

Igor Vranić: “The International Community’s Peace Plans in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina 1991-1995”

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Abstract

The article offers a review of the Yugoslav war of dissolution with special reference to the international community’s peace plans. The article’s main aim is to examine the purpose and efficiency of international diplomacy and the role of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in new geopolitical relations caused by the fall of Communism. Answers are provided as to what caused the war, whether the war could have been avoided and what were the war aims of the belligerent sides.

Key words: Yugoslavia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, international mediation, sovereignty, Serbian rebellion

Abbreviations used in the text

ABiH	<i>Armija Bosne i Hercegovine</i> (Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina)
BiH	<i>Bosna i Hercegovina</i> (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
HDZ	<i>Hrvatska demokratska zajednica</i> (Croatian Democratic Union)
HVO	<i>Hrvatsko vijeće obrane</i> (Croatian Defence Council)
HR HB	<i>Hrvatska Republika Herceg-Bosna</i> (Croatian Community of Herceg-Bosna, 1993-1996)
HZ HB	<i>Hrvatska zajednica Herceg-Bosna</i> (Croatian Community of Herceg-Bosna, 1991-1993)
JNA	<i>Jugoslavenska narodna armija</i> (Yugoslav people's army)
RS	<i>Republika Srpska</i> (The Serb Republic in BiH, 1992-)
RSK	<i>Republika Srpska Krajina</i> (Republic of Serbian Krajina, 1990-1995)
SDA	<i>Stranka Demokratske Akcije</i> (Party of Democratic Action)
SDS	<i>Srpska Demokratska Stranka</i> (Serbian Democratic Party in BiH)
SR BiH	<i>Socijalistička Republika Bosna i Hercegovina</i> (Socialist Republic of BiH, 1943-1992)
UJDI	<i>Udruženje za jugoslavensku demokratsku inicijativu</i> (Association for Yugoslav Democratic Initiative)
UNPA	<i>United Nations Protected Areas</i>

Introduction

The latest war in Croatia and BiH has produced a multitude of scholarly, semi-scholarly, autobiographical and journalistic works. Only a very small number of these works meet the requirements of modern historical science, while the majority are attempts to achieve personal political aims under false academic pretense. Also, participants of the war have attempted, through their own literary works, to present themselves in a more positive light or explain how they were right but were not listened to which led to today's results that are worse than expected. A separate group consists of non-Yugoslav authors, usually poorly familiar with the topics as well as with the languages of the studied area. These are mostly people who have spent some time in Belgrade or Sarajevo where they gained acquaintances, as for example, David Gibbs, Robert Donia, John Fine, etc. They usually produce some kind of colonial discourse regarding peoples of the former Yugoslavia, i.e. how they have 'ancient hatreds' or of their prewar unity,

how they were not wise enough to choose *the right* choice at the first democratic elections etc. Exceptions to this can be discerned in the likes of James Gow and Michael Mann, whose works, however, also include a noticeable lack of ‘local knowledge’.¹ An interesting development was the growth of scientific papers on the Serbs starting immediately before and continuing after the NATO intervention on Kosovo in 1999, which evidently was meant to serve as part of a legitimation process.

This article will present a personal view of the key events of the war that was waged on Croatian and Bosnian-Herzegovinian territory, with special attention paid to peace plans led under the aegis of the international community. In considering these plans I will present the changes they brought to the field, and what each plan offered to all sides, but also the reasons for their general failure. However, it is important to bear in mind that the outlined picture is primarily based on the current level of knowledge, which could experience a drastic change in the future when the official archives of all sides are opened.

Global change and the role of Yugoslavia

The late 1980s of the twentieth century brought about notable global changes and subsequently the collapse of Communist systems. Significant changes also affected the European Community, today’s European Union. Leading countries started establishing tighter co-operation, and the possibility of expanding the Union was growing stronger as an idea. Although it was the main potential entrant, Yugoslavia did not join the EC, having, as it did, preconditions to complete such reforms as political and cultural democratization and introducing the market economy system.² Besides, democratic elections were also a precondition for receiving the loans Yugoslavia had been given since the start of the 1980s.³

The first democratic elections held in Yugoslavia in 1990 resulted in winning campaigns by democratic national parties, except in Serbia where the Communists led by Slobodan Milošević maintained their lead. It appears that the leading countries of the European Community, namely Great Britain, laid too much hope in the reformed Communists led by Ante Marković and the Democratic Alternative (*Demokratska alternativa*) led by

¹ An excellent essay of the same name on ‘local knowledge’ can be found in Geertz (1983).

² Miškulin (2010): 299-301.

³ Bekić (2010): 340.

Adil Zulfikarpašić, Desimir Tošić and Vane Ivanović, who were expected to reform Yugoslavia into a state acceptable to the European Community. This preceded the actions of Communist intellectuals and employees, who founded the UJDI in 1989. Distinguished members included the likes of Branko Horvat, Žarko Puhovski, Milorad Pupovac, Koča Popović, Ljubomir Tadić, Nenad Zakošek, Mirjana Kasapović and Milan Kangrga.⁴ In 1990 Žarko Puhovski published the book *Socijalistička konstrukcija zbilje* (*Socialist Construction of Reality*), which, in the last chapter, included a potential plan for a future state structure, whereby decisions would be made by citizens (not by the state) and important topics would be dealt with through referendums. Since no specific stress was placed on protecting minority rights, it could be presumed that such a system (and the rest of its sort) would pander to the most numerous ‘citizens’. Furthermore, Puhovski was stunned by the citizens’ commitment to the ‘primitive’ HDZ at the first democratic elections, contrary to voting in favor of the intellectuals (presumably UJDI members) and the program presented in his work.⁵

This period was significantly affected by the turnaround in American politics, since the USA wanted to reduce its military obligations in Europe after the Cold War, but also retain its influence. This meant that the USA would not interfere in European security issues unless it was part of some direct interest, which was visible during the obstruction of the Vance-Owen peace plan. By the end of the Cold War, Yugoslavia had lost its significant strategic position of a ‘buffer-zone’ between the East and the West, and was transformed into a guinea-pig, in other words, a training ground for American diplomatic experiments.⁶

Nation-forming, political experience and the creation of the Yugoslavias

Michael Mann separates four sources of power: ideological, economic, military and political. The ideological source refers to the mobilization of social values, norms and rituals of peoples and societies. Military power is a socially organized, congested and lethal form of violence. Political power refers to a centralized and territorial regulation of social life, essentially

⁴ Orlić (2011): 101. This article does not tell the reader much about the state’s problems from the title and summary, but is instead full of the author’s regret because of the UJDI’s failure. Furthermore, the author does not understand the main point of Michael Mann’s book or she has not read it, Orlić (2011): 110.

⁵ Puhovski (1990); for the mental set of Milan Kangrga see the excellent article by Lučić (2005a).

⁶ Gow (1997): 29-30.

being authoritarian and monopolistic.⁷ Before the first democratic elections in Yugoslavia, all four power sources were more or less in the hands of the Communist Party or under its control (monopoly). The elections initiated the redistribution and dispersal of this power. The war in ex-Yugoslavia was essentially a clash between the ‘All Serbs in One Country’ Serbian project and its opponents, primarily consisting of Croats in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bosniaks⁸ and Kosovo Albanians.

When considering the downfall of Yugoslavia a question arises: what are states? What is their point? Pre-modern states were static, possible to sustain by force, while modern countries tend toward a voluntary consent of the people rather than coercion. Both Yugoslavias, the second less than the first, were primarily a tool of the Serbian political elite, but also of others to a lesser extent, and used to carry out their own economic and political interests. The first Yugoslavia (1918-1941) was created out of almost completely formed nations, which had diverse political experiences and cultures. Of all the Yugoslav nations, the loudest political demands were made by either the Croats or Slovenians.

The Yugoslav political centre reckoned that the Yugoslav nations should and could be assimilated to a new Yugoslav nation. The creation of this nation was to be achieved through school-systems, but also repression if necessary. Examples of this kind are known from the 19th century, but in the 20th century this type of assimilation became unsustainable due to the final phase of nation forming. Contrary to this, the second Yugoslavia, according to Communist practice, was impregnated with the opinion that nations were slowly disappearing. A clear example of this opinion is the relatively recent work of Dejan Jović, who is still surprised by the fact that nations have not yet vanished.⁹ Both of the Yugoslav states neglected the importance of nations. Individuals use nationality to perceive their moral obligations, believing that as members of an (imagined) community they are entitled to group solidarity. Nations are not seeking secession from themselves. The impossibility of creating a unified Yugoslav nation caused and deepened

⁷ Mann (2005): 30-32.

⁸ The Bosniaks is current ethnic designation for Bosnian Muslims, which was officially used after 1993. The paper will refer to the (Bosnian) Muslims before 1993 and the Bosniaks after 1993, understanding the same people.

⁹ Jović (2003).

international discords.¹⁰

Western studies of nations and nationalism lost their importance in the 1980s due to the opinion that the role of nations was growing weak. Re-interest in nations and nationalism reappeared in the early 1990s, only after significant international conflicts. Unlike Western intellectuals who were directed toward social studies, the then Croatian historian and dissident Franjo Tuđman warned in his book from 1981 that solving the question of nations was the crucial element for any modern state to function properly.¹¹ So far, nationalism appears to be the most successful movement in achieving integration compared to all other ideologies.¹²

Were the Yugoslavias sustainable?

Compared with the above, it is clear that the odds for conserving the Yugoslavias were extremely poor. Nations were not willing to compromise with other nations about the redistribution of already limited resources. This became visible during the Axis attack on the Kingdom of Yugoslavia when some of its citizens refused to defend it, joining the German forces instead. An important factor in the breakdown of socialist Yugoslavia were the changes in personnel Josip Broz made in the 1970s. From the Second World War up until the 1970s, Broz removed most of his closest political associates, and replaced them with new – thus carrying out a negative selection. The same group continued to rule Yugoslavia after Broz had died, without having the necessary skills and knowledge to sustain a complex multinational country. The only way of sustaining Yugoslavia, (though this did not necessarily guarantee success), was finding a charismatic heir for Broz who would govern like his predecessor.¹³

Since the 1960s, the Serbs have experienced a demographic drop, primarily in Kosovo which became a precondition for conflict. The economic crisis in the 1980s led to a hard struggle for already insufficient resources. The control of these resources was possible only under the condition of federal control, which led to control of the republics and that of local government. Federal control enabled arbitrary redistributions and the installation of politically suitable people in important positions. Due to

¹⁰ Schöpflin (2000): 324-43.

¹¹ F. Tuđman (1981).

¹² M. Tuđman (2012): 201.

¹³ Schöpflin (2000): 337.

insufficient resources, at least one group was expected to face losses. This is why the Serbs were against decentralization which was favored by the Slovenes and Croats. Nationalist parties won the elections in these republics because they asserted that the ‘national wealth’ belonged to the people, in other words, the redistribution which they advocated was more important than political power. An ideal denouement for the Serbs was a strong centralized federation, which they would control and also redistribute all of its resources. A back-up plan was the creation of a Greater Serbia, with a loyal leadership in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁴ An interesting article to single-out in this context is one by Nina Caspersen on the relations of Beograd with Knin and Pale (political centres of RSK and RS), in which the author makes sources out of her own interviews with instigators of the Serbian rebellion in Croatia and BiH which she conducted in 2003. The most interesting person in the interviews is definitely leader of the Serbs in Eastern Slavonia - Goran Hadžić.¹⁵

Practice has shown that is hard to sustain a country under international stress if it lacks domestic legitimation and if there is no voluntary consent on part of the demos.¹⁶ This is best shown in the political situation in today’s Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was created and remains sustainable almost only thanks to international pressure and support.

An overview of the nature of the war

The start of the war in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina had similar features. Firstly, local Serbs would occupy an area, which would lead to the JNA separating the conflicting sides, which in practice meant a confirmation of Serbian conquests, and creating the so-called ‘buffer zones’. When local Serbs failed in seizing territory, generally larger cities, the JNA would surround the cities and attack them with the aim of intimidating and expelling the population. This demonstrative type of violence was meant to force the population to leave without a struggle, due to the fact that the JNA did not have enough men for street combat, a vital factor for seizing cities, but merely artillery. Another advantage of expelling the population was the inability to wage a potential guerilla war from within.¹⁷ The JNA’s dread of

¹⁴ Mann (2005): 363-67.

¹⁵ Caspersen (2007).

¹⁶ Schöpflin (2000): 342.

