against their Bosniac allies. Accordingly the small group of HDZ and HVO hardliners, who were committed to secession from Bosnia-Herzegovina, began their activities by sowing distrust among Bosniacs and Croats. To have started fighting in Central Bosnia by massacring innocent civilians in Ahmići is typical example of sowing the seeds of hatred.

It has to be mentioned that there might have also been 'real' experiences of competition and irritations among the two sides, as opposed to just artificially created tensions. Since the signs of a Croat "appetite" for parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina were

all too clear already before the outbreak of the war, many in the Bosniac leadership had expected an eventual Croat assault on them. Consequently, Bosniac behavior towards their Croat allies was also distrustful. In several interviews internationals, who were present in the area during the war, evaluated the situation, almost using the same words, as follows: "Both sides were at fault in the escalation of tensions, but it was the Croats who were more fault" (personal interview, Hans, 13 July 1996, also Bernd 15 June 1996).

Even though some last negotiations regarding the VOPP dragged on for a few more weeks, the peace plan was effectively dead with the Serb Parliament's decision to put it forward to a referendum and the subsequent HVO offensive on the ABiH. This had long lasting consequences on the further course of the war. Milošević, who had endorsed the VOPP, now imposed a Serbian-Montenegrin embargo on Bosnian Serbs to force them to agree to the peace plan. For the moment the Bosnian Serbs were out of the control of Milošević.

Turning back to the Bosniac-Croat conflict, the outbreak of fighting was instantly followed by a vicious campaign of ethnic cleansing and detainment of Bosniacs in detention camps around Dretelj, the Mostar Heliodrom, Gabelica and others. With open hostilities with the Croat side, the Bosnian Government was now totally cut off from outside supplies, and thus in a desperate situation. Nevertheless, Bosniac resistance proved far stiffer than expected. From June 1993 on, the ABiH-initiated offensives inflicted heavy losses on the HVO, especially in Central Bosnia. It was first Travnik that fell, then Konjic, Jablanica and Vareš. Croats were forced back into small pockets or enclaves around Novi Travnik and Vitez, Kiseljak and Žepče. The Croat-held part of Gorjani Vakuf could only be held and supplied under great difficulties through a hastily prepared road winding through rugged mountains. The Bosniac offensives were now themselves followed by ethnic cleansing, vengeance and atrocities. By September 1993 the situation turned critical for the Croats as ABiH launched an attack to the north of Mostar through mountainous terrain aiming at an encirclement of the Croat-held part of the town towards the south-west. The offensive came within a few kilometers of Siroki Brijeg, a hard-line Croat stronghold and one of

the main supply routes of the Croat-held part of Mostar, and showed that the ABiH was also capable of seizing the initiative in the Croat heartland of West-Herzegovina.

It is not clear whether the offensive was beaten back or withdrawn. ABiH fighters claim with bitterness that they were ordered to withdraw – as some kind of a deal among politicians. A former ABiH Brigadier mentioned in an interview (7 January 1998) that "the Armija feared an all-out engagement of Croatia, as it [i.e. Croatia] considered the Herzegovina as part of its immediate security zone". Additionally, at this time the Bosniac side was already aiming at a peace with the Croats.

The autumn and winter of 1993-94 saw some further major developments in Bosnia. The Bosnian government came under an even increased threat when the troops of the Bosniac warlord Fikret Abdić, in the West Bosnian enclave of Bihać, declared independence. Troops loyal to Sarajevo fought intense battles with the renegades of Abdić while at the same time repulsing Serb offensives.

But in spite of all external pressures, the Bosnian Government was gaining confidence. Its troops had risen from 65,000 to about 200,000 in the previous summer (Lewis 1994). They stopped the Serb advance and made significant gains against Croat separatists. Additionally, the international climate was changing. Calls for limited military intervention and an altogether tougher approach towards the conflict were heard increasingly often. On 3 February 1994, the Security Council warned Tuđman to pull out his troops and artillery (i.e. the forces of the Croat Republic) out of Bosnia by 17 February 1994 or face "serious measures".

Faced with a deteriorating military situation and mounting international pressure, Croatia was forced to give up its immediate plans of annexing parts of Bosnia to Croatia. Croatia, in addition to militarily being on the losing side in Bosnia-Herzegovina, was also highly vulnerable to international pressure. The first and paramount priority for Croatian politics was actually not Bosnia-Herzegovina, but to retake territories within the internationally recognized borders of the country that were held by Serb insurgents: Krajina and Western- and Eastern Slavonija. For this Croatia needed to arm and train its recently established forces – a task impossible

without at least the tacit support of the Western countries. Moreover, European integration was also a basic tenet of Tuđman's ideology ("Croatia is a Central European and not a Balkan state"). UN sanctions against the country would have made the retaking of the Serb-held territories of Croatia nearly impossible and would have delivered a severe blow to Croatian plans of integration towards Europe.

According to this basic strategic and preference structure, on 8 February 1994 Mate Boban resigned from his post, paving the way for peace talks between Bosniacs and Croats. In an unrelated event that nevertheless had an impact on the Croat-Bosniac War, NATO spelt out its first threat of air strikes against the Bosnian Serb militia on 9 February 1994. On the previous day, 8 February 1994, a mortar shell fired by the VRS exploded in the crowded Sarajevo market place killing 72 people. On the same day as the NATO air strikes were threatened against the VRS, Bosnian Croat commanders also decided to significantly reduce the shelling of East Mostar.

An interview of the New York Times journalist, William E. Schmidt, with a Spanish UNPROFOR officer sums up the strategic context.

"I think the difference was the NATO ultimatum," said Lt. Col. Antonio Castro, a Spanish officer with the U.N. peacekeeping force in Bosnia. 'It is simple', he said: 'the Croats calculated they might be next on the list after the Serbs'" (Schmidt 1994, <http://www.bosnet.org/bosnet.shtml>).

Just one month after Boban's resignation on 3 March 1994, a peace accord between Bosniacs and Croats was finalized in Washington. According to the agreement, Bosniacs and Bosnian Croats were to be united in the so-called Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina which itself was supposed to enter a confederation with Croatia. As part of the European Union was invited to administer the divided town of Mostar. This was the birth of the first international peace-making effort in Bosnia. The war was far from over, but the first peace accord was born. In Mostar the European Union Administration of Mostar (EUAM) was put in place, the success or failure of which is an issue of heated debate.

From the point of view of the Bosniac-Croat conflict, most relevant events have already been described. Returning to the overall context of the Bosnian war the end of the Croat blockade on the encircled Bosnian Government and thus a freer flow of weapons changed the situation significantly for the Bosnian army. By August 1994 a long-term shift in the balance of power in the Bosnian war theatre was becoming visible. Military analysts in a Reuters article assessed the situation in August 1994 as follows:

“The might of the Bosnian Serb army has been exaggerated [...] ‘The BSA [Bosnian Serb Army or VRS] has to defend 1,100 miles of frontlines with a crumbling army. Out of the 80,000 soldiers NATO says they have, only 10-15,000 are professional’, the analyst added. [...] Delić’s [the commander of the ABiH troops] Bosnian army is fighting a classic partisan war, another military analyst said, referring to Yugoslavia’s World War Two resistance army, which fought and won a guerrilla campaign against occupying Germans from the hills of Bosnia. ‘They engage and tie up the enemy, hit and run, cut communications and avoid trying to capture big towns’, the analyst said. ‘The BSA is not mobile enough to counter that sort of warfare.’ The BSA realizes it is vulnerable to lightning attacks and has tried to reorganize into smaller fighting units to counter the threat, with limited success, the analyst said. BSA mobility will be further hit by a trade blockade imposed by Serbian president Slobodan Milošević on the Bosnian Serbs, cutting off fuel and ammunition supplies in protest at their failure to agree to an international peace plan” (Reuter 17 August 1994, <http://www.bosnet.org/>).

Thus in 1994, the ABiH began to gain momentum by further building up its capacities and, for the first time in the war, around May 1994, it took the initiative on the battleground against the Serbs. In the autumn of 1994, the Armija achieved a number of successes in and around Tuzla and Zenica in northern Central Bosnia. The aim of the operations was to push back Serb positions and thus increase the security of Central Bosnia. Finally, autumn 1994 also saw the first successful military cooperation between the HVO and ABiH against the Serbs: the strategically important Kupres Pass and the town of Bugojno were conquered jointly. According to a prior agreement between the sides, it was then the HVO which kept Kupres and the ABiH Bugojno.

The last year of the war, 1995, saw increased international engagement, a strengthening of Bosniac and Croat military activities and a number of Serb blunders,

which, in the end, brought about their military defeat. On 25 May 1995, as NATO airplanes attacked Bosnian Serb ammunition dumps and command and control centers near Sarajevo, Serbs countered and took UN peacekeepers hostage. The NATO attacks were in retaliation for Serbs not respecting an earlier ultimatum on the withdrawal of their heavy weapons from around Sarajevo. The stand-off in the hostage situation, which put NATO and UN peace-keepers in an extremely difficult situation, was only resolved through massive pressure from Belgrade, as Milošević was moving to establish himself as a peacemaker.

Probably emboldened by the sense of insecurity the hostage-taking had created within the IC, Serb forces moved on to commit another atrocity in June 1995: they overran the UN-declared safe havens of Srebrenica and Žepa and were only stopped by massive international pressure from doing the same in Goražde, another safe haven. The fall of Srebrenica to the Serb forces of Mladić was followed by the massacre of some 8,000 Bosniac men and boys. The military rationale behind the attacks must have been to free up VRS troops who had been tied down in controlling the Bosniac safe havens of Srebrenica, Žepa and Goražde which had never been properly demilitarized and from where ABiH raids into Bosnian Serb-held territory were conducted.

While militarily rational, the utter disregard of the international status of the areas as UN declared safe havens and the senseless brutality of the Serb forces, the worst such massacre since World War II in Europe, did a lot to mobilize international public support for tougher action against Serbs in Bosnia. Nevertheless, the events in and around the fall of Srebrenica are murky and suspicious. The role of UN peacekeepers was widely criticized – many even speculate about a deal paving the way to a Bosnian peace accord since a solution for Srebrenica and Žepa would have been impossible to find at the negotiating table.

In the summer of 1995, events in and around Bosnia were picking up speed. In the wake of a US-led peace initiative the Croatian army, HV, launched an attack on the Krajina region, which had been held by rebel Serbs for four years. In just three days

the HV managed to wipe out the Serb insurgents. Even though officially consequently denied it is clear that the Croatian operation had US backing.

Finally, on 28 August 1995, the second shelling of the Sarajevo market place led to the first really decisive and direct military intervention of the IC. The background of the attack, which killed 37 people, remains a topic of speculation with some people claiming that the shell was in fact fired by the ABiH to compel the IC to act. Whatever the truth behind the shelling is, after the Serb atrocities and provocations earlier in the year, the shelling of the market place compelled the IC to take action. On 30 August 1995, NATO launched a two-week-long devastating air campaign against Bosnian Serb positions.

The NATO air strikes were followed by a coordinated Croat-Bosniac offensive on Serb positions especially in Western Bosnia. Using the confusion caused by the NATO bombing the Serbs were routed and, within days, some 20% of Bosnia came under the control of the advancing HVO and ABiH forces. These gains significantly changed the overall situation. From the beginning of the War until August 1995, the Bosnian Serb Army, the VRS (*Vojska republike srpske*), had held some 70% of the country's territory. The new status quo came closer to a 49% - 51% distribution in favor of the Federation armies – a division resembling the international Contact Group's long-standing formula for a Bosnian peace agreement. This five nation Contact Group, composed of the United States, Russia, Britain, France, and Germany, was established in spring 1994 with the goal of brokering a settlement between the Federation and Bosnian Serbs.

The military activities on the ground were accompanied by parallel diplomatic efforts. While fighting was still in progress, at meetings sponsored by the Contact Group in September 1995 in Geneva and New York, the Foreign Ministers of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia (now also representing the Bosnian Serbs) agreed to some of the basic principles for a settlement in Bosnia, such as the preservation of Bosnia as a single state and the already mentioned equitable division of territory between the Muslim-Croat Federation and a Bosnian Serb entity based on the Contact Group's 51/49 formula.

A US-brokered ceasefire in early October 1995 paved the way for peace talks in Dayton, Ohio, which were successfully concluded on 21 November 1995. The War in Bosnia came to an end and a lengthy and difficult international conflict resolution process was about to begin.

3.3 The International Community and the Bosnian Conflict

From the beginning, the international community closely followed the unfolding of the (ex-)Yugoslav conflicts. Even though the role of the IC was usually seen as impotent and weak, in retrospect, it is clear that it was important, formative and in the end decisive in shaping the final outcome of the conflict. In the following section I shall concentrate on the international developments directly impacting on the Bosnian war. Nevertheless, occasional references to ex-Yugoslavia-wide developments will be necessary.

