

Pax Americana. The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and International Diplomacy from the Washington to the Dayton Peace Agreement (18 March 1994 – 21 November 1995)*

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Abstract: Using relevant literature and diplomatic sources, the author reflects on the plans and activities of the international community to end the war in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the period from the Washington to the Dayton Peace Agreement. Special consideration is devoted to those events that had influenced the shift in US policy and caused its more active engagement. The analysis of international diplomacy and attitudes of various countries towards the developments in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, pointed to the complexity of achieving a peace agreement for which the US had to try out various strategies and seek different solutions. The author pays particular attention to events that had paved the way for a peace agreement, as well as the military and political means that played a key role in achieving peace. Based on the analysis of the provisions and subsequent implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement, the author believes that the agreement had ended the war, but did not allow the establishment of a functional state because the ideologies that had caused the war continued to live and deepen the divisions in the society of Bosnia and Herzegovina through propaganda and rhetoric. He believes that re-enabling of normal life in the country requires the removal of these structures and the consequences that they have produced and continue to produce, which is why Bosnia and Herzegovina is still waiting for support for its European path. He claims that this could only work if the democratic settings were to be imposed by the international community, since the project of building the institutions was left unfinished. If the international community consistently supports this, the author believes that the path of accession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the modern European societies will be much shorter and much faster.

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From mid-1993 the US displayed a stronger engagement in the events taking place in the former Yugoslavia. After the breakdown of various initiatives that turned out to be unsuccessful because of the resistance of its allies, particularly France and Great Britain, who provided the largest contingents of the UNPROFOR in the region and explicitly opposed all measures that could place them in danger, the US administration in Washington began looking for a new strategy.¹ Due to a lack of unified international policy, the US tried various diplomatic paths in its attempts to end the war.² By the end of 1993, under American leadership, a completely new process was initiated – clear, efficient and pragmatic. The first task was to reestablish the Croat-Bosniak alliance and thereby end the *war within a war*, which was achieved with remarkable speed. Only a few weeks after the White House announced the intensification of American involvement in the crisis under the patronage of president Bill Clinton, in the midst of the negotiations in Geneva, on 18 March 1994 in Washington the Croats and Bosniaks signed an agreement about the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.³ Its establishment achieved the first part of the US plan. The next step anticipated the regulation of the occupied territories of Croatia, which evolved in a few phases. In April of 1994 the president of Croatia, Franjo Tuđman, suggested to ambassador Peter Galbraith and the American diplomat Charles Redman that Iran could supply the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina with arms through Croatian territory. On 27 April 1994 the Croatian minister of foreign affairs, Mate Granić, visited the US embassy in Zagreb to enquire about the opinion of the American government regarding the establishment of an arms supply network between Iran, Republic of Croatia and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Tuđman wanted reassurance that the USA would not oppose this plan. Galbraith, who advocated a more aggressive US involvement, supported the idea to accept the suggestion of the Croatian government in Washington. The US Security Advisor Anthony Lake talked about this idea with president Clinton and Strobe Talbott who was the Special Advisor to the Secretary of State. After that, Clinton decided that Galbraith and Redman should inform Tuđman that they had not received instructions in Washington, which was practically a green light for the implementation of the initiative.⁴

¹ Calvocoressi 2003, 345.

² Šehić 2013, 323-335.

³ EA, 7, 1994, D.239-D.-248.

⁴ Witte 2000, 135.

Several events in the beginning of 1994 influenced a more active engagement of the US. On 5 February 1994 a mortar shell was fired from Serb positions towards the marketplace in Sarajevo killing 68 civilians and wounding 104. This required a resolute reaction of the international community.⁵ During a meeting held in Bruxelles on 7 and 8 February, European ministers of foreign affairs requested the immediate termination of the siege of Sarajevo, deciding by majority for air attacks against the artillery positions of the Army of the Republic of Srpska and placing Sarajevo under UN administration.⁶ The NATO Council requested the suspension of the siege and the withdrawal of Serb heavy weaponry in the following ten days, to a distance of 20 km away from the center of the city, placing it under the control of UNPROFOR. Considering the failure of European states to achieve peace in which the Russian foreign policy played an active role, the US did not want to lose leadership in the relevant issues of global politics. Just before the expiration of the ultimatum, Clinton defined the reasons for the increased US involvement regarding the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, considering *that the history of the twentieth century had shown that the US could not allow European conflicts to be ignored*. The developments after the ultimatum showed the waning influence of the European Union to the benefit of NATO, and from a different perspective the increasing role of the US and Russia, without whom there could seemingly be no solution.⁷ Only a week after the withdrawal of heavy artillery from positions around Sarajevo, the credibility of the conclusions reached by the International community was put under test. Two US F-16 planes brought down four of the six Serb jets that violated the flying prohibition over the territory of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina by flying on 28 February from the Serb Krajina towards Bihać.⁸ The same occurred when the forces of the Army of the Republic of Srpska initiated an attack on the *safe haven* of Goražde in April 1994. In a unanimously passed verdict on 22 April 1994 the UN Security council requested that the Serb forces immediately stop the attacks and leave the *safe haven*, otherwise NATO and UNPROFOR would respond with air strikes against their artillery positions. An ultimatum was issued according to which they had to withdraw three kilometers away from Goražde before 24 April, while the artillery had to be withdrawn to positions that were 20 km away from the town. In the statement issued after the meeting of ambassadors of NATO in Bruxelles, the proposal to resolve the conflict through negotiations was supported and in that context the cooperation and close communication between the USA, Russia, UN and EU were praised with

⁵ Bulletin. 22. 2. 1994, Nr 16, 152.

⁶ Bulletin. 23. 2. 1994, Nr 17, 159.

⁷ Silber-Litl 1996, 340-345; Šehić 2007, 392.

⁸ Witte 2000, 136.

a goal to unify the existing diplomatic initiatives.⁹ During the events in Goražde, the former prime minister of Great Britain, Margaret Thatcher, sent a message to the International community: *Instead of punishing the Serb aggressor who was responsible for mass killings, torture and ethnic cleansing, the International community chose to treat the conflict in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a civil war in which all sides bear the same responsibility. The government of the internationally recognized sovereign state of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been imposed with an immoral and illegal arms embargo preventing them from importing weapons necessary to defend their land and people... This was not only a shameful and immoral policy, which gave the green light to potential aggressors to break international law and norms of civilized behavior in order to achieve their ambitions. It is high time to admit the mistakes in our approach to this problem in the past few years after the break up of Yugoslavia, as well as to understand the roots of the problem.*¹⁰ At the same time public individuals in the US also reacted. The Democrat senator Joe Biden claimed that the *Bosnians were victims of the bloodiest aggression in Europe after the Second World War.* The consistent advocate of the preservation of the internationally recognized Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina stressed that the two-year-long systematic genocide in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina must be stopped. Senator Tom Lantos publically called Clinton to appeal to Congress for a determined action in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, considering that he would get overwhelming support.¹¹

The consequence of the Goražde events was an increased engagement of the US and Russia in the negotiating process, so a Contact group was formed made up of representatives of the USA, France, Great Britain, Russia and Germany, which attempted to initiate a peace process in London on 26 April 1994. This was a completely different leadership to the one in which Great Britain played the most important role, using the rules of the EU, UN and NATO to outwit the others, and using Russia as a threat to potential resistance, while in fact covering up for the attainment of its own goals. In the new American concept of diplomatic initiatives, Russia received the role of a key partner in the peace process, but its return to the international political stage as a partner in the resolution of the most important European security issues was just a consolation.¹² The Contact group was to establish the unique principles of the peace process and to insist on their implementation. However, the opposing stances of the US and France came to the fore since the US declined the French request to apply more pressure on the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to accept the territorial division of the country. The ministers of foreign affairs of the USA, Russia, Germany,

⁹ EA, 21/1994, D.626-D627; EA, 21/1994, D. 627- D 629.