¹⁷ Gow (1997): 41.

guerrilla warfare was visible at the end of 1991, when it stopped advancing and engaged forces to cleanse the rest of the occupied areas in Croatia. Since cities under siege were easier to defend, and capturing these cities came at the price of a large number of dead and wounded, street warfare was left to the Serb militia.¹⁸

The purpose of leading such a limited war was to force the other side to retreat, rather than to expand the conflict.¹⁹ The unreadiness of the conflicting sides to sustain great mortality led to the creation of forced strategies. This meant avoiding direct combat whenever possible. The aim of coercion was to influence the other sides' conduct through posing threats in order to change the previous conduct. In the case of disregarding the threats, the other side would be exposed to a punishment which would probably be better to avoid. However, the punishment would need to be appropriate, so that the enforcers were satisfied, and not discontented.²⁰ The question remains as to whether the JNA could have managed to intersect Croatia as they planned without applying the given strategy, but instead leaving major cities under siege and then continuing to advance.

The Vance Plan and the international recognition of Croatia: From aggression to international recognition

The first trace of the implementation of the Serbian project can be seen in the plan of proclaiming the federal unit of Srpska Krajina in Knin in 1989, during the celebration of the Battle of Kosovo, planned by the Initial Serb Committee from northern Dalmatia, Lika, Kordun, Banija, Slavonia and Baranja, which was stopped by extinguishing the sound system.²¹

The events which marked the beginning of tensions in May 1990 were the following: disarming the Croatian military reserve, enactment of new amendments in the Croatian Constitution, the staged assassination of Miroslav Mlinar, the withdrawal of the Knin municipality from the Municipality Communities of Dalmatia and the clash at a football match between Dinamo Zagreb and Belgrade's Red Star. The foremost issues with the newly made amendments was in particular the question of Serbian constitutionality, which changed the status of Serbs in Croatia from a

¹⁸ Gow (2003): 161.

¹⁹ Marijan (2008); Gow (2003): 300.

²⁰ Gow (1997): 39.

²¹ Barić (2005): 50.

constitutional nation to a national minority, listed with other minorities.

The problem of the aforementioned ‘local knowledge’ is visible in the works of James Gow and Michael Mann in that they both stress the firing of policemen of Serbian nationality as one of the main causes of the Serbian rebellion in Croatia. On July 3 1990, members of the Public Safety Station Knin sent a letter to the Secretary of the federal police Petar Gračanin, in which they stressed that the Croatian government was relieving Serbian police officers and that they did not want new uniforms or changing the name of the police forces from communist *milicija* to Croatian *redarstvo* (police) due to its similarity to the NDH (Independent State of Croatia, 1941-1945) nomenclature. The *redarstvo* was never officially announced, and new uniforms came into use only at the end of 1991. Two days later Croatian interior minister Boljkovac met with the signatories of the letter in Knin, who requested the establishment of a municipal station, which in practice would have meant an independent militia which the central government would have no control over.²² In early 1991 the police forces of RSK were founded. The government in Zagreb requested the signing of an oath of loyalty to the Republic of Croatia. Rejection would mean a suspension of employment, which was interpreted by the Serbian leadership as a provocation. These new circumstances required a new repressive system which would fulfill the government’s wishes. The authorities placed trustworthy people in crucial positions, while the changes made primarily affected the Serbs due to the fact that they formed the majority in the repressive apparatus.²³ Taking the above into consideration, it seems that relieving the Serbian policemen was not the start of the armed rebellion, but rather the unwillingness of all policemen, regardless of nationality, to serve the central authority. The key problem was that the Serbs, who were over-represented in the communist-era Croatian police forces, compared with their percentage of the population,²⁴ felt that they were losing the privilege of control and handling of the repressive apparatus.

In addition, by the end of June Borisav Jović and Slobodan Milošević were planning to use the JNA to force Croats and Slovenes to separate, with the condition that the Serbs in Croatia carry out a referendum to determine

²² Barić (2005): 68.

²³ Barić (2005): 126-27.

²⁴ In 1984 the Serbs constituted 49% of police officers in Croatia, although in the 1981 census the Serbs constituted only 11.55% of the Croatian population, see Štulhofer (1993).

the borders. The Serbs held a Serbian assembly in Srb on July 25, which proclaimed the ‘Declaration of independence and autonomy of the Serbian people’. The main argument stressed in the Declaration was that the privilege of independence should be given to nations, and not republics.²⁵ According to the Constitution of socialist Croatia, Croatia was “... *the national state of the Croatian people, the state of the Serbian people in Croatia, and the state of other peoples and nationalities who live in it.*”²⁶ The meaning of Communist constitutions was symbolic and intentionally written to be manipulated, and needs to be distinguished from democratic constitutions, it is also clear that Serbs were not granted constitutionality. They would have possessed constitutionality if it had been written that Croatia was the national state of the Serbian people in Croatia. Therefore, if the new Croatian Constitution abolished the constitutionality of the Serbs, it also abolished the constitutionality of other nations as well. This formulation of the Constitution was only meant to emphasise the special position of the Serbian people in Croatia who were larger in number compared to other minorities.

Shortly after this, on August 17, 1990, the police in Zadar took away 70 rifles from the police station in Benkovac, while on the same day in Obrovac and Knin arms of the reserve police were distributed to Serbian rebels. The Croatian police in Zagreb was instructed to deal with the situation with helicopters and transporters. The JNA stopped the helicopters, and the Serbian population in Titova Korenica stopped the transporters. That the rebellion and the JNA’s interference was planned earlier is clearly visible in the fact that two months earlier the 221st Motorized Brigade of the Knin Army Corps had its classification brought to level B (15-60% capacity), and was reinforced with two batallions of A classification (60-100% capacity).²⁷

The Serbian referendum of autonomy was carried out from August 19 to September 2, and on September 30 autonomy was proclaimed with 99.96% of the voters approving. Taking into consideration that the voting was not completely regular, as well as the media war that was waged against the Croatian government, it is still clear that the Serbian people did not want to live in any kind of Croatia. A significant statement on this

²⁵ Barić (2005): 72.

²⁶ Yugoslav constitution (1974): 242.

²⁷ Barić (2005): 78-80.

question was made by Milan Babić in 1991: *“I assure you that we in Krajina would rather die or depart from Krajina to Europe, than to agree to any kind of living in any kind of Croatian state.”* It seems very likely the mass departure of the Serbs in 1995 during Croatian military operations was planned by the Serbian government with a yet unknown goal in mind. The probable answer is that the Serbian government wanted to damage the reputation of Croatia in the eyes of the international community and move the refugees to Kosovo in order to increase the Serbian demographic rate.

In early March 1991, an armed revolt broke out in Pakrac, which led to the intervention of the JNA, separating the local Serbs and the Croatian police, enabling the local Serbs to retreat. Pakrac was the first place to witness the JNA’s role as a ‘buffer-zone’. Preventing the Croatian police from entering the territory under armed siege with closed roads, the JNA secured the better organization of the local Serbs and basically gave them protection.²⁸ A week after this, demonstrations broke out in Belgrade against Milošević and the ruling structures. The opposition resented Milošević’s poor care for Serbs outside of Serbia.²⁹ On March 21, local Serbs occupied the Bureau of the National Park Plitvička Jezera. Croatian police arrived to intervene, and again the JNA appeared as a ‘buffer-zone’. At the Plitvice Lakes the first Croatian victim fell – the police officer Josip Jović. In May, the Croatian village of Kijevo was attacked and 12 police officers were killed in Borovo Selo.

From declaring independence to the acceptance of the Vance Plan as a precondition for international recognition

On June 25, the Croatian Parliament proclaimed the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Croatia. By mediation of the international community, specifically the European Triplet for Antiwar Actions,³⁰ on July 8 on the Brijuni Islands, a three-month moratorium was proclaimed on the independence. In practice this enabled the JNA and Croatian Serbs to continue the plans for the last attempt at salvaging Yugoslavia. Croatian authorities desired the immediate dispatching of international observers

²⁸ Marijan (2008): 57-58.

²⁹ Lučić (2008): 120.

³⁰ The Triplet consisted of ministers of foreign affairs from past, present and future chairs of the European Community. In the beginning the Triplet was led by Italy, Netherlands and Luxembourg. Italy was later succeeded by Portugal.

which was opposed by the federal Yugoslav authorities. The observers' mission arrived in Croatia at the beginning of July, but they stressed that their authority merely applied to Slovenia. This standpoint changed only at the end of July, when Croatia became part of their mission. The Federal authorities created problems with regard to the observers, delaying their dispatch as much as possible. After a few failed initiatives, an ultimatum was handed to all sides to agree to given conditions by September 1. The mission started its operations on the field with a civil character although Croatian authorities also sought a military character.³¹ Besides their official work, the observers carried out intelligence work for their home countries as well.

The last attempt at stopping Croatian independence was the bombing of the official residence of the Croatian government, Banski Dvori, by the JNA, on October 7, 1991, after the expiry of the three-month moratorium. Croatian President Franjo Tuđman, President of the Federal Presidency Stjepan Mesić and Federal Prime Minister Ante Marković left the scene a few minutes earlier and thus avoided assassination. The next day independence was proclaimed by the Croatian Parliament. The Croatian government wanted to gain international recognition as soon as possible and secure the arrival of the UN Peace Corps. In Paris, on October 11, representatives of the European Community offered the Serbs autonomy in Croatia and stressed that Croatia would soon be internationally recognized, which they refused immediately.³² The Serbian government and the JNA wanted to conquer the planned areas and only after that secure the arrival of the UN Peace Corps. The Croatian government, however, started a series of successful military operations, which resulted in recovery of parts of Bilogora and west Slavonia. In Geneva, on November 23, a cease-fire and the raising of the blockade of barracks was signed by the Presidency of Yugoslavia, Croatia and the JNA, which was meant to enable the departure of the JNA as one of the preconditions for the arrival of the Peace Corps.

Since the beginning of the conflicts on the territory of former Yugoslavia, the main disagreement was the question of the right of separation – was it the right of a nation or a federal republic? The inability of conducting sovereignty over its entire territory was the main problem for

³¹ For more information on the observers' mission see Miškulin (2010).

³² Barić (2008): 68.

Croatia. In normal circumstances, a government can justify almost any operation of conducting its sovereign rights. A sovereign authority is an ultimate one which can not be overruled or rejected.³³ Sovereignty has to be achieved through armed force, but also sustained in the case of individual rebel activity.³⁴ Accordingly, the Croatian government did not have full, but limited, sovereignty because it was not able to control its whole territory or to quash the rebellion by negotiation or by force.

Due to the disagreement of the main participants, The Ministers' Council of the European Community decided to form an Arbitration Commission which would investigate the problem, popularly named the Badinter Commission after its president Robert Badinter who was the president of the Constitutional Court of France. Even though the commission consisted of five High Court judges (Italy, Germany, France, Spain and Belgium), the main negotiations were held between Germany and France, that is between the chancellor Helmut Kohl and the minister of Foreign Affairs, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, on the one hand, and the French president Francois Mitterand and the Foreign Affair minister Roland Dumas on the other. Germany favored the recognition of the newly-founded republics of Croatia and Slovenia to prevent further warfare, while France and Great Britain claimed that premature recognition would only enhance the conflict.

At the same time, under the influence of Great Britain, the Peace Conference on Yugoslavia was convoked under the presidency of Lord Peter Carrington, a highly esteemed diplomat who had enjoyed high positions such as the British Secretary of State for Defence (1970-1974) and Secretary of State for Foreign nad Commonwealth Affairs (1979-1982), Secretary General of NATO (1984-1988) and the Chair of of the Lancaster House Conference, which solved problems in Rhodesia and enabled its transformation into Zimbabwe. The Peace Conference's tactic was, as Lord Carrington himself stressed, to shape the conduct of the conflicting sides by blackmailing them with international recognition through the 'stick and carrot' system. Besides, they founded several ineffective work-groups. Germany played a major role with its lobbying for Croatia and therefore 'confounded' the Peace Conference's plans. After the recognition of

³³ Gow (1997): 68-69.

³⁴ Gow (1994): 476.

Croatia, the Conference blamed Germany for the extension of the war due to premature recognition.

The German instance of the unilateral recognition of Croatia is an exception in international relations. In practice, only states which possess complete rule over their territory are recognised, and after being given approval by a majority of countries in the international community. One of the causes of Germany's behaviour was surely its desire to show its international status, and the intrepidity in making unilateral decisions, without fearing potential sanctions or isolation.³⁵ An important role was also played by the German fear of a wave of refugees which was a potential threat for the country.

It is important to point out that in peace mediations the main goal is to fulfill the interests of the ones who are mediating, and only after that, the interests of the conflicting sides.³⁶ The international community had different interests, on one side the German and Austrian, and on the other French and British interests. However, good mutual relations were more important to them than their stance towards Yugoslavia. The truncated Presidency was therefore surprised after France changed its stance. In exchange for strengthening relations with the newly united German state, France decided to sacrifice its support for preserving Yugoslavia.

