

# Simulation II

## **BOSNIAN CONFLICT BACKGROUNDER**

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The focus of this exercise is the power-sharing arrangement drawn up at an internationally brokered peace agreement called the Dayton Peace Agreement of 1996. The Agreement was put into place to end a bloody ethnic war involving Bosnian Serbs, Muslims and Croats, which had killed about 250,000 people since 1992. It led to a power sharing arrangement that effectively partitioned Bosnia, setting up two Entities: a Muslim/Croat Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Bosnian Serb Republic, Republika Srpska, each with its own president, government, parliament, police and other bodies. Providing an overarching framework for both is a weak central Bosnian government and a three-member rotating presidency.

Dayton brought peace but it was, and remains, a controversial agreement, its critics arguing that it created de facto states along lines that reinforced separatism and nationalism at the expense of integration. Its defenders say it was the best chance of ending ethnic war; that it needed to be ambiguous about reintegration in order to bring parties diametrically opposed to each other on board, and that it does include significant provisions for reintegration. For instance, it enshrines the right of those displaced by the conflict to return home.

During the student workshop, student participants will be organized into groups and asked to participate in a simulation exercise that is set five years after Dayton, with the objective of exploring two broad issues relating to this agreement:

- *One, whether and how Dayton could have been different. Was creating de facto states and making ethnic power sharing central to all political and administrative arrangements the only chance for an end to war?*
- *Two, the challenges involved in stabilizing this peace process and making it work on the ground. Eg: Can ethnic cleansing genuinely be reversed? Can partition pave the way for long-term integration?*

Given below is a backgrounder on the conflict and the tortuous route to peacemaking that ended in Dayton. It also recaps the successes and failures of post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction up until end 2001, for when the simulation has been set. Along with this paper, which has two annexures, you will receive a note on the simulation exercise. All these should be read together.

### **Showcase of Multiculturalism Crumbles**

For Yugoslavia, the transition from communism to democracy in the 1980s and the 1990s was a particularly difficult one. This federation of six republics—Serbia, Croatia,

Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia—created in 1945 fragmented violently along religious fault lines, between Catholic and Orthodox Christians, and between Christians and Muslims.

A large part of the population was South Slav. But this is an umbrella category that contains groups separated by religious practice and language in a region associated for centuries with ethnic diversity, migration and the building and dismantling of empires. The main competing nationalisms at the end of the Cold War were:

**Serbian:** Predominantly Eastern Orthodox, spoke a dialect of Serbo-Croatian. In 1991, Serbs constituted 65.8 per cent of the population of Serbia, 12.2 per cent of Croatia's population, 9.3 per cent of Montenegro's and 31.4 per cent of Bosnia's.

**Croatian:** Predominantly Roman Catholic, they spoke a dialect of Serbo-Croatian. Croats constituted 78.1 per cent of the population of Croatia, and 17.3 per cent of the population of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

**Bosnian Muslim:** These were mostly South Slavs who converted to Islam under Ottoman rule; 43.7 of Bosnians were Muslims.

**Slovene:** Predominantly Roman Catholic, they had a distinct Slav language, quite different from the Serbo-Croat dialect spoken by many of the other Slav groups. They constituted nearly 90 per cent of the population in Slovenia, the most ethnically homogeneous of the republics.

**Albanians:** Mostly Muslim, with a Roman Catholic minority. Language: Albanian. There were 17.2 per cent in Serbia, 6.6 per cent in Montenegro and 21 per cent in Macedonia

Post World War II Yugoslavia was an attempt to create a multicultural space in which all these groups could coexist and live as one nation. The federal structure was designed to prevent Serb dominance—which had been a source of resentment in the first, short-lived Yugoslav state formed after World War I, fuelling Croat extremism and separatism. In the new structure, there were Serb minorities in every constituent of the federation. This showcase of multiculturalism began to crumble as Yugoslavia slipped into a five-year power vacuum following the death of Communist strongman, Marshal Tito. Policies of decentralisation that increasingly led republics to pursue national goals and a rapidly worsening economy accelerated the drive towards fragmentation. There is a popular view that the conflict was the inevitable outcome of suppressed 'ancient hatreds'; however, it has persuasively been argued that it was not inevitable but the outcome of specific political circumstances and nationalist narratives drew on selected stories from the past to make political points.

