

# Us involvement in the bosnian conflict politics essay



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The U. S foreign policy is the policy by which the U. S interacts with foreign nations. Like it is mentioned in the Foreign Policy Agenda of the U. S Department of States, the officially stated goals of the foreign policy of the U. S, as are to create a more secure, democratic, and prosperous world for the benefit of the American people and the international community.[1]

In addition, the United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs states as some of its jurisdictional goals: “ export controls, including nonproliferation of nuclear technology and nuclear hardware; measures to foster commercial intercourse with foreign nations and to safeguard American business abroad; international commodity agreements; international education; and protection of American citizens abroad and expatriation.” U. S. foreign policy and foreign aid have been the subject of much debate, praise and criticism both domestically and abroad.[2]

The United States is a founding member of NATO, the world’s largest military alliance. The 28-nation alliance consists of Canada and much of Europe, including the nation with NATO’s second largest military, the United Kingdom. Under the NATO charter, the United States is compelled to defend any NATO state that is attacked by a foreign power. NATO is restricted to within the North American and European areas. Starting in 1989, the United States also created a major non-NATO ally status (MNNA) for five nations; this number was increased in the late 1990s and following the September 11 attacks; it currently includes 14 nations. Each such state has a unique relationship with the United States, involving various military and economic partnerships and alliances.[3]

American relations with Eastern Europe are influenced by the legacy of the Cold War. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, former Communist-bloc states in Europe have gradually transitioned to democracy and capitalism. Many have also joined the European Union and NATO, strengthening economic ties with the broader Western world and gaining the military protection of the United States via the North Atlantic Treaty.[4]

### **3. 2 U. S INVOLVEMENT in the BOSNIAN CONFLICT**

The U. S. was one of the first countries which recognized Bosnia and Herzegovina as independent on April 7, 1992. on August, 1992 U. S. established diplomatic relations with Bosnia, and Embassy of the United States began to operate on November 10, 1993, as the part of American Embassy in Vienna. On July, 1994 the first official Embassy of United States of American was opened in Sarajevo.[5]

Even before the war in Bosnia started, U. S. made some decisions which were crucial for the conflict in Yugoslavia. On November 5, 1990, a year before the civil wars in Yugoslavia have started, the US Congress passed the 1991 Foreign Operations Appropriation Law 101-513. This bill, without a previous warning, cut all aid, trade, credits and loans to Yugoslavia and then pushed the World Bank and International Monetary Fond to do the same. The bill derecognized the country of Yugoslavia and announced that the U. S. will deal with the constituent republics instead.[6]

During the war in Bosnia U. S. was clear about their opinion. They accused Serbia and JNA as the main perpetrators of the war which they started. They also believed that Milosevic's regime is responsible for the conflict in Bosnia

and without his help conflicts would not continue. Even though it was clear who the aggressors, President Bush and his administration made a decision that they will not militarily get involved in Bosnian conflict.[7]

During his presidential campaign, Bill Clinton had totally opposite plans from the Bush Administration. Clinton believed that military interventions are the priority of U. S. foreign policy. But when President Clinton came to power he realized that the Bosnian conflict is much more difficult to solve than he expected.[8]

Throughout the Bosnian war, Americans have been occupied with territory-who controlled what percent, whether the maps at the heart of all eight peace plans rewarded aggression and appeased the Serbs, how to get Bosnian Serbs to give up land, and whether a strategic balance had been created between them and a putative alliance of Croats and Muslims.[9]

Because the Dayton map appears to have settled the territorial issues with a 51-49 split of the land, most observers believe the war is over. But for the three ruling parties of Bosnia, territory was always a subsidiary question, a means to the end of national sovereignty for each and recognition of their states by the international community.[10]

### **3. 2. 1. The Bush Administration**

In July, 1989 at the Paris Economic Summit, President Bush said that he agreed with the EU who said that Western European states should deal with conflicts and making stability in the Eastern Europe.[11]

