

**THIRD PARTY INTERVENTION IN HUMANITARIAN CONFLICT:
WHY THE U.S. INTERVENED IN THE BOSNIAN WAR**

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Between 1992 and the summer of 1995, Bosnia-Herzegovina experienced a deadly and costly war as the Bosnian Serbs, Croats and Muslims fought for control over Bosnian territory. Prior to August 1995, the administrations of both Presidents George H. W. Bush and William Clinton opted for non-interventionist foreign policies aimed at containing the spread of the conflict rather than resolving the war. In August 1995, the Clinton administration altered its foreign policy and supported a military intervention that ultimately drove the three warring parties into serious peace negotiations that ended the war. The questions this paper seeks to answer are, first, why did the U.S. initially pursue a policy of non-intervention? And second, what explains this shift in U.S. foreign policy to prompt intervention in the summer of 1995?

To answer these questions, in this paper I situate an empirical study of U.S. foreign policy regarding Bosnia within the framework of two competing theories on foreign policy in an effort to determine what explains the U.S. decision to intervene to end the war in 1995. The two theories that this study examines are *constructivism* and *neoclassical realism*. While there are a considerable number of theories existing within the study of international relations, constructivism and neoclassical realism are both theories of foreign policy as well as International Relations. Both of these theories represent newer approaches to the study of foreign relations that surpass the structural arguments that have traditionally dominated the field of International Relations. For example two of the most dominant IR theories, *classical* and *neorealism*, explain how states interact with one another, yet they fail to explain why states institute different foreign policies at different times and why foreign policies may shift overtime. Neoclassical realism and

constructivism, on the other hand, provide theoretical frameworks to explain foreign policy decisions.

This paper first develops the basic logics of the two theories. The first chapter will define both the constructivist and neoclassical realist theories and highlight the core assumptions of each theory regarding the construction of a state's foreign policy. I also explain the predictions outlined by both constructivists and neoclassical realists regarding the decision of a state to intervene in the conflict of another state.

The second chapter is devoted to a study of U.S.-Yugoslav relations during the Cold War and a brief explanation for the breakup of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The aim of this chapter is to provide the reader with the contextual background necessary to understand the changing nature of the U.S.-Yugoslav relationship that was occurring at the same time war was breaking out. During the Cold War, Yugoslavia was disproportionately influential on U.S. foreign policy due to its geo-strategic location and hostile relationship with the Soviet Union. Yet after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the U.S. no longer perceived an interest in country or its war.

After establishing the theoretical framework and providing the necessary background regarding the history of U.S.-Yugoslav relations prior to the outbreak of war, the remaining chapters apply constructivism and neoclassical realism to an empirical study of the foreign policies of both the Bush and Clinton administrations during the Bosnian War. I argue that U.S. foreign policy during the Bosnian War can be divided into three separate parts: detachment, containment and intervention. As I explain the shifting situations on the ground in Bosnia, in the international system and domestically within the U.S. that led to these three U.S. policies, I will explain them within the framework of both

constructivism and neoclassical realism in order to determine which theory of foreign policy best explains U.S. policy on Bosnia.

CHAPTER I: THE NEOCLASSICAL REALIST AND CONSTRUCTIVIST THEORIES OF FOREIGN POLICY

Neoclassical Realism

Theories of International Relations

Most traditional theories within international relations focus on structural explanations for state behavior, but fail to address a state's individual foreign policy decisions. For example, classical and neorealist theories seek to explain the outcomes of the international system that cannot be attributed solely to the behavior of a single state, such as the likelihood of war, international cooperation, and arms races. Classical realists argue that states interact under the assumption of anarchy and since there is no global government to provide security, states must ensure their own security. As a result, classical realists assert that states operate in a self-help world and that their behavior is determined by where they are situated relative to other states. The balance of power theory within classical realism posits that states seek an equilibrium of power in the international system, through either increasing their own defensive and offensive power or entering into alliances to jointly constrain the power of a larger state. In essence, classical realism posits that the distribution of power in the international system is the defining variable in state interaction. Thus, under classical realism, intervention when power or strategic interests are not threatened -- such as humanitarian intervention -- is unlikely since intervention for humanitarian purposes would most likely offer little or no material returns and more likely deplete the resources of the intervening state.¹

¹ For further information on classical realism see: Hans Morgenthau. *Politics Among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace*. New York NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948.

As with classical realism, neorealism also posits that states' actions are predictable and understandable by virtue of their power position relative to other states within the international system.² Yet neorealists differ from classical realists by arguing the drive for security, not power, dominates states relations with one another. For example, under the self-help mentality, states are interested in increasing their security relative to that of other states. Yet as State A increases its security, the security of State B decreases, because security is zero-sum. Thus State B will inevitably seek to increase its own security, which in turn decreases the security of State A once more. This is known as the security dilemma within international relations. The theory asserts that while states may seek alliances, they cannot rely on other states to provide for their security. The security dilemma also provides a guideline for the effectiveness of intervention. If State A's initial increase in security was sparked by fear of aggression from State B, then intervention and confidence building measures could effectively relieve that fear and abate the tensions. On the other hand, if the security increase resulted from aggression due to hatred between States A and B, third party intervention would prove meaningless as no amount of confidence building measures could reduce the fear of aggression and distrust.³

Thus classical and neorealism are theories of international politics that explain only the general principles of behavior that govern relations between states in an anarchic international system and offer no or weak predictions about the foreign policy behavior of individual states. As neorealist author Kenneth Waltz argues, mainly explanation, not

² For further information on neorealism see: Kenneth Waltz. *Theory of International Politics*. McGraw-Hill, 1979.

³ Barry Posen. *The Security Dilemma and Ethnic Conflict*. In *Ethnic Conflict and International Security*. Michael Brown, ed. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993. p 103-123.

prediction, is expected from a good theory.⁴ While traditional realist theories explain why individual states could act given their material capabilities, or may be motivated to act out of security and power concerns, they do not provide sufficient explanation for why different states or even the same state at different times, pursue particular foreign policies in the international system.

While neorealist theory includes some general assumptions about the motivations of individual states in seeking security, it fails to explain their behavior in great detail or in all cases. As a result, theories of foreign policy began to emerge. Unlike theories of international relations, theories of foreign policy “take as their dependent variable not the pattern of outcomes of state interactions, but rather the behavior of individual states. Theories of foreign policy seek to explain what states try to achieve in the external realm and when they try to achieve it.”⁵

Neoclassical Realism

Neoclassical realism seeks to explain the behavior of individual states in the international system. According to Gideon Rose, who coined the term neoclassical realism in a 1998 book review, a “country's foreign policy is driven first and foremost by its place in the international system and specifically by its relative material power capabilities.”⁶ Thus neoclassical realism applies traditional realism to foreign policy by merging the material power and security concerns of classical and neorealist theories with “probabilistic predictions about how individual states respond to systemic imperatives.”⁷

⁴ Kenneth Waltz. *Theory of International Politics*. McGraw-Hill, 1979.

⁵ Gideon Rose. *Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy: A Review Article*. *World Politics* 51.1 1998. The John Hopkins University Press. p 145.

⁶ Rose. p 146.

⁷ Jeffery Taliaferro. *Security Seeking Under Anarchy: Defensive Realism Revisited*. *International Security* Vol. 25, No 3 (winter 2000/01). p 133- 134.

In short, the basic parameters of foreign policy are established by a state's position in the international system. Yet neoclassical realists recognize that political leaders make foreign policy decisions, and so it is their perceptions of the state's relative power and security interests that shape foreign policy choices. In other words, there is no automatic link between a state's material capabilities relative the rest of the world and its foreign policy behavior. Rather the context in which a specific foreign policy is implemented requires examination in order to understand the linkage between power and policy.

Within neoclassical realism, foreign policy outcomes (the dependent variable) result from the distribution of power in the international system (the independent variable) and internal factors such as domestic perceptions of the system and domestic incentives (the intervening variables). The addition of intervening variables into the foreign policy equation allows neoclassical realism to distinguish between the material capabilities of states to influence one another and individual state's interests and preferences for acting externally. In other words, just because a state has the capability to act in the international system does not mean it has the incentive or desire to act.

Regarding the independent variable of systemic incentives, neoclassical realists assume that states react to anarchy by attempting to shape and control the international environment. Although states may define their individual interests in a variety of ways, all states are likely to want to increase their international influence. According to Rose, "the central empirical prediction of neoclassical realism is thus that over the long term the relative amount of material power resources countries possess will shape the magnitude and ambition of their foreign policies: as their relative power rises states will seek more

influence abroad.”⁸ Thus a major factor determining a state’s foreign policy behavior is its power relative to the rest of the international system

The intervening variables recognized by neoclassical realist theory attempt to explain the way individual states react to and interpret the international system. While neoclassical realists agree that the theory provides probabilistic predictions regarding how individual states respond to systemic imperatives, scholars writing within the genre of neoclassical realist literature make different claims about what factors are important in the formulation of an individual state’s foreign policy. In short, not all neoclassical realist scholars ascribe to the same list of intervening variables that impact a state’s foreign policy decisions. Thus prior to conducting this study, it was important to determine which intervening variables seemed most logically conducive not only to the Bosnian case, but globally as well. The set of intervening variables that makes the most sense intuitively are the variables dealing with domestic structure. Irrespective of Bosnia, the case can be made that the manifestation of domestic structure matters the most in influencing a state’s foreign policy decisions because a state can never fully separate its foreign policy decisions from its domestic structure.

To this end, this study combines the literature of four widely accepted neoclassical realist scholars: Thomas Christensen, Randall Schweller, Fareed Zakaria, and William Curti Wohlforth. The combination of the intervening variables discussed by these four scholars provides a comprehensive set of intervening variables, which logically fit together given that they all recognize the importance of domestic structure in a state’s foreign policy formation.

⁸ Ibid. p 152.

The first intervening variable, widely accepted by the four above mentioned neoclassical realist scholars, is policymakers' perceptions of systemic pressures and the distribution of power. Neoclassical realism argues that

the international distribution of power can drive countries' behavior only by influencing the decisions of flesh and blood officials... and would-be analysts of foreign policy thus have no alternative but to explore in detail how each country's policymakers actually understand their situation.⁹

Unlike with other realist formulations, under neoclassical realism one cannot assume a single, or even accurate, comprehension by government leaders of the distribution of power, nor the direct translation of such comprehensions into foreign policy. In short, neoclassical realists argue that it cannot be assumed that policymakers accurately comprehend their state's position in the global distribution of power.

In his book on the Cold War dynamic between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, Wohlforth highlights the error of assuming policymakers rationally perceive the relative distribution of power. Wohlforth argues that the cycles of tension between the two superpowers derived from the ambiguity in the distribution of power and policymakers inability to correctly interpret the global situation. The U.S. and the Soviet Union interpreted differently the shifts in the power relationship. After every shift "each side tried to maximize its own position. Unwilling to go to war to test the power distribution, they reached stalemates after crises, posturing and signaling until a new perceived shift led to another round."¹⁰ In essence, according to Wohlforth, the Cold War is best understood

⁹ Ibid. p 158.

¹⁰ William Curti Wohlforth, *The Elusive Balance: Power and Perceptions during the Cold War*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993. p 301.

“as an ongoing dispute between the U.S. and USSR over who had how much power and what influence over the international system they were thus entitled to exercise.”¹¹

Policymakers’ perceptions of the distribution of power feed into the second intervening variable that impacts a state’s foreign policy: the nature of the state’s goals and interests in the international arena. While similar to the first intervening variable in that both deal with policymakers’ perceptions, the second variable looks specifically at how policymakers perceive threats and interests in the international system, as opposed to policymaker’s perceptions regarding their relative power in the international system. The first two intervening variables are interrelated given that a state’s relative power ultimately drives its perception of threats and interests. Schweller argues that a total theory of foreign policy must address the nature of state’s goals and interests regarding their satisfaction with the distribution of international prestige, security, resources “and principals of the system.”¹² According to neoclassical realist theory, states will only act externally if they conceptualize an interest or a threat, regardless of whether the state has the capability to act externally.

The third intervening variable widely recognized by neoclassical realist scholars is the strength of the state relative to society. These scholars contend that merely assessing the international distribution of power is misleading since policymakers may be unable to access the total material power resources of their state. The ability of policymakers to mobilize the states resources in support of its policy initiatives cannot automatically be assumed. Thus a government’s domestic power acts as "a key intervening variable

¹¹ Rose. p 159.

¹² Randall L. Schweller. *Deadly Imbalances: Tripolarity and Hitler's Strategy of World Conquest*. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1998. p 24.

between the international challenges facing the nation and the strategies adopted by the state to meet those challenges."¹³

In short, neoclassical realism argues that relative power distribution and domestic perceptions of this relative power define a state's foreign policy. In order to explain why particular courses of action are taken, one must look to internal factors, such as perceptions of the international context and strategic environment, policymakers' conceptualization of the state's interests and the government's ability to garner domestic support for certain policies.

The Application of Neoclassical Realism to Intervention

Under neoclassical realism, the decision of a state to engage in third party intervention to end a conflict is driven first and foremost by a state's relative material power in the international system. In his work, Zakaria asserts that the foreign policy behavior of states stems from their attempts to use the tools at their disposal in order to exert control and influence over the international environment. Thus as states increase in wealth and gain international influence, intervention becomes a tool with which to shape the international system. As Zakaria posits, as states grow increasingly wealthy, it is natural that they will build large armies and entangle themselves in politics abroad in order to seek international influence.¹⁴

Yet according to neoclassical realists, policymakers cannot be assumed to accurately interpret the relative distribution of power in the international system. Thus

¹³ Thomas J. Christensen. *Useful Adversaries: Grand Strategy, Domestic Mobilization, and Sino-American Conflict, 1947-1958*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996. p 13.

¹⁴ Fareed Zakaria. *From Wealth to Power: The Unusual Origins of America's World Role*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998. p 3.

policymakers' perceptions regarding their state's allocation of international power play a major role in determining whether a state will adopt an interventionist foreign policy. Since power in the international system is based largely on the ability to exert influence over other states, individual states struggle to gain both international prestige and control over international organizations proportionate to their perceived power capabilities.¹⁵ According to scholars such as Jeffery Taliaferro, neoclassical realism asserts that states often intervene in external conflicts in order to protect their perceived allotment of international prestige and power. When policymakers conceptualize a threat to their state's influence in the international system, they are inclined to intervene in order to reassert their power.¹⁶

The way in which policymakers perceive the cause of conflict is another important factor influencing the decision of a state to intervene externally. According to Barry Posen, policymakers' perceptions regarding the cause of conflict influences the decision of a state to intervene in an external conflict since under neoclassical realist theory, the cause of conflict speaks to the efficacy of intervention. On one hand, if the conflict is driven by mistrust or fear of aggression, third party intervention can be effective in establishing an environment of security in which opposing sides can initiate negotiations and confidence building measures. On the other hand, if the conflict is the result of aggression driven by hatred, intervention would prove meaningless since no outside force would be able to diminish the distrust and antipathy between the opposing parties. Thus in considering the

¹⁵ Wohlforth. p 182.

¹⁶ Jeffery Taliaferro. *Neoclassical Realism: The Psychology of Great Power Intervention*. In *Making Sense of International Relations Theory*. Jennifer Sterling-Folker, ed. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers. 2006. p 38.

efficacy of intervention, policymakers' perceptions about the cause of the conflict greatly determine the foreign policy a state adopts.¹⁷

Another factor impacting a state's decision to intervene derives from the way policymakers conceptualize their interests. When a conflict breaks out in an area where a state conceptualizes a strategic interest, it has a strong incentive to intervene in order to restore stability and protect its interests. Wohlforth's work highlights the importance given to interests when policymakers determine a state's foreign policy. He argues that while the Soviet Union struggled to increase its international influence and power, in pursuit of its own interests, the U.S. sought to deny the Soviet Union an influential role in the global system.¹⁸ Thus the Cold War saw many U.S. interventions, into countries such as North Korea and Vietnam, aimed at preventing the spread of Soviet influence that was considered to threaten U.S. global interests.

Neoclassical realism also recognizes the impact of domestic support on policymakers' decisions to intervene externally. In his work, Christensen discusses "national political power", which he defines as "the ability of state leaders to mobilize their nation's human and material resources behind security policy initiatives."¹⁹ While Christensen focuses on U.S.-Sino Cold War relations, this concept of "national political power" can easily be transposed onto intervention politics. If policymakers cannot sell their intervention strategies to the public, they will be unable to mobilize the states human and material capabilities effectively. As Zakaria argues, "foreign policy is made not by the nation as a whole but by its government. Consequently, what matters is state power, not national power. State power is that portion of national power the government can extract

¹⁷ Posen, p 109.

¹⁸ Wohlforth, p 182.

¹⁹ Christensen, p 11.

for its purposes and reflects the ease with which central decision makers can achieve their ends."²⁰ In short, a government requires a degree of domestic support prior to adopting an interventionist foreign policy or it will not control enough national power to effectively achieve its goals in intervening externally.

Table 1: The Theoretical Formula for Neoclassical Realism

Independent Variable	+ Intervening Variables	→ Dependent Variable
Global distribution of power	- Policymakers' perceptions - Conceptualization of threats/interests - Domestic Pressure	Interventionist or non-interventionist foreign policy

Constructivism

Constructivist Theory of Foreign Policy

Unlike neoclassical realism, constructivism serves as both a structural theory of international relations as well as a theory of foreign policy. Constructivists deny the existence of systemic constraints and argue instead that the self-help mentality and power politics of states are social constructions, rather than the inherent features of anarchy assumed by realist theories. In the words of Alexander Wendt, who argued that the existence of a self-help world is due to process rather than structure, "anarchy is what states make of it."²¹ According to Wendt, anarchy and the distribution of power are insufficient in determining state interaction. To take a current example, a nuclear France holds a different meaning for the U.S. than a nuclear North Korea. Under the realist assumption of anarchy, any nuclear state poses a threat to the U.S. security. In fact, France with five hundred nuclear weapons should pose an even greater threat to the U.S. than

²⁰ Zakaria. p 9.

²¹ Alexander Wendt. *Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics*. International Organization. 46, 2 Spring 1992. p 395.

North Korea, which has only one or two nuclear weapons. Yet in reality this is not the case. Since the U.S. and France share similar values and recognize the same rules governing international behavior, the U.S. does not perceive the same threat from a nuclear France as it does from a nuclear North Korea. Constructivists recognize that while the “distribution of power may always effect states calculations, [how] it does so depends of the inter-subjective understandings and expectations, on the ‘distribution of knowledge’, that constitute their conceptions of self and other.”²²

Instead of the realist assertion that the international structure results from state interaction under anarchy, constructivists argue that the international structure is governed by a system of rules and norms. While there is no global government, shared norms, rules and expectations about appropriate behavior govern state conduct in the international system. In her work, Martha Finnemore highlights the norms that regulate the use of force in the international community. Finnemore asserts that

the use of force between states is shaped by the notions people have about rights and duties of states toward one another. Violations of those shared understandings constitute causes for military actions that states collectively understand and recognize.²³

Similarly, rules also regulate how states may use force against one another. These internationally accepted rules outline, “which weapons may be used, who may use violence and who may be its target, how intermediaries are to be treated and communication maintained.”²⁴

Along with its theory of international relations that explains the structure of the international system and how states interact within it, constructivism also offers a theory of

²² Ibid. p 397.

²³ Martha Finnemore. *The Purpose of Intervention: Changing Beliefs About the Use of Force*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003. p 1.

²⁴ Ibid. p 2.

foreign policy. As with the constructivist structural argument on international relations, the foreign policy decisions of individual states are also motivated by the norms and values of the international system. Within this theory, shared norms and values act as an independent variable that determines a state's foreign policy. In the constructivist view, a norm's impact will be greater the more actors within the international system share it and the more precisely it distinguishes appropriate from inappropriate behavior.

In constructivist theory, norms have a constitutive effect on the foreign policy decisions of states as they act to "legitimize goals and thus define actors' interests."²⁵ By identifying certain goals as legitimate, norms act as motives and thus serve in determining the goals towards which states should legitimately direct their foreign policy. States define their interests, and their foreign policy, in accordance with the goals that have been designated as legitimate.²⁶ According to Finnemore, in the current post-Cold War system, the principle legitimate reasons to intervene in a sovereign state are territorial violations, humanitarian disasters wherein a state is violating its rights to sovereignty by failing to protect human rights, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.²⁷

To ensure the goals of individual states are legitimate in the international arena, constructivism argues that multilateral action used to enforce international norms grants legitimacy to and increases the transparency of each individual state's actions. Constructivists argue that multilateral action through legitimate authorizing agents is more effective because "rules backed only by force, without any legitimacy or normative

²⁵ Audie Klotz. *Norms in International Relations: The Struggle against Apartheid*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995. p 26.

²⁶ Ibid. p 26.

²⁷ Finnemore. p 97-98 (Table 1: Goals and Rules of Different European International Orders).

authority, are difficult to sustain and tend not to last long.”²⁸ Thus constructivists consider multilateral organizations as a way for states to legitimize their international actions.

Constructivist theory also recognizes the impact of domestic politics, and the values and norms embedded in a state’s domestic political culture, on foreign policy decisions. As Thomas Risse-Kappen points out, policymakers are “always exposed to several, often contradictory, policy concepts” and the pressure asserted by domestic coalitions has the potential to influence a state’s policy decisions.²⁹ To understand how domestic politics impact foreign policy decisions, one must consider how constructivists conceive the international system. Constructivism views the international system as the interaction between manmade institutions. These institutions are “settled or routinized practices established and regulated by norms.”³⁰ Yet states are not only the actors who interact in the international system, but they are also institutions in of themselves. States are “understood as an ensemble of normatively constituted practices by which a group of individuals form a special type of political association” based on shared beliefs and values.³¹ Under constructivist theory, the international system does not exist in a separate sphere from domestic politics given that both are considered in terms of normatively constituted practices based on shared values and rules. In short, the norms and values given prominence by the domestic population translate into the norms and values a state pursues in the international system. Thus domestic politics can transform the international

²⁸ Ibid. p 2.