### **First Stirrings of Trouble**

The first stirrings of trouble came in the 1980s with a demand for republic status for Kosovo, declared an autonomous province in the country's 1974 constitution, by its majority Albanian population. The demand set off alarm bells in Serbia as well as in Macedonia, which had a large Albanian minority in districts bordering Albania and Kosovo.

Secondly, economic nationalism laced with racism came to dominate the political agenda in the relatively rich republics of Slovenia and Croatia, which felt they were subsidizing the poorer republics. They campaigned to decentralize executive authority, including over the economy. In ethnically homogenous Slovenia, the targets were a relatively small numbers of guest workers but in Croatia's case, they were Serbs, and later, the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Serbia reacted to Albanian minority nationalism, and Slovene and Croat economic nationalism, with suspicion and mounting aggression. Serbia's communist party president, Slobodan Milosevic, played the nationalist card, merging his party with the powerful Serbian trade unions to form the Serbian Democratic Party in the mid-1980s. By 1989 he had acquired enough authority to get the Serbian assembly to revoke the autonomy of Vojvodina, another autonomous province, and Kosovo, and declare a state of emergency in the latter.

These steps gave Milosevic effective control over four of the eight federal presidency votes, and heightened a rising sense of threat in Slovenia and Croatia, accelerating secessionist movements in the two republics.

### **Road to Secession**

Slovenia's secession was a relatively uncomplicated issue; not so the separation of Croatia, which threatened to create conflict for the large Serb minority there, a conflict likely to spill over into Bosnia-Herzegovina, with its three large communities of Muslims, Serbs and Croats (43.7 per cent, 31.4 per cent and 17.3 per cent respectively).

These possibilities sharpened chauvinism among majorities and minorities in the two republics, but especially in Croatia, where Milosevic began to covertly arm irredentist paramilitary groups in the Serb enclaves bordering Bosnia. In the 1990 elections, ethnic nationalists won in republican elections across the federation, with the exception of Macedonia. Serbia elected Milosevic's Serbian Democratic Party, and Croatia elected the ultra-nationalist Croatian Democratic Union, led by Franjo Tudjman.

In Bosnia, Serbs and Croats voted for regional branches of the Serbian Democratic Party and the Croatian Democratic Union, while most Muslims voted for the Muslim Party for Democratic Rights, led by Alija Izetbegovic. The three parties formed a coalition government under the presidency of Izetbegovic.

Though there were intensive negotiations to decentralize the Yugoslav federation, they were now led by the poorer multiethnic republics of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia,

and received little more than lip support from Slovenia and Croatia. Relations within the federation deteriorated, and in early 1991 the Slovene and Croatian assemblies called for secession from Yugoslavia. There were increasingly frequent clashes between Croatian armed police and Serbian police reservists and paramilitary.

In May 1991, Croatia held a referendum that resulted in an overwhelming vote for secession. The Croatian Serbs boycotted the referendum, and in a separate referendum, voted to be an autonomous region of the Yugoslav federation. Alarmed by the threat of war in Croatia and what such a war might spell for Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bosnian President Izetbegovic asked for the preventive deployment of UN peacekeepers, but was turned down. Bosnia was still a member of the Yugoslav federation and Yugoslavia would have to request peacekeeping troops.

Tensions began to mount in Bosnia. In a trigger reaction to the Croatian referendum, Bosnian Serb nationalists declared “Serb autonomous regions” in the Serb majority areas of northwestern and southeastern Bosnia. Weeks later, Croatian nationalists declared a “Croatian Community of Herceg-Bosna” in the Croatian majority areas of western Herzegovina and central Bosnia, and a “Croatian Community of the Bosnian Sava Valley” in the Croatian enclave in northern Bosnia.

### **Yugoslavia at War**

In June 1991, Slovenia and Croatia announced their independence and Yugoslavia went to war. Both these republics had small land forces and armed police, but little else. The problem was less acute for Slovenia—neither Milosevic nor the Yugoslav national army wished to prosecute a Slovene war and it ended ten days after it began, having gone no further than border skirmishes. But it was a very different picture in Croatia, where Serb rejection of Croatian independence led to an intense war. The Yugoslav army used bases inside Bosnia to bomb Croatian cities such as Dubrovnik, and the conflict spread rapidly south and east along Croatia’s border with Bosnia-Herzegovina, populated by Serbs on both sides. At the same time, conflict erupted on Croatia’s eastern border with Serbia, in the mixed Slavonian, Croat and Serb districts. Refugees began to flood Croatia’s western neighbors, Austria and Germany, and its eastern neighbors, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Serbia and Hungary.