¹⁰ Poruka Margaret Tačer: "Vrijeme je da priznamo greške", *Oslobođenje*, 18. IV 1995, 4.

¹¹ "Američko-ruske vizije bosanske drame. Klinton raspakovao paket", *Oslobođenje*, 22. IV 1994, 4.

¹² Starešina 2004, 198.

France, Greece and Belgium requested on 13 May 1994 during a meeting in Geneva that a four-month truce be agreed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and after two weeks the peace talks would be continued, and would be based around a territorial division in the proportion 51% for the Federation and 49% for the Bosnian Serbs. The ceasefire was supposed to be followed by a quick separation of forces, withdrawal of heavy weaponry and the distribution of UN soldiers on critical key points.¹³ The members of the Contact group for the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina met on 25 and 26 May in 1994 in Talloires with the representatives of Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs, but an agreement was not reached regarding the suggested territorial division.¹⁴ On 5 July 1994 in Geneva the ministers of foreign affairs of the Contact group had approved the plan of territorial division of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina which envisaged its survival in existing borders, but with its territory divided into 51% for the Federation of BiH and 49% for the Bosnian Serbs. This plan was presented and an agreement was supposed to be reached by 19 July.¹⁵ On 18 July the Parliament of the Federation had voted and with 68 votes for, 17 against and two sustained, approved the plan of the Contact group. After a two-day meeting, the Bosnian Serbs announced on 19 July that they could not agree with the plan, requesting the continuation of the negotiations.¹⁶

The US policy towards the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina came under scrutiny of the American media, as was discernible from a ninety-minute long talk of the president to the journalists which was broadcast all over the World. President Clinton responded passionately when the CNN correspondent from Sarajevo, Christiane Amanpour, criticized his policy towards the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, asking for a clear reply: *Here in Bosnia this is the fundamental issue of the World and international order. Why did you, as the leader of the free world, need so much time to establish your policies towards Bosnia and why have you allowed yourself to be the hostage of those who defend the policies of the Bosnian Serbs? Will this not make the world dictators such as Kim Il Sung take you less seriously?* These questions posed by Amanpour were the only point in the ninety-minute long interview during which Clinton attempted to justify the US policy towards Bosnia and Herzegovina, claiming that from the beginning he had been much more active than his predecessor.¹⁷

The events in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina had influenced the interior political scene in the USA to a great extent. The majority of democrats and

¹³ Šehić 2007, 395.

¹⁴ Šehić 2010, 314.

¹⁵ EA, 21, 1994, D.636; and D. 636-D. 637.

¹⁶ EA, 5/94, Z. 109.

¹⁷ "Svjetski forum CNN-a. Sarajevska lekcija za Klintona", *Oslobođenje*, 6. V 1994, 4.

republicans in the American Senate approved of lifting the arms embargo, which they expressed on 12 May 1994 when two amendments were proposed; Dole-Liebermann's for a unilateral lifting of the embargo and Michel's for an invitation to allies and the UN for a joint lifting of the embargo, both of which received 50 votes. In order for the embargo to be lifted, president Clinton had to sign an agreement with the Congress within five days. Even though during the previous year he had often favored the lifting of the embargo, in the circumstances of the current diplomatic initiatives he nevertheless wanted to have this decision reached in concordance with the West-European allies.¹⁸ The turnaround in American policy became more visible. The Clinton administration managed to create interest for the preservation of its prestige and credibility with a series of initiatives: broader authorization for NATO air strikes in the protection of six *safe havens* in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the practical implementation of the *Sarajevo model* which would imply the removal of heavy weaponry from this zone; by increasing economic sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and increasing the humanitarian aid and UN peace-keeping forces, as well as by diplomatic initiatives for the ending of the war through negotiations. For a strong course in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Clinton could only count on unity in Congress, announcing that he would suggest the lifting of the embargo on the import of arms to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore, he informed Congress that, if the Bosnian Serbs did not accept the peace plan by 15 October 1994, he would within two weeks present the UN Security Council with a resolution on lifting the arms embargo. If the UN Security Council did not approve the resolution in a reasonable time, the US had to approach this issue unilaterally. The text of Clinton's letter about the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina was sent to the president of the Senate Committee for Arms, Sam Nunn, on 10 August 1994.¹⁹

At the same time Russia intensified its diplomatic attempts to find a solution for the ending of the war in the former Yugoslavia. A peace plan for the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina was in the center of the talks carried out between Russian minister Kozyrev and president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia Slobodan Milošević on 1 August 1994. Kozyrev requested from Milošević to force the Bosnian Serbs to accept the peace plan if he wanted the sanctions imposed on

¹⁸ "Glasanje u američkom Senatu. Ukinuti embargo?!" *Oslobodenje*, 13. V 1994, 3. The Republican Senate minority leader Bob Dole said: Today we need to say something very important, not just to the Bosnian, but to our people as well, whether we believe in the right to self-defense. Without American leadership nothing will happen. It is Clinton's move now. If he truly wanted to lift the embargo a year ago, now in imposing this solution to the allies he has a strong card – the full support of the Senate.

¹⁹ EA, 21/1994, D. 639 – D. 640; See also: "Pismo predsjednika SAD Bila Klintonu Kongresu. Rok – 15. oktobar", *Oslobodenje*, 12. VIII 1994, 3.

Serbia to decrease. Seeing as the Bosnian Serbs rejected the plan for weeks, strife among the members of the Contact group grew with time. After the meeting with Milošević on 21 September 1994 in Belgrade, some members of the group suggested a revised plan that allowed the Bosnian Serbs to be connected to Serbia. However, the American government did not support this proposal. In the beginning of October, French minister of foreign affairs, Alain Juppé, went a step further, inviting Europe, Russia and the USA to confirm the right of the Bosnian Serbs to establish confederal relations with Serbia. The US State Department and president Clinton claimed that this plan did not have any support of the public nor of the closed official circles. These plans, however, confirmed international support for the division of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.²⁰ On the 49th Assembly of the UN in New York held on 27 September 1994, president Izetbegović addressed the delegates. After he spoke about the stance of the International community towards events in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, he presented six demands of his government. The demand to lift the embargo was supposed to be limited only to the passing of a formal decision, while its implementation would be delayed for six months. The General Assembly and the UN Security council were asked to implement all the resolutions that had been passed thus far, to undertake effective measures to control the borders between Serbia and Montenegro from one side, and Bosnia and Herzegovina from the other, in order to prevent or identify in time the transport of troops, weapons and military equipment across that border. In the end, two main commitments were declared; a democratic Bosnia and Herzegovina, in its internationally recognized borders and full national, religious and political rights for all of its inhabitants. In such Bosnia and Herzegovina the Serbs could have all rights including the highest step of autonomy, but they could not have a state within a state, on which they specifically insisted.²¹

²⁰ Hodge 2007, 202.

