
3

The Bosnian Road to NATO Enlargement

Beverly Crawford¹

The end of the Cold War, the Soviet threat, and the Soviet Union appeared to be the death knell of the NATO alliance. Its security doctrine was obsolete; isolationist mutterings were heard in Washington; and there were numerous efforts to breathe life into competing institutions, like the CSCE—now the OSCE, and the WEU. In the initial flush of post-Cold War uncertainty, pessimists predicted institutional chaos in Europe’s security future that would set European nations against each other and draw the United States and Russia into European security conflicts.² Optimists, on the other hand, heralded the dawn of a new “pluralism” in European security arrangements, suggesting a new “division of labor” rather than a competitive struggle among institutions and between their member states.³ They proclaimed that the European continent’s peaceful evolution depended on transcending the Cold War requirement for military alliances. In 1992, President Clinton had placed a premium on relations with Russia, declaring a policy of “strategic alliance” and a “new democratic partnership” with the West’s former enemy.⁴ These initial events and trends did not bode well for NATO’s future, much less its enlargement.

But by the decade’s end, both optimists and pessimists were proved wrong; the United States was fully involved in European security, and with the US at the helm, NATO emerged again victorious as Europe’s premier security institution, prepared to protect new democracies and expand its membership—pointedly excluding Russia. NATO had carried out the first airstrikes in its history, against Bosnian Serbs, attacked Belgrade, sent ground troops to the Balkans, and “won” the battle for Kosovo against Serbia.

¹ I would like to thank James Goldgeier, Robert Rauchhaus, and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments.

² John Mearsheimer, “False Promises of International Institutions,” *International Security*, Vol. 19, No. 3, Winter 1994; John Mearsheimer, “Back to the future : instability in Europe after the Cold War,” *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 1, Summer 1990.

³ They compared the present period to the shifting, ad hoc alliances and ineffective collective security arrangements that bred suspicion and fear in the interwar period. See Steve Weber, “Does NATO have a future?,” in Beverly Crawford, ed., *The Future of European Security*, (Berkeley: International and Area Studies Publication, 1992), pp. 360-395.

⁴ On the policy of the first Clinton administration see Michael Cox, “The necessary Partnership?” *International Affairs*, Vol 70, No. 4, October 1994.

Other European security institutions, in which Russia participated, receded into their Cold War dormancy. How was this victory possible for an organization, whose mission was outmoded, whose members squabbled, and whose very existence had been challenged by its own members, and by competing institutions?

I argue here that the explanation for NATO's revitalization and decision to expand its membership is *path dependent*, and the path runs through Bosnia. The map revealing its destination was drawn in the Cold War and revived and modified in the war in the former Yugoslavia. Efforts on the part of institutions that included Russia—the UN and the OSCE—failed to resolve the conflict; each new failure deepened latent tensions between Russia and the West. Festering tension served to reinforce and modify ingrained Cold War beliefs in the “Russian threat”—that Russia was either too strong or too weak to participate in European security arrangements. Perceptions of Russian weakness and obstructionism emerged in the Bosnian war,⁵ leading western decision-makers to fall back on old strategic guidelines for foreign policy behavior and to conclude that NATO—an alliance that excluded Russia—was the only institution that could ensure security in Europe. The lesson of Bosnia was that institutions that included Russia were weak and could not provide security in Europe. This lesson was not lost on NATO: like any organization that achieves a “monopoly,” NATO prepared to expand both its membership and its functions—swallowing up the functions of competing organizations.

This argument supports the central claim of the realist theory of international relations: that power balances. Efforts to build a new “security architecture” in Europe at the end of the cold war were bound to fail, because, in their effort to advance a new definition of security, harking back to old visions of “collective security,” they ignored this central feature of the international system. The Bosnian war revealed a new kind of Russian “threat” demanding a military response. And NATO was the only security institution in Europe that could exert military power. Because force is the bottom line of power, the wars in the former Yugoslavia reinforced a military definition of security, thought by many to be an outmoded concept in the post-cold war world. In reinforcing a military definition of security, those wars gave NATO a premier position in Europe's security future. It was not foreordained that NATO be the institution that embodied this security concept; but rather NATO fought for and won that role in Bosnia and secured its position of preeminence in Kosovo. The wars in Bosnia and Kosovo were the path to NATO's renewed strength but not the cause. The cause can be found in the structure of the international system and the realities of power in the post-cold war world.

⁵ Peter Rodman argues that “Russia's identity as a clumsy and troublesome factor in European politics is rooted in its history—and predates the arrival of the Bolsheviks and the advent of thermonuclear weapons.” See Peter W. Rodman, “NATO's Role in a New European Security Order,” *Old Dominion University Graduate Programs in International Studies Working Paper 95.2* Oct. 1995, p. 3.

In supporting this argument I begin with an elaboration of the apparent puzzle of NATO's resilience and rebirth in the post-cold war environment. I then trace the events that led to NATO's institutional victory in the Bosnian war and show how those events shaped the wider European security environment, leading to the consensual decision to expand NATO's membership. I conclude with a brief discussion of the reciprocal impact of European integration and NATO enlargement, suggesting long-term consolidation of NATO's institutional victory.

The Puzzle of NATO Expansion

At the Cold War's end, most analysts predicted NATO's demise, or, at the very least, a fundamental restructuring and reorientation of the alliance. The dramatic change in Europe's political geography seemed to inspire new institutional preferences. In the United States, the Bush Administration—while stressing a commitment to democracy in Eastern Europe—was reluctant to discuss its security needs.⁶ In Russia, the loss of the Warsaw Pact encouraged a preference for the OSCE as Europe's central security institution, both because Russia was an OSCE member and because the centrality of the OSCE would replace NATO's primacy. The Russian government declared that while NATO should offer security guarantees to "emerging democracies," it would have to unambiguously renounce the extension of its military activities to the East, so as not to provide fuel for conservative forces in Russia and in the former Soviet military who might use the renewed Western threat to increase their domestic political power.