### **Peace Conference for Yugoslavia**

In September 1991, the European Community set up a rolling peace conference for Yugoslavia. It asked a five member judicial commission draw up the conditions which each republic would have to satisfy for recognition as an independent state, chiefly on human rights and minority protection. Partly because the war was just beginning, and partly because Milosevic’s eyes were firmly fixed on Bosnia, the peace conference was able, at a meeting in The Hague in November, to wrest a cease-fire in Croatia.

Under pressure to act, both domestically and from its allies, the U.S. appointed Cyrus Vance as envoy to the peace conference under the aegis of the UN. A veteran diplomat,

Vance expanded the cease-fire agreement into a wider peace agreement. The agreement was to be implemented by the UN and it had three major elements:

- The separation of forces and deployment of UN peacekeeping troops.
- A time bound demilitarization of the warring region (now divided into four sectors and termed UN Protected Areas).
- Phased normalization pending negotiations over the area's political status.

The first US peacekeeping troops arrived in Krajina, in the Serbian-majority part of Croatia, in January 1992. But thousands had died, some 700,000 people had become refugees, and Croatia had suffered enormous physical damage. Croatia's nationalist government saw the peace agreement as breaching Croatia's sovereignty and potentially weakening its territorial integrity. This led to an unspoken refusal to cooperate with the UN and an unofficial blockade of the UN Protected Areas for the next few years.

### **Controversial Recognition**

After the Croatian cease-fire of September 1991, Austria and Germany stepped up pressure on the European Community to recognize Slovenia and Croatia, a step not favoured by the US, Britain, France and the bulk of western as well as central European countries. But the European Community, wanting to avoid showing a split in its ranks, recognized Slovenia and Croatia as sovereign states after the January 1992 peace agreement.

In Bosnia & Herzegovina, Germany's push for the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia was seen as a clear sign that the two republics would soon achieve independence. With the threat of a spillover of the Croatian conflict hanging over them, and in the hope that the secession of Bosnia might lead to the preventive deployment of peacekeepers, Bosnia's leaders applied to the European Community for recognition in December 1991. In January 1992, they were told that Bosnia would first have to hold a referendum under international supervision.

### **Carrington-Cutileiro Plan**

Just before the referendum took place, the European Community sponsored peace conference met in Lisbon in a last-ditch attempt to cobble together an agreement that would prevent a vote for independence from sparking conflict by providing a power-sharing formula.

Led by Lord Carrington of Britain and Ambassador Cutileiro of Portugal, the talks focused on the decentralization of power to clusters of Serb, Croat and Muslim cantons in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The plan proposed a weak central government with most administrative powers devolved to the district level. Bosnia & Herzegovina's districts would be classified as Muslim, Serbian or Croatian, even where no ethnic group was in the majority. Though the proposal included various provisions for the protection of minority rights within the ethnic districts, it was unpopular all around. Secular and human

rights' groups saw the Carrington-Cutileiro plan as increasing ethnic polarization in Bosnia's already fragile environment; it would, moreover, leave stranded minorities in dispersed ethnic enclaves.

As far as the nationalist groups were concerned, the plan did not go far enough in ethnic polarization: neither Muslims nor Serbs nor Croats would control contiguous districts, so all three were denied the option of partition.

Bosnia's Muslim-led government was unhappy with the Carrington-Cutileiro plan's focus on decentralization of powers, which would further weaken Bosnia's already weak central government. Eventually, both the government and the Serbian nationalists rejected the plan.

### **Civil War and Ethnic Cleansing in Bosnia**

The referendum in held in Bosnia in February 1992 resulted in an overwhelming vote in favor of independence, but Bosnian Serbs boycotted it. Within days of the referendum, war began. Bosnia Serbs laid siege to the capital, Sarajevo, and helped by the Yugoslav army, started to take land. Serb strategy, which remained constant through the four years of war that followed, was to create contiguous Serbian territories in a spreading arc from the northwest to the southeast of Bosnia by driving Muslims and Croats out, and widening the corridor linking northwestern and southeastern Serb-held territories.

By the end of spring 1992, Serbian forces had widened the east-west corridor, and set up "Bureaus for Population Exchange" all over northern Bosnia. Earlier, Muslims and Croats had been forced to flee at the barrel of a gun. Now they were forced to pay for their own ethnic cleansing. Refugees were packed into sealed trains and sent to Croatia's capital, Zagreb.

