

France and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia

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Abstract

This thesis examines French relations with Yugoslavia in the twentieth century and its response to the federal republic's dissolution in the 1990s. In doing so it contributes to studies of post-Cold War international politics and international diplomacy during the Yugoslav Wars. It utilises a wide-range of source materials, including: archival documents, interviews, memoirs, newspaper articles and speeches.

Many contemporary commentators on French policy towards Yugoslavia believed that the Mitterrand administration's approach was anachronistic, based upon a fear of a resurgent and newly reunified Germany and an historical friendship with Serbia; this narrative has hitherto remained largely unchallenged. Whilst history did weigh heavily on Mitterrand's perceptions of the conflicts in Yugoslavia, this thesis argues that France's Yugoslav policy was more the logical outcome of longer-term trends in French and Mitterrandienne foreign policy. Furthermore, it reflected a determined effort by France to ensure that its long-established preferences for post-Cold War security were at the forefront of European and international politics; its strong position in all significant international multilateral institutions provided an important platform to do so. Therefore, it was imperative for France that Yugoslav dissolution, and recognition of its successor states, be firmly anchored within a strongly European and international framework. Moreover, it was absolutely essential that the Yugoslav crisis did not threaten the Maastricht Treaty in 1991 nor the national referendum on its passing into law in September 1992. Therefore, French diplomacy stressed the primacy of a unified common European approach to the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Many of the methods employed in diplomacy towards, and peacekeeping within, Yugoslavia thus bore the hallmark of French initiative. In addressing these issues, this dissertation demonstrates that France played a far greater role in shaping the international response to the dissolution of Yugoslavia than previously acknowledged.

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Contents

Abstract		i
Acknowledgements		ii
Contents		iii
Abbreviations		vi
Introduction		1
Part One - France an	nd the Dissolution of Yugoslavia.	
_	e amitié traditionelle? Franco-Yugoslav Relations in the gue durée, 1918-1981.	18
The	e Interwar Years	18
Wo	rld War Two	22
The	e Early Cold War	25
Dec	colonisation and Early Nonalignment	29
Ola	d Rivals: The General and the Marshal	34
Poi	mpdolienne Pragmatism	40
Gis	ccard d'Estaing: 'Change without Risk'	44
-	anco-Yugoslav Relations in Mitterrand's <i>premier</i> otennat, 1981-1988.	49
Tito	o's Orphan	49
Tov	wards a European Socialism?	52
	litical Émigrés: A Thorn in the Side of Franco-Yugoslav ations	57
Fre	om U-Turn to Downturn	66
-	rance and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia, May 1988 - nuary 1992.	73
'Tw	vo Contradictory Emergencies'	73
'We	e would like Yugoslavia to remain Yugoslavia'	85
'Th	ne Phony War'	98

	The Yugoslav Crisis could break the European Community'	104
	'We must guard the unity of the Community at all costs'	127
Part Two - Fran	ce and the Bosnian War.	
Chapter 4	- 'Beyond Diplomacy': Defining French Humanitatian Intervention in Bosnia-Hercegovina, 1992.	136
	'Highway of Hell': Warning Signs in Bosnia-Hercegovina	136
	Europe once more	140
	François Mitterrand in Sarajevo	152
	Internationalising the Crisis	172
	Maastricht and London	187
Chapter 5	5 - France and the Vance-Owen Peace Plan, September 1992 - May 1993.	194
	Making Plans	195
	The Vance-Owen Peace Plan	204
	Protecting a Peace Plan	215
	'You are now under the protection of the United Nations'	222
	Cohabitation and Clinton	228
	The Failure of the VOPP: A Catastrophe of Clinton's Making	234
Chapter 6	5 - France and the Tripartite Peace Plans, June 1993 - April 1994.	248
	The Union of Three Republics	251
	The 'Kinkel-Juppé Plan'	259
	A Massacre in a Marketplace	273
	Making Contact	277
Chapter 7	7 - France and the Conclusion of the Bosnian War, May 1994 - December 1995.	285
	The Contact Group Plan	285

	Paris-Bihać-Washington	295
	Exit Europe, Enter USA	304
	Jacques Chirac and the Force of Will	310
	France's Last Stand	320
	Pax Americana	327
Conclusion		335
Bibliography		341
Maps		352

Abbreviations

AD Archives diplomatiques (Archives of the French Foreign Ministry)

AFP Agence France-Presse (French Press Agency)

AN Archives nationales (National Archives of France)

ARBiH Armija Republike Bosne i Hercegovine (Army of the Republic of Bosnia-

Hercegovina)

BiH Bosna i Hercegovina (Bosnia-Hercegovina)

BL-DY Brook Lapping documentary series *The Death of Yugoslavia*, deposited

at Liddel Hart Centre for Military Archives, Kings College, London

BODA Balkan Odyssey Digital Archive, an online repository of documents

pertaining to the work of Lord David Owen in the International

Conference for the Former Yugoslavia.

CAP Centre d'analyse et de prévision (Policy Planning Staff of the French

Foreign Ministry)

CFSP Common Foreign and Security Policy

CIA Central Intelligence Agency

COMECON Council for Mutual Economic Assistance

COMINFORM Communist Information Bureau

COREU CORespondance EUropéenne: an EU Communication network between

Member States and the European Commission in the fields of foreign

policy.

CSCE Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe

DMZ Demilitarised Zone

EC European Community

ECU European Currency Unit

ECCY European Community Conference on Yugoslavia

ECMM European Community Monitoring Mission

EEC European Economic Community

EMS European Monetary System

EU European Union

FAC Foregin Affairs Council

FLN Front de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Front)

FRG Federal Republic of Germany

FRY Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

G-7 Group of Seven (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, United

Kingdom and United States)

GPRA Gouvernement provisoire de la République algérienne (Provisional

Government of the Algerian Republic)

HDZ Hrvatska demokratska zajednica (Croatian Democratic Union)

HDZ-BiH Hrvatska demokratska zajednica Bosne i Hercegovine (Croatian

Democratic Union of Bosnia-Hercegovina)

HNV Hrvatsko narodno vijeće (Croatian National Council)

HV *Hrvatska vojska* (Croatian Army)

HVO Hrvatska vijeće obrane (Croatian Defence Council)

ICFY International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia

ICTY International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia

ICRC International Committee of the Red Cross

IFOR Implementation Force

IMF International Monetary Fund

JAP Joint Action Programme

JNA Jugoslovenska narodna armija (Yugoslav People's Army)

KPJ Komunistička partija Jugoslavije (Communist Party of Yugoslavia)

KSCS Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes

MAE *Ministère des affaires étrangères* (French Foreign Ministry)

MSF *Médecins sans frontières* (Doctors without Borders)

NAC North Atlantic Council

NAM Non-Aligned Movement

NATO North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NDH Nezavisna država hrvatska (Independent State of Croatia)

NFZ No-Fly Zone

OIC Organisation of the Islamic Conference

PCF Parti communiste français (French Communist Party)

PS Parti socialiste (Socialist Party)

PTT Postal, Telephone and Television building (UN HQ in Sarajevo)

RPR Rassemblement pour la République (Rally for the Republic)

RRF Rapid Reaction Force

RS Republika Srpska

SACEUR Supreme Allied Commander Europe

SALT Strategic Arms Limitation Talks

SDA Stranka Demokratske Akcije (Party for Democratic Action)

SDS Srpska Demokratska Stranka (Serbian Democratic Party)

SFRY Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

SKJ Savez komunista Jugoslavije (League of Communists of Yugoslavia)

TO Teritorijalna odbrana (Territorial Defence Force)

UDF Union pour la démocratie française (Union for French Democracy)

UN United Nations

UNHCR United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNPA United Nations Protected Area

UNSC United Nations Security Council

UNSCR United Nations Security Council Resolution

UNPROFOR United Nations Protection Force

VOPP Vance-Owen Peace Plan

VRS Vojska Republike Srpske (Army of Republika Srpska)

WEU Western European Union

Introduction

The late historian Eric Hobsbawm opens his seminal work *Age of Extremes* by recounting the visit of the French President François Mitterrand to the besieged Bosnian capital of Sarajevo on 28 June 1992.¹ The date of the President's visit was highly significant: it marked the anniversary of the assassination of Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand by the Bosnian Serb nationalist Gavrilo Princip close to Sarajevo's infamous *Latinska ćuprija* (Latin bridge). The date also has a further connotation within the Balkan context, as it marks the celebration of Vidovdan: a Serbian national holiday that plays an important role in Serb ethnic and religious identity. The symbolism of Mitterrand's visit, from a 'Western' perspective, was stark: Europe could not allow itself to end the century as it had begun it, at war. Hobsbawm contends that "hardly anyone caught the allusion except a few professional historians and very senior citizens" adding that "the historical memory is no longer alive." Notwithstanding, the President's personal undertaking certainly demonstrated a serious French commitment to resolving the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia.

Mitterrand's bold gesture is a near-perfect microcosm of France's policy towards the dissolution of Yugoslavia. It demonstrated France's ambition to take significant initiatives and provide leadership in an effort to reinforce humanitarian intervention whilst international mediators sought a negotiated political settlement. Furthermore, it demonstrated that, although France had significant aspirations on the international stage, it had reconciled itself to its medium-power status.

France, since the return of Charles de Gaulle and the establishment of the Fifth Republic, had sought to bring about the end of the 'Europe of Yalta'. Fate conspired so that the historically sensitive François Mitterrand – a man whose own biography reflects

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¹ Hobsbawm, Eric. Age of Extremes (London: Michael Joseph, 1994), 2-3.

² Ibid., 3.

France's conflicted history in the twentieth century – had near-total control in the realm of foreign policy. France had long sought a Europe from 'the Atlantic to the Urals' and, as the blocs disintegrated, the President feared that the 'Europe of Yalta' would be succeeded by the 'Europe of Sarajevo'.³ As Yugoslavia dissolved, Mitterrand faced a seemingly impossible task: to create an independent and integrative Europe to manage and mediate the dissolution of a Federation that, for almost the entirety of the Cold War, had overcome the nationalism that he so greatly feared. An analysis of France's policy towards the dissolution of Yugoslavia will provide an understanding of how it sought to manage these two difficult and seemingly contrasting goals. Moreover, it offers an interesting vantage point from which we can better understand France's role in the international community's involvement in Yugoslavia's dissolution and the Socialist President's vision for post-Cold War Europe.

Historiography

The international community's involvement in the dissolution of Yugoslavia and the resultant wars has inspired a broad literature and continues to provoke several heated debates.⁴ Temporally, works can be divided into three distinct groups: memoirists and contemporary commentators; a first wave of scholarly and popular works; and a newly emerging body of archival studies, which will proliferate over the next decade.

The memoirists occupy an interesting position in the historiography of the Yugoslav dissolution as they simultaneously wrote the history of the conflict but were also actors in the international negotiations. Sensing that the Yugoslav conflicts required detailed explanation, and would later provoke detailed historical investigations, a plethora

³ Bozo, Frédéric. "The Failure of a Grand Design: Mitterrand's European Confederation, 1989-1991", *Contemporary European History* 17, no. 3 (August 2008), 412.

⁴ The particularly heated and rather personal exchange between Marko Attila Hoare and David N. Gibbs is perhaps the most notable recent example. Hoare, Marko-Attila, "First Check Their Sources: On David N. Gibbs and 'shoddy scholarship'", *Greater Surbiton*. Accessed on 7 August 2015. https://goo.gl/Ed66bu.

of politicians, peacekeepers and negotiators produced autobiographical accounts of their roles in the conflict. Hubert Védrine's *Les Mondes de François Mitterrand* provides a fascinating insight into *Mitterrandienne* policy towards the Western Balkan federation's dissolution.⁵ Although Védrine has produced scholarly works, *Les Mondes* cannot be classed amongst them. Other political and military figures closely involved in France's foreign policy towards Yugoslavia have also reflected on their roles in writing.⁶ The work of the two *Agence France Presse* (AFP) journalists Pierre Favier and Michel Martin-Roland also falls within this memoir category.⁷

The first wave of academic works on the international community and the conflict appeared with the Dayton Peace Accords in December 1995 or shortly thereafter. As such, many of them lacked historical distance and access to archival documents.⁸ With the opening of archives from the early 1990s, we will slowly begin to see more historical investigations of the international community's policy towards the Yugoslav crises. Currently, the most notable example is Josip Glaurdić's *The Hour of Europe*.⁹ It is hoped that this study will be situated firmly in this final temporal trend. It is a preliminary archival study, which can be built upon with the further declassification of documents.

With some commendable exceptions, France's contribution to the international community's response is consistently overlooked. ¹⁰ Whilst other countries have provoked

⁵ Védrine, Hubert. Les Mondes de François Mitterrand: À l'Élysée, 1981-1995 (Paris: Fayard, 1996).

⁶ Dumas, Roland. *Le fil et la pelote: Mémoires* (Paris: Plon, 1996); Balladur, Édouard. *Deux ans à Matignon* (Paris: Plon, 1995); Kouchner, Bernard. *Ce que je crois* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1995); Morillon, Philippe. *Croire et Oser* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1993).

⁷ Favier, Pierre, and Michel Martin-Roland. *La Décennie Mitterrand*, vol. 4 (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1999).

⁸ Gow, James. Triumph of the Lack of Will: International Diplomacy and the Yugoslav War (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997); Woodward, Susan. Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution after the Cold War (Washington: The Brookings Institution, 1995); Almond, Mark. Europe's Backyard War: The War in the Balkans (London: William Heinemann, 1994); Berg, Steven L., and Paul S. Shroup. The War in Bosnia-Hercegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 1999).