²⁹ Thomas Risse-Kappen. *Ideas Do Not Float Freely: Transnational Coalitions, Domestic Structures, and the End of the Cold War*. In *International Relations and the End of the Cold War*. Richard Ned Lebow and Thomas Risse-Kappen, eds. Chichester, NY: Columbia University Press, 1995. p 188.

³⁰ Rey Koslowski and Friedrich V. Kratochwil. *Understanding Change in International Politics: The Soviet Empire’s Demise and the International System*. In *International Relations and the End of the Cold War*. Richard Ned Lebow and Thomas Risse-Kappen, eds. Chichester, NY: Columbia University Press, 1995. p 134.

³¹ Ibid. p 135.

system as domestic coalitions, ascribing to a certain set of values and norms for the international system, form in support of or opposition to a state's foreign policy decisions.

The Application of Constructivism to Intervention

According to Martha Finnemore, at the end of the Cold War there was a shift within the international system that changed the pattern of intervention. While in the post-Cold War system stronger states continue to intervene in weaker states, the understanding “about the purposes to which they can and should use force” has changed.³² The importance of conflict resolution and the protection of humanitarian rights are now widely accepted. Yet according to Finnemore, the shift in the international system merely allows for a permissive environment in which intervention can occur. States are now allowed to intervene for humanitarian purposes, but intervention is not required.

In regards to humanitarian intervention, Finnemore argues that a new conceptualization of sovereignty emerged after the Cold War that changed the international structure and made intervention a permissible norm. After World War II, the Charter of the United Nations acknowledged the sovereign rights of states as the organizing principle of the international system. One of the necessary conditions of sovereignty between states is non-intervention since intervention is an overt challenge to the right of individual states to control the use of force within their territory.³³ Under this principle of international organization, intervention, even for humanitarian purposes, was viewed as an inappropriate form of aggression. Yet Finnemore suggests that this conception of sovereignty ended with the conclusion of the Cold War and “certain claims, particularly human rights claims,

³² Finnemore. p 3.

³³ Ibid. p 7.

now trump sovereignty and legitimize intervention in ways not previously accepted.’³⁴ While states may continue to hesitate to respond to a humanitarian crisis, it is no longer because they will be denounced as illegitimate aggressors.

As a result of the shift in the norms of intervention, according to constructivists the new international structure that emerged after the Cold War allows for intervention but does not compel it. To explain why individual states may adopt interventionist foreign policies to intercede in a humanitarian crisis, Finnemore argues that the norms valued in the international system are not disconnected from individual interests. States no longer separate external and internal evaluations of violent and aggressive behavior. Instead, the internal behavior of states is now considered to be an indicator of their external behavior. Thus states that egregiously and violently violate the human rights of their own citizens are considered international security threats, both in the sense that the violence increases the flow of refugees and destabilizes neighbors and also because internal aggression indicates a states capacity to behave aggressively in the international system as well.³⁵ Thus in the 1990s, the foreign policies of powerful states also began to recognize that without human rights protections, international security could not be assured. This link between international security and human rights was institutionalized in international organizations at the end of the Cold War, especially within the UN. The UN was the institution responsible for promoting and protecting the international norms and values of the system in order to maintain international stability. Thus the early 1990s saw several examples on UN peacekeeping forces aimed at preventing human rights violations, including Somalia, Rwanda and of course, Bosnia.

³⁴ Ibid. p 21.

³⁵ Ibid. p 135.

Thus the variation in foreign policy behavior, either between states or within an individual state, can be explained by the changing perception of a state's interests. One state may choose to intervene in a conflict, while a second state remains aloof, given individual states hold differing conceptualizations of interests. Similarly, if the situation surrounding a humanitarian crisis shifts significantly enough to transform a state's perceptions of its interests, a state may choose to modify its foreign policy in favor of intervention. A second explanation for the variation in foreign policy behavior is the varying standards by which international and domestic actors classify and appraise certain types of action. For example, what constitutes self-determination as opposed to secession? What qualifies as self-defense rather than an unauthorized use of force? What is a case of legitimate intervention as opposed to a blatant violation of sovereignty?³⁶ These questions are just three examples of the numerous contested issues that plague both international and domestic politics. How a state answers these questions, as a domestic population and as a member of the international system, leads to a wide variation in foreign policy behavior.

As evidence of the shift in the burden to intervene in incidents of human rights violations in the international system, Finnemore and other constructivists point to the U.S. intervention in Somalia in the beginning of 1993 as an example of humanitarian action undertaken by the U.S. military in a state that held not strategic or economic interests for the U.S. Similarly, Finnemore argues that after the Persian Gulf War in 1991, the principle interveners expanded their duties to the protection of the Kurdish minority even though for they had pointedly ignored the abuse suffered by the Kurds in previous decades. Constructivists assert that neoclassical realism cannot explain these shifts in foreign policy

³⁶ Koslowski. p 136.

that resulted in humanitarian intervention without strategic or economic interests for the U.S.

Neoclassical Realism versus Constructivism

Table 2, seen below, lays out the predictions of both the neoclassical realist and constructivist theories of intervention.

	<i>Neoclassical Realism</i>	<i>Constructivism</i>
Explanations for state behavior	Driven by a state's position in the international system and relative material power capabilities	Driven by shared rules, norms and expectations about appropriate behavior
Principal reasons for intervention	To maintain the distribution of power and international prestige; conceptualization of threats and interests; perception of efficacy of intervention; domestic variables, including popular support for intervention	To respond to a territorial violation, humanitarian disaster, terrorism, or other situation that threatens the norms established within international system or by the domestic population
Type of intervention	Multilateral or unilateral intervention: Multilateral organizations are considered instruments of international power and influence, but unilateral intervention is acceptable depending on the domestic determinants	Multilateral intervention: Multilateral organizations provide an intervention with legitimacy and transparency

In contrasting these two theories, neoclassical realism can be considered more interest driven than constructivism, which is instead driven by accepted international rules, values and norms. Neoclassical realism derives mainly from the different ways individual states conceptualize threats and interests in the global system. A state may intervene in order to protect its international prestige or because a conflict threatens its interests in a specific state or region. Of course, as mentioned earlier, constructivism is not devoid of interest either. As Finnemore argues, states may be motivated to intervene in order to

protect international security and to avoid an increased flow of refugees and regional destabilization. Yet ultimately constructivism is driven by the responsibility to act. Although states are by no means compelled to intervene, with the end of the Cold War there was a shift in the burden to act and the importance of intervention for conflict resolution and in protection of humanitarian rights has been accepted as more of a given.

Constructivists and neoclassical realists can also disagree on the way intervention should be carried out. Constructivists believe that intervention should always be undertaken multilaterally, through organizations such as the United Nations. Historically, neoclassical realism has favored multilateral intervention. Yet there is more room for calculation and choice within the neoclassical realist logic and unilateral intervention is a viable option depending on the domestic determinates that impact policy. Regarding multilateralism, the similarities between the two schools of thought end at the basic prescription for multilateral intervention, with each school ascribing to a different logic as to why multilateralism is important. Within the competitive international environment posited by neoclassical realists, where the foreign policy ambitions of individual states are shaped by their power relative to the rest of the world, multilateral organizations are considered tools through which a state may shape the global environment and exert its influence on other states. In contrast, constructivists consider multilateral organizations as a way for states to legitimize their international actions and provide transparency. Thus neoclassical realists view multilateral institutions as tools of influence while constructivists consider them to be legitimating agents.

The two schools of foreign policy theory have very different explanations for the U.S. decision to intervene in Bosnia, although they afford importance to many of the same

factors. For example both theories tie the ultimate decision of the U.S. to intervene to the threat that the Bosnian War posed to the legitimacy of the UN and NATO. Yet scholars of neoclassical realist and constructivist theory conceptualize the specific nature of the threat, and how it applied to the U.S., very differently. Both theoretical schools look at the same factors, yet the analysis of why the U.S. responded the way it did differs greatly between the two theories.

When the neoclassical realist theory is applied in the context of the Bosnia War, it would posit that the decision to intervene was predicated on a significant strategic U.S. interest. Within neoclassical realism, policymakers' perceptions play a large role in the foreign policy adopted by a state. Thus neoclassical realism would predict that the U.S. would intervene in Bosnia only if policymakers perceived a threat to the U.S.'s ability to exert its power and influence over other states or if policymakers conceptualized a strategic interest in intervening.

Constructivism, on the other hand, argues that the U.S. intervention in Bosnia resulted from a desire to protect the internationally established rules and norms of the global system. The international system would be severely de-legitimized if a state were allowed to violate the human rights of its citizens and would in fact pose an international security threat because a willingness to act aggressively internally suggest a willingness to do so externally as well.

The Argument in Brief

This paper asserts that U.S. actions during the Bosnian War are more consistent with the neoclassical realist expectations for a state's foreign policy decisions than with constructivist expectations. In short, rather than the international rules and norms of the

international system influencing the U.S. policy, which would have been consistent with constructivism, it was policymakers' conceptualizations of U.S. interests and perceptions regarding the distribution of global power that drove U.S. policy decisions during the Bosnian War.

In the following chapters, I argue that neoclassical realism offers the strongest explanation for the U.S. decision to intervene in Bosnia. Such an argument is supported by the fact that policymakers did perceive a threat to U.S. power in the international system and conceptualized a threat to U.S. interests in light of the UN withdrawal. Ultimately it was the growing potential for a UN withdrawal from Bosnia, combined with the increasing threat to U.S. power and influence in the international system, which sparked a full scale military and diplomatic intervention. While the intervention did occur after the horrendous humanitarian tragedy perpetrated at Srebrenica, I argue the internal debate occurring within the Clinton administration in August 1995 centered primarily on the global perception of U.S. power, not on protecting the norms and values of the international system.

Constructivism fails to explain the decision to intervene in 1995 because, as I argue, humanitarian tragedies had been occurring in Bosnia long before the ethnic cleansing was carried out at Srebrenica. This, combined with the fact the debate within the Clinton administration was not centered on ending a humanitarian tragedy, supports my argument that while the ethnic cleansing perpetrated in Bosnia was horrific, the U.S. decision to intervene was not predicated on a desire to protect human rights.

As with many conflicts, both the situation on the ground in Bosnia and the international response to the war were exceedingly complex. The following chapter provides the necessary background on U.S.-Yugoslav relations during the Cold War and

the breakup of Yugoslavia in order to familiarize the reader with the situation in Bosnia when war broke out in the spring of 1992. From there, the remainder of this paper is devoted to a study of U.S. policy during the Bosnian War, which aims to explain the strategic motivations that led the U.S. to intervene in Bosnia in August 1995.

CHAPTER II: THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The History of Post-World War II U.S.-Yugoslav Relations

After the end of World War II, the U.S. determined its relations with the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) in the context of the Cold War. In 1948, Yugoslavia's communist leadership, under the control of Josip Broz Tito, broke away from Soviet control when the nation was expelled from the World Communist League by the Soviet Union for its refusal to follow Moscow's lead. This break with the Soviet Union coincided with the start of the Cold War between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. Due to the increasing tension in the international balance of power, the leadership in the U.S. began to view an independent Yugoslavia as a valuable strategic asset given both its geographical location and also its adverse impact on Soviet control in Eastern Europe.

Throughout the entirety of the Cold War, U.S.-Yugoslav relations remained oriented around the strategic importance of Yugoslavia in containing and combating Soviet influence. Geographically, Yugoslavia was situated in a strategically significant location between member states of the U.S. led North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Soviet led Warsaw Pact. Yugoslavia shared common borders with two NATO member countries. To the west lay Italy, a founding member of the 1949 NATO collective security alliance. To the northeast lay Greece, which joined the NATO alliance in 1952. Yugoslavia served to geographically disrupt the contiguousness of NATO by physically separating Italy from Greece. Additionally, this disruption in the alliance further isolated Turkey; the NATO member state located the farthest to the east and sharing a common border with Greece. Regarding its proximity to members of the Warsaw Pact, which formed in 1955 as the Soviet response to NATO, Yugoslavia shared common borders with

Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. Given the country's strategic geographical significance, throughout the Cold War Yugoslavia demanded a certain level of importance among U.S. policymakers since it remained a communist country with the potential to fall back in line with the Soviet Union.

Geography allowed Yugoslavia to exercise disproportionate influence during the Cold War, even though it lacked the material capabilities to assert influence onto the world stage. A paper prepared by the Department of State in August 1958 noted that while Yugoslavia did not "possess the human, natural, or technological recourses to play a major political, military or economic role in Europe", the country's geographically and strategically significant location between the Warsaw and NATO power complexes gave Yugoslavia a "considerable politico-strategic importance."³⁷ Tito utilized Yugoslavia's significant position to benefit from relations with both the East and West. According to a National Intelligence Estimate drafted by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency,

Tito's main foreign policy goals [were] to retain Yugoslav independence at any cost, to stand as a model of nonaligned socialist enterprise in the eyes of the world, and to achieve access to economic opportunity in both East and West. His methods for achieving these goals, marked by clever improvisation and shrewd compromise, [were] largely successful. He rejected alliance with either East or West and [received] substantial aid from both. He denied Soviet hegemony in the socialist movement and lived to see that denial become something of a touchstone of socialist policy. He accepted financial aid from the West in wholesale quantities, but politely bid the West goodnight on the doorstep.³⁸

In essence, the strategic importance of Yugoslavia to both the U.S. and the Soviet Union allowed Tito to play both sides off against one another and in the process obtain substantial

³⁷ Paper Prepared by N. Spencer Barnes of the Policy Planning Staff. August 26, 1958. Department of State, PPS Files: Lot 67 D 548, Europe (East).

³⁸ National Intelligence Estimate. NIE 15-67. April 13, 1967. Central Intelligence Agency, Job 79-R01012A, ODDI Registry.

amounts of economic, financial and military assistance, the bulk of which came from the U.S. By November 1966, the U.S. had invested over 3.5 billion dollars in Yugoslavia.³⁹

During the Cold War, the U.S. considered Yugoslavia to be a strategically significant not only geographically, but also as a country whose independence from the Soviet Union could influence other Eastern European states to alter their subservient relationships with the Soviet Union as well. As Secretary of State Dean Rusk noted in November 1961,

Yugoslavia's principal significance remains that of an independent Communist regime which successfully resisted Soviet imperialism. The dramatic economic growth achieved by this regime, along with the evolution of its system, has fortified its role as a disruptive element in the international Communist movement and as a source of encouragement to nationalist anti-Soviet tendencies in the bloc.⁴⁰

Although the country's leadership remained communist, after its 1948 break from the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia began to move towards full global integration, including extensive economic liberalization and political decentralization. The U.S. hoped that the Yugoslavia model would influence the rest of Eastern Europe to break away from the Soviet Union. A section from a National Security Council Report in 1958 entitled "Additional factors adversely affecting Soviet control in Eastern Europe" noted that "the continued existence of Yugoslavia as a Communist nation independent of Moscow will tend to encourage nationalist elements in the area to seek greater autonomy."⁴¹ Subsequent U.S. administrations throughout the Cold War continued to believe that the promising

³⁹ Memorandum From the Under Secretary of State (Katzenbach) and the Under Secretary of Agriculture (Schnittker) to President Johnson. November 30, 1966. Johnson Library, National Security File, Country File, Yugoslavia, Memos, Vol. 2.

⁴⁰ Memorandum From Secretary of State Rusk to President Kennedy. November 21, 1961. Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Yugoslavia.

⁴¹ National Security Council Report. Statement of U.S. Policy Toward the Soviet-Dominated Nations in Eastern Europe. May 24, 1958. NSC 5811/1.

situation in Yugoslavia would encourage other Eastern European countries to break with the Soviet Union because the “relative prosperity, freedom to travel and work abroad, and the landscape of multicultural pluralism and contrasts that Yugoslavs enjoyed” were considered to be “the envy of eastern Europeans.”⁴²

Conscious of how the rest of Communist Eastern Europe watched U.S. and Western policy regarding Yugoslavia, U.S. policymakers made the decision to avoid “active opposition to Communism per se and...to discourage premature action aimed at overthrowing Communist regimes.” Instead the U.S. government determined the best policy to adopt towards Yugoslavia, and the rest of Eastern Europe, was to

continue to express, through media, official and diplomatic channels, its conviction that the popular welfare in any country [was] best served through political democracy, individual liberties and wide scope for private enterprise. But [this was to] be coupled with continuing emphasis on the fact that the US and its Western allies [had] no intention of exerting pressure on any Communist government in a truly independent state...[The U.S.] would encourage elements in present governments who [were] inclined toward a gradual swing out of the Soviet orbit. And furthermore, it would continuously undercut Soviet propaganda that US policy [promoted] the restoration of monopoly capitalism or feudalism.⁴³

Thus the U.S. hoped its policy towards Yugoslavia would be seen as a model for the rest of Eastern Europe. The posture that the U.S. adopted towards Yugoslavia after it declared its independence from the Soviet Union was designed to disprove Soviet propaganda claims that the U.S. would force regime change and capitalism onto Eastern European nations.

The U.S. foreign policy that developed towards Yugoslavia was three-pronged. The first aim was to,

⁴² Susan Woodward. *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute, 1995. p 1.

⁴³ Paper Prepared by N. Spencer Barnes of the Policy Planning Staff. August 26, 1958. Department of State, PPS Files: Lot 67 D 548, Europe (East).

assist Yugoslavia--a Communist-ruled state [that had] successfully broken away from Soviet domination--to build a firm secure base of national independence and to support the determination that Yugoslavia [had] shown to preserve and strengthen its independent status...[Second] to exert influence upon Yugoslavia's present and future leadership...[and finally] to follow a course which would bring the US maximum benefit from the significant role of Yugoslavia as an independent socialist state outside the Soviet bloc which [exerted] a disturbing influence upon the political and ideological unity of the Soviet-dominated international Communist movement and [tended] to stimulate the Soviet-dominated Eastern European governments to seek greater freedom of action from Moscow in shaping their own institutions and policies.⁴⁴

While the rationale behind the first and third stages of the U.S. foreign policy have been explained above regarding Yugoslavia as an independent Communist regime, the second stage regarding the U.S. desire to influence present and future Yugoslav leaders deserves further explanation.

While the U.S. made a conscious effort not to appear to be forcing democracy on Yugoslavia for fear of pushing other Eastern European countries further towards the Soviet Union, U.S. policymakers did aim “for the evolution of Yugoslav political, economic, and social institutions along more democratically representative and humanistic lines with increasing ties to the West.”⁴⁵ Yet George Kennan, who served as the U.S. Ambassador to Yugoslavia from 1961 until 1963, warned that

Tito and his leading associates were too deeply affected by their early Communist training to be able to get away from it entirely: they would always be sensitive to the charge that they were becoming tools of the imperialists, and would always lean somewhat to the Communist side in world affairs as a means of salving their Communist consciences.

Instead, Kennan suggested that the U.S. should direct its principal hopes towards the “second generation of Yugoslav leaders, particularly the younger people in the echelon just

⁴⁴ Letter From the Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs (Foy Kohler) to the Ambassador to Yugoslavia (Kennan). October 12, 1961. Kennedy Library, National Security Files, Yugoslavia.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

under the top” since this group had the potential to be “more amenable to an understanding of [the U.S.] point of view and less fearful of appearing to have normal and intimate relations with [the U.S].”⁴⁶ Thus the U.S. accepted that Yugoslavia would remain Communist under Tito’s leadership and this was tolerable given how an independent Yugoslavia helped to undermine the Soviet position in Eastern Europe. Yet while the U.S. would abide by a Communist Yugoslavia out of necessity of maintaining positive relations with Yugoslavia during the Cold War, U.S. policymakers still desired a democratic Yugoslavia.

As the Cold War continued, U.S. foreign policy regarding Yugoslavia continued to center around the Soviet Union. When Richard Nixon took office in 1969, his administration recognized that the U.S. had entered into a new era of strategic parity in which it would be unable to restore the former military superiority that the country had previously enjoyed. Instead, Nixon hoped that by recognizing this strategic parity in his new policy of *détente*, he would be able to engage the Soviet Union “in deals that would contain and channel the competition and blunt Soviet interest in attempting to confront the United States and its core allies.”⁴⁷ In regards to Yugoslavia, and Eastern Europe as a whole, *détente* aimed to allay Soviet fears that the U.S. sought to increase the tension in Eastern Europe while also showing support for the independence of Eastern European countries.⁴⁸ Nixon emphasized the continued political importance of Yugoslavia by visiting Tito in Belgrade in 1970 and sending his Secretary of State, William Rogers, to Yugoslavia in July 1972.

⁴⁶ Memorandum of Conversation. George F. Kennan (US Ambassador) speaking with President. March 22, 1961 Department of State, Central Files, 611.68/3 - 2261.

⁴⁷ Raymond L. Garthoff. *Détente and Confrontation: American-Soviet Relations from Nixon to Reagan*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1994. p 3.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.* p 144.

Gerald Ford continued Nixon's practice of visiting Eastern European states after assuming the presidency in 1974, stopping in both Romania and Yugoslavia after the Helsinki Summit in 1975. Ford's administration continued to hold with previous U.S. policies directed at an independent Eastern Europe, emphasizing that U.S. "policy must be a policy of responding to the clearly visible aspirations in Eastern Europe for a more autonomous existence within the context of a strong Soviet geopolitical influence."⁴⁹ Ford sought to further normalize U.S. relations with Eastern Europe by expanding economic, consular and cultural exchanges. While the U.S. enjoyed burgeoning relations with other Eastern European states, the Ford administration remained wary of Soviet overtures to Yugoslavia. Tito had firmly resisted Soviet influence for decades, yet the U.S. remained fearful of Yugoslavia falling back under Soviet control in light of Leonid Brezhnev's November 1976 visit to Belgrade.

Under the administrations of both Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan, U.S.-Yugoslav relations continued as they had under previous administrations, with the U.S. supplying both economic and military aid to bolster the country against the Soviet Union. The U.S. continued to perceive the strategic importance of Yugoslavia as both a geographical divide between the NATO and Warsaw power complexes and as a regional model for Eastern European states. Thus from 1948 until 1990, U.S.-Yugoslav relations were oriented around the Cold War. As a result, when the Cold War ended in 1989 after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the motivating force driving U.S.-Yugoslav relations crumbled. Thus U.S. strategic interest in the country diminished dramatically just as tensions were increasing in Yugoslavia after the death of Tito.

