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Lessons learned from the Bosnian Conflict

Ahmed Saeed
James Madison University

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Lessons Learned from the Bosnian Conflict

Ahmed Saeed

A thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

In

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

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Master of Science

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List of Characters

Bill Clinton
President of the United States
1993-2001



<http://www.whitehouse.gov/about/presidents/williamjclinton>

Warren Christopher
U.S Secretary of State
1993-1997



<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,2061226,00.html>

Richard Holbrooke
U.S Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs
1994-1996



<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/dec/14/richard-holbrooke-obituary>

Alijah Izetbegovic
President of Bosnia-Herzegovina
1990-1996



<http://media3.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/photo/gallery/090821/GAL-09Aug21-2508/media/PHO-09Aug21-175146.jpg>

Radovan Karadzic
President of Republika Srpska
1992-1996



http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2008/07/22/world/0722-KARADZICSUB_index.html?ref=radovankaradzic&_r=0

Tony Lake
U.S National Security Advisor
1993-1997



http://projects.nytimes.com/44th_president/new_team/show/anthony-lake

Slobodan Milosevic
President of Serbia
1989-1997



<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1413020.stm>

Ratko Mladic
Chief of Staff of the Army of Republika Srpska
1992-1995



http://cdn.theguardian.tv/bc/281851582/281851582_961397631001_110526mladic-4747541.jpg?pubId=281851582

William Perry
U.S Secretary of Defense
1994-1997



http://vcdnp.org/130510_william_perry_journey_nuclear_brink_report.htm

General John Shalishkavilli
Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the U.S Army
1993-1997



<http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/24/us/24Shalikashvili.html>

Gojko Susak
Defense Minister of Croatia
1991-1998



<http://www.pbase.com/image/67740144>

Strobe Talbott
U.S Deputy Secretary of State
1994-2001



<http://www.apbspeakers.com/speaker/strobe-talbott>

Franjo Tudjman
President of Croatia
1990-1999



<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/longterm/balkans/overview/croatia.htm>

Sandy Vershbow
Senior Director for Europe, U.S National Security Council
1994-1997



http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/who_is_who_84342.htm

Abstract

Utilizing the propositional inventory method, this thesis compares the propositions of various U.S. Government agencies, under the Clinton Administration, and the propositions of Richard Holbrooke, chief negotiator and architect of the Dayton Accords, regarding the Bosnian conflict. Recently, the CIA and the Clinton Presidential Library declassified numerous documents from various government agencies concerning the Balkan Crisis and this thesis focuses its scope on the Bosnian conflict that took place in the time period from 1992 through the Dayton Accords in 1995. By analyzing the differing propositions in contrast to the historical events, it was possible to assess the accuracy of each account. This assessment found that Richard Holbrooke had a higher accuracy rate than did most of the U.S Government agencies regarding the Bosnian conflict.

Introduction

The civil war in Bosnia was a devastating tragedy that took place between 1992-1995. According to the latest numbers posted by the BBC in 2007, nearly 100,000 people were killed in the Bosnian war. (BBC, 2007) Today, other tragedies are taking place in different parts of the world, with civil unrest similar to the one in Bosnia. For example, according to CNN, more than 100,000 people were killed in the Syrian civil war. (CNN, 2013)

The government of the United States of America played an important role in orchestrating a peace agreement between the conflicting groups in Bosnia and, for the most part, put an end to the killing of innocent people by successfully executing the Dayton Accords in 1995. Currently, many regions are involved in civil conflicts, which have escalated to the point where foreign involvement, from nations such as the United States, is more needed, to achieve peace. So what can we learn from the past that can be applied to conflict resolution today?

In my thesis, I am proposing to perform an analysis of the conflict in Bosnia, by researching the newly declassified documents released about the Bosnian conflict in the 1990's and how it correlates to the historical information currently available. A comparison between the information from these documents, and the historical information that was publicly available before, will help better understand how the peace agreement was reached. This research is an attempt to aid the current understanding of the conflict in Bosnia and how this conflict ended with a peace agreement, so it can be

applied in understanding current and future conflicts, such as the ones in Syria, Egypt, Iraq, and other areas of conflict, to achieve peace.

Why Holbrooke?

Richard Holbrooke was an American diplomat who served under every democratic President of the United States, from Kennedy to Obama, until his death in December of 2010. His tenacity earned him nicknames, such as “the bulldozer diplomat” (Holbrooke, 100). "If Richard calls you and asks you for something, just say yes," former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger once said. "If you say no, you'll eventually get to yes, but the journey will be very painful." (NBC, 2010)

Though he is the first to express that it was a team effort, Holbrooke will long be remembered as the architect of the Dayton Accords. He seemingly tirelessly negotiated between three leaders, representing four factions, all with different outcome desires, meanwhile representing the United States vested national interest in the region. It is safe to say that the Bosnian conflict was likely to have gone on longer and ended much more brutally without Holbrooke’s leadership and determination. Holbrooke was also given an unprecedented amount of negotiation power by the Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, and Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, as he describes in his memoir, “I would have to operate in a rather assertive manner. If I were to operate in a routine manner, putting process ahead of substance, I might make fewer enemies but would have less chance of accomplishing their goals.” (Holbrooke, 57)

Terminology

One of the problems that was encountered during the course of research was the use of terminology. In other words, different terms can be used to refer to the same things or other times to something else. For example, ethnicity and nationalism were used interchangeably in many studies and sometimes one was used but not the other. There are many definitions and scholarly references for these two terms.

According to the Oxford dictionary, Ethnicity or an ethnic group is a group of people who share a cultural identity or cultural characteristics, such as place of origin, religion, language, food, etc. The term itself dates back to the Greek word *ethnikos*.

According to the Oxford Dictionary ethnicity is “of or relating to a population subgroup (within a larger or dominant national or cultural group) with a common national or cultural tradition”. (Oxford Dictionaries, 2014)

Nationalism on the other hand is a newer term. Before the development of nationalism in Europe, people were loyal to a religion or a leader, not to a nation. In the 18th century, with the growing public circle and an integrated countrywide economy in England, people started to identify with a bigger picture as a country rather than a smaller unit. (Newman, 1987)

Nationalism, according to *Collins English Dictionary*, in government, politics and diplomacy is “a sentiment based on common cultural characteristics that binds a population and often produces a policy of national independence or separatism”. (dictionary.com, 2014)

According to Mariam-Webster, Nationalism is “Loyalty and devotion to one's nation or country, especially as above loyalty to other groups or to individual interests.

Before the era of the nation-state, the primary allegiance of most people was to their immediate locality or religious group”. (merriam-webster.com, 2014)

For the purpose of this research, we can think of ethnicity as units or parts of which a nation is built. To put ethnicity and nationalism into a viewpoint, we can use the United States as an example. The map below shows the different ethnic groups in the United States, who share the same nationality as a country.