⁹ Glaurdić, Josip. *The Hour of Europe: Western Powers and the Breakup of Yugoslavia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

¹⁰ Most notably: Lucarelli, Sonia. Europe and the Breakup of Yugoslavia: a political failure in search of a scholarly explanation (London: Kluwer Law International, 2000); Tardy, Thierry. La France et la gestion des conflits yougoslaves (1991-1995): enjeux et leçons d'une opération de maintien de la paix de l'ONU (Brussels: Bruylant, 1999); Wood, Pia-Christina. "France and the Post Cold War Order: The case of Yugoslavia", European Security 3, no. 1 (1994), 129-152.

dedicated studies, ¹¹ France has largely been relegated to fleeting mentions as a powerbroker in the international community, ¹² or the Yugoslav crisis has been one aspect of France's post-Cold War foreign policy. ¹³ Where France is acknowledged, a consideration of the existing historiography of France in the post-Cold War era is invariably omitted much to the detriment of the overall analysis. Nonetheless, there are some dedicated chapters in edited volumes, written as part of broader studies. ¹⁴ Thus far, there has been no single study devoted to the French political response to the dissolution of Yugoslavia. This preliminary study hopes to partially address this lacuna. Moreover no English language study has yet made use of French archives or the broad-range of primary French language material available. As such, those studies that do attempt to analyse French policy and its consequences almost unfailingly underplay France's initiatives or present them as unpredictable.

¹¹ For Britain see notably: Simms, Brendan. *Unfinest Hour: Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia* (London: Penguin, 2002). For the US see: Power, Samantha. "A Problem from Hell": America and the Age of Genocide (London: Flamingo, 2002). For Germany see: Libal, Michael. *Limits of Persuasion: Germany and the Yugoslav Crisis, 1991-1992* (London: Praeger, 1997). For the Netherlands see: Both, Norbert. *From Indifference to Entrapment: The Netherlands and the Yugoslav Crisis* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2000).

¹²For example see: Gow, James. "The Major Players: Paris, Bonn, London", in Gow. *Lack of Will*, 156-183; Almond. *Europe's Backyard War*; Woodward. *Balkan Tragedy*; Berg, Steven L., and Paul S. Shroup. *The War in Bosnia-Hercegovina*; Gibbs, David N. *First Do No Harm: Humanitarian Intervention and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2009).

¹³ See, for example: Treacher, Adrian. "A case of reinvention: France and military intervention in 1990s", *International Peacekeeping* 7, no. 2 (2000), 23-40; Dyson, Tom. "Convergence and Divergence in Post-Cold War British, French and German Military Reforms: Between International Structure and Executive Autonomy", *Security Studies* 17 (2008), 725-774.

¹⁴ Dedicated chapters on the subject are scarce. See: Jones, Chris. "N'ajoutons pas la guerre à la guerre': French Responses to Genocide in Bosnia", in *Genocide, Risk and Resilience: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, eds. Bert Ingelaere et al. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 150-163; Canivez, Patrice. "France's Yugoslav Policy Contribution to a Collective Failure", in *International Perspectives on the Balkans*, ed. Jacques Rupnik (Clementsport: Canadian Peacekeeping Press, 2003), 115-135. This chapter is, for the most part, an English-language translation that previously appeared in French: Canivez, Patrice. "François Mitterrand et la Guerre en ex-Yougoslavie", in *Mitterrand et la sortie de la guerre froide*, ed. Samy Cohen (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998); Laughland, John. "France: To Believe and to Dare", in *With No Peace to Keep*, eds. Ben Cohen and George Stamkoski (London: Gainpress, 1995), 134-141; Lepick, Olivier. "French Perspectives", in *International perspectives on the Yugoslav conflict*, eds. Alex Danchev and Thomas Halverson (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), 76-86; Morjé Howard, Marc and Lise. "*Raison d'état* or *Raison populaire?* The Influence of Public Opinion on France's Bosnia Policy", in *International Public Opinion and the Bosnia Crisis*, eds. Richard Sobel et al. (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2003), 107-134.

James Gow characterises the French response as "the most erratic approach to the problems of the Yugoslav war of dissolution, at least viewed superficially." Gow is right to caveat his assertion as, through a detailed study of France's policy, it becomes patently clear that *Mitterrandienne* policy towards Yugoslavia's dissolution was coherent from the outset, originally aiming towards pan-European unity but having to settle for Western European unity. Indeed, my own interpretation of France's contribution to the international efforts in Yugoslavia changed during the research process.

On the issue of Croatian and Slovenian recognition, Glaurdić, reaffirming Gow's interpretation, argues that France "viewed the possible dissolution of Yugoslavia's center with disdain, perhaps because of their own 'Bonapartist' and state-centric prejudices and even more so because of how they saw the future of Europe." Indeed, France's response conformed to Mitterrand's vision for Europe, which was a pan-European idea and not solely Western European; the dissolution of Yugoslavia into its six constituent republics was an affront to this aspiration. Mitterrand aspired to the Gaullist dictum of a 'Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals' and had "hoped to see emerge in the 1990s a European confederation in the true sense of the word, which will associate all states of our continent in a common and permanent organisation for exchanges, peace and security." Although ill-defined, Mitterrand's Confederation aimed towards pan-Europeanism, in pursuit of France's long-term goal of an independent and *European* Europe. The evolution of events in the Western Balkans by the summer of 1991 meant that, as Frédéric Bozo notes, "the Europe of 'Sarajevo', which Mitterrand had feared might succeed that of 'Yalta', had, indeed, literally – and sadly – become a reality."

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¹⁵ Gow. Lack of Will, 158.

¹⁶ Glaurdić, Josip. The Hour of Europe, 179; Gow. Lack of Will, 159.

¹⁷ Ministère des affaires étrangères [hereafter MAE], Allocution de Voeux de M. François Mitterrand, Président de la République, 31 December 1989. Accessed on 6 August 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

¹⁸ Bozo, Frédéric. "The Failure of a Grand Design", 412.

Although France's preference for mediating the Yugoslav crisis through international institutions has not gone unnoticed, it has been misinterpreted. 19 Glaurdić argues that France sought to use multilateralism to deter German enthusiasm for the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia. 20 Similarly Gow argues that it was a tactic aimed at "ensuring that French status and influence was not diminished." Rather, Mitterrand sought to emulate his approach to the reunification of Germany, which was carefully anchored within a "strong European and international framework." Indeed, two of Mitterrand's closest advisers reflected that the President's handling of Germany was a great success.²³ This was a *Mitterrandienne* vision for preventive diplomacy and conflict resolution, which, whilst well-suited to the integrational process of German reunification, was sadly not sufficiently developed for the fragmentary process of Yugoslav disintegration. However, only hindsight allows for this observation. As Sonia Lucarelli has demonstrated, 'realist' interests do not "justify the enthusiasm with which it [France] supported European involvement in the crisis."24 It was the traditional French goal of providing European solutions to European problems, independent of the US, which provoked French activism. That the United Nations (UN) became the forum after European failure was also preferable to the French as they sought to minimise the influence of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and maintain Russian support.

France has been characterised as 'realist' for its policy, during the dissolution of Yugoslavia.²⁵ Moreover, Mitterrand has been characterised as pro-Serb²⁶ owing to France's historical alliance with Serbia and his propensity for "thinking of the future in

¹⁹ Gow. Lack of Will, 159;

²⁰ Glaurdić. *Hour of Europe*, 266.

²¹ Gow. Lack of Will, 159.

²² Bozo, Frédéric. *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War and German Unification*, trans. By Susan Emmanuel (Oxford: Berghahn, 2009), xxii.

²³ de Margerie, Caroline. Interview with Author. Conseil d'État, Paris, 16 September 2014; Védrine, Hubert. Interview with Author. Paris, 18 September 2014.

²⁴ Lucarelli. Europe and the Breakup of Yugoslavia, 173.

²⁵ Glaurdić. *Hour of Europe*, 308.

²⁶ Almond. Europe's Backyard War, xii.

terms of the past."²⁷ For some, France therefore acted as a block on Croatian and Slovenian independence.²⁸ Rather, Mitterrand was keenly aware that the international community had little desire to intervene militarily.²⁹ He believed that the solution to the Yugoslav crises would be political, it was thus essential to maintain an open channel of communication with the authorities in Belgrade. In an increasingly morally Manichaean era, François Mitterrand was a man comfortably at home in the moral grey zone: a Pétainist then a *résistant*; a Catholic, then an agnostic; a conservative, then a socialist; Mitterrand saw beyond the morality of the Yugoslav crisis and sought a political solution.

The international community, France included, had missed several preventive opportunities in the preceding decade.³⁰ That the international community failed to help the Yugoslavs achieve a more sustainable balance of trade only hastened the revival of nationalism. Therefore the inconvenient truth was that there was no forthcoming solution to the Yugoslav crises that could satisfy the liberal moralism of the post-Cold War unipolar world. Thus, when internationally-brokered peace plans required international support, which other powers criticised for legitimising ethnic cleansing, France was ready. The French government were certainly not Serb apologists but they clearly took into account the limited means and opportunities of the international community at that point in history. As the British Foreign Minister, Douglas Hurd, noted "Mitterrand enjoyed playing with historical analogies, but had no intention of turning them into policy."³¹

Indeed, what this study hopes to demonstrate is that France possessed a strong vision for a European and international solution to the crises in Yugoslavia, which

²⁷ Védrine, Les Mondes de François Mitterrand: À l'Élysée, 1981-1995 (Paris: Fayard, 1996), 464.

²⁸ Ramet, Sabrina P., and Letty Coffin. "German Foreign Policy toward the Yugoslav Successor States, 1991-1999", *Problems of Post-Communism* 48, no. 1 (2001), 48-64.

²⁹ Howorth, Jolyon. "Humanitarian intervention and post-conflict reconstruction in the post-Cold War era: a provisional balance sheet", *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 26, no. 2 (2013), 296.

³⁰ Woodward, Susan L. "Costly Disinterest: Missed Opportunities for Preventive Diplomacy in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1985-1991", in *Opportunities Missed, Opportunities Seized: Preventive Diplomacy in the Post-Cold War World*, ed. Bruce W. Jentleson (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), 133-172.

³¹ Hurd, Douglas. *Memoirs* (London: Little Brown, 2003), 448.

reflected long-term aspirations in French foreign policy, an inherent awareness of its limitations, and the idiosyncrasies of the powerbrokers in Paris. However, activism becomes extremely difficult in multilateral institutions where the *modus operandi* often descends into the politics of the lowest common denominator. For better or for worse, France played a far greater role in the international community's response to the dissolution of Yugoslavia than has hitherto been acknowledged.

Sources and Methodology

This is primarily a political history of France's policy towards the dissolution of Yugoslavia. It is certainly not another history of the Socialist Federal Republic's sad demise in the 1990s. Nor is it another account of the 'international community' struggling to resolve the Yugoslav crisis.³² Rather, it seeks to make extensive use of French-language sources to integrate France in to the existing historiography of the Yugoslav conflicts. Indeed, as we approach the 25th anniversary of Yugoslavia's dissolution, the time has come for a greater historicisation in scholarship on the international community and the Yugoslav conflicts.

Many of the principle actors have now either passed on or retired from the political scene. As a principal protagonist in this story, François Mitterrand receives notable attention. His Presidency was mired in controversy, which led to many fierce polemics at the time particularly surrounding France's Yugoslav policy. Therefore, public opinion inevitably played a role in influencing the shape of French foreign policy in the former Yugoslavia. Historical distance – nearly twenty years have passed since his death – allows for a somewhat more dispassionate view of the man and his foreign policy. Indeed, as

³² The term 'international community' is a nebulous term used herein as a phrase of convenience to describe the group of nations that concerned themselves with the dissolution of Yugoslavia, usually through multilateral institutions.

Mitterrand himself said, "a politician expresses himself first and foremost by his deeds."³³ Therefore this research project will not dwell on the psychology of the political powerbrokers in Paris but will instead seek to analyse the discourse and practice of French diplomacy during the Yugoslav crises.

This analysis will be based on a broad-range of primary sources. Firstly, it seeks to make use of partially opened French archives. Until the period of cohabitation, François Mitterrand held a firm grasp over France's foreign policy. He also remained actively engaged with the subject whilst he shared political power with Édouard Balladur and Alain Juppé. As such, the archives of the Presidency – deposited at the *Archives Nationales* in Pierrefitte-sur-Seine – were an important point of departure. However, the 1979 French law on archives established a thirty year rule on classification, or sixty years for matters deemed relevant to national security, but individual requests for derogation are allowed and are considered on case-by-case basis.³⁴ The author submitted a request, with the assistance of *l'Insitut François Mitterrand*, which was partially granted. The information found therein is used carefully throughout this study but it is hoped that future requests will allow for an even greater access to the Mitterrand presidential archives.

The second set of archives consulted in France was those of the French Foreign Ministry deposited at the *Archives Diplomatiques*. Owing to limited time, resources and reclassification work at these Archives, it was regretfully not possible to submit a request for derogation for this research project. As this thesis remains a preliminary study, any further research for resultant publications would certainly seek to correct this post-haste.

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³³ Mitterrand, François, and Elie Wiesel. *Memoir in Two Voices* (New York: Arcade, 1996), preface.

³⁴ For an overview of the presidential archives of François Mitterrand, see: Bos, Agnes, and Damien Vaisse.

[&]quot;Les archives présidentielles de François Mitterrand", Vingtième siècle 86 (February 2005), 71-79.

However, the declassified documentation on Yugoslavia maintained by the Quai d'Orsay has been used extensively in discerning longer term trends in Franco-Yugoslav relations.³⁵

Further miscellaneous archives were consulted during the course of the research process. The author also consulted the archives of the Brook Lapping documentary series *The Death of Yugoslavia* deposited at the Liddel Hart Centre for Military Archives in London. It contains more than eighty transcripts of extensive interviews conducted with many of the primary protagonists for the documentary. Furthermore Lord David Owen has deposited his papers with the University of Liverpool Library, some of which have been made available in the Balkan Odyssey Digital Archive. These provide a useful insight into France's generally supportive role in the peace process. Further document collections are employed throughout alongside relevant international law, UN resolutions and proceedings from the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

Owing to the regrettably incomplete nature of the archival source base, it was an even greater necessity to use further complimentary sources. Accordingly, the thesis makes use of the publicly available database of the Ministry for Foreign and European Affairs, which holds thousands of official declarations, press interviews and images. Furthermore debates from the French *Assemblée Nationale* are also referenced where relevant. Equally, French press archives were also consulted to ensure a full-coverage of France's public-facing initiatives. Furthermore, the author conducted a handful of interviews with some notable political figures. These include figures close to Mitterrand, as well members of the British and European diplomacies. Although the interviews conducted here were rewarding and enlightening, there is scope for further fruitful investigation in this area. These interviews are reinforced by a good number of useful memoirs, diaries and reflections

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³⁵ The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs is located at the Quai d'Orsay. Thus 'The Quai' or Quai d'Orsay' are common metonyms for the Ministry. Similarly, the Premiership is often referred to as 'The 'Matignon' and the Presidency as 'The Élysée'. These terms are frequently employed throughout this study.