Indeed, the Clinton Administration was initially responsive to the Russian position. In its first year, the Administration had begun to seek stable partners who could assist in reducing America's overseas commitments and share the burden of world management. To this end, it had made its relationship with Russia a policy priority. It proclaimed that Russian stability and progress in reforms were vital to US interests. And Russia's continuing great power status, with far-reaching influence in Eurasia and Iran made it an important partner, a conclusion bolstered by Russia's cooperation with the US in the Gulf War of 1991. Indeed, Yeltsin was eager to establish Russia as a good world citizen. His foreign policy was strongly supportive of multilateralism in international diplomacy.

With the US taking this position, security organizations that included both Russia and the West began to gain credibility. In 1990 the CSCE's Paris Charter stated that the era of confrontation and divisions in Europe had ended, and it set the liberal constitutive norms around which a CSCE "security community"⁷ would be constructed: democracy, the rule of law, human-rights, minority rights, political

⁶ Rodman, "NATO's Role in a New European Security Order," p. 5.

⁷ Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, "Security Communities," Paper delivered at the 1994 annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, September 1-4, 1994, New York City. See also Daniel N. Nelson "America and

pluralism, and respect for the environment. The CSCE was to be the protector and “implementor” of those norms, and by 1995, its status was upgraded to that of an international organization.

In Bosnia, as I shall show in more detail below, the “partnership” between the US, Russia and Europe, and broad-based multilateral organizations like the CSCE got off to a good start. Communism’s collapse forged common goals between Russia and the West in that conflict: the west had “won” the Cold War. Now the war of Yugoslav succession symbolized a blatant attack on western values of peaceful conflict resolution, tolerance, equality, and dignity of the individual. Defense of these values thus guided the initial Western response to the war and guided the Russian response as well, since Russian leaders desperately wanted to join the “ West.”

Thus, incentives were high for both Russia and the West to join together to encourage a diplomatic solution that would end the war and preserve western values in the region. Russia was a full participant, giving its support to the deployment of UNPROFOR in Croatia, voting in favor of the UN economic sanctions against Serbia, cooperating in the proclamation of a ‘no-fly zone’ over Bosnia, and heartily agreeing to the establishment of a war crimes tribunal in the Hague. Russia was a member of the “Contact Group” formed in 1994 to negotiate an end to hostilities between the warring parties.

With this full Russian participation in multilateral efforts, NATO was sidelined diplomatically; it had been reluctant to become involved at the outset, suggesting that the war would remain contained and would not endanger the alliance. Indeed, until 1994, NATO was plunged into an identity crisis; its members were reluctant to extend territorial guarantees eastward at the same time that they were thinning out their forces on the former front line. When Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic first came knocking on NATO’s door, the *most* its leaders could do was to create a new council, The North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC), enabling former Warsaw Pact countries and the Baltic states—and later Russia, to consult with NATO.⁸ Central Europeans then approached the West European Union (WEU), hoping that association would bring them closer to EC membership. But those hopes, too, seemed dimmed by the uncertainty of the WEU’s function and the impact of German unification on European integration. Central European nations thus scrambled to conclude overlapping bilateral agreements with former Soviet republics, with one another, and with France, Britain, and Germany.

But by the time the Dayton accords were signed, NATO emerged dominant over all other actors on the European security stage, upstaging Russia and gaining the institutional legitimacy to expand

Collective Security in Europe, *Journal of Strategic Studies* 17 (December 1994), p. 115. See also “The Charter of Paris for a New Europe,” as reprinted in *NATO Review* 38 (December 1990), pp. 27-31.

⁸ Alan Cowell, “Bush Challenges partners in NATO over Role of U.S.,” *The New York Times*, November 8, 1991, p. A4. The United States had argued for East European membership in NATO in order to enhance NATO’s security role at the expense of competing arrangements which would exclude or downplay U.S. participation. France, of course, in a transparent effort to reduce American influence in European security issues, blocked the idea, arguing that the expansion of NATO would duplicate the role of the CSCE.

eastward. This dominance was demonstrated in Kosovo, and secured by NATO's military "victory" there. As negotiations over NATO's future proceeded throughout the 1990s, it became clear that its future would be determined by its performance in Bosnia. When NATO was hamstrung in Bosnia by the Great Power tensions behind institutional conflicts, negotiations on enlargement were stalled. Only when NATO emerged victorious in Bosnia, could its enlargement be considered. The next section traces the events that led to this outcome

NATO's triumph in Bosnia

When the Yugoslav war began in 1991, it was hailed as the "hour of Europe," an occasion for the then European Community to bolster and hone its "common foreign and security policy," and act independently of the Atlantic alliance through European institutions to solve a regional conflict.⁹ But when the war widened to Bosnia, drawing in Russia and an array of multilateral institutions (the UN, the OSCE, and NATO), many analysts began to see the conflict as a test of "the willingness of Europeans and Americans to adjust their Cold War political and security institutions to the changing geo-strategic circumstances in Europe."¹⁰ Most analysts and policy makers believed that the West should act jointly with Russia to end the first war on European soil since 1945.

The war began innocuously. On June 25, 1991 Croatia and Slovenia declared independence from Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav National Army (JNA) was called to prevent the secession of these two states; but both resisted, and fighting broke out.¹¹ EC foreign ministers quickly negotiated an agreement between Slovenia and Croatia to suspend their independence declarations if the JNA would withdraw its troops, and they sent an observer mission to Zagreb to monitor the agreement. Normally, the CSCE would provide monitors. But this unusual EC monitoring mission was at the request of the Soviet Union, who preferred that the CSCE take a back seat to the EC with regard to this crisis, fearing that CSCE involvement would serve as a precedent for interference in the Baltics.¹² Thus the CSCE was quickly sidelined, and EC foreign ministers took up the challenge.¹³ The European Monitoring Mission (EMM), a "first" in European Political Cooperation, was born, suggesting that the crisis was indeed helping to forge new levels of policy coordination in Europe, and that US and Russian involvement would be minimal.