⁴⁹ Ibid. p 549.

The Rise of Serb Nationalism

Yet it is important to recognize that while the U.S. maintained some degree of interest in Yugoslavia up until the end of the Cold War, the rise of Serb nationalism in the 1980s, which threatened to undermine the stability of the country, coincided with a steadily declining U.S. interest in Yugoslavia. A major cause of the surge in nationalism was the economic decline, foreign indebtedness and rising unemployment of the 1980s, which is discussed in detail in the following section. This economic crisis resulted in a political conflict between the republics over how to respond to the crisis and organize political power, with Slovenia and Croatia favoring political pluralism and decentralization and Serbia and Montenegro favoring increased centralization and single party rule.⁵⁰ This growing political conflict allowed for the emergence of ethnic polarization in the republics and Serbian party leaders, mainly Slobodan Milošević, saw the growing ethnic tensions in the country not as a danger, but as an opportunity to consolidate power.

Initially, Serb nationalism was directed at the rising tensions between the minority Serb population and the majority Albanian population in Kosovo, an autonomous province of Serbia. In April 1987, Milošević, as the head of the Serbian Central Committee, incited Serb nationalism as he spoke to a large crowd of angry Serbs outside of Pristina, the capital of Kosovo. His speech, in which he declared that no one would ever be allowed to beat the Serbs, attracted huge public support, and became a rallying cry for Serbs across Yugoslavia. Such a response convinced Milošević of the political value of appealing to Serb nationalism and he rejected the agenda of the Tito regime under which public manifestations of national intolerance were ruthlessly suppressed. As a result, Serbs in

⁵⁰ Michael Brown, ed. *The International Dimensions of Internal Conflict*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1996. p 42.

other republics also became increasingly radicalized in response to the growing propaganda flowing from Belgrade which painted Serbs as the aggrieved victims of the former Tito regime. In light of the economic crisis, political conflict and overall growing insecurity within the Federation, the growing argument for a Greater Serbia, in which would encompass all Serbs living in communities outside of Serbia, greatly appealed to the Serb population. This provided Milošević with strong nationalist sentiment to exploit as a political tool in order to mobilize and strengthen his political base.

Thus once Milošević assumed the presidency of Serbia in 1988, he had established himself as a nationalist leader of a growing Serbian national movement that cut across the borders of the republics. In short, the dramatic rise of Serb nationalism in Yugoslavia in the 1980s set the stage for the breakup of the Federation by provoking powerful nationalist reactions in the other republics in response to the Belgrade's desire for a Greater Serbia. As Milošević sought to consolidate power, the other republics were intent on avoiding being included in his Greater Serbia. Thus the other republics had a powerful incentive to move towards greater decentralization of SFRY, which resulted in the break-up of Yugoslavia.

U.S.-Yugoslav Relations After the Cold War

After Milošević assumed power, in part due to his talent at exploiting Serb nationalist sentiment, the USSR collapsed. Thus the culmination of Serb nationalism in Yugoslavia occurred just as the U.S. lost the reason for its strategic interest in Yugoslavia. In short, the U.S. no longer needed Yugoslavia as a symbol in Eastern Europe to encourage others to break from the USSR. The U.S. Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Warren Zimmerman, explained that in 1989, "the traditional American approach to Yugoslavia no

longer made sense, given the revolutionary changes sweeping Europe”.⁵¹ Ultimately, the stability of Yugoslavia was no longer considered instrumental to U.S. strategic interests after the Cold War ended and there was no move from the U.S. to quash the growing ethnic polarization that ultimately led to the destruction of the Federation.

It is interesting to note that as early as 1967, U.S. intelligence analysts predicted the potential for conflict in Yugoslavia after Tito’s death. A CIA National Intelligence Estimate argued that,

the greatest problem the Yugoslav Communist Party is likely to face is arranging an orderly secession to the 74-year-old Tito. Should the secession problem arise during a period of severe internal stress and before current reforms have become institutionalized, a serious struggle might ensue.

Yet CIA analysts asserted that there was only “a remote chance that such a struggle could threaten the cohesiveness of the Federation” and it was “far more likely that the state would survive intact.” The Agency predicted that the “relatively united leadership could avoid serious crisis and choose a replacement or, more likely, agree on some form of collective leadership.”⁵² CIA’s optimistic outlook regarding the secession of leadership after Tito’s death proved inaccurate. After Tito’s death, the Federation of Yugoslavia was set on a path toward disintegration that ultimately culminated in the Bosnian War in 1992.

The Disintegration of the Yugoslav Federation

Prior to its disintegration in 1991, Yugoslavia consisted of six republics inhabited by multiple nationalities. Yugoslavia was led by the head of the Yugoslav Communist Party, Josip Broz Tito from 1945 until his death in 1980. During this time period, the six

⁵¹ Warren Zimmerman. *The Last Ambassador: A Memoir of the Collapse of Yugoslavia*. Foreign Affairs. March/April 1995, p 2.

⁵² National Intelligence Estimate. NIE 15-67. April 13, 1967. Central Intelligence Agency, Job 79-R01012A, ODDI Registry.

republics operated autonomously to a great extent. Five of the republics were designated as homelands of their majority ethnic groups, and bore names to reflect this: the Croats in Croatia, the Serbs in Serbia, the Slovenes in Slovenia, the Macedonian Slavs in Macedonia, and the Montenegrins in Montenegro. The sixth republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, often referred to simply as Bosnia, had no dominant majority and was regarded as a joint homeland for Croats, Serbs and Bosnian Muslims.

At the time of Tito's death in 1980, Yugoslavia entered into a period of economic decline, caused largely by the program of liberalization and privatization instituted in order to resolve the foreign debt crisis, which severely diminished the living standards of many Yugoslavs. As the two wealthiest republics in Yugoslavia, Croatia and Slovenia objected to the central government's economic redistribution policy that aimed to bolster the weak economies in the other republics, arguing that "redistribution sapped the incentive of firms and workers" in the other republics economies who benefited from the trickle-down effects.⁵³ The republics of Croatia and Slovenia both welcomed the revolutions on 1989 that served to liberalize and decentralize communism. At the start of 1990, multiparty elections occurred in both republics for the first time since the creation of the Yugoslav federation. Non-communist candidates won the presidencies in both the republics, arguing against Serbian domination of the federation as well as the federal redistribution policies.⁵⁴

In Croatia, the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), led by Franjo Tudjman, defeated the Party of Democratic Changes (SDP) for control of the presidency. The SDP was simply the League of Communists of Croatia (SKH) renamed, which from 1945 until the elections in 1990 had been the only party in socialist Yugoslavia. Tudjman, a former

⁵³ Woodward. p 69.

⁵⁴ Jon Western. *Selling Intervention and War: The Presidency, the Media, and the American Public*. Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 2005. 140.

general in the Yugoslav National Army (JNA), was an ardent nationalist who pledged to deliver Croatian statehood. Thus the election platform of the HDZ developed to assert Croatia's right to succeed and to freely form alliances with other countries outside the auspices of the federation. In order to accommodate this reorganization of the republic into an independent state, the HDZ pledged to correct historical imbalances such as the disproportionate representation of Serbs in the police and media.⁵⁵

Tudjman's policy during the election also had significant ramifications during the Bosnia War, which broke out after Croatia won its independence from the federation. From the start, Tudjman clearly expressed his disregard for Bosnia-Herzegovina by referring to the republic as a "national state of the Croatian nation" and Bosnian Muslims and Islamicized Croats. After taking control of the presidency, Tudjman denounced Bosnian Muslims as "dangerous fundamentalists" determined to spread Islam throughout Europe and at one point even argued before U.S. Ambassador Warren Zimmermann that Bosnia should simply be divided between Croatia and Serbia.⁵⁶ Tudjman advocated for the Croatia annexation of Herzegovina, the southern part of the republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, partly because he was beholden to the Herzegovina lobby for their financial and political support during the elections. The Herzegovina lobby consisted of Croat emigrants from Herzegovina as well as Croats still in the region who advocated the annexation of Herzegovina into Croatia.

Unlike in Croatia, the Slovene Communists initiated democratic reforms before public pressure began to build. The reformist Communist Party, under the leadership Milan Kucan, helped to lead the drive for constitutional amendments that laid the ground

⁵⁵ Laura Silber and Allan Little. *Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1995. p 87.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p 86.

work for elections, asserted the republics sovereignty over the federation and established the right to succeed. The reformed Communists and the opposition parties mainly differed of the prospect for reform within Yugoslavia, with the reformed communists arguing that Yugoslavia could be transformed into a model democratic state.⁵⁷ Thus the elections platforms were established around the question of Slovenia's role in the federation and whether the modern republic should remain a part of Yugoslavia or succeed. Kucan won the elections held in January 1990, becoming Slovenia's first president. As the republic's new president, Kucan immediately gave up his membership in the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, leading to the collapse of the all-Yugoslav party, in order to better represent all Slovenes. At first Kucan remained wary of the idea of an independent Yugoslavia, instead pursuing a policy of transforming Yugoslavia into a loose confederation. Yet after it became apparent that this aim was not possible, Kucan did not oppose Slovene secession from Yugoslavia.

The election of non-communist nationalist leadership in both Croatia and Slovenia directly challenged the centralization policy of the Serbia's communist president Slobodan Milošević, who sought to consolidate political and economic control throughout the federation. In February 1988, Milošević assumed the presidency in Serbia after aligning with Serb nationalists and increasing the political power of the Communist Party. After consolidating his power within Serbia, Yugoslavia's largest republic, Milošević began an aggressive campaign to reassert a strong central government in Yugoslavia. Towards this end, in 1989 Milošević unilaterally altered the 1974 federal constitution and revoked the autonomous status of two Serbian provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina. Under the 1974 constitution, Yugoslavia was governed by an eight-member presidency consisting of the

⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 88.

six republics plus the autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. Thus by revoking the autonomy of the two Serbian provinces, Milošević assured Serbia greater control and influence in the Yugoslav federal government. As his power increased and he pursued a policy of centralized power, Milošević used nationalism as a vehicle to attain power and strengthen his control over Serbia and then Yugoslavia.

Angered by the unilateral alteration of the federal constitution and frustrated by Milošević's attempts to centralize economic and political power, in June of 1991 the republics of Croatia and Slovenia decided to succeed. Neither Croatia nor Slovenia wanted to be tied to the economically poorer republics and both wanted to follow the model of the post-Cold War European nations rather than that of the Soviet Union, which Serbia had close ties with. Milošević refused to allow the two republics to succeed and declared the right to defend the territorial integrity of the country.

By the time secession became a real possibility for both Croatia and Slovenia, the U.S. orientation towards Yugoslavia had undergone a dramatic shift and the Bush administration saw no reason to become involved in the growing tensions of the region. The Cold War had ended, thus Yugoslavia's "no longer enjoyed the geo-strategic importance that the U.S. had given it during the Cold War."⁵⁸ This geo-strategic shift was a determining factor regarding U.S. foreign policy in Bosnia during the period of disintegration and during the war as well. Prior to the end of the Cold War, the U.S. would have been exceedingly interested in the stability of Yugoslavia, which served as a buffer between NATO and Warsaw Pact countries and was a symbol of what Eastern European countries could achieve if they separated from the Soviet sphere. Yet as the following chapter will show, the complete lack of a conceived interest in Yugoslavia after the end of

⁵⁸ Zimmerman. p 2.

the Cold War led the U.S. to remain detached first from the country's collapse, and then from its war.

As a result of this shift in geo-strategic importance, from 1989 until the outbreak of war in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992, U.S. foreign policy in Yugoslavia showed "support for Yugoslavia's unity, independence, and territorial integrity." Yet the U.S. would "only support unity in the context of democracy; it would strongly oppose unity imposed or preserved by force."⁵⁹ In support of this policy, on June 21, 1991, U.S. Secretary of State, James Baker, arrived in Belgrade. Although Zimmerman concedes that Baker made it clear to Milošević that the U.S. strongly opposed any use of force that would "block democratic change", he argues that while no green light was given to Milošević or the JNA to invade the succeeding republics, there was no red light either.⁶⁰ Thus even as the Federation's collapse became more apparent, the U.S. gave "no consideration to using force to stop a Serbia/JNA attack on Slovenia or Croatia."⁶¹

Regardless of the message, Baker's trip came too late. On June 25 Slovenia declared itself independent in a nearly unanimous vote by the Parliament. The newly declared state was well prepared for its decision to succeed, having backed the independence legislation with executive orders that created and staffed organizations capable of assuming control of the borders, air traffic and port authorities from federal police and custom officials on June 26. One the same day Slovenia declared its independence, the Federal Parliament met and agreed not to recognize the secession. In July 1991, the JNA, comprised mainly of Serbs and under Milošević's control, fought against Slovenian forces in an attempt to return Slovenia to the Federation. Due to the

⁵⁹ Ibid. p 3.

⁶⁰ Ibid. p 11.

⁶¹ Ibid. p 12.

fact that Slovenia's Serb population was relatively small, the war lasted a mere ten days and ended with mediations led by the European Community (EC). Fewer than seventy people died, giving the impression that the disintegration of Yugoslavia would not be as difficult as the international community had feared.⁶²

As with Slovenia, Croatia also declared its independence from the federation on June 25. Yet unlike the small Serbian population on Slovenia, Croatia had 12 percent Serb population that feared it would be mistreated as a minority under the leadership of Tudjman, a Croat. Serb opinion in Croatia was inflamed by the HDZ refusal to endorse the Serb's place in the Croat constitution, which resulted in many Serbs being purged from their jobs in the police, security forces, media and factory work. The conflict between the JNA and Croatian forces began in late July 1991 and lasted for seven months until former U.S. Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, brokered a cease-fire in December 1991. During this time the United Nations (UN) placed an arms embargo on Yugoslavia in hopes that it would bring stability to the region. Yet the Serbian army already controlled the majority of the arms in Yugoslavia, thus granting them a large military advantage that persisted throughout the war with Bosnia.

The Impact of Croatian and Slovene Secession in Bosnia

After Croatia and Slovenia seceded, Bosnia was in a tough position as the most ethnically heterogeneous of the Yugoslav republics. With a population distribution that was 43 percent Bosnian Muslim, 35 percent Serbian Orthodox Christian, and 18 percent Croatian Catholic, Bosnians feared that if they remained a part of Serbian controlled Yugoslavia the Bosnian Serb population would receive preferential treatment while

⁶² Woodward. p 146.

Muslims and Croats would be marginalized and possibly abused by Milošević. Yet if Bosnia were to declare independence, the Muslim citizens feared that they would be left vulnerable since they had no parent nation to help protect their interests in Bosnia. The Bosnian Serb population could receive aid and support from Serbia and the Croats from Croatia, but the Muslims would be forced to rely on the international community.⁶³ Thus the security of all its peoples greatly concerned the government of Bosnia as it debated whether to succeed.

As in both Croatia and Slovenia, multiparty elections were held that brought non-Communist representatives to power in Bosnia. The elections, held in December 1990, resulted in Parliamentary seats being won by Muslim, Croat and Serbian nationalists. The Bosnian presidency was comprised of seven members, two Muslims, two Croats, two Serbs and one Yugoslav, each of which belonged to ethnically based parties. One member, Alija Izetbegovic, the head of the Muslim Party, argued that if Croatia left the Federation, Bosnia-Herzegovina would be forced to declare independence not only out of fear of Serbian domination, but because Bosnia could not belong to a Federation that excluded Croatia. Izetbegovic argued that the significant Croat population in western Bosnia would seek to succeed and join with independent Croatia rather than remain in a Serbian dominated Yugoslavia. Thus after the secession of Croatia and Slovenia, Izetbegovic and other non-nationalist parties asserted that Bosnia was a state in its own right that had its own unique history, culture and traditions.⁶⁴ Izetbegovic's Party of Democratic Action (SDA) joined with Croat representatives in lobbying the Bosnian Assembly to succeed from

⁶³ Samantha Power. *"A Problem From Hell": America and the Age of Genocide*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2002. p. 240.

⁶⁴ Paul Shoup and Steven Berg. *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*. New York, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000. p 34.

the Serbian-led Yugoslav Federation. Together the Bosnian Muslims and Croats constituted close to 60 percent of the government Assembly, allowing the declaration to pass easily.

The Bosnian Serb element of the Presidency, dominated by the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) under the leadership of Radovan Karadzic, opposed Izetbegovic's move towards independence and abstained from the Assembly's vote by walking out of the Parliament during the vote. In response to the Bosnian Assembly's declaration of sovereignty, in November 1991 the SDS organized a referendum to determine whether "the Serbian people in Bosnia-Herzegovina should remain in a common Yugoslav state."⁶⁵ After receiving an almost unanimous affirmative response from the Bosnian Serbs, the SDS argued that there could be no doubts that the Bosnian Serbs wanted to remain a part of Yugoslavia and would not accept minority status in an independent Bosnia.

In response to the debate, the Bosnian Presidency determined the appropriate course of action was to offer a referendum to determine the future of Bosnia. This decision was made despite warnings from the Serbian members of the presidency that any move to independence would result in the Serbian-inhabited areas of Bosnia seceding to remain with the rump Yugoslavia. In March 1992, 99.4 percent of voters chose to succeed, though the two Serbian members of the presidency convinced a vast majority of the Serb population to boycott the referendum, which it regarded as unconstitutional. Backed by Milošević, the two Serb members of the Bosnian presidency resigned their posts and declared a separate Serbian Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina within the borders of the newly independent Bosnian state that was loyal to the "all-Serbian State of Yugoslavia."⁶⁶

⁶⁵ Ibid. p 74.

⁶⁶ Western. p 142.

This new Serbian state joined with the JNA to establish the Bosnian Serb Army that controlled the majority of the Bosnian military arsenal. Given the UN arms embargo on the region, Bosnian Muslims and Croats were left nearly defenseless.⁶⁷

After Bosnia declared its independence from Yugoslavia, the Bush administration, along with Europe, granted the new state diplomatic recognition in hopes that international legitimacy would act as a stabilizer in Bosnia. Yet as the following chapter will show, short of offering international recognition, the Bush administration had no interest in preserving the Yugoslav Federation giving the shift in the country's geo-strategic importance after the end of the Cold War. Thus after the March referendum, and despite international recognition of the new Bosnian state, violence erupted between Bosnian Croats, Muslims and Serbs. Bosnian Serb forces, operating in conjunction with the Yugoslav Army, secured control across all of northern Bosnia and began a policy of ethnic cleansing in an attempt to create an ethnically homogeneous state.

Until the outbreak of the Bosnian War, Europe had not experienced comparable atrocities committed by military troops against civilians since World War II. Bosnian Serb soldiers rounded up, beat and often executed the Muslim and Croat intellectual elite and destroyed cultural and religious sites in order to erase the memory of the Muslim and Croat history in Bosnia. Non-Serbs were fired from jobs and factories limited the percent of non-Serb employees that could work there. Often, men and boys were imprisoned in concentration camps and all over Bosnia there were mass killings meant to wipe out all non-Serbs in order to create a Greater Serbia. In order to break the link between citizens and their land, fathers were forced to castrate their sons and molest their daughters. Muslim and Croat women and girls were raped and impregnated by Bosnian Serb

⁶⁷ Power. p. 243.

soldiers.⁶⁸ All of this violence aimed to cleanse Bosnia of its non-Serb population through either forced relocation or death and lasted until the war's end in 1995.

⁶⁸ Power. p. 251.

CHAPTER III: THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION AND DISENGAGEMENT

The Argument in Brief

This chapter examines the U.S. decision to remain disengaged after the start of the Bosnian War in the spring of 1992. There are two possible explanations for this policy of disengagement, each of which gives precedence to different sets of determining factors dictating a state's foreign policy. Neoclassical realism would predict that the U.S. would only intervene in an external conflict if policymakers perceived a threat to the distribution of power in the international system that would disrupt the ability of the U.S. to influence the global community or if there was a conceptualized interest that could be achieved through engagement. Additionally, neoclassical realist theory posits that the U.S. would be inhibited from intervening externally if policymakers perceived the root of the conflict to stem from ancient ethnic hatred since within this theoretical framework, the cause of the conflict speaks to the efficacy of intervention.

Constructivism, on the other hand, predicts that the U.S. would intervene externally if the conflict threatened to undermine international security by either undermining multilateral international institutions, creating a refugee crisis or destabilizing a region. Additionally, the theory posits that the U.S. would intervene in defense of the established rules and norms of the international system, in which egregious violations of human rights are not acceptable because internal state aggression is a warning sign for potential external state aggression. At the same time, constructivism, like neoclassical realism, recognizes that a state's foreign policy cannot exist separate from its interests. The two theories merely diverge regarding what interests should spark a policy of intervention, but agree that a state's foreign policy is driven by its interests.

This chapter looks specifically at the strategic reasoning that kept the Bush administration from intervening in Bosnia in 1992. I posit that this policy of disengagement reinforces the neoclassical realist explanation that says a state's decision to intervene is dependent on policymakers' conceptualizations of interests and their perceptions as to the cause of the conflict. I argue that the Bush administration allowed the European Community to take the lead in Bosnia due to the diplomatic fatigue that resulted from the overextension of U.S. power elsewhere in the world and the preoccupation with the systemic changes in the world power structure that resulted from the collapse of the Soviet Union. When the policymakers' lack of a conceptualized interest in Bosnia was combined with the U.S. military's adamant opposition to any U.S. involvement in the Bosnian War, the result was a policy of detachment. While domestic pressure for U.S. involvement did emerge in August of 1992 in response to the disclosure of Serbian concentration camps, ultimately no strategic interest or threat emerged during the Bush administration to prompt a U.S. intervention.

Strategic Interests and Disengagement

When the Bosnian War broke out in the spring of 1992, the Bush administration's policy on Bosnia reflected the complete lack of U.S. interest in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In 1992, the U.S. no longer had a conceptualized strategic interest in Bosnia. Yugoslavia had been strategically important to U.S. geo-strategic interests during the Cold War given its location between NATO and Warsaw Pact countries. Yet once the Cold War ended, concern over the systemic changes in the international system and the emergence of other interests took priority over the collapse of Yugoslavia.