³⁶ Available online at: http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

written by the protagonists of this interesting history. This extensive collection of primary documents is supported throughout by the use of relevant secondary literature.

Of course, the historian must be careful and diligent in the use of these sources. The acceleration of events in the 1990s created a massive proliferation of diplomatic statements, initiatives and press coverage. As such, this study takes a strong chronological approach, which seeks to carefully place French policies and initiatives within a broader international context and thus allows for an analysis of their influence and impact over the course of the international community's efforts. Furthermore, this study provides an historical overview of Franco-Yugoslav relations in order to geopolitically situate the Balkan federation in France's long-term European planning. Indeed, this study is emphatically a work of history and it hopes to demonstrate the saliency of historical methods in understanding France's policies in the 1990s.

Overview

This study is divided into two strongly interrelated parts. Part One investigates France and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia, whilst Part Two focusses upon France's intervention in the Bosnian War. The first chapter provides a long-term overview of the relationship between France and Yugoslavia. This rapport was feted by both parties as an *amitié traditionelle*, akin to a 'special relationship', throughout the twentieth century. However closer scrutiny reveals that the two states share a far more complex history. In the interwar period, France enjoyed significant influence, prestige, and material holdings in the Serb-led Kingdom of Yugoslavia, which originated from Francophone cultural influence in the Balkan region during the nineteenth century and more particularly the Franco-Serbian allegiance in World War I. Following the Second World War, the victorious Yugoslav Communists did not seek a complete rupture with the history of the *amitié*. Rather they used the historical relationship to lend legitimacy to the nascent regime but also as a contingency against

overpowering Soviet ambition. Fourth Republic France was also initially keen to maintain a presence in Yugoslavia, particularly following the Tito-Stalin split in 1948, but would have to compete with the US and the UK. However, due to its limited means in the Cold War, stretched even more thinly owing to colonial conflicts, France could not maintain the level of influence it had previously enjoyed in Yugoslavia. Thereafter, Franco-Yugoslav relations were often characterised by a rhetorical enthusiasm but undermined by a lack of means and more pertinent political priorities. This *leitmotif* of Franco-Yugoslav relations would continue into the 1990s.

The relationship between France and Yugoslavia during François Mitterrand's first presidential term is the subject of Chapter Two. The Mitterrand administration sought to rekindle a close relationship with Yugoslavia in the early 1980s as the 'New Cold War' commenced, hoping to acquire leftist political credibility. However, when Mitterrand's socialist project failed, and the President made a *volte face* in 1983, enthusiasm for the relationship waned once more. With the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev in the USSR, and his moves towards *glasnost* and *perestroika*, Yugoslavia lost its important symbolic role in Eastern Europe precisely at the time its communitarian fabric was being unpicked by the resurgence of nationalism.

Chapter Three examines France's response to Yugoslavia's dissolution culminating in its recognition of Slovenia and Croatia in January 1992. As the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (*Savez komunista Jugoslavije*, SKJ) began to crumble under the forces of nationalism and bankruptcy, prescient voices within the Mitterrand administration warned in 1988 that Slobodan Milošević posed a grave threat to the peace and unity of Yugoslavia. As the socio-political fabric of the socialist federal republic was being torn asunder by centrifugal nationalist forces, France began to, alongside its European partners, consider how best to mediate the future arrangements for the geographical entity of Yugoslavia. The move towards fragmentation in Eastern European sat entirely at odds with Mitterrand's

plans for pan-Europeanism. Therefore, the French President actively pursued a *European* solution to a *European* problem. This had been the mantra of successive Fifth Republic French Presidents and tying German reunification into a European framework had proved successful only two years previously. However the Yugoslav crisis came too soon for the Europeans who wanted to demonstrate they could act in unison through the European Community (EC) and created the European Community Conference on Yugoslavia (ECCY). Resultantly, European unity of purpose came far too late to salvage Yugoslav cohesion.

Chapter Four – the first in Part Two – provides a thorough examination of the formation of France's early policy towards the conflict in Bosnia and Hercegovina (BiH). France's formulation of its policy in BiH was based upon three pillars: international institutions, humanitarianism and political negotiations. Guided by François Mitterrand's belief in firmly anchoring international crises in international institutions, France supported initial EC peace efforts, sought to send peacekeepers to BiH under the auspices of the Western European Union (WEU), and was the largest troop contributor to the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). The second pillar was greatly moulded by the growing influence of the publicly popular Minister for Health and Humanitarian Action, Bernard Kouchner. France placed a great emphasis on securing the delivery of humanitarian aid and was the first to suggest an armed UN contingent to perform basic humanitarian functions in BiH. When diplomacy failed to achieve this end, François Mitterrand personally sought to go 'beyond diplomacy' by staging an extraordinary personal visit to the besieged Bosnian capital of Sarajevo. Indeed, with a referendum on the Maastricht Treaty due in France in September 1992, it was vital for the French President to demonstrate that Europe could resolve a crisis on its own continent. The London Conference at the end of August provided a clear demonstration that Europe could, when pressed, find a unity of purpose.

Following the London Conference, the European Community and the United Nations cooperated in the creation of an International Conference for the Former Yugoslavia (ICFY). By early 1993 the two ICFY co-Presidents, Cyrus Vance and David Owen, had produced a peace plan for BiH: the Vance-Owen Peace Plan (VOPP). France's efforts in support of the VOPP form the focus of Chapter Five. Politically, France enthusiastically supported the VOPP and David Owen consistently sought French assistance. Indeed, François Mitterrand agreed to host talks with Serbian President Slobodan Milošević at the Élysée at the request of the ICFY co-Presidents. On the ground, French General Philippe Morillon sought to ensure that the Bosnian Serb forces could not render the VOPP map obsolete by near single-handedly attempting to save the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica. In doing so, the General drew the international media's attention to the plight of Srebrenica and forced the international community into reluctant action. In spite of these significant efforts, the VOPP failed as it was bulldozed by the moralising Clinton regime who believed the Plan rewarded ethnic cleansing. Following a disastrous diplomatic initiative to secure European support for its 'lift and strike' policy, the White House made an about-face and sought to distance itself from the conflict. In doing so it bulldozed the VOPP and proposed the Joint Action Programme (JAP). The new French Foreign Minister, Alain Juppé, thought it necessary to improve Franco-American relations and signed Washington's JAP. Now in its second period of cohabitation, France would begin to take a more pragmatic approach to the former Yugoslavia.

The European Union Action Plan, or Kinkel-Juppé Plan, forms the focus of Chapter Six. Differences over the VOPP created a new rift between France and Germany. Alain Juppé and Klaus Kinkel sought to kill two birds with one stone by providing a Franco-German lead in a renewed effort to resolve the Bosnian conflict. The plan provided the European Union (EU) with a renewed sense of unity and purpose. France and Germany divided their diplomatic efforts intelligently, with the French applying pressure to the

Serbs and the Germans negotiating with the Croats. It demonstrated that, with a strong Franco-German lead, Europe could pursue a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). However, the Bosnian Serb rejection of the plan revealed that a unified European policy was not sufficient to bring the war to a conclusion, although it marked a significant step. It revealed that, if the international community wanted to end the conflict, Russian and US pressure would have to be brought to bear. The Markale Marketplace Massacre and Bosnian Serb attacks on the 'safe zone' of Goražde provided sufficient impetus to bring the US and Russia into concert with Europe in the Contact Group.

The final chapter analyses the role of France in the conclusion of the Bosnian war. The failure of the 'Contact Group Plan' led France to seriously reconsider its commitment to BiH. Moreover, the Clinton administration became increasingly keen to deploy NATO air power against the Bosnian Serbs. France remained sceptical of the efficacy of the NATO approach and, fearing for the safety of its ground troops, opposed a reconfiguration of the authorisation mechanism for the use of NATO force. As such, the Bosnian government became openly hostile towards Paris. Following a ceasefire brokered by former US President Jimmy Carter fighting recommenced in the spring of 1995 with a renewed intensity. Amidst this fighting, Jacques Chirac succeeded François Mitterrand in the Élysée. Following NATO airstrikes, Bosnian Serb forces took French peacekeepers hostage, much to the ire of the new President. More prepared to take unilateral action than his predecessor, Chirac, in concertation with Britain, created the Rapid Reaction Force (RRF) to protect UNPROFOR. Following the Srebrenica massacre in July 1995, Chirac proposed recapturing the UN 'safe zone' with elements of the RRF. The international community instead fell behind the US policy of massive airstrikes, as the US took the lead in solving the crisis. Although the Dayton Peace Plan was signed at the Élysée Palace, France was virtually excluded from the three week long negotiations. In spite of significant efforts to the contrary over the preceding four years, France's role in the Western Balkans had been usurped by the US.

By undertaking a detailed investigation of this heretofore neglected subject, it is hoped that this study can make a modest, but meaningful, contribution to the broader fields of French foreign policy in the post-Cold War era and the international response to the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

PART ONE:

France and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia.

Chapter One – *Une amitié traditionelle?* Franco-Yugoslav Relations in the *longue durée*, 1918-1981.

The Interwar Years

In interwar France, intellectuals likened the Serbs to "younger brothers" who saw France as a reference point in their own historical progression towards Human Rights.¹ Furthermore, literate Serbs already had knowledge of the French cultural world as French was often their second language. This '*amitié franco-serbe*' was crystallised during World War I as French and Serb soldiers fought alongside one another on the Salonika Front.

In 1915, the French Minister for Public Education, Albert Sarraut, gave lectures and talks in public institutions to make Serbia better known to the French public and to inform them of "the long fight against its economic oppressors, the Austrians, and its military oppressors, the Turk...". Furthermore, in primary schools children learnt how to write "Brave Serbs, France is with you! *Vive la Serbie! Vive la France!*" Equally, some 4,000 Serbs were educated in French schools and universities during the war, many of whom would go on to be the intellectual, professional and administrative elite in their country of origin.⁴

During the war, the creation of a state of south Slavs became the key element of Franco-Serb relations.⁵ France, buoyed by its renewed global prestige in the aftermath of World War I, provided invaluable support for the Serb monarchy becoming the hegemonic power in the newly created Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (KSCS).⁶ It therefore

⁴ Sretenović, Stanislav. "Le monument à la France à Belgrade: La mémoire de la Grande Guerre au service de l'action politique et diplomatique", *Vingtième siècle* 115, no. 3 (2012), 33.

¹ Sretenović, Stanislav. "French cultural diplomacy in the kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians in the 1920s", European Review of History: Revue européene d'histoire 16, no. 1 (2009), 35.

² Becker, Jean-Jacques. "L'ombre du nationalisme serbe", *Vingtième siècle* 69, no. 1 (2001), 7.

³ Ibid.

⁵ Pavlović, Vojislav. "La France et le programme yougoslave du gouvernement serbe", *Balcanica* 37 (2007), 171.

⁶ Lampe, John R. *Yugoslavia as History: Twice There was a Country*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 110.

sought to maintain its client relationship with the nascent Balkan power through investment and 'soft power'. A strong Serb-led entity in Eastern Europe suited France's geopolitical and strategic interests: it filled the void vacated by the defeated Austro-Hungarian Empire and created a bloc that would prevent any eastward German expansion. The Kingdom was a key strategic location for France as it lay at in an important geographical crossroads for providing military aid to France's other East European allies; access to the port of Salonika and the railway at Vardar were considered essential. Therefore the continuation of strong bilateral relations was important for France. Thus it strongly supported the new regime in its endeavours to create a unified state, which proved to be a mutually beneficial relationship: France continued to enjoy cultural influence in the area and a client in the Balkan region whilst the new regime benefited from the support of the continent's most significant post-War power.

However, French influence in the KSCS was not without its problems, particularly in the former Austro-Hungarian territories. Croatia proved to be particularly resistant to French cultural activity, rejecting the opening of a French consulate in Zagreb in May 1920. Significantly, the French Ambassador to Belgrade blamed Germany and Hungary for propagating anti-French ideas. The notion of clientelism between former Austro-Hungarian territories and Germany would prove a prominent trope during the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's dissolution.

The *amitié* thus remained a strong feature of Franco-Yugoslav relations. The shared struggle of World War I was used in service of political and diplomatic aims. Indeed, in French political circles, the words 'Yugoslavia' and 'Serbia were interchangeable: French

⁷ Grumel-Jacquignon, François. "La France et la Yougoslavie de 1920 à 1940", *Relations internationales* 103 (2000), 362.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Sretenović, Stanislav. "French cultural diplomacy in the kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians in the 1920s", 41.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ See Chapter Three.

soldiers had fought with Serbs rather than Yugoslavs and French diplomats, based in Belgrade, habitually referred to the 'Serbs' rather than Serbs, Croats or Slovenes.¹²

The relationship was memorialised and commemorated during the interwar period: in Yugoslavia Bastille Day was celebrated annually and became a means to commemorate the French lives lost in the Balkans; in France a commemoration to "the brotherhood in arms of the Franco-Serb armies on the field of battle in the Balkans" was held in Nantes on the 12th anniversary of the war's start. Annual Commemorations on 11 November formed a central pillar of the memorialisation process. Symbolically, a declaration of Franco-Yugoslav friendship was signed in Belgrade on 11 November 1927, being simultaneously ratified in Paris. The following year, on the tenth anniversary of the Rethondes armistice, Serbs expressed their gratitude to the *poilus* of the French Orient Army and the official delegation led by Marshall Franchet d'Espèrey, who had led the Salonika offensive. Following the establishment of the Royal dictatorship in January 1929, King Alexander I¹⁴ established *banovinas*, regional administrative units, which were sought to imitate French administrative practices. Furthermore, a programme of renaming in Belgrade created streets named after Franchet d'Espèrey, Aristride Briand and Georges Cleamenceau. Services de programa en description and Georges Cleamenceau.