In May, 1990 President Bush expressed his concerns about improvement of violence in Yugoslavia. He supported Yugoslavian political and territorial integrity, he also stated that “ any dissolution of Yugoslavia is likely to exacerbate rather than resolve ethnic tensions.” One year later U. S. policy changed their policy from insisting on a united Yugoslavia with no border changes, to a willingness to accept changes, including independence of individual republics.[12]

For the U. S. it was clear who the aggressor was in Yugoslavian conflict but they did not make any serious plan by which they will stop the further conflicts. In the fall of 1991, the EU imposed sanctions only against Serbia while US imposed sanctions against all six republics.[13]

First joined intervention of EU and U. S. was in 1991 by establishing Resolution 724 on economic sanctions: “ The economic sanctions ... have been remarkably effective. ... These sanctions were - unlike the peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance operations - the only strategic instrument of the United Nations to contain the conflict and restore peace and security in the region, not involving the use of armed force.”[14]

When the Serbian troops moved from Croatia to Bosnia, U. S. decided that they should change their policy towards Yugoslav conflicts. President Bush was pushing UN resolution to support the use of force to get humanitarian aid delivered.[15]

The decision to deliver humanitarian aid was pushed by the Clinton’s speech during the presidential campaign. President Bush never showed serious

attentions for military interventions. His administration was described as passive during the conflicts.[16]

After President Bush and Colin Powell designed the victory over Saddam Hussein, Bush lost his bid for another four years as President of the United States. New President, Bill Clinton had criticized Bush's policy toward Bosnia, and after taking office he looked toward taking a tougher stand against the Serbs.[17]

### **3. 2. 2 The Clinton Administration**

During his presidential campaign, Bill Clinton gave so many promises about solving the Bosnian war. On one of his speeches he said that " We may have to use military force. I would begin with air power against Serbs to try to restore the basic conditions of humanity." [18]

His campaign was very promising but the fact is that when Clinton came to power his administrations did no react so fast on resolving Bosnian war, as many expected. As mentioned before, Clinton did know that the conflict is so complex so he could not find an immediate solution which President Bush used to accused President Clinton for not having an a to manage Foreign policy.[19]

In May 1993, Clinton established U. S. foreign policy, known as " lift and strike". Warren Christopher, a Secretary of the State was sent to Europe to promote America's allies on lifting the arms embargo against Bosnian Muslims and bombing the Serbs.[20]

The answer of Bosnian President Izetbegović on “ lift and strike” policy was that Bosnian does not want U. S. troops, they just wanted an end to U. S. support for a UN sanction that tied their hands and left Serbs with an overwhelming military advantage.[21]

The problem with the “ lift and strike” policy was that European states did not agree with the U. S. proposal. For example, Britain believed that lifting the arms embargo would widen the war, UNPROFOR nations maintained that air strikes would put their troops at risk unnecessarily.[22]

Warren Christopher’s trip to Europe failed after which he realized that “ lift and strike” policy was a bad idea. Christopher was convinced that any serious U. S. involvement in Bosnia would be politically disastrous for Clinton. He described the conflict as “ The hatred between all three groups.. is almost unbelievable. It’s almost terrifying, and it’s a centuries old. That really is a problem from hell.”[23]

After the “ lift and strike” failed it was clear that there would be no quick interventions. Instead of lifting the arms embargo and bombings Serbia, the U. S. and other powers on the UN Security Council agreed on a compromise policy.[24]

On 6 May, 1993, the UNSC passed a resolution establishing “ safe areas” in six Bosnian cities: Sarajevo, Tuzla, Bihać, Žepa, Goražde and Srebrenica. There was no provision for enforcement except for Srebrenica where there were 220 Canadian UNPROFOR troops attempting to maintain the status quo.[25]

On 4 June, 1993 the Security Council voted to authorize the allies to use air strikes against Serbian forces besieging the six safe areas. UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros - Ghali told the Security Council that 30, 000 troops would be needed to protect these safe areas. Because of American refusal to contribute soldiers and exhaustion among European states with troops already in Bosnia, only a very little part of the forces needed to monitor and defend these areas arrived. The safe areas were left extremely vulnerable.