²¹ "Alija Izetbegović govorio pred Generalnom skupštinom OUN-a. Provesti sve rezolucije", *Oslobođenje*, IX 1994, 1. In his speech president Izetbegović highlighted the ineffectiveness of the UN policy: When some three years ago Yugoslavia fell apart, we did all we could to make that break up develop in a peaceful way. The war that was imposed on Bosnia and Herzegovina and its people, and which has now entered its 31st month, is among the bloodiest in human history. At the very beginning, this was not a war but an attack of a well equipped army, the former Yugoslav army, against barehanded people... The World has not responded to this barbarity in an adequate way... Namely, before the war broke out, the UN passed the famous resolution prohibiting the importing of weapons to the whole territory of the former Yugoslavia... The arms embargo resolution turned into its direct contrast. By keeping the imbalance in the arms, it prolonged the war, and turned peace negotiations into the dictate of the better-equipped side. We told the World: You do not have to come to defend us, but do come, untie our hands and allow us to defend ourselves. In the moment when our children are being killed, our women raped and our holy sites destroyed, acknowledge our right to self-defense. Only in our capital of Sarajevo more than 10.000 had been killed, and more than 50.000 people wounded. There is almost no family without a victim – either killed or wounded. On all of this we only had one

After the Bosnian Serbs rejected the peace plan, the Yugoslav government declared that it will sever political and economic ties with them and that it will close its border towards the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, apart from the delivery of humanitarian aid.²² The UN Security Council reduced sanctions against Yugoslavia on 5 October 1994 for the next 100 days, which implied the reopening of the international airport in Belgrade, as well as the reestablishing of cultural and sport contacts.²³ On 19 October the US communicated that it was still exerting pressure on its European allies to lift the embargo for the import of arms for the military forces of the Bosnia and Herzegovina government, and that it was even considering a unilateral act if a peace agreement was not reached by 15 November.²⁴ Upon the announcement that the arms embargo would be lifted, the French minister of defense Francois Leotard arrived to Sarajevo late one night, bringing a clear message: if the arms embargo is lifted, the European countries, and first of all France, will pull their troops out from the UNPROFOR. In that case humanitarian aid and protection of the population will be stopped, and this will mean a return to brutal confrontation.²⁵ On a joint meeting held in New York on 28 October 1994, the UN and NATO published a number of agreements about the possible activities of fighter jets according to the orders of NATO. In future, it was necessary only to give a general warning about the air strikes, and in order to support the UNPROFOR, it was possible to attack more goals at once. The proportional principle was supposed to be retained, so the decision about the action was supposed to be jointly approved by the commanders of the UN and NATO.²⁶ On the same day, the US ambassador to the UN, Madeleine Albright, submitted a resolution to the UN Security Council, asking for the lifting of the UN arms embargo for the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a six months delay. This document requested from the General Secretary of the UN to plan an arranged and safe reconfiguring of the UN personnel in the Balkans in the case that the embargo is lifted.²⁷

message from the World: negotiate. Knowing the spirit of Bosnia, we believed – and we still believe – that peace saves and war destroys that what we call Bosnia. And what we call Bosnia is not just a piece of land in the Balkans. For many of us Bosnia is not only homeland, Bosnia is an idea. It is a belief that people of different creeds, nations and cultural traditions can live together. If it happens that this idea is forever buried, and if the dream of tolerance among the peoples of this regions goes away, it will be the fault of those who have already for 30 months been killing Bosnia with their cannons, but not less so the many powerful in the World who could have helped, but refused to do so.

²² EA, 5/94, Z. 118.

²³ Šehić 2010, 315.

²⁴ “Ukinuti embargo na oružje Bosni”, *Oslobođenje*, 20. X 1994, 4.

²⁵ “Nepopustljiv stav Pariza”, *Oslobođenje*, 28. X 1994, 1.

²⁶ EA, 14/94, Z. 156.

²⁷ “Podnesena američka rezolucija”, *Oslobođenje*, 29. X 1994, 1.

The US imposed a settlement through a NATO military intervention, which was a formula for confirming its role as the guarantor and of NATO as an instrument for the preservation of European security. In the autumn of 1994 the US tried to gain European allies for an intervention in the area of Bihać that was, as the media dramatically reported, besieged by Serbs and faced imminent fall. However, the European allies fiercely resisted this approach, above all Great Britain and France, who stated that they have their soldiers in the field that could face the brunt of Serb revenge. Europeans warned of the crisis that might ensue in the NATO if the US forced the bombing and their soldiers get hurt. France and Great Britain did not want the US to end the war in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and thus assume leadership in Europe.²⁸ In the second half of December 1994 the former US president Jimmy Carter attempted to use a private visit in order to achieve an agreement about a ceasefire in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Even though this agreement was achieved and was supposed to be implemented on 23 December 1994, the ceasefire was violated on the very first day as many as 28 times.²⁹

In spring of 1995, under the influence of activities in the battlefield, there was an announcement of a change in the basic strategy of the US, which included diplomatic and military instruments. The path to achieving an agreement on peace in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina was long and dangerous. The humiliation of the UN peacekeeping forces who were tied to lamp posts and water pipes in order to prevent the NATO air-strikes in May and June 1995, the fall of the UN *safe havens* of Srebrenica and Žepa, the appearance of evidence about the mass executions of Bosniaks and the final breakdown of the Republic of Serb Krajina, influenced the situation whereby efforts to end the war were at their lowest possible level. In the summer of 1995, in the capitals of the Western World, discussions were had about the possibility of withdrawing the UNPROFOR if the war continued. By the end of June, after having conversations with some of his foreign-policy advisors, president Clinton returned to the idea about attempting once again to establish control over policy towards the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. When Richard Holbrooke, who was named State Secretary for European and Canadian matters in December 1994, described the duty of the US to participate in the withdrawal of the UN forces in accordance with the OPLAN 40 104, Clinton said that he would decide on this when the time comes. The Secretary of State Warren Christopher then confirmed that NATO had already approved and accepted the plan, and that according to the governing procedures there was a *high level of automatism* in these decisions. The US assumed the duty regarding the mission to withdraw the UNPROFOR, and not fulfilling it would additionally disrupt the credibility of the US administration in Europe. The possibility for the US troops

²⁸ Witte 2000, 139.

²⁹ Schönfeld 1996, 1199-100.

to soon be travelling to the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina forced the US administration to look for possible solutions. On the meeting of a *Foreign Policy Group*, held on 21 June 1995 in the Oval Office of the White House, those present discussed the financing of the *Rapid Reaction Forces*. Clinton grew impatient and unsatisfied, claiming that the UN was paralyzing the activities of the US and was undermining the arguments of its policy. The US National Security advisor, Anthony Lake, claimed that the administration must begin from the start and completely re-think its policy towards the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.³⁰ Madeleine Albright, the US ambassador to the UN, considered that the unpreparedness of the administration to assume a defining role was having a detrimental impact on the US foreign policy. She submitted a suggestion titled *Components of the new strategy*, with a recommendation that the administration initiates the creation of plans for the period in which the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina would be left without the UNPROFOR, inviting president Clinton to assume control of events and leadership of the alliance, and *not to allow the process to be dragged down the matrix of monotonous political decisions*. She considered that the UNPROFOR would leave the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the end of the year, and due to the already assumed commitments towards the OPLAN 40 104, the existing situation would turn into a problem for the US. On 6 July 1995 Secretary of State Warren Christopher forwarded a document to the president, entitled Night Note, describing a course of events nearing culmination in the process of transformation of the US State Department. He wrote that it could be expected that the Europeans would request from the US to get involved in the process, considering that the US administration could respond to that request with a new diplomatic initiative and increase pressure on the Bosnian Serbs, providing a *credible basis to demand for the UNPROFOR to stay*.³¹

After the failure of Frasure's mission, Milošević did not allow the cession of Sarajevo to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as he suggested previously, but he demanded one half of Sarajevo along with its airport. Washington was afraid of the operation to withdraw the *blue helmets*, and Milošević hurried them to do so, threatening with taking new hostages. Pushed against the wall by Milošević's audacity, the Westerners were forced to choose between the enclaves and a full cooperation with Belgrade in the quest for a peaceful solution. On 17 June 1995 the CIA recorded a telephone conversation between generals Mladić and Perišić in which they talked about the military operation against Srebrenica, which was a UN *safe haven*. From these conversations, that were soon conducted on a daily basis, it was clear that the initiative came from Belgrade and that the operation would be commanded by the General Staff of the Yugoslav Army,