Significantly, a monument was erected in honour of France in Belgrade's Kalemegdan Park and unveiled on 11 November 1930. Designed by the renowned Croatian sculptor Ivan Meštrović, the statue became a *lieu de mémoire* that has embodied the vicissitudes of the *amitié* in the twentieth century. For example, when France took part in NATO's bombing campaign against Yugoslavia in 1999 the statue was covered in

¹² Drapac, Vesna. "A King is killed in Marseille: France and Yugoslavia in 1934", *French History and Civilisation* 1 (2005), 232.

¹³ Drapac, Vesna. *Constructing Yugoslavia: A Transnational History* (Hampshire: MacMillan 2010), 104.

¹⁴ King Alexander, like his father Peter, had attended the highly-regarded military academy École spéciale militaire de Saint-Cyr in Paris. He served as the Supreme Commander of the Serbian army during World War I and served alongside Marshall Franchet d'Espèrey on the Salonika Front.

¹⁵ Sretenović, Stanislav. "French cultural diplomacy in the kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians in the 1920s", 35.

¹⁶ Ibid.

graffiti that read, "to the eternal glory of France, which no longer exists".¹⁷ Moreover, in 2008, when France granted international recognition to the contested region of Kosovo, the statue was once again the target of anti-French sentiment, this time reading: "To France, with whom we spilt our blood and whose name we have mentioned in our prayers, and that no longer exists".¹⁸

One further event significantly affected Franco-Yugoslav relations during this period: the assassination of King Alexander I of Yugoslavia and French Foreign Minister Louis Barthou in Marseilles on 9 October 1934. Often relegated to an insignificant footnote in French history, the assassination had profound political implications for both France and Yugoslavia. 19 In Yugoslavia, Alexander's successor, Peter II, was too young to assume rule and therefore his uncle, Prince Paul, became Prince Regent of Yugoslavia. In France, Louis Barthou was replaced as Foreign Minister by Pierre Laval. Barthou had, with some success, been pursuing a policy of encirclement towards Hitler's Germany. The French Foreign Minister had undertaken an active diplomacy aimed at reconciling difficulties in Yugoslav-Italian relations with a multilateral security pact in mind. King Alexander's visit to France was intended to demonstrate the progress in these negotiations and to underscore the strength of Franco-Yugoslav relations. With Barthou's death, the Germanophile Laval slowly abandoned the encirclement policy and took a more conciliatory position with the fascist regimes of Europe. Laval would later serve in Philippe Pétain's collaborationist Vichy regime and was responsible for turning over possession of the Bor copper mines - one of France's most valuable assets in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia - to the Nazis.²⁰

¹⁷ Mijatović, V. "Poruka prijateljima". Accessed 12 November 2014. http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/beograd.74.html:211126-Poruka-prijateljima.

¹⁸ Ibid

¹⁹ Graves, Matthew. "Memory and Forgetting on the National Periphery: Marseilles and the Regicide of 1934", *PORTAL Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 7, no. 1 (January 2010), 4.

²⁰ Warner, Geoffrey. Pierre Laval and the Eclipse of France (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1968), 246.

World War Two

Yugoslavia shared the same fate as France during World War II: it was divided, partially occupied by Axis forces and a complex collection of insurgencies and resistance movements emerged against the occupiers. Yugoslavia's regent, Prince Paul, joined Yugoslavia to the Tripartite Pact on 25 March 1941; a *de facto* surrender to the Nazis. Two days later, General Dušan Simović led a *coup d'état* that ended the regency and formed an all-party government. Prince Paul was succeeded by the heir to throne, Peter II. Resultantly, Italy and Germany attacked Yugoslavia and Serbia was declared a war zone. The Yugoslav government fled, eventually residing in London.

Resistance movements emerged in opposition to the regency's capitulation. One such group was led by Dragoljub "Draža" Mihailović. A Francophile, Mihailović had attended the prestigious *École spéciale militaire de Saint-Cyr* in Paris, of which Charles de Gaulle was an alumni. Furthermore, Mihailović had participated in Marshall Franchet d'Espèrey's famous Balkan Offensive of 1918, a central event in the forging of the *amitié franco-serbe*. During World War II, Mihailović led his small group of followers from Northern Bosnia, where he had been chief of staff of the Yugoslav Second Army, and set up base at Ravna Gora in North-West Serbia. There he gathered around him fellow Serbian officers and formed military detachments or 'chetnik' groups.²¹ These chetnik groups were seen as the spiritual descendants of the Serbian *comitadjis* of World War I; guerrilla groups that earned a special place in the narrative of the *amitié* as resistance fighters.²²

Mihailović recognised that he needed support from abroad and, as a legitimist, the Yugoslav government. De Gaulle, as head of *France Libre*, supported the Yugoslav monarchy and the Simović government and when they arrived in London he "welcomed"

²¹ Pavlowitch, Stevan K. *Hitler's New Disorder: the Second World War in Yugoslavia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 53-54.

²² Drapac. Constructing Yugoslavia, 103.

[them] with sympathy... and expressed solidarity with the Yugoslav resistance."²³ The *Comité National Français* continued to liaise directly with the Yugoslav government. It took Mihailović and his small nucleus of officers several months to establish a network and a list of conscripts and reservists for use.

Meanwhile, competitor insurgencies were emerging throughout the territories of Yugoslavia, most notably the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (KPJ), led by Josip Broz 'Tito'. With the collapse of the Molovtov-Ribbentrop Pact, the KPJ prepared to seize power over the territory of Yugoslavia in partnership with the USSR.²⁴ The commencement of Nazi attacks on the Soviet Union in June 1941 led Tito to publish a call to arms, which was published on 12 July.²⁵ The Communists formed small guerrilla groups that would be famously known as the "Partisans".

The two leaders and their respective followers vied with each other for control over territory in Yugoslavia, whilst resisting the occupiers and collaborators, and their respective popularity waxed and waned throughout the occupation. However it was Mihailović who was recognised by the Allied forces as the commander of the Yugoslav forces in the homeland, owing to his links with the government. Following heavy German reprisals in the late autumn of 1941 both movements regrouped and began to struggle against one another, as well as the other insurgency groups that were fighting territorial battles all over the former Kingdom.

The relationship between *France Libre* and the Yugoslav government-in-exile remained strong and de Gaulle decorated Mihailović with the prestigious *Croix de guerre* in February 1943. Furthermore, a request was made to the Commissariat of Foreign Affairs for a direct link with the chetnik leader the following month; it was rejected as it was

23

²³ Marès, Antoine. "La France libre et l'Europe centrale et orientale (1940-1944)", Revue des études slaves 54, no. 3 (1982), 310.

²⁴ Pavlaković, Vjeran. "Yugoslavia" in *European Resistance in the Second World War*, eds. Cooke, Philip and Ben H. Shepherd (Barnsley: Praetorian Press, 2013), 221.

²⁵ Pavlowitch. *Hitler's New Disorder*, 56.

deemed to "be imprudent from the point of view of France's relations with different fighting Yugoslav elements, the other Balkan countries and Russia." Support switched from Mihailović and the Yugoslav Home Army to Tito and his partisans following the Tehran Conference in December 1943, which Charles de Gaulle was powerless to resist. Relations between Mihailović and the British quickly deteriorated, as the chetnik leader told them that "The French … had been our only allies; they had not measured their sweat against our blood." Abandoned, Mihailović appealed directly to de Gaulle for help and support in regaining the confidence of the allies. ²⁸

The French General, concerned by the collapse of Mihailović's movement, enquired to Stalin on the chetnik leader's whereabouts in December 1944. Stalin tried to convince de Gaulle that Mihailović had left Yugoslavia and was hiding in Cairo.²⁹ But the French Foreign Ministry kept a detailed dossier on General Mihailović and were able to track his whereabouts to Eastern Bosnia in April 1945, where he had amassed 60,000 men to rally against Tito.³⁰ He, in fact, struggled against the Communists until March 1946.

His capture, the procedure of his subsequent hearing for treason, and his eventual execution, gave rise to great concern in France and the United States; the latter appealed to Belgrade to allow American soldiers to appear as witnesses in Mihailović's trial.³¹ Many of these soldiers, as a US State Department press release stated, "were rescued and returned to allied lines through the undaunted efforts of General Mikhailovich's [sic] forces..." and they possessed "first hand evidence which cannot but have a bearing upon the charges of enemy collaboration which the Yugoslav authorities have indicated they will bring against

²⁶ Marès. "La France libre et l'Europe centrale et orientale", 321.

²⁷ Paylowitch. *Hitler's New Disorder*, 222-223.

²⁸ Ibid., 227.

²⁹ Ibid. 237.

³⁰ Minstère des Affaires Étrangères [hereafter MAE], Direction d'Europe, Note A.S. Entretien avec Colonel Zugovic, 4 April 1946, Archives Diplomatiques [hereafter AD], 209QO/26, Z-492-3.

³¹ Letter from Henri Bonnet to MAE, a.s. de Drago Mihailovitch, 10 April 1946, AD, 209QO/26, Z-492-3.

General Mikhailovich [sic]."³² There was even a "Committee for a Fair Trial for Draja Mihailovich [sic]" established that consisted of six Governors, six Senators and several prominent writers, intellectuals and journalists.³³

However France, in contrast to its position after World War I, was in a fragile position internationally in the aftermath of the Second World War. Faced with the reality that much of its traditional sphere of influence was now under the aegis of the Soviet Union, France had no choice but to accept the change of regime in Yugoslavia, and the execution of Draža Mihailović, especially if it wanted to protect its material possessions from Tito's nationalisation programme.

The Early Cold War

With the liberation of France and Yugoslavia, their respective reconciliation and reconstruction projects began in earnest. France's significant involvement in the Western Balkan state prior to the Second World War cast a long shadow over the two's post-war relationship, particularly owing to France's significant investment in the banking and mining sectors. With France requiring significant materials and capital to undertake its own post-war reconstruction projects, it was unprepared to cede the Bor copper mine to Yugoslavia's nationalisation programme without significant compensation. Indeed, General de Gaulle, in his capacity as head of the French provisional government, delayed formal recognition of the new regime in Belgrade by a month to highlight his desire to see Yugoslavia uphold the international engagements of the *ancien régime*.³⁴

Equally, Tito was not prepared to abandon a potentially useful partner in France.

He was sceptical about the reliability of support from the Soviet Union and remained

³² Ibid.

³³ Letter from Ambassador Henri Bonnet to MAE, a.s. L'opinion et l'administration américaines et le procès du général Mihailovich, 18 May 1946, AD, 209QO/26, 492-3.

³⁴ Souleille, Alain. "Quelques aspects des rélations Franco-Yugoslaves de 1944 à 1949", *Recueil des Travaux* 10 (1990), 333.

reluctant to reconcile Yugoslavia's interests with overarching Soviet ones. Stalin reportedly scolded Tito for not having sufficiently sovietised: "No, your government is not Soviet—you have something in between De Gaulle's France and the Soviet Union." Perhaps Stalin's reprimand was more prescient than he realised as, much like the French General, Tito would seek to overcome emerging Cold War bipolarity. Even in 1946, the Yugoslav leader was unprepared to be restrained by the "imaginary line traced by Mr. Churchill." To this end, Yugoslavia sought a pact with a country 'from the other side': France. Accordingly, in April 1946 a Franco-Yugoslav friendship society was created.

Tito sought to use the *amitié* to lend legitimacy to his nascent regime but also required trade partners in the West, as the Soviet Union could not absorb all of Yugoslavia's exports. As such, and to maintain a level of independence from the Soviet Union, Tito sought a trade agreement with France. Running until 1948, the agreement increased trade between the two countries year-on-year, accounting for over \$10 million of trade by its end.³⁷ However this relationship was not without its problems. The Yugoslavs announced summary nationalisation in December 1946.³⁸ France accordingly pursued compensation claims, particularly for the Bor copper mine, with its valuation differing from the Yugoslav's. However, France was cautious lest it come away with nothing.³⁹

Tito continued to demonstrate that he was unwilling to reconcile Yugoslavia's interests with overarching Soviet ones or to be confined by the parameters of the Cold War. Disagreements over 'adventurism' in Greece and Albania, which Stalin thought would provoke the West further, led to fractious relations between the USSR and Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav Central Committee was unwilling to give Stalin the required

³⁵ Banac, Ivo. With Stalin Against Tito: Cominformist Splits in Yugoslav Communism (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 17.

³⁶ Souleille, "Quelques aspects", 335.

³⁷ Todić, Katarina. A Traditional Friendship? France and Yugoslavia in the Cold War World, 1944-1969. PhD Diss., McMaster University (2015), 62.

³⁸ Banac. With Stalin Against Tito, 21.

³⁹ Souleille. "Quelques aspects", 334.

level of obedience in the Communist bloc. Therefore, on 28 June 1948, Yugoslavia was expelled from the Communist Information Bureau (COMINFORM) and faced a period of isolation.

Neither did the early Cold War favour France's perceived foreign policy interests. As Frédéric Bozo notes, "France's position in the Cold War soon provoked a number of frustrations that the country's painful decolonization process and chronic internal instability only aggravated". France viewed the onset of the Cold War with caution as it provided it with two significant international challenges: maintaining its status as a great power, particularly in its traditional spheres of interest; and preventing the potential remilitarisation and re-emergence of Germany. The ostracisation of Yugoslavia from COMINFORM provided France with an opportunity to increase its influence in Eastern Europe once more. However, France could no longer rely solely on the legacy of World War I and the *amitié* and would face increasingly stiff competition from the US and the UK for influence in Yugoslavia.

Although the US had significant concerns about the Tito regime, particularly regarding its treatment of domestic opponents and assistance to the Greek Communists, it sought to pounce on the opportunity that Tito's enforced independence provided. Therefore the US provided Yugoslavia with aid and loans. From an ideological perspective, this Communist rupture also had an important political value: Tito's break from the Eastern bloc undermined the theretofore unshakable unity of the international Communist movement. It appeared to the West that other East European states may follow Yugoslavia's lead and break their ties with the Soviet Union.

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⁴⁰ Bozo, Frédéric. "France, 'Gaullism' and the Cold War", in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*, vol. 2, eds. Leffler, Melvyn P., and Odd Arne Westad (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 158.
⁴¹ Ibid.. 159-160.