Germany advised Croatia to be completely cooperative towards the international community in case the Peace Conference collapsed because of internal problems, and the recognition of Croatia was soon to come.³⁷ Besides, Croatia was told to accept the UN Peace Corps, that is the Vance Plan, as a condition for international recognition, but also for possible membership in the UN. The Vance Plan was presented to all sides on December 11, while the Security Council implemented it with Resolution 724 on December 14, 1991. The sending of peace corps was arranged, including the military component, but not before it was determined that all sides were to respect the cease-fire and the embargo on importing weapons. After Vance's stay in Belgrade where he obtained the Serbian government's acceptance of the peace plan and ceasefire on December 31, 1991, on New Year's Day 1992, he met with Tuđman who accepted the plan. The next day the Sarajevo Agreement was signed which stopped the war in Croatia.

³⁵ Crawford (1996).

³⁶ Filipović (2008): 92.

³⁷ Nobile (2000): 160.

In Croatia an idea emerged in parts of the military structure (Anton Tus, Petar Stipetić, Martin Špegelj, etc) that it was possible to free the entire territory of western Slavonia, and maybe more. Bearing in mind the situation at the time, such an operation was impossible. The Croatian Army had, with great casualties, performed operations in Bilogora and in western Slavonia, and a great number of soldiers were not available for further combat. Besides, it was revealed that the Croatian Army captured areas which were less defended, that is, they were defended by the local Serbs, while better defended lines held by the JNA were difficult to surpass.³⁸

According to the Vance Plan, the mission was to consist of 10 combat battalions, a hundred military observers and 500 civil police officers and assistant military and civil personnel, counting in total 10,000 people.³⁹ It was then the most expensive UN project ever undertaken, and its cost was visible by the fact that the UN could not completely finance it, so that part of the expense was covered by the conflicting sides. The UN's policy of separating conflicting sides was determined primarily by the failure it experienced in the Congo in the 1960s, after which it stopped carrying out offensive operations.⁴⁰ The area under the UN mandate was split into three UNPA zones (Eastern Slavonia, Western Slavonia and Krajina), or four sectors which were located in the zones: East (territory of Eastern Slavonia), West (territory of Western Slavonia), South and North (territory of Krajina). The International forces and observers were to be deployed in the areas that were to be demilitarized, with local armed forces disbanded or required to withdraw. The JNA retreated, and the local Serbs reformed into a type of local militia. The arming of the rebels was placed under strict, 'double' surveillance, one conducted by the international representatives and the other by the local authorities. This 'double' system proved ineffective by the end of the war, when the Serbs managed to acquire arms. According to the plan, the return of refugees was also to be enabled (which did not occur before the conflict ended), while the status quo was to be preserved until a political solution between the conflicting sides was found.⁴¹

A part of the Croatian public was opposed to the arrival of the Peace Corps because it felt that military actions should be continued, while others

³⁸ Marijan (2008): 61.

³⁹ Barić (2005): 149.

⁴⁰ Ničota (1992b): 7-9.

⁴¹ Filipović (2008): 99.

pointed to the potential ending of the war and that the UNPA zones would soon be returned to the legal framework of Croatia thanks to international forces.⁴² With time it was shown that the UN was not able to fulfill its task and that the Serbian side was not prepared to make compromises, which resulted in the liberation of occupied territories excluding eastern Slavonia, Baranja and part of Srijem (Syrmia) which were returned through peaceful reintegration.

On January 14, 1992, the military mission of the UN arrived in the crisis areas and confirmed that conditions for a mission did exist. The next day Croatia received international recognition from 12 members of the European Community, which encouraged other countries to recognise Croatia by the end of January. The president of the RSK (political entity formed in a meantime by Croatian Serbs) Milan Babić was opposed to the start of the UN mission because he considered it a prejudicial decision in favour of Croatia, and demanded international recognition of the RSK.⁴³ Babić also stressed that the Peace Corps should stand on the front-line and protect the Serbs. He opposed the JNA's retreat and wanted to personally negotiate with Cyrus Vance and the UN's General Secretary Boutros Boutros-Ghali.⁴⁴ International factors ignored Babić, letting him know that they did not consider him an international subject. To stop turning Croatia into Cyprus, which was desired by the Serbian rebels, Tuđman, during a meeting with the UN's Head Secretary assistant Murrack Goulding, refused to accept an undetermined mandate for the Peace Corps, which resulted in Goulding's fiery departure from the meeting.⁴⁵ On February 21, the Security Council declared Resolution 743 with which it confirmed that conditions had been created to send the Peace Corps, after the approval of the Serbian and Croatian authorities. UNPROFOR (United Nation Protection Forces) was founded on the basis of a mandate of 12 months, which was possible to extend.⁴⁶

⁴² Barišić (1992); Ničota (1992a).

⁴³ Filipović (2008): 103.

⁴⁴ Barić (2005): 151.

⁴⁵ Filipović (2008): 103.

⁴⁶ Filipović (2008): 106.

Disagreements among Serbian authorities over the acceptance of the Vance Plan

From January 31 to February 2 a meeting of the Yugoslav Presidency was held with Serbian participants from Croatia and BiH. The main purpose of the meeting was to convince the RSK president Babić to accept the peace plan and the sending of the Peace Corps. Babić was the only one opposing the plan during the voting and soon left the meeting. According to the RSK Constitution, the president in absence could be replaced by the president of the *Skupština* (Assembly). As president of the *Skupština*, Mile Paspalj accepted the plan, but pointed out that it also had to be accepted by the *Skupština*.⁴⁷ In Glina, on February 9, 1992, an extraordinary meeting of the RSK Assembly was held under the presidency of Paspalj, inviting Branko Kostić, Blagoje Adžić and other members of the military and civil authorities from Serbia as guests, and at which the only topic was the acceptance of the Vance Plan. Immediately after the session, Babić notified Boutros Boutros-Ghali that the meeting was illegal, but he was further ignored by the international community. The next day Babić held an extraordinary meeting in Knin, where it was stressed that the people had a legitimate right to decide for themselves, and he asked for a referendum. The Knin meeting was pronounced null and void on February 16 in Glina, while Babić was recalled from presidential duty and the referendum was revoked as well. Babić's resistance was not an important factor because Belgrade controlled the JNA and Martić's local police. Therefore, the entire leadership in Knin was forced to accept the plan if they wanted to continue receiving help from Belgrade.⁴⁸

The matter of the 'pink zones'

The 'Pink zones' referred to areas which, according to the Vance Plan, were under Croatian sovereignty, but were temporarily occupied and had to be returned to Croatian rule. However, it was soon clear that the local Serbs were not prepared to hand over these areas, to which Croatia responded by drawing the attention of international representatives to this matter. The 'pink zones' represented a massive communication and economic problem for Croatia, and were also used to target nearby Croatian localities. After failed negotiations, it was decided to militarily occupy these areas. The first

⁴⁷ Barić (2005): 154.

⁴⁸ Barić (2005): 158-62.

operation of this sort happened from June 21-22 in 1992, when the 40 km² area of Miljevci plateau was occupied.⁴⁹ In January 1993, the operation *Gusar* (Pirate) was carried out, known to the public as Operation Maslenica, which secured the strategically important Maslenica Bridge, the Peruča hydropower and the Zemunik airport. This connected the Croatian North with the South, also thereby solving the energetic problem.

The ‘Karadorđevo agreement’ and other political myths

The meeting of the Serbian President Slobodan Milošević and the Croatian President Franjo Tuđman in Karadorđevo, on March 25, 1991, is a common subject in daily-political discussions. For those favoring the idea that they planned the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina it serves as the main evidence for disclosing the intentions of the two presidents.⁵⁰ However, it is important to point out that this meeting did not give rise to significant media attention at the time and appeared in public discussion for the first time only after disagreements emerged in the ruling Croatian party – HDZ, after which Stjepan Mesić, Josip Manolić and their supporters left the party. The first media launch of the ‘division’ story occurred in June 1991, when, in an interview for the Serbian weekly *Vreme*, Muhamed Filipović presented such a thesis with a clear aim in mind – to create suspicion amongst the Muslims towards the Croats, and to justify the Muslim-Serb negotiations being held between Filipović and Adil Zulfikarpašić and Karadžić and Milošević.⁵¹ The conversation between the two presidents was not heard by anybody, although some claim to possess audio-tapes of the talks. If the presidents did arrange the division of BiH, the military actions that occurred afterwards in Croatia and BiH clearly prove that the ‘deal’ collapsed. In a recent book Glaurdić⁵² understands the situation, but cannot cope with the fact that no division took place arguing that the division was arranged, but never carried out. His main sources of cognition are HDZ breakaways Stjepan Mesić and Dušan Bilandžić. However, when Mesić removes pro-Muslim moderate Stjepan Kljuić as head of BiH branch of HDZ, Glaurdić, out of respect, does not specifically name him, but mentions him in general terms as part of the more

⁴⁹ Barić (2005): 178-79.

⁵⁰ For a detailed deconstruction of the Karadorđevo myth see Lučić (2003).

⁵¹ Lučić (2003): 18.

⁵² Glaurdić (2011): 141.

radical Mate Boban's faction.⁵³

It is also important to point out that one third of Croatian territory was occupied soon after the 'agreement', as well as 70% of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore, bearing in mind that during the aggression on Croatia in 1991 BiH served as a logistics base and that the JNA Banja Luka corps in western Slavonia was receiving money from Bosnia-Herzegovina, one could speak of the aggression of BiH against Croatia.⁵⁴ Also, a further question arises – what is Bosnia-Herzegovina in this time, if it did not have control of its own territory and its own institutions? The meeting in Karadžorđevo should, above all, be observed as a political myth which has a practical use in present times for the purpose of disqualifying political, ideological or academic adversaries. The Karadžorđevo myth became a means of pacifying Croatian and Serbian nationalism and for disabling legitimate political demands and rights.⁵⁵

Political myths are also a part of the media war, the purpose of which is to influence the behaviour of people. Thus, the fall of Vukovar was presented by Serbian intelligence as a traitorous sell-out to discourage the Croatian population in Slavonia and force them to escape on the one hand, and to disqualify the political leadership on the other. The people of Vukovar experienced the city's fall as a sell-out primarily because it was easier to deal with defeat as an internal betrayal, rather than admit the supremacy of the enemy.⁵⁶ The same can be seen with the Krajina Serbs who blame Belgrade for the collapse of the RSK.⁵⁷

In his recently published book, retired lieutenant-general of the Army of RS, Novica Simić, writes openly how the 'betrayal' of Posavina was intentionally launched through the media to weaken Croatian forces and for the purpose of conquering the Posavina corridor with less effort, which was of vital importance for the Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Croatian forces achieved initial successes mostly due to the weakness of their opponents, who had to transform the JNA into the Army of the RS. After the successful transformation, Croatian forces could not resist the enemy who

⁵³ Glaurdić (2011): 264.

⁵⁴ Marijan (2004): 215.

⁵⁵ Lučić (2013): 459.

⁵⁶ For an excellent analysis of informational warfare from Hrvoje Zovko's report regarding Vukovar's downfall see Domović (2009).

⁵⁷ For more about the construction of political myths and their social use, see Ančić (2008): 71-105.

outnumbered them and had more military power. Besides the ‘sale’ of Posavina, Simić also notes that the First Krajina Corps leaked intentional misinformation on the agreement between Mate Boban and Radovan Karadžić in Graz:

“The command of the 1st Krajina Corps, through means of intelligence, deliberately spread misinformation as to their intentions. All misunderstandings, disagreements and different interests between Herceg-Bosna and the Muslim leadership in Sarajevo were skilfully manipulated. Information about the agreement between Boban and Karadžić, which was signed in Graz, and according to which the Serbs were to be given a corridor through Posavina, was constantly repeated. Spreading the misinformation that the civil authorities in Osijek held a meeting with representatives of the Posavina and Semberija Serbs, with the presence of the JNA general Prašević, caused even more suspicion amongst Croats and Muslims that something was ‘going on’, and also confirmed doubts as to ‘fishy affairs’ about Bosnian Posavina ... It was a task worthy of every victim.”⁵⁸

The example of the Posavina ‘sale’ is a classic instance of an information war, the aim of which is to discredit the opponent. The opponents' military weakness was used as evidence of an intentional retreat. This type of media warfare was not only intended for the opponent’s public, with the purpose of discrediting the other side, but also for one’s own public, in order to garner support for aims which would not be accepted by the public if the truth was known. The purpose of disinformation is double-natured – to justify one’s own behaviour, intentions and goals through erroneous (untruthful) interpretations of someone else’s behaviour, intentions and goals.⁵⁹ Bosnian Muslim leader Alija Izetbegović publicly accused Tuđman of retreating from Posavina, while at the same time secretly asking the international community to demand the retreat of Croatian forces.⁶⁰

What is Bosnia and Herzegovina and the question of its sovereignty

⁵⁸ Simić (2011): 59-60.

⁵⁹ M. Tuđman (2012): 143, 154.