³⁰ Chollet 2007, 39-40.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 46-47.

subordinated to Milošević.³²

At the time of the Srebrenica genocide, Clinton was at his private golf court. Sandy Berger, the Deputy National Security Advisor, and Nancy Sodeberg, also from the National Security Council, told him the news from Srebrenica about the mass killings and massacre. Bob Woodward, journalist of the *Washington Post*, recorded that an angry Clinton exclaimed: *This cannot go on any further. We must place these things under control.*³³ The fall of Srebrenica represented a turning point in Western and above all US policy. The UN, under the leadership of the USA, effectively engaged itself in a war with the Army of the Republic of Srpska, renouncing any guise of impartiality. Washington turned to Croatia in an attempt to get it to do that what it did not want to execute itself: to fight against the army of the Bosnian Serbs. European allies who for three-and-a-half years kept saying that they should be wary of falling into the *Balkan swamp*, those who warned that *peace could not be achieved from a distance of 15.000 feet*, followed the Americans. The proposal of the newly elected French president Jacques Chirac invoked a new American initiative. On 13 July 1995 Chirac insisted that the UN must keep its promise to protect Srebrenica – that the *Rapid Reaction Forces* and the French national troops will re-establish the enclave. *I suggested to our allies, those who take most care about international and human rights, to take joint action and retake the enclave of Srebrenica* – claimed Chirac. However, the proposal was rejected by Great Britain, which meant that France distanced itself from London. Speaking on Bastille Day in Paris on 14 July 1995, Chirac condemned the reaction of the West

³² Hartmann 2007, 305. From 2002 Carla del Ponte, the Hague Tribunal prosecutor, requested from Washington the conversation tapes from the spring of 1995, but the American government ignored these requests. By the end of 1995 the US government even sent to its officials a circular memorandum stating how the reporters should be responded to when dealing with questions about Srebrenica. The American officials were supposed to claim that they, much like the UN, did not know that the Serbs planned to conquer Srebrenica and that they did not have information about the movement of the military. About the predictability of monstrosities, the US officials were supposed to respond that they had no information about any intention to commit crimes against the Bosniak defenders or the population of Srebrenica. The story was the same in Washington, Paris and London. The great powers did not want to admit that the information they had actually announced a threat to the population of Srebrenica. Seeing as the US was better equipped than its allies and disposed of more information, it was in the most delicate position regarding these events. At that time it was capable of listening in on more than 20.000 conversations, and the five daily active satellites produced more than 5.000 images. (Hartmann; 2007, 51). At a later time, the president of Montenegro Momir Bulatović, talked about the intelligence capabilities of the US in an interview published in the *Večernji List* in Zagreb on 26 April 2007, where he claimed that in 1995 Holbrooke showed them satellite images that showed trucks and cisterns travelling from Serbia to Bosnia. Since Milošević told him that they were transporting mil, Holbrooke provided him with a spectroscopic analysis which proved that this was not milk but diesel fuel. (Hartmann 2002, 51, n. 39).

³³ Danner 1998, 1.

to the fall of the enclaves, calling it an *attempt to observe events in a perspective*, likening it to how Chamberlain and Daladier interpreted their conversations with Hitler in Munich in 1938.³⁴ Undeterred by the cold reaction of his European allies, Chirac turned to Washington. He called president Clinton who listened to his proposals. The American plan soon began to crystalize. In order to have it become ultimately successful, clear maps were necessary as they implied the transferal of population from one ethnic region into another one. As the National Security Advisor Anthony Lake said, *lines would not be drawn here or there, but in a way that could be further discussed, considering where the population is now, in order to do everything in our power to simplify the territories as much as possible.*³⁵

The events in Srebrenica and around it³⁶ represented an ultimate humiliation of the International community, not only because the World stood and observed the case of the largest mass crime in Europe after the Second World War. The International community also had another, even greater reason to be ashamed; behind the public condemnation of violence there was a completely real sense of relief – even of satisfaction – as the inconvenient issue of the eastern enclaves, which disturbed the maps of the peace creators, was finally solved. Now they could draw clear maps on which the peace agreement would be based on. They understood that the game plan had changed.³⁷ A month later, when the Croatian army executed a blitz attack on the Krajina Serbs, it became clear that the forceful expulsion of hundreds of thousands of people which had been from the outset the main war goal of the Serb and Croat leadership, even though a regretful event, actively helped the peace process. Ethnic cleansing and mass killings created ethnically homogenous territorial units; global leaders perhaps condemned the method, but nevertheless they supported the final result due to which peace seemed closer than ever.³⁸

The shameful capitulation of the UN and NATO in their exit from the Srebrenica *safe haven* inflicted the US administration with a problem that was politically insolvable. On 13 July 1995 Clinton declared that UN mission would

³⁴ Witte 2000, 158.

³⁵ Danner 1998, 28.

³⁶ About the events in Srebrenica see the report of the special plenipotentiary of the UN Human Rights committee Tadeusz Mazowiecki from 22 August 1995 in: *Internationale Politik* (IP); Nr. 12, 1995, 94-103.

³⁷ The failure of global policy was also confirmed by the fall of the *safe haven* of Žepa. The military and political leadership of the Bosnian Serbs proved to be confident, not expecting a serious reaction of the international community. At that time the leader of the Bosnian Serbs Radovan Karadžić claimed: Our sovereignty is the minimum. Whether the World wants it or not, our unification with Serbia is a matter of days. At the same time, general Mladić asserted that he was sure that by autumn the Serbs would conquer Goražde, Bihać and Sarajevo, thus ending the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Witte 2000, 144).

³⁸ Raffone 1996, 236; Čalić 1996, 244.

be coming to an end if it did not reclaim its integrity. Even though he called on the Bosnian Serbs to withdraw from the occupied Srebrenica, he did not give any concrete suggestions about the way in which the UN troops could recover from their expulsion from that area. The Senate Republican leader Robert Dole thought that the peacekeeping forces in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina were being faced with an increasing catastrophe and that they should immediately initiate preparations for withdrawal. He claimed that the US could not continue to support the UN mission which to a great extent had a role of *supervisor over aggression and ethnic cleansing*.³⁹ Those days John Pomfret, journalist of the *Washington Post* stationed in Tuzla, published a disturbing article about the crimes committed in Srebrenica. The article began with the following story: *The young woman died with no shoes on. Sometime Thursday night she climbed a high tree near the muddy ditch where she had camped for 36 hours. Knotting a shabby floral shawl together with her belt, she secured it to a branch, ran her head of black hair through the makeshift noose and jumped...* The US Vice-president Al Gore who saw the article and the accompanying image in Clinton's office said that the girl was as old as his daughter. *My 21-year-old daughter asked me about that picture. What was I supposed to tell her? Why is this happening and we are not doing anything? My daughter is astonished why the World is allowing this to happen.* The events in Srebrenica had an impact on the decision to reevaluate the possibility of NATO airstrikes. Clinton stated that the US would undertake the necessary measures and agreed with Gore that *coming to terms with this is not an option*.⁴⁰

In mid June 1995 on a meeting with his advisors about the situation in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Clinton expressed dissatisfaction with the way that US policy had been led thus far. *We must implement a proper policy – he claimed – or we will continue to kick a can down the road. Now we have a problem, but we do not have a clear mission, nobody is in charge of these events.* After Srebrenica was taken, pressure to do something came from all sides. Writers, human rights activists, former diplomats and journalists all raised their voice against the US policy. Only in the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times* the list of those who criticized the current government in the week after the fall of Srebrenica was long: Anthony Lewis, William Safire, Jim Hoagland, George Will, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Brent Scowcroft, Charles Gati, Robert Kagan, Charles Krauthammer, Ana Husarska and George Soros. Richard Cohen from the *Washington Post* described Clinton's administration as big on words and small on action. Safire wrote that Clinton's failure turned a super-power into an under-power. On the pages of the *New Republic*, Zbigniew Brzezinski published a speech that could be summed up in a sentence that the position

³⁹ "Bil Clinton pesimističan. Ozbiljan izazov misiji UN", *Oslobodenje*, 14. VII 1995, 4.