⁹ See the statement of Jacques Poos, Foreign minister of Luxembourg, as quoted in "A long hour," *The Economist*, July 22, 1995, p. 48.

¹⁰ Senator Richard Lugar, "NATO: Out of Area or Out of Business," Address Before the overseas Writers Club, Washington, June 24, 1993. Not everyone agrees with Lugar's assessment, however. U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher stated that "the crisis about Bosnia is about Bosnia. It is not about NATO." Quoted in Elaine Sciolino, "U.S. and NATO Say Dispute on Bosnia War is Resolved," *The New York Times*, December 2, 1994, p. A4.

¹¹ See Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia: The Third Balkan War* (London: Penguin Books, 1992).

¹² "Drei Tage lang am Telefon," Wie sich Hans-Dietrich Genscher bemuehte, die jugoslawische Krise zu loesen." *Der Spiegel* 45 (8 July 1991) p.128.

¹³ *Declaration on Yugoslavia*, 82nd EPC Ministerial Meeting, The Hague, 10 July 1991.

Furthermore, in order to compel the warring parties to accept binding mediation on the part of the EC, members agreed that they would jointly suspend arms sales and economic aid to Yugoslavia.¹⁴ Later, the UN joined the arms embargo that would become an international bone of contention when the war spread to Bosnia one year later.

Despite these efforts, the war continued in Croatia. NATO was initially reluctant to become involved in the conflict. Its official policy statements paid lip service to Europe's geographic unity and interdependence, but expressed reservations about intervention in post-communist conflicts. The war in Yugoslavia was not expected to widen.¹⁵ The EC thus asked the WEU to serve directly as its military arm, and requested that it develop options to strengthen the EC's cease fire monitoring capability. But the WEU was stymied by internal disagreements, and failed to do so.¹⁶ The absence of military power to enforce agreements suggested that those agreements would be meaningless in the eyes of the belligerents. By 1992, the war had ended in Croatia but had spread to Bosnia.

Until Bosnia was ravaged by war, the United States had taken no diplomatic initiatives, at the request of the France and Britain, who had sought a "European" solution to this regional crisis. But in late May 1992, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker complained that the EC was doing nothing and simply waiting for the UN to act. His comments prodded the Europeans to impose sanctions against Yugoslavia without waiting for the UN. The UN had been stymied: supporting Serbia, Russia was hesitant to impose UN sanctions;¹⁷ nonetheless EC pressure forced Russia's hand, and the Security Council voted for sanctions on May 30.

The independent imposition of EC sanctions indicated growing tensions over the coordination of an institutional response to this first post-cold war European crisis. British officials approved of a UN peacekeeping mission, but France opposed a UN sponsored diplomatic effort, arguing that it would undermine EC initiatives. CSCE officials attempted to find a role for that institution in this crisis; they wished to be seen as a regional organization under UN auspices, with the power to coordinate peacekeeping operations.¹⁸ As I will show below, however, the UN eclipsed the CSCE, and it again receded as an actor in this crisis. Indeed, in December 1994, when the CSCE met to discuss issues of European security and conflict resolution, Bosnia was not even discussed.¹⁹ Still, however, no "security

¹⁴ "G-Aussenminister hoffen auf friedliche Loesung in Jugoslawien," (EC foreign ministers hope for a peaceful solution in Yugoslavia) *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 10 July 1991, p. 5.

¹⁵ See NATO Press Service, press communiques M-1 (91) 42, 6 June 1991; M-2(91) 60, 21 August 1991; S-1 (91) 86, and 8 November 1991.

¹⁶ Trevor Salmon, "Testing times for European political cooperation: the Gulf and Yugoslavia, 1990-1992," *International Affairs* 68 (April 1992), pp. 251-52.

¹⁷ "The world against Serbia," *The Economist*, May 30, 1992, p. 49.

¹⁸ Statements from CSCE Summit in Helsinki, July 9, 10, 1994.

¹⁹ *This Week In Germany*, Dec. 9, 1994

institution” had emerged which was strong enough to enforce diplomatic agreements reached with the belligerents.

The Vance Owen Plan: A blow to multilateral cooperation

In October 1992, the Vance-Owen plan was unveiled, which proposed to divide Bosnia into ten geographic units within a single Bosnian state, granting the Serbs and Croats autonomy within Bosnia. By preventing Croats and Muslims from remilitarizing areas the Serbs would cede, the plan was a major concession to the Bosnian Serbs. The plan itself had no enforcement mechanism, although the UN had stepped in, and was prepared for peacekeeping. In April 1992, the UN Security Council had created the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) to protect humanitarian relief efforts and ensure the safety and security of the Sarajevo airport.²⁰ On June 8, the Security Council had expanded the UNPROFOR mission to include the task of reopening the Sarajevo airport for relief supplies. On August 13, the Security Council approved the use of “all means necessary” to supply humanitarian aid to Bosnia, but cautioned that this not be interpreted as an attack on the Bosnian Serbs.²¹ Under the Vance Owen Plan, UNPROFOR would protect those areas that the Bosnian Serbs had been asked to give up. In this plan, NATO would be completely sidelined.

While the US opposed the plan because it called for the deployment of US ground troops for enforcement within UNPROFOR and because it had no role for NATO, Russia strongly supported it because it stressed the Russian contribution to the UN force. US officials did not want the Russians *in*, while the Clinton administration was pressured by domestic and European forces to stay *out*. Russian Foreign Minister Kozyrev had quickly called for a UN Security Council meeting to discuss the plan’s implementation, putting the United States in the position of potentially having to use its veto power, a move that would strain the new “strategic partnership.” Further exacerbating the tension, Russia was opposed to the air strikes against Bosnian Serb positions that the US supported, and Kozyrev’s vocal opposition began to drive a wedge between the US and its allies, since the Europeans were opposed to air strikes as well.