⁶⁰ Lučić (2013): 420.

In public and academic discourse ‘Bosnia’ is a common subject, without a clear indication of what exactly contemporary, or any other, Bosnia is, while Herzegovina is frequently omitted from the discourse. Considering that the name of the country is **Bosnia and Herzegovina**, it should be used in its full form, except when it is not used exclusively for the geographical terms of Bosnia or Herzegovina. In such discourse, mostly in current Bosniak intellectual circles and/or the “*socialism of semi-educated pseudo-intellectuals*”⁶¹ who comprehend the Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, established in 1943, as a natural given, Bosnia is presented as a millennial country, praising its statehood and multiculturalism. One interesting example is surely Ivan Lovrenović, who sees ‘Bosnia’ as something ‘metaphysical’.⁶² This view neglects the fact that every kind of medieval Bosnian uniqueness was lost in 1463 when the Bosnian kingdom was conquered by the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans introduced a particular state system in which Bosnia did not possess any state- or legal uniqueness, but was merely a province that was legally no different than any other province in the Empire. Similarly to statehood, any kind of multiculturalism stopped after the Ottoman conquest. The only exception were the Franciscans, who represented a social institution, which sustained its existence through the entire period of Ottoman rule, and who also represented the only custodians of the memory of the medieval Bosnian state which grew weaker with time.⁶³ The modern idea of multiculturalism is used, primarily amongst the Bosniak intellectual circles, as a type of dogma which one is not allowed to oppose.⁶⁴ It remains unclear as to why something multicultural automatically means that it is something (absolutely) good, especially bearing in mind today’s situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, when a significant percentage of the population does not wish to live in the country.

Bosnia and Herzegovina was united only in the 19th century, through the occupation by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The purpose of its creation was the forming of a new and unique Bosnian nation which would prevent the union between Croatia and Serbia, serving as a wedge in the cleft.⁶⁵ The

⁶¹ Expression taken from Ančić (1999): 113.

⁶² More about Lovrenović’s understandings in Raspudić (2011).

⁶³ Ančić (1999): 116.

⁶⁴ E.g. Mahmutćehajić (2000).

⁶⁵ See Kraljačić (1987); Okey (2007): 55-143, 253-55.

project collapsed because the central government was not able to convince the Catholic and the Orthodox population that they were Bosnians, and not Croats or Serbs. The nature of Bosnia and Herzegovina is substantially determined by the fact that all the way from its beginnings in the 19th century to this day it was created and sustained only through outside pressure. Bosnia and Herzegovina in today's form was created at the first assembly of the State Anti-Fascist Council for the National Liberation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ZAVNOBiH) on November 25, 1943, in Mrkonjić Grad. It was defined as "... *neither Serbian nor Croatian nor Muslim, but Serbian, Muslim and Croatian together.*"

Bearing in mind the conditions on the field during the international recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina in April 1992, it is clear that it did not have sovereignty. Organized political power broke down by the end of 1991, through the separation of parts of the territory by the Serbs, and the founding of the HZ HB. It is important to point out that the HZ HB did not separate, but rather it acknowledged the state's authority as long as there was national independence in relation to any kind of Yugoslavia.⁶⁶ It did, however, set up a different social structure to protect itself from Serbian conquests due to the inability and the lack of will of the central government in Sarajevo to protect the population. Glaurdić recently shows a lack of understanding of the problem, equalising the separation of Serbian territories from Bosnia and Herzegovina with the founding of Croatian administrative areas within BiH. He also claims that: "... *in the Yugoslav Constitution Bosnia and Herzegovina was defined as a state, like the other republics*",⁶⁷ which is doubtful, because the particularity of SR BiH was the fact that sovereignty was not conferred to a single nation, but rather was shared by three equal nations.

Apart from all of the above, the central authorities were not capable of controlling the repressive organs of the state (police and army) on at least half of the territory they laid claim to in 1992.⁶⁸ Furthermore, it is important to add that at least one third of the population clearly demonstrated that they did not acknowledge the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina with its own central institutions and refused to participate in the referendum on

⁶⁶ M. Tuđman (2005): 99-100.

⁶⁷ Glaurdić (2011): 263, 217. Through the entire work it is clear that the author does not know these facts or does not want to admit them, giving legitimacy only to the Bosniaks.

⁶⁸ Ančić (2008): 167.

independence conducted on February 29 and March 1, 1992. An important determinant of behaviour of all three sides was the attitude toward the Constitution. The Croatian side, as the smallest, accepted most of the solutions, and stressed as the only condition, separation from Yugoslavia. The Muslim side used institutions according to need, most often unconstitutionally because of the lack of consent from all three nations. The Serb side was least concerned about the Constitution, considering that they possessed a force able to control conditions on the field.

The central authorities themselves had, as a repressive organ, according to all definitions, a paramilitary Muslim formation called The Patriotic League (*Patriotska liga*) which will later evolve into the official army of the central Muslim government in Sarajevo – the ABiH. In early 1992, the Patriotic League stressed as its main task, even though no larger conflicts between Croats and Muslims had yet emerged, the ‘protection of the Muslim people’, and also counted amongst their enemies the ‘extreme forces of the HDZ (strength ranging from one to two brigades)’.⁶⁹

The main political parties and their goals

In the summer of 1990, three national parties were founded, gaining significant support at the first free elections, and which were to play crucial roles during the war, and still do to this day. Alija Izetbegović became the president of the SDA, which defined itself as the party for Yugoslav citizens who belong to the Muslim historical and cultural circle. Radovan Karadžić was chosen to lead the SDS, and this party was declared as an ‘all-Serbian national movement’. Davor Perinović was elected to be the president of the BiH branch of the HDZ, but was removed in September and his place was taken, as the officer in charge, by a sports journalist, Stjepan Kljuić. The HDZ declared itself as ‘political movement of all Croatians in the world’.⁷⁰ Therefore, none of these parties were based exclusively on Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is important to point out that, out of these three national parties, HDZ had the least educated members, which led to incompetence in strategic thinking, both medium and long term.⁷¹ Unlike the other two sides, the Croatian Communist leadership, during the Communist government, had no legitimacy amongst the people, which caused it to be frequently

⁶⁹ Ančić (1999): 35-36.

⁷⁰ Lučić (2008): 109-10.

⁷¹ Lučić (2005): 161.

condemned by the Central Committee.⁷² Thus it was only after the first democratic elections that most of the Croatian politicians started to participate in political life, without the previous knowledge possessed by the Muslim and the Serbian side.

The first democratic elections were held on November 18, 1990, and won by a coalition of national parties which secured 84% of the mandates in the Parliament of the SR BiH. The elections reflected the national structure which has remained the practice until the present day. It is important to note that many Western social scientists dispute the free choice and democratic right of the citizens in 1990, considering them to be too immature to make their own political decisions. Using the ‘subsequent cleverness’ syndrome, they have concluded that it would have been better if the citizens had voted for the reformed Communists of Ante Marković, which would have allowed the country to prosper, unlike with the ‘nationalists’ who brought it war.⁷³

It was clear from the start that this type of coalition would have difficulties in reaching a common platform. The key question was that of BiH remaining in or leaving Yugoslavia, which happened after the acceptance of the Declaration of Sovereignty. It is important to point out that the feeling of fellowship in BiH was related to Yugoslavism, and not republican ‘Bosnian’ identity. Accordingly, the relationship with Yugoslavia determined mutual relations between the three nations.⁷⁴ All three sides had a different vision of the internal arrangement of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which would remain visible during the entire war, and also later on.

The referendum on independence and international recognition

The decision on holding the referendum to confirm status of BiH was brought on January 24 and 25 in 1992 in the *Skupština* in the absence of Serbian representatives. In October they founded the *Skupština* of the Serbian people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. For this period it is important to point to the excellent detail noticed by Pehar.⁷⁵ It concerns the 50th meeting of the Presidency of SR BiH held on January 10 under the presidentship of Alija Izetbegović with only one item on the agenda – the Decision of the Serbian *Skupština* on the proclamation of the Republic of the Serbian nation

⁷² Lučić (2013): 22.

⁷³ E.g. Chandler (2000): 7-33.

⁷⁴ Lučić (2013): 179.

⁷⁵ Pehar (2011).

in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The meeting was attended by the representatives of SR BiH from Serbian ranks, Biljana Plavšić and Nikola Koljević.

The session was a potential arena at which negotiations could have taken place, but the result was the opposite. Izetbegović addressed the Serbian representatives with a preponderant tone, stating that they would be arrested in any normal country, which automatically implied that the Serbs were impossible to negotiate with and that he saw them as criminals and persons against whom state force should be used. Although he had been a political prisoner, Izetbegović clearly showed by his stand that he viewed the state from an exclusively Marxist point of view, that is, as an instrument of power by which one group ruled over another. Besides, Izetbegović considered that he himself knew what was best for the Serbs in BiH and that they had enough rights. Instead of attempting to negotiate, Izetbegović threatened war and compared the Serbs with the Nazis. Summarising this speech, one can clearly conclude that Izetbegović felt that only an integral BiH could be the ‘order-issuing authority’, a state in which the internal organisation had to be arranged exclusively according to his ideas, while everything else was considered Nazi expansionism. He had shown clearly that he was ready to start a war over this question.

The Serbian representatives tried to polemicise with Izetbegović, seeking a compromise solution, which was utterly ignored by Izetbegović. Nikola Koljević admitted that the ‘Decision’ was anti-constitutional and should be discussed because it represented the reality on the field. To all this Izetbegović reacted by negating the legitimacy of the Serbian representatives, requesting that the people manifest their wishes through a referendum on independence.⁷⁶ It is not hard to conclude that such a ‘one man – one vote’ principle led to the overruling of minorities. By the publicly uttered principle of a ‘civil republic or civil war’,⁷⁷ it was clear that the denial of the Muslim privilege to represent all citizens inevitably meant war. A part of the mentality of the Muslim political elite is reflected in the statement by Hadžo Efendić, who claimed that they (Muslims) ‘do not have another homeland’,⁷⁸ which had a clear meaning – Serbs and Croats, go to your home countries and achieve your goals there. As an argument against negotiations, Izetbegović pointed to the diversity of the negotiating sides and saw a

⁷⁶ Pehar (2011): 30-37.

⁷⁷ Lučić (2008): 111.

⁷⁸ Lučić (2008): 116.

referendum as the only possible solution. By refusing to negotiate with the Serbs, he was left with the Croats as the only partners for a referendum.

On the Croatian side, Stjepan Kljuić was losing more and more credibility due to the lack of public reaction to the Serbian aggression on Croatian areas, and at the beginning of February resigned at the meeting of HDZ in Široki Brijeg under the presidency of Stjepan Mesić. The central committee of the HDZ was not satisfied with the formulation of the referendum and wanted to put forward a demand for ‘national cantons’. As the meeting was held in Livno, the matter of national cantons is now known as the *Livanjsko pitanje* (The Livno Question). The Parliament of SR BiH rejected the *Livanjsko pitanje*, but invited Croats to vote for independence. The international community accepted the Croatian demands, which were included in the Cutileiro Plan⁷⁹, according to which Bosnia and Herzegovina was to be a state composed of three units based on national, geographic, economic and other criteria. The first round of talks was held on February 13 and 14, on the first day with the three leading parties, and including the opposition on the second day. An agreement was not reached, while an extension for talks was announced for February 21 and 22 in Lisbon.⁸⁰ After returning from the negotiations in Lisbon, Alija Izetbegović stated, at an expanded meeting of the SDA, that the referendum depended on Croatian votes and that he therefore promised them “... *some sort of sovereignty, some kind of national recognition, some regions.*”⁸¹ It is important to point out that immediately after arriving back from Lisbon, Karadžić replied that an agreement on the new referendum formulation should be reached if there was time.⁸²

The referendum was held on February 29 and March 1, resulting in 62.68% of the population voting for independence, primarily Muslims and Croats. Simultaneously, the situation became worse when two Serbs near Travnik were killed while trying to break through Serbian road barricades. In Sarajevo, Serbian nuptials were attacked by a number of Muslims, resulting in one death, and one injured. The SDS blocked on March 2 all important crossroads in Sarajevo and stressed that this was an assault on the entire

⁷⁹ Also known as Cutileiro-Carrington plan, after Lord Carrington and Portuguese ambassador José Cutileiro.

⁸⁰ Begić (1997): 84-85.

⁸¹ Lučić (2008): 136-37.

⁸² M. Tuđman (2005): 137.