The events of the spring and early summer of 1992 are more consistent with the expectations of neoclassical realist than with constructivism when considering why the Bush administration chose to remain detached from the war in Bosnia. U.S. foreign policy regarding Bosnia in the first half of 1992 was determined primarily by four factors: policymakers' perceptions of the global distribution of power, the conceptualization of U.S. interests, the U.S. military's opposition to involvement in Bosnia given the chance for success, and the overall perception of the efficacy of intervention. All four of these factors are intervening variables cited within neoclassical realist literature to explain a state's foreign policy behavior and thus reinforce the neoclassical realist explanation for U.S. policy in early 1992.

The first factor that influenced U.S. foreign policy in early 1992 was policymakers' perceptions of the U.S. position in the distribution of power. Policymakers' perceptions are key intervening variable within neoclassical realism and in the case of Bosnia, played a major role in preventing the Bush administration from engaging in the war. The collapse of the USSR resulted in a massive systemic change in the world system as there was a shift from a bipolar to a unipolar distribution of power. From 1989 through 1991, the Bush administration had been dealing with the major concern over what would happen after the USSR collapsed. The USSR was a nuclear power that stored weapons and maintained facilities in several of its satellite states. As the total collapse of the Soviet system became more apparent, the Bush administration attempted to create a policy to deal with the nuclear capabilities that the newly independent satellite states stood to inherit. In a very short time, the number of states in the world with nuclear capabilities had the potential to

increase dramatically, and many of these states did not yet have the infrastructure and bureaucracy in place to assure the security of these weapons.

Thus in 1992, there was a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the U.S. position in the world and policymakers were engaged in re-conceptualizing the U.S. role in the world system. Essentially, U.S. policymakers' uncertainty as to the distribution of power in the newly emerging unipolar world meant that the war in the former Yugoslavia, which broke out before the complete collapse of the USSR, was a distant second priority behind the reconfiguration of the U.S. position relative to the rest of the world.

The second factor supporting the neoclassical realist explanation for the policy of disengagement in 1992 stems from policymakers' perceptions of U.S. interests and priorities. The Bush administration could not engage in every global problem and since there was no conceptualized interest in engaging in Bosnia, policymakers chose to direct U.S. capabilities and energies elsewhere. The Bush administration was contending with diplomatic and leadership fatigue as it dealt with Germany's reunification, the collapse of communism in central Europe, the break-up of the USSR into fifteen independent nations and the U.S. led coalition in the Persian Gulf War.⁶⁹

In addition, several complex and potentially politically destabilizing concerns demanded the attention of the Bush administration. The administration had to devote significant time and attention to the potential nuclear capabilities of North Korea and the appropriate response to the regime's defiance of the International Agency of Atomic Energy; the Nuclear Posture Review to determine if the U.S. should retain a secure nuclear deterrent in the post-Cold War era; and the continuation of Operation Provide Comfort that supplied humanitarian aide and played a protective role for Kurds in Northern Iraq.

⁶⁹ Richard Holbrooke. *To End a War*. New York, NY: Random House, 1998. p 24.

Furthermore, the Bush administration was considering imposing a full economic embargo on Haiti due to the refusal of General Raul Cedras to leave the country. If enacted, the embargo would result in a massive wave of Haitian economic migrants and increase pressure on U.S. border patrol agencies.⁷⁰ Ultimately, the Bush administration was focused extensively on their commitments in the Persian Gulf, the diplomatic effort that accompanied the disintegration of the USSR and the other complex concerns emerging in the post-Cold War world. As the former ambassador to Yugoslavia, Warren Zimmerman noted, “even a great power has trouble dealing with more than one crisis at a time.”⁷¹

The third factor that reinforces the neoclassical realist explanation of U.S. policy in Bosnia in early 1992 was the opposition of the U.S. military. Ultimately, the opposition of the U.S. military influenced policymakers’ conceptualizations of U.S. interests and led the Bush administration to pursue a policy of detachment in Bosnia given the lack of a perceived interest in intervening. The military establishment in the early 1990’s adhered to the Powell Doctrine of Decisive Force, which reflected the lessons of the Vietnam War by asserting that the military should only enter into conflicts it knew it could win. If intervention was deemed necessary, the U.S. should only do so with overwhelming force. Considering the rough, mountainous terrain of Bosnia and the belief that the conflict was driven by unremitting ethnic hatred, the military leadership was concerned of an intervention effort spiraling out of control.

In 1992, military estimates as to the scale of commitment that would be required for a successful U.S. military intervention in Bosnia dampened any chance of direct U.S. involvement. A senior aid for the Joint Chiefs of State (JCS) informed Congress in August

⁷⁰ Wesley Clark. *Waging Modern War: Bosnia, Kosovo and the Future of Combat*. New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2001. p 34.

⁷¹ Holbrooke. p 26.

1992 that between 60,000 and 120,000 troops would be needed in order to secure a land route from the Croatian coastal city of Split to Sarajevo and to establish a twenty mile secure zone around the airport in Sarajevo for the protection of relief flights. Overall, the JCS estimated that as many as 400,000 ground troops would be required to impose a ceasefire in Bosnia.⁷² Policymakers in the Bush administration viewed intervention from a Vietnam era perspective, remembering the power of anti-war demonstrations and public opinion.⁷³ Committing such a large number of U.S. forces to intervene in a conflict in which the U.S. had no vital interests suggested political suicide. In short, the large number of troops that the Pentagon deemed necessary for a successful intervention in Bosnia was too large a commitment given that the Bush administration perceived no strategic interest in the former Yugoslavia. Bosnia was merely another humanitarian crisis that carried no vital interest for the U.S.

The fourth factor supporting the neoclassical realist explanation for the U.S. policy of detachment in early 1992 was the Bush administration's and the military's perception that the war was the result of ancient ethnic hatred. Within neoclassical realism, the perceived cause of a conflict speaks to the efficacy of third party intervention. Many in the Bush administration believed that the Bosnian War could not easily be stopped with a third party intervention since the conflict was driven by hatred. Thus instead of resolving the war, the U.S. military would merely be drawn into another Vietnam quagmire and bogged down by guerilla warfare. Bush's Secretary of State, Lawrence Eagleburger, best explained the perceived relationship between the cause of a conflict and the efficacy of intervention by describing the war in Bosnia as "not rational...it's not for any common set

⁷² Shoup. p 210.

⁷³ Clark. p 7.

of values or purposes; it just goes on. And that kind of warfare is the most difficult to halt.”⁷⁴

Members of the Bush administration who opposed intervention argued that Bosnia would become another Vietnam if U.S. ground forces were deployed because the ancient ethnic hatred could never be resolved by third party intervention. In order to shield Bush from any political damage that could result from failing to intervene in Bosnia, the Bush administration undertook three efforts aimed at cooling public outrage and portraying the war as an inevitable outcome of an unstable region. First, the administration depicted the war as the result of bottom-up ancient ethnic hatred rather than a war of aggression politically driven by nationalism from the top-down. Thus, while the killing of civilians was tragic, it was the result of war rather than an overt policy of genocide. Secondly, the administration argued that, seeing as this was a war of ancient hatred, the outcome of U.S. intervention would be another Vietnam where the U.S. would be unable to bring stability to a region where the people were incapable of living together in peace. For example, Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney argued “it’s tragic, but the Balkans has always been a hotbed of conflict...for centuries.”⁷⁵ Finally, the administration warned of the consequences that could emerge from a military confrontation with the Bosnian Serb Army. Military actions would interrupt aid workers and result in brutal retaliation against Muslim and Croat civilians and possibly international peacekeepers.⁷⁶

As a result of their fatigue and the Pentagon’s opposition to intervention, the Bush administration willingly allowed European nations to take the lead in resolving the war in Bosnia. At the time there was “an undercurrent in Washington, often felt but seldom

⁷⁴ Western. p 164.

⁷⁵ Ibid. p 161.

⁷⁶ Power. p. 282-283.

spoken, that it was time to make the Europeans step up to the plate and show they could act as a unified power.”⁷⁷ The Bosnian War represented the first time since World War II that the U.S. turned over a major security issue to complete European control. The newly formed European Community (EC), which later became the European Union (EU), relished the chance to assume a larger role in the Atlantic partnership. As Luxemburg’s foreign minister Jacques Poos pronounced, “it is the hour of Europe” and “if anybody can achieve things it is the EC.”⁷⁸ Reflecting a desire for Europe to distance itself from U.S. influence, the president of the EC Commission, Jacques Delors announced, “we do not interfere in American affairs. We hope they will have enough respect not to interfere in ours.”⁷⁹ Given European enthusiasm for leadership and the hesitation of U.S. policymakers to get involved, the Bush administration remained disengaged from international efforts to negotiate. An anonymous U.S. senior official expressed U.S. policy under the Bush administration the best when he stated, “we are willing to help, add our voices to the Europeans...But we are not about to get out in front of the Europeans. They must define the distance and set the pace for the international community in dealing with Yugoslavia.”⁸⁰

Due to Europe’s desire to take the lead in negotiating a political settlement and the large number of troops the Pentagon estimated for effective intervention, the Bush administration decided that the U.S. would only act as a part of a UN sanctioned multilateral force aimed at humanitarian relief.⁸¹ The Bush administration declared that

⁷⁷ James A. Baker III. *The Politics of Diplomacy*. New York, NY: Putnam’s Sons, 1995. p 636.

⁷⁸ Shoup. p 197.

⁷⁹ Peter W. Rodman. Bosnian Quagmire—Serbs Take United Nations Peacekeepers Hostage. *National Review*. 26 Jun. 1995.

⁸⁰ Shoup. p198.

⁸¹ *Ibid.* p 201.

the U.S. would not try to end the political conflict unilaterally, but neither would the administration rule out the use of multilateral force. Yet the chances for multilateral force were slim in 1992 given the differing European views on both the substance and implementation of policy in Bosnia. France pushed for a European policy carried out under the Western European Union (WEU) while Britain opposed increasing Europe's involvement in favor of directing an international policy through NATO in order to involve the U.S. Russia, which had a voice in the international response due to its seat on the UN Security Council, opposed the use of force altogether.⁸²

Camp Disclosure and the Impact of Domestic Pressure

In the beginning of August 1992, images of Serbian concentration camps became public in the U.S., forcing the Bush administration to confront the public mobilization demanding action. Graphic images of emaciated Muslim and Croat men and boys and accounts of mass killings and abuse began to saturate the media. Between August 2 and 14, the three major U.S. news networks ran 48 stories on Bosnia and the conditions in the camps, providing images reminiscent of the Holocaust.⁸³ As the public outcry increased after the exposure of the camp abuses, the UN Security Council turned to the issue of ethnic cleansing by the Serbs. Yet the Security Council was divided over how far to go in threatening the Serbs with the use of force if they did not end their ethnic cleansing and allow the free flow of humanitarian aid to the Muslim areas. The U.S. pushed for the use of force in delivering aid to Sarajevo through the deployment of European ground troops under the protection of NATO air power. These additional troops would pursue a more aggressive role than that of the UN peacekeepers already on the ground in Bosnia. Yet the

⁸² Ibid. p 207.

⁸³ Power. p. 276.

UN Secretary General warned, with the support of the European states, that UN forces already in Sarajevo might be targeted if the international community threatened to use force. As a result, the Security Council Resolution 770 that passed in August explicitly limited the use of the phrase “all measures necessary” specifically to the delivery of humanitarian assistance, as opposed to achieving an overall settlement.⁸⁴

On its face, the actions of the Bush administration in August 1992 appear to be consistent with constructivist logic. As the concentration camps came to light in the media in August 1992, public outrage over such an egregious human rights violation drove the Bush administration to diverge from its policy of detachment and seek an increase of European troops in Bosnia supported by NATO air power. The American public’s push for a more aggressive approach resulted from the fact that the concentration camps violated the American public’s perceptions of the accepted international rules and norms, which within the constructivist framework should prompt intervention. The presidential campaign of William Clinton also added to the domestic political pressure on the Bush administration to take action in Bosnia. On August 5, Clinton challenged Bush to “do whatever it takes to stop the slaughter of civilians” and suggested that the U.S. “may have to use military force.”⁸⁵ Thus the Bush administration’s actions in August 1992 could have been driven by the public’s perception of the accepted international norms and values, which would be consistent with constructivist logic. Within constructivist thought, domestic pressure influences U.S. foreign policy. Thus in light of the mounting domestic political pressure the Bush administration diverged slightly from its policy of detachment

⁸⁴ Shoup. p 210.

⁸⁵ Holbrook. p 42.

by pushing for increased troop levels in Bosnia and approving the Security Council Resolution.

At the same time however, the fact that the Bush administration willingly backed down from its proposal to increase the troop levels in Bosnia after it was rejected by Europe shows that the administration remained wary of any U.S. commitment to Bosnia. Policymakers' perceptions as to the cause of the conflict best explain this wariness to engage. Faced with public anger over the concentration camps, Eagleburger continued to warn the public of "another Vietnam" where the U.S. commitment would spiral out of control.⁸⁶ Along with the belief that Bosnia would become a second Vietnam, the Bush administration also dropped its proposal willingly given that policymakers still had no conceptualization of a U.S. interest in Bosnia.

Thus in order to fend off domestic demands for action, the Bush administration attempted to further its argument against intervention in Bosnia by denying that the Bosnian Serbs were committing genocide. National Security Advisor, Brent Scowcroft attempted to differentiate between genocide and the Serbian practice of ethnic cleansing by asserting, "ethnic cleansing is not 'I want to destroy an ethnic group, wipe it out'. It's 'they're not going to live with us. They can live where they like, but not with us'...There is a proscription on genocide, but there is no proscription on killing people."⁸⁷

Due to the fact the international community was unwilling to use force to impose a settlement, the U.S. and Europe had no choice but to pursue political negotiations, even though neither the Serbs nor the Muslims showed much interest in negotiating. The lack of any credible threat of force severely undermined any incentive for the Bosnian Serbs,

⁸⁶ Shoup. p 210.

⁸⁷ Power. p. 289.

who maintained military superiority on the ground, to make concessions to the Muslims and Croats in the interest of reaching an agreement. On the other hand, due to the August Security Council Resolution and the increasing media attention within the U.S., the Bosnian Muslims continued to hope for a Western military intervention.⁸⁸ As a result, the Muslim government resisted any settlement that legalized Serb military gains.

Since the warring parties refused negotiations, the international community set out to draft a political settlement that was acceptable to all sides. In the fall of 1992, Cyrus Vance, the U.S. Special Envoy to the Secretary-General of the UN, and the British foreign secretary, Lord David Owen, produced the Vance-Owen plan. Vance and Owen opted for a decentralized state “in which the central government would have only those minimal responsibilities that are necessary for a state to function as such, and to carry out its responsibilities as a member of the international community.”⁸⁹ Under the plan, 43 percent of Bosnian territory was assigned to Serb-majority provinces, significantly less than the 70 percent they currently held from war gains. Vance and Owen believed that their solution accounted for the preferences of all parties by creating a decentralized state of ten regions. Yet their hopes proved too optimistic, and none of the sides agreed to the plan. The warring parties rejected the plan due to the fact there was no pressure being exerted by international actors to enforce the plan. Lacking any direct and forceful pressure from the international community, the Vance-Owen plan ultimately failed.

When the Vance-Owen plan was made public, it was harshly attacked by the Bush administration for rewarding the Bosnian Serbs for ethnic cleansing. Zalmay Khalilzad, an assistant under secretary of defense, warned that the plan “amounted to appeasement” and

⁸⁸ Shoup, p 211.

⁸⁹ Ibid. p 216.

others cautioned to “beware of Munich.”⁹⁰ The Bush administration’s rejection of the plan is consistent with constructivist logic, which links the respect of human rights to international security. Appeasement would send the message that the international community would not only allow, but even reward, defiance of the international norms of behavior in order to avoid having to intervene. Such a message would severely damage international security by encouraging other potentially predatory states to violate the accepted international rules and values without fear of reprisal from the international community. U.S. acceptance of the Vance-Owen plan would essentially imply recognition that international rules were no longer relevant and that ethnic cleansing would be rewarded. Thus the Bush administration refused to support the plan, which ultimately failed because it lacked international backing, and the U.S. maintained a detached foreign policy in Bosnia.

The Intervention in Somalia

Throughout the fall of 1992, the Bush administration sought to combat increasing pressure from liberals in Congress and the non-government organization (NGO) community to end the conflict in Bosnia. Congressman Les Aspin argued that “those who disagree with the all-or-nothing school are unwilling to accept the notion that military force can’t be used prudently short of an all out war.”⁹¹ Fearful of the increasing pressure to intervene, General Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, began a public campaign aimed at preventing the deployment of U.S. ground troops to Bosnia. In a *New York Times* interview on September 27, Powell spoke out against public demands for military action in Bosnia by arguing that civilians

⁹⁰ Ibid. p 230-31.

⁹¹ Western. p 165.

have stuck us into problems before that we have lived to regret...I have some memories of us being put into situations like that which did not turn out quite the way that the people who put us in thought, i.e., Lebanon, if you want a more recent experience, where a bunch of Marines were put in there as a symbol, as a sign. Except those poor young folks did not know exactly what their mission was. They did not know really what they were doing there. It was very confusing. Two hundred and forty-one of them died as a result.⁹²

Considering that Powell perceived the war in Bosnia to be “especially complex” with “deep ethnic and religious roots” stretching back “thousands of years”, he strongly opposed involving the U.S. military on any level.⁹³ As a result, Powell adamantly opposed a plan, which was ultimately accepted, to support a no-fly zone over Bosnia that was aimed to “make a difference on the ground and temper some of the criticism [the administration was] getting in Washington.”⁹⁴ By the end of October, Powell’s noninterventionist crusade received challenges not only from the media, Congress, and the Clinton campaign, but even from members of the Bush administration who were beginning to consider involvement in Bosnia.

Then in November, William Clinton, who had campaigned for an increased U.S. role in Bosnia, won the election for the presidency. Clinton had campaigned on an activist Bosnia policy, leading many in Washington to believe his liberal administration would quickly lift the arms embargo and conduct air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs. Powell’s fears of a U.S. military involvement in Bosnia only increased during his first meeting with the president-elect when Clinton asked whether the U.S. military “could influence the situation through air power.”⁹⁵ Convinced that the incoming Clinton administration would intervene in Bosnia, Powell and the Joint Chiefs of Staff suddenly changed gears in

⁹² Ibid. p 166-67.

⁹³ Ibid. p 167.

⁹⁴ Ibid. p 167.

⁹⁵ Ibid. p 171.

support of intervening in Somalia, which was suffering from a massive famine induced by civil war. Ultimately, the Bush administration and General Powell decided that if the U.S. were going to intervene in a humanitarian crisis, Somalia would prove more tenable than Bosnia. As a result, in one of his last acts as president, Bush approved Operation Restore Hope aimed at relieving the humanitarian crisis in Somalia. This effectively determined that Somalia would dominate the first months of the incoming Clinton administration, thus distracting attention from the growing war in the Balkans.

The Bush administration's decision to intervene in Somalia instead of Bosnia reinforces the neoclassical realist explanation for the administration's foreign policy in Bosnia. Ultimately, the Bush administration still had no perception of any U.S. interest in Bosnia that would justify the estimated troop commitment needed to control the conflict. Thus the Bush administration chose to intervene in Somalia since they perceived that the intervention could succeed with a much smaller number of troops. The administration was under pressure to act in both Somalia and Bosnia, yet they chose Bosnia because as Admiral David Jeremiah noted, "we could do Somalia—we could do it with a relatively moderate force—and it wasn't clear to me we could do Bosnia. Thirty thousand wouldn't get you a running start in Bosnia."⁹⁶

Even if the administration were to conceptualize an interest in Bosnia, the Bush administration still held a negative perception of intervention efficacy given the belief that the war was driven by an ancient and unending ethnic hatred. Essentially, the Bush administration believed that a mission aimed at mitigating the famine in Somalia had a better chance of success than an intervention aimed at quelling an ethnic civil war. As domestic political pressure mounted for action in both Bosnia and Somalia and the Clinton

⁹⁶ Ibid. p 172.

administration appeared to be contemplating an intervention in Bosnia, the Bush administration realized it had to act somewhere. Ultimately Somalia was perceived to be more tenable given policymakers' perceptions of both U.S. interests and the root of the conflict.

CHAPTER IV: THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION AND CONTAINMENT

The Argument in Brief

During his presidential campaign, Clinton was notably more hawkish than the Bush administration in terms of intervening in Bosnia to stop the ethnic cleansing. After the concentration camps became public knowledge in August 1992, Clinton called for stricter economic sanctions on the Serbs, the use of force to deliver humanitarian aid to the Bosnian Muslims and Croats, and the bombing of the Serb military units that had been shelling the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo since the start of the war. In addition he demanded that the Bosnian Serbs be made to open the concentration camps to international inspections.⁹⁷ Yet once in office he continued the policy of weak diplomacy that the Bush administration had begun and the Serbs were neither given ultimatums nor threatened with force. So long as the Serbs appeared at the peace talks brokered by the U.S. and UN, they were free to continue their policy of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia with no fear of outside intervention.

The first part of this chapter looks at the explanations for why the Clinton administration pursued a similar policy of disengagement in Bosnia throughout 1993, despite their harsh rhetoric during the presidential campaign demanding that the U.S. act to end the war. Both constructivism and neoclassical realism posit that the Clinton administration remained disengaged in Bosnia due to the lack of a conceptualized interest, although the two theories diverge regarding what exactly policymakers consider when determining a state's interest. I posit that the Clinton administration's policy of disengagement is more consistent with neoclassical realist expectations than with

⁹⁷ Power.. p 275.

constructivist expectations because constructivism fails to explain the debate surrounding the cause of the conflict and efficacy of intervention. In short, the Clinton administration remained disengaged in 1993 due to a lack of a conceptualized interest and the perception that the conflict could not be resolved by third party intervention.