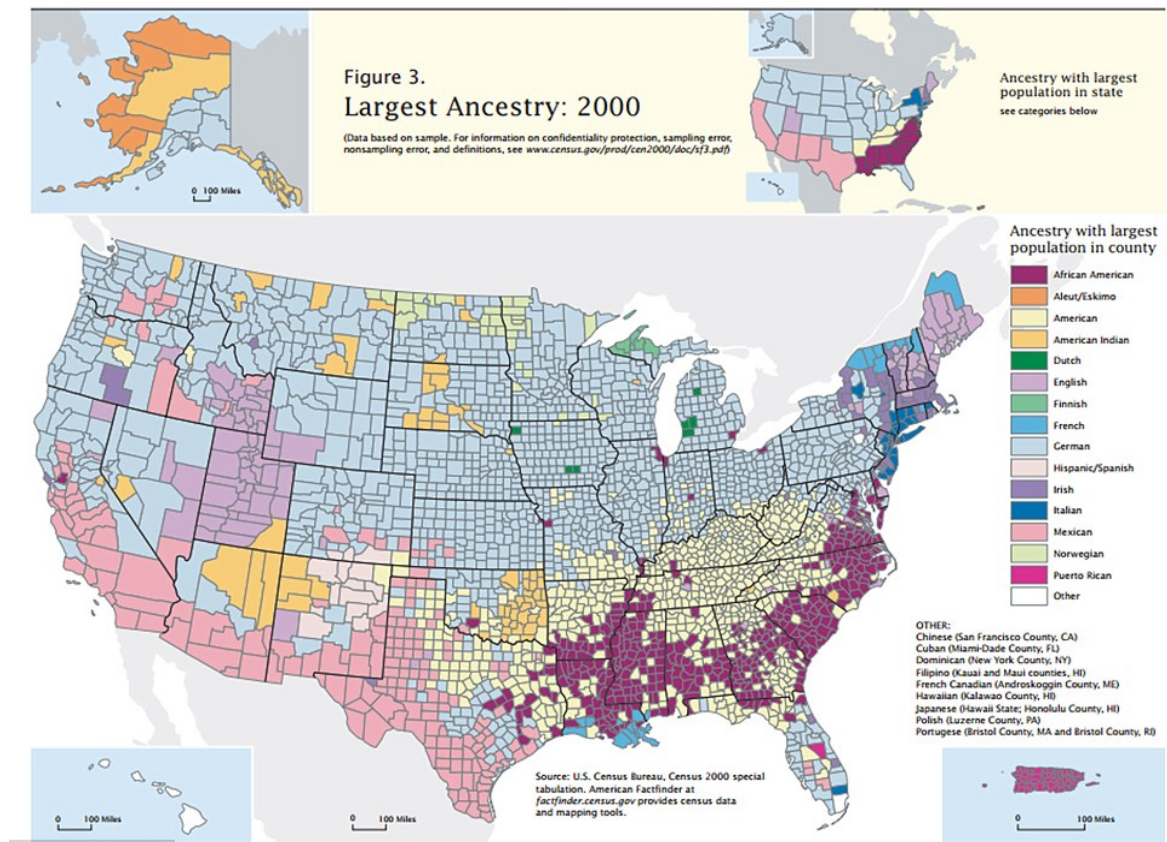


Figure 1: Map Shows the Different Ethnic Groups in The United States of America. (Jerreat, 2013) Retrieved from: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2408591/American-ethnicity-map-shows-melting-pot-ethnicities-make-USA-today.html>

In the declassified documents, there was some terminology utilized in reference to meeting on foreign policy issues on different levels of the U.S. Government. To describe how these meetings worked, Dr. Timothy Walton, a professor at James Madison

University with twenty-four years experience with the CIA, placed them into the following categories:

Deputies get together and evaluate global issues, whether they are of a concern or not. If they are not, they get put aside. If they are of concern, what is the concern level and how it should be handled.

Principals review the deputies' work and evaluate its credibility and its level and what actions are on the table, then recommend it to the president for action.

President signs on the action to be carried out. (Walton, 2014)

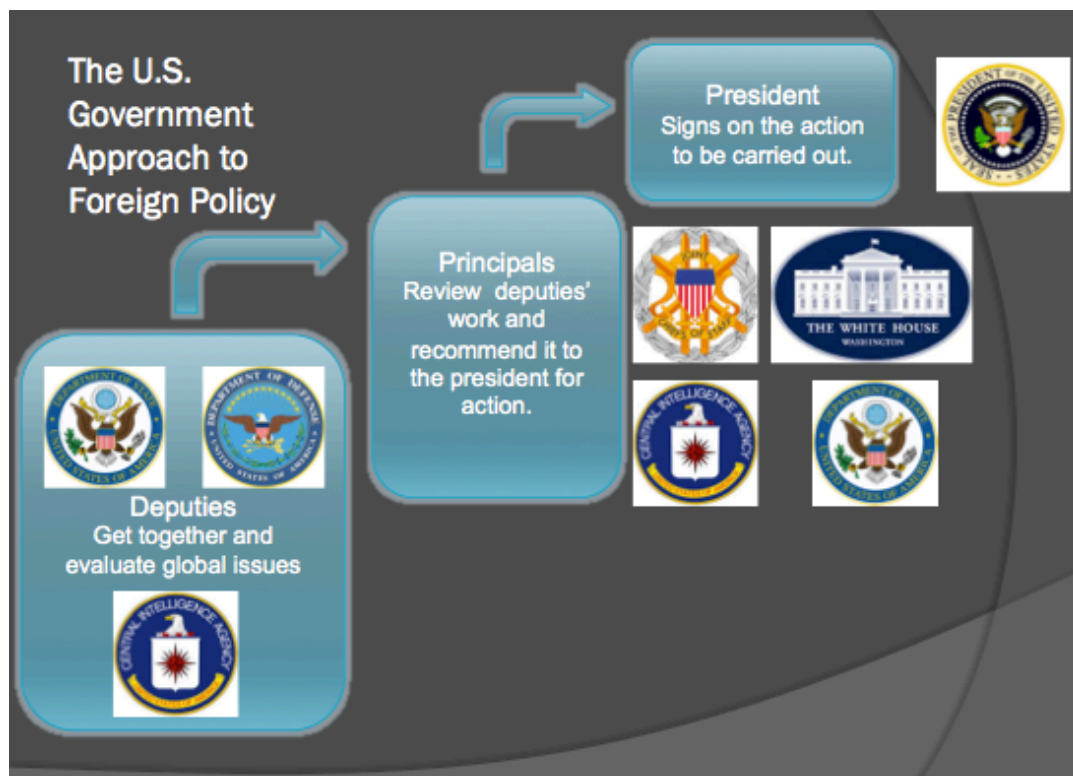


Figure 2: Shows the Structure of the U.S. Government on Foreign Policy. Logos retrieved from: <http://www.state.gov/>, <http://www.defense.gov/>, <https://www.cia.gov/index.html>, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/>, http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/d/d4/Joint_Chiefs_of_Staff_seal.svg/198px-Joint_Chiefs_of_Staff_seal.svg.png, <http://findlogo.net/images/P/president%20of%20the%20united%20states%20logo.jpg>

Background

Bosnia-Herzegovina, located in the heart of Europe, is part of an area known as the Balkans and is a home to a diverse mix of different ethnic groups, distributed throughout its wide-ranging terrain.

In the first centuries of the Christian era, the Balkans was part of the Roman Empire. Serbs, who were Slavs that settled in the area in the seventh century, inhabited the Balkans.



Figure 3: Map of The Roman Empire. Retrieved from: <http://www.culturalresources.com/images/maps/RomEmp117Big.jpg>

Serbs were defeated in Kosovo by the Muslim Turks in the expansion of their Ottoman Empire, which conquered the Balkans in the 13th century. During the Ottoman rule, many Bosnians converted from Christianity to Islam. Hundreds of years later, these events were used by Serbian nationalists to drum up a nationalist movement and to justify the ethnic cleansing of the Muslims, calling them “traitors” for converting to an occupier’s faith. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the Ottoman Empire started to collapse and the sense of nationalism that was building for decades struck the Balkans leading to the exile of Turks out of Kosovo in 1912.