⁴⁰ Power 2002, 413.

of the leader of the free world was currently unoccupied. This paper dedicated a whole issue to the fall of Srebrenica. Its editor Leon Wieseltier wrote: *It seems that the US is missing the period of historical reality, closing its eyes before genocide and its consequences, running away from the moral and practical imperative of its military might... either you Americanize war or you will Americanize genocide...*⁴¹ Newt Gingrich complained that in Bosnia *the honor of the whole world was destroyed. When all options are dangerous* – Robert Kagan, the high-ranking official of the State Department during the Regan administration, advised – *we should chose the honorable one. Let us allow Bosnia to defend itself.* The former ambassador of the US to the UN, Jeane Kirkpatrick, declared that *multilateralism was incapable to finish the job* and evaluated *all the endless talks between the Contact group, EU, NATO and UN* as meaningless.⁴²

In June 1995 Lake requested from the members of Clinton's cabinet to decide if they wanted Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state that would function and look as it did before. He tried to motivate the foreign policy team to think strategically so that they would not stumble in crisis situations. Finally, on 17 July Lake revealed his strategy during breakfast with the foreign affairs team. His presentation surprised most of the present high dignitaries. Albright supported the proposed plan, while Christopher, Defense Secretary William Perry and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff John Shalikashvili remained suspicious because the strategy contained a danger that would imply dragging the US even deeper into the conflict, and some of the details regarding support for the Bosnian and Herzegovinian army could additionally increase tensions among the allies. As Lake had planned, Clinton entered the room and sat at the table while his advisors debated the document. In a short address he said that the current course of action was untenable.⁴³ The US should assume diplomatic leadership by threatening again with airstrikes against Bosnian Serb positions and lifting the arms embargo for the military forces of the Bosnia and Herzegovina government. Clinton said that he was opposed to the *status quo*. *This policy is creating a great damage to the US and our position in the World. We look weak, he said, predicting that things can only get worse. The only improvement we have made was when we turned NATO into a real threat for the Serbs.*⁴⁴

On a meeting in Washington held on 18 July 1995, when Vice-president Gore mentioned the girl from Srebrenica who committed suicide by hanging, Clinton responded by saying that he refused to use air force, claiming that the *US should stop being a punching bag*. Srebrenica fell, Žepa was supposed to fall soon. Clinton

⁴¹ Ibid., 430.

⁴² Simms 2003, 264.

⁴³ Chollet 2007, 84.

⁴⁴ Power 2002, 437.

had to stop that circle of humiliation. Lake requested from the other departments to prepare their own ideas and opinions about the course of policy towards the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In a few weeks he presented a number of strategic documents that were supposed to turn those ideas into a new diplomatic initiative. The essence of the document about *the final act*, which was drafted by the National Security Council, was the consideration of the risks that the US had to be ready to take in the case that an agreement was not achieved. The authors of the document claimed that, if the UNPROFOR withdrew, the US had to insist on a multilateral lifting of the arms embargo or aiding the Bosnians, i.e. the Bosnia and Herzegovina government, within a program of secret arming. The US would also have to send their military advisors to train the Bosnia and Herzegovina army with the aim of establishing a balance between the military forces in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and help the military forces of the Bosnian government to fight with the strength of arms for approximately that much territory as has been promised to them by the plan of Contact group.⁴⁵ After a very tense and long discussion in London on 21 July 1995, headed by the British chief of diplomacy Malcolm Rifkind, agreements were achieved on a number of points. As Christopher had informed the journalists, the conference ended with six key results. A unified confirmation was given that the UNPROFOR would remain in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina; it was necessary to defend Gorazde with NATO air forces; Rapid Reaction Forces were supposed to be deployed in the areas around Sarajevo in order to stabilize the situation; full support had to be given to efforts of solving humanitarian problems; it was reiterated that the agreement should be achieved through diplomatic means; steps and measures were suggested for UNPROFOR to decrease the vulnerability of the peacekeeping forces.⁴⁶ Since a threat had been issued of all-encompassing and strong air strikes, the London conference was considered an important achievement in the USA. Retrospectively looking, Perry, Christopher and Shalikashvilli talked about it as a turning point in the approach of the international community towards the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to Perry, by attacking Srebrenica, the Bosnian Serbs *lost their chance; their strategic estimate that the international community had no will or readiness to employ military force encouraged them to action, that was so outrageous and inappropriate that it, in fact, forced the international community to act decisively*.⁴⁷ Due to the unsolved differences and the pressure of the General Secretary of the UN, on the NATO meeting on 24 July 1995 not even a discussion could be initiated about what should be done after the London conference. Therefore, the NATO council met again on 25 July, and at the same time sixteen allies commenced intensive

⁴⁵ Chollet 2007, 83-84.

⁴⁶ IP, 12, 1995, 84-86.

⁴⁷ Chollet 2007, 61.

discussions in Bruxelles and between their respective capitals. After this marathon assembly and after almost thirteen hours of debating of the NATO, an agreement was finally achieved to implement the conclusions of the London conference.⁴⁸ On the initiative of NATO, on 1 August these decisions were broadened as to include the *safe havens* of Tuzla, Sarajevo and Bihać.⁴⁹

On 7 August 1995, Clinton met the members of his foreign policy group – Lake, Albright, Perry, Shalikashvili and Peter Tarnoff, the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs – to discuss the documents about the strategy of *the final act*. Lake explained the options presented in the four strategic documents.⁵⁰ The *scenario*, composed on nine pages, which Lake used, began with the broad suppositions on which the US based its approach to the crisis: preserving the relations with allies and keeping the credibility of NATO; avoiding conflict with Russia that could hamper reforms and international cooperation; preventing the war in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina from turning into a broader war in the Balkans. In the comments conditions about an agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina were signed. Immediately after the meeting, on 7 August 1995, they were grouped into seven points. The agreement was supposed to be all-encompassing and to bring about a lasting peace within Bosnia and Herzegovina and the whole region. It included a tripartite reciprocal recognition of Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina with a ceasefire on the whole territory and an interruption of offensive military actions. The Americans would attempt to persuade the sides to negotiate about appropriate and sustainable borderlines that would include the new territorial changes, but would not merely reject the plan of the Contact group. Even though in the plans of the National Security Council and the Defense Department of the US implied that the Bosnians would be asked to exchange Goražde for a part of territory held by the Bosnian Serbs, the officials of the Ministry of foreign affairs managed to soften that proposal with a statement that the Americans will advocate flexibility, but if the Bosnian side shows resistance, they will not be forced to exchange Goražde. According to its constitution, Bosnia and Herzegovina would remain a unified country, but would be composed of two entities. Instead of a package of limited relaxation of sanctions, which had been discussed previously, after the signing of the agreement the US was ready to accept the suspension of economic sanctions against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, and after the implementation of the agreement a full removal of the sanctions. The agreement was supposed to include the Serbo-Croat agreement about eastern Slavonia, an area rich in resources, over which the two states fought a bitter conflict in 1991, and which was ultimately occupied by the

⁴⁸ Ibid., 68-69; Cf.: IP; 1995, Nr. 12, 87-88.