Disagreements among NATO allies fueled the debate over whether more “European” security arrangements such as the OSCE or the WEU should be strengthened. Countering the U.S. position, Russia also proposed a tightening of the arms embargo against Bosnia, and sanctions on Croatia if further attacks on Serb enclaves there ensued.²² It appeared to some observers that Russia was helping to divide the West.

²⁰ (Resolution 749 (1992). Adopted By The Security Council At Its 3066th Meeting On 7 April 1992)

²¹ (Resolution 771 (1992). Adopted By The Security Council At Its 3106th Meeting, On 13 August 1992)

²² Hannes Adomeit, “Russia as a ‘great power’: Images and Reality,” *International Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 1 (January, 1995), p. 46.

These disputes ensured the Vance-Owen Plan's failure, and, knowing that the great powers were divided, both the Bosnian Muslims and the Bosnian Serbs soundly rejected it.²³ This failure created a diplomatic vacuum that led to even deeper contradictory domestic pressures in the West and Russia, threatening to unravel the multilateral decision-making process altogether. In the United States and Britain, public opinion called for Western intervention on behalf of the Bosnian Muslims, and the British Labor Party called for the bombing of Bosnian Serb positions. In the United States, public opinion overwhelmingly supported a lifting of the arms embargo against Bosnia, and Clinton's National Security advisor, Tony Lake, called for intervention on behalf of the Bosnian Muslims. The German Foreign Minister called for Europe to break diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia.

But in Russia, domestic forces *opposed* a lifting of the embargo on Bosnia, and *supported* a lifting of the arms embargo on Serbia. Yeltsin feared that Russian acquiescence in a lifting of the arms embargo on Bosnia would alienate voters who might swing toward the hard core nationalists.²⁴ He was also pressured by economic forces to lift the embargo on Serbia; Moscow News reported that Russian participation in sanctions against Yugoslavia and Iraq cost \$30 billion per year in lost contracts.²⁵

In the face the Vance-Owen plan's failure, these contradictory domestic pressures increased tensions among the great powers over future strategy. The U.S. called for tougher sanctions against Serbia in an effort to pressure Milosevic to push the Bosnian Serbs to comply. Russia wanted pursue the opposite strategy: to dangle the carrot of easing the sanctions in order to get Milosevic to put more pressure on the Bosnian Serbs.

Clinton recognized the danger to multilateralism of these increasing tensions, and he did not want to make any moves in Bosnia that might undermine stability in Russia.²⁶ He therefore did not push the demand for a lifting of the arms embargo, and promised not to pursue a second round of UN financial sanctions until after the April 1993 referendum on the new Russian constitution.

But within the American foreign policy establishment, there was growing criticism of Clinton's embrace of Russia. Many observers believed that Russian actions with regard to Bosnia were proof that Russia did not really intend to reintegrate itself into the international community, and was attempting to rebuild its old spheres of influence. In a report to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in April, 1993, Senator Joseph Biden called for a policy of Russian acquiescence rather than collaboration. He urged the Clinton administration to adopt a policy of "working even more closely with Yeltsin to ensure Russian

²³ The Muslims believed that the UN was too weak to protect Muslim and Croat civilians in Serb dominated areas, and the U.S. State Department undermined Muslim support for the plan by telling Bosnia's President Izetbegovic that the US would support him if he demanded changes.²³ The Bosnian Serbs did not want to sustain the "fiction" of Bosnia as an independent state and felt forced to give up too much of the wrong territory.

²⁴ Jonathan Landay, "Bosnian Serb defiance causes deepening of the contact group, but Serbian President consents to international border monitoring," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 12, 1994, p. 6.

²⁵ "A storm at the United Nations : why Kozyrev needs it," *Moscow News*, Oct. 21, 1994, p. 5.

abstentions from Security Council resolutions that prove necessary.”²⁷ US officials began to perceive that Russia was not helping to achieve a settlement, and they stepped up pressure for the use of NATO to launch air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs, a move that would effectively exclude Russia in the enforcement effort.

Meanwhile, in the face of diplomatic failure in Bosnia, the fighting intensified, and the intensification required the West to formulate a new plan to moderate it. As a stop gap, France and Britain lobbied the US to support the creation of “safe havens” for Bosnian civilians. By June, 1993, the UN Security Council approved a “joint action program” establishing six ‘safe areas’ at Sarajevo, Srebrenica, Zepa, Tuzla, Goradze, and Bihac. But the question of who would have the power to keep the havens “safe” was still an issue of intense debate, and for the first time, NATO was called in to help. But the UN resolution left unclear whether NATO would use air strikes to retaliate against attacks on these areas or whether the UN troops would retaliate. As noted above, the US called for air strikes; Russia and the Europeans were opposed. Clarity on this issue and the prominence of NATO’s role would only be achieved after the attack on the Sarajevo market in February 1994.

On February 5, 1994, an attack on an open market left over 60 civilians dead in Sarajevo. Assuming that the attack was launched by Bosnian Serbs, the sixteen members of NATO issued an ultimatum demanding the withdrawal of Serbian artillery to at least 20 kilometers from the center by February 21. If the Bosnian Serbs did not withdraw, NATO threatened an attack on their military positions. The credibility of this threat was demonstrated when NATO jets shot down four light Bosnian Serb planes over Banja Luka for violating the flight ban.