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Senator Bob Dole criticized Clinton's policy towards Bosnia. He believed that Bosnian war could be prevented only with the first Clinton's plans and not by "lift and strike policy". He said: "This shrinking and shrinking American presence on the global stage is exactly the type of invasion dictators and aggressors dream of." [27]

Bob Dole advised to Clinton to reassemble his NATO allies and to issue an ultimatum: The Serbs must hold on to the latest cease-fire accord, permit the free passage of all humanitarian groups, place its fearsome heavy weapons under UN control, and break up its paramilitary forces. [28]

If they would fail to meet the United States' demands, air strikes should begin and the arms embargo against the Bosnian Muslims should be lifted so that the Muslims could protect themselves and their vulnerable safe areas.

[29] The solution which Dole proposed was immediately ignored by the Clinton administration. [30]

There are three possible reasons which pushed away President Clinton from using force in solving Bosnian war:

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First of all, the U. S. military disagreed with the interventions which President Clinton offered. Secondly, U. S. foreign policy leaders believed that U. S. should intervene only if European countries participate in interventions. The third reason is that Clinton cared about the opinion of American people.[31]

Even though Americans supported the idea of sending troops to Bosnia, the U. S officials did not trust that public support would withstand U. S. casualties. Clinton was also worried that Russia could be offended by his interventions due to the fact that they are sympathizing Orthodox Christian Serbs.[32]

Before the signing Dayton Peace Agreement, the Clinton Administration did take one significant step toward ending the conflict between Bosnian Croats and the Bosnian Army in March 1994.[33]

After six months of work U. S. finally formulated a plan that was accepted by two parties, the Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Muslims, made possible in part by ouster of Mate Boban, the leader of the Bosnian government, under pressure from Washington, agreed to join a common federation, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This new federation allowed some weapons to be smuggled into Bosnia for the Bosnian Army and encouraged joined military operations against the Serbs.[34]

In 1994 the allies did occasionally launch Serbia, but this only caused intensive attacks on Bosnian civilians or rounding UN peacekeepers as hostage, and along with its allies they gave up.[35]

### **3. 3 REASONS of U. S. MILITARY INTERVENTIONS in BIH**

After a passive West that characterized so much the Western policy since the beginning of the Bosnian war in 1992, it was more than a positive surprise when NATO began an intensive bombing campaign of Serbian weapons, air defense, munitions stores, and communications infrastructure in Bosnia in late August 1995.[36]

There are few reasons which pushed western countries to change their opinion about military interventions. Even though, the UN designed safe areas two of them were overrun in July of 1995 which was one of the reasons when west was reconsidering their policy. Another change in policy was also facilitated by a major shift in European sentiment. The French Prime Minister Alain Juppe said after the fall of Srebrenica that the French were ready to take part in military action retake Srebrenica. By this shift in French statements, Clinton got the support against Serbs.[37]

Another reason why U. S. intervened is the fact that during his presidential campaign president Clinton said that solving Bosnian conflict is one of the top priorities. He said, " We should make clear that the economic blockade against Serbia will be tightened, not only on weapons but also on oil and other supplies that sustain the renegade regime of Slobodan MiloseviÄ¶.[38]

Europe and U. S naval forces in the Adriatic should be given authority by the UN to stop and search ships that might be carrying contraband headed for Serbia and her ally, Montenegro. The continuing attacks by Serbian elements in Bosnia threaten the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian aid,

jeopardize the safety of UN personnel and put at risk the lives of thousands of citizens.[39]

The UN should take the lead in seeking UN Security Council authorization for air strike against those who are attacking the relief effort. The U. S. should be prepared to lend appropriate military support to that operation. Air and naval forces adequately to carry out these operations should be visible in position.”[40]One year before another elections President Clinton still did not solve the conflict. So, he felt an obligation to fulfill the promise made three years before.[41]