Serbian nation.⁸³ The negotiations continued and on March 9 in Bruxelles the ‘Statement on the principles for a new constitutional arrangement in Bosnia and Herzegovina’⁸⁴ was proclaimed, reflecting the negotiations held hitherto on the arrangement of BiH as a state divided into three units with a national appellation. Local governments would have broad authority, while the state would be decentralized with the central government being a guardian of sustainability and key strategic interests. After the negotiations were nearly finished, Izetbegović stated that he did not want national regions which were the basis of the new constitutional proposal. On March 11 the Serbian *Skupština* rejected the Bruxelles constitutional arrangement emphasising that the minimum that the Serbs could accept was to either remain in Yugoslavia or a confederal state consisting of three national states.⁸⁵

On April 6, a group of citizens from a large anti-war rally held outside crashed into the building of the BiH *Skupština* in Sarajevo and proclaimed the ‘All-National Parliament of the Citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina’. The Council of Ministers of the European Community recognised it on the same day, while the United States, Austria and Croatia followed suit on April 7.⁸⁶ The Muslim rejection of the very basis of the new constitutional arrangement was probably suggested by American diplomacy. The Serbs, regardless of their rejection of the plan, were prepared for further negotiations. The question remains as to whether they were just trying to ‘buy some time’ for further conquests or were they prepared, as they themselves stressed, to accept a federal BiH inside Yugoslavia or a confederal state consisting of three national units. After Izetbegović retreated, there was a lack of international pressure on the sides to accept the plan, which resulted in further negotiations throughout April and May in Sarajevo and Lisbon with poor chances of being accepted. The impossibility of a real threat from the international community in case of non-acceptance of the plan highlighted its weakness i.e. its inability to force an implementation through the deployment of land troops, which is one of the main tasks in international mediation. One of the causes of the reluctance of the international community to send combat forces was, as Boutros Boutros-Ghali pointed out, the unfavourable natural geographic conditions, which

⁸³ Lučić (2008): 138.

⁸⁴ M. Tuđman (2005): 146-50.

⁸⁵ Begić (1997): 88-91.

⁸⁶ Lučić (2008): 139.

caused dread considering the American experience in Vietnam.⁸⁷ International weakness became, above all, an impetus for the Serbian and Muslim side to stall and to put off the negotiations. This type of ‘fingers crossed’ negotiation tactic consisted of consent in principle and of sudden withdrawal if the others accepted it and would remain a characteristic of Muslim diplomacy throughout the war. The Muslim goal was an integral state exclusively under their rule, and then, if that was not possible, to acquire a larger part of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Cutileiro’s Plan offered the Muslims 44% of the territory, which matched their representation in the country, and included urban areas with numerous mineral, industrial and infrastructural resources. This meant that the Muslim side was offered the most out of all three nations. The Serbs were also offered 44% of the territory which was more than their share of the population. However, the given areas were not as developed and did not enable a complete link to be made with the occupied areas in Croatia. The Croats were to be given less territory considering their share of the population, but they accepted the plan in principle.⁸⁸

According to the Cutileiro Plan, the Parliament was to be bicameral. One House would be directly elected, while the other would have an even number of representatives from all three communities to prevent over-voting. The central government would be in charge of defence and foreign affairs, the economy and finances, infrastructure and the basic needs of the population. Every community would have broad regional authority and the possibility of veto in the Parliament on everything that could damage their interests. Besides, all communities were allowed to decide for themselves as long as this did not endanger the independence and territorial integrity of the whole of the country.⁸⁹

The rejection of the Cutileiro Plan by the Muslim side was accompanied by three documents published by the Presidency and the Government – ‘The Platform for Actions of the BiH Presidency in Warfare’, ‘Standpoints on the Administrative and Territorial Arrangement of BiH’ and ‘Constitutional Principles for the Internal Arrangement of the Republic of BiH’. The documents shared a negative attitude towards cantonization, i.e. the organisation of the state upon (albeit not solely) the ethnic principle.

⁸⁷ Gow (1997): 97.

⁸⁸ Nobile (2000): 548-49.

⁸⁹ Gow (1997): 85-86.

Therefore, the Muslims, who controlled 21% of the territory, would decide for all citizens, regardless of the fact that the Cutileiro Plan was a precondition for international recognition. According to these documents, an arrangement similar to the plan was proposed, but differed from it by renouncing sovereignty for the regions. The Cutileiro Plan saw the regions as the source of sovereignty i.e. as units with constitutionality, in which national majorities could form their own administration. This is why the Muslims resisted the ‘ethnic criteria’ so strongly. According to Muslim plans, the regions were to be established by the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and most of them would not have been able to make independent political decisions, but only economic and cultural decisions. The central government was to be constructed so as to ensure the dominance of the majority without the possibility of being endangered, that is, through a control mechanism.⁹⁰ This was the Muslim idea shown in Izetbegović’s statement talking about “... *some kind of sovereignty, some national rights and some regions.*”

On July 21, Tuđman and Izetbegović signed the ‘Agreement of Friendship and Cooperation’, but Izetbegović refused to sign a military agreement, stating that the Serbian people would “... *surely see it as a threat*” and that “... *it would be better to leave more room for the operations of international factors.*”⁹¹ The Cutileiro mission officially failed on August 26, 1992 at the London conference when Cutileiro and Lord Carrington resigned, and were replaced by Cyrus Vance and Lord David Owen.⁹² It is interesting to note, though one should conduct further research into the matter, that during the first 6 months of the conflict, the number of killed counted for four fifths of the total number of killed in the entire war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that the most of the war crimes were committed by the JNA and Serbian paramilitary troops.⁹³

The Vance-Owen plan as the first attempt to establish a unitary BiH

As regards the aforementioned Muslim objections, the newly elected Vance and Owen started working on a new plan which would partly satisfy the demands of all sides. According to this new plan BiH would be organized

⁹⁰ Mrduljaš (2009): 126-28.

⁹¹ Marijan (2004): 229.

⁹² Begić (1997): 101.

⁹³ Gow (2003): 268.

into ten regions (provinces) – three for every nation and a neutral Sarajevo district. It would be a unitary decentralised state which would mean a loss of sovereignty for Croats and Serbs under the disguise of multi-ethnicity, whereas Muslims would only be fully sovereign as the most numerous people. Croats and Serbs would have only national-cultural identities without special local and state political rights. The Muslim strategy was to provoke military interventions against the Serbs or to diplomatically force the international community to coerce the other two sides to accept their conditions.⁹⁴

The Vance-Owen Plan was supported by the European Community and Russia, but the main role in its rejection was played by the United States. The Bush administration had kept away from Bosnia and Herzegovina since the beginning of the crisis, possibly because of the economic relationships established with Serbia by some high officials such as Brent Scowcroft and Lawrence Eagleburger. Also, the territory of Yugoslavia lost its geostrategic importance so that the United States left the resolution of the crisis to the European Community.⁹⁵ After the Vance-Owen plan was presented, the Muslims seemed clearly satisfied with its propositions. The plan consisted of three parts: military, political and a map of delineation. The military part included the separation of the warring sides, demilitarization of Sarajevo and placing heavy armament under control. According to the political part, every unit had to have an administrative and economic centre, but without political autonomy. A bicameral parliament was to be organized with a directly elected House of Representatives and House of Peoples which would consist of members of the regional governments. The House of Representatives would be elected by the principle of proportional representation which would have led to the domination of the most numerous peoples according to the principle of ‘one man – one vote’. This was clearly the result of a compromise according to the idea of either a ‘civil state or civil war’. To ensure majority domination completely, it was proposed that in the case of disagreement between the Houses, the last word would be the one of the House of Representatives.⁹⁶

The situation changed drastically when presidential candidate Bill Clinton started to mention possible military intervention against the Serbs in

⁹⁴ Mrduljaš (2009): 129.

⁹⁵ Gow (1997): 205.

⁹⁶ M. Tudman (2005): 178-79.

Bosnia and Herzegovina in his campaign. Since then the Muslim side started to linger in negotiations. In the case of military intervention against the Serbs, they could establish control over most parts of BiH. The Serbs rejected the unitary plan and seized mostly Muslim territories in eastern Bosnia, except the enclaves of Srebrenica, Goražde and Žepa.⁹⁷ A potential reason for the Serbian rejection may be linked to the third unit in the Vance-Owen plan, which would have split the unification of all territories under Serbian control, causing problems of supply in western Bosnia and the Serb-held parts in the Republic of Croatia.⁹⁸

The Vance-Owen plan led to an open Muslim-Croat war in territories under joint control. Bearing in mind that the Croatian side was interested in accepting the plan, while the Serbian side even proclaimed a ‘Declaration of the conclusion of war’ on December 17, it is obvious that the Muslim side was dissatisfied with the plan, although they publicly proclaimed their acceptance of it. Muslim attacks on Croats followed in central Bosnia, where the Muslims were numerically able to overpower the Croats.⁹⁹ One of the strongest pieces of evidence for this can be found in the statement of Rasim Delić, Commander-in-Chief of ABiH in February 1994 on how:

*“ ... the HVO was eliminated from the territories of Jablanica, Konjic, Fojnica, Kakanj, Zenica, Travnik and Bugojno. Therefore, one complete province according to the Vance-Owen plan with its centre in Travnik.”*¹⁰⁰

After the Serbian rejection of the Vance-Owen plan, the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia decided to move from Geneva to New York so that the Security Council could adopt the resolution on its implementation. Its implementation was overruled by the votes of the five permanent members after the objection of the United States. After unsuccessful negotiations with his former deputy from the State Department, Warren Christopher, Cyrus Vance resigned from duty. He was replaced by the former Norwegian minister of defence and actual minister of international affairs Thorvald Stoltenberg on May 1. In order to retain good relations with their European allies, on February 10, 1993, the United States

⁹⁷ Mrduljaš (2009): 139-40.

⁹⁸ Gow (1997): 240.

⁹⁹ Marijan (2004): 222.

¹⁰⁰ Marijan (2004): 227.

announced its six statements on American policy towards Bosnia and Herzegovina: all agreements must be the result of negotiations, not imposed, sanctions against Serbia should be stricter; the use of military force in the case of Serbian involvement in Kosovo; the cessation of murders and destruction; and all agreements needed to be conducted on the field after consultation with the allies of the US.¹⁰¹ The United States rejected the Vance-Owen plan because of its unreadiness to send combat troops and in order to establish closer connections with the Islamic world and the Muslim lobby in the United States, which surely made a big impression on politicians who lived in the United States such as Ejup Ganić and Muhamed Šaćirbey.

The Security Council adopted Resolution 820 on April 17 1993 in order to force the Serbian side to sign the Vance-Owen plan within a period of 9 days under the threat of the enlargement of sanctions. Lord Owen was in Belgrade from April 21 to 26 trying to convince Milošević and Dobrica Ćosić to force the Serbs from BiH to sign the plan. On April 25 and 26, the Serbs from BiH decided to conduct a referendum on whether to accept the plan. The purpose of conducting the referendum was probably to buy more time and not to suffer more sanctions. Such a plan proved to be wrong because of the Security Council's Resolution 821, which expelled Yugoslavia from ECOSOC (UN economic and social committee). The last attempt to save the Vance-Owen Plan occurred at the beginning of May in Athens when Milošević, Ćosić and Greek Prime Minister Konstantinos Mitsotakis tried to convince Karadžić to sign the plan. Karadžić signed the plan, but stated that his signature had to be ratified by the Parliament.

Milošević, Ćosić, Mitsotakis and the Montenegrin president Momir Bulatović were present during the assembly in order to force a positive outcome. A great majority of Parliament members (96%) supported the referendum.¹⁰² Although Milošević was disappointed, it was only due to the sanctions against Yugoslavia. That moment was a turning point because local Serbian leaders were not ready for a compromise and wanted the promised unification with, or federal status within, Yugoslavia. In 1994, Milošević tried to get better cooperation by appointing Borislav Mikelić as Prime Minister of the RSK. That action proved to be unsuccessful due to the rejection of cooperation with Croatian authorities by RSK politicians. Serbs

¹⁰¹ Gow (1997): 242-44.

¹⁰² Gow (1997): 245-47.

in BiH had a 'plan B' which was stated in the 'Declaration of the continuation of the peace process'¹⁰³ on May 19. After rejection of the Vance-Owen plan, the main idea of this new plan was a Serbian republic in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Progressive implementation and the Joint action plan

The international community and Russia held a meeting on May 16 in Moscow on a Russian initiative. The main topic was the progressive implementation of the Vance-Owen plan. An agreement was generally accepted, but the biggest problem was the sending of military troops and observers. The United States promised to send air forces without ground troops. Lord Owen held a meeting with the Croatian and Bosniak side on May 18 in Međugorje at which a progressive implementation of the plan was accepted. The Vance-Owen Plan was to be put into action in territories under Croatian and Bosniak control. During the next two days, Lord Owen travelled to NATO headquarters in Naples, as well as to Minsk and Kiev to find military troops and observers for the mission. Although Belarus and Ukraine accepted the deployment of troops, the plan of progressive implementation was not carried out because the strongest forces rejected sending ground troops, probably because a potential failure would be hard to explain to their domestic public.¹⁰⁴

The major forces published the 'Joint statement of Bosnia and Herzegovina'¹⁰⁵ on May 22, also known as the 'Joint Action Plan'. The plan was adopted by states which were to provide the majority of troops: United States, Russia, Spain, France and United Kingdom. This plan meant the final ending of the Vance-Owen plan. The main points of the new plan were: sending humanitarian help, enlargement of sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro until their withdrawal from the occupied territories, closure of the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina (especially with Serbia), founding of protected areas, continuing the prohibition of flights over Bosnia and Herzegovina, founding of a court for war crimes, establishing permanent peace in order to prevent the conflict from spilling over into neighbouring countries. Point 8 is worthy of note because it was probably inserted by the American side on the insistence of the Bosniaks:

¹⁰³ M. Tudman (2005): 384-85.