Secondly, this chapter considers the shift that occurred in U.S. foreign policy during 1994 that led the U.S. to play a more aggressive role in Bosnia. Constructivism would predict that this shift resulted from the growing concern over the potential impact the Bosnian War could have on international security. The failure of the UN to end the humanitarian violations was making the organization appear weak and ineffective, thus sending the message to other states that the UN could not halt aggressive internal behavior. For the first time, humanitarian issues during an internal conflict were linked to international security since aggressive behavior internally was considered a sign of the willingness of a state to act aggressively externally as well. Since the UN was under constant scrutiny in the global press for failing to end the humanitarian suffering, international leaders began to express concern that this would undermine the ability of the UN to promote global stability.

While the constructivist analysis holds merit, as there was considerable debate within the UN regarding the impact of the Bosnian War on international security, I posit the shift in policy is most consistent with neoclassical realist expectations. I argue that the Clinton administration became increasingly engaged in the Bosnian War throughout 1994 as a result of policymakers' perceptions that the credibility of the UN and NATO were at risk, the continuing geo-strategic competition with Russia, and the emerging potential for a UN withdrawal from Bosnia. These three factors, all of which constitute major intervening

variables within neoclassical realist thought, were the focus of the internal debate within the Clinton administration. I assert that it was concern over the ability of the U.S. to exert global influence, the distribution of power in the international system and the perceived threat U.S. troops would face if deployed to assist in a UN withdrawal that resulted in an increasingly aggressive U.S. foreign policy in Bosnia.

The Clinton Administration and Disengagement

When Clinton took office in 1993, the systemic restructuring of the global distribution that had demanded the attention of the Bush administration had been largely resolved. Policymakers now fully appreciated the fact that they were operating in a unipolar world. Yet the Clinton administration faced another issue that influenced U.S. policy in the Balkans: the peace dividend. Historically, the U.S. had demilitarized after the resolution of every war. Now that the Cold War was over, the Clinton administration faced mounting domestic pressure to downsize military budgets and focus on domestic priorities. Furthermore, during his campaign Clinton focused heavily on the domestic economy and its mismanagement under the Bush administration. Thus Clinton's campaign promise to focus on domestic priorities, in combination with domestic pressure to demilitarize, resulted in policymakers adopting a foreign policy stance based upon the mentality of the peace dividend rather than engagement. The impact that the administration's decision to focus on domestic priorities had on its policy in Bosnia is consistent with neoclassical realism expectations, which recognizes that without domestic support a state cannot muster the material resources behind a policy of intervention. The fact that the U.S. population was focused on domestic issues meant that the Clinton

administration would have been unable to garner enough support to intervene even if policymakers had wanted to.

Despite the focus of the domestic economy, one of Clinton's first acts in office was to issue a Presidential Review Directive (PRD-1) that directed his national security team to review U.S. foreign policy in the Balkans. In early February 1993, Clinton made it clear that the U.S. had to take the lead since "failure to do so would be to give up American leadership."⁹⁸ The resulting policy review stated that the U.S. would provide leadership by supporting efforts to achieve a political solution through close work with key allies and appointing a special U.S. envoy to participate in any resulting negotiations; rejecting any settlement that was imposed, rather than voluntarily accepted by all parties; directly contributing to humanitarian relief efforts by facilitating aid delivery; enforcing no-fly zones in an attempt to limit further violence; tightening the sanctions on Serbia in order to pressure Belgrade to stop assisting the Bosnian Serbs; and by offering U.S. troops to help implement and enforce any peace agreement that all parties accepted.⁹⁹

The Clinton administration conducted PDR-1 because, as Clinton said, failure not to lead would result in a loss of U.S. leadership. The Clinton administration worried that failure to resolve the war and end the humanitarian crisis would make the U.S. appear weak in the eyes of the international community. From the start of the war, the U.S. maintained the material power capabilities necessary to intervene in Bosnia. Yet the maintenance of policymakers' perceptions of U.S. influence in the international system was a constant concern. The Clinton administration feared that if the U.S. allowed the Bosnian War to continue without acting at least on a small level, the world's perception of

⁹⁸ Ivo Daalder. *Getting to Dayton: The Making of America's Bosnia Policy*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2000. p 9.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* p 9-10.

the U.S.'s ability to control and influence other state's would be damaged. Neoclassical realism assumes that states interact given their relative power capabilities in the international system. Thus if by failing to lead in Bosnia the U.S. lost a degree of its perceived power, this would impact U.S. relations with others states as well.

While the Clinton administration promoted this new policy as a strong stand against the violence in the Balkan's, there was a substantial contradiction between the rhetoric utilized when the policy became public and its content. When Secretary of State Warren Christopher made the results of the policy review public on February 10, he proclaimed that "bold tyrants and fearful minorities are watching to see whether ethnic cleansing is a policy the world will tolerate...[Our] answer must be a resounding no."¹⁰⁰ Yet the policy review contained no mention of air strikes or lifting the arms embargo against the Bosnian Muslims, both of which were issues Clinton had campaigned on just a few months before. Instead, in his announcement, Christopher emphasized the limits of U.S. engagement. The U.S. would only consider deploying U.S. ground troops to Bosnia if all parties voluntarily accepted a peace settlement. Thus as long as there was no settlement, the U.S. need not commit troops.¹⁰¹

For all of its talk of taking the lead, the Clinton administration still refused to commit troops to Bosnia until after a peace settlement was in place. As with the Bush administration, the Clinton administration's hesitancy to engage in Bosnia is more consistent with neoclassical realism than with constructivism. Ultimately, the Clinton administration chose not to intervene in Bosnia for the same two reasons as its predecessor. First was the belief that carried over from the Bush administration that this was a war of

¹⁰⁰ Ibid. p 10.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. p 10.

ancient ethnic hatred where both sides were committing atrocities.¹⁰² As stated before, this logic is explained when applied to the neoclassical realist intervening variable dealing with policymakers' perceptions of an intervention's efficacy. In Bosnia, a successful intervention was perceived as impossible given that confidence building measures and negotiations could never end the fundamental hatred that existed between the parties. Secondly, the Clinton administration, all of whom had witnessed the power of public demonstrations during the Vietnam War, feared that public opinion would not withstand any American casualties as a result of a humanitarian intervention. Thus the strength of the state relative to the society, another neoclassical realist intervening variable that determines foreign policy, came into effect. If the state cannot garner domestic support behind its foreign policy, the state will be unable to mobilize and sustain all of the necessary resources in support of its policy initiatives. In light of the limited number of Americans supporting deploying U.S. troops to Bosnia, the Clinton administration feared political repercussions at home. Thus domestic opinion strongly influenced U.S. policy on Bosnia during the early months of the Clinton administration.

The Importance of the NATO Alliance

While the U.S. remained disengaged from the situation in the Balkans, the Bosnian Serbs continued to stonewall any international effort to negotiate a peace agreement, instead attempting to obtain their objectives through force. On March 18, 1993, Bosnian Serbs launched an assault on the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica. The violence perpetrated against Bosnian Muslims received significant media attention, which increased domestic pressure on the Clinton administration to act. Realizing that the escalating violence would

¹⁰² Power, p 307.

reduce the chances of a political agreement, and still vehemently opposed to deploying ground troops, the Clinton administration determined that something else was needed in order to convince the Serbs to negotiate.

In May 1993, the Clinton administration chose to present the “Lift and Strike” policy to NATO as a way to force the Bosnian Serbs to negotiate. The policy entailed increasing the military pressure on the Serbs by lifting the arms embargo against the Bosnian Muslims and conducting NATO air strikes against Serb military targets. Under this policy, the Clinton administration sought to reverse the military imbalance in Bosnia, thus pressuring the Bosnia Serbs both on the ground and in negotiations. Yet for all its appearance of U.S. determination to engage, the Clinton administration did little to promote the survival of its policy. First, it was evident from the start that this policy would receive little support from the allies. Any use of force would increase the risk to UNPROFOR troops on the ground in Bosnia, many of whom came from NATO member states. Also, lifting the embargo would potentially provoke a massive Serb offensive aimed to destroy the Bosnian Muslims before they could rearm, dramatically increasing the violence in the country and the danger to the allies’ troops. Secondly, when Christopher took the policy to Europe, he was tasked only with seeking support for the policy as it was currently written and was given no leeway to negotiate the details of the policy or pressure the allies into accepting it.¹⁰³ Thus given the take-it-or-leave-it approach, NATO rejected the “Lift and Strike” policy and the U.S. continued to maintain its policy of disengagement as the violence and ethnic cleansing progressed.

As a result of domestic pressure in response to the attacks against Srebrenica, the Clinton administration introduced “Lift and Strike”. Yet while this may appear to

¹⁰³ Daalder. p 15.

reinforce the constructivist explanation, where a foreign policy shift is prompted by an abuse of international rules and values, the fact that the Clinton administration allowed its policy to be so easily rejected suggests that other interests overrode any humanitarian motivations. As Clinton expressed in an interview in June, the Bosnian War “involves our humanitarian concerns, but it does not involve our vital interests.”¹⁰⁴ Thus while the creation of “Lift and Strike” as a U.S. foreign policy appears consistent with constructivist logic, its swift rejection in Europe reinforces the neoclassical realist explanation in which other interests were deemed to be more imperative than humanitarian intervention in Bosnia.

The U.S. interest that overshadowed the “Lift and Strike” policy was maintaining cohesion between the allies. The U.S. shied away from quarreling with the allies for two reasons. First, was the fear that if the U.S. pushed the allies too hard, the allies would make the Balkan’s solely a U.S. responsibility. The U.S. still opposed committing its own troops to the region, instead depending on allied nations to continue to provide the ground forces. Secondly, pushing the allies too hard threatened the cohesion of NATO. Given that the Cold War had ended recently, the U.S. depended on the NATO alliance to assist in integrating other parts of Europe emerging from decades of isolation from the West. Thus the Clinton administration, and the Bush administration before that, had felt that efforts to resolve the Bosnian conflict were a distant second when compared to efforts to bolster NATO unity.¹⁰⁵

The failure of the “Lift and Strike” policy is more consistent with the neoclassical realist explanation than with the constructivist explanation because it was policymakers’

¹⁰⁴ Shoup, p 265.

¹⁰⁵ Daalder, p 187.

conceptualizations of U.S. interests and the perceived threat to U.S. global influence that dictated how the Clinton administration presented its policy to Europe. Since the Clinton administration perceived U.S. interests to be better served by maintaining the cohesion within the NATO alliance than by pushing for European acceptance of “Lift and Strike”, the policy was rejected without any U.S. objection. NATO was the oldest existing military alliance in the world and was instrumental in allowing the U.S. a military role in Europe. Thus the destruction of NATO would not only minimize U.S. influence in Europe, it would also threaten other U.S. interests around the world that were promoted through NATO, such as the integration of former Soviet states. The loss of NATO would significantly undermine U.S. influence in the international system as well as threaten other U.S. interests.

The Siege of Sarajevo

After the failure of its “Lift and Strike” policy, the U.S. reverted to a policy of containment where the goals were “to contain and stabilize the situation” and “to put the brakes on the killing.”¹⁰⁶ On May 6, the United Nations Security Council voted to create safe areas in Bosnia where Muslims and Croats would be placed under UN protection. The new policy granted the authority to protect the safe areas with force if necessary, although the U.S. was only committed to providing air support; placed monitors on the Serbian border to ensure Belgrade was abiding by the international embargo against the Bosnian Serbs; and called for an increase in international presence in Kosovo and Macedonia to keep the conflict from spreading there.¹⁰⁷ Yet again, the U.S. and the international community backed away from a policy that would have forced the Bosnian

¹⁰⁶ Shoup, p 264.

¹⁰⁷ Daalder, p 19.

Serbs to negotiate and instead maintained a policy of limited engagement for the purpose of containment.

By the summer of 1993, the U.S. began to promote a more forceful approach in the Balkans, which included using air strikes to end the siege against Sarajevo and other safe areas and to force the Bosnian Serbs to negotiate. The Bosnian Serb siege of Sarajevo was receiving increasing media attention and stories of people reduced to eating raw sewage and the rapid spread of contagious diseases began to appear in newspapers across the globe. At this point, two U.S. interests, which prior to the summer of 1993 had been non-existent in Bosnia, began to emerge. First, the credibility of NATO, and thus the credibility of the U.S. as a leading member of NATO, was at stake. NATO's failure to end the war, or at least diminish the human suffering in Sarajevo, was being broadcast by the media across the world and damaging NATO's reputation. Secondly, there was a growing concern that the blatant ethnic cleansing of Muslims in Bosnia could potentially have broad implications for Western interests throughout the Muslim world.¹⁰⁸

The Clinton administration's decision to take a stronger position in Bosnia, including using the threat of air strikes to end the Serb siege on Sarajevo, is consistent with both the neoclassical realist and constructivist theories of foreign policy. The Clinton administration's decision to implement a more aggressive approach in Bosnia is consistent with the neoclassical realist expectation that the U.S. would act to protect the credibility of NATO. The repeated failures to follow through on the threats and warnings issued to the Bosnian Serbs did little to promote the authority of NATO elsewhere in the world.¹⁰⁹ Within neoclassical realist theory, the loss of NATO's credibility would severely diminish

¹⁰⁸ Ibid. p 21.

¹⁰⁹ Shoup. p 284.

the military alliance's prestige and power in the international system. NATO's failure to successfully threaten the Bosnian Serbs would send the message to other states that NATO's threats were not credible, significantly undermining NATO's authority in other areas around the world. In addition, within neoclassical realist literature, multilateral organizations such as NATO are considered the tools through which a state may shape its external environment and exert influence over other states in the competitive international environment. Thus not only would the loss of NATO's credibility impact the alliances authority, it would also serve to limit the ability of the U.S. to influence other states through the NATO organization.

On the other hand, constructivists would argue that the more aggressive U.S. policy resulted from that fact that for the first time humanitarian issues that emerged during an internal conflict began to develop a link to international security.¹¹⁰ As media reports regarding the humanitarian crisis increased, the UN was criticized for allowing the destruction of morality and human rights, the same values that the organization had been created to defend and promote. As Pakistani Prime Minister, Benazir Bhutto, wrote in a statement to the UN, allowing the Serb aggression to continue would "represent a leap backwards to the law of force and away from our aspirations for a world ruled by the force of law". This would only "encourage predatory Powers to defy the world community and to violate accepted international norms. Force would become the sole currency of international relations; chaos would be its companion."¹¹¹ For the Clinton administration, such concerns were crystallized by the potential consequences for post-communist states and other new democracies if the U.S. and its allies allowed ethnic conflict to go

¹¹⁰ Andrea Kathryn Talentino. *Military Intervention after the Cold War: The Evolution of Theory and Practice*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press. 2005. p 183.

¹¹¹ Ibid. p 183.

unchecked.¹¹² The U.S. feared that the lack of a resolution in Bosnia could result in instability in emerging democracies if political or national groups believed that they could obtain their goals by murdering their opposition. Thus constructivists would argue that the international community realized that a failure in Bosnia would significantly undermine global efforts to promote security and decided to take a more aggressive approach.

The allies resisted the new U.S. policy of using air strikes to relieve Sarajevo for two reasons. First, the proposed policy extended far beyond the guidelines of UN Security Council Resolution 836 which limited the use of air strikes to the protection of UN personnel. Under the proposed policy, air strikes would not be used to defend UN troops, but rather to influence Bosnian Serb behavior by utilizing “air power in the service of diplomacy” in order to force serious negotiations of a ceasefire.¹¹³ Second, the allies opposed a policy of military intervention in Bosnia for fear of their troop’s safety. Canada and Britain, both NATO members with troops on the ground in Bosnia as part of UNPROFOR, feared that NATO strikes against the Bosnian Serbs would provoke an escalation in hostilities and possibly a violent reprisal against their ground forces.¹¹⁴

Well aware of the allies’ objections, Clinton’s National Security Advisor, Anthony Lake, traveled to Europe on August 2 to present the air strike policy to NATO. Ultimately, NATO decided to use the threat of air strikes to end the siege on Sarajevo and stop interference with the delivery of humanitarian aid. The outcome of the August 2 NATO decision to have the NATO Military Authorities draw up operational options for air strikes demonstrated that a credible threat of force could influence the situation in Bosnia. The Bosnian Serb army immediately eased their military assault on Sarajevo in light of the

¹¹² Shoup. p 412.

¹¹³ Daalder. p 21.

¹¹⁴ Shoup. p 267.

threat of force. Yet by the end of 1993 the Bosnian Serb's once again increased operations against Muslim safe areas, attacked UN humanitarian relief efforts and resumed their siege on Sarajevo.¹¹⁵ The failure, yet again, to authorize immediate action versus the Bosnian Serb's after they renewed their military efforts against the Bosnian Muslims sent the message that the international community was not serious about militarily intervening in Bosnia and the potential for a credible threat of force diminished once more.

While the adoption of a stronger U.S. policy on Bosnia is consistent with neoclassical realist and constructivist expectations, the fact that the Clinton administration failed to press for air strikes when the Bosnian Serbs renewed their offensive against UN safe areas reinforces the neoclassical realist explanation. Once more, it was policymakers' perceptions of intervention efficacy, an intervening variable in neoclassical realism, which kept the Clinton administration from pushing the international community to initiate NATO air strikes. In short, the Clinton administration still questioned the ability of the international community to end the war since Clinton himself still believed that the aggression was the result of ancient ethnic hatred. In explaining the U.S. failure to push for immediate action against the Serbs, Clinton maintained the stance that the U.S. lacked "the capacity to stop people within [Bosnia] from their civil war until they decided to do it."¹¹⁶

The Neoclassical Realist Logic for the Shift in Policy

At the start on 1994, the Clinton Administration realized the need for a more aggressive approach towards negotiations in Bosnia, which included using air power to supplement diplomacy. This policy shift stemmed from three main motivating factors that

¹¹⁵ Daalder. p 23.

¹¹⁶ Shoup. p 285.

came to the forefront of U.S. foreign policy considerations during the first half of 1994: the credibility and effectiveness of both the UN and NATO, geo-strategic competition with Russia, and the possibility of a UN withdrawal from Bosnia.

All three of the factors that led to the shift towards a more aggressive U.S. foreign policy at the start of 1994 reinforce the neoclassical realist explanation for U.S. policy in Bosnia. The first two factors, the need to strengthen the credibility of international organizations and geo-strategic competition with Russia, led to a shift in U.S. foreign policy because policymakers perceived a challenge to the U.S.'s prestige and influence in the international system. The third factor, the growing potential for a UN withdrawal, sparked a shift in U.S. foreign policy due to a change in policymakers' conceptualization of security. The changes in policymakers' perceptions of both U.S. influence and security are consistent with the intervening variables of neoclassical realism.

This first factor to prompt a shift in U.S. policy derived from policymakers' concerns regarding U.S. power in the international community. After returning from a trip in Central and Eastern Europe, Clinton's Ambassador to the UN, Madeline Albright, was convinced that the conflict in Bosnia was beginning to hurt democratic development in the region. Albright produced a report warning Clinton of the potential consequences of the U.S. policy in Bosnia, especially concerning the credibility and effectiveness of NATO and the UN in promoting democratic governance.¹¹⁷ In short, by January 1994, U.S. foreign policy was primarily motivated by the desire to reaffirm the effectiveness of U.S. leadership in both NATO and the international community as a whole. Indeed, in a New York Times article on February 20, of the seven U.S. interests Clinton asserted that the

¹¹⁷ Daalder, p 24.

U.S. held in Bosnia, four involved relations with either Europe or NATO. Of the other three, none concerned the matter of the conflict itself.¹¹⁸

The Clinton administration's desire to shore up U.S. power in the international arena by protecting the credibility of both the UN and NATO reinforces the neoclassical realist explanation for the shift in U.S. policy in early 1994. As stated before, within neoclassical realist theory multilateral institutions are considered tools through which a state can exert influence over other states. For example, Albright was concerned that damage to the credibility and effectiveness of the UN and NATO could potentially damage the ability of the organizations to promote democracy in the world. Thus by reasserting U.S. leadership in NATO, the UN and the international community as a whole, the Clinton administration sought to protect the institutions through which the U.S. promoted its interest in democratic governance around the world. The Clinton administration feared that any damage to either multilateral organization would significantly weaken U.S. influence in the international community and thus acted to protect the credibility of the two institutions by taking a leading role in Bosnia.

As a result, in a meeting in late January, Christopher was asked to put together a coherent strategy based off of an internal National Security Counsel (NSC) review conducted by Anthony Lake aimed at determining what could be done in Bosnia. The paper, submitted to Clinton of February 4, called for the U.S. to play a leading role in achieving a diplomatic solution by threatening Pale with air strikes should the Serbs refuse to negotiate seriously and by strengthening the Bosnian negotiating position by forging an alliance between the Bosnian Muslims and Croats.

¹¹⁸ Shoup, p 290.

The following day, on February 5, the new U.S. policy calling for diplomatic leadership was put to the test after a Serb artillery shell landed in the crowded Markala marketplace in Sarajevo, killing 68 and wounding another 200. The event received worldwide press coverage, which included background reporting on the war as well as the failure of the international community to resolve the conflict. This served to increase the pressure of Western policymakers to act and added urgency to the new U.S. initiative to assert a leadership role.¹¹⁹ Over the course of several meetings, U.S. policymakers agreed on a plan, based off a French proposal, to use air power to establish and enforce a demilitarized zone around Sarajevo. The proposal, which avoided the deployment of additional ground forces, imposed a heavy weapons exclusion zone within a twenty-kilometer radius of the center of Sarajevo and required all parties either to withdraw or place all heavy weapons under UN control within ten days. Failure to meet these conditions or further attacks against civilians within the demilitarized zone would result in immediate air strikes.

