



Cato Institute Foreign Policy Briefing No. 34: Killing with Kindness: The UN Peacekeeping Mission in Bosnia

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Executive Summary

The recent onset of clashes between UN and Serb forces in Bosnia is the latest evidence that the UN-led intervention in the former Yugoslavia is fundamentally flawed. That operation prolongs the fighting and suffering instead of contributing to a secure environment in which the local parties might negotiate a lasting peace settlement. The UN intervention has imposed an artificial life-support system on a Balkan society bent on continuing to fight. The "middle way" between traditional passive peacekeeping and large-scale coercive intervention has left all the local parties with greater incentives to continue the conflict than to negotiate a settlement.

That situation exposes the many weaknesses of international humanitarian intervention in violent intrastate struggles. Rather than prolong a policy that seems destined to fail, the United States should advocate the termination of the UN operation and urge the European countries, which have the most at stake, to take measures to contain the Yugoslavian conflict.

Introduction

The UN operation in the former Yugoslavia was undertaken to assuage Western consciences about the barbarity taking place in a "European" war. The international community, under the aegis of a UN peacekeeping mission, has conducted a series of "may-work" and supposedly low-risk initiatives centered around a humanitarian intervention. That middle way is certainly more than doing nothing, yet it is profoundly short of the prolonged and expensive military intervention that would undoubtedly be required to effectively suppress the fighting. As Lawrence Freedman, a professor at King's College in London, has pointed out, the middle alternative has "turned out to be a collection of half-measures that left unbridgeable gaps between the ends proclaimed and the means adopted."^[1] In other words, the strategy of the intervention--the relationship between ends and means--is inherently flawed.

Peacekeeping Assumptions

The purpose of a UN peacekeeping force is to sustain and support a stable environment conducive to peace negotiations and a lasting settlement. That goal presupposes that such an environment exists, at least in the form of an observed cease-fire, and some willingness to negotiate on the part of the belligerents. The relationship between the peacekeepers and the resolution of the conflict is indirect and oblique. The peacekeepers do not "create" or "cause" conflict resolution, they merely help belligerents to contribute to a more stable political and military environment that could conceivably lead to conflict resolution. The United Nations has written that the purpose of its military intervention in the former Yugoslavia is to

control the conflict, fostering a climate in which negotiations between parties could be promoted, preventing the resumption or escalation of conflict, providing a breathing-space for the continued efforts of the peacemakers and supporting the provision of essential humanitarian assistance.[2]

UN officials hope that the passive military efforts of the peacekeepers will indirectly contribute to "fostering" such a climate. The power to directly "create" that climate lies, of course, with the local belligerents. In short, peacekeeping is a technique designed to help those who wish to help themselves.

Consequently, the chief operational imperative of UN peacekeeping missions has always been that the consent and cooperation of the belligerents are the key to success. As the United Nations itself has maintained throughout its existence, peacekeeping's "effectiveness depends on voluntary cooperation." [3] In extraordinary circumstances, when one powerful and threatening belligerent party can be identified, the United Nations may authorize the use of force to compel that belligerent to accept a solution and impose a peace on the region. But that is not peacekeeping; it is known in the UN lexicon as peace enforcement. That is an important distinction that has become dangerously blurred in recent years.

Blending Peacekeeping and Peace Enforcement: An Unhappy Mix

The heady optimism after the end of the Cold War and the military success of the Persian Gulf War prompted the United Nations to propose a more robust and muscular form of peacekeeping. In *An Agenda for Peace*, UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali proposed a departure from traditional peacekeeping operations, which used modest numbers of armed forces and employed passive military operations to sustain an existing peace agreement. The "peace-enforcement" units proposed by Boutros-Ghali would be more heavily armed than traditional peacekeepers and able to use active military force to compel belligerents to accept a stable and peaceful environment.[4]

The UN operation in the former Yugoslavia has been the first test of that new kind of operation. Specifically, the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia-Herzegovina has sought to find a middle way between traditional peacekeeping missions that "sustain" a peaceful environment and large-scale enforcement operations that use active military force to "create" such an environment. The middle way has proved elusive, however, and in January 1995 the secretary general retreated from *An Agenda for Peace* and stated,