In general, the international intervention in the Bosnian conflict showed, just as later in the phase of peace implementation, a certain learning and a hesitantly toughening attitude. This aspect included, firstly, a learning about "own capabilities" – about the capability of international post-cold war structures to mobilize for crises. Secondly, it also included a learning about nationalist, separatist conflicts of the post-cold war era. Initially, in 1991 and early 1992, the European Community, just about to transform itself into a Union, felt strong enough to deal with the ex-Yugoslav crisis, and the US, under the leadership of President George Bush, was happy to leave the problem to it. Soon it became apparent, however, that this was not the case – EC/EU was too indecisive to effectively tackle the problem of war in the former Yugoslavia.

Leadership was needed, but the US, the only country capable of assuming this role, was only reluctantly accepting this task. Nevertheless, under increasing public pressure, from 1993 on, the Clinton administration slowly began to play a more assertive role in the Bosnian developments. The EU grudgingly accepted this

strengthened US engagement, well-knowing that it could not offer a better alternative. The first success of the US engagement was the Washington Agreement ending the "war within the war", as the conflict between Bosniacs and Croats is occasionally called. Its final success, the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA), ended the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. These macro-political developments serve as a background to the Bosnian conflict. Crucial from the perspective of this paper is, however, how the international institutions put in place by the macro-political actors implemented these policies.

When the war in Bosnia broke out, there were already a number of international institutions and mechanisms in place, which had been established to deal with the conflict in Slovenia and Croatia. This was, most notably, a "culture" of international mediation in the ex-Yugoslav crises. More precisely, on July 1991 the CSCE,¹⁷ agreed to recommend the dispatch of an EC-based observer mission to supervise the agreed ceasefire. This mission, later to be known as the ECMM (European Commission Monitoring Mission), was present all through the conflict in Bosnia and played, among other things, also a leading role in supervising a Yugoslav embargo on the Bosnian Serbs. Glenny (1996) on the ECM monitors (short ECMM):

“Throughout the wars in Slovenia, Croatia and BiH, the monitors were comforting but strange figures. They emerged from their white vehicles, dressed all in white and projecting a clinical, even dreamlike, quality. It was as though they were emissaries from outer space who had been sent to save the human race from itself. Almost all monitors were military intelligence officers, a fact which created some resentment among the JNA and even among the Croat military. Never in the history of warfare have so many foreign intelligence officers been permitted to wander around freely gathering information. None the less, I am convinced that their mere presence helped save lives in Croatia and BiH and they took considerable risks” (p.158-159).

In the same month another important piece of international intervention was put in place: on 5 July 1991, the EC Foreign Ministers decided to impose an arms embargo on Yugoslavia and to freeze EC financial aid. Three days later the arms embargo was also endorsed by the US. On 3 and 4 September 1991, the embargo was

¹⁷ The CSCE (Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe) was the predecessor of the later OSCE (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) - a European security organization, wider than the EU, which later played a major role in the Bosnian peace process, especially concerning the organization of elections.

extended by the CSCE to an embargo on all weapons and war equipment against all parties involved in the conflict. This was adopted as a UN Resolution (Resolution 713), calling for a complete arms embargo on Yugoslavia. The inclusion of all the successor states of Yugoslavia in the arms embargo was a controversial one and was later strongly criticized. The rationale behind the embargo was a fear of further escalating the conflict if the possibility of purchasing weapons remained open to the parties to the conflict. Furthermore, the embargo was also problematic from the point of view of international conflict resolution, as it denied the victims of aggression the right to properly defend themselves.

The arms embargo was followed by trade sanctions - this time only targeting Yugoslavia. On 8 November 1991 the EC Council of Ministers imposed trade sanctions on Yugoslavia and proposed a United Nations Security Council oil embargo. The US followed two days later, by declaring that it would also impose trade sanctions, and the following day, the G-24 donor countries suspended aid to Yugoslavia. Later, already after the outbreak of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, on 30 May 1992, the Security Council, by adopting Resolution 757, imposed comprehensive sanctions on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia including the severing of trade links, the freezing of government assets abroad, an oil embargo, a sporting and cultural ban, and the cutting of air links.

Another institution already in place at the outbreak of the Bosnian conflict was the presence of UN blue helmets. On 8 January 1992, the United Nations Security Council unanimously approved the deployment of an advance force of blue helmets. In total the resolution approved the later deployment of 10,000 troops as United Nations peacekeepers to Yugoslavia. This was the beginning of the UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Force), the widely, and to a certain extent, unjustly¹⁸ criticized UN peacekeeping force. These troops were originally meant to be deployed in Croatia supervising the ceasefire between the Croatian government troops and the rebel Serbs in the Krajina and Slavonija regions. Soon, however, in the Bosnian

¹⁸ The criticism can in so far be considered unjust as the mandate and tasks of UNPROFOR were exceedingly difficult to fulfill. These lightly armed blue helmets were supposed to escort supply convoys through the lines of the warring parties, protect the UN safe areas, though never deployed in sufficient number and armed accordingly.

context, their mandate was modified to offer protection to humanitarian convoys, to negotiate ceasefires between the warring parties and to a certain degree, and in certain cases, to offer protection to the so-called UN Safe Havens.

The last key international institution to be mentioned is the internationally sponsored peace talks. From the first moment of fighting the international community, most notably the EC, was trying to negotiate ceasefires and peace agreements. The first successful agreement was reached in Brioni, on 7 July 1991, which managed to resolve the Slovenian problem, but could not find a solution for the unfolding conflicts elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia. Then, on 7 September 1991, a peace conference was opened in The Hague under the chairmanship of Lord Carrington. In a declaration, the key principles upon which further negotiations should be based were laid out. The declaration stated that internal borders could not be changed by force, that the rights of minorities had to be guaranteed and that full account had to be taken of all legitimate concerns and aspirations. These principles were to become the guiding principles of all further international involvement.

Initially, the peace conference in The Hague focused on outlining a new all-Yugoslav political framework. It soon became apparent, however, that Yugoslavia was in a process of total dissolution and the Hague conference began defining the conditions which, when fulfilled, would qualify new states in Europe to be internationally recognized. Most Yugoslav republics aspiring to independence, including Bosnia-Herzegovina, quickly moved to fall in line with the EC-conditions, among others by holding referenda. Following such a referendum at the end of February 1992, Bosnia-Herzegovina declared its independence on 3 March 1992.

3.3.1 The IC During the War in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Thus when in March 1992 the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina began to turn violent, all or most international institutions and conflict resolution mechanisms such as an embargo and sanctions regime, international monitors, peace negotiations supported by several Western countries and international organizations, UN blue helmets, a humanitarian effort and last but not least the international media were ready to deal

with the problem. Here, however, international efforts faced a serious dilemma. In spite of the attention the conflict attracted, there was no experience of how to deal with such conflicts, and also the will was lacking to use force to solve the Yugoslav crises.

However, resulting from the experience of failure and the consequent public pressure, all through the Bosnian war, a gradual intensification of international engagement can be observed. Even though this intensification was very gradual, hesitant and the measures the IC undertook were many times contradictory, one can nevertheless observe some six levels or phases of clearly increasing assertiveness and intensification of international pressure. In moving from one level of international pressure to another intensified level of pressure, world public opinion, influenced by the media, played a major role. Thus many times it was spectacular provocations of the warring parties or spectacular actions of individuals, i.e. media attractive events, that prompted an intensification of international pressure, e.g. the shelling of the Sarajevo market.

3.3.2 Phase I - EC / UN Political Action

The first international reaction to the outbreak of fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina was a last-minute attempt, led by the Special Envoy of the EC José Cutilheiro, to negotiate a new constitutional order based on three ethnic cantons – one Serb, one Croat and one Bosniac. The agreement was signed on 18 March 1992 in Sarajevo, but none of the sides ever really tried to implement it. As the first EC-brokered agreement failed, on 7 April 1992 the EC formally recognized Bosnia-Herzegovina's independence, whereafter the fighting only intensified.

Probably the first limited success of international engagement was reached after the already mentioned UN Resolution 757 imposing comprehensive sanctions on Yugoslavia on 30 May 1992. A few days later the JNA began pulling out of the country, not, however, without handing over some 80% of its hardware and manpower to the newly formed VRS. The increasing international isolation of

Belgrade probably also contributed to the pullout of the JNA: in mid May 1992, the EC recalled all its ambassadors from rump Yugoslavia and a few days later the CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe – later OSCE – Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) suspended the membership of the country.

Even though in many respects this move was nothing but an attempt by Milošević to improve Yugoslavia's image, it had an effect of somewhat weakening the Bosnian Serbs, as it meant a decrease in total manpower and hardware and because the quality of military hardware left behind was of relatively lower quality. Probably at that time there was no immediate, visible impact of this move, due to the absolute superiority of the Serbs forces over the Bosniac and Croat militias. In the long run, however, it might have very well effected developments in the Bosnian war theatre. Nevertheless, by achieving the withdrawal of the JNA from Bosnia-Herzegovina the possibilities of purely political interventions were exhausted, without any direct and significant improvement on the ground in Bosnia. Low intensity (phase I) international efforts had thus reached their limits.

The late spring and summer of 1992 went by in a true cacophony of demands for tougher military action, even intervention and warning voices urging caution and restraint. In addition, there was also no agreement among the main countries of the IC on how to deal with the conflict. This dissension was visible within the public political discourse and within the international institutions dealing with the conflict. In the UN Security Council Russia and China tended to oppose all initiatives aiming at a more forceful international engagement to solve the conflict. In the CSCE, and later in the OSCE, Russia once again tended to water down resolutions against rump Yugoslavia.

There were, however, also disagreements within the countries of the traditional Western bloc and even the positions of the various individual states were not always coherent. In general the US tended to support a tougher line regarding the lifting of the arms embargo on the Bosniac side, but was more cautious about outright engagement. Thus especially at the beginning of the conflict the US was happy to

leave the lead to the European states. Within the EU itself there were also great rifts. Almost by default, without any clear rational or moral reasons and often against the public opinion of their populations, some Western European governments tended to slide back to World War II and pre-World War loyalties. Especially French government bureaucrats and occasionally soldiers, but according to some observers, also the British, thus showed a tendency to side with the Serbs, whereas Germans tended to support the Croats.

There were, however, notable individual exceptions. Francois Mitterand's surprise visit to besieged Sarajevo in the middle of June 1992 was without doubt a media – effective move directing attention to the suffering of civilians under the Serb siege. He was allegedly convinced to undertake the trip by the French philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy and the Minister of Health and Human Rights Bernard Kouchner, later the international administrator of Kosovo (Hahn 29 June 1992:3).

With more and more reports reaching the media on atrocities committed by Serb irregulars, the JNA and later the VRS, calls by the media, politicians and opinion leaders for tougher action became louder in the early summer of 1992.

3.3.3 Phase II - Humanitarian Effort, Blue Helmets and NATO

On 15 May 1992, the UN Security Council for the first time demanded the opening of Sarajevo airport for humanitarian flights and Bosnian Foreign Minister Haris Silajdžić appealed for safety zones to be created in the country like the one for Kurds in Iraq. Both ideas would later become recurring and prominent features of the Bosnian conflict. Amid calls for military intervention of an unspecified nature in Western countries, on 30 May and 10 June 1992 the Security Council solidified its previous call for the opening of the airport in Resolutions 757 and 758 authorizing also additional blue helmets to secure and operate the airport.

While on the one hand a toughening of IC attitudes, the degree of which was not yet predictable, was under way, on the other hand the Milošević regime was also

experiencing difficulties at home. From the middle of June 1992 on, mass demonstrations in Belgrade demanded the resignation of Milošević. What then followed was a masterpiece by Milošević and the Bosnian Serbs of appeasing domestic opposition and defusing the threat of IC resolve. Already after the first day of large-scale Belgrade demonstrations (on 15 June 1992), Karadžić on 16 June 1992 offered a ceasefire and the withdrawal of Serb heavy weapons from around Sarajevo. Just two days after the appointment of the opposition writer Dobrica Ćosić, a compromise that secured the position of Milošević with regard to his domestic opposition, Karadžić slithered back into a confusing mode of cooperation and provocation.

It is worth briefly outlining the chronology of this dance of defiance. On 17 June an accord was signed with the Bosnian Serbs regarding the opening of the Sarajevo Airport. The next day (18 June 1992) the unilaterally declared ceasefire of the Bosnian Serbs collapsed under a barrage of VRS artillery fire. Nevertheless, on 19 June an advance commando of blue helmets was allowed to enter the airport. These troops were then frequently shot at, frequently presumably from Serb position. Later under Canadian General McKenzie the peacekeepers increasingly lost their credibility with the encircled Sarajevans also from the side of the various government-friendly militias. To the surprise of the Bosnian presidency, in negotiations the same day the Serbs signaled openness concerning a withdrawal of heavy weapons from a 20km radius around the airport.