After an extended inter-alliance debate and in part due to Clinton's decision to lobby other leaders directly, on February 9 NATO endorsed the U.S. proposal and issued the Sarajevo ultimatum. The following ten days were tense, as Russia publicly opposed the NATO ultimatum, while working behind the scenes to secure Serb agreement. The Bosnian Serb military, headed by General Ratko Mladic, strongly contested the removal of heavy weapons from the twenty-kilometer exclusion zone. Yet, largely thanks to Russian pressure, by the February 21 deadline, Russian negotiators secured the agreement of the Bosnian Serb military to turn over their heavy weapons within the exclusion zone to UN forces. Russia also announced that it would contribute forces to monitor the cease-fire that

¹¹⁹ Ibid. p 287.

had been announced February 10. Thus by the deadline set in the ultimatum, NATO determined that all necessary requirements had been met.

Thus the second factor that sparked the Clinton administration to adopt a leadership role in resolving the Bosnian War was competition with Russia, which emerged again after Russia played a lead role in securing Bosnian Serb compliance with the Sarajevo ultimatum. U.S. policymakers still operated under a Cold War mentality in which the U.S. and Russia remained in a geo-strategic competition for international power and influence. In Bosnia, Russia acted as a counterbalance to the U.S. While the U.S. favored the Bosnian Muslim government, Russia tended to lean towards the Bosnian Serbs in negotiations. The fact that the U.S. chose to debate the use of force within NATO, as opposed to the UN, was a choice that allowed the U.S. to maintain both political and military control over any possible operations.¹²⁰ By holding the debate regarding the Sarajevo ultimatum within NATO, the U.S. effectively minimized the role of Russia in any policy deliberations. Yet Russia refused to allow its influence in the region to be minimized. Russia's role in securing Bosnian Serb agreement in the Sarajevo ultimatum and the introduction of Russian forces into Bosnia assured the importance of Russia in any effort to reach a settlement. As Russia increased its prominence and influence in Bosnia, the Clinton administration was prompted to take a more active role in resolving the war in order to maintain its international power relative to Russia's.¹²¹

The fact that competition with Russia led to a more aggressive U.S. foreign policy is consistent with the neoclassical realist intervening variable that predicts a state's foreign policy will shift as policymakers perceive a threat to their state's international prestige. The

¹²⁰ Ibid. p 288.

¹²¹ Ibid. p 289.

policy shift in early 1994 resulted in part from the increasing Russian role in Bosnia, which challenged U.S. policymakers' perceptions of U.S. power and influence in the international system. The Cold War had ended less than five years ago and the U.S. government still perceived a geo-strategic competition with Russia for international prominence. While both the Bush and Clinton administration's had willingly allowed European states to take a leading role in Bosnia, both had chosen NATO as the venue for debating the use of force in order to minimize the Russian role in the policy deliberations. Yet after proving its ability to influence the Bosnian Serbs by obtaining their agreement to recognize the Sarajevo ultimatum, Russia assured its inclusion in any international effort to reach a peace settlement in Bosnia. Thus when faced with the increasing Russia presence in the region, the Clinton administration was prompted to take a more active role in order to maintain U.S. power in the international system relative to that of Russia.

Added to the fact that Russia had secured the agreement of the Bosnian Serb's, which was something neither the U.S. nor Europe had been able to do, was the fact that Russia also agreed to supply forces to police the exclusion zone around Sarajevo. This was meant to assure the Serbs that the forces of the Bosnian government would not break out of the city. In short, unlike the U.S. and Europe, Russia appeared to be offering and supporting viable solutions towards a permanent peace settlement. Thus at the very least, Russian intervention in support of the Sarajevo ultimatum increased the pressure on the U.S. to take a more active role in the negotiation efforts in order to counterbalance Russia's increased prominence and influence in the region.¹²²

The third factor that led the U.S. to take the lead in Bosnia at the start of 1994 was the fear that the UN would withdraw its forces from the region, which would necessitate

¹²² Ibid. p 289.

the Clinton administration to deploy U.S. troops to support the withdrawal. In May 1994, in an effort to pressure the U.S. to join the effort to impose a settlement in Bosnia, the French Foreign Minister Juppe warned that Europe was beginning to view its position in Bosnia as unsustainable. Juppe warned that “there is no question of going through another winter there” and unless there was a “swift diplomatic breakthrough,” France would be forced to consider withdrawing its troops.¹²³ A European decision to recall its troops would require the Clinton administration to deploy U.S. troops through NATO to assist in the UN withdrawal. Failure to do so would further damage the already tense NATO relations, possibly signaling the end of NATO as an effective military alliance. As a result of the increasing possibility of a withdrawal, the Clinton administration became more involved in reaching a settlement in Bosnia through either negotiations or limited air strikes. Thus throughout 1994, the possibility of a UN withdrawal impacted the policy considerations of the Clinton administration and led to a more assertive U.S. role in the conflict. As discussed later, by May of 1995, the possibility of a UN withdrawal had increased substantially and once more played a large role in determining U.S. policy decisions in Bosnia.

The fact that the Clinton administration feared a UN withdrawal reinforces the neoclassical realist explanation for U.S. foreign policy at the start of 1994. Unlike the first two factors that prompted a shift in U.S. policy, which dealt with perceptions of power in the international system, the potential withdrawal sparked a policy shift by changing the Clinton administration’s conceptualization of U.S. security. If the UN decided to withdraw, the Clinton administration would be expected to deploy U.S. troops through NATO to support the withdrawal. In short, a UN withdrawal would risk the security of

¹²³ Ibid. p 299-300.

American troops. Given the complexities and level of violence in Bosnia, there was a good possibility that U.S. troops would become enmeshed in the escalating violence that would likely ensue as the UN forces withdrew. In 1994, the possibility of a UN withdrawal emerged, leading the Clinton administration to re-conceptualize U.S. security interests in resolving the Bosnian. As the following chapter will show, as a UN withdrawal grew more inevitable during the course of 1995, U.S. policymakers' threat perceptions shifted even further and moved U.S. policy even closer towards intervention.

The Results of the Policy Shift

As part of its new leadership role, in early 1994 the Clinton administration decided to increase its involvement in diplomatic negotiations. Given that the policy shift stemmed from policymakers' perceptions of a threat to U.S. global influence and a fear of a UN withdrawal, the resulting U.S. policy reinforces the neoclassical realist expectations for U.S. policy in Bosnia. Previously, the Clinton administration had remained aloof from European efforts at territorial division, arguing that it both short-changed the Bosnian Muslims and legitimized ethnic cleansing by allowing the Bosnian Serbs to retain captured territory.¹²⁴ Yet in early 1994, Clinton sent Undersecretary of State Peter Tarnoff and Charles Redman, the special envoy to the Balkans, to Europe in an effort to emphasize the U.S. commitment to finding a political solution. The new initiative demonstrated U.S. willingness to encourage the Bosnian Muslim government to enter negotiations with more reasonable expectations.

The first priority of the new diplomatic effort, as laid out in Christopher's February 4 paper, was to forge an alliance between the Bosnian Muslims and Croats in order to

¹²⁴ Daalder, p 26.

strengthen their negotiating position relative to that of the Bosnian Serbs. A conflict between the Bosnian Muslims and Croats had emerged in the spring of 1993 over Croat controlled land in central Bosnia. This conflict complicated peace negotiations in two ways. First, having three, as opposed to two, conflicting parties made it harder to reach a settlement. Second, as long as the Muslim-Croat conflict continued, the Serbs maintained a decisive military advantage, thus giving them little incentive to concede territory during negotiations.¹²⁵ The Clinton administration hoped that a Muslim-Croat alliance would improve the military balance of power on the ground, which in turn would achieve a better settlement for the Bosnian Muslim government.

During February and March, Redman mediated negotiations between the Muslims and Croats. The agreement that emerged called for a joint Muslim-Croat federation consisting of about half of Bosnia's territory which would be linked to Croatia in an economic confederation. The Bosnian Serbs would exist separately from the federation, but still within a united Bosnia. On March 18, a deal was announced. Although details such as a constitution and military integration remained unsettled, both the Muslims and Croats agreed to basic elements of the new power sharing arrangement. The formation of the federation, known as the Washington Agreement, was the Clinton administration's first successful initiative in Bosnia.

While the Washington Agreement served to isolate the Bosnian Serbs in negotiations, they still controlled close to 70 percent of the total Bosnian territory. The newly formed Muslim-Croat federation was suppose to control about 50 percent of Bosnian territory. Thus in order to realize this goal the Bosnian Serbs would need to return large portions of the land they had taken during the first two years of war. Given that

¹²⁵ Ibid. p 27.

starting in early 1994 Russia had become a major player in Balkan diplomacy due to its sway over the Bosnian Serbs, a new negotiating forum was created in April to ensure their inclusion in international negotiation efforts. The new forum, known as the Contact Group, consisted of the U.S., Russia, Britain, Germany and France. During the spring of 1994, the Contact Group focused on creating a map of territorial divisions that all sides could accept in a peace agreement. The group ultimately decided on a division that allotted 51 percent of the territory to the Muslim-Croat federation, with the remaining 49 percent left under Serb control. U.S. policymakers considered this to be an adequate compromise between justice and reality since the federation would control the majority of the territory while the Serbs retained significant portions of captured territory.¹²⁶

On July 6, the Contact Group plan was presented to all parties, giving both sides two weeks to accept the proposal. The group members warned of potential punitive actions should either side reject the proposal. Both the Muslims and Croats immediately agreed to the plan, while the Bosnian Serbs delayed answering until the last minute. The Serbs conditioned their acceptance to an unreasonable amount of amendments, which essentially equaled rejection of the proposal. The Contact Group's encouragement for reconsideration of the plan ultimately failed, compelling the members to consider using force to elicit Serb agreement.

The Clinton administration pushed for lifting the arms embargo that had been enacted at the start of the war in order to reduce the disparity between Serb and Muslim military power. This push was partly in response to increasing domestic pressure within the U.S. to lift the arms embargo. In June, the House of Representatives had voted, with a substantial majority, to lift the embargo and in July the Senate failed to pass the measure

¹²⁶ Ibid. p 28.

by only a single vote. Yet France and Britain were quick to warn the U.S. that they would withdraw their troops if the arms embargo were lifted since they feared an increase of arms to the region would increase the violence and risk to their troops. While domestic pressure continued to mount for the U.S. to unilaterally lift the arms embargo, the Clinton administration was reluctant to undertake unilateral action in violation of UN Security Council sanctions. Policymakers feared that by unilaterally lifting the embargo, they would set a precedent for other states to violate future sanctions the U.S. supported.¹²⁷ Instead the U.S. proposed that should the Serbs fail to accept the plan by October 15, it would introduce a resolution in the UN to lift the arms embargo. Yet Russia warned that it would not support such a resolution and would use its Security Council veto if necessary. Ultimately, the Clinton administration appeased Congress by announcing the U.S. would no longer support efforts to enforce the arms embargo. The announcement outraged U.S. allies in Europe, who claimed the U.S. was risking European, not American, troops' safety. This served to remind U.S. policymakers of the stress the Bosnian War was putting on the NATO alliance.

The NATO Factor Revisited

Throughout 1994, the maintenance of the struggling NATO alliance was a key determinant of U.S. foreign policy in Bosnia. The Clinton administration perceived U.S. interests to be best served by maintaining NATO. Thus the administration adopted policies regarding Bosnia within the framework of the greater interest of not further straining the alliance's cohesion. This reinforces the neoclassical realist explanation for U.S. policy in Bosnia since it shows that the administration was more interested in

¹²⁷ Shoup, p 307.

preserving NATO, a significant tool through which the U.S. could exert its power over other states, than in ending the war.

During the summer and fall of 1994, the NATO alliance was split over the use of air strikes in response to the Bosnian Serb attacks on the UN safe area of Bihac. At first NATO, with UN approval, initiated limited air strikes against Serb surface-to-air missile sites in Bosnia and against the Croatian airfields from which Serb troops were launching missions against Bihac. Rather than deterring further Serb aggression, NATO escalation provoked a series of Serb counter measures. These included blockading 200 UN peacekeepers at various weapons collection sites around Sarajevo, detaining 5 Canadian peacekeepers, and restraining the movement of UN observers in Bosnia. Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader, warned the UN that

if a NATO attack happens, it will mean that further relations between yourselves and our side will be rendered impossible because we would have to treat you as our enemies. All United Nations Protection Force personnel as well as NATO personnel would be treated as our enemies.¹²⁸

In light of the mounting Serb aggression, NATO members with troops on the ground as part of the UN mission were wary of accepting additional risks by provoking Serb retaliation. Thus the U.S. insistence on persisting with air strikes was rejected by Europe, which demanded that either the U.S. deploy forces to allow the UN to operate effectively in Bosnia or that the UN strictly limit its activities to humanitarian protection.

By late 1994, tensions within NATO over Bosnian policy threaten to break the alliance. The Clinton administration was forced to choose between either unilaterally continuing air strikes in support of the Bosnian Muslims or abandoning the idea of additional air strikes in order to avoid provoking a UN withdrawal from Bosnia. The first

¹²⁸ Daalder, p 32.

option of continuing air strikes had the potential to destroy the NATO alliance. NATO was not only a successful military alliance in which the U.S. played a key leadership role, but it also provided the main logic behind a U.S. military presence in Europe. On the other hand, failure to continue air strikes would call into question the concept of the safe areas upon which support for the use of NATO air power had originally been based on.¹²⁹ Ultimately, the Clinton administration decided to place the unity of NATO first, abandoning the effort to convince NATO members and the UN that air strikes were necessary in ending the war.

Instead of air strikes, the Clinton administration put its support behind negotiating a three to six month long ceasefire in hopes this would increase the prospects for a settlement. In order to secure the agreement of both the Muslim-Croat federation and the Bosnian Serbs, the U.S. and its allies needed to pressure the federation to cease its attempts at regaining lost territory and also offer concessions to the Serbs to entice them to the negotiating table. The concessions finally offered to the Serbs included: allowing territorial modifications to the Contact Group map so long as all parties agreed, allowing constitutional links between the Bosnian Serbs and Serbia so long as they were balanced by similar links between the federation and Croatia, and finally, assuring contacts between the Bosnian Serb leadership in Pale and the allies would resume.¹³⁰ While the concessions ultimately served to gain Serb agreement to halt all military activity until April 30, 1995, the ceasefire negotiations failed to move the parties closer towards a settlement.

The Clinton administration used the relative peace of the ceasefire to determine new objectives for U.S. policy in Bosnia. The first objective was to mend the growing rift

¹²⁹ Ibid. p 33.

¹³⁰ Ibid. p 35.

that had emerged in the NATO alliance. The second was to contain the Bosnia War to prevent its spread throughout the Balkans. The final objective was to preserve Bosnia's territorial integrity through negotiations.¹³¹ In essence, after a year of a more aggressive approach in Bosnia, by the end of 1994 the Clinton administration slipped back into a policy of containment. As one senior U.S. official stated, the "principals agreed that NATO is more important than Bosnia...Our objective, we pretty much accept at this point, is containment."¹³²

¹³¹ Ibid. p 34.

¹³² Ibid. p 34.

CHAPTER V: THE MOVE TOWARDS ENGAGEMENT AND INTERVENTION

The Argument in Brief

This chapter deals with the central question of this essay: why did the U.S. intervene in Bosnia in August 1995? Although constructivism and neoclassical realism offer different explanations for the U.S. intervention, I argue that it was the horrendous violation of human rights against Bosnian Muslim men and boys at Srebrenica that served as the catalyst that sparked the intervention.

Constructivism posits that the Clinton administration intervened because the inability of the UN and NATO to protect human rights was destroying the credibility and viability of both institutions, which were supposedly devoted to the protection of the accepted rules of the international community. Thus in a broader sense, international security was at stake because without internationally recognized institutions to monitor state's compliance with the international rules, states may be tempted to violate the norms of the global community.

Neoclassical realism on the other hand, posits that the U.S. intervened when it became evident that the UN force was preparing to withdraw after Srebrenica. The large scale human rights violations effectively signaled the end of UNPROFOR's usefulness in Bosnia and it was clear that a withdrawal would occur by the end of the year. The potential failure of the UN mission not only threatened the credibility of the U.S. and the viability of the UN and NATO, but it would also require the U.S. to commit troops to assist in the withdrawal operation. In short, in 1995, U.S. policymaker's began to re-conceptualize U.S. security interests and the potential threat to U.S. influence and power in the international system.

I argue that the Clinton administration's decision to intervene in Bosnia is more consistent with the neoclassical realist explanation. While constructivism offers a logical explanation for the sudden shift in U.S. policy in Bosnia, the emerging U.S. interest in avoiding a UN withdrawal and the growing threat to U.S. power and influence in the global community, reinforces the neoclassical realist explanation for the U.S. intervention in August 1995. While the horrendous human rights violations at Srebrenica undoubtedly violated U.S. policymakers' perceptions of international norms, this alone did not spark a U.S. intervention.

U.S. Strategic Interests and UNPROFOR

The ceasefire lasted through early 1995, and served as the calm before the storm as both sides prepared for the resumption of fighting in the spring. The Bosnian Muslims used the cessation of fighting to import arms and train their forces, while the Bosnian Serbs planned their own spring offensive aimed at ending the war by summer.¹³³ Croatia's president, Franjo Tudjman, also warned that his country's patience with the war was dwindling. Tudjman indicated that Croatia would not renew the mandate for a UN presence in Croatia after its expiration April 30, 1995 and that Croatia would assert control over the four Serb inhabited UN protected sectors in Croatia.¹³⁴ Tensions continued to mount during the winter months and the Bosnian Serbs continued to reject any negotiation efforts. As a result, when the ceasefire ended on April 30, the hostilities quickly resumed.

The war resumed immediately in May, with conflict not only beginning once more in Bosnia, but also in Croatia where the Serb army launched attacks against Zagreb and the Croatian army prepared to invade the UN's western sector in Slavonia. On May 7, a shell

¹³³ Daalder. p 38.

¹³⁴ Ibid. p 38.

exploded in the center of Sarajevo, a designated UN safe area, killing eleven civilians. The UN resisted pressure from the Clinton administration and the UNPROFOR Commander in Bosnia to authorize NATO air strikes. Emboldened by the UN's failure to act, on May 22 Bosnian Serb forces seized a weapons containment depot within the twenty-kilometer exclusion zone around Sarajevo. Yet the UN did not back down again, instead warning that NATO would respond with air strikes unless all weapons were returned within forty-eight hours.

The Bosnian Serbs failed to respond to the warning. After the forty-eight hour deadline had expired, NATO launched air strikes that destroyed two Serb ammunition bunkers. The Bosnian Serb leadership again failed to yield to UN and NATO demands, instead threatening UN peacekeepers and bombing the UN safe area of Tuzla in northern Bosnia. NATO responded once more with air strikes, this time destroying six more ammunition sites. In response, Bosnian Serb forces took hundreds of UN peacekeepers as hostages. As a result, the requests by the UN commander for further air strikes were rejected by both the UN military and civilian commands for fear of the safety of the hostages and other UN personnel in Bosnia. In the emergency meeting of the UN Security Council, no country, including the U.S., pushed for the continuance of NATO air strikes.

The hostage situation sent a clear message to the countries with forces deployed on the ground: either their troops should withdraw or the UN mission should be dramatically increased and deployed more defensively.¹³⁵ The current status quo of trying to influence the Bosnian Serbs with air strikes while lightly armed peacekeepers were on the ground was no longer feasible. As discussed in the last chapter, the possibility of a UN withdrawal from Bosnia had emerged in early 1994 as the conflict continued to increase

¹³⁵ Ibid. p 42.

with no end in sight. The hostage situation and the resulting media broadcasts of European troops standing handcuffed to trees and telephone poles while waving white flags merely served to reinforce Europe's desire to get out of Bosnia.¹³⁶

The possibility of a UN withdrawal had been a motivating factor in increasing the role on the U.S. in ending the conflict in 1994. As a result of the hostage crisis, the possibility of a U.S. commitment in assisting in a withdrawal grew as governments with troops in Bosnia began to openly discuss withdrawing.¹³⁷ By early June, NATO and the Pentagon had completed the OPLAN 40-104, a comprehensive document outlining all aspects of a NATO role in supporting a UN withdrawal. OPLAN 40-104 estimated the possible need for as many as 82,000 NATO forces, with the U.S. accounting for 25,000 of the total troop level.¹³⁸ Under the plan, the withdrawal operation was scheduled to last twenty-two weeks at the estimated cost to the U.S. of \$700 million.¹³⁹ Along with the substantial monetary cost, OPLAN 40-104 also laid out the danger to U.S. ground troops. In one scenario, U.S. troops would be used to carry out a risky nighttime extraction of UN troops from isolated enclaves in a mission that carried a large risk of casualties.¹⁴⁰

Throughout 1995 the potential UN withdrawal from Bosnia was one of the most influential factors considered by U.S. policymakers regarding U.S. foreign policy in Bosnia. The Clinton administration's reaction to the possible UN withdrawal is consistent with the neoclassical realist intervening variable that theorizes that a state's foreign policy is shaped by policymakers' perceptions of their state's security interests. Regarding U.S. security in Bosnia, in the case of a UN withdrawal the U.S. would need to deploy a large

¹³⁶ Holbrooke. p 65.

¹³⁷ Holbrook. p 65.

¹³⁸ Shoup and Steven Burg. p 313.

¹³⁹ Daalder. p 48.

¹⁴⁰ Holbrook. p 66.

ground force to operate in rugged conditions while undertaking risky operations to facilitate the withdrawal of UN troops located across the country. Thus after the hostage situation sparked serious discussion among European states about withdrawing their troops and the possibility that the Clinton administration would be required to fulfill its commitment increased, U.S. policymakers became to re-conceptualize the war in Bosnia relative to U.S. security.

One policy option clearly unavailable to the Clinton administration was the option to not deploy U.S. troops to assist in a UN withdrawal. On December 7, 1994, the Clinton administration had promised its European allies that the U.S. would provide troops to assist in a UN withdrawal. Such a pledge was aimed at giving European states with troops in Bosnia an incentive to stay by reassuring them that the U.S. would not abandon its allies in a time of need.¹⁴¹ Thus if the Clinton administration failed to meet its commitment, U.S. credibility among its NATO allies would be severely diminished. As described earlier, NATO was the venue through which the U.S. pursued a military presence in Europe and promoted democratic governance in former Soviet states. Thus the loss of U.S. credibility in the NATO alliance that would result from the Clinton administration breaking its pledge to support a UN withdrawal would hurt U.S. interests elsewhere in the world that were supported by NATO, decreasing the U.S.'s international authority. In short, the failure to act would weaken U.S. prestige and influence in the international system, which within neoclassical realist theory is one of the major intervening variables considered by policymakers when determining a state's foreign policy.