The UN operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina . . . [was] given additional mandates which required the use of force. These were incompatible with existing mandates requiring consent of the parties, impartiality, and the non-use of force. The resultant combination was inherently contradictory. It jeopardized the safety and success of the peacekeeping mission.[5]

What the secretary general did not recognize is that, along with the strategic incoherence of those operations, the effort to pump vast amounts of humanitarian aid into the former Yugoslavia and to use UN forces to keep a lid on tensions in the region has backfired. The middle way forced on the United Nations by a hesitant international community has contributed to the problem, rather than helped to foster a solution.

As a compromise between the ideal and the reality, the United Nations launched a limited intervention that emphasizes the provision of humanitarian aid. "Limited" is a relative term, however. UNPROFOR is by far the biggest and most expensive UN "peacekeeping" operation of all time. In addition, "mission creep" has plagued the operation, and the UN forces, by virtue of their being in Bosnia to "do something," have gradually acquired additional missions such as the protection of "safe areas" and the enforcement of heavy weapons exclusion zones. Those missions require a heavily armed and armored force with naval and combat air support, yet the overall purpose of the UN operation is still to play a passive and impartial supporting role to foster a negotiated peace. There is, at the very least, a severe tension between those two objectives.

The most serious flaw in the strategy is that the enormous military, civil, and humanitarian effort is not coherently tied to any policy that would convince the belligerents that they have more to gain by negotiating than by fighting. The United Nations itself recognized that it was dangerous to deploy a peacekeeping force without the political prerequisites of success, such as a previously concluded settlement and the consent and cooperation of the belligerents. Nevertheless, the Security Council thought that the force "could be an interim arrangement to create the conditions of

peace and security required for the negotiation of an overall settlement of the Yugoslav crisis." [6] The danger in that language is the mandate to "create" conditions, a task that has historically been successfully undertaken only by expensive collective coercive military action in Korea (1950-53), some parts of the Congo operation (1960-64), and the Gulf War (1990-91).

UNPROFOR is not supposed to be a coercive mission, although NATO airpower has been used for limited enforcement actions. [7] The key operational imperative of the mission is still the willing consent and cooperation of the belligerents. [8] However, there are no incentives for the belligerents to cooperate, and the UN intervention has produced an operational environment in which it is easier for the local factions to go on fighting and forget about negotiating for peace. The UN mission is hopelessly mired. There is no peace to sustain, there is no will on the part of the leading UN member states to incur the enormous costs in blood and treasure of imposing peace through force, and the middle way perversely encourages the belligerents to continue fighting.

The option of ending the UN intervention deserves to be fully explored, no matter how morally repugnant it might seem to European and American advocates of intervention. It may well be that nonintervention would have resulted in a more sustainable political solution to the Balkans conflict.

Prolonging the Balkan Wars

Intervention in the Balkans under the auspices of the United Nations is an enormous enterprise and one in which America is heavily involved. The principal function of the intervention is to protect vast quantities of humanitarian aid--principally for the citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina. By May 1994 that effort involved over 33,000 UN military troops, 600 UN military observers, 3,000 UN civilian administrators and staff, and hundreds of humanitarian organizations. [9] The U.S. commitment includes 600 ground troops in Macedonia, the bulk of the air forces and command infrastructure to enforce the no-fly zone over Bosnia, and a substantial portion of the logistics effort to deliver aid (not to mention 30 percent of the \$2 billion annual cost). [10]

That well-intentioned international effort keeps Bosnian society functioning at a level that is just tolerable enough to keep any of the belligerents from negotiating seriously for peace. Freed from the need to keep the basic infrastructure of Bosnia in operation and under no significant political pressure to bargain with their adversaries, the warring factions all feel they have at least as much to gain by continued fighting as by negotiation.

A British brigadier general, having recently served in the UN force in Bosnia, admitted that the UN intervention has prolonged the ability of all sides to continue fighting. [11] Washington Post reporter John Pomfret also recognized that perverse side effect as early as November 1993.