In the summer of 1992, Croatian paramilitary groups moved to create their own ethnic territories in the mixed Muslim-Croat regions of Bosnia & Herzegovina. With the aid of Croatian troops that had originally entered Bosnia in pursuit of the war in Croatia, they took control of Mostar city, and surrounding areas in western Herzegovina.

The Croatian nationalists dismissed Muslims from public office in areas under their control, and mounted roadblocks around Mostar to curtail Muslim movement both into and out of the city.

By autumn 1992, the war in Bosnia was being fought on two fronts: in the west between Croats and Muslims, and in the north and east between Serbs and Muslims. Facing superior weaponry on both sides, Bosnia's ragtag army could do little but hold small enclaves of territory.

A notable feature of the four-year war was its almost total absence of combat. In the rural areas, Serb and Croat forces simply swept through Muslim villages, killing or driving out their inhabitants and destroying their houses; the cities they put under siege and let their

artillery do the work. Mostar was partitioned into a Croatian west and a Muslim east, while the Serbs controlled a small chunk of Sarajevo. There were over a million refugees in Croatia, Serbia, Austria, Germany, and further afield; by early 1993, the figures had crossed two million.

### **Vance-Owen Peace Plan**

As Europe faced its biggest flow of refugees since World War II, the European Community sponsored peace conference made another attempt to find a formula to end the war. The “Vance-Owen Peace Plan”, presented in January 1993 by international mediators Cyrus Vance and David Owen, reworked the Carrington-Cutileiro plan, moving from decentralization at the level of districts to larger provincial units. It was, like its predecessor, intended to avoid partition by scattering the provinces so that Bosnia & Herzegovina could not be divided into three ethnic territories.

But the military arrangements that the Vance-Owen plan envisaged reinforced de facto partition by leaving paramilitary groups in territorial control. The Serbian paramilitary groups would continue to control Serbian held territories; and the Croatian paramilitary groups would continue to control Croatian held territories.

The plan proposed a loose federation of ten Serb, Croat and Muslim provinces. It offered the Serbs less territory than they controlled, severely reduced Muslim territories, and gave the Croats more territory than they had dreamed of. But it did not allow contiguous Serb territories, and it did provide for a central government, however weak, and in March the Bosnian government reluctantly accepted it.

However, as far as the Serbian leaders were concerned, the Vance-Owen Peace Plan demanded large territorial concessions at a time when the only remaining obstacles to their ambition to form a Greater Serbia were the eastern Muslim enclaves of Srebrenica, Zepa and Gorazde. If Serbs agreed to the plan, they would have to give up Greater Serbia. So instead of agreeing to the plan, Serbian forces moved to conquer the eastern enclaves, starting with Srebrenica. In March 1993, Serbian forces surrounded and blockaded Srebrenica, which slowly began to starve.

### **“Safe” Areas**

By early 1993, the humanitarian crisis in Bosnia & Herzegovina was terrifying. Over half its population was refugee, either inside or outside the country. The territory under Bosnian control was a smattering of isolated enclaves, none viable without the life support of international aid, which Serbian and Croat forces refused to let through.

UN troops (UNPROFOR), tasked with protecting aid delivery since 1992, were increasingly blocked. The victims of the international arms embargo on Yugoslavia were the very people the embargo had been designed to protect. Landlocked Bosnia could not acquire weapons, while its belligerent neighbors did so with impunity.

In April 1993, the UN Security Council adapted the “Safe Area” formula used in the Gulf War for Iraq’s Kurd areas, and declared Srebrenica a safe area. In May, the number of safe areas was expanded to include the other two eastern Muslim enclaves, Zepa and Gorazde, and the besieged cities of Sarajevo, Tuzla, and Bihac.

The safe areas were intended to ensure the uninterrupted flow of aid, through the withdrawal of Serbian forces and heavy weapons to a safe distance, and an expanded role for the UN protection forces. But in most instances Serbian paramilitary leaders used these conditions to maximize their own positions and the humanitarian crisis continued. International outrage over human rights abuses led the UN to establish a war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in May 1993.

### **Another Stab at Peace**

In the face of a brutal partition war, the EU negotiators, with U.S. and Russian assistance, tried a third rework of the ethnic power-sharing formula.