For the Clinton administration, the withdrawal appeared to be a logistical nightmare. The withdrawal force would be required to operate in the rough mountainous

¹⁴¹ Daalder, p 47.

Bosnian terrain with poorly maintained roads, the majority of which had been mined. Furthermore, several substantial issues still lacked the appropriate levels of consideration necessary to achieve a successful withdrawal mission. For example, questions still remained over how to manage refugees abandoned by the withdrawal of UN forces; how to respond to violence perpetrated against civilians; how to evacuate NATO forces from Bosnia after the UN withdrawal given the level of violence was expected to dramatically increase as the international community departed; and how to get the American public to support the withdrawal mission.¹⁴²

The fact that the debate within the Clinton administration focused in part on obtaining public approval for its foreign policy in Bosnia reinforces the neoclassical realist explanation, which posits that without domestic support a state cannot sustain enough material power behind its foreign policy. In order to obtain domestic support, the Clinton administration had to contend with the fact that 80 percent of the American public opposed the deployment of U.S. ground troops into Bosnia.¹⁴³ As discussion intensified over the possibility of the U.S. deploying ground troops to Bosnia, Clinton decided to address the nation on June 3 in order to clearly state U.S. policy regarding involvement in Bosnia. In his radio address, Clinton said

I want to make it clear again what I have said about the use of our ground forces. We will use them only if, first, if there is a genuine peace with no shooting and no fighting...Second, if our allies decide they can no longer continue the UN mission and decide to withdraw, but they cannot withdraw in safety, we should help them to get out...[Third,] I have decided that if a UN unit needs an emergency extraction, we would assist, after consulting Congress. This would be a limited, temporary operation, and we have no been asked to do this.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴² Ibid. p 49.

¹⁴³ Ibid. p 55.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. p 55.

In further testimony before Congress, members of the Clinton administration continued to emphasize the three circumstances in which the U.S. would deploy its troops to Bosnia: to help enforce a peace settlement, to support a UN withdrawal, or to aid in an emergency extraction of a besieged UN unit.

Thus by the early summer of 1995, the Clinton administration began to reconsider its Bosnia policy in light of the policymakers' growing perceptions of a threat to U.S. troop security posed by the impending UN withdrawal. As a result of policymakers' changing conceptualization of U.S. interests in Bosnia, the Clinton administration began to turn its focus towards finding a policy that would keep U.S. ground forces out of Bosnia, either by resolving the war or at least postponing a UN withdrawal. Yet policymakers still had to contend with the fact that they lacked the domestic support necessary to sustain a policy of intervention. By the summer of 1995 U.S. policymakers were preparing to shift towards a policy of engagement, and the genocide at Srebrenica provided the event that mobilized U.S. domestic support behind intervention.

Srebrenica: The Catalyst for U.S. Intervention

Regardless of whether one ascribes to the neoclassical realist or constructivist school of thought, the massacre perpetrated at Srebrenica, which is explained in detail below, can be considered the catalyst that prompted U.S. intervention. Yet the U.S. reaction to Srebrenica is more consistent with neoclassical realism expectations than with constructivism. Such an argument is reinforced when one considers the debate occurring within the Clinton administration, which centered on policymakers' perceptions of U.S. interests and the distribution of power, as opposed to the need to protect international norms.

By the summer of 1995, U.S. foreign policy in Bosnia had reached a standstill as the Clinton administration faced the choice of either attempting to bolster the UNPROFOR mission or assisting in the withdrawal operation. Yet as the Clinton administration debated its policy options and resisted Congressional pressure to unilaterally lift the arms embargo, the horrific human rights violations committed by Bosnian Serb forces in the eastern enclaves of Srebrenica and Zepa occurred. In March, the Bosnian Serb army, in violation of the ceasefire, had begun operations in Tuzla and Travnik and was active in the UN safe area of Gorazde. In mid-June, the Bosnian Serb army broke out of Sarajevo and launched offensives against the UN designated safe areas in Srebrenica, Zepa and Gorazde. General Mladic, who hoped to eliminate the UN protected enclaves in order to secure the entire eastern section of Bosnia for the Serbs, was emboldened by his prior success in intimidating the UN forces. He had little fear of international retaliation for his actions given the lack of a credible threat of force from the U.S. and its allies.¹⁴⁵

On July 6, the Bosnian Serb army began shelling Srebrenica in retaliation for the alleged incursions into Serb territory by Bosnian Muslim troops based out of the enclave. The Serb forces, led by Mladic, entered Srebrenica on July 8 and easily overpowered the small contingent of Dutch peacekeepers. After gaining full control by July 11, the Serb soldiers, under the direct command of Mladic, massacred an estimated 7,000 Bosnian Muslims, mainly men and boys, residing in Srebrenica.¹⁴⁶ The killings in Srebrenica represent the largest mass killing in Europe since World War II and occurred while the West did nothing.¹⁴⁷ Aside from an isolated air strike on July 11, dismissed even by the West as merely a “pinprick”, the international community failed to act as thousands of

¹⁴⁵ Holbrook. p 68.

¹⁴⁶ Power. p 429.

¹⁴⁷ Holbrook. p 69.

Muslim civilians were slaughtered in Srebrenica. The Serb forces then proceeded to easily overtake the smaller safe area of Zepa.¹⁴⁸

After the fall of Srebrenica and Zepa, Mladic announced that “by autumn, we’ll take Gorazde, Bihac and in the end Sarajevo and we’ll finish the war.”¹⁴⁹ With knowledge of the Bosnian Serb strategy, the leading members of the UN and NATO were faced with a stark choice between either withdrawing UN forces or escalating the international military involvement in Bosnia to force a settlement.¹⁵⁰ In mid-July, French President Jacques Chirac proposed that the International community take a firm stance in Gorazde, a UN safe area containing nearly to 60,000 Bosnians. The French proposal called for a deployment of 1,000 troops to Gorazde to deter a Serb attack, with the U.S. providing air cover and helicopter transportation. While the plan would draw the U.S. military more deeply into the war than policymakers desired, the Clinton administration could not outright reject the proposal for two reasons. First, the Clinton administration wanted to avoid having to deploy ground troops to assist in a risky and costly UN withdrawal, which seemed the inevitable outcome after the fall of Srebrenica and Zepa signaled the uselessness of the UN mission in Bosnia. Secondly, by deciding that military action was necessary and producing a feasible plan, Chirac assured that other states, mainly the U.S., would carry the blame if there were no international response.¹⁵¹

As a result, the Clinton administration could not reject the French proposal for increased international involvement. Yet instead of approving the reinforcement of Gorazde, U.S. policymakers began to push for the use of strategically significant air strikes

¹⁴⁸ Shoup. p 324-5.

¹⁴⁹ Daalder. p 68.

¹⁵⁰ Shoup. p 342.

¹⁵¹ Daalder. p 69.

in response to continued Serb aggression. At the London Conference, which had been called by British Prime Minister John Major after the fall of Srebrenica, the Clinton administration decided to push for a forceful air campaign subject to strict rules of engagement. In addition, the U.S. argued that the decision to conduct the air strikes could no longer be subject to the dual-key arrangement under which all actions required both NATO and UN authorization. Instead the authorization of NATO air power should rest solely with the UN and NATO commanders directly involved on the ground.¹⁵²

The fact that the Clinton administration pushed hard for the adoption of a more assertive air strike policy unhindered by the former dual key agreement and with the authority to strike a broader range of Bosnian Serb targets is consistent with both the neoclassical realist and constructivist theories of foreign policy. In neoclassical realist theory, policymakers' perceptions of a state's interests are one factor that dictates foreign policy. Thus neoclassical realists would argue that the Clinton administration's decision to use force in Bosnia to pave the way for a settlement resulted from policymakers' perceptions that the events in Srebrenica would spark a UN withdrawal. This in turn would trigger the deployment of U.S. ground troops in Bosnia. By the end of July, policymakers concluded that they were "faced with the worst possible outcome: [the U.S. was] going to have to initiate the evacuation of the UN forces from Bosnia—a move that was very risky to American life, and expensive, and would lead to a wider war."¹⁵³ As Holbrook stated to a reporter from the *New Yorker*, after Srebrenica, "even the most marginally informed person realized that the policy was headed for a crash, and that we

¹⁵² Ibid. p 72-3.

¹⁵³ Shoup. p 325.

were headed for military involvement either way.”¹⁵⁴ In short, after Srebrenica and Zepa, the Clinton administration “saw the degree to which involvement was now inevitable, and how much better it would be to have that involvement built on success rather than failure.”¹⁵⁵ U.S. policymakers finally perceived a U.S. military intervention in pursuit of a political settlement to be essential to U.S. interests in avoiding a UN withdrawal. Thus the Clinton administration intervened in order to force a peace agreement in an effort to assure that the deployment of U.S. troops would occur under the most favorable circumstances, such as helping to enforce the settlement.

However, constructivism is also consistent with the Clinton administration’s decision to intervene in Bosnia. The slaughter at Srebrenica was a deeply disturbing event that was depicted to the American public within days of its occurrence. The articles described how the Serbs engaged in the worst war crimes in Europe since the end of World War II. These crimes included herding 23,000 women and children from the UN safe area to the Bosnian Muslim territory near Tuzla and the massacring and burying in mass graves over 7,000 civilian men and boys.¹⁵⁶ Such horrifying accounts of activities that clearly violated the international conceptualization of norms and values served to mobilize the American public behind action.

Similarly, the massacre also affected policymakers within the Clinton administration, who expressed outrage over such a blatant violation of human rights. In a meeting on the Oval Office on July 18, Vice President Al Gore spoke out about the need to respond with force to the brutality witnessed at Srebrenica. Gore recalled a picture that

¹⁵⁴ Ibid. p 325.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid. p 325.

¹⁵⁶ For examples, see: Stephen Kinzer, “Terrorized Human Tide Overwhelms Relief Camp.” *New York Times*, 15 July 1995. p A1; or Stephen Kinzer, “Bosnian Refugees’ Accounts Appear to Verify Atrocities.” *New York Times*, 17 July 1995. p A 1.

had appeared recently in the news of a young woman who had hung herself at a camp for refugees from Srebrenica. Gore said, “my 21-year old daughter asked about that picture. What am I suppose to tell her?...My daughter is surprised the world is allowing this to happen. I am too.” Gore concluded, “the worst solution would be to acquiesce to genocide and allow the rape of another city and more refugees.”¹⁵⁷ In short, Srebrenica served as the catalyst after which the humanitarian crisis occurring in Bosnia could no longer be ignored. Genocide was once again occurring in Europe and neither the American public nor the Clinton administration could deny it. Thus constructivists would argue that the Clinton administration adopted an intervention policy in order to end the genocide in Bosnia after the deliberate breach of international norms at Srebrenica.

While constructivism certainly offers a logical explanation for the sudden shift to a more aggressive U.S. foreign policy in Bosnia, neoclassical realism presents the fullest explanation for the change in U.S. strategic interests that led to a U.S. intervention in Bosnia. This is evident when one considers the emerging U.S. interest in avoiding a UN withdrawal and the growing threats to U.S. power and influence in the global community. This paper posits that these strategic interests, both of which are key intervening variables within neoclassical realism, were the major factors that prompted the Clinton administration’s decision to support a military intervention.

This argument is reinforced by U.S. policy shifts prior to August 1995. The massacre at Srebrenica was undeniably horrific. Yet many other cases of atrocious violations of human rights had characterized the Bosnian War. As early as the summer of 1992, the global media broadcast pictures of Bosnian Serb run concentration camps reminiscent of those in Germany during World War II. Similarly, the world was well

¹⁵⁷ Daalder, p 73.

aware of the bombing of Bosnian Muslim civilians and the inhumane conditions in many Bosnian Muslim cities that resulted from Bosnian Serb sieges. In short, Srebrenica was undisputedly a morally repugnant event that violated the international standard of human rights, but it was neither the first nor the only horrifying violation of human rights to occur during the war. Given that terrible human rights violations in Bosnia had been well documented prior to August 1995, it would seem that the U.S. required a much more compelling interest than the protection of humanitarian rights to provoke the Clinton administration to intervene in Bosnia.

This analysis is also furthered when one considers the debate that occurred within the Clinton administration after the killings at Srebrenica. Instead of focusing on the need to protect international rules and norm, the debate centered on the ramifications that the massacre would have on the sustainability of UNPROFOR and U.S. international power. After Srebrenica, Richard Holbrook asserted that the withdrawal of UN troops was “inevitable” and would risk American lives, carry heavy expenses and “lead to a wider war.”¹⁵⁸ Thus given that U.S. involvement was now inevitable, the Clinton administration was faced with either assisting in a UN withdrawal or leading an effort to intervene to force a settlement. Ultimately, policymakers considered an intervention in Bosnia to be a better option than the allowing the UN to withdraw, since a withdrawal would entail deploying U.S. ground troops. During the re-conceptualization of U.S. interests, policymakers were not considering any U.S. interest in protecting international norms. They were conceptualizing the potential risk to American ground troops and the heavy monetary cost to the U.S. In the end, the Clinton administration determined that a

¹⁵⁸ Shoup. p 325.

diplomatic and military intervention was the best option given the U.S. interest in avoiding the deployment ground troops into Bosnia.

After the massacres at Srebrenica, the Clinton administration was committed to the adoption of its new policy and pushed hard for its acceptance at the London Conference. Clinton spent many hours on the phone convincing both Chirac and Major to adopt the U.S. plan. Similarly, high level officials from both the State and Defense Departments held meetings and phone conversations with their foreign contemporaries in order to secure their agreement. Ultimately, the U.S. effort succeeded and three agreements were reached that completely revised the role of NATO air power in Bosnia and set the ground work for the first sustained NATO air campaign in Bosnia. First, it was decided that an attack on Gorazde would be met with substantial NATO air strikes both in the immediate vicinity of the safe area and also against significant targets throughout Bosnia. Second, NATO air strikes would no longer be conditioned on responding to a Serb attack. Instead, NATO now had the authority to strike preemptively when it became clear that Bosnian Serb army was preparing to attack. Third, command and control arrangements were to be streamlined, meaning local commanders now held the authority to request close NATO air support to protect individual units. In addition, the authority to implement more extensive air strikes would fall to the UN Protection Force commander on the ground, General Smith.¹⁵⁹

A New Interest in Diplomacy

The dramatic shift in U.S. policy in Bosnia from disengagement to diplomatic and military intervention is most consistent with neoclassical realism's expectations for a

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. p 75.

state's foreign policy decisions. Ultimately, the Clinton administration intervened due to the changing perceptions held by policymakers regarding U.S. power in the international system. The inability of the Clinton administration to end the war challenged not only U.S. credibility, but also the credibility and vitality of the international organizations that served as the tools through which the U.S. exerted its influence on the international system. When added to the previously discussed U.S. interest in avoiding a UN withdrawal, neoclassical realist theory provides a comprehensive argument for this dramatic shift in U.S. foreign policy in Bosnia.

The Clinton administration adopted a policy of engagement in Bosnia in order to protect U.S. power and credibility in the international community. By August of 1995, Clinton expressed frustration with the current U.S. policy in Bosnia. Clinton announced "this policy is doing enormous damage to the United States and out standing in the world. We look weak" and it "can only get worse down the road."¹⁶⁰ Thus the U.S. leadership role in promoting a diplomatic initiative backed by military power resulted from policymakers' growing perceptions that the U.S. was losing its influence as a world leader due to the loss of U.S. credibility in NATO and the UN. By leading the effort to reach a settlement in Bosnia, the Clinton administration believed it could once more enhance U.S. credibility and influence in the world.

Along with acting to protect U.S. credibility within NATO and the UN, the Clinton administration was also driven to intervene in Bosnia in order to protect the viability of the institutions themselves. Within neoclassical realist theory, international organizations are the venue through which the U.S. can exert power into the international system, thus any damage to those organizations diminishes the ability of the U.S. to influence other states.

¹⁶⁰ Daalder. p 101.

The UN had been humiliated as a result of the hostage crisis in May 1995 and the increasing calls for a withdrawal only served to underscore the organizations apparent weakness in the world. The UN's credibility in the world was further diminished after UN forces failed to protect the UN established safe areas of Srebrenica and Zepa. Similarly, the NATO alliance was also at risk as a result of the failure of the international community to end the war in Bosnia. First, the debate among NATO members regarding correct action in Bosnia strained the alliance and threatened its vitality. Second, the failure of NATO to resolve the war, or at least end the humanitarian atrocities, challenged the alliance's role in managing the overall security of Europe.¹⁶¹ Thus the Clinton administration perceived an interest in intervening in Bosnia in order to protect not only the credibility of the U.S. as a world power, but also the credibility of the international organizations that were perceived to be fundamental in promoting U.S. influence in the international system.

In short, by August 1995, the Clinton administration's interest in avoiding a UN withdrawal and the changing perceptions of U.S. international influence merged together and prompted a U.S. led intervention into Bosnia. The fact that the Clinton administration adopted an interventionist policy in Bosnia is consistent with the intervening variables of neoclassical realism. Neoclassical realism posits that a state will intervene in an external conflict in order to protect its power in the international system and if policymaker's conceptualize either an interest in intervening or a threat that would result from failing to intervene.

On the other hand, the Clinton administration's decision to intervene is also consistent with constructivist expectations. First, the threat posed to the credibility of both

¹⁶¹ Ibid. p 164.

the UN and NATO can be considered as more than simply a threat to U.S. international influence. Within constructivist theory, international organizations are the institutions that promote and protect the accepted rules, norms and values of the international community. Thus any threat to the viability or credibility of such organizations can be seen in a broader sense as a threat to international security as a whole. Without internationally recognized institutions to monitor state's compliance with the accepted rules and values, states may be tempted to violate the norms of the international system. Such fears came to a head after the August 1995 massacres at Srebrenica and Zepa. While the Bosnian War had seen nearly four years of humanitarian tragedy, the mass murders committed within the two supposed UN protected safe areas sent a dangerous message to potential predatory powers. If the international community allowed such violations to stand, this would send the message not only that international norms and values need not be respected, but also that UN peacekeeping forces are merely a symbolic presence without any credible military backing. In short, the failure to respond to such atrocious humanitarian violations would undercut the effort to encourage global security, instead promoting a world of "war and destruction."¹⁶²

The second factor consistent with constructivist expectations for intervention was the U.S. interest in respecting internationally accepted precedents. As the horrifying stories began emerging from Srebrenica, the U.S. Congress once more challenged the Clinton administration's Bosnia policy by voting overwhelmingly to lift the arms embargo to allow the Bosnian government to better defend itself. The Clinton administration feared that if the U.S. unilaterally lifted the arms embargo, this would set a precedent among

¹⁶² Talentino., p 184.

other states in the international community that UN Security Council Resolutions are non-binding. The Clinton administration especially feared that such a precedent would allow Russia, and possibly even France, to abandon the sanctions imposed against Iraq, which the U.S. considered instrumental in protecting global security.¹⁶³ Given that the bill had passed by substantial majorities in both houses, the Clinton administration needed to provide an alternative course in Bosnia or risk having the presidential veto overridden. Thus the Clinton administration adopted a diplomatic intervention policy backed by military air power partly to avoid having to unilaterally lift the arms embargo on Bosnia.

By early August 1995, it was clear to the Clinton administration that an overhaul of U.S. diplomatic strategy was necessary as well. Regardless of the redefinition of NATO's mission, Europe still remained on the brink of withdrawing their forces before the end of the year. Thus the Clinton administration still faced the possibility of having to deploy U.S. troops to Bosnia either to assist in a UN withdrawal or to support a UN decision to stay in Bosnia. Faced with an upcoming election in 1996 and the ever-increasing chance of having to deploy troops, Clinton ultimately decided that the U.S. had to "seize control of this."¹⁶⁴ As a result, the Clinton administration decided to lead a new diplomatic strategy, to be backed by NATO's newly defined military strategy, in order to achieve a peace settlement by the end of the year and avoid a commitment of U.S. troops to assist a UN withdrawal.

The new diplomatic strategy, outlined by Anthony Lake, was aimed at gaining leverage over the Bosnian Serbs through the use of real sticks and carrots. The real sticks included using the recently formed Rapid Reaction Force to open a corridor between

¹⁶³ Daalder. p 165.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. p 80.

Sarajevo and the airport and to establish UN control over the airport; reestablishing the heavy weapons exclusion zone around Sarajevo with a new NATO ultimatum; allowing third parties to increase their covert arms shipments to the Bosnians; gaining diplomatic leverage by using Congress's resolution to unilaterally lift the arms embargo; and finally, reconfiguring the UN force to be more easily defended and possibly offering U.S. assistance in extracting troops still in the eastern enclaves. In addition, the U.S. proposed terminating sanctions relief if Serbia did not end its military and economic support of the Bosnian Serbs.¹⁶⁵ Lake argued that the U.S. also had to offer real carrots in order to gain the support of the allies and to motivate the Bosnian Serbs to negotiate. He proposed that the real carrots include allowing realistic modifications on the Contact Group map, such as trading the smaller enclaves in the east for Federation control of Sarajevo; a degree of autonomy for Bosnian Serbs in the constitution, with a possibility for a referendum of secession to be held within two or three years; significant international aid after a settlement; and possibly offering the potential for an associate membership in the European Union.¹⁶⁶ Regardless of which sticks and carrots were eventually agreed upon, under the new diplomatic strategy it was clear the U.S. would need to take the lead in negotiations. This included gaining the support of the international community and even the possibility of engaging the Bosnian Serb leadership directly, something the Clinton administration had previously refused to do.