Roads improved by the UN to ease access for food and medical convoys will also make it easier for the three Bosnian factions to move troops and guns. Much of the UN aid, meant for women and children, will end up in the stomachs of gunmen. Fuel for hospitals and power stations will be siphoned into military vehicles. UN provisions will bolster the flimsy economies of all three factions. UN aid is for sale in any town in Bosnia. If such supplies did not exist, many Western officials here say, pressure could mount for the three sides to sue for peace. [12]

The three factions--Muslims, Serbs, and Croats--have become adept at manipulating the United Nations to advance their war aims. As an example, in October 1993 a Swedish battalion was forced to deliver 10,000 gallons of vehicle fuel to Serb forces in order to enter the safe area of Tuzla. The irony of the episode is that the Swedes were sent to protect Muslim-held Tuzla from the now refueled Serbian armored forces in the area. [13]

That UNPROFOR cannot avoid being manipulated is a result of deploying peacekeepers in an unsuitable political environment. The rules of engagement for UNPROFOR, which reflect the ill-conceived attempt to mix the principles of peacekeeping with limited enforcement measures, are so ineffectual and confusing that they were printed verbatim in *Orbis* under the title "UN Theater of the Absurd." [14] For example, even as the United Nations has authorized the active use of airpower to enforce the no-fly zone over Bosnia and target threatening forces on the ground, the exposed and vulnerable UN ground troops have been restricted to the defensive use of force in an attempt to maintain their impartial standing and protect their mission.

That improbable mix has not worked, as evidenced by the events of May 1995. On May 26 the United Nations twice bombed a Bosnian Serb ammunitions dump after the Serbs ignored UN ultimatums to abandon certain heavy weapons in the Sarajevo exclusion zone. The Serbs retaliated by taking hostage hundreds of poorly armed UN peacekeepers, some of whom were then chained to key military targets as human shields against further air strikes. The Serbs made clear that they no longer viewed the UN forces as impartial peacekeepers and accused UNPROFOR of "flagrant interference in the conflict" and "siding with one party"; they also declared all UN and NATO resolutions null and void.[15] The United Nations, for its part, accused the Serbs of "terrorist" acts and barely bothered to feign impartiality. Yet the international community still did not "have the guts to admit that this is a failure and get out," as a senior UN officer reportedly said in 1993.[16]

War weariness, crushing economic hardship, and conclusive battlefield defeats are admittedly brutal. But throughout history they have been the factors that have compelled warring opponents to sue for peace. Entrenched belligerents will not stop fighting until peace presents a better option for their people than war. Ironically and tragically, the UN intervention has postponed and diluted the suffering and hardship, which historically have been the basic incentives for most peace settlements in the Balkans and elsewhere. There is no doubt that unfettered fighting in the Balkans would be sharp and traumatic, but the middle way of the UN humanitarian intervention has prolonged the fighting, albeit at a less intensive level. The question that policymakers must ask themselves is whether the decision to avoid the short-term trauma of unrestricted warfare has increased the sum total of the war casualties over the long run.

Compounding the irony of the humanitarian intervention's prolonging the war in the Balkans is the lack of a comprehensive overall strategy for the UN effort--a strategy that ties the military means being exercised to the political goals of the Security Council. The root cause of that omission is the unwillingness of the major UN powers, because of the costs involved, to address the fundamental political causes of the conflict. Instead, the low-risk, may-work option of humanitarian intervention leaves the United Nations, in the words of Harvard University professor Stanley Hoffmann, "doomed to playing Sisyphus. . . . If the political causes are not removed, victims remain in danger and the intervention will risk, at best, being no more than a Band-Aid, and at worst, becoming part of the problem." [17] Peacekeeping expert Mats Berdal has also recognized that danger and written that "when humanitarian operations serve as a substitute for dealing with the root cause of conflict or as compensation for diplomatic failures, formulation of realizable military objectives becomes extremely difficult." [18]

So what is the UN strategy for formulating realizable and sustainable military objectives in the former Yugoslavia? What are its 33,000 peacekeepers doing beyond the humanitarian mission? The simple answer, which discredits the Security Council but not the peacekeepers themselves, is everything and nothing. In more than 60 resolutions passed since the conflict began, the Security Council has enlarged or expanded the mandate of UNPROFOR over a dozen times.[19] Those resolutions have become increasingly disconnected from the situation on the ground and the military resources of UNPROFOR. The UN commanders in the field have reportedly quipped that they do not even bother reading the strategic directives from New York anymore.