¹⁰⁴ de Rossanet (1997): 26-32.

¹⁰⁵ M. Tudman (2005): 388-90.

*“Central Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are deeply worried because of conflict between Bosnian Croats and forces of the Bosnian government and the ‘ethnic cleansing’ that follows; therefore we are willing to send Croatia a warning if they continue to send help to the Bosnian Croats in combat, in which case they could be punished by sanctions of the international community.”*¹⁰⁶

This type of formulation was only possible amongst pro-Bosniac circles, which was primarily reflected in the meaningless phrase ‘Central Bosnia and Herzegovina’. There is the geographic term of central Bosnia, but it remains unclear how this is connected with Herzegovina and which area precisely comprises ‘Central Bosnia and Herzegovina’. Secondly, the formulation ‘forces of the Bosnian government’ had the aim of covering up the fact that these were actually Bosniak forces, thereby attempting to provide them with state legitimacy. It is interesting to note that in the statement “... *the conflict between Bosnian Croats and the forces of the Bosnian government*” there is no mention of Herzegovina which was mentioned in the previous sentence. The tragicomic situation concerning the introduction of international sanctions against Croatia because of its assistance to the ‘Bosnian Croats’ is primarily reflected in the documents of the time from which it is visible that the Bosniak side demanded (and received) arms and military equipment from Croatia throughout the entire period.¹⁰⁷ Croatia risked international sanctions by sending weapons packed in food through humanitarian convoys.¹⁰⁸ It is also interesting to note the order from the Third Zenica Corps of ABiH relating to the shooting down of a Croatian helicopter even though the flight was previously announced.¹⁰⁹ This led to the somewhat paradoxical situation in which the Bosniak side demanded that Croatia cease sending help to its own people while requesting the same help for itself, regardless of the fact that they were launching offensive operations precisely against those Croats.

The shortcoming of the Joint Action Plan was that there was no specific mention as to what would happen, apart from sanctions, if the Serbs continued their offensive or how much time was anticipated for a Serbian

¹⁰⁶ M. Tudman (2005): 389.

¹⁰⁷ Praljak (2007): 41, 52, 68, 69 (Only the first four pages of the publication are numerated, and the page number of documents is an extension of the same numeration).

¹⁰⁸ Praljak (2007): 70-73.

¹⁰⁹ Praljak (2007): 63.

retreat from the occupied territories.

A meeting was supposed to be held on June 3 and 4, but did not take place because Mate Boban's helicopter was fired upon. In the agreement with representatives of the international community concerning the meeting, Izetbegović requested that Serbian positions in the presidency belonging to the legitimately elected SDS should be replaced with Serbs from other parties, granting himself the right to choose people who should represent the Serbs. As the meeting failed to take place, negotiations were led with each side individually. Karadžić wanted observers to be sent and emphasised the Bosniak attacks on all fronts.¹¹⁰ A problem occurred relating to the attack on Goražde which was skilfully used by the Bosniak side to pressure the international public which was consistent with their 'strategy of the weak', even though Goražde was a legitimate military goal as it had an ammunition factory 'Pobjeda', which had an underground section for wartime operations.¹¹¹

After the attacks on buses in Novi Travnik, it was decided that negotiations would be continued in Geneva on June 13 and 14.¹¹² Even though the Bosniak side publicly stressed its desire for an end to the war, but, due to the unaccomplished war aim of establishing a unitary Bosnia and Herzegovina (preferably including the entire country) and American support, in finding themselves in the likely situation of a cessation of military operations Alija Izetbegović and Ejup Ganić refused to sit at the same table with Karadžić in Geneva, clearly showing that they had no intention to join any negotiations. This type of mentality inherited from the Communist system was visible not only on the Bosniak side, but also during the negotiations on the Z-4 Plan when Milan Babić refused to touch the paper on which the agreement was written. It was also seen during the negotiations in Rambouillet when Slobodan Milošević sat with his arms crossed, refusing to take a pen to correct what he considered wrong. According to the agreement, the establishment of provinces and local jurisdictions was to be enabled, as well as the creation of a court for human rights which would support international humanitarian law, and cooperation with the international humanitarian mission. The result of the voting was three in favour, three opposing and three sustained, after which the agreement was then forwarded

¹¹⁰ de Rossanet (1997): 39-40.

¹¹¹ Gow (2003): 186.

¹¹² de Rossanet (1997): 42.

to the Presidency for voting.¹¹³ Izetbegović categorically rejected the agreement primarily because it was not of a unitary character, and enabled the national communities to create provinces and local jurisdictions.

The Owen-Stoltenberg Plan

After the Serbian rejection of the Vance-Owen Plan, and the short failed episode with progressive implementation and the Joint Action Plan, which collapsed because of the Bosniak rejection, the international community attempted to find a solution with the new Owen-Stoltenberg peace plan which was very much like the Cutillero plan, a plan generally accepted by the Serbs. Owen and Stoltenberg organized negotiations on June 15 and 16 in Genthod, Switzerland, which was attended by presidents Milošević, Bulatović, Tuđman and Izetbegović, as well as Radovan Karadžić and Mate Boban. Presidents Tuđman and Milošević suggested the idea of a Federative Republic of BiH, consisting of three constitutive republics without international subjectivity, the securing of Bosniak territory with a gateway to the sea, the right of return for refugees and respect for human rights. After it seemed that all was arranged, on June 23 Izetbegović promised to discuss the model with the Presidency, but immediately after leaving the meeting told the journalists outside that he had given up on that plan.¹¹⁴ In a statement for the BiH radio-television on July 8, Izetbegović claimed the following with regard to the peace initiative: *“It is a very ugly option, that is all I can say to you at the moment.”*¹¹⁵ The following day, the Office of the BiH Presidency issued a denial on agreeing to confederalize BiH, in which it was stated that confederalization, that is, ethnic division can:

*“ (...) be imposed as a solution only under the condition that there is no other choice, in other words, if the the following choice is presented – either that [ethnic division] or starting a neverending war, which would lead us back to living in caves.”*¹¹⁶

The risk of living in caves was obviously not a great problem for the Muslims, since they continued to reject the agreement even though they were

¹¹³ de Rossanet (1997): 43.

¹¹⁴ de Rossanet (1997): 45-46.

¹¹⁵ M. Tuđman (2005): 404.

¹¹⁶ M. Tuđman (2005): 405.

not able to occupy and secure any larger city. The only offensive success of the ABiH was noted against the drastically outnumbered Croats in central Bosnia.

On July 17, 1993, the Presidency of BiH issued a ‘Starting Point of the BiH Presidency for Negotiations in Geneva’.¹¹⁷ The ‘Starting Point’ again stressed that the Parliament should be bicameral, with the Lower House being represented proportionally to the population, which would give the starting advantage to the most numerous nation – the Bosniaks, and also enable the unitarization of BiH. At the end of the document, it was noted that, in the case of the rejection of the proposal, the Presidency was prepared to propose to the Security Council the establishment of an international protectorate over BiH.

In Geneva, on July 30, the ‘Constitutional agreement on the Union of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina’ was concluded and was supposed to be implemented once agreement over maps and humanitarian rights was reached. Each republic would have a right to veto, while the Parliament would consist of 120 positions according to the principle of parity – equal representation from each member of the Union. The Presidency was to consist of presidents of the three republics who would change every four months, and would decide by consensus. The competencies of the Union were to be foreign affairs, foreign trade and the functioning of common institutions, while all other power would be handed to the republics. None of the constitutive republics would be allowed to leave the Union without the consent of all republics.¹¹⁸

The next day Alija Izetbegović withdrew his signature on the advice of his legal advisor, Francis Boyle, because the membership of BiH in the UN seemed to be in question. Even though Izetbegović was promised that the status of the Union in the UN would not be changed, the Bosniak side sought an immediate guarantee from the Security Council and the General Assembly.¹¹⁹ On August 4, Alija Izetbegović sent a letter to Tuđman in which he suggested a union between the territories of the Bosniak and Croatian Republics and the continuation of the fighting against the Serbs. Also, the resignation of people who had brought about the current state of

¹¹⁷ M. Tuđman (2005): 410-12.

¹¹⁸ M. Tuđman (2005): 414-15.

¹¹⁹ M. Tuđman (2005): 416.

affairs was sought and offered by Izetbegović.¹²⁰ This move once again shows the unwillingness to stop the conflict and a willingness to continue the war against the Serbs, i.e. a desire for acquiring even more territory whilst trying to lure the Croats to the Bosniak side by offering them part of government power which would, in practice, mean majority rule over the Serbs. The maximum that the Bosniaks were willing to offer was cultural autonomy, while political autonomy was not mentioned at all. It is interesting to note that, by directly sending the letter to the Croatian president, Izetbegović ignored the legitimate Croatian representatives in BiH. The answer from Tuđman arrived on August 10, in which it was stressed that Croatia was ready for cooperation between the two constitutive units, but that this agreement had to be reached by the legitimate representatives of those republics and that Bosniak offensive operations against Croatian areas had to be stopped.¹²¹ The military chiefs of all three sides signed a truce on August 11 at Sarajevo Airport. It was agreed upon to postpone discussion on the disputed areas of Brčko, Posavina, eastern Bosnia, Bihać pocket, eastern Herzegovina, central Bosnia and Sarajevo for a later date.

In line with the idea of a union between the three republics, on August 28, 1993 the Croatian side proclaimed the HR HB in Grude. Even though HR HB is commonly regarded as a creation of a Greater Croatia and a unilateral act, the fact is that the stimulus for this idea originated from circles of the international community. Besides, in the resolution of its establishment it was stressed that the Croats, as a constitutive nation, were establishing a state community with other nations as the bearers of sovereignty. However, there was no mention of the right to secession or the desire for annexation to Croatia.¹²² On the contrary, the HR HB House of Representatives issued the ‘Declaration for an independent BIH as a union of equal republics’ in which it was stressed that: “... *we are in favour of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s independence in internationally recognised borders, as a state of three equal constitutional nations*” and:

“... *the founding of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as an independent and internationally recognised state, is only possible with the consent of all three equal and*

¹²⁰ M. Tuđman (2005): 418.

¹²¹ M. Tuđman (2005): 419.

¹²² M. Tuđman (2005): 421-24.

constitutional nations and all together, through the Union of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina."¹²³

On September 20, negotiations were held on the British HMS Invincible war ship between the representatives of the international community and Tuđman, Izetbegović, Milošević, Bulatović and Radovan Karadžić and Mate Boban. It seemed that all parties agreed to the proposed arrangements and territorial solutions, but the Bosniak side rejected the agreement. The treaty offered 30% of the territory to the Bosniak Republic with access to the Brčko and Neretva ports, which would be connected with the Adriatic at the Port of Ploče, through a concession of 99 years provided by Croatia. Sarajevo would be under UN administration, and Mostar under EU administration.¹²⁴

After yet another rejection of the amended version of the Owen-Stoltenberg Plan known as the 'The Peace Packet on Bosnia and Herzegovina' from late September 1993, on October 20 Alija Izetbegović issued a resolution on the recall of the Croatian members of the Presidency, Franjo Boras and Vitomir Miro Lasić, and replaced them with Ivo Komšić and Stjepan Kljuić, who both enjoyed Izetbegović's favour.¹²⁵

The Action Plan of the European Union

After the Bosniaks refused the plan from HMS Invincible, Lord Owen started the initiative for the wider pacification of the region, including Kosovo, RSK and BiH. If a solution could be found for RSK, then sanctions against Yugoslavia would be removed. This plan failed when Tuđman announced after talks in Norway in early November that he was prepared, at most, to acknowledge the local and cultural autonomy of the Serbs in Croatia.¹²⁶

In his peace initiative from November 2, President Tuđman requested that the international community impel all conflicting sides to sign in favour of the Union within 14 days, under the threat of sanctions.¹²⁷ Following this, the international community started a peace initiative known as the Action Plan of the EU, the primary goal of which was to convince the Bosniak side

¹²³ M. Tuđman (2005): 519-20.