⁴⁹ IP; Nr 12, 1995, 88-89.

⁵⁰ Chollet 2007, 84.

Serbs. In the end, the agreement had to also include an all-encompassing program of regional economic reconstruction. The US diplomatic initiative considered the last point to be particularly important as the European contribution to the renovation was supposed to be a *carrot-on-a-stick* for the achievement of the agreement. The keys of success of this initiative were in the incentives and punishments that would be used for both sides in order to encourage them to sit and negotiate. Along with economic re-development, another offer was the compliance of the peace agreement with the supervision of NATO; military assistance to the Bosnians, movement of Croats towards European integration, abolishing sanctions for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, as well as legal and territorial rights for the Bosnian Serbs.⁵¹

Soon, Lake's delegation travelled to London, Bonn and Paris. During a meeting in the Ministry of foreign affairs in London on 10 August 1995, the British expressed great enthusiasm and gave full support to the American plan. After that meeting, Lake's group visited Rome, Madrid, Ankara and Sochi, the summer residence on Crimea, where they were supposed to hold consultations with the Russian minister Kozyrev.⁵² After stopping in Ankara, where they discussed Turkish involvement in the suggested initiative to *train and equip* the military forces of the Bosnia and Herzegovina government, the delegation flew back to London on 14 August. They were met by Holbrooke and an associate of the National Security Council, Nelson Drew, both of who were supposed to join a regional travelling team together with Frasure, Clark and Kruzal. On the following day, the American delegation informed Holbrooke about their tour and considered the strategy of his appearance.⁵³ In the morning of 16 August 1995 Holbrooke's delegation, together with the US ambassador Galbraith, met with Croatian president Tuđman, who positively reacted to the American peace initiative. For months Holbrooke insisted that the US should implement a more energetic approach, believing that only they possessed the diplomatic and military power to ensure a solution. He believed that Milošević was ready to apply pressure on the Bosnian Serbs, in exchange for a gradual relaxation of sanctions.⁵⁴

Then on 28 August 1995 an event occurred that was a carbon-copy of the one which caused the first NATO ultimatum in February 1994; a mortar shell fired from a grenade thrower fell near the Sarajevo market place killing 43 and wounding

⁵¹ Ibid., 89-90.

⁵² Ibid., 92.

⁵³ Ibid., 95-96.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 102; Robert C. Frasure, the American member of the Contact group for the solution of the Bosnia and Herzegovina crisis from the National Security Council, and Joseph Kruzal, deputy assistant secretary of state for European and Canadian affairs, and a French soldier died after the vehicle in which they were driving to Sarajevo plunged off a hillside on the Igman mountain and caught fire on the morning of 19 August. In their stead the government named Robert Owen, Christopher Hill and Donald Kerrich (Holbrooke 1998, 84-86).

141 civilian. There was no doubt: in twenty-four hours UN experts analyzed the crater and declared that the grenades were fired from the positions held by the Bosnian Serb Army. The General Secretary of the UN, Ghali, condemned the continuation of *senseless bloodshed in Bosnia*, calling the military commanders of the UN to investigate the attack and immediately take necessary measures. A quick and stern condemnation from the international community soon ensued.⁵⁵ In the early morning on 29 August more than 60 NATO planes participated in the action *Deliberate Force* during which a greater number of military targets of the Bosnian Serb Army were damaged or destroyed. The *Rapid Reaction Force* also took part. While the NATO fighter jets were ready for attack, Milošević convened a meeting of the Serb leadership in Belgrade that was attended by the president of Montenegro, Momir Bulatović, the leadership of the Bosnian Serbs and the patriarch Pavle of the Serb Orthodox Church. The meeting was called to establish a unified platform of the Serbs from both sides of the Drina River. On the eve of the air strikes Milošević used the possibility to gain a media war against the leaders of the Bosnian Serbs. He wanted to be identified as the main intermediary between them and the outside World. The Americans also insisted that this was a precondition for the future negotiations. For the first time after a year the complete leadership of the Bosnian Serbs came to Belgrade with the aim of convincing Milošević to create a joint delegation that would participate in the further negotiations. The agreement on action was blessed and signed together with bishop Irinej and patriarch Pavle, which presented a clear image of their political engagement.⁵⁶ Soon after the Bosnian Serbs put their signatures on the *Patriarch's agreement* in the morning hours of 31 August 1995 the NATO fighter jets began attacking in waves and destroying the facilities of the Bosnian Serb army throughout the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Holbrooke nevertheless met with Milošević. He greeted the *Patriarch's agreement* as a *procedural turning point* since Milošević ensured that negotiations would only be conducted with him.⁵⁷ Holbrooke spent thirteen hours negotiating with Milošević, which resulted with a meeting planned in Geneva with the ministers of foreign affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Yugoslavia.⁵⁸ The US, convinced that progress was made with Milošević, requested a cease in the bombing, but general Mladić stubbornly refused to withdraw the heavy artillery from the area around Sarajevo, so NATO continued with its air strikes. During a two-week long campaign, NATO fighter jets completed 3.400 flights, including 750 attacks on 56 ground goals. They destroyed munitions warehouses, anti-aircraft batteries,

⁵⁵ Begić 1997, 270-271.

⁵⁶ Holbrooke 1998, 108; Schönfeld 1996, 103-106.

⁵⁷ Siber – Litl 1996, 402; Holbrooke 1998, 109-111.

⁵⁸ "Holbruk se susreo s Miloševićem. Mape ključno pitanje", *Oslobodenje*, 4. IX 1995, 3.

radar installations, communication facilities, artillery units, command bunkers and bridges. The goal was to temporarily incapacitate the Bosnian Serb Army to respond and gather reinforcements. Even the civilian phone lines were broken. After a long debate in the NATO council in Bruxelles, on 2 September 1995 the member states agreed with the request of the Bosnia and Herzegovina government to renew the ultimatum issued to the Bosnian Serb Army for the withdrawal of heavy artillery from the region around Sarajevo and a complete suspense of attacks on civilian targets in *safe havens*. The ultimatum was limited to 48 hours and the countdown began on 2 September at 2300 hours, when the commander of the Army of the Republic of Srpska Ratko Mladić was handed the response of the UNPROFOR which rejected his conditions.⁵⁹

In the night 4/5 September 1995, in the residence of US ambassador Marc Grossman in Ankara, events evolved that would have consequences for what will happen in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the following two decades. The central issue of the conversation between Holbrooke and the Bosnia and Herzegovina delegation regarded the name of the country and the entities. The previous day in Belgrade, Milošević accepted the *joint statement on political principles*, according to which Bosnia and Herzegovina would *continue to exist legally in its previous borders and with international recognition*. However, the fact that he did not give up on the goals for which he initiated the war in the first place, was shown by his two demands: he rejected the name of the country as the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in which he was ultimately successful, as well as in his second demand whereby he insisted that the Serb part of the country would be called the Republic of Srpska.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Smajić; “Nova pobjeda bh. diplomatije”, *Oslobođenje*, 4. IX 1995, 5.