The military missions--supervising protected areas, "pink areas," safe areas, and exclusion zones; protecting aid convoys; monitoring borders; and more--are all performed by an UNPROFOR with insufficient resources in an atmosphere of ad hoc crisis management. Neither the United Nations, the five-nation Contact Group (Britain, France, Germany, Russia, and the United States), nor the European Union has established a comprehensive and coordinated political process that the operations on the ground accompany and complement. Clearly, the belligerents are aware of the "finger-in-the-dike" nature of the measures taken by the United Nations and have factored it into their war plans. The warring parties have every incentive to look for ways to manipulate the blue-bereted, white-vehicled troops.

The UNPROFOR forces are left to hope for the best and ride their luck while hoping that the belligerents work out some balance of incentives among themselves to make peace.[20] But what incentives are there to come to the negotiating table? Quite simply, none. As William Durch of the Henry Stimson Center has written, "Openness to a settlement may stem from stalemate on the battlefield or from the mutual exhaustion of the local parties, which leads them to look more favorably at alternatives to fighting." [21] The political, diplomatic, military, and humanitarian efforts of the UN intervention have not yet, after three years, provided such alternatives to the local parties in the Balkans. In fact, the intervention has kept natural incentives from surfacing while it has failed to provide any of its own.

The UN's Uninspiring Record of Intervention in Intrastate Conflicts

The UN record of interventions in multifaction, intrastate conflicts is not good. For example, the United Nations has maintained an average of 6,000 peacekeepers in southern Lebanon since 1978 to restore peace and security to the area before turning it over to Lebanese authorities. Seventeen years, 200 peacekeeper deaths, and billions of dollars later, the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) is no closer to that goal than it was in March 1978.[22] The UN force was neither structured nor intended to force a peaceable solution. As noted earlier, peacekeeping doctrine dictates that the responsibility for a political solution rests principally with the belligerents. Even when it becomes painfully obvious that a solution is not forthcoming, however, there is typically no exit strategy for UN forces.

UN interventions tend to gather irresistible momentum. If a mission cannot succeed in its original mandate because of the noncooperation of the local actors, new reasons are sought to justify the intervention. In Lebanon, as in Bosnia, the UN force is now principally kept in place to administer humanitarian aid--a mission it was not meant to perform but gradually assumed throughout the 1980s. Now supporters of the Lebanon operation argue that the UN force cannot be withdrawn because it has "been sucked into the economic and political fabric of the wider society in which it operates and of which it has become an integral part." [23] UNIFIL injects \$45 million into southern Lebanon annually, and its supporters argue that its withdrawal would cause economic collapse and heightened conflict. UNIFIL is now part of the problem, not part of the solution.

In late 1993 and 1994 the United Nations (belatedly) realized that it was in a similar situation in Somalia. With none of the Somali factions seriously interested in making a political accommodation and rebuilding their ruined society, the Security Council finally made the decision to withdraw all UN forces. After sustaining hundreds of casualties and devoting billions of dollars to an inconclusive intervention in a multifaction conflict, the United Nations was finally fed up.

UN military interventions have two basic goals. The first is to limit armed conflict. Although that goal involves the use of military personnel, it is not attained through compulsion or coercion. The belligerents make the initial decision to limit the armed conflict, and the United Nations helps them decide on the methods of policing the peace agreement and the passive role that UN forces will play in that effort. If the essential political conditions for a peace agreement and the cooperation of belligerents do not exist, a passive UN military operation is ineffectual.