Figure 4: Map of the Balkans in the Early 19th Century. Retrieved from: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/europe/macedona.jpg>

Austria-Hungary, now governing Bosnia, sent the Emperor's heir, Archduke Franz Ferdinand, to settle the unrest created by Serbian desire to expand to a greater Serbia. A Serb nationalist assassinated the Archduke in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, which was one of the major events that led to World War I. After WWI, the kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes was established. In the beginning of 1940's, the Germans invaded the Balkans. Hitler gave the Croats a state, which included Bosnia, as a reward for welcoming the German troops. Later on, a group of Serb nationalists, joined by Joseph Tito, a communist leader, fought the Germans. In 1945, just after WWII, Marshal Tito declared the area a socialist nation to be called Yugoslavia, which consisted of six republics: Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia (see Figure 5). With a strong fist and a good economy, Tito kept the nation stable. A rise in national debt and inequality in development shed the light on an ethnic and national tension that was suppressed under Tito. After his death in 1980, this tension kept building for another ten years leading to the collapse of what used to be called Yugoslavia. In 1991, Slovenia declared independence from Yugoslavia, followed by Croatia. In 1992, Bosnia-Herzegovina declared independence, sparking a conflict that would be considered later as the most devastating tragedy in Europe after WWII. (Holbrooke, 32)



Figure 5: Map of Yugoslavia Post World War II. Retrieved from:
<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/europe/macedonb.jpg>



Figure 6: Map Showing the Different Ethnic Groups in the Balkans. Retrieved from: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/europe/balkans.jpg>

In a 1991 census figure, Bosnia was home to some 4.3 million people, with 44% of them being Bosniaks who were Muslims, 31% Serbs who were Orthodox, and 17% Croats who were Roman Catholic. There were also numbers of Jews, Albanians and undetermined ‘Yugoslavs’ (Bosnian Institute, 2014).

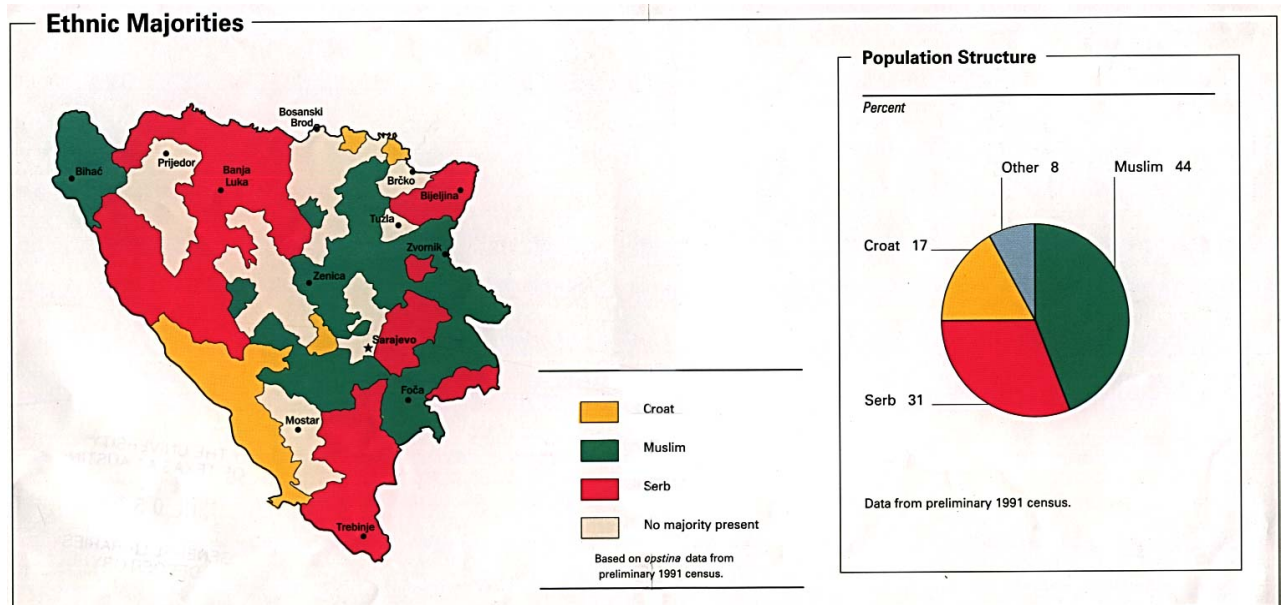


Figure 7: Shows the Ethnic Majorities in Bosnia. Retrieved from:
https://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/bosnia/ethnic_majoities_bosnia.jpg

The Bosnian Serbs did not welcome the idea of an independent Bosnian state and fought for a “greater Serbia”. The rise of the Serbian nationalism, backed by the full support of the government in Belgrade, led to a series of organized attacks on the Muslim community. The Serbs began a systematic removal of Muslims from Bosnia by any means, including concentration camps, destroying neighborhoods, and mass killings. This systematic removal process did not have a name at that time; the term “Ethnic Cleansing” was formed to address this process.

Literature Review

There are plenty of sources on the conflict in the Balkan region. An attempt was made to limit the scope of this research to just the events in Bosnia, as that is where the majority of the ethnic cleansing took place.



Figure 8: Shows the Bosnian War in Numbers. Retrieved from:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-13564139>

However, this is difficult as, for the most part, these events were impacted by events outside of Bosnia. Thus, this research includes not only sources on the Bosnian crisis, but also ones detailing the larger collapse of Yugoslavia. The following is a review

of the literature, including both historical and current sources, and the themes and conclusions that can be drawn from them.

In their book, *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation*, Laura Silber and Allan Little chronicle the collapse of the country during the eighties and the nineties. It is a companion book to a documentary of the same name produced by the BBC. It is written in the five parts of the documentary, covering the post-Tito era through the Dayton Accords. Containing interviews with many of the major players, the book covers the events and the suffering of the people in powerful description. This book is often cited by other works on the subject and, while it was written nearly two decades ago, seems to be the backbone of the research on the Balkan conflict. (Silber, 1997)

While certain sources, such as *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History*, by Robert Kaplan, argue that the collapse of Yugoslavia was inevitable due to long standing nationalistic rivalries; most other sources argue that, while historical events did have some effect, it was the emphasis placed on these events, by leaders such as Slobodan Milosevic, that caused nationalism to spread like a contagion. (Holbrooke, 155) In fact, most sources, such as Richard Holbrooke's *To End a War*, state that most former Yugoslavians did not even know who of their neighbors and friends were Muslim, Serbian, or Croat, and that intermarriage was very common.

It is widely agreed that Slobodan Milosevic was the key figure in the igniting of the nationalistic fever and bears the majority of responsibility for the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

In most sources, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic are portrayed as villains for their parts in this tragedy. In fact, their actions led to the creation of the term "ethnic

cleansing” which is detailed by Burg and Shoup in their book, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*. It covers, in great detail, the conflict in the region as well as the history of the area. One of the most thought-provoking features of this book, that many of the others do not have, is it dwells in the hypothetical “what if” the world had intervened sooner and using different strategies to avoid the conflict. The concrete data and thorough analysis are a very helpful aid in this research and the hypotheticals were interesting. (Burg, 1999)

The events in the Balkans were the first major diplomacy tests in the post-USSR world and most sources agree that the initial world response to the conflict in Bosnia was a drastic failure. It is widely documented how the poor action by the international community to stop the humanitarian disaster, led to the downward spiral of Yugoslavia.

The sanctions imposed allowed for the Serbian offensive against Bosnia, as the Bosnians did not have the same access to weapons supply, which the Bosnian Serbs had from Serbia, where the majority of the weaponry manufacturing in Yugoslavia was located. Richard Holbrooke claims that Rebecca West’s book, *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, held a pro Serbian stance and policy makers used this book as a backbone for decades. (Holbrooke, 155) In a different argument, Holbrooke asks in his 1992 Newsweek op-ed, which he highlights in his book, whether the world would have remained as inactive and ineffective as it did, if the people in Bosnia were Christians or Jews. (Holbrooke, 221) It is widely agreed that the Vance-Owen plan, a peace attempt by the United Nations and the European Council, was too little, too late to make any big difference in the Balkans.