⁶⁰ Holbrooke 1998, 132-133. Even though he placed the delegation of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina under intense pressure to accept those demands, Holbrooke would later consider the division of the country into two entities as the key weakness of the Dayton peace agreement, and particularly, as he states in his book, allowing Karadžić to keep the name he came up with was more of a concession than they understood at the time. (*Ibid.*, 362). Before the meeting in New York, in a conversation of the Croat National Council and the Serb Popular Council with Peter Tarnoff, the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, on 19 September 1995 in the State Department, the presidents of the two councils, Ivo Komšić and Mirko Pejanović, gave their American counterparts a suggestion of principles for the future of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian state. Their basic objection to the General agreement from Geneva was that it did not stem from the legality of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian state, but by including the Republic of Srpska in the peace process it actually disintegrated the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina into two separate entities with two distinct constitutional systems. Therefore, Komšić and Pejanović, in the name of the two councils, submitted a draft proposal for the future organization of Sarajevo. According to their opinion, Sarajevo was supposed to remain the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina as the rightful member of the UN. The Sarajevo area with the seat of many state and political institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina was to be, as Washington in the USA, a district under direct control of the government – open and free for all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Kurspahić; “Delegacije HNV i SGV u Vašingtonu. Mirna Bosna – cjelovita Bosna”, *Oslobođenje*, 20. IX 1995, 4).

The quest for peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in which progress was made only when global diplomacy resorted to force and when the three-and-a-half year long unrealized resolutions of the UN were supported with NATO aviation and artillery, evolved in stages and progressed step by step. The first one was taken on 8 September 1995 when an agreement was reached implying that in its internationally recognized borders Bosnia and Herzegovina would consist of two parts, the Bosniak-Croat Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska. The second was taken in New York on 26 September when the ministers of foreign affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia – Muhamed Šaćirbegović, Mate Granić and Milan Milutinović – signed an agreement on the constitutional principles and joint institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The importance that was attached to the signing of this document in Washington is best shown by the fact that it was presented to journalists in the White House by Bill Clinton himself.⁶¹ While the US jets were still performing attacks on the positions of the Army of the Republic of Srpska, Holbrooke continued travelling across the Balkans. On 13 September 1995 the US team arrived to Dabanovci, a military complex in the vicinity of Belgrade. During the meeting, Milošević asked Holbrooke that the NATO bombings be stopped. Holbrooke conveyed the request that before the NATO suspended its campaign the Bosnian Serbs should withdraw their artillery from the area around Sarajevo. Milošević then told him that in that case he should talk to those who are responsible – Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić, who were just 200 meters away.⁶² Milošević was direct: if general Mladić refuses to seriously negotiate, the NATO will destroy the Army of the Republic of Srpska. Mladić and Karadžić accepted to withdraw heavy artillery, and the following day the Americans stopped the air strikes. After three years and four months, the shelling of Sarajevo was stopped. At that time, the Croat and Bosnian and Herzegovinian army had great and swift victories in north-western Bosnia, while the Army of the Republic of Srpska was in disarray. There was even talk about the fall of Banja Luka. However, Washington was against this since it could involve Yugoslavia into the war and endanger Milošević who was a new guarantor of peace.⁶³

⁶¹ Smajić, “Vijeće Nata o mirovnim trupama za BiH. Riješen ključ komandovanja”, *Oslobođenje*, 30. IX 1995, 4. With great pleasure I declare that another positive step has been taken towards peace in Bosnia. The ministers of foreign affairs of Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia supported the basic principles for the ending of the war based on the agreement that they had signed on 8 September in Geneva – said Clinton. These principles included more details about the constitutional arrangement of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the establishment of the joint Presidency, Parliament and Constitutional Court. The central authorities will be responsible for the carrying out of Bosnian foreign policy. The agreement achieved today leads us closer to the ultimate goal – true peace. America will strongly object to the division of Bosnia and will continue to work for peace – Clinton stressed.

⁶² Siber-Litl 1996, 401-402; Holbrooke 1998, 153-156.

⁶³ Siber-Litl 1996, 402-403.

Holbrooke offered Tudman a settlement: if he accepted to suspend the operations and strengthen the Bosniak-Croat Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the US were ready to support the integration of eastern Slavonia, the last part of Croatia held by the Serbs. This convinced Tudman. By the end of September 1995 the front lines had changed: the territory controlled by the Bosnian Serbs was reduced from around 70 % to around 50 %, Croats and Bosniaks approximately controlled equal parts of the remaining territory. The map created after the offensive in September of 1995 was in accordance with the peace plan drawn up by Holbrooke and Lake. President Clinton personally announced ceasefire that would begin in five days. The ceasefire was supposed to last for 60 days during which negotiations would take place leading to an all-encompassing peace solution.⁶⁴ After the Geneva agreement on the internal division and the New York agreement on the joint institutions of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian state, it seemed that peace was nearing. Even though the summer changes in the war geography of Bosnia and Herzegovina made the US Congress contemplate whether the US forces should go to war to Bosnia and Herzegovina, and whether 25,000 troops should be sent there, as Clinton promised, when the dividing lines became so clear. Nevertheless, the logic of the General Staff Shakasvili prevailed that if NATO was already going to Bosnia and Herzegovina to implement peace, then this should be such a demonstration of force that nobody will dare to play with it. It was planned that only a few weeks after the peace agreement was signed the heavily armed NATO forces under American leadership should come to Bosnia and Herzegovina, supported by tanks, artillery and aviation.⁶⁵

News about the agreement to implement a ceasefire in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 10 October 1995 if certain conditions were met in Washington was declared personally by president Clinton, thus showing that the White House was directly supervising the peace process. Appearing in front of reporters, he stressed that a new strong step was taken towards peace, expressing satisfaction that he can declare that an agreement about the ceasefire was reached and suspension of all military enmities that will come into place on 10 October if certain conditions were met. At the same time, the governments of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia, agreed on direct negotiations in the US in order to move closer to the peace agreement.⁶⁶ There was a sense that peace was already near so after-war roles were being handed out. In the forming and functioning of the multinational forces, that were supposed to replace the UN units, the US had a leading role by virtue of the fact that it was supposed to send the greatest number of soldiers, while the EU assumed coordination in tasks regarding post-war reconstruction and rebuilding. At the same time, diplomatic preparations took place: for the location of the

⁶⁴ Ibid., 404-405.

⁶⁵ Kurspahić; *Oslobođenje*, 6. 10. 1995, 5.

⁶⁶ "Reagovanja u svijetu na mirovni sporazum. Otvorena vrata ka miru", *Oslobođenje*, 6. X. 1995, 3.

negotiations between presidents Izetbegović, Milošević and Tuđman, the American air base Wright-Patterson in Dayton, Ohio, was chosen. On 31 October 1995 president Clinton declared that *the peace negotiations in Dayton were the best chance, and possibly the last chance for peace in the former Yugoslavia*.⁶⁷

The key message from Christopher's greeting speech at the opening of the peace negotiations on 1 November 1995 was – *in order to achieve a lasting peace, Bosnia and Herzegovina must remain a unified state in internationally recognized borders, and as a unique subject in international right*. Responding to one of the burning issues of the peace process – about the future of Sarajevo as a unified or divided city, Christopher, speaking about conditions for lasting peace, also said that Sarajevo *deserved a chance to be the beautiful city it previously was*. To these conditions for peace he also added the right for the return of those who were expelled and the rightful compensation for their property, punishment of those responsible for war crimes and a peaceful reintegration of Slavonia into the constitutional order of Croatia. His speech initiated negotiations that were continued in secrecy in separate rooms in the air base. In the last conversation with reporters before the negotiations were closed for press (*you cannot speak publicly about secret negotiations*), Holbrooke stated that the three presidents each received a thick book of the *General framework for peace* with eleven annexes – chapters: about the military aspects of achieving peace, including the engagement of the American army within the NATO forces, about the future democratic elections for joint institutions of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian state and its two units, about the proposed constitutional arrangements, about the future of refugees, maps... As an illustration of the remaining difficulties in achieving the agreement he cited the dilemma about future elections: who has the right to vote in them, how will the Bosniaks from ethnically cleansed areas, such as Banja Luka, be able to vote...⁶⁸ Particular attention was placed on two key questions: the strengthening of the Bosniak-Croat alliance and the status of eastern Slavonia. The settlement of these contentious issues paved the way for more difficult tasks

⁶⁷ Holbrooke: *Oslobođenje*, 1. XI 1995, 1. In an interview given to Washington Post which was published on 27 October, Holbrooke specified that the agreement included detailed proposals for constitutional and territorial solutions. According to his words, this package included the agreement about the division of the forces, a suggestion for election on the territory of whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as an agreement about the return of refugees who had been expelled during the three-and-a-half-year long war. Four days before the beginning of the peace negotiations, Holbrooke warned that there would be no peace if the Serbs continue to insist on their right to cede from Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time, Secretary of State Christopher declared that during the negotiations the USA would employ tactics of relaxing some sanctions to Serbia, and even offering et certain awards before the official signing of the agreement, stressing at the same time that the USA will not permit an agreement which would allow the Republic of Srpska to cede and join Serbia.