In May 1993, the U.S., Russia, Britain, France and Spain put forward a Joint Action Plan for a union of three republics, sealing off Bosnian borders, and extending UNPROFOR’s mandate to include the protection of Bosnia’s three eastern enclaves and the towns of Sarajevo, Bihac and Tuzla.

The Joint Action Plan was widely seen as harbinger of the next stage of talks, towards a three-way partition. Assuming tacit acceptance of their war aims, Serbian nationalists responded immediately with a map for the Serbian republic, which would comprise over 60% of Bosnia.

While Serbian and Croatian paramilitaries continued their offensives on Muslim held territory, EU negotiators were bargaining over the territory to be allocated to the three proposed republics. By late September, they reached agreement on the boundaries of the three republics, and that Sarajevo and Mostar would be placed under UN and EU administrations respectively.

The Serbian republic would comprise 53 % of Bosnia & Herzegovina, the Croatian republic 17 % and the Muslim republic 30 %. The allocation was not demographically proportionate but was supposed to conform to prewar landholdings (the mostly peasant Serbs farmed some 51 % of Bosnia).

As with the previous peace plans, Bosnia’s Muslims were the chief sufferers. The Muslim republic would be fragmented, with Bihac isolated in the northwest and the eastern enclaves connected only by a road. It would also be landlocked and dependent on the Serbian and Croatian republics for access to the sea, as well as access to its erstwhile neighbors, Serbia and Croatia.

The Muslim republic’s viability was questionable. More important still, so was its identity. Unlike the leading Serbian and Croatian political parties, the leading Muslim

political party that led the Bosnian government had striven for secularism, especially the separation of religion from state. It was not clear whether this secularism would hold after partition. The Bosnian parliament turned down the proposal and the war dragged on.

### **Two-Track US Policy**

1994 proved to be a turning point for Bosnia & Herzegovina, when the war between Croatian paramilitary groups and the Bosnian government was ended at U.S. initiative.

While publicly supporting European efforts for a settlement that seemed to be moving towards a three-way division of Bosnia, the U.S. had pursued a two-track policy from autumn 1993 by seeking to broker a separate Muslim-Croat peace, an effort to limit or control the partition process bilaterally. The U.S. also put pressure on Croatia to stop supporting the Croatian offensive in Bosnia and threatened sanctions against it. But Croatia continued to defy UN and U.S. demands to withdraw troops from Bosnia, and Croatian paramilitary groups were intent on seizing territory by force. But when pressure was combined with incentives – US support for Croatia’s applications to join European institutions, among other things --- Croatia acquiesced.

At the end of February 1994, four days of proximity talks in Washington yielded a “Framework Agreement for the Bosniac-Croat Federation” (The Washington Agreement). The Washington Agreement, as it was called, created a federation of two constituent nations, Croats and Muslims (now named “Bosniacs”). In return, Croatian paramilitary groups would cede control of the area they called “Herceg-Bosna” (Herzegovina), and the federation would have the right to confederate with Croatia.

Croatian paramilitary groups would merge with Bosnian army units, and the UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR), which had already undertaken humanitarian aid delivery in Bosnia, would help implement the creation of a unified territory and security force across the federation. Mostar would be placed under an EU administration for a two-year interim period. Refugees and displaced people would return to areas they had been driven from. The federation would have a weak central government with most administrative powers, including policing, devolved to the cantons (clusters of municipalities, with borders based on the previous administrative units, or communes, in Bosnia).

All executive and judicial posts would be shared between Muslims and Croats: if the president were Muslim, the vice-president would have to be Croat, and vice versa. The federation’s House of Peoples (akin to the Senate) would have equal numbers of Muslims and Croats, while the House of Representatives (akin to Congress) would be in proportion to the ethnic composition of the population. So would the cantonal legislatures, courts and police. Finally, Muslim or Croat majority cantons would be allowed to band into “Councils of Cantons.” Even the three Ombudsmen tasked with monitoring human rights across the federation, had to comprise a Bosniac, a Croat, and an “Other” (double speak for Serb, as Serb nationalists were yet to come to the negotiating table).

The agreement yielded mixed results. A cease-fire took hold across central Bosnia and UNPROFOR troops began to be moved to the Croatian-Muslim front lines. But Croatian paramilitary groups did not cede control to UNPROFOR — or to the EU administration in Mostar — and Croatian irregulars did not merge with Bosnian government forces.