The main precondition of the UN for an opening of the airport was a stable ceasefire around the airport and a substantial withdrawal of Serb (20km radius), and to minimal extent Bosnian Government heavy weapons. A ceasefire was, however, not to be achieved and also Serb heavy weapons were not withdrawn. In this respect McKenzie stated: "We have seen that all sides at some point have started with the exchange of fire. This is unacceptable"¹⁹ (taz 22 June 1992:8).

¹⁹ In the original German source: „Wir haben gesehen, daß jede Seite irgendwann einmal mit den Schußwechseln angefangen hat. Das ist nicht hinnehmbar.“

Fighting and heavy shelling nevertheless continued until an ultimatum by the UN Secretary General Butros Butros Ghali that threatened Serb forces with unspecified consequences should they not withdraw their forces by 14.00hrs GMT, 29 June 1992. By the evening of the same day VRS forces were already withdrawing and two days later the first aircraft landed bringing humanitarian relief to the city. UNPROFOR soldiers were thus allowed to take control of the airport and from 4 July 1992 the air bridge to Sarajevo was officially up and running. 29 June is, by the way that also Francois Mitterand arrived to Sarajevo.

Serb heavy weapons were, however, not withdrawn from a 20km radius of the airport as requested by the UN, but only from the immediate surroundings of the facility. Throughout their Bosnia mission blue helmets were at constant risk of attacks and the humanitarian air traffic had to be frequently interrupted due to shelling and direct attacks on incoming aircraft. With the official opening of the air bridge IC resolve for tougher action was weakened and after appeasing and then dividing domestic opposition Milošević and his cronies in Bosnia were once again strong enough to continue their campaign. In an elaborate bargaining game of defiance, provocation, cooperation and confusing lies they budged just so far as was necessary to avert stronger IC sanctions at a time they were also experiencing domestic turmoil.

3.3.3.1 Neutrality

A word is also necessary regarding the Canadian Major General Lewis McKenzie, the commander of UNPROFOR troops in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The general was widely criticized and hated by citizens of Sarajevo for siding with the Serbs. He was even accused of visiting Serb-run rape brothels. The reason for the hatred and for the controversy around him was his approach towards the blue helmet mission. In line with most, though not all, Cold War peacekeeping missions and the ethics of several international organizations like the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross) the general understood his role as that of a neutral actor in the conflict. Regularly, the general equated all parties to the conflict and accused all sides of engaging in and initiating fighting.

Faced with what most citizens of Sarajevo and international observers in the city felt to be unprovoked aggression, this ethic of neutrality appeared unfair and absurd. At the same time the mandate of the UNPROFOR troops was not neutral in the classical sense either. Opening up the Sarajevo Airport for humanitarian transports was understood by the Serbs as assisting the besieged city. McKenzie was by no means the only international attempting a neutral approach in his mission. In his person a general controversy about the humanitarian mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and such missions in general, has manifested itself, which will be discussed in the conclusions of this work.

3.3.3.2 The Concentration Camps

Still in July 1992 parallel to the Sarajevo airport affair, another important issue came up. On 3 July 1993 a journalist Roy Gutman came out with an until then not realized horrible new aspect of the Serb assault on Bosnia. Since around April 1992 Bosniacs and Croats, men and women, had been detained by Serb regular and irregular forces in a number of detention camps scattered around Bosnian Serb-held territory. In the words of the EU chief negotiator at the Bosnian peace conference, Lord David Owen (1996:18), these camps could be “described, not unreasonably, as Serb concentration camps”. Gutman’s reports were “blazing a trail that would rouse international public opinion about the nature of Bosnia’s war” (Silber and Little, 1996:249). His report to the Manjača camps, published in *Newsday*, 19 July 1992, vividly describes the scene:

“Heads bowed and hands clasped behind their backs, the Muslim prisoners lined up before their Serb captors. One by one they sat on the metal stool and then knelt to have their heads shaved. An order was given that could not be heard from 200 yards away, and each groups of twenty then returned on the double to the sheds in which they lived in near darkness. Guards at the entry swung their rubber truncheons as if in anticipation of beatings to come” (quoted in Silber and Little, 1996:249).

Other shocking journalistic accounts followed. Silber and Little (1996) impressively describe the progression of international media reports uncovering these crimes. On 2 August 1992 Gutman “upped the ante” (ibid. p.249) with a front-page article titled

“The Death Camps of Bosnia” (*Newsday*) accusing Bosnian Serbs of the systematic extermination of prisoners. Further crucial publicity was given to the issue of concentration camps on 6 August 1992, by ITN TV footage produced by Penny Marshall. The recording shows emaciated men clasping the barbed wire of the Omarska camp in Northwestern Bosnia and showing what appear to be the bruises of severe beatings. The scenes are indeed reminiscent of World War II pictures of concentration camps.

Public outcry forced even the publicity shy ICRC to confirm the existence of the camps. It turned out that both UNHCR and ICRC, and thus most definitely also IC governments, were already aware of the detention / concentration camps. Both organizations were reporting their findings to the superior levels of their structures, without, however, any notable effect on the ground. A German commentary of the time acknowledges the belated ICRC confirmation of the journalistic reports but adds

The refusal of the Red-Cross representatives in Geneva, however, to give more precise details about the inspected camps remains incomprehensible. If the tortured people can be helped at all, it is only through the creation of publicity. Obviously the Red-Cross diplomacy has not learned from the mistakes that were committed in the time of Nazism (taz 6 August 1992:2)²⁰.

Serbs were caught off-guard by the accusations and by the consequent wave of sympathy and anger in Western countries. Karadžić and other Serb leaders either denied the accusations or tried to excuse it as not being systematic, but only the occasional atrocities of uncontrolled paramilitaries; to no avail. Under the increasing pressure of public opinion Western politicians were forced to discovering the problem and to seek solutions. Bill Clinton, then Presidential Candidate, was already demanding air strikes against Bosnian Serbs. Owen concludes (*ibid.* p.30): “It was clear that the public mood in the US was responding to stories about the Serb detention camps more strongly than was the case in Britain”.

²⁰ My translation, the German original reads as follows: “Unverständlich hingegen die Weigerung der Rot-Kreuz-Vertreter in Genf, über die inspizierten Lager genaue Angaben zu machen. Wenn überhaupt den gequälten Menschen geholfen werden kann, dann nur durch die Herstellung von Öffentlichkeit. Offensichtlich hat die Rote-Kreuz-Diplomatie aus den Fehlern, die zur Zeit des Nazismus begangen wurden, nichts gelernt.“

At this time, however, Serbs were at significant strategic disadvantage, which would, however, remain unexploited. Let me quote Lord Owen's analysis of the situation:

"Given the flat terrain, action from the air against Serb military targets could in my view have been as surgical as in the desert flatness of Iraq. I had followed the arguments for and against military intervention in the former Yugoslavia with care and I genuinely felt that here, unlike in Sarajevo, there was an opportunity for limited action for a humanitarian purpose which did not set NATO on an automatic escalator to putting in ground troops. Moreover, the UN was then not yet involved on the ground, except for a small contingent of 300 to keep Sarajevo airport open who would need to be removed or reinforced before any strike action, as would UNHCR and other aid workers" (ibid. p.18).

There were nevertheless certain risks involved, though not sufficient to explain or justify IC inactivity:

"The risk was to the Muslims in these camps for, following air strikes, many could have been massacred by undisciplined militia and vengeful local people; also, Sarajevo might have been taken by the Serbs" (p.19).

Clearly sensing their weakness, the Serbs bugged. In mid September 1992 UNHCR escorted by blue helmets was evacuating prisoners from the Manjača concentration to Croatia. The UNPROFOR escort had become possible through a hastily accepted resolution of the Security Council on 14 September 1992 (Resolution 776).

In the course of the following several months Bosnian Serbs slowly began to disband their detention and concentration camps. Some of the inmates were released towards Croatia and some to Yugoslavia. Many later ended up in Western countries with the largest numbers being accepted in Germany. Others were exchanged with detained Serbs, or simply families and individuals who wished to leave HVO and ABiH areas. The concentration camp crisis changed the Serb strategy of conducting their ethnic cleansing campaign. Over the next years of the war the cleansing of the areas under VRS controlled was done more by constant harassment and continuous though lower-scale expulsions. Large-scale cleansing campaigns became rare – only prior tentative signing of the "almost" successful Vance-Owen Peace Proposal in

1993 and in anticipation of the Dayton Peace Agreement was ethnic cleansing stepped up to create facts on the ground.

3.3.3.3 *The IC Strategy*

Following the episode of the Sarajevo airport and the unfolding of the concentration camps crisis, the discourse within the IC about tougher or just limited military intervention soon reached a temporary consensus on a low level. Faced with an all-out escalation of the Bosnian conflict, massive abuses of human rights and huge flows of refugees and IDPs, the lack of resolve within the EC to apply radical means became painfully manifest. This political frustration can nevertheless be considered to have triggered the first escalation of international engagement. The emerging policy line, the first step of which was the takeover of the airport could be summarized as follows:

- Massive support for humanitarian aid (the first UNHCR conference already amassed \$152 Million);
- Limited military engagement by UNPROFOR to ensure the safety of humanitarian convoys (backed by UN Security Council Resolution 770). The contributing states were mainly France, Belgium, Spain and the United Kingdom. UNPROFOR members were allowed to use force for self-defense, including in being prevented from carrying out their mandate;
- Limited military engagement to oversee the sanctions regime along the Danube and in the Adriatic.

The deployment of blue helmets in the Bosnian conflict occurred under an unusual mandate. While in Croatia UNPROFOR was acting in the traditional role of blue helmet troops separating combatants, the mandate of UNPROFOR in Bosnia-Herzegovina was to offer security to UN humanitarian convoys. By its nature, such a mandate included the possibility of exerting force and was thus the first minimally forceful IC engagement in the Bosnian War. Accordingly, from November 1992 on, UNPROFOR troops are known to have engaged in occasional exchanges of fire with hostile militias. The amount of force UNPROFOR troops were willing to exert

depended very much on the rules of engagement provided by the national governments of the respective troops. Aid workers of this period reportedly preferred British escorts as these troops were usually the most robust in their response to threats and provocations (see section on UNPROFOR p.154).

Even though the basics of this new policy line appear to be weak and indecisive, the late summer and autumn of 1992 saw the first steps in the later ever intensifying international engagement in the Bosnian conflict. On 3 September, a new permanent conference on Yugoslavia, co-chaired by Lord Owen for the EC and Cyrus Vance for the United Nations, was opened. This was the first realistic, and almost successful, peace conference, which lasted for almost a year. The Vance-Owen Plan further developed the idea of the cantonization of Bosnia-Herzegovina: up to 10 cantons, some of them mixed, others mono-ethnically controlled, were to be established, with Sarajevo having special status.

An important step showing the gradually increasing decisiveness of international engagement was achieved by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 787, adopted on 16 September 1992, which called upon states to stop and search vessels in the Adriatic and on the Danube to ensure the strict implementation of United Nations sanctions against former Yugoslavia. It also called for observers to be deployed on the borders of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Based on this resolution, NATO and the Western European Union (WEU) agreed to adopt powers to stop and search any ship entering or leaving Yugoslav waters. This was the first open engagement of NATO in the Yugoslav conflict!

A further step, eventually also involving NATO, was sanctioned by another United Nations Security Council Resolution (No 781) banning military flights in the air space of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In the following months, the initial resolution was amended with increased room for military action to enforce it. Initially the ban was defied, but after the 17 December 1992 meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers, where the organization declared its readiness to enforce the ban, Bosnian Serbs finally grounded their combat aircraft. Additionally, the US issued a unilateral warning to

Serbia not to escalate tensions in the Albanian majority province of Kosovo, or else face US military action.

Thus early 1993 saw an increase in international presence and pressure in the Bosnian conflict. International presence could be felt in almost every aspect of the war. International aid convoys crisscrossed the country supporting besieged pockets of civilians. UNPROFOR troops escorted these convoys, engaged occasionally in firefights with Bosnian militias, negotiated ceasefires and assisted the ICRC when exchanging bodies or prisoners of war between the warring parties. The spring of 1993 also saw the first regular NATO aerial patrols over Bosnia.

There was, however, a substantial downside to the chosen path of the IC's low-level intervention of deploying ever greater numbers of blue helmets in support of the humanitarian mission: it plugged the main strategic vulnerability of Bosnian Serbs to air strikes by "offering" them an escalation strategy of taking these UN troops hostage. Faced with the unwillingness of most IC states to forcefully intervene, the "blue helmet" option, a course of action following the smallest common denominator, might still have been the only realistic alternative of the time. It had nevertheless postponed the decisive use of force, necessary to end the war, for several years. With VRS vulnerability that motivated Bosnian Serbs to compromise on the Sarajevo airport and concentration camps issues gone, the tone in Pale and Banja Luka became noticeably more defiant.

Owen quotes Mladić to describe the unbending defiant mood in late 1992:

"The existence of the Serb Republic may be disputed in the world, but the existence of its army is indisputable. The Serb Republic exists because we have our territory, our people, our authority and all the attributes of a state. Whether they want to recognize it or not is their affair. The army is a fact." He was not just thumbing his nose at the international community but signalling loud and clear that for him Greater Serbia had been achieved; roll it back if you dare was his challenge, and he never believed that the international community would dare" (ibid. pp.119-120).