¹²⁴ Gow (1997): 255-56.

¹²⁵ M. Tuđman (2005): 483-84.

¹²⁶ Burg & Shoup (1998): 282.

¹²⁷ M. Tuđman (2005): 495.

to accept the Union, and was set in motion by Germany and France. The Bosniak side was offered a small expansion of its territory, according to which they would be given 33.56%, and the Croats 17.5%. The starting point for the negotiations was the packet from the HMS *Invincible*, while the Bosniak side was advised to agree with the other sides under the threat of reducing international support. Izetbegović demanded the opening of the airport in Tuzla, which was not agreeable to the Serbs because they were (justly) afraid that it would be used for military purposes, and he also requested, somewhat nebulously, the sending of peace troops to only the Bosniak parts of the territory for a period of 5 years, in order to protect the Bosniak side until it developed an armed capacity for self-defence. Milošević requested the removal of sanctions because he had fulfilled all conditions, while the acceptance of the plan depended on the Bosniaks. In the meantime, during November the ABiH expelled Croats from Vareš, and in December laid siege to Vitez.¹²⁸

At the meeting in Bruxelles between the three BiH sides and the ministers of foreign affairs of the European Twelve, on December 22 and 23, Izetbegović rejected the solution offered, and after that Karadžić no longer agreed to the UN administration in Sarajevo.¹²⁹ As a response, the Bosniak side attacked the Serb-held suburb of Grbavica in Sarajevo in the first weeks of January. On the initiative of Tuđman, Milošević and Bulatović, a meeting was held on January 18 and 19 in Geneva with Izetbegović, Karadžić and Mile Akmadžić (Prime-minister of HR HB). The Bosniak side remained inflexible and demanded 40% of the territory, access to Neum, the merging of the eastern enclaves and access to the Sava River.¹³⁰

The Owen-Stoltenberg Plan and the Action Plan of the EU collapsed due exclusively to the disagreement of the Bosniak side with American support. These plans did not satisfy Bosniak appetites for as much territory as possible, if not the entire territory, while the American rejection was primarily due to the unwillingness to send a large number of combat troops. According to the budget, the peace mission would have totalled approximately 60,000 men, and one third of this was to be secured by the USA.

¹²⁸ Burg & Shoup (1999): 282-83

¹²⁹ Gow (1997): 257

¹³⁰ Burg & Shoup (1999): 284

The Washington Agreement

At a meeting on January 18, 1994, Presidents Tuđman and Izetbegović, together with Haris Silajdžić (Bosniak minister of Foreign Affairs) and Krešimir Zubak (the President of HR HB), signed a proposal drafted by the BiH Federation Constitution and a preliminary agreement on the future economic and military cooperation between the Federation of BiH and Croatia. According to the treaty, there had to be ethnic parity in parliamentary representation, while cantonization was a subject for future discussion. Silajdžić was in favor of the deal, but Izetbegović was against it. The new initiative brought the active involvement of the USA toward solving the crisis in which it had previously stood to the side and was the one to blame for the failure of all previous peace plans. Meanwhile, Mate Boban was removed from office, and replaced by Krešimir Zubak. Prime ministers Silajdžić and Granić were invited to a new round of negotiations in the State Department from February 27 to March 2. Both prime ministers were left surprised by the radical turn in the negotiations.¹³¹

Specifically, it was no longer possible to hold long negotiations, as was the practice before, or to change key points of the agreement. All that was left to them was to agree over trifles. It was the principle of 'take it or leave it', which would now be promoted by the USA, and the 'leave it' option meant severe sanctions and air raids. This was best seen during the Dayton Peace Talks during which the negotiators were kept in semi-incarcerated conditions found in the Wright Patterson military base. Besides the inability to stall, these conditions did not allow the sides to use statements made for the domestic media as a means of creating pressure on the international public.

According to the agreement, the central government would control foreign affairs, citizenship, national currency, monetary and fiscal policies, finances, telecommunications, energy and infrastructure. Jurisdiction was to be divided between the central and local authorities in the areas of human rights, health care, environment, social policies, immigration and asylum, tourism, infrastructure and the use of natural resources. Canton jurisdiction would cover the police, education, culture, public services, radio and so on. Besides this, the Federation of BiH should form a confederation with Croatia and enter into a customs and monetary union with it. The Washington

¹³¹ Nobile (2000): 606-07.

Agreement was signed on March 18,¹³² and its signing marked the start of the unitarization of BiH, considering the fact that the agreement did not state that the cantons were bearers of sovereignty. Even though the treaty was signed, the Croatian areas remained under the rule of HR HB, and the Bosniak areas under the government in Sarajevo.¹³³ The Washington agreement was in practice a military-political alliance designed by the USA to force the BiH Serbs to the negotiating table. It served its main purpose, but proved to be completely outdated by the end of the war.

One of the primary tasks of the American ambassador in Croatia, Peter Galbraith, according to his own testimony, was to convince President Tuđman to stop supporting the BiH Croats under the threat of sanctions if he decided to continue his support. The abandonment of the HR HB was dependent on the liberation of the occupied territories of the Republic of Croatia and the promised aid of the USA concerning the establishment of stronger connections with the West. It seems that the crucial role in convincing Tuđman was played by foreign minister Mate Granić.¹³⁴ The agreement itself was in fact a modification of the Action Plan of the EU, because the federation was basically meant to be comprised of the Croatian and Bosniak territories which was anticipated by the previous plan. Neither side was particularly satisfied with the agreement, but there was no more choice to make, except over details.

Plans of the Contact Group for Croatia (Z-4) and BIH

After the signing of the Zagreb Agreement on the cessation of fire between the RSK and Croatian authorities on March 30, a new round of negotiations began which included the USA, Russia, UN and EU, so that they became known as the – Z-4 (Zagreb Four Talks). According to the agreement, the delineation line was to be 2km long, while the treaty itself was understood by the Krajina Serbs as a chance to stabilize the RSK. After the signing, the UN mandate was prolonged which gave Serbs an extra feeling of security. Even though they did not acknowledge Croatian authority, the Serbs were demanding pension payments, which was partially agreed to by Croatia. Economic relations were also discussed, but prime minister Mikelić said that he needed the confirmation of the RSK Skupština which in practice meant

¹³² Nobile (2000): 609-10.

¹³³ Ilić (2008): 110.

¹³⁴ Galbraith (2002): 138-41.

that it was a failure. The economic part of the deal was only signed before the end of December through the direct telephone intervention of Slobodan Milošević.¹³⁵

The Contact Group was formed in April 1994, and consisted of Russia, the USA, and – as the representatives of the EU, UN and the International Conference on Former Yugoslavia – Germany, France and Great Britain. According to the plan for Croatia, named Z-4, Serbs were to be given broad autonomy with their own symbols, separate legislative bodies, a president and ministry cabinet (government), a separate currency and a police force. At the request of the American ambassador Galbraith a meeting took place with Tuđman on September 12 1994, at which the ambassador proposed that two majority Serbian districts, Glina and Knin, linked via Slunj, should have some elements of statehood, while the rest of the occupied territories in Slavonia should be reintegrated into Croatia. The next meeting was held on October 10, at which Galbraith introduced an expanded version of the plan. According to this version, besides the above, it was suggested that the area of Serbian autonomy be called Krajina, and that it should have a president, a parliament and courts. There would be no border between Krajina and Croatia, and Krajina would have autonomy in the areas of education, culture, energy, tourism, trades, taxes and police. It would be allowed to sign state treaties in agreement with Zagreb, and in the area of autonomy it could also sign treaties with other Serbian states. The currency would be controlled by the Croatian National Bank, but Krajina could have its own banknotes. A separate constitutional court was to be established, consisting of two judges from Krajina, two from Croatia and three representatives of the international community. Krajina would enjoy the rights to its own flag and coat of arms. A precondition for acquiring Krajina citizenship was possession of Croatian citizenship. State borders with BiH would be controlled by the central government, while Krajina would be demilitarised within 5 years.

Tuđman opposed such a proposal, stating that he could agree to the cultural autonomy of the Serbs in Croatia, and territorial autonomy in the districts of Glina and Knin, but without the elements of statehood. In a meeting on January 30, 1995, Tuđman stated that he would consider the plan, which could be a starting point, but could not depart from the constitutional decrees of Croatia. The Krajina Serbs rejected the plan

¹³⁵ Barić (2005): 261-65.

claiming that it was made in agreement with the Croats at the expense of the Serbs, and on the same day they refused to receive an international delegation. Croatia was opposed mainly due to the possibility that Krajina could sign international agreements, thus providing it with subjectivity and a basis for potential separation from Croatia in the future.

The rejection of the plan was one of the last acts which had shown that negotiations were not possible and that the occupied territories had to be returned to the state-legal framework of Croatia by military means. The uncompromising politics of the Krajina Serbs led to a situation where it was no longer possible to discuss arrangements of any kind or coexistence with Croatia, even though there definitely were people in the leadership who understood that the plan was the best they could get. Prime minister of RSK Mikelić also rejected the Plan, which, considering his loyalty to Milošević, also meant that it was not agreeable to Belgrade. This proved to be true after the international representatives, who were not received by Krajina authorities, were also not welcomed in Belgrade the next day. This type of behaviour can primarily be interpreted by Milošević's abandonment of the maximum Serbian demands for a Greater Serbia with the western borders of Virovitica–Karlovac–Karlobag and his desire to strengthen Serbian authority in east Bosnia. Besides, it was becoming clear that, due to international factors, Krajina would not be internationally recognised. Milošević could not publicly declare his rejection of the plan because he would have probably been accused of betraying national interests. Rather he ordered Knin to reject the plan and distanced himself from further political moves by the Krajina leadership.¹³⁶ To Milošević, Krajina served as a means to blackmail Croatia in the negotiations over BiH.¹³⁷

The Plan of the Contact Group for BiH

According to the plan of the Contact Group, BiH would be organised into two entities, the Federation of BiH and the RS as well as Sarajevo under the jurisdiction of the UN. Since 1994 Croatian-Bosniak cooperation had led to the conquest of territories under Serbian rule. In the case of a Serbian rejection of the plan, threats were made to lift the arms embargo and impose stricter sanctions as well as to withdraw UNPROFOR. For the first time

¹³⁶ Barić (2005): 474-80.

¹³⁷ Bing (2007): 391.

Milošević distanced himself from the politics of the BiH Serbs. The Contact Group did not officially withdraw after its failure and nor did it undertake some sort of action which would bring significant changes on the field.¹³⁸ In July, the Group presented a map according to which the ratio between the Federation of BiH and the RS would be 51%:49%. The Bosniak side felt that the Federation should have 58%, but it agreed in principle, stating publicly its conviction that the Serbs would not agree, which soon turned out to be true. According to the suggested constitutional principles, the presidency was to consist of one member of all constitutive nations, and would change every four months. The parliament would make decisions upon the basis of a two-thirds majority, which would have to include a simple majority of every nation. The American demands on lifting the arms embargo was heavily criticized by the other members of the Group, who feared for their combat troops and threatened to withdraw them. As a counter-proposal they put forward the idea of stricter sanctions.¹³⁹

The different interests of the Group's members proved to be too big of a problem when decisions had to be made on how to act after the Serbian rejection of the plan, that is, should the embargo be lifted (USA), await Serbian approval (Russia) or tighten sanctions (Germany, France and Great Britain).

The Dayton Agreement

In the autumn of 1994, the Bosniak side started a series of operations in the Bihać area, most probably encouraged by the Americans, for the purpose of sensitizing the global public and instigating operations against the Serbs which soon occurred. The autumn attack operations revealed the weakness of the ABiH which was winning territories, but was not capable of keeping them, resulting in Serbian re-conquests.¹⁴⁰ The Croatian side undertook successful actions in the late autumn of 1994 in the Livno and Kupres areas. The Croatian actions were, among other causes, boosted because a part of the military intelligence structures from the Pentagon was in favour of halting the conflict based on the situation on the field in Croatia and BiH.¹⁴¹ Contrary to the expected, international attacks did not discourage the Serbs

¹³⁸ Gow (1997): 261-64.

¹³⁹ Burg & Shoup (1999): 303-04.

¹⁴⁰ Daalder (2000): 31-33.

¹⁴¹ Bing (2007): 390.

who stopped UN movements and captured their observers. According to some opinions, the Serbs had intentionally provoked the intervention to gain legitimacy and to speed up the continuation of their operations. The USA demanded that NATO continue their offensive, which was against the opinion of all the NATO members which had troops in BiH. The former American President Jimmy Carter arranged a four-month truce with the BiH Serbs, which was activated on January 1, 1995. Tuđman threatened that he would not prolong the UNPROFOR mandate, which was to expire on March 31, 1995, if the situation did not change. The UN mission was renamed the UN Peace Force on March 31, and divided into UNCRO for Croatia, UNPROFOR for BIH and UNPREDEP for Macedonia. Whilst stressing the truce, all sides were preparing for the continuation of combat which was to continue in April.