⁴² Lampe, John R., Russell O. Prickett, and Ljubiša S. Adamović, *Yugoslav-American economic relations since World War II* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1990), 19.

France, sensing that the US was attempting to usurp its role in Eastern Europe, agreed to participate in the Tripartite Aid programme, alongside the US and the UK, to Yugoslavia from 1951-4. The *Direction d'Europe* noted that participating in the aid programme was important for two reasons: it demonstrated solidarity with Great Britain and the United States and provided the moral benefit and strengthening of relations between France and Yugoslavia.⁴³ The Fourth Republic had not yet lost all hope of reestablishing its influence in Eastern Europe. Therefore, it would allow Yugoslavia "to safeguard its independence and to resist the pressure of the countries of the Soviet bloc."⁴⁴ These were rather lofty goals for French foreign policy, particularly as France struggled with its colonial territories. Indeed, France's contribution to Tripartite Aid highlighted its essential problem in the Cold War: it sought to reconcile Great Power ambitions with medium-power means.⁴⁵

France's contribution was consistently the smallest of the three contributors owing to its own economic problems and expenditure in the extremely expensive conflict in Indochina. April 1951 settlement for outstanding compensation from the nationalisation programme – \$10 million over a period of ten to twelve years – as extremely generous and "therefore constituted aid in its own right." France's National Assembly ended its participation in the programme in 1953 owing to its need to finance the Navarre Plan in Indochina; an expensive, and ultimately fruitless, endeavour. France's paltry contribution led to a diminishment in its influence in Yugoslavia. Where once French had been learnt in schools, it was now supplanted by English. Furthermore, French imports and products were being replaced by US and British goods.

⁴³ MAE, Direction Général Politique Europe, Note, a.s. aidé la Yougoslavie, date unknown, AD, 209QO/181, 37-24-1.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Bozo, Frédéric. La politique étrangère de la France depuis 1945 (Paris: Flammarion, 2012), 3-10.

⁴⁶ Lampe et al. Yugoslav-American economic relations since World War II, 39-40.

⁴⁷ Ibid. 40.

Decolonisation and Early Non-Alignment

Having weathered the storm of 1948, and now supported by US aid, Tito was once again becoming more active in international politics. In doing so, he began to feel his way towards a coherent foreign policy, which would later find its expression in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Tito was passionately anti-colonial and accordingly made contact with the National Liberation Front of Algeria (*Front de Libération Nationale*, FLN) in Cairo in 1953.⁴⁸ Algeria also presented Yugoslavia with an opportunity to assist a national liberation movement, which would bring with it prestige amongst similarly oppressed peoples. Strategically, Algeria would also be a useful ally to Yugoslavia, being, as it is, situated in close proximity and at a key location on the Mediterranean littoral.

Thus, when the FLN uprising began on 1 November 1954, Belgrade tacitly supported the rebels and received several prominent members of the movement in Yugoslavia.⁴⁹ Therefore, in January 1955 Yugoslavia supported a Saudi Arabian proposal to bring the Algerian problem before the UN Security Council (UNSC) and challenged the French accounts of events in the General Assembly.⁵⁰ As Matthew Connelly has demonstrated, there was a strong foreign policy aspect to the FLN's strategy, which was often conducted in the forum of the United Nations.⁵¹ In this respect, Yugoslavia provided Algeria with ample support. In light of these diverging political lines, France reconsidered its relationship with Yugoslavia.

Furthermore, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union had entered a period of rapprochement, which allowed it to further delineate its position on the international stage. However, Tito also wanted to continue to derive the benefits of non-alignment, particularly

⁴⁸ Rubinstein, Alvin. *Yugoslavia and the Nonaligned World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 85.

⁴⁹ MAE to L'Ambassadeur de France au Caire, a.s. Attitude de la Légation de Yougoslavia au Caire à l'égard des nationalistes nord-africains, 8 March 1956, AD, 209QO/183, 37-23-16.

⁵⁰ Rubinstein. Yugoslavia and the Nonaligned World, 85.

⁵¹ Connelly, Matthew. "Rethinking the Cold War and Decolonization: The Grand Strategy of the Algerian War for Independence", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33, no. 2 (May, 2001), 234.

Western aid and loans, which he had enjoyed theretofore. He cautioned Moscow not to expect Yugoslavia to improve its relations with the Soviets at the expense of its ties to the West: "we have numerous trade and other agreements with them [Western nations]... we still receive aid from some Western countries like the United States, Great Britain, France, for instance, and so far these countries have not shown themselves to be our enemies; they have proved to be friends".⁵² Indeed, the Yugoslavs had just negotiated a food and financial assistance package from the US, reached agreement with Italy on the subject of Trieste, and signed a defensive pact against the USSR with Turkey and Greece known as the Balkan Pact.⁵³

Owing to this stability, Tito became increasingly ambitious on the international stage. In Western Europe he continued to focus on cooperation with France as the two nations' security needs converged. In early 1956 the French government was considering two significant proposals for investment in Yugoslavia: the construction of an assembly line to manufacture *Mystère* IV B2 fighter planes; and Franco-Yugoslav cooperation in copper mining in Majdanpek, the construction of a foundry and a sulphuric acid factory in Bor and a superphosphate factory in Prahovo. The Yugoslavs made concerted efforts to flatter the French government: Tito was set to visit Paris in May and *Borba* published articles that evoked the traditional *amitié*. ⁵⁴ Parallel to these inter-state relations the SKJ also sought a rapprochement with the French Communist Party (*Parti communiste français*, PCF) and by July 1956 the Yugoslavs were considering sending a mission to renew contacts between the two parties. ⁵⁵

Although the French Ambassador in Belgrade welcomed the warm messages, and explained that there was no reason to doubt their sincerity, he cautioned the Quai against

⁵² Rubinstein, Yugoslavia and the Nonaligned World, 64.

⁵³ Rajak, Svetozar. Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in the Early Cold War: Reconciliation, comradeship, confrontation, 1953–1957 (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 106-7.

⁵⁴ Telegram from the French Embassy in Belgrade to MAE, 27 February 1956, AD, 209QO/181, 37-17-

⁵⁵ Telegram from the French Embassy in Belgrade to MAE, 16 July 1956, AD, 209QO/181, 37-24-1.

an over-enthusiastic reaction. He explained that, in spite of the ardour of Tito's resistance to Soviet subjugation, Belgrade was always at risk of being subordinated to Moscow, particularly if Tito was no longer in power. Moreover, he stated that Franco-Yugoslav rapprochement would be "an unacceptable fool's game" if it should provoke the slightest weakening between the Atlantic allies. Therefore, France was keen to support the Majdanpek copper mine venture but withdrew its support for the Mystère as it required US Congressional support. With France facing an increasingly expensive war in Algeria, it was itself increasingly concerned with Yugoslavia's ability to service its debts and pay its outstanding nationalisation compensation to France. However, by seeking to extract raw materials from Yugoslavia, France failed to provide any meaningful contribution to recalibrating the Franco-Yugoslav balance of trade, which greatly favoured itself. France's short-sightedness – although not the sole Western power to only assist Yugoslavia in the short-term – would severely hamper Yugoslavia's ability to service its increasing debt in later years.

Simultaneously, Yugoslavia embarked on its more ideologically-driven foreign policy aims and started to look to the Third World, which would bring it into direct competition with France. The Yugoslav leader invited the Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, and the Egyptian President, Abdel Nasser, to the island of Brioni for a highly publicised meeting with an international agenda. Nasser was deeply impressed by Tito's Yugoslavia and particularly its careful balancing of East-West relations.⁵⁸ France worried that the link between Egypt and Yugoslavia would make a change in Yugoslav policy towards Algeria even more unlikely.⁵⁹ The French Ministry of Defence regularly

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⁵⁶ Telegram from the French Embassy in Belgrade to MAE, 27 February 1956, AD, 209QO/181, 37-24-

⁵⁷ MAE, Direction Général Politique Europe sous Direction d'Europe Orientale, Note a.s. équipement des mines de couivre de Majdapak, 13 June 1956, AD, 209QO/181, 37-24-1.

⁵⁸ Cigar, Norman. "Arab Socialism revisited: The Yugoslav Roots of its Ideology", *Middle Eastern Studies* 19, no. 2 (April 1983), 155.

⁵⁹ Telegram from the French Embassy in Belgrade to MAE, 5 July 1956, AD, 209QO/181.

drew comparisons between the Egyptian President and Hitler.⁶⁰ The Brioni Declaration signed by the three leaders committed them to take concerted action on issues such as decolonisation with Algeria featuring prominently.⁶¹ It also marked tentative steps towards an active policy of non-alignment.

Owing to his close relations with the Egyptian leader, Tito supported Nasser's nationalisation of the Suez Canal. The French were most displeased and criticised Yugoslavia's policy of 'equidistance' asking: "Does the People's Republic feel no embarrassment aligning its diplomatic action with that of a feudal regime openly preaching holy war whose repercussions could be felt in Bosnia?" In spite of this accusation, Yugoslavia remained supportive of "a French presence in North Africa." Indeed, the Yugoslavs even continued to believe in the necessity of close Franco-Yugoslav relations for the sake of Europe:

You well know... that the Yugoslav government considers that it is only around France that a united Europe can be based. We cannot count either on Great Britain, whose interests are not strictly European, or the Germans, towards whom we remain suspicious. It is through a close and sincere collaboration between France, Yugoslavia, the Nordic countries and Benelux that could create a real European community.⁶⁴

However, Yugoslavia was once more becoming isolated. Communications broke down with Western Europe, and particularly France, as the US encouraged Tito to act as a mediator in the Suez Crisis.⁶⁵ Moreover, Yugoslavia came into confrontation with the

⁶⁰ Crosbie, Sylvia K. *A Tacit Alliance: France and Israel from Suez to the Six Day War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 18.

⁶¹ Rothermund, Dietmar. "The era of non-alignment" in *The Non-Aligned Movement and the Cold War: Delhi-Bandung-Belgrade*, eds. Mišković, Nataša, Harald Fishcer-Tiné and Nada Boškovska Leimgruber (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 23.

Direction Général Politique Europe sous Direction d'Europe Orientale, Note A.s. Conversation avec M. Bernadic, 22 September 1956, AD, 209QO/160, 37-23-1.
 Ibid.

⁶⁴ Letter from Chargé d'Affaires in Yugoslavia to MAE, A.s. Propos tenus par M. Smole, Belgrade, 23 November 1956, AD, 209QO/160, 37-23-1.

⁶⁵ Direction Général Politique Europe sous Direction d'Europe Orientale, Note A.s. Conversation avec M. Bernadic, 22 September 1956, AD, 209QO/160, 37-23-1

USSR as, following Khrushchev's hardening after the Hungarian uprising, Tito refused to sign the Declaration of 1957, which called for Communist ideological homogeneity centred on Moscow. 66 Yugoslavia therefore turned towards the Third World, where France's empire was crumbling. Yugoslavia's search for allies would lead to a great divergence between itself and France.

In one of the few pieces of work devoted to Franco-Yugoslav relations, Gilles Troude greatly overstates the significance of Islam in Tito's support for the FLN. Labelling Yugoslavia as a "real Muslim power", Troude adds that "the Marshall did not hesitate to give himself a pro-Arab image, by giving materials and arms to a insurrectional movement, at the risk of breaking relations with a traditionally amicable Western power who has greatly aided him militarily and financially after the split with Moscow in 1948." Rather, what motivated Tito's assistance to the FLN was a strong aversion to colonialism, which brought Yugoslavia into direct conflict with France as its colonial territories sought independence.

Matthew Connelly observes that the Algerian War of Independence "was both a cause and consequence of that movement's [NAM] emergence." Indeed, its campaign was focussed on maintaining equidistance between East and West and, thus, courting neutralist nations was a promising strategy. Therefore, Ferhat Abbas, future president of the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic (*Gouvernement provisoire de la République algérienne*, GPRA), visited Yugoslavia in July 1956 hoping to present a note to Tito, Nasser and Nehru. *Le Monde* noted that their sources indicated that it was very likely that Tito received Abbas during this time. ⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Rajak. Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union in the Early Cold War, 211.

⁶⁷ Troude, Gilles. "La Yougoslavie titiste vue par les diplomates français (1955-1974), *Balcanica* 40 (2009), 170.

⁶⁸ Connelly, Matthew. A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post-Cold War Era (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 9.

^{69 &}quot;M. Ferhat Abbas est arrivé à Pula", Le Monde (19 July 1956).

Yugoslavia thus sent five freighters a week to Morocco to resupply the FLN training camps in Oujda, Morocco. This came to light following an incident in January 1958 when the Yugoslav freight ship *Slovenija* was seized by the French Navy off the coast of Oran carrying 7,000 weapons. The Yugoslav government denied that the arms were destined for the FLN and protested furiously for the cargo to be released. Nonetheless, Belgrade still attached importance to France at the centre of its idea of a unified Europe and sought to manage the *l'affaire Slovenija* in a "friendly way." However, it greatly soured Franco-Yugoslav relations, which would only be reinforced by the return of the anti-Communist *extraordinaire* to the forefront of French politics: General de Gaulle.

Old Rivals: The General and the Marshal

It was the violent process of decolonisation that brought Charles de Gaulle back to the forefront of French politics in 1958. As Frédéric Bozo notes: "If France's posture in the Cold War were to be summarized in one word, 'Gaullism' should be considered an appropriate one." Truly, the constitution and workings of the French Fifth Republic allowed one man to near single-handedly define its foreign policy: the President. This was no mere coincidence; de Gaulle believed that France had lost much of its prestige over the preceding fifty years and ensured that the constitution would provide him with the authority to restore its 'grandeur'. The decline of French influence in Yugoslavia only served to demonstrate how far French grandeur had declined.

History played a central role in de Gaulle's personal philosophy; he professed not to believe in ideology, only history. Whilst Marx pronounced that the "history of all

⁷¹ Connelly. A Diplomatic Revolution, 162.

⁷⁰ Troude. "La Yougoslavie titiste", 171.

⁷² Telegram from the French Embassy in Belgrade to MAE, 20 January 1958, AD, 209QO/185, 37-23-16.