There was little return of refugees to areas under Croatian nationalist control. And the ethnic provisions of the federal constitution had a severely negative impact on the Bosnian government. The moderates lost out in most of the governing bodies, while the nationalists gained in power.

The main, and by no means insignificant, achievements of the Washington Agreement were to end the Croatian-Bosnian war, and lift the siege of Sarajevo. At the same time, the Serbian-Bosnian war continued to escalate. Though Serbian nationalists were offered inducements to enter the federation on the same terms as Croatian nationalists had, they held out for a two-way partition of Bosnia. With Russian and Yugoslav backing (Milosevic had begun to withdraw support for the Croatian Serbs) former U.S. president Jimmy Carter persuaded the Serb forces to agree to a four-month cease-fire, but early in 1995, they renewed their offensive to establish a Serbian republic by force. By the end of June 1995, it was clear that any hopes that the Serbs would enter the federation on the same terms as the Croats were dead. Instead, the Framework Agreement began to be viewed as primarily an interim wartime arrangement to form a joint front against Serb forces until territorial divisions were agreed.

### **From Ceasefire to War**

In July 1995, Serb forces launched a final onslaught on the eastern enclaves, beginning with Srebrenica. Though NATO was committed to defend the Safe Areas, the UN Special Envoy could only order air strikes to the former Yugoslavia. While NATO and the UN debated whether or not to order air strikes, Srebrenica fell, and in late July Serb forces took Zepa. While Dutch peacekeepers stood helplessly by, Serbian forces separated Srebrenica's men from its women and led the former away to be massacred. It is estimated that 6,000 Muslims died in the massacre. Soon after, the International War Crimes Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, established in 1994, indicted Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic for the crimes committed in Srebrenica.

The terrible massacre that followed Srebrenica's fall underlined the UN's culpability and cast doubt on NATO's will to act. In late August, NATO launched sweeping air strikes that only briefly targeted Serb forces in the eastern enclaves; instead they destroyed the Serb forces' defense and communications systems, and provided air support to the joint Bosnian-Croatian offensive that began in mid-September.

Within a few days Bosnian and Croatian troops captured hundreds of square miles between Bihac and the rest of the Bosniac-Croat federation, and by the end of October the ratio of federation-controlled territories to Serb-controlled territories tallied pretty well with the 51:49 proposed under the union of three republics plan.

## The Dayton Agreement

Under concerted international pressure, Bosnian and Croatian forces agreed to halt their offensive, and the US and the UN pushed the three sides into a peace agreement at Dayton, Ohio, in November 1995 that finally brought Bosnia's war to an end. After spending the bulk of November at Dayton, Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian leaders agreed to a federal arrangement along the lines of the Washington Agreement, with an even weaker central government, and devolution at both national and local levels.

The Agreement was signed in Paris on 14 December 1995. But unlike the Washington Agreement, which devolved powers to cantons and municipalities, the Dayton Peace Agreement devolved powers to two territorial units — the federation and the Serbian entity — and thus tacitly accepted a two-way partition of Bosnia & Herzegovina.

### Main Actors at Dayton

- **Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic:** The man who, in the opinion of many, bore the heaviest responsibility for the war. He wanted an end to UN economic sanctions against his country, and that was a major bargaining chip in the negotiations. As head of the Serb delegation, he bargained and accepted the plan on behalf of the Bosnian Serbs.
- **Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic:** "This may not be a just peace, but it is more just than a continuation of war," Alija Izetbegovic said after the end of the negotiations.
- **Croatian President Franjo Tudjman:** He found himself in a powerful position, since he had the ability to prevent a Bosnian agreement and to threaten another war, which was his primary leverage over Milosevic. His leverage over Izetbegovic was that he could break up the Croat-Muslim federation, whose continued survival was essential for Dayton to work.
- **Richard Holbrooke, principal US negotiator:** Through bluff and false deadlines, Holbrooke and other US negotiators virtually bullied the three Balkan Presidents into an agreement to end the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

### Main Features of the Agreement

- Bosnia & Herzegovina would be one country, but with the Serbs having a separate republic comprising 49 % of the territory of Bosnia & Herzegovina. The country would consist of two "Entities," the Bosniac-Croat Federation and the Republika Srpska (the Serb entity) and inter-entity borders would be open.
- Instead of a single president or Prime Minister, there would be a three-member presidency of a Bosniac, a Croat and a Serb, and a centre with limited responsibilities: ie, foreign or inter-entity affairs.
- Each entity would have its own parliament, army, police force and law courts. It would also have the right to enter into parallel relationships with the neighboring

states of Croatia and Yugoslavia, and to make agreements with them and with international organizations.