The attack had galvanized the Europeans; neither the WEU, the CSCE, nor the UN had been able to mitigate the bloodshed. NATO seemed to be the only hope. NATO’s action had broad support among the Western powers, Although Russia opposed the idea of a NATO command in Bosnia, Russian credibility to effectively pressure the Bosnian Serbs had weakened, and it now had little choice but to accept the NATO alternative. Russian officials thus requested that the Serbs respect the NATO ultimatum. But Yeltsin also wanted to send Russian peacekeepers to Bosnia as part of the UN peacekeeping operation.²⁸

First inklings of NATO expansion

²⁶ “Unhappy anniversary,” *The Economist*, April 10, 1993, p. 57.

²⁷ Joseph Biden, *To Stand against Aggression: Milosevic, the Bosnian Republic, and the Conscience of the West* (Washington D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1993) p. 14.

²⁸ Laurie Laird, “Shared History: Serbians turn to Russia” in *Europe: Magazine of the European Community* No. 337, (June 1994), p. 19. All political elites in Germany joined in a resolution to support the NATO air attack.

The failure of the Vance-Owen plan and the failure of the US to support it may have been responsible for Russia's retreat from "wholehearted international cooperation."²⁹ Furthermore, the reformist leadership in Russia was growing disillusioned with the West for its lack of support for the reform process within Russia itself. The US decision not to embrace the Vance-Owen Plan may have added insult to injury, representing to the Russians "the loss of an opportunity to establish a cooperative mechanism for dealing with European security problems, including those faced by Russia in the former Soviet Union."³⁰

It was during this low point in the Bosnian war that plans for NATO's "Partnership for Peace" were launched, and it was after the attack on the Sarajevo market that the top policy elite in Washington decided to openly beef up NATO's role in Europe's still-debated security "architecture." The Partnership for Peace would include Russia, and was intended to create working links between participants and NATO governments, a plan to adapt airfields to NATO standards, exercises in compatible command and control systems, and defense review planning. Through these means, Partnership for Peace would facilitate transparency in national defense planning and budgeting and develop cooperative military relations with NATO, developing forces better able to operate with those of the Alliance. Ts of ensuring democratic control of defense forces; and maintaining the capability and readiness to contribute to operations under the authority of the United Nations or the OSCE were goals that Russia could hardly refuse to endorse.³¹

Although not explicitly stated in NATO's official declarations, a few analysts put forth the counter-intuitive argument that the Partnership for Peace would be the first step toward NATO expansion and the marginalization of Russia in the post-cold war European security environment. In December, 1994, Joseph Leggold wrote that Partnership for Peace left open the possibility of NATO membership for the Visegrad group, the Baltic republics, and perhaps Ukraine, and it assumed that either the Europeans could work toward mutual security with Russia or, if Russia were to resume expansion, the nations that would be threatened would have time to mobilize effectively.³² NATO officials saw it as "a valuable framework for evaluating the ability of each partner to assume the obligations and commitments of NATO membership - a testing ground for their capabilities."³³

But the real testing ground for NATO capabilities was Bosnia. Partnership for Peace was in its embryo stage, and the idea of a treaty to enlarge NATO did not gain momentum. As the following section

²⁹ This argument is made by James Gow, *Triumph of the Lack of Will: International Diplomacy and the Yugoslav War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997) p. 221.

³⁰ Gow, *Triumph of the Lack of Will*, p. 201.

³¹ On these goals see Gebhardt von Moltke, "Building a Partnership for Peace, *NATO Review* 42 (June 1994), p.4.

³² Joseph Leggold, "The Next Step toward a More Secure Europe, *The Journal of Strategic Studies* 17 (December 1994), p. 8.

³³ North Atlantic Assembly, "Projecting Stability in an Undivided Europe: Partnership for Peace and a Pact on Stability in Europe," draft Interim Report, International Secretariat, 1995.

demonstrates, resolve to move ahead with a treaty to enlarge NATO was only forged on the battlefield in Bosnia.

The Contact Group Plan: Diplomatic Failure, NATO's Tied Hands

In March 1994, the United States had persuaded the Bosnian Muslims and Croats to form a Muslim-Croat Federation with the signing of the Washington Accords. To induce the Croats to sign the accords, the U.S. promised that Tudjman could regain parts of its territory, lost to the Croatian Serbs in the war. The U.S. also helped Croatia build up its army by sending advisers and by permitting weaponry to flow into Croatia.³⁴ The accords halted the fighting between Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats and provided for an eventual confederation with Croatia, thus undermining the legitimacy of a separate Bosnian state.

This new federation also opened the door for a new diplomatic effort. In May, 1994, the foreign ministers of Greece, Belgium, Germany, and the EU, France, Russia, the UK, and the US met in Geneva. They created what was called the "Contact Group" (composed of representatives from the U.S., France, Britain, Germany, and Russia) to begin substantive negotiations again with the warring parties. The Contact Group proposed a plan that would turn Bosnia into two parts: a 49% Bosnian Serb and 51% Muslim-Croat federation. This would require that the Bosnian Serbs surrender 1/3 of their territory and give up plans to create a union with Serbia. The plan's success depended heavily on Milosevic to pressure the Bosnian Serbs into acceptance by closing its border to Bosnia—thus halting the flow of arms and other supplies—and permitting UN monitors along border areas in exchange for the easing of sanctions. The Contact Group also urged Serbia to recognize Bosnia as an independent state and, over initial Russian objections, proposed that NATO troops enforce the cease-fire.

The key to successful pressure on the Serbs was Russia. Russia joined American diplomats to urge Karadzic to accept the plan and declared that it would take a stronger stand against the Serbs if they did not cooperate. Both Kinkel and Kozyrev agreed to jointly use their influence with participants in the conflict to promote a cease-fire and accept the plan.³⁵ Kozyrev, however, still attempted to limit NATO's involvement: he opposed the US effort to transfer command over Bosnian operations from the U.N. to NATO.³⁶ With NATO's hands tied, the agreement could not be effectively enforced.