A toughening in IC attitudes was nevertheless taking place, but the self-erected tripwire of UN troops on the ground effectively hindered it. Thus as it became clear

that most Western countries were, at that moment, not willing to intervene militarily to end the conflict, calls for a lifting of the arms embargo on Bosnia-Herzegovina grew louder. It was especially the US that favored this option, while most European countries, which, contrary to the US, had troops within the framework of UNPROFOR, opposed it. They feared that their troops could be taken hostage once fighting escalated. Parallel to the international discourse also the Vance-Owen peace negotiations proceeded. This US exclamation might have led Milošević and Karadžić to sign the VOPP in the first place. The later protests of troop-contributing states against a lift and strike option, however, must have convinced Karadžić of the low probability of the plan being carried out.

While the Vance-Owen peace talks definitely impacted upon the course of the war, its effects were different on the various "players". On the one hand, Milošević, feeling and understanding the effect of the intensifying diplomatic and military pressure and under sharp trade sanctions, now began pressuring Bosnian Serbs, involved in the Vance-Owen Peace negotiations (VOPP), to accept the proposals. The subtleties of increasing international decisiveness were, however, lost on the Bosnian Serbs. On the ground in Bosnia-Herzegovina they were very much in control of the military situation and thus remained defiant towards international and even Yugoslav pressure.²² But certain aspects of the Vance-Owen Plan irritated them as they seemed to undo the effects of their previous campaigns. They thus intensified their ethnic cleansing, in order to create "mono-ethnic" facts on the ground and that way make the VOPP unworkable.²³ For the same reasons the Bosnian Serbs also started

²² This defiant, seemingly irrational, bullying attitude of Serb politicians initially completely confused Western politicians who were led to believe that no amount of pressure and military threat would be able to force Serbs into compliance. This was wrong, as later developments showed, but in 1992-93 the Serbs were on the winning side.

²³ Still in 1993, Vasić (22 March 1993) analyzes this situation more in depth: "Then Božidar Vučurević, leader of the Serbs in Herzegovina, also realized how the Vance-Owen plan would turn out, and expelled several thousand Moslems from Trebinje. The fact that they had been loyal until the end, and fought with the Serbs in Eastern Herzegovina, was to no avail. Today it is the turn of the Moslems from Bijeljina and its vicinity. Of course, the worst situation is in Eastern Bosnia: under the Vance-Owen plan, province no. 5 (Tuzla, a Moslem majority of 63.7 percent) is placed in the corridor linking Serbia and the Bijeljina province with the Rudo province, i.e. with Eastern Herzegovina. This is unacceptable for Karadžić's side. If they lose at the negotiations, then a year of war and ethnic cleansing and all that resulted from it, have been in vain, and the price has been too high... From this perspective, Mladić's offensive and its final goal are understandable. The complete ethnic cleansing of Eastern Bosnia: the elimination of Moslems from this province would allow for a re-examination of Vance-Owen's plan" (Vasić 1993).

an offensive in early Spring 1993 in Eastern Bosnia with the aim of eradicating the few remaining Bosniac pockets there, notably Srebrenica, Žepa and Goražde.

The VOPP also had some unwanted effects on Bosnian Croats. Even though Bosnian Croats were, in general, very much in favor of the plan, already in January 1993, they began fighting with the ABiH to take control of areas, which, under the VOPP, were assigned to come under Croat control. While this fighting was temporarily halted, the VRS offensive went on.

3.3.3.4 Rape Camps

A last IC-Bosnian Serb interaction of this escalation phase has also to be described. The gradual release of Bosniac and Croat detainees by the VRS revealed an until then largely unnoticed horror of the war: the existence of Bosnian Serb-led rape camps. Though since June 1992 rape was occasionally mentioned in journalistic accounts the systematic nature of rape by VRS and Serb irregular troops only received wide-scale acknowledgement when Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the UN Special Envoy for Human Rights, presented his report to the Security Council on 1 December 1992 producing an unprecedented outcry among the members of the Human Rights Commission. A subsequent EC investigation team confirmed the findings and stated that

“a repeated feature of Serbian attacks on Muslim towns and villages was the use of rape, often in public, or the threat of rape, as a weapon of war to force the population to leave their homes. Probably in most cases, other forms of physical and mental violence to persons were associated with rape, accompanied or followed by the destruction of homes, mosques and churches. The Mission saw examples of statements and documents from Serbian sources which very clearly put such actions in the context of an expansionist strategy” (Womenaid International, 28 January 1993, <http://www.womenaid.org/press/info/humanrights/warburton.htm>).

From December 1992 onwards media reports on rape camps were appearing almost on daily basis. The huge outcry in Western countries made the Bosnian government discover the propaganda value of the issue, which it until then viewed as “just another” of the truly countless evils the non-Serb population of Bosnia-Herzegovina was suffering at the hand of the VRS (Stiglmayr 1993). As public outrage and further

damage to the international image of Serbs was mounting, so was the pressure on Western politicians increasing “to do something”. It seems that the perpetration of systematic rape had dropped sharply by the end of 1992, though rape in a less systematic way, of course continued all through the war. The report of the United Nations Commission of Experts concludes:

“The reported cases of rape and sexual assault contained in the database occurred between 1991 and 1993. The majority of the rapes and sexual assaults occurred during April to November 1992 and very few occurred before or after that. In the same time period, the number of media reports increased from a low of none in March of 1992 and of 13 in April 1992 to a high of 535 in January 1993 and 529 in February 1993” (United Nations Commission of Experts, 28 December 1994, <http://www.ess.uwe.ac.uk/comexpert/IV.htm>).

There were no IC threats directly linked to the issue of rape camps. It is thus unclear whether this gradual abandonment of rape as a strategy of terror was due purely to media pressure and severe damage to Bosnian Serb image or was stopped with the ongoing release of prisoners.

3.3.4 Phase III - First NATO Threat

As the VRS advance proceeded Bosniacs were crammed together, under appalling conditions, in shrinking ABiH controlled pockets. At this moment the personal bravery and integrity of one man, General Philippe Morillon, temporarily saved the Bosniac inhabitants of the besieged towns. At the beginning of March, after gaining access to the encircled town of Srebrenica and seeing the terrible plight of the entrapped civilians, the General declared

“with a De Gaulle-like statement ‘Here I am, and here I stay! (J’y suis et j’y reste!)’ and gave the order for the UN flag to be raised on the Post Office building with a short ceremony. Besieged and starving Srebrenica became the headquarters of General Philippe Morillon, UN forces commander for Bosnia-Herzegovina. In a statement for the public, Morillon said: ‘I am perfectly aware that we are faced with the danger of a great tragedy in Srebrenica. I came here intentionally and I have decided to stay, to calm your fears and to try and

save you.' A legend was born..." (Vasić 1993, <http://www.siicom.com/vreme/index.html/>).

Needless to say, Morillon's action did not go down well with UN bureaucrats. They started grumbling of "discipline", "challenges" and in general, expressing muted dissatisfaction because a standard routine of "diplomatic efforts" had been disrupted (Vasić 1993).

It can be added that the French political and military establishment did not appreciate Morillon's act either. But in the end, after Morillon's high profile and media effective intervention there was no more denial possible of what was happening on the ground. The UN was forced into another half-hearted "catastrophe-containment" measure. On 16 April 1993 a UN Resolution declared Srebrenica a demilitarized security zone, which should be given back to the Bosniacs. Less than a month later the concept of safe havens was expanded. Additionally to Srebrenica, five other towns were listed in UN Resolution 824 as security zones: Žepa, Goražde, Tuzla, Bihać and Sarajevo.

Bosnian Serbs were irritated, but initially, showed no inclination to budge and their pressure on the Bosniac enclaves increased. In the same defiant vain, on 6 May 1993 finally also the Bosnian Serbs rejected the VOPP. On the same day Milošević declared Yugoslav sanctions on the Bosnian Serbs for all but humanitarian goods. Initially, the Yugoslav sanctions on Bosnian Serbs remained somewhat of a joke. Nevertheless, it had sent a first shock to rebel Serbs and indicated a rift between them and Milošević, which later was to become an open conflict.

The decision of the Bosnian Serb Parliament basically ditched the VOPP. Just some two weeks later on 22 May 1993 a new concept for peace was proposed in Washington and adopted by the "Big Four", the US, France, Great Britain and Russia, plus the EU Negotiator Lord Owen, to resolve the Yugoslav problem (Owen 1995). The plan was to be short-lived, but is nevertheless noteworthy as its basic tenets strongly deviated from the VOPP. The British Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd

“confirmed [to Owen] that the US argument had changed completely in recent days: whereas they had originally argued that the VOPP was too generous to the Serbs, they were now saying it was unrealistic to expect the Serbs to give up so much territory” (Owen 1995:271).

A further important aspect of the Joint Action Plan (JAP) was that it first introduced the concept of an international criminal court for the Former Yugoslavia. The JAP also mentioned the safe areas and while critical of UN plans for peacekeepers to secure the safe havens, an alternative, clear and sufficiently robust enforcement mechanism was not specified. The mentioning of safe areas in the context of the and in connection with, even if unspecified, enforcement action, nevertheless raised the profile of the threatened enclaves.

International calls for tougher military action against the Serbs could not be indefinitely ignored. On a meeting of the sixteen NATO foreign ministers on 10 June 1993, NATO member states decided to make 80 (mainly American) combat aircraft available to the United Nations for operations under NATO command. Then, on 9 August 1993, NATO approved the principle of military intervention in Bosnia in the form of air strikes to protect UNPROFOR troops and loosen the Serb stranglehold on Sarajevo.²⁴ The final decision on whether the operation should go ahead was to rest with the United Nations. Air strikes had already been demanded one year previously, around June / July 1992 with regard to the opening of the Sarajevo Airport and access of convoys to Sarajevo and other areas. Serbs budged in time to the degree necessary to appease IC indignation and resolve.

As talks of NATO aerial bombardment became more concrete, the Bosnian Serbs were, initially at least, defiant as always. A high-ranking officer of the Bosnian Serb forces even declared:

“The minute the first bomb lands here, we'll start firing missiles at bases in Italy and Austria. If they want war, they'll get war” (Bosnet News Briefs, 7 May 1993).

²⁴ Regarding the military potential of air strikes, officials involved in planning the strikes against the Bosnian Serbs believed “that the air strikes would be effective in suppressing the Serbian artillery fire that has fallen on Sarajevo and other Bosnian cities. But the officials do not believe that air strikes would be sufficient to end the war in Bosnia” (New York Times, 7 May 1993).

But, of course, everything has a limit, even Bosnian Serb defiance. Under increasing pressure from all sides, towards the end of May, the VRS suspended its military operations against the enclaves. Srebrenica, Žepa and Goražde were temporarily saved. Even talks on Serb withdrawal from around Sarajevo were successful: On 15 August 1993, Serb forces completed their evacuation of the mountains above Sarajevo. Blue berets then moved in to occupy the positions surrendered by the Serbs. The first round of negotiating by force and military threats went to NATO. The IC, however, remained reluctant to learn from this event. The IC and with it NATO were forced into this engagement by humiliating Serb defiance, by international public pressure, and, to a large extent, by the personal initiative of General Morillon.

Important for the temporary rescue of the Eastern Bosnian enclaves was also a creative compromise promising to disarm Bosniac troops entrapped the pockets while providing sufficient UN blue helmet personnel to credibly secure the safe areas. The compromise was most probably crucial in effecting Serb compliance. Unfortunately, however, none of the aspects of the compromise were carried out. Blue helmets were not provided in sufficient numbers to secure the enclaves and the ABiH troops of the safe areas continued to launch raids into Serb territory tying down sizeable VRS forces.

Around the same time as the VRS's East Bosnian offensive took place, there was another significant development in its unfolding: the Bosniac-Croat conflict. This became a full-fledged war when, on 9 May 1993, three days after the Bosnian Serbs practically rejected the VOPP, the HVO initiated a massive attack in Southern Bosnia-Herzegovina against ABiH forces. This new twist of the Bosnian War, i.e. that a victim of an aggression can, in another context, become an aggressor himself, seriously confused Western diplomats. For a time there was a denial mentality all over the international diplomatic scene – Western diplomats in Zagreb simply refused to acknowledge that in central and southern Bosnia-Herzegovina a Croat assault was going on against Bosniacs. Once again it was thanks to the efforts of individuals like Jerry Hulme, the Head of UNHCR or US Congressman Frank Wolf,²⁵ who forced the

²⁵ See chapter "Mostar and International Community".

world to acknowledge the reality on the ground, and eventually to take action to stop it.