Richard Holbrooke’s memoir, *To End a War*, on the war in Bosnia and the subsequent peace talks is about one man’s struggles with American foreign policy and

diplomacy, the role he played, and how he viewed the events from 1991-1995. The book is a very telling personal account of a key player in the peace talks and what it took to get all the players to the Dayton Accords. His firsthand accounts of the U.S. inaction and policy talks that then led up to the final peace agreements give a very unique perspective. Where *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation* is an all encompassing, in-depth book on the Balkan wars, *The Collapse of Yugoslavia* is a brief overview. The information is concise and compact. As it is one of the more recently published books it also covers the post-1995 period, including some of the war crime trials, as well as the deaths of some of the major players, including Alija Izetbegovic, the president of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Franjo Tudjman, the president of Croatia, and the assassination of Zoran Djindjic, the Serbian Prime Minister who extradited Milosevic to be tried for war crimes by the Hague. The book reads more like a condensed textbook. It contains a very detailed timeline, however its "Cast of Characters" is not as thorough as the one in *Death of a Nation*. Due to its brevity, this book was found to be a good introduction to the conflict, however it was not as helpful as the more thorough books, such as *Death of a Nation* and *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*.

In his book, *Bosnia A Short History*, Malcolm argues that the main basis for hostility in Bosnia was economic, not ethnic or religious. Malcolm believes that the economical change after the Ottomans conquered Bosnia and the shift in land ownership to Muslims created resentment by mainly Christian peasantry towards their Muslim landowners. These animosities changed with time as economics changed and was subject to political pressure, which altered the landownership in the nineteenth century. Malcolm

also argues that the hostility between the Catholic and the Orthodox communities were subject to church and political pressure from neighboring countries.

In conclusion, it is apparent that nearly all of the sources agree that Milosevic and his hardline Serbian stance bear the majority of blame for the events in Bosnia. They also agree that what occurred in the region was a tragedy and that the world's inaction is nearly just as guilty for allowing the killings and creation of concentration camps to continue. Where they disagree is if nationalism at the heart is to blame or if it was other factors, such as economics or if the area is conflict prone in nature.

Methodology

The objective of this research is to provide an updated view of the war in Bosnia.

Propositional theories will be evaluated regarding the events that took place during the war in Bosnia and the U.S. policy in relation to the war at that time.

Propositional Inventory is a methodology in which two or more variables are examined. Goode, in his book *Social Systems and Family Patterns; a Propositional Inventory*, describes propositional inventory as a listing of formal declarative statements of relations between two or more variables. (Goode, 1971)

This research will be investigating the analyses of the intelligence community and various U.S. Government agencies compared against Holbrooke's approach to the Bosnian conflict. To do so, the recent documents that were released in October of 2013, by the Central Intelligence Agency and the Clinton Presidential Library (CPL), will be analyzed in relation to how Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. diplomat to that region at that time and the architect of the Dayton Accords, said he handled the situation. This research will gather existing literature, specifically Richard Holbrooke's book *To End a War*, then compare and contrast his views with the released documents by the CIA and the CPL, to better understand the collective knowledge about the war in Bosnia and how we can use this knowledge to aid current and future conflicts.

It might be useful to think about the events that took place in the time of the Bosnian war in two dimensions, where the first dimension would be the propositions of the U.S. Government agencies and the other would be the propositions of Richard Holbrooke and his negotiation team.

The following topics will assess the areas where Holbrooke had different views than the U.S. Government agencies on matters related to the Bosnian conflict, in the process that led to the Dayton Accords.

The Initial Response

There are varied opinions on the reasons why the Balkans erupted like dry tinder. One of the most prevalent of which is that the area has long antagonistic ethnical divides and there is no use in trying to prevent them.

Holbrooke's Proposition:

Richard Holbrooke stated that, "(t)here was no noticeable physical or ethnic difference between them, and, in fact, considerable intermarriage. Many people told me that until the collapse of their country they did not know which of their friends were Serb and which were Muslim." (Holbrooke, 23) Holbrooke continues in that same vein stating that the Yugoslav collapse and the tragedies following were not destined to happen. It occurred due to political and personal ambitions by the certain leaders who used technology to disseminate their dangerous propaganda. (Holbrooke, 23-24) In Washington, however, the book "Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History" was widely read and "(a)ccording to numerous press reports, the book had a profound impact on President Clinton and other members of the Administration shortly after they came into office. Thus arose an idea that 'ancient hatreds,' a vague but useful term for history too complicated (or trivial) for outsiders to master, made it impossible (or pointless) for anyone outside the region to try to prevent the conflict." (Holbrooke, 22)

Holbrooke was very clear on his position on the Balkan crisis, as he wrote, "Washington had a dog in this particular fight. It would take four years to undo these mistakes—four years before Washington belatedly and reluctantly, but ultimately decisively, stepped in . . . this did not happen until after even more severe strain within the Atlantic Alliance, and historic disasters in Bosnia." (Holbrooke, 29)

The Government's Proposition:

Not everyone in Washington was swayed by the “ancient hatreds” argument. In October of 1990, a National Intelligence Estimate stated, “The strongest cohesive forces at work in Yugoslavia are those within Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia. They are a mix of national pride, local economic aspirations, and historically antagonistic religious and cultural identifications . . . The Milosevic-controlled press continue to fan the Serbian nationalist flames in Kosovo and Croatia”. (CIA, 2013, 1990-10-1)

*Information available as of 18 October 1990 was used
in the preparation of this National Intelligence Estimate.*

*The following intelligence organizations participated
in the preparation of this Estimate:*

The Central Intelligence Agency
The Defense Intelligence Agency
The National Security Agency
The Bureau of Intelligence and Research,
Department of State

also participating:

The Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence,
Department of the Army
The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence,
Department of the Air Force

Figure 9: A Screenshot of a CIA Document Shows the Agencies that Worked on Preparing the Estimate referred to in the Above Paragraph. Retrieved from:

http://www.foia.cia.gov/sites/default/files/document_conversions/1817859/1990-10-01.pdf

A 1991 Intelligence Assessment by the CIA summed up that, “(a)Yugoslav civil war, in our view, would quickly become a "European" problem requiring a political settlement-perhaps negotiated under international auspices”. (CIA, 2013, 1991-3-1)

Assessment:

Holbrooke’s recommendation to get involved early on, before the situation turned into series of atrocities, deserved attention at that time. Washington, on the other hand, was busy dealing with other international crises such as the ones in Germany, Russia, and the first Gulf War. The Balkan crisis could potentially been averted had the United States taken a firmer stance in the early days of the civil conflict.

Getting Involved

In August 1992, Holbrooke wrote a memorandum to then Candidate Clinton criticizing the Bush Administration's handling of the crisis, describing it as, "weak and inadequate . . . your (Clinton's) public statements have made a real difference, especially pushing the Bush Administration into doing more than they otherwise would have done." (Holbrooke, 42) Indeed, the Bush Administration decisively wanted no part of this seemingly "European" problem. According to Silber and Little, in an interview with Brent Scowcroft, a Bush Administration foreign policy maker, asserted he and Lawrence Eagleburger (another foreign policy maker), "were most concerned here about Yugoslavia. The President and (Secretary of State) Baker were furthest on the other side. Baker would say 'We don't have a dog in this fight.' The President would say to me once a week 'Tell me again what this is all about.'" (Silber, 201)

Meanwhile, an April 1992 report states, "Greater US engagement increases the risk that US forces could become involved in the fighting. However, failure to act or to achieve a positive outcome would have a negative impact on the US security role in Europe." (CIA, 2013, 1992-4-1)

Holbrook's Proposition:

In the weeks before President Clinton was sworn into office, Holbrooke sent a memorandum to Secretary Christopher and to National Security Advisor Anthony (Tony) Lake detailing four objectives he thought the new administration should take on the area:

(F)irst, "to save as many lives as possible in Bosnia"; second, "to make containment of the war a top priority"; third, "to punish the Serbs for their

behavior ... and to brand certain individuals war criminals”; fourth, “to use this crisis as an opportunity to strengthen the U.N. system. (Holbrooke, 51)

He also recommended that the Clinton administration publicly support the Vance-Owen plan if the temporary acceptance allowed for a ceasefire and the ability for Washington to create their own plan for the region.