Russia's pressure on Serbia seemed at first to pay off; Milosevic ordered the border between Serbia and Bosnia closed on August 5, and two months later, the UN eased sanctions against Yugoslavia. Nonetheless, the oil and trade embargo would remain in effect until Serbia recognized Bosnia as a unitary

³⁴ See John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen Van Evera, "When Peace Means War," in *The New Republic*, December 18, 1995, p. 18.

³⁵ *This Week in Germany*, November. 26, 1994, p. 2.

³⁶ Roger Cohen, "Bosnia Peace Mat: Serbs and West at Loggerheads" *The New York Times*, July 29, 1994, p. A3)

state.³⁷ Milosevic agreed to recognize Bosnia as a state but not a government in return for the lifting of all the sanctions. Russia suggested a 200 day suspension of the sanctions in exchange for recognition, but the four non-Russian Contact Group members feared that Russia would use its veto in the Security Council to ensure that the sanctions would not be reimposed and leverage over Milosevic would be lost.³⁸ They thus blocked the Russian initiative.

Furthermore, there was an intense institutional struggle over who would control the military enforcement of any agreement reached. A “dual-key” arrangement required both UN officials and military commanders on the ground to approve NATO air strikes. Disagreement over the rules of engagement, however, made that arrangement ineffective. When Bosnian Serbs attacked Bihac in November 1994, NATO announced that it could not attack Bosnian Serb positions because the UN refused authorization to attack; for their part, UN officials believed that an attack would amount to a declaration of war.³⁹

Each NATO air strike had provoked the Bosnian Serbs to take UN peacekeepers as hostages and increased pressure for the UN to pull back. On May 7, a major shelling from Bosnian Serb positions into Sarajevo led Rupert Smith, UNPROFOR’s commander, to order NATO air strikes. At first, his orders were countermanded by officials at UN headquarters in Zagreb, who argued that Croatian Serbs would retaliate with attacks in Croatia and those attacks would endanger UN troops; nonetheless, against UN orders, on May 25, NATO conducted air strikes against Bosnian Serb positions near Sarajevo.⁴⁰ Confusion increased with the growing tension between the UN and NATO commands.

The problem was inherent in the UN mandate. As the Secretary-General reported, “even though the use of force is authorized under Chapter VII of the Charter, the United Nations remains neutral and impartial between the warring parties, without a mandate to stop the aggressor (if one can be identified) or impose a cessation of hostilities. Nor is this peace-keeping as practiced hitherto, because the hostilities continue and there is often no agreement between the warring parties on which a peace-keeping mandate can be based.”⁴¹ NATO, on the other hand, did not suffer under similar constraints and, with US backing, pushed to gain control over military decision-making with regard to air strikes. Russian disagreement and UN pressure, however, blocked this effort.

The West was thus unable to break the negotiating deadlock, and international negotiators could not enforce agreements already made. So, like the Vance-Owen plan, this agreement, too, broke down. Despite Russia’s cooperation and signs that Serbia would pressure the Bosnian Serbs into acceptance,

³⁷ “Bosnian Serbs : Feeling the Pinch,” *The Economist*, October 8, 1994, p. 54.

³⁸ “Ex-Yugoslavia : To Go or to Stay ?,” *The Economist*, May 27, 1995, p.43.

³⁹ Roger Cohen, “Serbs Closing in on Bosnian Town; UN and NATO unable to Act,” *The New York Times*, Nov. 9, 1994, p. A1.

⁴⁰ “Ex-Yugoslavia : to go or to stay ?,” *The Economist*, May 27, 1994, p. 43.

they resisted the plan. As long as the warring parties preferred the possibility of battlefield victory to the certainty of a compromise at the negotiating table, their incentive to reach a negotiated settlement would be low.

Great power leverage could have heightened that incentive, but the great powers disagreed about the military backing needed to exert it. In an effort to preserve multilateral cooperation, the US and Europe had reigned in their impulse to unleash NATO, because of Russian objections. But those cooperative efforts were too weak. The Bosnian Serb army attacked UN positions, surrounded Sarajevo, blocked relief convoys, and attacked Bihac, and the international community, was unable to respond with concerted and coordinated military force. Clearly defeated, the Contact Group declared their plan a “basis for negotiations” only. With festering differences between the US and Europe and with massive human rights violations in Europe’s doorstep, questions about NATO’s post-cold war mission became more intense, and Europe’s lofty new security agenda rapidly began to lose credibility.

Indeed, these stalemates had a profound impact on NATO’s efforts to maintain its strength and enlarge its membership. In December, 1994, NATO ministers initiated a comprehensive study of enlargement and agreed to try to complete that study by the end of 1995. But the Bosnian crisis had precipitated institutional conflicts between NATO and the UN. NATO’s inability to act in Bosnia bogged down the enlargement process. Thus, plans for enlargement were simply postponed, due, in part, to a fear that Russia would react adversely and refuse further cooperation in Bosnia.⁴² These frustrations may have contributed greatly to the decision taken in the Spring of 1994 among a few top policy makers in Washington to support enlargement as a way of strengthening NATO and keeping Russia out. And the US position was crucial to the initiation of the enlargement study, commissioned by NATO ministers in December. But squabbles among the allies, tensions with Russia and the West’s need for Russian cooperation in Bosnia ensured that enlargement was not in the cards, at least for the time being. There was no more talk of identifying potential new members and setting timetables. Meanwhile, Russia formally signed onto the PFP, hoping that through PFP it could influence the decision on NATO enlargement. So the enlargement process was stalled through the first half of 1995. But events in the Bosnian war would soon move it forward.

NATO’s Triumph and the Dayton Agreement

Back in Bosnia, with military options now greatly narrowed, the US thus stepped up pressure on Russia to agree to an enhanced role for NATO in countering Bosnian Serb strikes. Russian options to oppose the US were now narrowed, because of its own diplomatic failure to exert sufficient pressure on

⁴¹ UN Document A/50/608/1995/1. January 3, 1995.