Srebrenica was the West’s greatest shame. Guilt led senior representatives of the United States and its key allies to agree in London a few days later that NATO would make a strong stand at Gorazde by defending the town’s civilian population. Secretary of State Warren Christopher declared that Gorazde would be met with a “ substantial and decisive” air campaign”. A few days later, the North Atlantic Council worked out the final operational details of the air campaign and passed the decision to NATO’s military commanders on when to conduct the strikes.[42]

By the end of July the United States and its allies confronted a situation that required concerted action. The strategy of muddling through that had characterized U. S. policy since the beginning of the conflict clearly was no longer viable. The president made clear to his senior advisers that he wanted to get out of the box in which U. S. policy found itself.[43]

This box had been created by an unworkable diplomatic strategy of offering ever greater concessions to Serb President Slobodan Milosevic just to get the  
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Bosnian Serbs to the table; by the long-standing refusal to put U. S. troops on the ground; by allied resistance to using force as long as their troops could be taken hostage; by a U. N. command that insisted on “ traditional peacekeeping principles” even though a war was raging; and by a U. S. Congress bent on taking the moral high ground by unilaterally lifting the arms embargo on the Bosnian government without, however, taking responsibility for the consequences of doing so.[44]

### **3. 4 DAYTON PEACE AGREEMENT**

On November 21, 1995, the world witnessed an event that for years many believed impossible, the leaders of Bosnia, Serbia, and Croatia agreed to end a war. The war ended with the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement (DPA) on 14 December 1995 in Dayton, Ohio by the presidents of Bosnia-Herzegovina Alija İzetbegović, Croatia Franjo Tuđman and Serbia Slobodan Milošević. The signing of the Dayton Peace Accords concluded one of the most challenging diplomatic undertakings the United States had pursued since the end of the Cold War.[45]

Eighteen weeks of whirlwind shuttle diplomacy, followed by twenty-one intensive days of negotiations in Dayton. The agreement’s main purpose was to stop the war and to promote peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to endorse regional balance in and around the former Republic of Yugoslavia thus in a regional perspective.[46]

The agreement brought peace to a troubled corner of Europe, and established an ambitious blueprint to build a new Bosnia, an effort that the international community remains deeply engaged in today.[47]

For three years, the American approach toward the Bosnia problem had been one of disengagement, hoping that the Europeans, who had high hopes for their fledgling political union, would take the lead to solve the problem.

Europe's response proved feckless, and the United States proved no better.

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More than any other foreign policy issue, the problem of Bosnia's defined the early years of Bill Clinton's presidency. Despite some significant successes during his first term, such as the Middle East peace process, the 1994 Framework Agreement with North Korea, the passage of NAFTA, Clinton's early years were in many ways defined by the inability to bring peace to Bosnia.[49]

Dayton's core accomplishment is that it ended a war and gave hope to millions who have suffered immense hardship. But it did more than that. Dayton brought to an end one of the most difficult periods in the history of U. S.-European relations, helping to define a new role for NATO and restore confidence in American leadership after a period during which it been cast into doubt.[50]

One year after the war in Bosnia, U. S. State Department decided to capture the record of the achievement of Dayton Peace Agreement. There were two core goals of the creation of this archive and the writing of the study: first, to collect the documents and create an oral history of this fast-moving negotiating process for the benefit of future historians and to supplement the State Department's Foreign Relations of the United States series.[51]

The second goal is, to use the study to outline the bureaucratic and diplomatic mechanics of this complex negotiation, so that the lessons of the “Dayton model” could be studied and applied by future diplomats and policymakers as they worked to tackle similar problems.[52]

It has also proved invaluable to the many American diplomats who have been responsible for implementing the Dayton Accords or shaping U. S. policy toward Balkans generally.[53]