The second broad goal is promoting conflict resolution. That objective is heavily dependent on having a secure and stable environment in which armed conflict has been limited. The goal of conflict resolution is reached through a combination of economic, diplomatic, humanitarian, and political endeavors. As we have seen in Kashmir, Cyprus, and the Golan Heights, the achievement of the first goal does not necessarily lead to achievement of the second. Those missions, in their 46th, 31st, and 21st years, respectively, have been politically inconclusive. The belligerents prefer the indeterminate but stable status quo to meaningful negotiations.

In Somalia, Lebanon, and the Balkans, however, the status quo entails continued fighting to make and consolidate political gains. As Freedman noted, in Bosnia "the core problem [remains] what it [has] been for almost three years: how to persuade the Serbs to relinquish sufficient territory for the Bosnian government to concoct a viable state with honor served." [24] The operational characteristics of the UN effort, military and otherwise, do not seem coherently linked with that goal and the current situation. A UN mission can sustain peace when the parties are willing, or it can impose peace when the political will of major UN member states to sacrifice is great. What can be achieved by the middle way is nothing at best and something akin to the situation in the Balkans at worst.

The U.S. Recoil from Massive Intervention

The nature of U.S. foreign policy, shaped by the media and a preoccupation with aggressively promoting "values," serves to unduly limit debate on America's policy options in such complex situations as the conflict in the Balkans. In the case of Bosnia, policy options cover a bewilderingly wide spectrum, ranging from full-scale multilateral military intervention to ignoring the problem. Interventionists who cite the alleged moral imperative for decisive action have had three years in which to make their case, but many have finally absorbed enough of the practical complexities and costs of a Balkan entanglement to retreat from their calls for a U.S.-led armed intervention.

In 1992 the Washington Post insisted that America had a "moral imperative" to stop the fighting; in early 1993 the New York Times began to call for debate about what could be accomplished with an American intervention force.[25] By late 1993 the Times seemed to have already decided the debate for itself and called on Clinton to "avoid a Bosnian quagmire." [26] The analyses of knowledgeable professionals like Gens. Colin Powell and John Shalikashvili have apparently induced some badly needed caution. The bottom line with a military intervention is that the forces must have objectives that are clearly defined, achievable, sustainable, and decisive enough to stand as politically important on their own. An intervention must also attract widespread domestic support, which would certainly prove difficult in the former Yugoslavia, given the high-cost, low-return nature of such a mission.[27]

Despite the retreat of some early interventionists, the debate about intervention goes on and now largely consists of quibbling about just how much force short of an American ground troop deployment can be used. The chief proponents of coercion are fascinated by airpower, which, as Eliot Cohen, coauthor of the major study on airpower in the gulf war has written, "is an unusually seductive form of military strength because, like modern courtship, it appears to offer gratification without commitment." [28] Cohen goes on to highlight the turnabout of liberal columnists, such as Anthony Lewis, who denigrated the effectiveness of surgical strikes in Operation Desert Storm but now insist that the same aircraft and missiles could have stopped Serbian aggression in the Balkans.

President Clinton's foreign policy team has ignored the case for no intervention at all. Indeed, any ideas along that line have not even been given short shrift because they are considered morally irresponsible and ethically bankrupt. The case for nonintervention may not seem inspiring, lofty, or noble, yet it is a solidly practical policy option that deserves a more thorough examination than it has been given by the administration's foreign policy team and analysts outside government.

Two points, one of which is somewhat understood and one of which is not, are paramount in the dynamics of the situation in the former Yugoslavia. The costs of a full-scale military intervention are somewhat understood, at least by the American public. It appeared for a time that Clinton also understood those costs, as administration officials long maintained that U.S. troops would not be sent to Bosnia except to enforce a peace agreement or to assist in the evacuation of UN peacekeepers. But Clinton reversed that policy after the Bosnian Serbs seized UN troops as hostages in late May 1995; he offered U.S. troops to assist in the "redeployment" of UN forces, despite strong opposition from Congress and the American public.[29] What is even less understood than the danger of intervention is that the more limited measures Clinton has pursued all along--in an attempt to show that the administration is "doing something"--are actually contributing to the intractability of the Yugoslavian conflict.