- Bosnia & Herzegovina would have a central parliamentary assembly made up of the House of Peoples and House of Representatives. The former would comprise equal numbers of Muslims, Croats and Serbs, and the latter would have two-thirds of its members elected by the Bosniac-Croat Federation and one-third by the Serbian entity.
- Sarajevo would be reunited under Bosnian administration and Mostar would continue under EU administration. Brcko, a link town between western and eastern Bosnian Serb territories, would be placed under international arbitration.
- Armed groups would be disarmed, peacetime transition would be overseen by a UN-EU High Representative for Bosnia&Herzegovina, elections would be overseen the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).
- UNHCR would supervise the return of refugees and war crimes would be prosecuted. NATO would send a 60,000 strong force to keep the peace, and work with the International Tribunal on war crimes to arrest the men it indicted. The European Court for Human Rights would supervise the creation of a Constitutional Court, comprising 2 Muslims, 2 Croats, 2 Serbs and three foreigners. The IMF would appoint the governor of the central bank, and the IMF, World Bank and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) would supervise reconstruction work. The UN would supervise policing, including the creation of a multiethnic police force.
- The two Entities would enter into cooperative economic projects and shared energy use.
- The OSCE would oversee arrangements for arms control and military balance, between the Entities and at the regional level.

#### **Facts about Bosnia-Herzegovina**

- **Population:** 4.2 million (UN, 2005)
- **Capital:** Sarajevo
- **Area:** 51,129 sq km (19,741 sq miles)
- **Major languages:** Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian
- **Major religions:** Catholic, Orthodox Christianity, Islam
- **Life expectancy:** 71 years (men), 77 years (women) (UN)
- **GNI per capita:** US \$1,540 (World Bank, 2003)

### **Post-Dayton 1996–2001**

#### **IFOR to SFOR: A Fragile Peace**

Two days after the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed in Paris on 14 December 1995, NATO launched the largest military operation ever undertaken by the alliance, Operation Joint Endeavor.

A 60,000 strong NATO-led multinational Implementation Force (IFOR), started its mission on 20 December 1995 with a one-year mandate to end hostilities, separate the Federation and Serbian forces, transfer control over remaining pockets of Federation or Serbian held territory to their respective Entities, and secure heavy weapons.

IFOR accomplished these tasks by the end of June 1996, and also opened roads, repaired bridges, freed up Sarajevo airport and key railway lines, and provided security for the September 1996 and subsequent elections.

But IFOR was less successful at the other security tasks under the Dayton Agreement, such as arresting indicted war criminals, establishing conditions for refugee return, and implementing arrangements for arms control and demilitarization.

One year into IFOR's takeover, Bosnia was still an extremely insecure country to live in. Though the numbers of irregular Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian forces had halved by late 1996, there were still approximately 150,000 active soldiers, many of them in irregular Serbian and Croatian paramilitaries.

These conditions led to an extension of NATO's mandate in Bosnia, this time with a 32,000 strong Stabilization Force (SFOR). Its mandate was wider than that of IFOR, and included preventing new threats to peace as well as promoting conditions under which the peace process could move forward.

Dayton led to the creation by the UN of an International Police Task Force (IPTF) to ensure that civilian law enforcement agencies operated in accordance with internationally recognized standards. Hampered by limited resources, the IPTF was able to place monitors at only 60 locations to supervise the transformation of local wartime police to regular civilian police — and even here they were blocked by local authorities in the Republika Srpska (RS) and the Croatian paramilitary held region of Mostar.

The task of creating a multiethnic federal police remained a distant goal, resisted by Serbian and Croatian paramilitaries and government officials, and also by the Bosnian government. By end 1997 the IPTF had less than 500 policemen. The UN had to negotiate additional powers through the Bonn-Petersberg Agreement on Federation Police Restructuring, and in 1998 had to negotiate a similar agreement separately with the Serbian Republic.