The Clinton administration also planned for the possibility that the negotiations would fail, prompting the collapse and withdrawal of UN forces. Under such a scenario the Clinton administration determined that the best course of action would be to: seek to

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. p 99.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. p 100.

lift the arms embargo through a vote in the UN Security Council; train and arm the Bosnians to establish a better balance of power on the ground, regardless of whether the embargo was lifted; enforce the no-fly zone and conduct air strikes in case of a Bosnian Serb attack for the first nine months after the withdrawal; and promote the establishment of a multinational force to help defend the Bosnian's territory. Yet the U.S. conditioned such support on a constructive and cooperative effort by the Federation during negotiations. Should the Muslims and Croats hurt the negotiation effort, the U.S. would simply lift the arms embargo and leave.¹⁶⁷

In early August, Lake and Tarnoff arrived in Europe to present the U.S. diplomatic framework to both Europe and Russia. In the past, the strategy had been both cumbersome and unworkable, requiring the U.S., France, Britain, Germany and Russia to reach a common position before presenting a settlement to the parties in Bosnia. Yet this time, Lake had been instructed to tell the allies what the U.S. planned, not ask what they wanted.¹⁶⁸ Prior to his departure, Lake explained that

the line I'm going to take in the meetings with the allies is that this is the U.S. policy, this is what we are prepared to do if there is no settlement. This is what we intend to do. We hope you'll come with us. We won't be so inflexible to refuse changes to our approach but we want to give them an accurate understanding that these are presidential decisions, this is a strategy we are wedded to and now's time to move on.¹⁶⁹

Lake's efforts in Europe succeeded, in part because the allies were grateful to see the U.S. finally commit itself to resolving the conflict.

While the allies may not have agreed with every aspect of the U.S. strategy, they accepted U.S. leadership in the diplomatic effort. Europe and Russia eventually came to

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. p 113.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. p 110.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. p 111.

accept all seven points of the U.S. diplomatic strategy. The strategy included: a “comprehensive peace settlement” based on the Contact Group plan for a united Bosnia; three way recognition between Croatia, Serbia and Bosnia; lifting the economic sanctions against Yugoslavia once an agreement had been reached; the return of eastern Slavonija from Serbian to Croatian control; the reaffirmation on the Contact Plan to divide Bosnia into two entities, although with consideration to recent territorial changes; an all out effort to pursue a ceasefire, including the consideration of a possible “parallel special relationship” of the two entities with both Croatia and Serbia; and finally, a program for regional economic integration with international assistance.¹⁷⁰

After securing the agreement of Europe and Russia, Richard Holbrook was selected by the Clinton administration to head the U.S. diplomatic shuttle in pursuit of an agreement. Starting in mid-August, Holbrook and his team traveled between the three capitals attempting to convince the parties to engage in a serious effort to negotiate. On August 27, in an interview with NBC, Holbrook threatened NATO air strikes if the Bosnian Serbs continued to attack Bosnian Muslims. The following day, a Serb artillery shell exploded in a Sarajevo market, killing thirty-eight civilians. The incident provided the base for launching a NATO air campaign since it was viewed as the “first direct affront against the U.S. because the attack came amidst a U.S. diplomatic effort to end the war.”¹⁷¹

In response to the artillery shell, on August 30, NATO launched Operation Deliberate Force, representing the largest military attack in NATO’s history. While earlier air strikes had been limited to Serb surface-to-air missile sites or single tanks, during the three-week duration of Operation Deliberate Force NATO flew 3,400 sorties and 750

¹⁷⁰ Holbrook. p 74.

¹⁷¹ Ibid. p 93.

attack missions against 56 targets.¹⁷² The NATO campaign paused briefly on September 1, in order to offer the Bosnian Serbs the chance to end their siege on Sarajevo and withdraw all heavy weapons from the exclusion zone. Yet the NATO air strikes quickly resumed on September 5, at the insistence of the Clinton administration, with increased intensity and against a broader range of targets after the Serbs refused to comply. The NATO campaign was finally suspended on September 14, after Holbrook secured the agreement of the Bosnian Serbs to withdraw weapons from the exclusion zone around Sarajevo. Holbrook had reached this agreement during a trip to Belgrade to meet with Serbian president Slobodan Milošević, who headed the negotiating team for the Bosnian Serb leadership.

The U.S. diplomatic shuttle continued through the end of September, with Holbrook now working to obtain Muslim and Croat acceptance of the ceasefire. Operation Deliberate Force had nearly destroyed the Bosnian Serb military capabilities, shifting the balance of power on the ground in favor of the Muslim and Croat forces. Throughout September, Muslim and Croat military campaigns resulted in massive territorial gains, retaking land previously captured by the Bosnian Serbs and overtaking historically Serb land as well. Thus by the end of September, Muslim and Croat forces were the main obstacle to reaching a settlement, with the Bosnian Serbs and Milošević showing an openness to negotiations. Ultimately, the U.S. won Bosnian Muslim acceptance of a ceasefire and agreement to attend a peace conference by promising to provide military aid to the Bosnian army. Even then, the Bosnian government did not fully end its offensive until Belgrade threatened to enter the fight in support of the Bosnian Serbs.¹⁷³ The last element obstructing the adoption of a ceasefire was the Serb held territory of eastern

¹⁷² Power, p. 440.

¹⁷³ Shoup, p 360.

Slavonija in Croatia. On October 3, the U.S. negotiated an agreement between Milošević and Tudjman reintegrating the territory into Croatia, thus allowing for a ceasefire to be announced on October 5.

After securing the ceasefire, the Clinton administration arranged for formal peace talks, under the direction of Holbrook, to be held at the Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio between November 1 and 21, 1995. In many ways the negotiations at Dayton were characterized by the same difficulties that had plagued earlier negotiation efforts. Yet they also differed in two critical aspects. First, the U.S. proved its willingness to exert the necessary pressure, especially on the Bosnian Muslim president Izetbegovic, in order to secure an agreement. Secondly, the two parties least susceptible to U.S. pressure, the Bosnian Serbs and the Bosnian Croats, were not a direct party to the negotiations.¹⁷⁴ Instead, Tudjman negotiated for the Bosnian Croats and Milošević for the Bosnian Serbs. By the end of the peace conference, the intensive U.S. commitment to achieving an agreement paid off and the three parties signed the Dayton Peace Accord. Under the peace agreement Bosnia was divided into three sections, each one to be controlled solely by the ethnic group residing there. The Serbs, who represented 35 percent of the population in Bosnia, were granted control of 49 percent of the land. The Croats, making up 18 percent of the population, and Muslims, with 43 percent of the population, were each given control of 25 percent of Bosnian territory.¹⁷⁵ After nearly four years of war, the murder of 200,000 Muslim and Croat civilians and the displacement of 2,000,000 more, the Bosnian War finally came to an end after a mere four months of intensive U.S. leadership.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid. p 360.

¹⁷⁵ Power. p 440

CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

Summary of Findings

The question that this paper sets out to answer was: what prompted the shift in U.S. foreign policy in August of 1995 that led the U.S. to intervene forcefully in Bosnia to end the war? To answer this question, this paper applies two competing theories of foreign policy to an empirical study of the Bosnian War in order to determine whether neoclassical realism or constructivism best explains the Clinton administration's decision to intervene.

U.S. Policy in Bosnia Prior to August 1995

Prior to August of 1995, the argument that the U.S. avoided humanitarian intervention in Bosnia because it was strategically ill advised reinforces the neoclassical realist explanation for U.S. policy in Bosnia. The intervening variables of neoclassical realism posit that policymakers' perceptions regarding intervention efficacy and the distribution of international power, combined with a state's conceptualization of its interests, are key determinants in the adoption of an interventionist foreign policy. At the start of the war, U.S. policymakers perceived no strategic U.S. interest in Bosnia. Thus the majority of U.S. power was directed elsewhere around the world. However, as the war progressed and the humanitarian crisis was broadcast across the world, U.S. policymakers became more involved in Bosnia as the credibility on NATO and the UN was called into question. This in turn called into question policymakers' perception of U.S. credibility as a leader within both institutions. Yet from the start of the war in 1992 up until the summer of 1995, U.S. policymakers weighed the potential damage to U.S. global influence against the unity of NATO, which would be threatened by an aggressive U.S. policy in the Balkans. In the end, the Clinton administration perceived U.S. interests to be best served

by maintaining the cohesion of NATO. As a result, the administration stopped short of any interventionist policy in Bosnia that would upset other NATO member states.

However, the Clinton administration's conceptualization of U.S. interests began to shift in 1994, when Russia became a powerful presence in the Balkans and the European states began to consider a UN withdrawal. The emergence of Russian influence in Bosnia threatened U.S. policymakers' perceptions of the U.S. position in the global distribution of power. While the Cold War had ended, the U.S. remained in geo-strategic competition with Russia for international influence. Thus policymakers perceived the increase in Russian influence to equate with a diminishing U.S. influence in the Balkans, which in turn pressured the Clinton administration to act. The result was the formation of the Contact Group in which the U.S. finally took a leadership role in an effort to impose a settlement in Bosnia. Regarding the potential UN withdrawal, not only would this result in the deployment of U.S. forces to Bosnia, it would also severely undermine the power of the UN in the international system by showcasing its weakness. Thus the withdrawal not only threatened the U.S. interest in keeping its troops out of Bosnia, it also threatened the credibility of an institution through which the U.S. exerted its power and influence onto the international system.

On the other hand, constructivist theory is also consistent with U.S. foreign policy in Bosnia prior to August 1995 if one believes that the shifts in U.S. policy resulted from the breach of internationally accepted norms and values. Throughout the war, after media broadcasts of humanitarian violations were aired, U.S. policymakers took steps to shift U.S. foreign policy toward a more aggressive stance. For example, the Bush administration pushed for the Security Council Resolution after the disclosure of the

concentration camps and the Clinton administration introduced the “Life and Strike” policy in response to the siege on Sarajevo. Additionally, the constructivist explanation for U.S. policy in Bosnia prior to the summer of 1995 is reinforced by the debate occurring within the UN. UN member states argued that the failure of the international community to end such atrocious violations of the international standard of values and norms would undermine international security by sending the message that states need not abide by the internationally accepted rules. In short, a state’s violation of international norms internally was now considered a potential sign of its willingness to behave aggressively externally. Thus, to protect international security, U.S. policymakers were prompted seek a political settlement in Bosnia.

While the two theories offer different explanations for the gradual escalation of U.S. involvement in Bosnia during the course of the war, both theories are consistent with policymakers’ interests in keeping U.S. forces out of Bosnia prior to August 1995. Constructivism, like neoclassical realism, recognizes that a state’s foreign policy cannot exist separately from its interests. Thus that fact that the documented humanitarian violations prior to the summer of 1995 did not spark a U.S. intervention can be reconciled within both neoclassical realist and constructivist theory. Ultimately though, it was the U.S. interests that reinforce the neoclassical realist explanation that led the Clinton administration to intervene in Bosnia.

The Decision to Intervene in Bosnia

The humanitarian tragedy perpetrated by the Bosnian Serbs at Srebrenica and Zepa served at the catalyst that sparked a U.S. diplomatic and military intervention in Bosnia. Constructivists, such as Martha Finnemore, argue that the U.S. intervened in Bosnia

because the Bosnian Serb leadership, “implemented policies that were viewed as grossly inhumane violations of international law.”¹⁷⁶ In addition, the massacre at Srebrenica threatened to further destabilize the international security system by sending the message that the UN and NATO would not intervene to end genocide. Basically, within constructivist theory, Srebrenica served as the final violation of international rules and norms that U.S. policymakers could withstand and the Clinton administration intervened in order to protect internationally accepted values and the overall security of the international system. By August 1995, the U.S. interest in protecting international security and the internationally accepted standard of norms and values overrode the previously held interest in avoiding the involvement of U.S. troops to Bosnia.

Yet this paper posits that the U.S. reaction to the massacres at Srebrenica and Zepa is most consistent with neoclassical realism rather than with constructivism. Srebrenica and Zepa were the catalyst that served to make a UN withdrawal a certainty by signaling the end of UNPROFOR’s usefulness in Bosnia. Given the threat policymakers perceived U.S. troops would face if deployed to Bosnia, the Clinton administration determined that U.S. interests would best be served by intervening with air strikes in order to prompt diplomatic negotiations prior to a UN withdrawal. Similarly, the failure of the UN and NATO to stop such blatant humanitarian violations undermined U.S. influence and credibility in the international system in two ways. First, the failure of the UN and NATO undermined U.S. power because the U.S. was a leading member of both organizations. Secondly, the credibility of NATO and the UN was important to the U.S. because these multilateral organizations were the tools through which the U.S. exerted its influence over the international system. Thus after Srebrenica, U.S. policymakers perceived a threat to

¹⁷⁶ Finnemore. p 137.

U.S. power and credibility in the international system, which they sought to counter by intervening in Bosnia. In short, the U.S. intervention in Bosnia in August 1995 was the result of a re-conceptualization of U.S. strategic interests.

The analysis that the U.S. intervention in Bosnia is most consistent with neoclassical realism is reinforced by U.S. policy shifts prior to August 1995. The brutal acts committed at Srebrenica were undeniably horrific. Yet the Bosnian War had seen many other cases of atrocious violations of human rights. As early as the summer of 1992, the global community was conscious of the Bosnian Serb run concentration camps. Similarly, the world was well aware of the bombing of Bosnian Muslim civilians and the inhumane conditions in many Bosnian Muslim cities that resulted from Bosnian Serb sieges. While Srebrenica was undisputedly a morally repugnant event that violated the international standard of human rights, it was neither the first nor the only violation of human rights that occurred during the war. Considering egregious human rights violations had been well documented prior to August 1995, it can be inferred that policymakers required a much more compelling interest than the protection of humanitarian rights to induce a U.S. intervention in Bosnia.

Such an analysis is furthered when one looks at the debate occurring within the Clinton administration after the killings at Srebrenica, which centered on the ramifications that the event would have on the UN peacekeeping force and U.S. international power, as opposed to the need to protect international rules and norms. Richard Holbrook, the lead negotiator for the Dayton Peace Accords, said that after Srebrenica, the withdrawal of UN troops was “inevitable” and would risk American lives, carry heavy expenses and “lead to

a wider war.”¹⁷⁷ In short, the Clinton administration was faced with either assisting in a UN withdrawal or leading an effort to intervene to force a settlement since involvement was now inevitable. Policymakers considered an intervention in Bosnia to be a better option than the allowing the UN to withdraw, since a withdrawal would entail deploying U.S. ground troops. In re-conceptualizing U.S. interests, policymaker’s were not debating the U.S. interest in protecting international norms. They were considering the potential risk to American ground troops and the monetary cost to the U.S. Ultimately, an intervention was determined to be the best option to meet the U.S. interest of avoiding sending ground troops into Bosnia.

Similarly, the debate within the Clinton administration also focused on the potential threat Bosnia posed to U.S. power in the international system. Neoclassical realism asserts that states will intervene in another state in order to protect their allotment of the international distribution of power. Thus states adopt interventionist foreign policies when policymakers perceive a threat to their state’s international influence. Such perceptions were certainly present within the Clinton administration. In early August 1995, Clinton lamented that the current U.S. policy in Bosnia was “doing enormous damage to the United States and out standing in the world. We look weak.”¹⁷⁸ The debate over whether to intervene in Bosnia centered on policymakers’ perceptions of U.S. power and influence and the ramifications that would impact both if the U.S. did not act in Bosnia.¹⁷⁹

A major criticism constructivist scholar’s launch at neoclassical realism is the argument that theories based off of *realpolitik* notions cannot explain why strong states

¹⁷⁷ Shoup. p 325.

¹⁷⁸ Daalder. p 101.

¹⁷⁹ For a more detailed study of the internal debate within the Clinton administration during the Bosnian War see: Ivo Daalder. *Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2000.

intervene in weaker states when it does not serve their strategic or economic interests.¹⁸⁰ Yet in the case of the U.S. intervention in Bosnia, policymakers perceived clear-cut strategic U.S. interests in intervening. First was the U.S. interest in avoiding a UN withdrawal. Secondly, there was the interest in protecting the institutions through which the U.S. promotes its power and influence in the international community. Thus not only is the notion that the U.S. had no strategic interest in intervening in Bosnia incorrect, but furthermore, the strategic interests that prompted the intervention directly reinforce neoclassical realist expectations for a state's foreign policy decisions. Neoclassical realism posits that policymakers' conceptualization of their state's interests and their perceptions of the international distribution of power are key determinates of a state's foreign policy and its decision to intervene.

Of course, this is not to say that the humanitarian tragedy perpetrated at Srebrenica did not impact U.S. policymaker's. As Chapter 5 shows, Vice President Gore was deeply moved by the massacre and argued fervently that such acts could not be allowed to continue. One assumes that the genocide in Bosnia violated U.S. policymakers' conceptualizations of international norms and values. Yet ultimately, this paper asserts that it was not the violation of international values that prompted a U.S. intervention in Bosnia. Instead neoclassical realism and the strategic interests that the theory incorporates in its expectations for a state's foreign policy decisions are reinforced by the shift in U.S. foreign policy and the intervention in Bosnia. U.S. policymakers re-conceptualized U.S. interests and perceived a threat to U.S. power in the international system, which ultimately led the U.S. to intervene in Bosnia to protect U.S. strategic interests.

¹⁸⁰ Finnemore, p 5.

The Implications of the Study

There are two main theoretical implications that can be drawn from this study. First, this study adds empirical content to the debate surrounding neoclassical realism and its applicability regarding individual state's decisions to intervene in external humanitarian conflicts. This particular case study suggests that in regards to humanitarian conflict, policymakers' perceptions of international institutions play a more important role in determining a state's foreign than traditional realist theories may have thought. This study posits that institutions are not epiphenomenal. Instead, the credibility and viability of international organizations are major factors considered by policymakers from the start.

Secondly, this study demonstrates a head to head analysis comparing neoclassical realist against constructivist logics. As stated above, in the context of Bosnia, policymakers' perceptions regarding the strength of international institutions dictated the U.S. decision to intervene to stop the humanitarian conflict. Yet constructivism and neoclassical realism offer different explanations regarding the importance of international organizations. Constructivism considers these institutions to be vital in a normative sense and posits that states intervene externally to protect the international rules and norms that perpetuate a secure and stable world system. On the other hand, neoclassical realism asserts that international organizations are vital tools through which states exert their influence onto the world system. Thus the U.S., which enjoys a disproportionate amount of influence in the world by virtue of its hegemonic status, would perceive a greater interest in protecting the credibility and viability of these institutions.

The policy implications that result from the theoretical inferences of this study deal primarily with the how policymakers' perceptions concerning a state's strategic interests shift when institutions intersect with interests. I am essentially asserting that the results of

this study suggest that the U.S. would benefit from intervening sooner rather than later. Allowing the perpetration of egregious human rights violations will eventually challenge both the credibility and viability of the international institutions through which the U.S. can exert its power over the international system. Thus if policymakers can conceptualize this link between U.S. strategic interests and the maintenance of international organizations earlier on in a humanitarian conflict, they may be inclined to intervene earlier in order to mitigate the threat to U.S. power and influence.

Of course, this one empirical study cannot be taken as evidence that there is constant a link between the credibility of international organizations and an individual state's strategic interests. One could argue that in the post-9/11 world, international organizations are becoming less relevant to the application of U.S. power, especially when one considers the unilateral U.S. intervention into Iraq in 2003. I would argue that the current predicament that the U.S. finds itself facing today in Iraq may in fact bolster the claim that international institutions are the best tools through which to funnel U.S. power and influence. Yet such a debate is well beyond the scope of this paper. Thus additional studies must be conducted looking explicitly at the relationship between international institutions and U.S. strategic interests in the context of intervention in the post-9/11 world.

Final Thoughts

While I argue that U.S. policy decisions during the Bosnian War are most consistent with the expectations of neoclassical realism, by no means is this paper an attempt to discredit the constructivist explanation of foreign policy. I simply do not see the theoretical applicability of constructivism within this specific case study regarding

intervention policy and the Bosnian War. I certainly hope that in the future, U.S. foreign policy in cases similar to Bosnia will reinforce the constructivist, rather than neoclassical realist approach. I firmly believe that the norms of the international system as espoused by constructivism, which value the protection of human rights and life, should on their own be enough to prompt a humanitarian intervention regardless of a state's conceptions of its own strategic interests. I am greatly disturbed that the findings of this study support the explanation that the U.S. based its decision to intervene to stop genocide on an analysis that weighed the perception of U.S. strategic interests against innocent civilian lives. Only after the benefits of intervention appeared to outweigh the costs, when a threat to the international organizations used to promote U.S. power emerged, did the Clinton administration finally conceptualize an interest in intervening.

I undertook this project in order to better comprehend what I found to be a horrifying lack of U.S. effort to end the genocide in Bosnia. As I conclude this study, I still believe that the U.S. could have and should have done more to end the human suffering caused by this war given both the U.S.'s military and diplomatic influence in the international system. At the same time, I have come away with a greater understanding of the hesitancy exhibited by both the Bush and Clinton administrations to involve the U.S. in such a complex and violent situation. Perhaps one of the greatest factors preventing the adoption of a more forceful U.S. policy was the cautious nature of the European states to utilize air power given the tenuous position of their troops deployed through UNPROFOR. Any unilateral action by the U.S. in this regard would be seen as a blatant disregard for European troop's safety and would effectively destroy the NATO alliance. Additionally, the U.S. is a democratic state and, although the American public expressed horror at the

situation in Bosnia, prior to the summer of 1995 80 percent opposed deploying U.S. troops to the Balkans.¹⁸¹ In short, the argument can be made that policymakers were merely fulfilling the promise of a democratic government by implementing policies that reflected the interests of the American public.

Yet regardless of the mitigating arguments, by no means do I excuse the fact that the Clinton administration waited until August 1995 to intervene in Bosnia, after over 200,000 innocent civilians had been brutally killed and countless others subjected to rape, displacement and ill treatment. I only hope that studies such as this one can help to reveal the callousness of basing humanitarian intervention on the conceptualization of a state's strategic interests. At the very least, perhaps policymakers will come to see the intersection between their conceptualization of strategic interests and the credibility of international institutions earlier on, and intervene to alleviate genocide and ethnic cleansing earlier rather than later.

¹⁸¹ Daalder, p 55.

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