Recognizing the Prerogatives of Power

As Henry Kissinger has recently noted, much of America's foreign policy calculus, both in the past and today, is not a rational calculus at all but a reflection of altruistic values.[30] The Clinton administration has essentially sought to inject its concept of values into the definition of America's foreign policy responsibilities as a great power. The policy implication of a values-oriented strategy is that America must now take responsibility for those in the international community who do not wish to take responsibility for themselves. That classic pillar of Wilsonian thought holds America hostage to an age-old syllogism: "something must be done, this is something, therefore we must do it." It is an inherently interventionist philosophy.

In the Balkans that bias has meant that the policy option of nonintervention has been virtually ignored. The Clinton administration, to its credit, has never advocated massive intervention approaching the scale of the gulf war. It has, however, been preoccupied with reassuring Americans and Europeans alike that the United States remains engaged in Europe.[31] U.S. actions in support of limited operations in Bosnia are designed more to assuage public conscience and satisfy the "CNN factor" than to have a conclusive impact on the conflict. Any options that move in the direction of closing the intervention down are dismissed out of hand as morally irresponsible.

The evidence suggests that the tentative UN-led intervention in the Balkans is probably the morally irresponsible course. As excruciating as it might be to passively witness the humanitarian tragedy of the Bosnian war, the international community's insistence on meddling to ease the global conscience has resulted in more, not less, suffering for the Bosnian people. There is rarely a painless way to end a conflict between factions that are intent on fighting; the

question is whether one feels better about paying less up- front or taking more tragedy in installments.

Although the UN-NATO intervention may have inhibited some fierce fighting and the attendant bloodletting in the immediate term, the prolonged, albeit less intense, war may prove to be the greater tragedy. The UN operation has essentially placed Bosnia-Herzegovina on a life-support system that may save lives in the short term but that also enables the fighting to continue year after year. So while U.S. support for the UN mission in Bosnia may have made Clinton administration officials more comfortable morally, the Bosnians will probably pay dearly in the long term for Washington's self-satisfaction.

Intervention is not necessarily a more powerful expression of leadership than is nonintervention. America believes it understands the responsibilities of being a great power; it must also learn to exercise the prerogatives of a great power. A great power reserves the right both to act and to not act. Some observers say that America loses credibility if it refuses any international challenge to the rule of law and world order. The prerogatives of power dictate the opposite-- a great power is exactly that because it alone has the prerogative to decide where and when it becomes involved in international crises.[32] And, as a great power, it needs to distinguish between crises that are important and those that are marginal and should be treated as such. The situation in the Balkans falls into the latter category.

Intervention in Bosnia, then, is no more evidence of American leadership than it is morally superior to nonintervention. An administration that will not debate or consider the advantages of closing down a well-intentioned but deeply flawed UN effort in the Balkans has failed both morally and in the exercise of leadership.

Conclusion: Ending the Bosnian Intervention

The political and strategic incoherence of the Bosnian intervention is manifested on two levels. First, there is the question of engaging in a limited and modest political- military activity, "peacekeeping," in an environment unsuited for such an exercise. Soon after the UN troops were deployed to the Balkans in 1992, far in advance of a comprehensive policy about how they would contribute to reconciliation as part of a diplomatic master plan, it was obvious that the international community was hoping aspirin would cure a traumatic head wound. An attempt has been made to limit the inappropriate application of peacekeeping by authorizing more robust enforcement measures from the air, but that has merely amounted to a Band-Aid to go with the aspirin. On a second level, the humanitarian intervention that has become the *raison d'être* of the entire huge military effort has backfired and prolonged the war and the suffering of the Bosnians.

What should U.S. policy be, after three years of supporting a flawed intervention in the Balkans and getting our fingers burned in Somalia at the same time? The obvious answer is to look for an exit strategy, a piece of policy planning that has been absent in UN interventions in multi- faction, intrastate conflicts (witness UNIFIL in Lebanon). Unfortunately, three years of support for the Balkan intervention has left the United States with three unpalatable options: cut and run, reinforce and fight, or struggle on in ignominious ineffectiveness along with the rest of the international community. The hindsight proffered recently with the publication of Robert McNamara's Vietnam memoirs would indicate that the option of disengagement would be the most advisable.