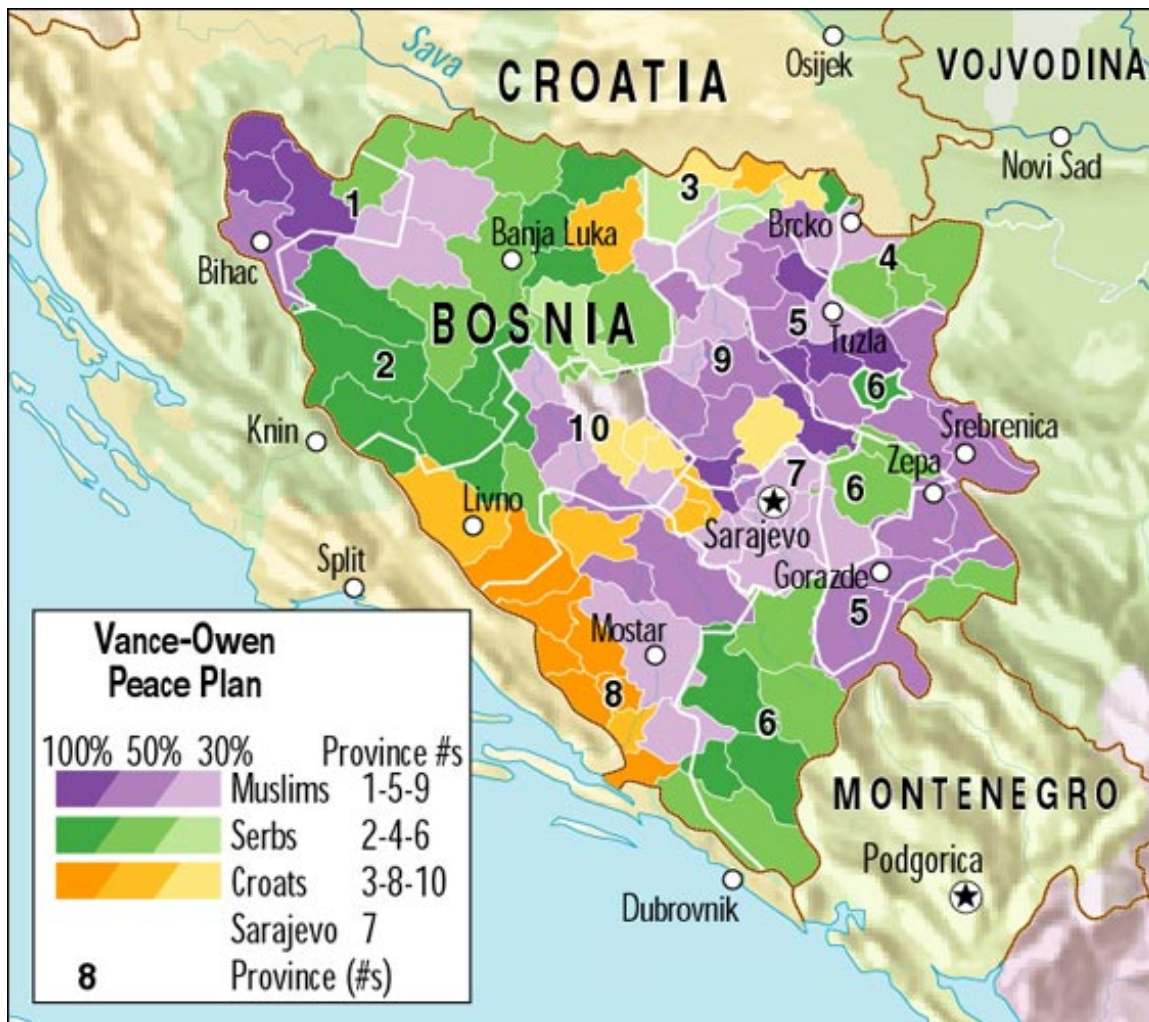


Figure 10: Map of Bosnia Showing the Vance-Owen Peace Plan. Retrieved from: http://www.partitionconflicts.com/partitions/regions/balkans/peace_process/05_05_02/

He supported lifting the arms embargo for Bosnia, because, while the embargo was being implemented by most nations, others, such as Iran, were smuggling in weapons and fighters through Croatia, with the Croatians taking some of the weapons to reinforce their own forces. As an endpoint Holbrooke insisted, in all capital letters, on keeping up pressure on the war crime tribunal. (Holbrooke, 52-53)

Holbrooke never heard an official answer back from his memo and when he questioned the National Security Advisor about it sometime later the response was “it was ‘useful,’ but it contained some suggestions that would ‘undercut us at the U.N.’” (Holbrooke, 53)

The Government’s Proposition:

Meanwhile, on January 22 of 1993, two days after President Clinton was sworn into office, Tony Lake sent a memorandum to the Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Director of Central intelligence, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff with 26 questions on the assessment of the Balkan situation and the possible actions that could be taken; many of these questions being the same points Holbrooke raised. Some of these questions included were:

To what degree is the arms embargo being violated, and by whom? Would it be possible to selectively lift the arms embargo so the GOB could defend what it now holds but not launch significant counterattacks? What threats of – or action on – punitive military steps against Serbia would be necessary simply to deter similar aggression elsewhere? (CIA, 2013, 1993-1-22)

The CIA responded to this memorandum with a very detailed response to the questions. These include the following topics:

“Establish a War. Crimes Tribunal. Serb paramilitary leaders charged with war crimes might attempt terrorist operations in the West. The Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian Governments might harbor some high-ranking war criminals while turning over those considered expendable. They may even rid themselves of war criminals to cover up war crimes . . .

Full Lifting of Arms Embargo on Bosnia. The West Europeans, with the possible exception of Germany, would, strongly oppose such an action. The Russians almost certainly would veto lifting the embargo . . . If Serbian regulars entered Bosnia and scored successes, most Muslim states would increase weapons shipments dramatically and step up calls for direct military intervention by the US and other Western forces under either UN or NATO auspices. There might also be a dramatic increase in Muslim ‘volunteers’ . . .

Enforce Sanctions. Tightened sanctions against Serbia/Montenegro would provoke strong protests from Belgrade, which would redouble efforts to seek relief from its perceived Russian allies and would attempt new ways of circumventing the measures. Additional sanctions probably would strengthen Milosevic's domestic position in the short term.” (CIA, 20013, 1993-2-1)

Assessment:

Even though Holbrooke’s memorandum was not well received, it did give the Clinton Administration food for thought during the first months after the inauguration. From 1993 through late 1994, Holbrooke had little to do with the Balkan crisis in an official manner as he had been appointed the ambassador to Germany. However, in the spring of 1994, Strobe Talbott, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, approached Holbrooke

and requested that he take over as the Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of European and Canadian Affairs. Holbrooke, enjoying his new position in Germany and not wanting to return to the bureaucracy he left behind when he was appointed as Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, turned the offer down. However, Talbott did not stop asking and in May he told Holbrooke that the Secretary of State and the President both wanted him to take the job. Holbrooke then agreed and requested to stay on as ambassador until President Clinton's trip to Germany a few months later. (Holbrooke, 56) Bosnia became the central issue of Holbrooke's tenure as Assistant Secretary of State, as he describes, "(m)y first meeting after being sworn in was on Bosnia, as was my last, seventeen months later." (Holbrooke, 59) His assignment to the region and the focus given during the next year and a half represents the now aligning focus of Holbrooke and the Administration.