### **Hardening Lines**

Initially, therefore, the lines of partition hardened rather than softened. Though the UNHCR succeeded in arranging the returns of some 100,000 refugees to Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2001 (a 14 per cent increase over the previous year), it reported at the end

of 2001 that around 450,000 internally displaced people and about 24,000 Croatian Serb refugees in the country were still awaiting “durable solutions”. (UNHCR Global Report 2001). Hundreds of thousands of Bosnians remained abroad. Instead of tracing missing persons, municipalities engaged in “body for body exchanges.” Refugee returns continued to be hotly opposed, with UNHCR reporting murders of returnees.

Cantons, entities and federation refused to adopt uniform laws or uniform law enforcement. Mostar was and remained one of the worst offenders. The EU administrator for Mostar and the UN-E.U. High Representative for Bosnia periodically dismissed Croatian municipal, cantonal and federation representatives, but the rule of law was elusive.

Though there were no less than 55 official implementing agencies and countries involved in post conflict reconstruction and stabilization, an ambiguous mandate and lack of clearly defined mechanisms for inter-agency or government cooperation meant progress was snaillike.

### **Slow Pace of Reform**

The slow pace of reform was partly because of the dual system of governance set up by the Dayton Agreement and partly because of pressures from across Bosnia’s borders. The UN-E.U. High Representative’s mandate was largely to monitor and guide Dayton’s implementation, while the Federation and Serbian entity governments would actually run the country.

This division of responsibilities did not work in a country in which most institutions had been destroyed by war and politicians represented a highly polarized society. Nepotism was already entrenched well before the war began and was strengthened rather than weakened in the aftermath of war.

The black economy that had established a stranglehold over Bosnia during the war continued into the peace. As late as 2002, the World Bank estimated that 20% of the Bosnian population was below the poverty line, and another 30% close to it.

### **Elections Held**

In its first five years, the Office of the High Representative set up by Dayton concentrated on organizing elections. The election in September 1996 that chose the three-person presidency and the national assembly established by the Dayton agreement was relatively trouble-free, but none of the winners was in favour of a truly multi-ethnic government. “The election strengthened the very separatists who had started the war,” Holbrooke wrote later in his book, *To End a War*. The election in 1998 also saw nationalist parties keep power. The third general election in 2000 election saw moderate parties do well in elections in Muslim-Croat entity but nationalists gain the upper hand in Serb entity. They were, however, unable to form a government on their own, and the main Serb nationalist party formed a coalition government headed by moderate Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic.

While the election reflected greater support than before for moderates, they also showed that ethnic nationalists still drew significant support from their respective ethnic groups.

### **The War Crimes Tribunal**

Though the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia that had been set up in May 1993 had the mandate to investigate, indict and prosecute war criminals, it had to rely on national governments for arrests. Of the 78 people indicted for war crimes by late 1997, only 10 were in the custody of the tribunal. The figure inched upwards very slowly, and by the end of 2001, most of those indicted were still at large.

Bosnian Serb authorities and officials in Croatia and the rump Yugoslavia generally refused to comply with the tribunal's requests for arrests. So did the NATO-led Stabilization Force in Bosnia (SFOR), arguing that they lacked both the mandate and the capabilities to do so.

After sustained U.S. pressure, Croatia finally persuaded former army General Tihomir Blaskic, indicted for crimes against Croatian Serbs as well as in Bosnia, to surrender to the tribunal in April 1996. But the two most prominent indictees for war crimes in Bosnia, Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, continued to move freely in Bosnian Serb territory. Both men exercised power through monopolies on tobacco and fuel, and in early 1997 it was reported that Karadzic himself paid the salaries of most of the Bosnian Serb police officers.

Public outrage at these violations of the tribunal's writ led to a gradual shift in SFOR's approach. In July 1997, British troops moved to arrest two men who had been secretly indicted by the tribunal, capturing one and killing the other in a shootout.

NATO's entry into Kosovo in 1999 and the fall of the Milosevic regime in October 2000 altered the situation. Soon after, Biljana Plavsic, the former president of the Bosnian Serb entity and the only woman among the tribunal indictees, surrendered to the tribunal.

*There is more information on the website [www.partitionconflicts.org](http://www.partitionconflicts.org), including detailed colour-coded maps demographic maps of the region, which are essential for understanding the contours of the conflict You may also consult other websites such as those of UNHCHR, the Office of the High Representative for Bosnia-Herzegovina, Institute of War and Peace Reporting, Central Europe Online, International Crisis Group, United States Institute of Peace, US State Department, etc There are links to all these and more on the partition conflicts website.*