The Clinton administration should adopt a combination of diplomatic muscle, which leans on our European allies as much as the belligerents, and a phased unilateral disengagement from the Balkan intervention. The diplomatic effort should urge the Europeans to pursue policies aimed at containing the conflict in the strategic sense--preventing it from spreading outside the former Yugoslavia. There is, unfortunately, no guarantee that the Europeans will take Washington's advice on that point. Nonetheless, containing the conflict is clearly in the interest of the European powers, and if they elect not to pursue that aim, it is European, not American, interests that may be at risk.[33] The Clinton administration should make it clear that, while the United States is committed to multilateral consultation and diplomatic initiatives, Washington will not squander resources on risky policies that seek to address problems of only marginal strategic interest to America.

The administration should also work through the Security Council to lift the arms embargo and terminate the UN humanitarian operation in Bosnia. Although it is an open secret that the United States no longer actively enforces the arms embargo, the Clinton administration has retreated from its earlier policy of trying to officially lift the ban. Washington should instead make clear that it no longer intends to observe the prejudiced and ineffectual embargo and

urge the European powers to follow suit. The way the embargo has been implemented is a sham. It has become an ineffective and cowardly policy option that reflects the unwillingness of the international community to make tough choices instead of following policies that offer appealing sound bites on Sunday morning talk shows.

It is perhaps even more important that the United States take advantage of its status as a permanent member of the UN Security Council to terminate the UN intervention in Bosnia. The Security Council, prompted by the need to "do something" about the war, authorized a UN intervention that is toothless but cruel. Perhaps the Security Council feels ennobled by passing an avalanche of resolutions, many of which the member governments know are completely unenforceable by the troops on the ground or in the air, but such posturing is costly both economically and morally. It is a luxury the United States can ill afford.

The United States must recognize the tragic irony of the flawed UN operation in Bosnia. Disengagement may not provide the American or the international community with the false comfort that intervention affords. But prolonging the conflict in the name of humanitarianism is likely to doom Bosnians to longer term pain. A sustainable reconciliation in the Balkans cannot be engineered by the international community. Only a policy of disengagement that shifts responsibility back onto the belligerents carries the hope of eventual peace in that beleaguered region.

Notes

[1] Lawrence Freedman, "Why the West Failed," *Foreign Policy* 97 (Winter 1994-95): 54.

[2] UN Department of Public Information, "The United Nations and the Situation in the Former Yugoslavia," New York, March 15, 1994, p. 12.

[3] UN Department of Public Information, *The Blue Helmets, A Review of UN Peace-keeping* (New York, United Nations 1990), p. xix.

[4] Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace* (New York: UN Department of Public Information, 1992), p. 26.

[5] Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "The Role of the United Nations in Peace and Security--What to Expect from Germany," address to chief editors and high-level officials at a conference on "Germany and International Security," Federal College for Security Policy Studies, Bad Godesberg, Germany, January 19, 1995, UN Information Center, SG/SM/5526, Washington.

[6] UN Department of Public Information, *Peacekeeping Notes Update*, May 1994, p. 56.

[7] Even this sort of enforcement is extremely limited, however. In the first 710 days of Operation Deny Flight, NATO air forces supporting UNPROFOR used active force only eight times against air and ground targets. During the same period combat aircraft flew more than 36,500 sorties over the former Yugoslavia. U.S. Air Force Europe South, "Operation Deny Flight Update," March 22, 1995.

[8] The former deputy commander of UNPROFOR, Maj. Gen. J. A. MacInnis of Canada, recently told a conference in Germany that, despite the presence of NATO air forces and the Security Council mandates to use limited enforcement on the ground and in the air, "UNPROFOR is not involved in the forceful imposition of peace nor in so-called peace enforcement. It is a peacekeeping force mandated for humanitarian purposes operating amidst ongoing conflicts. Apart from some increases in size, it remains configured, equipped, and mandated for peacekeeping." Presentation to a conference, "The Application of the Law of War Rules and Principles in Armed Conflict," Garmish, Germany, December 5-7, 1994.