⁴² Peter Rodman, “NATO’s Role in a New European Security Order,” p. 8

the Bosnian Serbs. Russian diplomatic credibility was therefore at a low point, and its protests against an enhanced role for NATO carried less weight. General diplomatic despair over rising institutional tensions and rivalry had opened the political space for a new solution, and when Russia finally agreed, NATO came to take the lead in military engagement. The turning point in official US policy and in NATO's future was the fall of Srebrenica.

In July, 1995, the "safe havens" of Srebrenica and Zepa fell to the Bosnian Serbs, and French and British forces were forced to withdraw. Clinton now felt that the US was in an impossible situation which, if left unaddressed might well erode the international order that the US appeared determined to bolster and maintain. He thus took decisive action to push for NATO's preeminence in enforcement efforts.⁴³ NATO commanders were permitted to summon air strikes without UN approval, and they increased their own authority over military decisions. NATO's increasing autonomy was accompanied by task expansion: plans were launched for the creation of a "Rapid Reaction Force of 4,000 troops to assist in a possible UN withdrawal.

With NATO's role enhanced, the United States initiated an alternative to the failing Contact Group Plan in the Summer of 1995. This alternative would prove to be the skeleton of the Dayton peace accord initialed the following November. The American plan built upon the Contact Group proposal in that it maintained the 49-51% split between the Bosnian Serb and Muslim-Croat territories. But the Serbs would keep the Muslim enclaves of Zepa and Srebrenica, and they would get more territory around the Brcko corridor connecting the two parts of their territory. Muslims would gain territory around Sarajevo.

The plan stipulated that Croatia and Bosnia recognize each other's pre-war frontiers, and international sanctions on Serbia would be lifted when it recognized Bosnia as an independent state. Bosnia would remain a recognized state, but areas with a Serbian majority population would be free to confederate with Serbia. The Muslim-Croat federation would be permitted under the plan to confederate with Croatia. In practice, then, Bosnia would de facto cease to exist as an independent entity, even though it would continue to exist *de jure*.

To press for agreement, the United States used a series of carrots and sticks to prod each of the belligerents. To pressure the Bosnian Serbs, the US promised to support a lifting of the arms embargo on the Bosnian government, a withdrawal of UNPROFOR, but also promised NATO air strikes against the Bosnian Serb positions if they refused to accept the plan and continued their attacks. To pressure the Bosnian Muslims, who initially opposed the plan because it gave Zepa and Srebrenica to the Bosnian Serbs, US officials persuaded Croatia to limit its assistance to the Bosnian Muslims and squeeze them until they accepted the plan. U.S. diplomats encouraged Tudjman and Izetbegovic to agree on a joint

⁴³ See Mark Danner, "The US and the Yugoslav Catastrophe," *New York Review of Books*, November 20, 1997, p. 58.

military campaign against the Bosnian Serbs in territory adjacent to Croatia, but also encouraged Croatia to abandon plans to help the Muslims in central Bosnia.

All the major European actors and Russia seemed enthusiastic about the plan, although they disapproved of the threat of air strikes.⁴⁴ Attitudes changed, however, after a mortar attack in Sarajevo at the end of August, 1995, killed 37 civilians. Assuming that the attack was launched by Bosnian Serbs, NATO began aerial bombardment of Bosnian Serb positions; this was NATO's biggest military assault in its entire history. At the same time, with encouragement from the United States, a joint Muslim-Croat offensive captured much of northwest Bosnia, and on October 12th, a cease fire was reached. The belligerents went to the negotiating table in Dayton, Ohio on November 1, and a peace accord was initialed by the presidents of Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia on November 21.

A clear institutional hierarchy emerged in Dayton: The OSCE—long inactive in this crisis—was given the task of supervising the 1996 Bosnian elections, monitoring human rights activity, and promoting arms control. The EU was to provide a plan for the economic reconstruction of Bosnia. Although the United Nations largely stepped into the background, UNHCR was given the task of leading humanitarian efforts. But the largest role was saved for NATO.

NATO was assigned the task of peacekeeping after the signing of the Dayton Accords. An army of 60,000, called Joint Endeavor and deployed to enforce the accords, carved Bosnia into three zones, managed by the United States, France, and Britain, all under the same NATO commander. To the rapid reaction force, NATO added IFOR, the joint implementation force. IFOR troops were instructed to employ standard NATO rules of engagement, meaning that they could preempt if they knew that an attack was imminent. The plan stipulated that IFOR could retaliate very heavily against the first sign of resistance. France now moved discretely closer to NATO, allowing French troops to serve under NATO command. French officials also indicated that they were keen to maintain an American presence. Given NATO's performance, Russia had no choice but to agree.

In sum, the WEU's earlier failure to enforce ceasefires, the UN's failure to protect "safe havens," UN/NATO coordination problems that further reduced the West's enforcement capability, NATO's successful show of force and the demonstration of its ability to coordinate military action when it was finally permitted to do so, France's participation in NATO's military activity, and finally, Russia's agreement—all combined to place NATO in a position of institutional prominence. By the time the agreement was initialed in Dayton, NATO had been strengthened beyond anyone's wildest hopes or fears. In Bosnia, the NATO alliance established itself as Europe's only meaningful security institution.

The Bosnian Road to NATO enlargement

Although the Bush Administration had advocated NATO's enlargement eastward shortly after the fall of Communism, few had anticipated that NATO could actually expand its membership because its Cold War mission was now obsolete. Many argued that its military functions be taken over by other organizations and that the WEU be revived. France and Germany envision the West European Union as a security arm of the EU and a bridge between the EU and NATO.