Only the US was initially quick to acknowledge and to criticize Croatia. Airdrops to East Mostar and the visit of a US Embassy representative show this clearly. However, after the Somalia debacle in the late autumn of 1993 and early winter of 1994 the US reverted back to a non-interventionist mode. Without the US adequately supporting the VOPP, the Croat attack on the Bosniacs meant the end of this negotiating track. Just about a month after the beginning of full-scale war between Bosniacs and Croats, Tuđman and Milošević came out with a joint proposal on the partition of Bosnia into "three constituent nations" (Serb, Croat and Muslim) in the framework of a federal or confederate state.

The VOPP was dead and a new peace conference was set up. The new chief mediators now were Lord David Owen, representing the EU, and Thorwald Stoltenberg for the UN. The basic assumptions of their proposal were very different from the previous Vance-Owen plan. The beauty of the VOPP – the probably fairest proposal ever offered as a solution to the Bosnian Conflict – was that it offered a decentralized, cantonized state, but without completely linking ethnic territories. The map presented by the VOPP was more a patchwork of ethnically dominated cantons. This way fully viable, potentially separatist entities were excluded. Additionally, it offered only 42% of the country to the Serbs, i.e. less than the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) with 49%. Bosniacs and Croats were to share the rest, with Sarajevo having a special status. Interestingly, a similar military and police force was foreseen for the implementation of the VOPP as was later for the DPA.

However, with the exception of the Croats, in late 1992 and in the first half of 1993 nobody really liked the plan. The Bosnian Serbs disliked it because they felt they could not realize their aims of independence and the Bosniacs because they felt "it accepted territorial conquests and ethnic cleansing as facts and it offered the Serbs who, in 1991, represented only 31% of the population, 42% of the land and the Muslims with 42%, only 28% of the land."

Contrary to the VOPP, the Owen-Stoltenberg Plan was based on the Tuđman-Milošević proposal of a subdivision of BiH into three ethnic parts, subject to international law. Following the original Tuđman-Milošević proposal Owen and Stoltenberg

“Over 15 - 16 June [...] met with Milošević, Tuđman, Bulatović and Izetbegović, Karadžić and Boban. These meetings laid the foundations for three plans, all basically of the same family: the Union of Three Republics that was finalized on HMS Invincible; the EU Action Plan; and the Contact Group Plan. All these plans gave the Serbs their own contiguous area for a republic within a Union of Bosnia-Herzegovina” (Owen 1995:304).

Regarding the particulars of the division, in one of its final versions, the plan foresaw 52% of the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina for the Serbs, 31% for the Bosniacs and 17% for the Croats. The plan was full with creative compromises. It proposed a special status for Sarajevo and Mostar - which were to be internationally administered for two years under United Nations and EC mandates respectively. For the Bosniacs it additionally offered an internationally guaranteed safe access to the Adriatic Sea (along the navigable part of the Neretva River), access to the Sava (a river joining the Danube) and the long-term lease of the Croatian Ploče harbor to BiH.

Regarding a comparison and evaluation of the two peace plans Lord Owen stated the following to a journalist of the New York Times:

“Now, as we move more toward division [i.e. the Owen-Stoltenberg Plan], arguably, you can get away with less that is good,” he said. “You’ve accepted more ethnic cleansing than I think is healthy, more territory seized. The more idealistic the settlement, the harder it is to get.” [...] “I’ve said this is a peace made in hell,” he continued. “This won’t be one that any of us can look back on with a feeling of moral correctness.” The Vance-Owen plan, he still insists, was far superior. “That would have rolled the Serbs back 37 percent,” he said. “This one, about 24 or 25 percent. If we had had the courage and the grit to see through the implementation of Vance-Owen, we could have reversed ethnic cleansing” (Darnton, 28 December 1993, <http://www.bosnet.org/bosnet.shtml>).

As Koehler (1996) rightly points out, the Owen-Stoltenberg plan represented a strong deviation from the course followed by the IC until then. Moral principles and thinking in terms of a just solution were abandoned; the proposals almost completely

conformed to the balance of power on the ground. This attitude resulted in a change in the Bosnian Government's position. Now, also they began to think in terms of establishing a mono-ethnic mini-state. Thus the key issue for the Bosnian, and now increasingly just Bosniac, government became to negotiate and fight for a strategically feasible Bosniac mini-state.

Nevertheless, the Owen-Stoltenberg Plan had many opponents in the Bosnian Government, mainly because it gave up the idea of a unified Bosnia, but also because the territory offered to the Bosniacs by the plan was very small. Thus the EU, which still had the lead in the negotiations, looked increasingly for US support in pressuring the Bosniac side into accepting the Owen-Stoltenberg offer.

In the end the Owen-Stoltenberg Plan failed. On the surface it failed because the Croats and Serbs were not willing to give a little bit more land and somewhat better conditions to the Bosniacs. But it also failed because there was no compelling reason for the Bosniacs to accept it. Their army, the ABiH, was increasing in strength and performance. In the US the political debate concentrated on "lift and strike", i.e. on lifting the arms embargo on Bosnia and conducting air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs. Additionally, talk on the international level was also going on about sanctions against Croatia for its engagement in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Furthermore, so it seems at least, even the international negotiators appeared to have been disgusted by the unfairness of the negotiations, as the above mentioned interview with Lord Owen or the statement of Hans van den Broek, the EC Commissioner of Foreign Affairs, who called the Serb and Croat proposals "not fair and not justified", show.

Increasingly, Europe began to seek US involvement, but the US still hesitated. An analysis from this time explains it as follows:

“Resisting European pressure, the United States has limited its role in the conflict to providing and delivering relief aid, leaving the negotiating to the United Nations and the Europeans. The main reason the United States has refused to try to nudge the Bosnian government to accept a peace that would partition the country is practical: the conviction that a forced peace would have to be enforced with American troops. In addition, American policy makers argue, the Muslims are victims of Serbian aggression and must not be

pressured into making concessions that are militarily unenforceable and morally indefensible” (Sciolino 1994, <http://www.bosnet.org/bosnet.shtml>).

3.3.5 Phase IV - Limited NATO Action

While the Owen-Stoltenberg negotiations were still going on, the Bosnian Serbs embarked on a new senseless provocation of the IC: on 6 February 1994 a mortar shell fired from Serb positions around Sarajevo hit the crowded Sarajevo market place killing 68 people in one of the single worst massacres in the town. In principle, since August 1993, there was a ban on heavy weapons around Sarajevo in place. This, however, was slowly eroded by the Serbs as early as October 1993. A renewed NATO ultimatum at that time once again caused the VRS to withdraw its heavy weapons from around Sarajevo, but as the Bosnian Serb leadership sensed that the resolve of the IC faded, they immediately reneged on their commitments. In the winter of 1993-94 the UN safe areas were again pounded by Serb shells. In December they even threatened NATO planes not to use Tuzla Airport, shot at a NATO airplane delivering relief items to Sarajevo, and prevented a Dutch UNPROFOR battalion from relieving the Canadian troops stationed in the UN Safe Area in Srebrenica.

The shelling of Sarajevo, however, was one provocation too many. On 9 February 1994 NATO issued a 10-day ultimatum to the Bosnian Serbs to withdraw their heavy weapons from around Sarajevo or face air strikes. The warning sounded serious and the Serbs complied. There was also a lot of talk at the higher levels of international politics on extending the ultimatum to other besieged Bosnian towns, most prominent on the list being Mostar. Even before a formal ultimatum against the HVO was officially spelled out, on 22-23 February 1994, the UN managed to broker a ceasefire between ABiH and HVO. Charles Redman, a senior US diplomat was also present at the negotiations. Subsequently there was a little talk about a federation between Bosniacs and Bosnian Croats, then a meeting in Washington and on 1 March 1994, Bosniacs and Croats signed the first peace agreement in Bosnia that was to last. This first peace agreement of the Bosnian War came to be known as the Washington Agreement.

This event was in many respects a key turning point. For the first time during the Bosnian conflict, the US took the lead – and it was a success. Another very important aspect of this peace agreement was that it did not recognize the Owen-Stoltenberg plan for Bosnia as its basis, but rather the territorial integrity of Bosnia as a whole. Thus, on the one hand, it was some kind of a return to a more just and moral policy, but on the other hand it was also a return to a more far-sighted "realpolitik" in the sense that once again the inviolability of international borders became the guiding principle.

It is shocking, but not really surprising, that some UN and other international bureaucrats grumbled about this unforeseen turn of events. The *New York Times* on this:

"Some officials of the United Nations and the European Union have ridiculed the American proposal for a Croatian-Muslim union in Bosnia as well meaning but ill conceived, because it does nothing to address Serbian grievances. Asked for his reaction to the American proposal, one top U.N. official said, 'You don't really want to know what I think'" (Schmidt 1994, <http://www.bosnet.org/bosnet.shtml>).

The Serbs were, however, immediately invited to join the Federation, and while the Owen-Stoltenberg peace talks faded away, the new peace conference, the proposal of the so-called Contact Group, focused on the ideas established in the Washington Agreement combining them with the previous Owen-Stoltenberg approaches regarding Serb territories.

Just a few days later, on 12 March 1994, U.N. Special Envoy to the former Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi ordered NATO air strikes against Serbs attacking French peacekeepers in Bihać, a U.N.-protected zone. In the end, however, the planes did not shoot. Nevertheless, this toughening in attitude on the side of the IC was sufficient to broker a deal on 17 March between the Bosnian government and the Serbs to ease the siege of Sarajevo by opening some roads to limited civilian traffic. This was a major breakthrough compared to the prior situation and from this time on

the threat of NATO military strikes became a constant part of day-to-day negotiations in the Bosnian war theatre.

Against this background of growing international resolve, new peace talks were initiated by Russia. The new IC negotiating body, the so-called Contact Group, was composed of five nations, the United States, Russia, Britain, France, and Germany. Contrary to the previous Owen-Stoltenberg plan, the basis of the Contact Group's peace plan was the Federation Agreement between Bosniacs and Croats. Its basic principles were:

- Bosnia would remain a single state;
- That state would consist of the Federation and a Bosnian Serb entity;
- These two entities would be linked via mutually-agreed constitutional principles, which would also spell out relationships with Serbia and Croatia proper;
- The Serb entity would retain 49%, the Federation 51% of the territory.

The Contact Group Plan strongly deviated from other previous plans also in another respect. For the first time a deadline was set for the acceptance of the proposal by the warring parties. In case of a negative response by any of the conflict parties sanctions were threatened. In effect, the plan was to be imposed by incentives and disincentives (sanctions). In this vein, on 12 May 1994 the US Senate voted for the selective lifting of the arms embargo on Bosnia-Herzegovina. In addition, on 9 June 1994 also the US House of Representatives adopted the unilateral lifting of the arms embargo – though without immediate legal effect.

The peace plan of the Contact Group was thus soon endorsed by most of the state or sub-state entities involved in the Bosnian conflict. Even Milošević, now in his new role as a Balkan peacemaker, strongly supported the proposal, which he rightly saw as the only possibility to bring about the lifting of international sanctions on Yugoslavia. The strategic situation on the ground had, however, significantly

changed. A discussion of David Owen with General Mladić, illustrates the situation well:

“On Friday 3 June [1994] in Geneva I had a two-and-a-half-hour conversation with General Mladić. The meeting was private, with just his chief military aide and his interpreter present. My main object was to try to ensure that Mladić saw the issues in a wider international perspective and to give him an opportunity to raise questions. He also saw General Galvin in the US Embassy that same day. In fact, most of the input from Mladić came in the form of questions. As I had found before, in these sort of talks he is quiet and unassuming and there is none of the bravado and boasting of some of his public performances. My impression was that he was calculating carefully the advantages and disadvantages of signing a map with a 49 per cent--51 per cent split. He would, I think, have preferred the cessation of hostilities under discussion with Akashi in Geneva to coincide with the signing of the map, but he did not rule out signing a cessation of hostilities agreement first. I was convinced that for the first time since I had been talking to Mladić he would listen to a serious threat to impose this settlement.

Mladić's whole stance was one of absorbing information and giving little away. He clearly now understood much more English and admitted that he had been trying to master the language with, he claimed, little success. My overall impressions were of a man who was beginning to count the cost of this war, prompted by his daughter's suicide as well as the daily toll of deaths among his own troops” (ibid. p.334).

It was only the Bosnian Serb Assembly, with “the Bosnian Serb leaders [...] blissfully unaware of NATO decisions, EC policy or Security Council declarations” (Owen 1995:335), that remained reluctant. This attitude seriously strained their relationship with Milošević's Yugoslavia. Thus, in spite of Milošević's endorsement, in July and later in August 1994 the Bosnian Serb parliament definitely rejected the peace plan. This rejection led to an open break between the two Serb entities.

There might have been an element of rational (or maybe just instinctive) calculation in the rejection, in the sense of not taking seriously the threatened sanctions. Lord Owen describes with bitterness how US threats to lift the arms embargo and initiate air strikes, for the time being, turned out to be mostly empty posturing. As the result of a general frustration with the Bosnian Serbs, however, a shift with militarily relevant implications was soon underway. In this sense again Bosnian Serb

intransigence was indeed self-destructive and had cost an additional year of suffering and loss of life.