On May 22, the Serbs captured an amunitions storehouse near Sarajevo, despite the ban on heavy weaponry. After the unfulfilled 48-hour ultimatum to return the captured munitions, NATO air raids followed. In retaliation, the Serbs struck Tuzla and killed 67 civilians as well as taking observers as hostages. General Rupert Smith sought the continuation of the air raids, but the command was refused. In June, Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) was founded on a French suggestion to secure UNPROFOR.¹⁴² The RRF was meant to be a mobile military formation prepared to perform offensive operations. To this day its role is not completely clear, but there are signs that the RRF formations were to serve as wedges for the stopping of further Croatian and Bosniak offensives against the Serbs, that is, to secure the interests of France, Great Britain and The Netherlands, which were the sole contributors to the RRF.

Joint Croatian-Muslim forces managed to capture, from June to October, a significant amount of territory, including Bosansko Grahovo, Glamoč, Drvar, Jajce, Mrkonjić Grad and were stopped around Banja Luka to keep the power balance intact, that is, to prevent a total Serbian defeat. With the Serbs defeated, a completely new situation would emerge, and the international intention was the end of the conflict as soon as possible. The biggest problem would have been the complete change of the demographic structure of BiH in the case of a complete Serbian defeat. The loss of territory forced the previously unyielding Karadžić to seek help from

¹⁴² Daalder (2000): 37-44.

Milošević and to accept that Milošević was internationally representing the BiH Serbs.¹⁴³

In February 1994, Boutros Boutros-Ghali requested that NATO create a possible plan for the withdrawal of UNPROFOR from BiH. The withdrawal plan was named the Oplan 40104, and its seriousness was visible in the fact that it consisted of 1,300 pages of text and 24 appendices. According to the plan, 82,000 NATO troops were to be involved in the extraction of UNPROFOR, 25,000 of these to be contributed by the USA. Bearing in mind the American share, it is clear why they decided to solve the BiH conflict rapidly. The duration of the operation was to be 22 weeks, while the expense just for the United States would be over 700 million dollars. A significant problem in the operation was the mountainous terrain in BiH with poor and mined roads. The UNPROFOR withdrawal also raised humanitarian issues. The civil population would be left unprotected, and a massive immigration wave to Europe was at risk.¹⁴⁴ Considering all of the risk-full situations, the USA forced the conflicting sides to accept a treaty, so as not to risk the engagement of a large number of combat troops and financial expense which would have to be justified to the American public.

The negotiations on the establishment of a permanent peace began on November 1 at the American military base Wright Patterson, Dayton, Ohio, after which the treaty was named. Negotiations lasted for three weeks, and one of the preconditions was the international recognition of BiH by Serbia. The delegations were separated during the meeting, and met only during bilateral meetings. There was no press or radio conferences so as to prevent the development of various interpretations and public pressure, although there was some leakage of information. For Croatia, it was agreed that the reintegration would last one year, with the possibility of extending it for one more year, if everything was not done in time. The Bosniak side managed to secure Sarajevo and the corridor to Goražde, which was the subject of numerous discussions. Milošević wanted a more narrow corridor, but gave up after he was shown on a computer that it was as narrow as possible. After the agreements were made, a problem occurred concerning the fact that the Serbs got 45% of the territory, and not 49% as was predicted. This was solved by giving the Serbs Mrkonjić Grad, while the Bosniak side was given

¹⁴³ Gow (1997): 279.

¹⁴⁴ Daalder (2000): 48-49.

arbitration for Brčko.¹⁴⁵

The Dayton peace agreement was signed on December 14 in Paris and consisted of 10 articles, 11 appendices and 102 maps. According to appendix 1a¹⁴⁶, a time and program was calculated for the separation of the conflicting sides and the redeployment of IFOR (Implementation Force) which had the task of implementing the peace. Its basic task was to protect the delineation line, and it numbered about 60,000 personnel. Besides the above, they were meant to be a ‘reminder’ to the warring sides to exclude the possibility of further conflicts. The delineation line held by IFOR was 4 km wide.¹⁴⁷ The number of personnel would have surely been higher if the progressive implementation had been agreed upon earlier, which would have raised the problem of finances.

The official name of the country was no longer The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the BiH Constitution (appendix 4)¹⁴⁸ in article III, point 1, the central institutions governed foreign affairs, foreign trade, customs, monetary policies (which was limited considering the fact that the governor of the central bank was chosen by the International Monetary Fund), the financing of institutions, international obligations of BiH, policies concerning immigration, refugees and asylum, international implementation of criminal law, implementation of entity rights, control over common resources, regulation of traffic between entities and air traffic control. The jurisdiction of the entities covered the functioning of human rights, making agreements with countries and international organisations, with the acceptance of the Parliament. According to article VI, the Parliament consisted of two houses: *Dom naroda* (House of the Peoples) and *Zastupnički dom* (House of the Representatives). *Dom naroda* had 15 delegates, five from each nation. Nine members were needed to reach a quorum, at least three from each nation. The *Zastupnički dom* consisted of 42 representatives, with two thirds from the Federation and one third from RS. To reach a quorum a majority was needed. To proclaim any law the consent of both houses was required. Each nation had the right to veto in case its vital interests were endangered. In that case, the president of the *Dom naroda* had to immediately call a commission consisting of three

¹⁴⁵ Gow (1997): 279-85.

¹⁴⁶ M. Tudman (2005): 652-69.

¹⁴⁷ Gow (1997): 287.

¹⁴⁸ M. Tudman (2005): 669-82.

representatives whose task would be to solve the issue within five days. In case of failure, the issue was forwarded to the Constitutional Court.

Ministers and their deputies had to be of different nationalities in order to secure control. The coordination of civil implementation was given to the High Representative who was named by the Security Council. Foreign bodies included in governing were the human rights attorney named by the OSCE (Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe), the central bank governor who was named by the International Monetary Fund with a six year mandate and three of nine members of the Constitutional Court were to be named by the President of the European Human Rights Court.

A security guarantee or a cause of instability?

The Dayton Agreement established the paradoxal formulation of ‘two entities and three nations’. The Serbian nation has its own entity through which it achieves its sovereign rights, and has the future possibility of exercising its legitimate right of self-determination, which is a common topic to this day. The Bosniak elites consider the Federation primarily as their own national unit in which supremacy is achieved through a numerical majority, including in the system a few Croats without legitimacy to create an illusion of legality. The ethnic division which was mostly opposed by the Bosniak leadership continued to be visible and has even deepened further. Creating this order was used by the USA as a guarantee of avoiding the deployment of a large number of combat troops and avoiding financial expense in the case of a further armed conflict. The role of Croats and Serbs in BiH was to prevent the development of radical Islam in Europe, which was feared by the West. The Croats would thus control government at the level of entities and the Serbs at the state level. It is worth mentioning Karadžić’s recorded statement from May 1992:

*“Europe won’t and doesn’t want to accept the risk of letting a Muslim state be organised here. This is our biggest problem. They want us to stay united with the Croats in a single state of Bosnia in order to control the Muslims.”*¹⁴⁹

This kind of BiH was (and remains) sustainable only because of the

¹⁴⁹ Hartman (2007): 93.

international protectorate and financing. BiH is unable to function independently which is visible in the role of the High Representative as an independent sovereign who can stop any decision, which means that BiH is a country of limited sovereignty or a quasi-state.¹⁵⁰ The BiH elites wish to retain their economic and social power, which they try to achieve by preserving the current state of the country's division and isolation.¹⁵¹

The prewar 'sacrificing peace for a sovereign Bosnia' failed and resulted in the 'sovereign Bosnia being sacrificed for peace', handing over a crucial part of its sovereignty to the High Representative in the process. The Bosniak elites have remained somewhat satisfied by sacrificing sovereignty to the international community in exchange for dominating the Federation. The question remains whether BiH will be able to transform itself into a functioning state and how long will the international community be prepared to finance the current state.

The Erdut Agreement

After the return of the territories of Krajina and west Slavonia to the state-legal framework of Croatia, the American President Bill Clinton stated that the problem of occupied territories in east Slavonia had to be solved within the framework of a solution to the conflict in BiH. The task of renewing contacts with the Serbs in the Danube basin was given to the American ambassador Galbraith and to the UN's ambassador Stoltenberg. The meetings between the representatives of the international community and the Serbian leadership were held during September and October in 1995 in Erdut. As a starting point for a solution the Z-4 Plan was suggested, but the situation changed significantly when the political autonomy of Serbs who formed the majority in those areas before the war was called into question. The Croatian delegation responded to the international mediators by noting that the Serbs had not formed a majority in any municipality in any prewar census and that military action was not excluded. In early October, the Croatian and Serbian delegations in Erdut managed to agree to the acceptance of eleven agreement articles on solving the conflict. The question of Croatian Podunavlje was meant to be solved before the start of the Dayton negotiations, but this was rejected by Milošević so that he could negotiate in

¹⁵⁰ Chandler (2006): 34.

¹⁵¹ Lučić (2005): 171.

case the talks somehow turned in an unexpected direction. One of the reasons for finding a quick solution was the artillery bombardment of Croatian areas from the territory of the BiH Serbs.¹⁵² In considering the implementation of a military operation a large number of military victims was predicted, as well as the possible interference of the Army of Yugoslavia and the bombings of Croatian cities, which resulted in the plan being rejected.

At the request of the Croatian delegation in Dayton, on November 2, the question of the reintegration of the Croatian Podunavlje was raised, and both sides agreed to it on November 11. Opinions differed on the question of the duration of the UN mandate in the transitional period. Finally it was agreed that the UN mandate would last one year with the possibility of it being extended for one more year in case one of the parties sought an extension. After reaching the agreement, Galbraith and Stoltenberg travelled to the signing of the treaty in Erdut which occurred the next day. Hrvoje Šarinić signed the treaty on behalf of the Croatian government, and Milan Milanović on behalf of the Serbian. According to the agreement, the territory was to be under UN administration for a period of between one to two years. The basic task of the UN was to organize a multinational police force, organize local elections and conduct demilitarization. The agreement was fulfilled in early 1998, which resulted in the establishment of the total territorial sovereignty of the Republic of Croatia.¹⁵³

Conclusion

The calling of the first democratic elections in Yugoslavia with the encouragement of the international community, especially of its European part, for the purpose of democratization and transformation to a market economy, led, in the eyes of the international community, to the unexpected collapse of Yugoslavia.

International mediation during the war in the area of the former Yugoslavia, observed in detail through the proposed peace plans, highlighted a lack of consensus between the main members in key issues regarding the prevention and conclusion of the war. Besides, it also highlighted the weakness of the European part of the international community in imposing

¹⁵² Bing (2007): 397-401.

¹⁵³ Bing (2007): 401-03.

its own solutions due to the lack of military capacity. The USA as a global superpower had the potential to control the development of the war, refusing to send combat troops which were requested by Europe and the UN to implement a peace process. By establishing the Vance Plan in Croatia, the infirmity of international peace mediations via the UNPA zones was revealed, since they were unable to complete their primary mission – demilitarization, establishment of civil life and the return of refugees.

The war ended relatively shortly after the active involvement of the USA in early 1994. American diplomacy was led by the simple principle of forcing peace under physical threats of military force, in which the conflicting sides were left merely with the details during negotiations. It is interesting to note two completely different principles in relation to ending the conflict, which could be interpreted primarily as diplomatic experiments of the USA. Even though BiH and Croatia were structurally completely different countries, in Croatia the war ended with peaceful reintegration, and in BiH with a freezing of conditions on the field. To put it simply, in BiH Serbian territorial conquests were recognised, which was not the case for Croatia. One could presume that the United States intentionally arranged this in order to see the advantages and disadvantages of both principles in practice for the purpose of future dealings with potential conflicts.

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Sažetak

U radu se daje prikaz rata koji se vodio na prostoru bivše Jugoslavije s posebnim naglaskom na mirovne planove međunarodne zajednice. Preispituje se svrha i učinkovitost međunarodne diplomacije te uloga Republike Hrvatske i Bosne i Hercegovine u novim geopolitičkim odnosima nastalima nakon pada komunizma. Osim navedenoga, daju se odgovori na pitanja što je uzrokovalo sukob, je li sukob mogao biti spriječen te ratni ciljevi zaraćenih strana. Nadalje, autor ističe suprotstavljene interese glavnih aktera u međunarodnoj zajednici te vojnu nemogućnost europskog dijela međunarodne zajednice da implementira mir. Konačno, rad se bavi promjenom vanjske politike Sjedinjenih Američkih Država prema ratu u bivšoj Jugoslaviji od nezainteresiranosti do aktivne politike okončanja rata pod svaku cijenu.