In this environment, NATO had scrambled to establish a new role in the post-cold war environment, at first attempting to edge out the CSCE by usurping its tasks. As noted above, at the Rome NATO Summit of November 1991, Foreign Ministers and representatives from all 16 NATO states created NACC, consisting of NATO members, Eastern and Central European states, and all Soviet successor states, including the Baltics as a forum for consultation on democratic practices. NACC would oversee military-to-military liaisons for cooperation on such issues as development of democratic institutions, civil-military relations, peacekeeping, conceptual approaches to arms control and disarmament, defense planning, scientific and environmental affairs, civil/military coordination of air traffic management, and the conversion of defense production to civilian purposes. Most of these tasks had been part of the CSCE mandate. But with NACC, NATO had attempted to take the initiative of community-building from the CSCE in a broader search for a new mission. Although many proponent of PFP and NACC saw them as alternatives to NATO, they actually served as incubators for NATO expansion.

In 1994, at a nadir in the Bosnian crisis, the final communiqué of the meeting of Allied Heads of State indicated that they "expected and would "welcome" NATO enlargement, but they made no firm commitment, calling it "evolutionary" and dependent upon political and security developments in Europe as a whole. By mid 1995, however, after NATO's successful performance in Bosnia, there was little doubt that it had been rescued as Europe's key security institution. It had become increasingly clear that under all the forms that the WEU could take, it would be almost entirely dependent on NATO resources and personnel.⁴⁴ In 1996 and 1997, the intense "dialogues" with prospective new members began, and were concluded with the entrance of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic into the alliance in July 1998. These new members became quickly socialized and integrated into the alliance structure when NATO began the bombing of Kosovo in 1999.

Conclusion

The Bosnian war provided NATO with the renewed legitimacy that it needed to expand eastward. It left no doubt in the minds of both European and American leaders, that other institutions in which

⁴⁴ "Enter the Americans," *The Economist*, August 19, 1995, pp. 41-42.

⁴⁵ The WEU does not include all EU members. Sweden and Finland have no plans to apply, while Turkey has an associate membership. Its staff has begun looking at the feasibility of the WEU acquiring its own satellite intelligence assets.

Russia participated would be too conflict-ridden and too weak to provide a common security umbrella for Europe. NATO enlargement was thus an unambiguous strategy to keep Russia out of the security institutions in Europe that really counted.

Recall that in the Bosnian crisis, after a brief struggle over whether the EC would continue to solve the crisis alone and what roles the EC, the OSCE, and the UN would play, the principal actors chose the UN as the institution with the widest membership as the sponsor of negotiations. Tensions among the actors over appropriate strategy led to domestic pressures for alternative policies. Those pressures combined with collective fears of chaos in post-cold war Europe, led to the decision to revitalize NATO and minimize the role of the UN. A weakened Russia, anxious to be part of the “West” had no choice but to support the choice for NATO’s enhanced role in Bosnia. France, though its preference for a European solution to the crisis, was not strong enough to push the process in a different direction. The United States as the strongest power, exerted leadership in its effort to bolster NATO, and the strategy worked. Indeed, Bosnia provided an opportunity for NATO’s first out-of-area action and set an important precedent, providing the legitimacy needed for enlargement and for its role in Kosovo.

These moves were consolidated in the Kosovo crisis and its aftermath. In September, 1998, the UN Security Council approved Resolution 1199 demanding a cease-fire in Kosovo, Serb withdrawal of military forces from Kosovo, the return of Albanian Kosovar refugees who had fled the intensified fighting that ensued after Dayton, and “additional measures” if Serbia refused to comply. At first, compliance seemed assured: Milosevic permitted unarmed OSCE cease-fire monitors to enter Kosovo, and in an agreement reached with NATO Supreme Commander General Wesley Clark, agreed to a Serbian force reduction there. But reports of continued fighting led to the deployment of NATO troops in Macedonia. And the failure of the Rambouillet peace talks triggered NATO’s successful air war against Serbia which began on March 24, 1999 and ended in June, 1999. In the aftermath, Russia agreed to a Western presence in Kosovo to keep the peace, and agreed to a UN-headed effort to rebuild the country. By March, 2000, however, the United States had made known that it would prefer an OSCE-led administration of Kosovo, and had begun to thwart the UN-appointed postwar government of Bernard Kouchner.⁴⁶

As reinforced in Kosovo, the institutional struggle and uncertainty ended with NATO dominance as Europe’s premier security institution. NATO not only remained a strong military alliance, its mission expanded to include the consolidation of new democracies and the protection of human rights—tasks formerly given to the OSCE, the UN, and the Council of Europe.⁴⁷ Its enlargement, to include former

⁴⁶ See Steven Erlanger, “U.N.’s Kosovo Chief Warns that Mission Is ‘Barely Alive,’” *The New York Times*, March 4, 2000, p. 4.

⁴⁷ Robert E. Hunter, “Enlargement: Part of a Strategy for Projecting Stability into Central Europe,” *NATO Review* 43 (May 1995), p. 3.

Warsaw Pact countries is a clear indicator of that success, a success that was forged in Bosnia. In the absence of events in Bosnia, it is unlikely that those policy elites in the Clinton Administration who supported enlargement would have gained the upper hand. Without the diplomatic blunders and institutional struggles in Bosnia, Russian opposition to expansion would have had more credibility. Under these conditions, NATO enlargement would surely continue to be stalled.

Finally, in his essay for this volume, Charles Kupchen makes a forceful argument for the inclusion of Russia in any future expansion of NATO's membership. If the analysis of this essay is correct, then the United States has paid lip service to the potential for Russian inclusion in NATO, but in fact made the decision to throw its weight behind enlargement in order to ensure that Russia would not be included in the post-cold war European security alliance and that a NATO that excluded Russia would dominate all other European security institutions. Nonetheless, like in the Bosnian crisis, any future security crisis in Europe will most likely require Russian cooperation for its resolution; therefore, the OSCE and the Partnership for Peace will still continue to play the roles of providing for a for the inclusion of Russia in Europe's security future.