While on the international level the negotiations dragged on, on the theatre level in Bosnia, after the first successful NATO threat against Bosnian Serbs in February 1994, a threat-based interaction between NATO and UNPROFOR on the one hand and the Bosnian Serbs on the other hand unfolded. A key event in this regard, signaling greater resolve, was the downing of four Serb jets by two U.S. F-16 fighters on 28 February 1994. The Bosnian Serb jets had violated the no-fly zone over Bosnia and reportedly bombed a munitions factory in central Bosnia. There was definitely a toughening IC attitude to be felt. A *New York Times* article from that period expresses this change as follows:

"... a lot of changes have taken place by coincidence lately. After years of vacillation, the West has in a single month threatened to bomb Bosnian Serb artillery positions around Sarajevo and thereby forced the withdrawal of the guns; decided, through the British general who commands U.N. forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina, to no longer ask the combatants for permission for the movement of aid convoys; sent the aircraft carrier Saratoga back into the Adriatic Sea; and struck for the first time in the air" (Apple Jr., 14 February 1994, <http://www.bosnet.org/bosnet.shtml>).

The seriousness of the initial NATO threat was felt by the Bosnian Serbs who consequently complied with the NATO ultimatum to withdraw heavy weapons from around Sarajevo. Soon afterwards, however, as the attention of the IC shifted from Bosnia, the Bosnian Serbs began testing the resolve of the international organizations active in Bosnia-Herzegovina. A complex pattern of Serb provocation, subsequent IC-threat, compliance and renewed testing of the resolve of the IC unfolded. It is worth taking a chronological look at this complex interaction from Spring to Autumn 1994:

- 10 February** Ultimatum for Bosnian Serbs to withdraw all heavy weapons from within 12.5-miles of Sarajevo or place them under U.N. control.
- 17 February** Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic agrees to pull back weapons after Moscow pledges to send Russian peacekeepers to Sarajevo.

- 28 February** Two U.S. F-16 fighters shoot down four Serb jets. The Bosnian Serb jets violated the no-fly zone over Bosnia and reportedly bombed a munitions factory in central Bosnia.
- 12 March** U.N. chief for former Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi, orders NATO air strike against Serbs attacking French peacekeepers in Bihać, a U.N.-protected zone. Planes do not shoot.
- 17 March** Bosnian government and Serbs sign an accord to ease siege of Sarajevo by opening some roads to limited civilian traffic.
- April** A VRS attack against UN safe area Goražde is undertaken.
- 10 April** Two U.S. Air Force F-16s launch air strike against Bosnian Serb tank and command post near Goražde.
- 11 April** Two U.S. Marine FA-18s launch air strike on Serb tank, personnel carriers.
- 15 April** Serbs take all strategic points around Goražde.
- 16 April** British Sea Harrier shot down over Goražde; pilot ejects and is safe.
- 20-21 April** Goražde hospital shelled. At least 38 killed.
- 22 April** NATO North Atlantic Council issues an ultimatum for the Serbs to pull back weapons 20 km around Goražde. Additionally, it agrees that if the safe areas of Bihać, Srebrenica, Tuzla or Žepa were attacked by heavy weapons from any range or there was a concentration or movement of such weapons within 20 km of these areas then they would be declared military exclusion zones. NATO would back up such declarations with Alliance air power.
- 27 April** Deadline passes for Goražde; no air strikes called as Serbs have (partially) complied.
- 5 May** Akashi makes deal to let five Serb tanks transit Sarajevo exclusion zone.
- May** ABiH initiates in the Tuzla area its first successful offensive against the VRS.
- 17 May** Serbs shell Tuzla airfield shortly after UNPROFOR flight lands.

- 31 May** Serbs shell Tuzla airfield. UNPROFOR request for air strikes is turned down by Akashi.²⁶
- 1 June** Serbs shell Tuzla airfield after U.N. plane lands.
- 23 June** Serbs fire small arms, mortars at aid convoy northeast of Tuzla. NATO air presence apparently halts the attack.
- 20 July** Serbs turn down latest peace plan.
- end of June** Shelling of Tuzla airport abates.
- 26 July** Karadzic announces Serbs will close civilian route in and out of Sarajevo.
- 27 July** Serbs fire on U.N. fuel convoy, killing one British soldier and setting at least one tanker ablaze.
- 28 July** Bosnian Serbs reject peace plan a second time.
- 3 August** Bosnian Serbs again reject peace plan.
- 4 August** Yugoslavia, consisting of Serbia and Montenegro, cuts political and economic ties with Bosnian Serbs.
- 5 August** Serbs seize weapons from U.N.-collection site near Sarajevo; In retaliation, later on the same day, NATO attacks Bosnian Serb heavy weapon sites around Sarajevo.
- 6 August** Serbs return all heavy weapons seized from UN collection site on the previous day.
- 8 August** UNPROFOR (French and Russian units) begin an anti-sniper campaign in Sarajevo
On the same day, the United Nations threatens to call in NATO air strikes against both Bosnian government and rebel Serb forces for fighting within Sarajevo's weapons-exclusion zone. The fighting eventually stops.
- 10 August** Bosnian Serbs once again cut off all supply routes leading to Sarajevo.
- 13 August** Bosnian Serb forces try to raid three U.N. weapons depots outside Sarajevo but French peacekeepers stand their ground.

²⁶ In fact the request was turned down "when Karadžić unexpectedly telephoned the U.N. command saying: 'This is a mistake, I will stop this shelling' (AP 1 June 1994).

- September** Two British Jaguar bombers and a US Fairchild A-10 ground attack plane hit a nationalist Serb tank inside the 20 km (12-mile) exclusion zone around Sarajevo after they attack a French armored vehicle with rocket-propelled grenades, wounding a French soldier.
- October** VRS launches an offensive against UN Safe Area Bihać.
- November** ABiH and HVO team up and capture in a joint offensive the Hercegovinian towns of Kupres and Bugojno from the Serbs.
- 19 November** United Nations Security Council grants NATO new powers to hit targets in Croatia used by Serb nationalists for attacks on the Bosnian town of Bihać.
- 21 November** NATO launches major attack on Udbina airfield in Croatia. The objective of the strike is to deter further attacks on Bihać by aircraft flying from the airfield in Serb-held Croatia. The mission was flown by about 30 aircraft of four NATO nations, in addition to about 20 other supporting aircraft.
- 22 November** Two British jets are fired upon over Bosnia. Neither is hit.
- 23 November** NATO aircraft attack nationalist Serb surface-to-air missile sites around Bosanska Krupa and Otoka in northwest Bosnia and in the area of Dvor, a town on the edge of the Bosnian Bihać pocket, in retaliation for attack on British jets.
- 17 December** A French Etendard IV P jet on a NATO reconnaissance flight over Bosnia-Herzegovina is hit by ground fire but returns safely to an airbase in Italy. The aircraft which had taken off from the French aircraft carrier Foch received tail damage.

Then, in December 1994, upon the invitation of Karadžić, former US President Jimmy Carter mediated a ceasefire lasting several months which put a temporary halt both to the Serb assault on Bihać and to the cautious NATO attacks. How should the effectiveness of the NATO air raids against the Bosnian Serbs be assessed?

From February until December 1994 roughly five sets of NATO/ VRS threat interactions had taken place:

- Sarajevo I (February-March)
- Goražde (April)
- Tuzla Airport/ Supply Routes (May-June)
- Sarajevo II (July-August)
- Bihać (October-December)

On first impression, NATO's increased assertiveness did not impress the Bosnian Serbs who kept continuously provoking and humiliating the IC and testing the limits of NATO resolve. At a second glance, however, the interaction seems to have been somewhat more successful. Even though NATO could not deter the Serb side from repeatedly breaking UN resolutions and provoking and testing the resolve of the IC, once NATO was drawn into a threat-based negotiation, it emerged from these interactions with a relatively high level of success or at least partial success. One can probably speak of a high level of success, based on the overtly stated demands of UN/ NATO in the case of interactions "Sarajevo I", "Goražde" and "Tuzla Airport". In the case of "Sarajevo II" the result is somewhat less clear. With NATO backing UNPROFOR succeeded in keeping heavy weapons under UNPROFOR control and eventually also Sarajevo airport was reopened. The road to Sarajevo, however, which was opened from March to August 1994 remained closed and the city was occasionally also shelled. Finally, the "Bihać" interaction in October abated as part of the Jimmy Carter ceasefire, i.e. not clearly as a result of NATO threats, even though they might have played a role in Karadžić seeking a ceasefire.

Where the UN and NATO had failed is to deter the Serbs from repeatedly trying to break Security Council Resolutions, which were backed up by general NATO threats. The Serbs again and again broke UN resolutions, such as the sanctity of UN safe areas, such as Sarajevo, Tuzla or Goražde. Why did this happen?

One of the reasons is a shift in strategic balance in the Bosnian war theatre. Since the formation of the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina weapon supply routes once again opened up to the Bosnian Government. Even though the UN arms embargo was officially still in place, many Western countries increasingly turned a blind eye to

Croatian and Bosnian arms purchases. The growing strength of the ABiH and the HV / HVO was clearly understood by the Serbs whose main problem was a lack of manpower. With the pressure on them increasing, the need for the VRS to eliminate the UN safe areas of Goražde, Srebrenica, Žepa and Bihać also increased. These safe areas were relatively easy targets, but, most importantly, they also tied down large numbers of VRS troops, because they were never effectively demilitarized as the relevant UN Resolutions actually required.

Thus, when the IC stepped in with its growing determination requesting the Bosnian Serbs to respect safe areas and let aid convoys pass through to them, they had to deal with an increasingly nervous VRS, which, of course, viewed all supplies as direct aid to its enemies. In other words, while the determination of the IC was growing, so, due to the strengthening of the ABiH, was the determination of the VRS not to comply.

Additionally, also the new Western decisiveness was fraught with mistakes - it was simply not decisive enough. A close analysis reveals three main patterns or reasons of deterrence failure, which were to emerge again and again in the process of conflict resolution during and after the war:

1. Accommodating signals towards aggressors invites further escalation; In the case of the February-December 1994 IC VRS exchange it was especially Akashi's²⁷ attitude that signaled to Serbs a lack of determination of the IC. On 5 May 1994 he allowed 5 VRS tanks to move across the Sarajevo heavy weapon exclusion zone, and later in the month he twice halted NATO air raids around Tuzla planned in retaliation for grave breaches of UN Resolutions (shelling of Tuzla Airport). These gestures of indecision were correctly understood by Serbs as weakness. Once NATO retaliation ceased to be inevitable, there was no reason for them to comply with restrictive UN

²⁷ Yasushi Akashi, from December 1993 until October 1995 the Senior UN Envoy to Bosnia-Herzegovina, was no match for the bullying, seemingly irrational Serb nationalist politicians. His indecision and willingness to compromise under threat made him soon one of the most hated international figures among Bosniacs, ranking just third after Mladić and Karadžić.

resolutions, or in general, theoretical terms, if a threat is not credible, it will be disregarded.

2. Short-term IC attention span invites renewed later escalation; Certain key-events, which prompt international outrage like the Sarajevo market place shelling, provoke ad hoc IC alliances. The threats made by such IC alliances are, due to their high profile, credible and dangerous. After initial compliance by the threatened side, the IC focus shifts and the "ad hoc alliance" falls apart opening up the possibility for renewed escalation in the war theatre. This was the case after the initial Sarajevo ultimatum. Once the Serbs complied, international attention shifted. The Serb leadership sensed this and began an offensive against the UN safe area of Gorazde.
3. Deliberately low-casualty level sanctions are not helpful; During all its initial raids NATO took care of avoiding collateral damage, or even serious damage and casualties to VRS. Admiral Leighton Smith, the Commander in Chief of Allied Forces in Southern Europe, specifically mentioned this point at a press conference, following the 5 August 1994 NATO raid on a Serb target:

"One of the things we specifically attempted to do today, it was the force commander UNPROFOR's aim to have no collateral damage and no deaths or injuries associated with these strikes and we tried very very hard to ensure that in fact this was the case" (gopher.stc.nato.int).

Needless to say, that the *a priori* knowledge of restrained sanctions will not be very effective in forcing a threatened side to comply.

All these patterns of threat and deterrence failure occurred again and again in both military and non-military type, and war and post-war intervention situations. It has to be admitted that NATO, and alliance states in general, faced a serious obstacle in escalating violence: the presence of UNPROFOR troops scattered all over Bosnia. While in the initial phases of the conflict, with little IC resolve and willingness for substantial engagement, the deployment of these troops seemed a positive step, with increased IC determination they now became a liability. Their light armament and the fact that they were scattered all over the country made them highly vulnerable to retaliatory attacks or of being taken hostage in case of tough NATO action. This was

a major problem with which the last phase of wartime international intervention had to deal.