It is important to point out that at the time this historical initiative began, no one knew whether the Dayton peace plan would succeed. Twenty-thousand American troops were on the ground in Bosnia as part of a 60, 000-strong NATO force. At the time, American diplomats were hopeful — and proud that they had achieved a diplomatic success — but few dared imagine that their efforts would prove to be as successful as they have been ten years later. [54]

Despite the fears by many that implementing Dayton would be a quagmire, not a single American soldier has been killed by hostile fire. And while Bosnia still has a way to go to fulfill Dayton’s vision of a single, multi-ethnic, tolerant state with a functional government, the war is over.[55]

The present political divisions of Bosnia-Herzegovina and its structure of government were agreed upon the “Annex IV” of the General Framework Agreement concluded at Dayton. It created a decentralised Bosnia-Herzegovina which divided the country between two entities: the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, a Croat-Muslim Federation covering 51% of the territory and a Serb-led Republika Srpska covering 49%.[56]

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To briefly summarize the General Framework Agreement:

“- Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia agree to fully respect the sovereign equality of one another and to settle disputes by peaceful means.

- The FRY and Bosnia and Herzegovina recognize each other, and agree to discuss further aspects of their mutual recognition.

- The parties agree to fully respect and promote fulfillment of the commitments made in the various Annexes, and they obligate themselves to respect human rights and the rights of refugees and displaced persons.

- The parties agree to cooperate fully with all entities, including those authorized by the United Nations Security Council, in implementing the peace settlement and investigating and prosecuting war crimes and other violations of international humanitarian law.”[57]

Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs implemented Dayton’s military components, but the civil and political components of the agreement were difficult to comply. NATO forces could not guarantee the safe passage of citizens traveling within the country. Nationalist parties gained success in Bosnia but it prevented civil democracy in Bosnia. Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian leaders could not do much in assisting the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and prosecuting war criminals although the Dayton Peace Agreement required so.[58]

The agreement mandated a wide range of international organizations to monitor, oversee, and implement components of the agreement. The NATO-  
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led IFOR (Implementation Force) was responsible for implementing military aspects of the agreement and deployed on the 20th December 1995, taking over the forces of the UNPROFOR. The Office of the High Representative was charged with the task of civil implementation. The OSCE was charged with organizing the first free elections in 1996.[59]

Map 6: Bosnia and Herzegovina according to Dayton Peace Agreement

## **CHAPTER IV:**

### **4. 1 BRITAIN and U. S. in BOSNIAN CONFLICT**

In 1999, four years after the war in Bosnia was stopped, Kofi Annan, who was the General Secretary of United State, published the report about genocide in Srebrenica.[60] In his report, Kofi Anan said: “ Through error, misjudgment and an inability to recognize the scope of the evil confronting us, we failed to do our part to help save the people of Srebrenica from the Serb campaign of mass murder... No one laments more than we the failure of the international community to take decisive action to halt the suffering and end a war that had produced so many victims,”[61]

By this report Annan tried to explain the background of the genocide and conflicts and the purpose of Britain, United States and other European states in the establishment of security in Bosnia.[62]

The report also noted that:

- there is no credible evidence to support charges that the Bosniaks provoked the Serbs attack by attacking out of the safe area;



- Serb forces acknowledged that the Srebrenica forces posed no significant military threat to them;
- UNPROFOR was able to mitigate some of the suffering inflicted by the war;
- there was an “ endemic weakness” of poor intelligence-sharing both within the peacekeeping mission and between the mission and UN member states;
- negotiations with Bosnian Serb General Ratko Mladic at various times during the war amounted to appeasement.[63]

In responding to the General Assembly’s request, the secretary general decided that the report should not be an operational one narrating tactical events, but should examine the entire role of the UN peacekeeping mission in the Bosnian war, the UN official said, adding that Annan believes the report should serve not only as a critical and honest examination of the responsibility of the entire international community but as a lesson to prevent any such calamity from recurring under the eyes of the United Nations.