Croatian Offensive

In the early part of 1995, the Croatian president, Franjo Tudjman, was pressing the Serbs to return the contested region of Krajina to Croatia or he would use force to take the region, as Holbrooke wrote in his memoir, “If the Krajina region was not returned to him peacefully, Tudjman warned, he would attack it soon, no matter what the risks.” (Holbrooke, 62) President Tudjman had been stirring this issue for a while, in fact the Croatian Foreign Minister, Mate Granic, had raised the same subject with Holbrooke in 1992.

In late September 1995, the Croatians were on the offensive again, with their sights set on Serb controlled cities, such as Sanski Most, Pridjedor, Bosanski Novi, and Banja Luka.



The Western Offensive, August-September 1995

Figure 11: Shows the Croatian Offensive. Retrieved from: Richard Holbrooke, *To End A War*. P.161

Holbrook's Proposition:

Throughout February and March of 1995, Holbrooke, representing the official Administration position, approached the Croatians time and again asking them to refrain from invading Krajina. Holbrooke attended a meeting with the United States Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman in which they told Croatian Defense Minister, Gojko Susak, “that the Serbs would defeat any Croatian attack, either with their own local resources or with support from the regular Yugoslav Army under Milosevic’s control.” (Holbrooke, 62) However, during this meeting, while maintaining the official platform, Holbrooke personally noted:

A grim meeting. Perry told Susak that we continue to feel that his government was making a mistake. Perry suggested that his country was sliding toward war and it might not turn out well for them. General Shali warned him that the JCS assessment of the balance of forces was far more pessimistic than Zagreb’s. My own instinct is that the Croatian gamble might pay off, although the risks are high. (Holbrooke, 62)

In the middle of their “shuttle diplomacy”, Holbrooke believed that, in order to bring all parties to the negotiations table, they would be in a better position if there were no major inequality in land distribution. Holbrooke stated, “I urged Tudjman to take Sanski Most, Prijedor, and Bosanski Novi—all important towns that had become worldwide symbols of ethnic cleansing. If they were captured before we opened negotiations on territory, they would remain under Federation control—otherwise it would be difficult to regain them in a negotiation.” (Holbrooke, 160)

The Government's Proposition:

The CIA believed that Tudjman lacked the ability to win a decisive victory over the Serbs in Krajina, as displayed in the following de-classified report by the BTF from November 1994:

A Croatian attack probably would regain some territory--especially in UN Sectors North, South and West--but not without high costs. The Croatian Army probably can regain some key lines of communication in UN Sectors South, and West, but it still lacks the heavy weapons and skilled leadership to achieve a decisive victory over Krajina Serb forces. (CIA,2013,1994-11-17)

Maintaining their position, the United States kept pressuring President Tudjman to not invade Krajina, in fact in July of 1995, just weeks before the Croatians launched their offensive, a declassified memorandum by the NSC titled Bosnian Endgame Strategy said, "providing increased economic assistance to Croatia to discourage Tudjman from launching a full-scale war in Krajina in the near term (while at the same time encouraging continued low-level attrition operations that could help limit Krajina Serb support to the Bosnian Serbs)." (CIA, 2013, 1995-7-20A)

On September 21st of 1995, in a White House meeting, the U.S. government, as Tony Lake mentioned, did not want the Croatians retaking the towns of Sanski Most, Pridjedor, and Bosanski Novi. They stated that Zagreb and Sarajevo have to end the offensive on Bosnian Serb territory. Holbrooke had already told the Croatians to take these territories, because what they can't get in the battlefield will be hard to get during negotiations; however he explicitly told them not to take Banja Luka, because it has a

Serbian majority and they would have to give it back in the negotiations. (Holbrooke, 172)

Assessment:

In the first days of August 1995 the Croatian army invaded the Krajina region and won a decisive victory over the Krajina Serbs. As Holbrooke observed, on page 63 in his memoir, “the American intelligence judgment as to what would happen if the Croatians attacked proved—fortunately—to be profoundly wrong.” Milosevic did not come to the aid of the Krajina Serbs. This was the first time the Serbs had experienced a substantial loss and this was instrumental to the future negotiations. As the Serbs had not been anything but successful in the past, they would be less likely to negotiate. After the loss of Krajina, the Serbs would be more conciliatory at the negotiation table. (Holbrooke 72-73) This was also apparent during the later offensive, where the Croatian federation was able to take Sanski Most from the Serbs, before the October 12th Ceasefire.



Figure 12: Areas of Control After Cease-Fire in October 1995 Shows the Increase in the Bosnian-Croatian Control Over Land. Retrieved from: Richard Holbrooke, *To End A War*. P.208

IFOR

The planning of the Implementation Force (IFOR) was a major point of contention between the Joint Chiefs of Staff and Holbrooke. As a CIA post-meeting memo stated on October 18th, “There was concern that a gap is widening between IFOR planning in NATO and the negotiations on the ground. Holbrooke seems to be promising a more activist role for IFOR than the NATO planners are considering.” (CIA, 2013, 1995-10-18B)

Holbrooke believed that the NATO planners (i.e. The Joint Chiefs of Staff and the DOD) had greatly limited the function of IFOR. He saw these limitations as a self-defeating cycle, stating that, “the narrower the military mission, the longer they would have to stay. But the military saw things quite differently: anticipating a huge security problem that would tie down their forces, they believed that any additional responsibilities would require additional forces, well beyond the sixty thousand troops in the plan.” (Holbrooke, 219)

These issues were coming to a forefront, as there was little time to plan for Dayton. Sandy Vershbow, Senior Director for Europe, U.S. National Security Council, put together a list of points of contention between the NATO planners and Holbrooke’s negotiating team (effectively representing the State Department). Some of these points are summarized below, first in Holbrooke’s proposition (Holbrooke, 220-221), then the corresponding declassified documentation following.

1. Cantonment of Weaponry

Holbrooke's Propositions:

Holbrooke proposition on weapons was that cantonments of weaponry would protect IFOR and reduce the chances of incidents. (Holbrooke, 220)

Pentagon's Proposition:

The Pentagon opposed the cantonment of weapons, they stated that, "stockpiling in isolated areas open to NATO inspection—by the two sides on the grounds that it was unenforceable." (Holbrooke, 220)

The proposition during the October 24th meeting was, "(i)f the parties agree and cooperate, then cantonments will enhance security and stability. If the parties do not cooperate, the cantonments could disrupt stability and increase troop requirements." (CIA,2013,1995-10-24A)

2. Past Issues:

Holbrook's Proposition:

Holbrooke believed that it was essential to investigate, "past incidents of attacks, atrocities or human rights violations." (Holbrooke, 220)

NSC's Proposition:

The NSC opposed giving IFOR the authority to investigate, "past incidents of attacks, atrocities or human rights violations." (Holbrooke, 220)

In an October 25, 1995 summary of conclusions by the NSC (Meeting of the NSC Principles Committee), it was clearly stated that the IFOR would not be responsible in any manner for investigating the past issues. (CIA, 2013, 1995-10-25)

3. Civilian Rescue

Holbrooke's Proposition:

Before IFOR started its mission in Bosnia, Holbrooke anticipated they would provide protection to international workers and civilians. Holbrooke argued, "it was inconceivable that the military could stand by if civilians, some of whom might be Americans, were endangered." (Holbrooke, 220-221)

Pentagon's Proposition:

The Pentagon did not want to interfere, as Holbrooke mentioned, "The Pentagon resisted any obligation to respond to 'over the horizon' reports of attacks on international civilian personnel or gross violations of human rights, on the grounds that this would 'lead to mission creep and increase force requirements.' In plain English, this meant that the Pentagon did not want to go to the aid of international civilian aid workers if a problem arose outside their immediate line of sight." (Holbrooke, 220-221)

During the October 27th 1995 NSC Principles Committee Meeting in the White House's Situation Room, it was decided that the decision to act on these "over the horizon" events would be made by, "the IFOR commander at the Corps level . . . on the basis of his own judgment, against reported . . . situations of urgent and serious humanitarian needs or attacks, and where NATO forces have the means and opportunity to stop violence to life and . . . it will not adversely affect the IFOR mission." (CIA, 2013,

1995-10-27)

4. Elections:

Holbrooke's Proposition:

Holbrooke and his team argued that the visible presence of IFOR during the first round of elections after the war would be essential. (Holbrooke, 221)

Pentagon's Proposition:

Pentagon on the other hand sought minimum or no role in any part of the “civilian implementation, including elections and securing freedom of movement.” (Holbrooke, 221)

The following points were decided on at the October 25th NSC Principles Committee Meeting:

The IFOR will create secure conditions for elections by completing its primary tasks of deploying forces to establish presence and separation between warring factions, and enforcing compliance with military aspects of the peace agreement. The OSCE should be enlisted as the lead organization in the electoral component of the overall implementation effort, including the responsibility for an election security plan. IFOR will not have specific election security tasks. (CIA, 2013, 1995-10-25)

5. IPTF (International Police Task Force)

Holbrooke's Proposition:

Holbrooke argued that "Either the military should have arrest authority or else the IPTF should be given such powers". (Holbrooke, 221)

Pentagon's Proposition:

While it was clear that Holbrooke envisioned a presence of some sort of policing power, the Pentagon was completely on the other side of the aisle. Holbrooke said:

The Pentagon not only rejected any police functions for themselves, but also opposed giving the International Police Task Force (IPTF) a strong mandate and authority to arrest people. This, they said, would constitute the most dangerous form of "mission creep." If the IPTF got into trouble, the military argued, this could "lead to the assumption by IFOR of police functions throughout the country." (Holbrooke, 220)

This issue was not decided on before the Dayton Peace Accords began. In the November 13th Principals meeting it was confirmed that the Deputies agreed that it was important to train the indigenous police force, as "deploying actual international police officers . . . was neither desirable nor feasible in resource terms." (CIA, 2013, 1995-11-13)

6. Eastern Slavonia:

Holbrooke's Proposition:

Holbrooke, knowing how important Eastern Slavonia was for the Croatians argued that, "eastern Slavonia, small, adjacent to Bosnia, and directly resupply their

forces in Bosnia, was an integral part of the region, and would be easy to place under IFOR.” (Holbrooke, 221)

Pentagon’s Proposition:

The Pentagon argued that Eastern Slovenia should not be one of IFOR responsibilities, because it will require more troops and will raise more problems with congress, therefore, it should be excluded. (Holbrooke, 221)

Eastern Slavonia was one of the major issues in Croatia’s involvement in the peace talks. Once it was decided that this land was to be returned to Croatia, the Principals decided on the recommendations would be drafted for military implementation, the United States’ participation in the transitional administration, and the likely conditions during the transition period. CIA, 2013, 1995-11-13)



Figure 13: Map Showing Eastern Slavonia. Retrieved from:http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/Bosnia/updates/jan96/01-10/slavonia/eastern_slavonia.jpg

7. War Criminals:

Holbrooke's Proposition:

Holbrooke was very adamant on getting war criminals indicted, he states in his memoire that “the Pentagon opposed any mandate or obligation to arrest indicted war criminals. Needless to say, I disagreed.” (Holbrooke, 221)

Pentagon's Proposition:

During the October 24th Principals meeting it was decided that, “(i)t is not IFOR's mission to search and find war criminals. However, if the opportunity presents itself, the IFOR will apprehend a war criminal.” (CIA, 2013, 1995-10-24A)

Assessment:

History has proven that Holbrooke's propositions on IFOR were more accurate. In March 1996, IFOR stood by and watched as Serb thugs from Pale, who had ordered all Serbs out of Sarajevo before its reunification, beat and raped other Serbs and burned their homes and belongings. The Muslims raced to the aid of the Serbs under attack, but were then attacked themselves. Their requests for IFOR aid were denied. Admiral Smith of NATO claimed that involving IFOR in stopping these thugs would lead to mission creep. (Holbrooke, 336-337) Another failure by IFOR was allowing Radovan Karadzic to continue to threaten any Serb that supported the agreements reached at Dayton.

Holbrooke insisted that, in order for Bosnia to become more stable, Karadzic needed to be arrested. However, NATO argued that, “arresting Karadzic. . .was too risky and not an IFOR mission.” (Holbrooke, 338) IFOR, later called the Stabilization Force

(SFOR), would remain a weak force on a narrowly defined mission, until 1997, when General Wesley Clark would be named Supreme Commander of NATO, effectively sending Dayton to NATO. (Holbrooke, 349)

Withdrawal Strategy

On September 5th, 1995 “Principals agreed that the exit strategy summarized in the Deputies Committee Memorandum should be clarified to state that the peace implementation force (IFOR) will withdraw when the Bosnian Federation is capable of defending itself, but in any case no later than 12 months from its initial deployment.” (CIA, 2013, 1995-9-5A)

Holbrooke’s Proposition:

Holbrooke had a different opinion on setting a time table for exit strategy so soon, he stated on page 211 that “(t)he negotiating team knew that one year was not sufficient to succeed, no matter what happened in Dayton. But we were traveling between Moscow and Belgrade on the day this issue was decided, and after stating once in an earlier discussion that an arbitrary deadline—especially one so unrealistic—was a terrible idea, we were not consulted again. When we heard the news, we feared it would weaken our negotiating hand as well as threaten successful implementation. But the decision had been made, and we had no choice but to defend it publicly.” (Holbrooke, 211)

The Government’s Proposition:

Knowing that using American troops as a part of the Implementation Force would be a tough sell to the American people, and their elected representatives in Congress, when the Secretaries of Defense, State, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff appeared before a Senate Armed Services Committee they announced that the NATO mission would be completed in twelve months. (Holbrooke, 210)

Assessment:

In fact, in the end Holbrooke's proposition was more accurate on this issue. Due to numerous setbacks in the peace implementation process, President Clinton dropped the timetable in 1997. (Holbrooke, 362)

Conclusion

Achieving peace is often a long and tenuous process, it might even seem impossible at times, but as the former Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, said in an interview with CBS News on the tenth anniversary of the Dayton Accords, "Ten years ago, many doubted whether democracy would be possible among Serbs and Croats and Muslims in the war-torn lands of the Balkans. Today, we are seeing those doubts dismissed. Bosnia and Herzegovina is emerging as yet another example of how democracy can help diverse peoples live together without fear or repression." (Todd, 2005)

Indeed, the peace that was negotiated in the Balkans was hard earned and nearly fell through on multiple instances. However, thanks to the persistency of the negotiating team and the players in the Administration, peace has been achieved in the region. The research done in this paper has been able to compare the newly declassified documents by the CIA and the CPL, with the information that has been publically available since that time.