⁶⁸ Holbrooke; *Oslobođenje*, 26, 2. XI 1995, 1.

– drawing up a border between the two entities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The German ambassador Michael Steiner attempted to get concessions from the Bosniaks and Croats. During the bilateral meeting it appeared that the delegation of the Bosnia and Herzegovina government was divided. Bosniaks wanted division of authority based on parity of population, while the Croats wanted equal representation. After he ironed out differences between the Bosniaks and Croats, on 10 November 1995 Steiner managed to ensure an agreement that reaffirmed the Federation.⁶⁹ Even more importantly, the Croats accepted to give up Herceg-Bosna, while the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina accepted to transfer authority to the government of the Federation. The agreement also included the reintegration of Mostar, the return of refugees and a customs union.⁷⁰ The most difficult part of negotiations in Dayton concerned the future territorial organization of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the last week it seemed that the negotiations would end in failure, but a series of compromise proposals allowed them to be concluded successfully.⁷¹

The Dayton peace agreement was achieved on 21 November 1995, after three weeks of negotiations. This was a lengthy document which contained 150 pages and 102 maps. It was ratified with the Paris agreement on 14 December 1995. It included the *General agreement on peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, with eleven annexes that determined its implementation. By declaring on 21 November that an agreement had been reached, president Clinton concluded that the plan would preserve Bosnia and Herzegovina as a unified state, within internationally recognized borders.⁷² Christopher, who presided over the ceremony and also had

⁶⁹ Čalić 1996, 251; Siber-Litl 1996, 406; Schönfeld 1996, 111.

⁷⁰ IP, 1, 1996, 72-78.

⁷¹ Holbrooke 1998, 233-314.

⁷² Lukić 2003, 32. “Obraćanje Bila Klintona. Bosna – jedinstvena država”, *Oslobodenje*, 17. XI 1995, 3. It will consist of two parts – the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republic of Srpska. The capital, Sarajevo, will exist united. There will be a central government which will consist of the Parliament, Presidency and the Constitutional Court, and which will be in charge of foreign policy, foreign trade, monetary policy, statehood, immigration and other important functions. The status of citizens will remain under the authority of the central government and there will be an obligation of holding free democratic elections under international control. All people will be allowed to return to their homes. People will be able to travel throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. An independent commission and an international civil police force will monitor human rights. Those indicted of war crimes will be excluded from political life. Describing the implementation process, Clinton claimed: NATO forces will be sent there in order to ensure the implementation of the agreement. The USA, as the leader of NATO, must send its forces. If this does not succeed, war will be resumed, killings will be resumed, and the war that has destroyed so many lives will spread like poison throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina... Our leadership has made it possible that this agreement brings to a close the killing of innocent people, that our citizens viewed on their TV screens each night for four long years. Now the USA, together with its allies, must make this peace real and long lasting. This is our interest and the interest of all countries across the World.

the role of witness during the signing of the document, expressed gratitude to the US as the agreement was reached when it seemed that everything was lost.⁷³ President Izetbegović said that *it was a historical day for Bosnia and Herzegovina and for the World. For Bosnia because war will be replaced by peace, and for the World because the suffering of Bosnia and all that followed it was a moral issue of the first order that concerned every man and every woman in the World... This might not be a just peace, but it is more just than the continuation of war. In the current situation, in the current World, a better peace could not have been achieved.*⁷⁴

Conclusion

The Dayton Peace Agreement was the result of a compromise, which was its greatest weakness. Instead of being the result of a careful and studious concerted effort to find the right solutions for the lasting peace in the region, for the West the Dayton Peace Agreement was just another in a series of efforts to find an instrument that could achieve the declared political goals. Holbrooke considered the agreement, which had been imposed by himself on the warring parties, to be generally satisfactory, because it stopped the war and established a unified state, reflecting the primary objectives of the United States in Bosnia and Herzegovina. That however, in his opinion, does not mean that the Dayton Peace Agreement is perfect, acknowledging some weaknesses in it. For some time, certain voices from Bosnia and Herzegovina and the international representatives are calling for a modification of the provisions of the Dayton Peace Agreement. Some appeal to the convening of the Dayton II, in order to correct deficiencies of the original plan, which could be clearly seen due to its inefficient implementation. The division of the country into two territorial entities is a fundamental weakness of the Dayton Peace Agreement since it prevents the proper functioning of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The international community has insisted that the two entities strictly implement the Dayton Peace Agreement, but did not know how to fulfill

⁷³ "Parafiranje dejtonskog sporazuma. Dan koji će ući u istoriju," *Oslobođenje*, 22. XI 1995, 5. In his speech Christopher said: We have arrived to a day that many believed would never come. We have arrived at a time for building just peace. It offers tangible hope that there will be no day when one has to hide from bullets, there will be no winters when fresh graves will be dug out, there will be no more years of isolation from the outside World. The agreement is a victory for all those who believe in multiethnic democracy. The implementation of this will require great efforts in the days that lay ahead of us, but these efforts can now begin as the war that has divided this country has finally ended. The agreement is also a victory for those in the World who believed that principles of peace were possible. The victory which has been achieved here today will not be ensured if the promises given are not implemented. Commitments were placed on paper, and in the days ahead they will have to be turned into actions.

⁷⁴ "Alija Izetbegović: Mir pravedniji od rata", *Oslobođenje*, 22. XI 1995, 5.

the provisions of Annex 7 of the General Framework Agreement related to the return of refugees, the most important question for the future demographic picture of Bosnian and Herzegovinian society. The solution provided by the US diplomats in Dayton is mainly pragmatic one and reflects the balance of military power in the region. In Dayton, the basic rule of international law which stipulates that the international community does not accept the violent conquest and annexation of the territory of another state has been fully respected; this represents the main value of the peace agreement. Confirming the international legal norm of *ius possidetis iuris*, the signatories of the Dayton Accords have confirmed that norm as the fundament on which the international order has been built on. Through a number of measures implemented by the international community, the results of ethnic cleansing remained unchanged. The return of displaced persons has progressed very slowly. Ideologies, that provoked the war, continued to remain alive and by using propaganda and rhetoric they deepen divisions in the society of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In order to enable the country's transition from the statute of the international protectorate to the state capable to independently manage its own political institutions, it is necessary to take a number of measures. Bosnia and Herzegovina is still waiting for the support on its European path. It can only work if the current democratic settings, if needed, are imposed by the international community, which left the project of building institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina unfinished. If the international community consistently supports Bosnia and Herzegovina, its path of joining the modern European societies will be much shorter and much faster.

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