[9] UN Department of Public Information, *Peacekeeping Notes Update*, May 1994, p. 55.

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 84; and "Financing the United Nations," UNA- USA Factsheet (New York: United Nations Association of the USA, 1993).

[11] Confidential interview with the author, October 1994.

[12] John Pomfret, "UN Dilemma: Relieving Bosnian Suffering Prolongs the War," Washington Post, reprinted in International Herald Tribune, November 25, 1993.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Bruce D. Berkowitz, "UN Theater of the Absurd: Rules of Engagement for UN Peacekeeping Forces in Bosnia," Orbis (Fall 1994): 635-45.

[15] Quoted in Roger Cohen, "U.S. Set to Offer Aid to Reinforce U.N. Bosnia Troops," New York Times, May 31, 1995, p. A1.

[16] Quoted in Pomfret.

[17] Stanley Hoffmann, "Out of the Cold: Humanitarian Intervention in the 1990's," Harvard International Review 16, no. 1 (Fall 1993): 9.

[18] Mats Berdal, "Peacekeeping in Europe," in European Security after the Cold War, Adelphi Paper 284 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, January 1994).

[19] See, for example, Security Council Resolutions 758, 761, 762, 769, 770, 776, 779, 786, 795, 816, 819, 824, 836, and 908.

[20] "Hope" as an operational method is repeatedly mentioned in UN documents, a fact that reflects that peacekeeping is a technique that will help only those who wish to help themselves. UN forces of even the present size do not have the mandates or resources to create or shape an environment in which they are the prime determinant of success. "Luck" is also enshrined as an operational imperative in those missions, and Trevor Findlay, in his book about the UN operation in Cambodia, actually lists "serendipity" as a factor of success. Trevor Findlay, Cambodia: Legacy and Lessons of UNTAC (London: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 112.

[21] William Durch, The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping (London: Macmillan, 1993), pp. 21-22.

[22] UN Department of Public Information, Peacekeeping Notes Update, May 1994, p. 16.

[23] Marianne Heiberg, "Peacekeepers and Local Populations: Some Comments on UNIFIL," in The UN and Peacekeeping: Results, Limitations, and Prospects, ed. Indarjit Rikhye and Kjell Skjelsbaek (New York: St. Martin's, 1991), pp. 150-51.

[24] Freedman, p. 67.

[25] "US Troops to Bosnia," New York Times editorial, reprinted in International Herald Tribune, April 14, 1993.

[26] "Avoid a Bosnian Quagmire," New York Times editorial, September 2, 1993.

[27] See Richard Haass, Intervention: The Use of American Military Force in the Post-Cold War World (Washington: Carnegie Endowment, 1994), chaps. 4 and 5.

[28] Eliot Cohen, "The Mystique of US Air Power," Foreign Affairs 73 (January-February 1994): 109.

[29] Ann Devroy and Rick Atkinson, "U.S. to Allow Ground Forces in Bosnia," Washington Post, May 31, 1995, p. A1.

[30] See Henry Kissinger, Diplomacy (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), especially chaps. 1 and 2.

[31] Clinton has, for instance, cited "a longstanding commitment to help our NATO allies" as justification for sending American forces to the region to assist an UNPROFOR redeployment. "Remarks by the President at U.S. Air Force

Academy Graduation Ceremony," May 31, 1995, transcript, p. 3.

[32] Henry Tizzard, an adviser to the British Ministry of Defense in the period following World War II, remarked that "a great power does not have to be a great power in the sense of feeling responsible for each and every event from Abkhazia to Zaire." Quoted in Jonathan Clarke, "Repeating British Mistakes," *National Interest* 39 (Spring 1995): 77.

[33] Fareed Zakaria of the Olin Institute has written that "forty years of calm--brought by bipolarity and nuclear weapons, not some advance in civilization--has deluded the Europeans into thinking they can get peace and stability without paying prices and bearing burdens. The US can best ensure the long-term security of Europe by making clear to the great powers of the Continent that they must once again return to the painful business of creating and maintaining peace." Fareed Zakaria, "Yugoslavia Is Europe's Business," *International Herald Tribune*, August 10, 1992.