⁷³ Telegram from the French Embassy in Belgrade to MAE, 27 January 1958, AD, 209QO/185, 37-23-16.

⁷⁴ Bozo, "France, 'Gaullism' and the Cold War", 159.

hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles", de Gaulle believed that "the struggle of nations" was history's primary engine.⁷⁵ Logically, therefore, the Cold War was a transient phenomenon and a break from the historical norm. Accordingly he believed that the conflict between ideological blocs would desist and that Russia would return to its "national" character.⁷⁶ Resultantly, the Eastern European 'satellites', including the Yugoslav republics, would regain their independence.

However, Yugoslavia was supporting another state in search of its national independence: Algeria. As Robert Niebuhr has demonstrated the Yugoslav leaders used the Third World to bolster domestic political legitimacy through foreign policy successes.⁷⁷ Aiding aspiring liberation movements also provided the Yugoslav administration with significant moral victories. Tito thus welcomed Ferhat Abbas to Belgrade in June 1959, declaring in a joint communiqué that:

Yugoslav representatives, faithful to the principles of the politics of the People's Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, according to which each nation has the right to decide its own fate, and in believing that general emancipation of the people of colonised and dependant countries constitutes an historical process, progressive and inevitable, have confirmed their point of view that they consider the fight for and aspirations to liberty and independence of the Algerian people to be legitimate and in full agreement with the United Nations Charter.⁷⁸

Accordingly, the Yugoslavs tried to encourage dialogue between the GPRA and France. However, Charles de Gaulle believed that Tito "felt obliged to howl with the wolves, with the FLN, and all the Afro-Asiatics, against France..." whilst his Foreign Minister, Maurice Couve de Murville exclaimed that it was "unacceptable: it's as if

⁷⁷ Niebuhr, Robert. "Non-Alignment as Yugoslavia's Answer to Bloc Politics", *Cold War Studies* 13, no. 1 (2011), 159.

⁷⁵ Wall, Irwin. "France in the Cold War", *Journal of European Studies* 38, no. 2 (June 2008), 133.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁸ "Des 'représentants' yougoslaves signent avec M. Ferhat Abbas un communiqué conjoint soutenant le point de vue du F.L.N.", *Le Monde*, 15 June 1959.

⁷⁹ Peyrefitte, Alain. *C'etait de Gaulle*, vol. 1 (Paris: Fayard, 1994), 295.

General de Gaulle had welcomed the exiled Croat leaders to France". 80 The French Ambassador in Belgrade warned that any recognition of the GPRA as the legitimate government of Algeria would be poorly received in Paris and would cause a rupture in Franco-Yugoslav diplomatic relations. 81 In response to Tito welcoming Ferhat Abbas, Paris decided to temporarily recall its Ambassador from Belgrade. 82 However, in spite of the strong French reaction, the Yugoslavs continued to hope that the two countries could collaborate on the international stage as the Yugoslav Ambassador relayed a message from Tito to de Gaulle:

We believe that, despite different points of views on certain international questions, there is a vast domain in which collaboration could develop to the benefit of both countries, in general European collaboration and the consolidation of world peace.⁸³

Tito therefore stepped back from full recognition of the GPRA. Nonetheless, the Yugoslav leader still pursued connections with the FLN but refrained from diplomatic recognition.

Over the next two years diplomatic relations continued to deteriorate with a series of provocative acts and gestures being taken on both sides, much to the other's disdain. In July 1959 the French Navy inspected the Yugoslav cargo ship *Makedonija* and found that it contained 10,000 heavy machine guns and 200 mortars destined for the FLN.⁸⁴ In France de Gaulle insisted on receiving the deposed monarchs of Yugoslavia in the Élysée to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the death of Alexander Karađorđević; he also decorated Maria with the Legion of Honour.⁸⁵

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⁸⁰ Troude, "La Yougoslavie titiste", 172.

⁸¹ Telegram from the French Embassy in Belgrade to MAE, 9 January 1959, AD, 209QO/182, 37-25-1.

⁸² Connelly. A Diplomatic Revolution, 205.

⁸³ Telegram from the French Embassy in Belgrade to MAE, 11 December 1959, AD, 209QO/182, 37-25-1.

⁸⁴ Troude. "La Yougoslavie titiste", 173.

⁸⁵ The Royal Family of Serbia. Accessed on 5 August 2015. http://www.royalfamily.org/dynasty/hm-queen-maria-of-yugoslavia/

The Yugoslavs were also making similarly provocative gestures. In March 1960 an office for the FLN was opened in Belgrade. Whilst in March 1961 a FLN football team travelled throughout Yugoslavia facing a host of city-select XI sides in Tuzla, Rijeka, Zagreb and Maribor, culminating in a game against the national team in Belgrade on 29th March 1961. The same year Yugoslavia, alongside several other nations, officially recognised the GPRA as the legitimate government of Algeria. It also hosted the Belgrade Conference, the official inauguration of the NAM, at which Algeria was represented.

Nineteen Sixty-Two was a decisive year in France's foreign policy. France signed the Évian Accords and granted Algeria its independence in March. Freed of the Algerian War but bitterly disappointed by the failure of the Fouchet Plan, de Gaulle broke with *les Anglo-Saxons* and pursued the creation of a Europe founded on Franco-German cooperation. This brought a temporary upturn in Franco-Yugoslav relations as de Gaulle reflected that "now that the Algerian War is finished, we must turn the page." Franco-Yugoslav diplomatic relations were normalised once more in August 1962 but sorely missed the warmth of the traditional *amitié* between the two countries. This can largely be accounted for by de Gaulle's resentment towards Yugoslavia, as a country that carried far greater diplomatic weight than its means merited, and his historical hostility towards Tito and his Yugoslav project.

Tito's treatment of Draža Mihailović cast a long shadow over relations between de Gaulle's France and Tito's Yugoslavia. The General reflected that:

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⁸⁶ "L'installation d'un bureau du F.L.N à Belgrade provoque une démarche de l'ambassadeur de France", *Le Monde*, 10 March 1960.

⁸⁷ Mubarak, Hassanin. Algeria: Equipe FLN, Rec.Sport.Soccer Statistics Foundation. Accessed on 5 August 2015. http://www.rsssf.com/tablesa/alg-fln-intres.html.

⁸⁸ Connelly. A Diplomatic Revolution, 256.

⁸⁹ Peyrefitte. C'etait de Gaulle, vol. 1, 295.

The true national hero was Mihailović. He did not fight for an ideology, nor for the soviet system. He was not set into motion because a foreign country urged him to. He was simply a patriot. He had no other goal than to liberate his homeland. He knew that no nation can be overcome by violence.⁹⁰

De Gaulle's close confidant, Alain Peyrefitte, reflected that for the General, Mihailović was "a brother in arms, a pure hero whose tragic fate moves him. Between the General and Tito, there will always be the blood of this Serbian de Gaulle. 91" Nonetheless, de Gaulle begrudgingly respected Tito, saying that he was "not without merit. Yugoslavia is a state that is respected inside and out. Externally, he has been the only one, a long time before China, to say no to the Soviets. Internally, he has maintained tranquillity between the nationalities who all hate one another." De Gaulle believed that, nonetheless, Yugoslavia would one day cease to exist. He predicted that, "On the day that he [Tito] goes, the Croats, the Serbs, the Bosnians will put their passion to fighting between themselves, as they used it to fight against the Germans. They are warrior peoples." Similarly, François Mitterrand would later echo the General's sentiment, describing Tito as "the only unifier in a country torn by centrifugal forces."

The failure of the Franco-German axis in Europe necessitated a redirection of foreign policy for the General. As such de Gaulle developed a 'politique à l'Est' and relaunched diplomatic relations with the USSR. As Bozo rightly notes, for the General, "If Europe was to be spared a 'new Yalta,' France had to take the lead in the quest for détente in Europe and, indeed, for a European détente." The General would have found a willing partner in Yugoslavia, who also sought a European détente for Europe, but he remained reluctant to deal with Tito.

⁹⁰ Peyrefitte. Alain, C'était de Gaulle, vol. 2 (Paris: Fayard 1998), 209-210.

⁹¹ Ibid., 209

⁹² Peyrefitte. C'etait de Gaulle, vol. 1, 295.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Védrine. Les mondes, 593.

⁹⁵ Bozo. "France, 'Gaullism' and the Cold War", 168.

Therefore having withdrawn France from NATO's military command, the General pursued relations with the Soviet Union.⁹⁶ By removing France from NATO, de Gaulle could negotiate with Moscow with clean hands: he could neither be manipulated by the Soviets into undermining NATO nor could he be seen as a Western puppet by them. As a result, his negotiating position was far stronger, which enabled the General to pursue the East-West détente that was the cornerstone of his foreign policy. Furthermore, France was able to pursue relations with Eastern bloc states more vociferously.

The General made an historic trip to Moscow from 20 to 30 June 1966. Under no false illusions about what he might achieve, de Gaulle was nonetheless forthright in outlining his vision for European détente and he set about probing his Soviet counterparts on their long-term vision for Europe. Furthermore, he explained his idea of "détente, entente and cooperation" as a means to solving the problems of Europe with a European solution.⁹⁷

Resultantly, Franco-Yugoslav relations began to improve once more. Although the two countries' interests aligned on certain international matters, and held annual Foreign Ministry Meetings as de Gaulle's foreign policy became more subtle, France could never fully reconcile itself to close cooperation with Tito's Yugoslavia under the General. Throughout de Gaulle's presidential tenure, the enthusiasm for Franco-Yugoslav relations stemmed from the East European side. Tito even invited France to the Non-Aligned Conference in 1969 believing the convergence of views on several important international matters would make them important European partners in the movement and ending the Cold War. 98 De Gaulle declined. 99 Throughout the period, the relationship remained firmly

⁹⁶ Martin, Garret. General de Gaulle's Cold War: Challenging American Hegemony, 1963-1968 (Oxford: Berghahn, 2013), 103.

⁹⁷ Bozo, Frédéric. Two Strategies for Europe: De Gaulle, the United States and the Atlantic Alliance, trans. by Susan Emmanuel (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001), 177.

⁹⁸ MAE, Note A.s. Les relations politiques entre la France et la Yougoslavia", 19 October 1970, AD, 209QO/288, 37-24-1.

⁹⁹ Todić. A Traditional Friendship?, 297.

stacked in France's favour. However the creation of a joint governmental committee for economic cooperation in January 1969 suggested that de Gaulle's antipathy towards Yugoslavia was easing as he became less confrontational in his abortive second term.

Pompidolienne Pragmatism

In spite of de Gaulle's impressive efforts on the global stage, his rule was undone by domestic problems and the General retired from frontline politics in spring 1969. He was succeeded by his former Prime Minister, Georges Pompidou. Over the preceding half-decade, France had become increasingly isolated from its European partners and the new President sought to reinvigorate the 'European project'. The election of Pompidou did not mark a complete rupture with Gaullist heritage, but he was a far more pragmatic leader and, in Franco-Yugoslav relations, did not share the same hostility towards Tito as his predecessor. Pompidou therefore sought to reinvigorate the *amitié* through practical measures; political cooperation would come through economic cooperation.

Années	Importations françaises	Exportations françaises	Solde	
1965	96	230	+ 134	
1966	I45	238	+ 93	
1967	137	363	+ 226	
1968	138	310	+ 172	
1969	247	412	+ 165	
1970 (7 mois)	174	400	+ 226	

Franco-Yugoslav Balance of Trade, 1965-1970. 100

Pompidou's first priority was establishing the European Economic Community (EEC). However, its establishment had significant effects for economic relations between its

 $^{^{100}}$ MAE, Note A.S. Relations économiques franco-yougoslaves, Paris, le 16 October 1970, AD, 209QO/289, 37-24-1.

member states and European countries outside the Community. Franco-Yugoslav economic exchanges would thereafter be contingent upon European trade laws, much to Yugoslavia's disadvantage. Yugoslavia soon sought to reconcile itself with the continent's new economic order and hoped to use its relationship with France, its closest ally in the Six, to its benefit.

Experiencing an economic malaise in the early 1970s, Yugoslavia agreed a three year non-preferential agreement with the EEC. Furthermore, it re-established diplomatic relations with the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in January 1968 in part owing to Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik* but also Yugoslavia's need to reconfigure its balance of trade with Western Europe. The Quai was aware that Yugoslavia sought to improve its balance of trade with France, and Europe more widely, and suggested that, for better access to French markets, the Yugoslavs could better promote the French language. ¹⁰¹ However, for France, the fundamental problem of the trade balance was still "the weak complementarity of the two economies." Nonetheless, it offered significant support and therefore, the two countries signed a cooperation agreement to create an intergovernmental commission to improve commercial and technical exchanges in arms. ¹⁰³ Furthermore, Yugoslavia held its first trade exposition in Paris in 1969 that developed significant industrial relations between the two countries. ¹⁰⁴ The two nations also established a Franco-Yugoslav chamber of commerce in Paris in June 1970. The motor industry quickly became the most productive sector with Citroën and the Slovenian enterprise Tomos signing an agreement

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¹⁰¹ MAE, Note A.s. Les relations politiques entre la France et la Yougoslavia, 19 October 1970, AD, 209OO/288.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ MAE, "a.s. Coopération franco-yougoslave en matière d'armement", 16 Juin 1970, AD, 209QO/288, 37-24-1

¹⁰⁴ MAE, Note A.s. Les relations politiques entre la France et la Yougoslavia", 19 October 1970, AD, 209QO/288, 37-24-1.

for the manufacture of 2 and 3 CV in Yugoslavia. Renault signed a similar agreement with a firm in Liubliana, which within a year had built 10.000 vehicles. 105

Seeking to improve Yugoslavia's position in Europe, Tito visited all six leaders of the EEC between October and December 1970. Pompidou welcomed his Yugoslav counterpart to Paris on 24 October 1970. The two Presidents shared similar views on the need for an independent Europe and its security and Tito praised de Gaulle's European policy reflecting that, "Europe is made up of independent and autonomous nations and not blocs."106 As such, the two men hoped that the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) would not be dominated by the two superpowers or bloc discussions and would allow Europe to address its own issues. Both Presidents hoped to derive some benefit from the meeting. Pompidou sought to use the meeting to establish the NAM's attitude towards France. Tito hoped to use this position to improve Yugoslavia's balance of exchange with the EEC and its agricultural sector suffering owing to import rules established by the Common Agricultural Policy. The Marshall thus happily cooperated with the French President. 107 However, Pompidou could not expand Franco-Yugoslav cooperation further at this point and pointed to the recent progress as cause for optimism. The Prime Minister, Jacques Chaban-Delmas would, accompanied by the Foreign Minister Maurice Schumann, be making a trip to Belgrade the following Spring and Pompidou indicated that he would possibly follow in 1972 or 1973. 108