3.3.6 Phase V - Arming the HV

The increasingly successful but still rather frustrating experiences of international intervention during 1994 seemed to have prompted the US to finally take the lead in finding a solution for Bosnia. Initial US actions were not overt, but highly effective. In late November 1994 the United States signed a military cooperation agreement with the Croatian Defense Ministry. Around the same time, an American company, Military Professional Resources Inc., signed a long-term contract with Croatia to help "democratize" its armed forces and reorganize its officer corps. The ABiH was, at this time, not so lucky. US and European officials nevertheless turned a blind eye to weapon deliveries from Islamic countries, many of which were organized from European countries, thus allowing for the clandestine armament of Bosnian Government troops. Or as a senior Western diplomat put it:

"We were told [by Washington] to watch them but not interfere,' the diplomat said. 'Bosnia was trying to get weapons from anybody, and we weren't helping much. The least we could do is back off. So we backed off'" (Pomfret 22 September 1996, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/bosvote/front.htm>).

As the ceasefire crumbled away in Spring 1995, the set-up was entirely different than a year previously. With newly won confidence Croatia demanded the withdrawal of UNPROFOR troops - a clear preparation for an offensive as these troops stood between the HV and rebel Serb troops. UNPROFOR stayed but in May the HV launched a surprise attack on a rebel Serb-held area called Western Slavonia, and retook it within three days. The increased strength of the HV was obvious.

Military activity restarted in Bosnia-Herzegovina, too. ABiH military activity around Sarajevo and the probably overall deteriorating situation for the Serbs prompted a desperate Serb escalation. Disregarding previous UN resolutions the shelling of

Sarajevo resumed, triggering a tit-for-tat escalation in the Bosnian war, which in the end led to the military defeat of the VRS.

The shelling of Sarajevo led to the strongest NATO response until then. On 25 May 1995 NATO airplanes attacked Bosnian Serb ammunition dumps and command and control centers near Sarajevo. Contrary to previous NATO raids, the attack was truly substantial. An ABiH army general, General Jovan Divjak, described the impact of the raids as follows:

“The targets were well selected. They consisted of a major explosives, artillery and mortar munitions store in the Koran locality near Pale, where there is also a part of the ‘Famos’ munitions industry complex, producing engines for a range of military transporters. [...] According to data in our possession, in the three raids by NATO planes, Koran was completely destroyed. [...] It must have put back all [VRS] plans for 15 to 30 days until they can get new supplies from the Serbian military [meaning here the Army of the ‘Federal Republic of Yugoslavia’ or the JNA], which continues regularly to resupply the forces of Karadzic” (Masle 1995:2).

In response, Bosnian Serb troops took UN Peacekeepers stationed on their territory as hostages. The world saw humiliating pictures of blue helmets chained to lampposts at potential aerial attack sites. This was just the situation Western governments had been fearing for the last two years.

The hostage standoff could only be solved through Milošević's mediation. After two weeks the hostages were released. Milošević was once again playing the role of a peacemaker.

3.3.7 Phase VI - Showdown

Regarding the peace negotiations the situation was closing in for an agreement as the balance of forces on the ground kept shifting. Warren Zimmerman, a former US ambassador to Yugoslavia, remembers that

“by mid-1995, the disparate elements of the administration finally coalesced around a tougher policy. The impending election undoubtedly played a role in

this change of heart. More broadly, it had become clear that the feckless European approaches would go nowhere and Bosnia would remain a bleeding sore for which the United States would be blamed. The overrated 'CNN effect,' which had failed to ignite two administrations over three years, finally began to make itself felt" (Zimmermann 1996, <http://www.rand.org/publications/CF/CF129/CF-129.chapter11.html>).

In the wake of these developments, in June 1995, a senior US diplomat, Robert Frasure, toured the region and almost managed to strike a deal with Milošević to accept the Contact Group Plan, but Milošević's counterproposal was rejected by the State Department.

The recent failure of the Contact Group proposal led to renewed military escalation. An ABiH offensive around Sarajevo proved to be a debacle, but the Bosnian Serbs, obviously desperate under the strong military pressure, decided to launch a new attack against the UN safe areas in early July 1995. This time, they were not willing to bow to international pressure and initially also the West's response was weak - probably due to the still fresh memory of UN blue helmets being taken hostage. As the Serb stranglehold drew closer and closer to the UN safe area of Srebrenica, the Dutch peacekeepers stationed there repeatedly requested NATO air support. Their requests were again and again turned down by the overcautious UN bureaucracy. As on 11 July 1995 the enclave fell to the VRS, these troops, directly commanded by General Ratko Mladić, began massacring Bosniac men in the single worst war crime of the Bosnian War or, in fact, in the history of post- World-War II Europe. More than 8,000 Bosniac men were murdered.

While the first credible reports about the mass executions in Srebrenica began to emerge, a second UN safe area, Žepa, was just about to fall and the offensive against two others, Bihać and Goražde, was also gaining momentum. But by now a turning point had been reached. The senseless Serb carnage provoked a strong international reaction. The question was how to save the remaining enclaves.

At this time (July and August 1995) various interrelated but separate events took place preparing an end to the Bosnian War. In the aftermath of the blue helmet hostage drama the role of UNPROFOR was once again subject to discussion.

Opinions ranged from pulling them out or to building them up to a potent military force in the country which could not be easily threatened if NATO decided to launch an aerial campaign. Both options had two prerequisites: regrouping troops to make them less exposed and reinforcing them with both manpower and heavy weapons.

General Janvier, the commander of the UN troops in Bosnia, undertook the regrouping of blue helmets already in July. The strengthening of UNPROFOR took place in the form of the so-called Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) - a contingent of heavily armed French and British troops which, in the case of an UNPROFOR pull-out, was capable of engaging possibly hostile militias trying to prevent a pull-out or to function as a potent military force in case of a stronger NATO clamp-down. Both options were open and towards the beginning of August the first units of the RRF were already present in the hills around Sarajevo.

With the UNPROFOR troops in a more secure position, and under the strong pressure of international public opinion, on 27 July 1995, NATO threatened broad-based NATO air strikes if the safe areas were attacked again. Four days later U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali transferred his authority to veto NATO air strikes to UNPROFOR military chief, General Bernard Janvier. This way command lines to order air strikes became simplified.

Finally, things were also moving in Croatia. The country, anxious to retake territory held by rebel Serbs and now well armed and trained was eager to make a move. The international situation was particularly favorable to Croatia. The Americans were furious at the Serbs for over running Srebrenica and Žepa. Additionally, it was clear that it was the HV which could offer the fastest and most efficient aid to Bihać, the endangered UN safe area in mountainous West Bosnia.

Everything was in place to deliver a lasting defeat to the Serbs and thus put peace talks back on track: sufficient military power and determination, the international outrage to support possible NATO action and a new and decisive American lead peace initiative. Even though in hindsight the situation seems very favorable, at that time it was perceived by Western decision-makers to be innately risky and

unpredictable. It is only through an article of this time that one can convey the sense of desperation on the international diplomatic scene:

"It [i.e. the NATO ultimatum from 27 July] is a last, despairing gamble by NATO and the United Nations whose past ultimatums have been shown repeatedly to hold more heat than substance. Two other government-held 'safe areas,' Srebrenica and Žepa, have already fallen to the Bosnian Serbs. 'We had to agree these steps, without them the U.N. mission's position would have been untenable,' an alliance source said. NATO governments know that if challenged this time they will have to carry out their threats in full or be forced to withdraw, leaving many of their own troops dead, condemning thousands more civilians to death by starvation or brutality and risking a wider war in the Balkans" (Lovell, 2 August 1995, <http://www.bosnet.org/bosnet.shtml>).

Then events leading to the end of the Croatian and Bosnian conflicts began to unfold with great speed. Almost definitely with tacit US approval, on 3 August 1995, the Croatian army (HV) launched a lightning attack on rebel Serbs in Croatia's Krajina region. Within a week the enclave fell and HV troops made contact with the ABiH-held Bihać enclave which had been cut off from the rest of the world for more than three years. A column of more than 100,000 Serbs fled through the Bosnian Serb Republic to Yugoslavia. In addition to the improved capability of the undoubtedly well-trained and highly motivated Croatian troops, many also suspect a clandestine involvement of Milošević in the fall of the Serb Krajina.

The dust had hardly settled over the fall of the Krajina when on 28 August 1995 a shell struck once again the Sarajevo market killing 37 people. It was never definitively cleared whether it was truly the VRS which fired the mortar shell or, as some suspect it, the ABiH itself to trigger an international response. Whatever the truth is, there was no going back for the IC.

On 30 August 1995 NATO began large-scale air attacks on Bosnian Serb positions which were suspended only after full VRS compliance with NATO demands. The use of NATO airpower was now very different than on previous occasions. Intensive air strikes against Bosnian Serb targets were being pressed under an evolving strategy to "starve" the Serbian military of its infrastructure and supply capability. The objective was to render the Serbian military impotent over the long-term while driving

it toward peace talks in the short-term. The strategy proved successful. With the backing of a joint Bosniac-Croat offensive that took advantage of the NATO air strikes and the weakening of the Serbs, the VRS was significantly pushed back and had to accept first a ceasefire (effective from 10 October 1995) and then peace talks held one month later in Dayton, Ohio.

Simultaneously, behind-the-scene negotiations, led by the US administration "trouble-shooter" Richard Holbrooke, were already well under way. Despite the recent military losses of the Serbs, the agreement could not be reached without additional, massive, (mostly American) threats to the parties to the conflict. These threats, addressed to the Serbs, included

- a lifting of the arms embargo on the Government of BiH,
- massive NATO air attacks,
- a further strengthening of the arms embargo against Yugoslavia, and
- the deployment of ground troops sympathetic to the BiH Government.

The agreement, usually referred to as the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) or just Dayton Agreement, which was thus finally signed on 22 November 1995²⁸ has many elements of the recent Contact Group plan and was composed of constitutional provisions for the country and of provisions concerning the implementation of the peace plan. According to the constitutional provisions, the main features of the "new" state were to be the following:

- Bosnia would remain a single state;
- That state would consist of the Federation and a Bosnian Serb entity;
- These two entities would be linked via mutually-agreed constitutional principles, which would also spell out relationships with Serbia and Croatia proper;
- The Serb entity would retain 49%, the Federation 51% of the territory.

²⁸ In fact, for reasons of European diplomatic sensitivities, the official signing took place on 14 December 1995 in Paris.

Contrary to the Contact Group plan, the DPA was based on an exchange of territories aiming at establishing militarily more feasible entities. Among other exchanges and modifications in the frontlines, a corridor was established to the last remaining east Bosnian Bosniac enclave, Goražde, and also the narrow VRS-held corridor connecting the Eastern and Western parts of the RS was broadened. Similarly, around Mostar, the VRS frontlines were pushed back some 10 km in order to give greater security to the town. Regarding the strategically perhaps most important town in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Brčko, no agreement was reached. The decision about Brčko, located in the center of the above mentioned VRS corridor connecting the two parts of the RS, was postponed. It was to be decided years later through international arbitration.

The implementation of the DPA was divided into military and civilian aspects. Heavily armed NATO troops were to implement the military aspect of the agreement, i.e. military disengagement and reduction of arms as defined by the DPA, and provide general stability for the civilian implementation of the Agreement. For the civilian implementation of the DPA a High Representative of the UN was to be appointed. Additionally, a number of European (OSCE) and UN (UNHCR, etc.) organizations were also to play a major role in implementing certain aspects of the agreement. Finally the IC was willing to engage itself massively in Bosnia-Herzegovina. It was to become a prolonged, very difficult, but, in my opinion, in some respects ultimately successful operation.

3.4 Analysis - Pressure and Compliance in War

How should IC action during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina be evaluated? A sketchy compilation of IC actions during the war shows that it was threat- and pressure-based interactions that ultimately proved to be successful. While most of the material in the table below (TABLE 1) is self-evident, a comment is necessary regarding the "evaluation" column. Success or failure of a certain IC action was measured in terms of its acknowledged and overtly stated aims. E.g. the overtly stated aim of a peace plan is to be accepted by the parties and to bring peace or a cessation of hostilities to

the war. Naturally, the final evaluation as "success", "limited success" or "failure" are, to a certain extent subjective, but I believe most readers would in the end agree with me on my judgments.

More precisely, the evaluation "success" refers to a maximal, or close to maximal fulfillment of overt demands or negotiated agreements. "Limited success" refers to an only partial fulfillment of demands or negotiated agreements, such as was the case with the opening of the Sarajevo Airport. The UN demanded the opening and withdrawal of heavy weapons of a 20km radius of the airport. The airport was opened, but the heavy weapons were not withdrawn. "Failure" describes a total non-fulfillment of either demands or negotiation aims.

A remark is also necessary regarding the third column "achievement strategy". Achievement strategy refers to the negotiation approach, either power and threat-based or persuasive, offering creative compromises as demanded by the Harvard School. In both cases I will also hint at the strategy of the negotiation approach specifically mentioning the interaction approach, e.g. air strikes, sanctions or mediation, creative compromise etc. Remarks concerning the classifications of certain can be found below. The interactions analyzed here are simply so complex that applying stringent but coherent categories would be self-defeating in the sense of failing to grasp the essence of the interaction. Forced into such subjectivity, all I can do is to point out, explain and justify contentious cases.