Throughout the course of this research, it appears that Holbrooke had a better grasp of the situation on the ground than did the policy makers in Washington. From his positions on the timetable established for American troop presence to the Croatian offensive, as well as the Implementation Force (IFOR) operation, history has proven Holbrooke to be correct on many accounts.

Proposition	Accuracy
Initial Response	H
Getting Involved	H
Croatian Offensive	H
IFOR	H
Withdrawal Strategy	H

Figure 14: A Table Showing the Accuracy Rate of Holbrooke (H) Compared to the Various U.S. Government Agencies (G).

One instance of this is Holbrooke’s assertion that American force casualties would be very limited in their role in IFOR, however the policy makers in Washington feared that there would be higher numbers. “Basing their predictions on another misreading of the Bosnian Serbs, as had been the case throughout the war, the military viewed the Serbs as a potent military force that would threaten IFOR.” (Holbrooke, 218)

Holbrooke had vocally decried the military's view on potential casualty rates, however, as he describes on page 323 of his memoir, that no one "could have imagined just how low the casualty rate actually would be---zero American forces killed or wounded from hostile action in the first two years after Dayton."

This study aids in linking Holbrooke's firsthand experience, documented in his memoir, with the various U.S. Government documents that were declassified by the CIA and the CPL, which shows how the process in Washington was developing. Both the documents and Holbrooke's memoir cover the time period from the end of the Bush Administration through the implementation of the Dayton Accords, under the Clinton Administration. The picture is now much more complete than it had been publically, however gaps still remain.

During the course of the research certain difficulties were faced when evaluating the declassified documents. There are often date gaps in the documents, as well as redacted information and partial documents. In fact, all of the documents during the Croatian Krajina offensive from August 1-3, 1995 are not in the declassified documents.

Another place this occurs is in reference to a cable sent by Holbrooke to the principals in Washington detailing why the peace negotiations had to take place in the United States. According to Holbrooke, Strobe Talbott called this, "the most effective cable sent so far in this (Clinton) Administration in terms of changing peoples' minds." (Holbrooke, 192) Holbrooke was, at the time, unable to provide a quotation due to concerns over the presidential "deliberative process". In researching the cable and the

October 2nd meeting, for which the cable was requested, it became apparent that these documents are still deemed classified information as they were not available.

In the end, what has been learned through this analysis is that the situation at the time was a unique one. The fact that there were distinct individual players that could be brought together for the negotiations was very helpful in creating the peace agreement.

Another, unique fact was the negotiating team at the time was given an unprecedented amount of leeway in their talks with each player in the region. Combined with mounting international pressure and hindering sanctions, all of these factors played important roles in drafting the Dayton Accords. The Dayton Accords, themselves, were also unique. As Holbrooke said, “Those considering other Daytonos should proceed with caution. It is a high-wire act without a safety net . . . The consequences of failure are great. But when the conditions are right, a Dayton can produce dramatic results.”

(Holbrooke, 232) When looking at situations in Syria, Egypt, and other conflict regions, applying the kind of negotiations used in the Balkans could succeed in some places but not be applicable in others. Factors, such as the players, the humanitarian issues, and post-peace implementations must be taken into consideration. Another factor that is important to contemplate is whether or not an individual such as Richard Holbrooke exists today and if they would be given the same negotiating powers and drive that allowed him to push through even the most difficult of times.

Further Research

Further research can be done in different areas such as:

The Declassified Documents:

Analyzing the declassified documents to find decision making propositions and comparing them to Holbrooke's propositions allowed for a better understanding of the United States' foreign policy during the Balkan Conflict. However, due to many documents still being classified, the picture is still not entirely complete. In order to have a broader understanding of policies and decision making at that time further research would need to be done as more documents are declassified in the future.

Krajina:

In *Death of a Nation* Silber and Little assert, "Behind the scenes, Ambassador Galbraith had returned from Washington and, according to UN officials, told Tudjman that the US would tolerate military action to take Krajina provided the battle was 'short and clean.'" (Silber, 352) This is an interesting assessment, as nothing in the declassified documents or in Holbrooke's memoir *To End a War* supports this allegation. This claim can be further investigated to assess if this was an actual U.S. position or a Croatian strategy to give the impression of U.S. support of invading the region.

Media:

Further research can also be done on the effect the Media had on policy making at the time. In fact, there is a Task Force document from August 1995 examining an article

from the Washington Post arguing for the lifting of the arms embargo for Bosnia. (CIA, 2013, 1995-8-3A)

The New York Times was mentioned often in Holbrooke's memoir, as well as numerous television interviews. The media's impact on public perception and support for intervention in the Balkans in contrast to the Administration policies could add an interesting layer to research on American involvement in the Balkan Crisis.

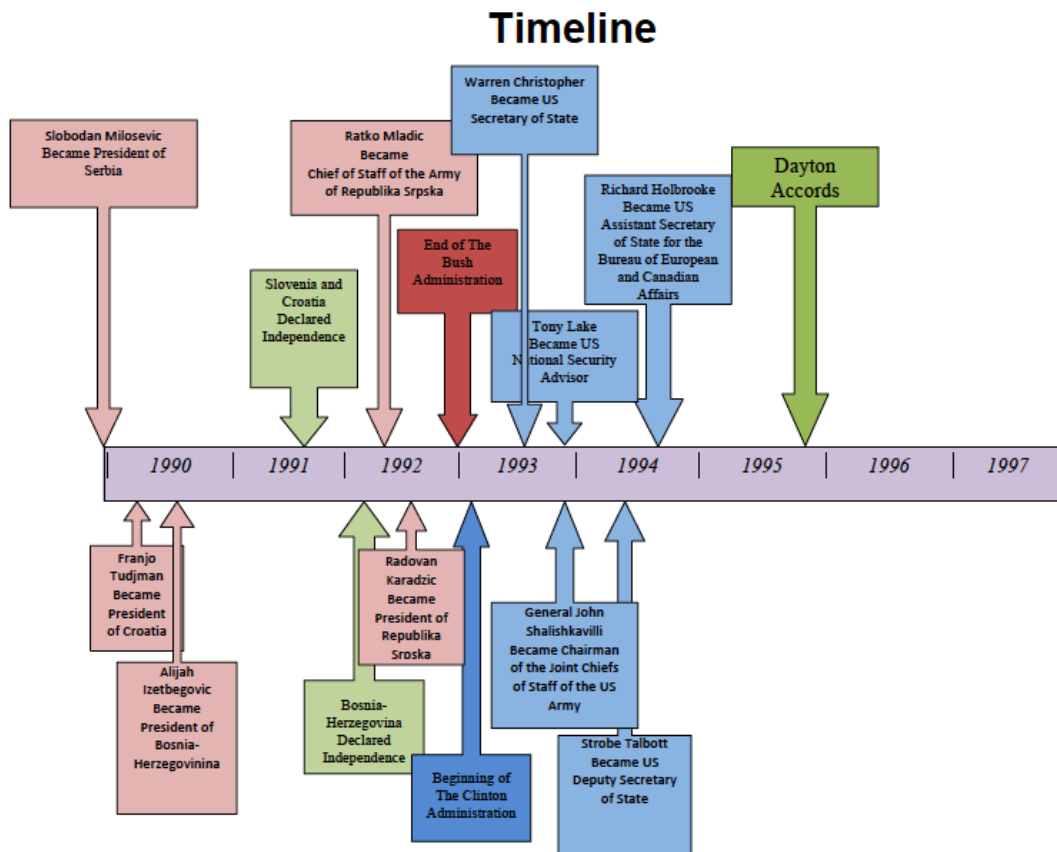


Figure 15: Timeline

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