Under Pompidou, Franco-Yugoslav cooperation initially witnessed an upturn, as business, cultural and diplomatic exchanges increased. With the Yugoslavs facing financial difficulties in funding new projects, French businesses were encouraged to provide

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¹⁰⁶ Entretien du Président de la République et du Maréchal Tito, Palais d'Élysée, 23 October 1970, AD, 209OO/288, 37-24-1.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid

investment. 109 In April 1971 Chaban-Delmas and Schumann were warmly welcomed to Yugoslavia visiting Skopje, Zagreb, Ljubljana and Belgrade. Alongside a meeting with President Tito, they also held detailed discussions with the Yugoslavia Prime Minister Mitija Ribičič who gave a frank appraisal of the Yugoslav economic situation. Both sides agreed to develop, diversify and rebalance commercial exchanges between the two countries to benefit Yugoslavia. 110

In Slovenia they met a host of directors of Slovenian enterprises in Bled. The Slovenian delegation hoped for an improvement in Franco-Slovenian exchanges, which the French delegation was also keen to develop. Chaban-Delmas left the meeting seemingly determined to develop Franco-Yugoslav exchanges believing that it attained to the higher goal of ending the Cold War:

> If I have understood correctly, the development of exchanges between Yugoslavia, France and Slovenia are not only an interest in themselves, and that would justify all efforts, but a higher interest that is fundamental to the independence of our countries, our people and world peace... Having arrived in Belgrade a little ignorant, I will leave Yugoslavia with a determination to act in a way that will produce positive results. 111

Indeed, the visit was a formative experience for Chaban-Delmas who also wrote an extremely sincere letter of thanks to Ribičič reaffirming that he was "henceforth assured that the longstanding friendship between our two countries will accentuate the strengthening of our political as much as our economic relationship." ¹¹² In this vein, the two countries held regular meetings of the Franco-Yugoslav commission and several bilateral meetings over the following three years until Pompidou's demise.

¹⁰⁹ Communiqué commun Franco-Yougoslave, date unknown, AD, 1928INVA/3767, 37-24-1.

¹¹⁰ Compte Rendu des entretiens politiques, 22 April 1971, AD, 1928INVA/3767, 37-24-1.

¹¹¹ Compte-rendu des entretiens de Bled, 24 April 1971, AD, 1928INVA/3767, 37-24-1.

¹¹² Telegram from Jacques Chaban-Delmas to Mitija Ribičič, 30 April 1971, AD, 1928INVA/3767, 37-24-1.

However, Franco-Yugoslav relations would once more fall victim to a readjustment in French political priorities and a divergence of views on political matters. The Prime Minister and Foreign Minister who had engaged so eagerly with Yugoslavia in 1971 were replaced by Pierre Messmer and Michel Jobert respectively. Furthermore, following three years of active engagement with the construction and enlargement of the EEC, Pompidou eased his European enthusiasm owing to poor health and public ambivalence over a loss of sovereignty. Accordingly, improving relations with Yugoslavia was far less salient.

Significantly, relations between the two states cooled over the issue of nuclear testing. In spite of French warnings about the effects it could have on bilateral relations, Yugoslavia supported a UN General Assembly resolution calling for the suspension of all nuclear and thermonuclear tests. As such, the Foreign Minister, Michel Jobert, indefinitely delayed a visit to Belgrade, much to the Yugoslavs' disappointment. When Pompidou's presidential term ended following his death, Franco-Yugoslav relations had thus regained their cordial, rather than amiable, character.

Giscard d'Estaing: 'Change Without Risk'

The election of the centrist Valéry Giscard d'Estaing marked a move towards "change without risk" that would not threaten the legacy of peace, economic prosperity and political stability bequeathed by the Gaullist period. Giscard's election campaign was one of personalisation, emphasising the charisma and charm of the young, moderate and responsible politician affectionately known as 'VGE'. Elected during a period of international change – Ted Heath, Willy Brandt and Richard Nixon all left office in 1974 – Giscard adopted a cooperative and conciliatory foreign policy towards the West initially. 116

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¹¹³ Bozo. *La politique étrangère*, 133.

¹¹⁴ MAE, note A/S. Relations politiques franco-yougoslaves, 5 April 1974, AD, 1928INVA/3767, 37-24-1.

Michel, Frank. "Breaking the Gaullian Mould: Valéry Giscard d'Estain and the Modernisation of French Presidential Communication", *Modern & Contemporary France* 13, no .3 (August 2005), 293.

¹¹⁶ Bozo. *La politique étrangère*, 143-5.

However, as Giscard's Presidency matured, he became a more confident and assertive international statesman who sought to promote European, and French, independence through Franco-German cooperation and 'mondialisme', marked by an increasing engagement with the North-South divide.¹¹⁷ Furthermore, Giscard also proposed a European-led disarmament conference, as he sought to protect the *force de frappe* at the second round of Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALTII).¹¹⁸ *Giscardienne* France and late Titoist Yugoslavia therefore shared a great many interests and concerns.

ANNEES	TOTAL des échanges	EXPORTATIONS françaises	IMPORTATION françaises	BALANCE
Carstes R. A. B	660 Mar (8) - 60	(e (original))	serigential'h	siden 2
1965	326	230	96	+ 134
1966	383	238	145	+ 93
1967	500	363	137	+ 226
1968	457	319	138	+ 181
1969	659	412	247	+ 165
1970	966	687	279	+ 408
1971	1.097	768	329	+ 440
1972	1.343	870	473	+ 397
1973	1.689	984	702	+ 282

French commercial exchanges with Yugoslavia (in millions of Francs), 1965-1973.¹¹⁹

As the former Finance Minister, Giscard was aware of the joint Franco-Yugoslav committee's aims and work having been party to its conception. The President sought to renew Franco-Yugoslav relations following their cooling in 1973. Following an extensive visit to Yugoslavia, a delegation from the National Assembly produced a report on the work of the joint committee in November 1974. It noted that, thus far, the results of the joint venture had been far from satisfactory as there were only six joint enterprises and 12

¹¹⁷ Frears, J.R. France in the Giscard Presidency (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1980), 94-5.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. 97.

¹¹⁹ MM. Barberot, Ceyrac, Degraeve, Delelis, Dousset, Dutard. "Au nom de la commission de la production et des échanges à la suite d'une mission effectuée en Yougoslavie", Assemblée Nationale Rapport d'Information N° 1304, 20 November 1974, 15. ¹²⁰ Ibid., 8.

joint contracts. Indeed, as the table above shows, the commercial balance continued to greatly favour France (see above).

There were positive signs of improved cooperation and the French government vowed to encourage French businesses to establish links with Yugoslav enterprises. However, several businesses remained concerned about the stability of Yugoslavia given the Croatian Spring, which was put down by the Yugoslav authorities in 1971, and the promulgation of the country's new verbose and elaborate Constitution in February 1974. The sheer complexity of the Yugoslav system of *samoupravljanje* (workers' self-management or *autogestion*) made cooperation difficult and the French suggested that the Yugoslav state produce a brochure for French businesses to navigate the system!¹²¹

The first visit of a member of the Giscard administration came in May 1975, when the Foreign Minister, Jean Sauvagnargues, travelled to Yugoslavia. Discussions between Sauvagnargues and his Yugoslav counterpart, Miloš Minić, took place "in a climate of confidence and the warm friendship that traditionally characterises Franco-Yugoslav relations." Politically, both ministers agreed that the two countries were mostly in alignment on international issues. The problem in the bilateral relationship was still its economic foundation. Sauvagnargues proposed increasing industrial cooperation particularly in the Third World but underlined that, owing to France's own economic situation, it would have to judge each proposition on a case-by-case basis. Minić was pleased with the Minister's suggestions and understood, although with some disappointment, that France would have to be selective in its investments. Minić also thanked his opposite number for France's cooperation in managing Yugoslav émigrés in France who were engaging in terrorist activity. 124

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¹²¹ Ibid., 20.

¹²² MAE, Projet de Communication à la Presse, 19 April 1971, AD, 1928INVA/3767, 37-24-1.

¹²³ Entretiens entre M. Sauvagnargues et M. Minic séance plénière du 21 mai à 18 h 30, 19 June 1975, AD, 1928INVA/3767, 37-24-1.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

The following year the *amitié* reached its Cold War zenith as 'VGE' became the first French President to visit Yugoslavia, some twenty years after Tito's visit to France in 1956. Giscard made the visit to reassure those in Yugoslavia that France, in its moves towards East-West détente, was not neglecting its traditional friend and to demonstrate the progress in relations between the two countries. The two leaders spoke largely about the international situation reaffirming their desire to see the end of bloc politics and an improvement in the material condition of the developing world. The following year, the ailing Tito reciprocated Giscard's gesture by making a largely inconsequential visit to Paris.

Bilateral relations between the two states began to falter towards the end of Giscard Presidency, as the Yugoslavs demonstrated some evident frustrations with the EEC and France. With their economy beginning to show severe strain, the Yugoslavs were increasingly concerned that they were being cut adrift of the EEC and warned France that they would be forced to become increasingly dependent on the USSR. ¹²⁷ They looked to France to assist in a favourable renegotiation of Yugoslavia's agreement with the EEC. The Yugoslavs threatened that, if its position in regard to the EEC failed to improve, it would have to reconsider its relations with France. ¹²⁸ The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Olivier Stirn, believed that it was evident that France's interests would be best served if Yugoslavia remained firmly anchored in the West rather than moving towards the East. ¹²⁹ However, the French government was limited in the ways that it could feasibly support Yugoslavia.

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¹²⁵ MAE, Visite du Président de la République en Yougoslavie (6-7 decembre 1976), 21 December 1976, AD, 1929INVA/4845, YOU-12-4.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ MAE, Compte rendu de la visite de secretaire d'état en Yougoslavie (11-12 juin 1978), 15 June 1978, AD, 1929INVA/4845, YOU-12-4.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid

One way the French sought to support the Yugoslav regime was through its assistance in preventing 'anti-Yugoslav' activities. Towards the end of the 1970s the Yugoslavs had become increasingly concerned about the activities of political émigrés emanating from France. With the death of Tito in May 1980 this worry only increased. Thus, it became an increasingly significant topic of conversation in bilateral meetings and the Yugoslavs linked to it détente in Europe. 130

There was a notable spate of French nationals being expelled from Yugoslavia at the end of the Giscard presidency. In particular, the case of *L'Express* journalist, Émile Guikovaty – who was known to the Yugoslav authorities for his close relations with the chetnik Branko Lazić – was expelled from Yugoslavia on 11 February 1981. Guikovaty had previously produced a revisionist biography of Tito in 1979 that displayed strong sympathies towards Serbia. Ante Marković, the spokesman for the Yugoslav Foreign Ministry and future Prime Minister, declared that the expulsion of Guikovaty had been taken "owing to malicious writings and deceit towards Yugoslavia and because of his hostile behaviour towards Yugoslavia." Privately, the French authorities protested vigorously and the French Ambassador to Belgrade, Yvez Pagniez, warned that these expulsions could have serious consequences for Franco-Yugoslav relations. Publicly, during a visit to Yugoslavia in his role as President of the National Assembly, Chaban-Delmas was keen to express that the expulsion would not threaten relations between the two countries. However, Franco-Yugoslav relations were once more characterised by a courteous, rather than close, cooperation.

¹³⁰ A.s. visite de M. Stirn en Yougoslavie: terrorisme, 15 June 1978, AD, 1929INVA/4845., YOU-12-4.

¹³¹ See in particular "Chapter 17: Draža" that sought to rehabilitate the chetnik leader: Guikovaty, Emile. *Tito* (Paris: Hachette, 1979), 169-176.

¹³² Expulsion de M. Guikovaty, 26 February 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-3-3/1.

¹³³ A/S. Démarche faite à la suite de l'expulsion de M. Guikovaty journaliste de l'Express, 18 February 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-3-3/1.

¹³⁴ Expulsion de M. Guikovaty, 26 February 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-3-3/1.

Chapter Two – Franco-Yugoslav Relations in Mitterrand's *premier septennat*, May 1981-May 1988.

Tito's Orphan

In the spring of 1981 the campaigns for the forthcoming presidential elections were well underway in France. Simultaneously, Yugoslavia faced its first post-Tito crisis. Student unrest over material conditions in the Kosovan capital of Priština led to disturbances on 11 and 26 March 1981, and culminated in riots on 1 and 2 April. The federal government declared a state of emergency and sent a strong military presence to the region. As the dust settled, official figures reported that there had been eleven deaths, two hundred injuries and large numbers of arrests. The real figure remains unknown although one local, and over-exaggerated, estimate suggested that there were as many as 1,000 deaths. 2

The Quai took great interest in the events in the autonomous province owing to a small French presence there.³ The head of the French Consulate in Yugoslavia attempted to reach Priština on 3 April but was turned away at a police border, which had been instructed to restrict access to foreigners. Entry was only permitted with express authorisation from the federal government. The French petitioned the Yugoslav authorities to grant the Consulate access to the autonomous province; it was eventually granted on 13 April.⁴

It became quite clear to the French diplomacy that access to foreigners had been restricted not for reasons of security but rather to control the flow of information from

¹ MAE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, a/s: Les troubles du Kossovo, 22 April 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5714, YOU-2-14.

² Malcolm, Noel. Kosovo: A Short History (London: Macmillan, 1998), 337.

³ TD BELGRADE 123, Événement du Kossovo Colonie Française, 4 April 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5714, YOU-2-14.