TABLE 1 IC-Local macropolitical negotiation interactions during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina

No	IC Action	Achievement Strategy	Date/ Phase	Result	Evaluation
1.	Cutilhiero Plan	Mediation	February-April 1992	Rejected	Failure
2.	Comprehensive trade sanctions on Yugoslavia	Sanctions	30 May 1992/ Phase I	Withdrawal of JNA troops, but handing over weapons to VRS	Limited success*
3.	Sarajevo Airport	Unspecified military escalation coupled with an ultimatum	June / July 1992 Phase II	Opening up of Sarajevo Airport of for humanitarian flights, but only partial VRS withdrawal	Limited success* *
4.	Release of prisoners from Serb camps	Unspecified military escalation, negative press coverage	July - November 1992 Phase II	Gradual release and exchange of prisoners	Success ***
5.	Blue helmets escorting aid convoys	Weak enforcement element	since Sep 1992/ Phase II	Improved conditions for aid convoys to reach destinations	Limited success ****
6.	Disbandment of rape camps; halt to the practice of systematic rape	Unprecedented public outcry in Western and Islamic countries; extremely negative media coverage	October - December 1992	Disbandment of rape camps, halt to the practice of systematic raping of Bosniac and Croat women	Success
7.	NATO ban on military flights	Strong enforcement element	Since Dec 1992 Phase II	In spite of occasional violations, aerial bombardment and overflights stopped	Success
8.	VOPP Negotiations	Persuasive negotiation strategy, not backed by substantial threats/	Since 1992 Phase II/ Phase III	Peace agreement failed, unintended side effects: intensification of fighting	Failure

		sanctions in addition to the already existing sanction regimes			
9.	Establishment of UN Safe Areas (Srebrenica etc.)	Backed by NATO threat and offered the creative compromise of disarming enclaves (though later not implemented)	Summer 1993/ Phase III	Serb withdrawal from 3 safe areas	Success †
10.	Owen-Stoltenberg Plan	Persuasive negotiation strategy, not backed by additional threats/sanctions, but supported by creative compromises (Ploče harbor, access routes etc.)	Autumn/ Winter 1993 Phase III	Peace agreement failed; unintended side effect: supporting separatist tendencies among Bosniacs	Failure
11.	NATO threats to withdraw heavy weapons from around Sarajevo	Backed by massive NATO threat	February 1993/ Phase IV	Heavy weapons withdrawn or put under UNPROFOR control	Success
12.	Washington Agreement	Backed by implicit NATO threat, economic sanctions and US pressure; military balance in favor of ABiH, and creative compromises (Ploče etc.)	February/ March 1994/ Phase IV	Peace Agreement signed and military aspects respected	Success †† (Military aspect success, political aspects limited success)
13.	Contact Group Plan I	Backed by serious Yugoslav sanctions against Bosnian Serbs;	Summer 1994/ Phase IV	Peace Agreement failed	Failure

		Yugoslavia under heavy pressure of UN sanctions. Also heavy IC threats of sanctions, which did not materialize.			
14.	UNPROFOR/ NATO protecting UN Safe Areas against VRS threats	Backed by limited NATO actions; lacking consequence, accommodative gestures	Spring-Autumn 1994/ Phase IV	In principle safe areas protected, but countless provocations undermine NATO/ UNPROFOR authority	Limited success
15.	Jimmy Carter Ceasefire	Mediation	December 1994 (lasting until April 1995) End of Phase IV		Success
16.	NATO protecting Sarajevo against VRS shelling	Substantial NATO aerial action	May 1995/ Phase V	Bosnian Serbs retaliate taking UNPROFOR troops hostage	Failure
17.	VRS attacks on Srebrenica and Žepa	Requests for NATO raids rejected; not sufficient UNPROFOR deterrent presence on ground;	June 1995/ Phase VI	VRS takes Srebrenica and Žepa.	Failure
18.	VRS attack on Goražde.	Massive NATO air raid threatened against VRS.	July 1995/ Phase VI	VRS suspends its offensive against Goražde.	success
19.	Contact Group Plan II	Initially acked by US pressure	July 1995/ Phase VI	Rejected in US congress	--
20.	Protecting Sarajevo against renewed Serb shelling	Massive NATO air raids	August/ Sep. 1995/ Phase VI	Total Serb compliance	Success
21.	Dayton Peace Agreement	Massive pressure and threat;	October/ November 1995/	Signing of DPA	Success

changed
balance of
power on
ground,
creative
compromises
(Goražde,
Brčko etc.)

Phase VI

Remarks:

* UN economic sanctions against Yugoslavia were strongly criticized for achieving only cosmetic compliance by Milošević, since the JNA handed over some 90% of its personal and equipment to the newly founded VRS. However, any army that reducing its enemy's capabilities by some 10% within just two months of fighting would consider itself successful. In addition, it was this sanctions regime that, in the end, convinced Milošević to seek peace and forced the Bosnian Serbs to also comply.

** I was reluctant to classify the toleration of only minimal VRS withdrawal of heavy weapons from around the Sarajevo Airport as a creative compromise (i.e. a WW solution). It endangered the entire humanitarian effort and was completely contrary to the essence of the UN resolutions, namely to demilitarize the area.

*** It is not entirely clear whether the halt to the practice of systematic rape and the disbanding of such camps should be counted as part of the disbandment of prison camps altogether or, in fact, as a separate interaction context.

**** Similarly, paying levies to VRS and local gangsters (petrol, food etc.) by UNPROFOR for convoys to pass their positions does not, in my opinion, classify as a creative compromise in a WW sense. UNHCR and other agencies supporting war-affected populations also in the Serb Republic, does probably not qualify as a creative compromise either, since large numbers of the population would have qualified in any case as beneficiaries for humanitarian aid.

† While later two of the UN safe areas, Srebrenica and Žepa, were overrun the by the Mladić's troops the initial intervention was successful in stopping VRS advance on the enclaves. Unfortunately, several aspects of the agreement were not fulfilled by UN member states. The initial interaction was nevertheless evaluated as "success".

†† The political aspects were, for a long time not implemented in any substantial way. In fact, they are now in 2002 still being implemented. The agreement nevertheless stopped the war, offering to both sides enough ambiguities to cease fighting and begin cautious co-existence and cooperation against the VRS. Thus instead of classifying the interaction as "limited success", I evaluated it as a "success".

Before proceeding with the analysis of the IC actions, a word is necessary regarding the most frequent recipients of IC measures, the VRS. IC measures during the war aimed at two types of concession: "substantial" and "minor". Under substantial concessions I understand concessions like agreement to a peace plan. Under minor concessions I understand compliance with demands not directly dealing with basic war or policy aims, e.g. to respect certain safe areas or similar. On the other hand a demand to the Serbs to renounce ethnic cleansing, or to give up the goal of independence or an area like Brčko would not qualify as a minor demand since these issues lay at the heart of the nationalist-separatist agenda. These were substantial for the Bosnian Serbs during and after the Bosnian War.

Clearly, attachment to a substantial issue is more intense than to a minor issue. In fact, within the framework of prospect theory attachment to a substantial issue like the future status of the RS could be understood as the reference point from where gains and losses are measured. Anything less than the envisaged sovereignty of the RS on some 70% of the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina must have been perceived by the Bosnian Serbs as a loss which they were to defend in a highly risk-taking manner.

While in the course of the Bosnian War the determination of the IC was slowly but steadily increasing, so was the desperation of the Bosnian Serbs. Suffering under sanctions and under the comparative disadvantage of IC support to their opponents, they were becoming, relative to their opponents, but also objectively weaker. An IC demand for a minor concession in the beginning of the war, when the VRS was very strong, would not have significantly endangered basic Bosnian Serb goals. Thus, in 1993 a relatively limited IC threat, protecting UN safe areas, was sufficient to pressure the VRS into compliance with the UN resolutions.

In 1995, with the VRS relatively weaker, a threat of the same intensity was no longer sufficient to achieve compliance. The Bosnian Serbs, now relatively weaker, would "play" in a highly risk-acceptant way, as they did not give up their "substantial" aim of independence. The hesitant and erratic threat enforcement style practiced by the IC in Bosnia ("accommodating gestures") could only encourage the Serbs to "gamble" on the IC once again failing to retaliate and sanction with air strikes.

In this situation the possible military gain of freeing up troops stationed around the non-demilitarized Safe Areas weighed more than the potential, but not necessarily probable, risk of NATO raids. The relative change in the balance of power among the hostile militias thus acts as a confounding variable. Consequently, in 1995 the increasingly desperate Serbs needed more threat, more punishment and also more credibility in these threats than in 1993 for them to comply with IC demands aiming at the same concession.

Returning to the main question of international pressure and local militia compliance, a quick look at the above table suggests that pressure, when applied, was successful. In almost all cases in which NATO signaled determination, IC demands on the Bosnian Serbs to make minor concessions were successful. Admittedly, on one occasion, following the 25 May 1995 bombing raid, it led to a disaster as UN peacekeepers were taken hostage. But even then, the situation was satisfactorily solved. Due to its economic stranglehold on Milošević the IC had sufficient clout over the Bosnian Serbs to force them to release the hostages.

Regarding the peace agreements, the two successful agreements (Washington Agreement and DPA) show the same ingredients:

- a changed military balance of power on the ground, and
- a massive IC (especially US) pressure and serious, militarily relevant threats and sanctions.

So why was there such a reluctance to exert pressure? Obviously, and this is well documented, there were strong domestic pressure groups and constituencies in Western countries which, for various reasons, opposed a massive IC intervention in such a complex conflict as the ex-Yugoslav wars. Additionally, Russia also opposed strong IC action. In my opinion, however, at the bottom of all this reluctance to intervene substantially, lay a lack of understanding of the real possibilities and powers of the IC and, resulting from that, a strongly risk-averse attitude among international diplomats, politicians and bureaucrats. Additionally, the "Balkan warriors" understood in a psychologically brilliant way to signal frightening, irrational resolve completely confusing Western negotiators. As it later turned out, a lot of the Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat bravado was nothing more than a show, a big "psyops"-operation.

It thus seems, and the political discourse of the time (and personal experience) show, that there was a basic lack of understanding on the side of the IC of the parties to the conflict, especially regarding their sensitivity to pressure and their real strength or weakness. Diverging from the general IC understanding, one of the basic

assumptions of Richard Holbrook, who had successfully applied pressure, was that the Bosnian Serbs were "bullies and thugs" and not the determined guerillas that for example the Vietcong were. Probably one could also argue that, according to prospect theory, while rebel Serbs, or for that matter Croats, seem to have operated in their loss quadrant regarding international peacemaking efforts, they were asked to give up their separatist goals and were consequently risk-acceptant. On the other hand, regarding their operational objectives international diplomats and bureaucrats were acting in their "gains-quadrant" and were thus risk-averse. Any success in IC negotiations was an unexpected gain for such an international diplomat.

How, then can the intensification of international pressure be explained? Was it learning and increased understanding of the IC's real power that compelled politicians to become more assertive? In many respects during the war there was very little learning and increased understanding on the side of the IC. But if it was not learning that the situation on the ground did allow for successful tougher action, what was it then?

It seems that, more than learning, it was critical situations that forced Western politicians to take the risks of tougher actions. In the various stages of increased pressure, it was usually either public pressure, induced by Serb (or Croat) atrocities reported in Western media, or the threat to NATO of losing credibility when faced with Serb provocations that forced IC politicians to become tougher. Thus, in the course of the Bosnian War, the IC increased its pressure not because it understood or calculated that it would be successful, but because it had no other choice. The IC was "forced" into declaring and enforcing the safe areas in 1993 by Morillon. The international outcry following the shelling of the Sarajevo market place compelled the UN and NATO to deliver its first ultimatum backed by force to the Bosnian Serbs. Public opinion and the credibility of NATO drove the unwilling alliance and the UN into a tit-for-tat confrontation with the VRS in the summer and autumn of 1994. In July and August 1995 it was once again public opinion that, after the massacre of Srebrenica, compelled NATO to issue a threat against the Serbs thus protecting the last East-Bosnian enclave, Goražde.

Probably the only calculated escalation on the side of the IC was the chain of events and measures that had led to the signing of the DPA. These were the US "green-light" for the HV to attack the Krajina, the subsequent bombing campaign against the VRS in September 1995 and the obviously IC-encouraged ABiH/ HVO offensive in Western Bosnia in the wake of the NATO air campaign. Thus, unfortunately, during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina there was very little calculated IC action. Most IC measures were *ad hoc* and born of desperation. Luckily, in the end they were nevertheless successful. A proper understanding of IC possibilities as well as the power of available sanctions and threats could have ended the war much sooner, or it might have even prevented its outbreak.