⁴ TD BELGRADE 149, Troubles du Kossovo Colonie Française, 17 April 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5714, YOU-2-14.

the region.⁵ In France, the Minister-counselor to the Yugoslav Ambassador visited Benoît d'Aboville, from the Quai's strategic directorate, to obtain information on the recent meeting of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in Rome. The Yugoslavs were particularly interested in the Council's discussions of "ethnic problems in the Balkans", which the Secretary General Joseph Luns had raised. D'Aboville confirmed that the internal matters of Yugoslavia had not been discussed during the NAC meeting.⁶ The Yugoslavs sought to use their relationship with France to glean information on the international response to events in Kosovo.

The Yugoslavs attributed the majority of blame for the riots to Albania, whom they accused of deliberately interfering in their internal affairs and for inciting Albanian nationalism. However, despite reports within the Serbian media that the protestors chanted for "Unification with Albania!", the demonstrators had little interest in the Hoxha regime. Accusations flew between the two Balkan Communist states, which led to a heated exchange through their respective national press and culminated in the termination of cultural cooperation.⁸ The bombing of the Yugoslav embassy in Tirana in late May only amplified the tensions. The Albanians accused the Yugoslavs of planting the bombs themselves and acting in concert with the Soviets as part of a "Russo-Greater Serbia conspiracy." For France, the crisis had reinvigorated the question of stability in the Balkan region.

Although some restrictions were slowly lifted, tensions remained high as the post-mortem began in earnest. The Yugoslav Ambassador in Belgium, Esad Čerić, sought out his French counterpart to discuss the demonstrations and stated that,

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ MAE, Direction des Affairs Politiques, Note a/s: Visite du Ministre-Conseiller de l'Ambassade de Yougoslavie, 8 May 1981, AD, 1929INVA/5726, YOU-12-2.

⁷ Scwartz, Stephen. "Enverists' and 'Titoists' – Communism and Islam in Albania and Kosova. 1941-1999: From the Partisan Movement of the Second World War to the Kosova Liberation War", Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics 25, no. 1 (2009), 67.

⁸ Kola, Paulin. The Search for Greater Albania (London: C. Hurst & Co., 2003), 164.

⁹ TD TIRANA 63, A/S: L'explosion à l'ambassade de Yougoslavie à Tirana et le Kossovo, 3 June 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5714, YOU-2-14.

although complaints about material conditions in Kosovo were often justified, the political character that the demonstrations had taken on were the result of external action. Indeed, Čerić ventured as far as to suggest, "with a certain prudence of language", that its origins could have been Soviet. In the Yugoslavs offered a further theory that, following the visit of the US Secretary of State to Madrid and resultant rumours that Spain may join NATO, the USSR was hoping to put pressure on Albania to reintegrate into the Warsaw Pact. In exchange, the Soviets would endorse the creation of a Greater Albania that included Kosovo. Furthermore, the theory continued, the recent deterioration in Bulgaro-Yugoslav relations regarding Macedonia may have resulted from Soviet pressure as part of its "grand plan" for Yugoslavia and Albania. The Yugoslav political leadership was feeling increasingly insecure and becoming increasingly paranoid. Its collective response was authoritarianism and autarchy.

As Yugoslavia was in the midst of its first crisis since the death of the talismanic Tito, France's first socialist president of the Fifth Republic entered the Elysée. His election was welcomed with trepidation in the West but with high expectation in Yugoslavia. A note written by the Air Vice Marshall destined for the new President reached Paris on 21 May. A highly insightful account of Yugoslavia's condition, it underlined the systemic problems that "Tito's orphan" faced and the crossroads at which the country found itself. It noted the strength of the JNA and the continued success of Non-Alignment but highlighted the fragility of state politicoeconomic institutions. The report also astutely recognised that the poor socioeconomic

¹⁰ Letter from the Amassador in Belgium to MAE, A.s/ Manifestation de Kossovars, 16 June 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5714, YOU-2-14.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Letter from the Amassador in Albania to MAE, A/s - La position albanaise sur les événements du Kossovo, 12 May, AD, 1930INVA/5714, YOU-2-14.

¹³ Frank, Robert. "L'effet Mitterrand' à l'étranger (1981-1982): un 'état de grâce', un jeu de miroir et une politique éxterieure de l'image", in *François Mitterrand: Les années du changement (1981-1984)*, eds. Berstein et al. (Paris: Perrin, 2001), 114.

¹⁴ Secrétariat Général de la défense et de la sécurité nationale, Note d'Information: Yougoslavia, un an après Tito, 20 May 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5714, YOU-2-14.

conditions in Kosovo had given rise to social unrest in the autonomous province, which had contributed to a renewal of Albanian nationalism. However, it concluded that "nothing indicates that Yugoslavia is threatened by a chain reaction of nationalist explosions, far less the collapse of the federation." It added, "The riots in Kosovo more likely represent a warning sign of a contagious movement. Nonetheless, it constitutes a narrow escape and the first difficult test for Tito's successors." Significantly, the incident had renewed tensions between Serbs and Albanians. The Serbian Communist Party called for political reform believing that its southern autonomous province was "taking away Serbia's character as a national state" thus "causing the disintegration of both Serbia and Yugoslavia." Yugoslavia required economic and political support in the face of increasing destabilisation.

Towards a European Socialism?

Although the Yugoslav experiment was severely stuttering in the early 1980s, the *Parti Socialiste* (PS) had long held the Yugoslav path to socialism in high regard. In the 1970s, the Yugoslav model of *samoupravljanje* (workers' self-management or *autogestion*) featured prominently in the PS's discussions on its own path towards socialism. Indeed, it had become a prominent feature of its post-1968 programme as the PS welcomed the *deuxième gauche* into its ranks.¹⁹ Michel Rocard, part of this 'new' left and future Socialist Prime Minister, acknowledged the lineage between the PS's conception of

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¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Malcolm. Kosovo: A Short History (London: Macmillan, 1998), 337.

¹⁸ Glaurdić, *Hour of Europe*, 16.

¹⁹ Christofferson, Thomas Rodney. *The French Socialists in Power, 1981-1986: From Autogestion to Cohabitation* (Cranberry: Associated University Presses, 1991), 32.

autogestion and Yugoslav samoupravljanje and thought it necessary to build "a profound and strong alliance with a Communist party."²⁰

Mitterrand and the PS had campaigned on a left-wing platform in the 1981 elections and owed the electorate a programme that reflected its promises. As Mitterrand's Finance Minister, and future President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors reflected: "The Left would not have been credible if it had not taken the measures due to its electorate. The sin of treason is more mortal than that of error." A socialist reconfiguration of the *amitié* offered the Mitterrand administration leftist political credibility and created an opening to the East. Therefore, the first government under Mitterrand enthusiastically engaged with Yugoslavia.

Mitterrand's Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson was the first cabinet member to visit Yugoslavia. He met with several Yugoslav ministers during his two day visit on 20 and 21 November. During a brief conversation with Aleksandar Grličkov, a member of the Presidium of the Central Committee of the SKJ, the Yugoslav relayed to Cheysson the need for greater cooperation between the PS and the SKJ. Moreover, he highlighted that, by opting for *autogestion*, the PS "have rendered us a great service." Indeed, exporting Yugoslav self-management had become an internally legitimising agent for the Yugoslav state and a useful domestic political tool. Cheysson also believed that developing relations with Yugoslavia "will be very enriching in light of your experience as a socialist state, independent, close to the Third World and a neighbour to the Soviet bloc."

²⁰ Parti Socialiste, Convenetion nationale de Paris les 21 et 22 juin 1975 (matin), Archives socialistes, Organismes Centraux, 77060. Accessed on 11 August 2015. http://flipbook.archives-socialistes.fr/index.html?docid=77060&language=fra&userid=0.

²¹ Friend, Julius W. *The Long Presidency: France in the Mitterrand Years, 1981-1995* (Oxford: Westview Press, 1998), 28.

²² Ministère des relations extérieures [hereafter MRE], Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, Note a/s: Entretien du Ministre avec M. Grličkov (20 novembre 1981)., 23 November 1981, AD, INVA1929/5726, YOU-12-2.

²³ Cichok, Mark A. "The Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in the 1980s: A Relationship in Flux", *Political Science Quarterly* 105, no. 1 (Spring 1990), 57.

²⁴ TD DIPLOMATIE 22877, ENTRETIEN DU MINISTRE AVEC M. VRHOVEC, 18 June 1981, AD, INVA1930/5726, YOU-12-2.

Moreover, Yugoslavia's position within, and at the head of, the NAM provided France with a useful ally through whom it could gain valuable insights into Third World relations; the Third World formed an important part of Mitterrand's foreign policy. France's position within the Western bloc, but aloof of NATO's integrated military command, could offer Yugoslavia a useful insight into Western strategy and politics. The parallels between the two states, and the potential benefits of an improved relationship, were not lost on either side.

Cheysson's most substantial meeting was with his opposite number, Josip Vrhovec, with whom he had a clear and amiable discussion on matters of convergence and disagreement. Earlier in the year Vrhovec had met Cheysson during a visit to Paris where the Yugoslav Foreign Minister expressed his happiness that the PS had been elected and the two men established a warm relationship. As French attitudes towards the USSR had hardened with Mitterrand's arrival in the Élysée, the issues of the "New Cold War" dominated discussion between the two Foreign Ministers. Given the context, East-West issues featured heavily in the discussions. Cheysson highlighted that the new government wanted to develop close relations with Eastern Europe and enquired about the socialist bloc's response to the unfolding crisis in Poland. Vrhovec, perhaps subtly referencing European interference in Yugoslav internal affairs, highlighted that, "The best service we can offer the Poles is to leave them to resolve their own problems. Any interference could only worsen the situation. Economic aid, this is a good thing."

Poland's economic situation paralleled that of Yugoslavia in the early 1980s, hence Vrhovec's thinly-veiled recommendations. Therefore, in a separate meeting, the Yugoslav Prime Minister Veselin Đurarnović raised the issue of economic aid with Cheysson. Since the 1973 Oil Crisis the Yugoslav economy had been faced with increasing inflation and a

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²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, Compte-Rendu a/s: Verbatim des entretiens entre le Ministre et M. VRHOVEC, Secrétaire fédéral aux Affaires Etrangères (20 novembre 1981), 17 December 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5727, YOU-12-4.

massive balance-of-payments deficit. Đurarnović had previously forewarned of serious impending economic problems.²⁷ By 1980 Yugoslavia was suffering a major external debt crisis and had reached a deficit of \$420 million to France, whilst three quarters of Yugoslavia's deficit was towards the EEC.²⁸

One issue that remained highly contentious between Yugoslavia and the EEC was the observation of the 1980 Cooperation Agreement. When the EEC and Yugoslavia concluded the agreement key Yugoslav agricultural products, in particular veal, were to be protected, whilst the EC was granted the Most Favoured Nation clause. Durarnović complained that Yugoslav beef exports had suffered as a result of the agreement and that the EC was not observing the spirt of the agreement. However Cheysson highlighted that the Yugoslav deficit *vis-à-vis* the EEC was nearly \$3 billion and that sales of veal barely passed \$80 million.²⁹ The French Foreign Minister suggested that Yugoslavia could engage with the external market in more novel and enterprising ways than it was at the time, highlighting that the EEC imported nearly \$2 billion of maize annually from the US and that Yugoslav tourism and industrial products were poorly advertised and unknown in Europe. Durarnović admitted that the time for change had come before Western Europe closed off its markets to Yugoslav exports.³⁰ Truly, Yugoslavia stood at a crossroads in the early 1980s.

Following the success of Cheysson's visit, Michel Jobert, now the French Minister for External Trade, led an industrial mission to Yugoslavia that sought to redress the trade balance between France and Yugoslavia and to develop Yugoslav exports to France. Of course, it was Jobert, in his capacity as Pompidou's Foreign Minister, who had cancelled a

²⁷ Jović, Dejan. *Yugoslavia: A State that Withered Away* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2009), 150

MAE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, Compte-Rendu a/s. Entretien de M. Cheysson et M. Djurarnovic
 20.XI.1981, 23 November 1981, AD, INVA1930/5727, YOU-12-4.

²⁹ Ibid..

³⁰ Ibid.

visit to Yugoslavia in 1974.³¹ This visit, however, was far more successful. Accordingly it was announced that the state-owned *Électricité de France* would begin to source certain materials from Yugoslavia.³² Further cooperation was envisaged in the energy industry as the cost of importing energy had greatly impacted the Yugoslav economy and, in this respect, greater energy self-sufficiency would bring down high import costs and help to redress the balance-of-trade. Yugoslavia possessed an abundance of lignite and therefore envisaged a programme to construct thermal power plants that would produce an extra 1000 megawatts in the following ten years. The French company *Alsthom-Atlantique* was interested in the project and was negotiating partnerships with the Croatian enterprise *Rade Končar* to construct alternators and with the Serbian enterprise *Minel* to construct furnaces.

³³ There was also a Yugoslav nuclear power programme under consideration that would, by the year 2000, provide at least 2500 megawatts. The Franco-American nuclear company *Framatome* was going to provide expertise whilst *Alsthom-Atlantique* would provide conventional equipment.³⁴

Previously, the Middle East had been highlighted as a potential area for Franco-Yugoslav industrial cooperation during the presidency of Giscard d'Estaing.³⁵ In a bid for a contract on the construction of a nuclear power plant in Croatia, the Directorate for Eastern Europe advised that if *Framatome* cooperated with Yugoslav enterprises, particularly *Yougoatomenergo* in its construction projects in Iraq, then it would improve the bid's chances.³⁶ Thus the deteriorating situation in the Middle East in the early 1980s was an area wherein the two states' interests often converged.

³¹ See Chapter One.

³² MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, Note A.S. Relations économiques franco-yougoslaves. Mission de M.Gutman.-, 14 December 1982, AD, 1930INVA/5727, YOU-12-4.

³³ MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, NOTE A.S. Relations économiques franco-yougoslaves.-, 30 December 1982, AD, 1930INVA/5727, YOU-12-4.

³⁴ MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, Note A.S. Relations économiques franco-yougoslaves. Mission de M.Gutman.-, 14 December 1982, AD, 1930INVA/5727, YOU-12-4.

³⁵ See Chapter One.

³⁶ MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, Note A.S. Relations économiques franco-yougoslaves. Mission de M.Gutman.-, 14 December 1982, AD, 1930INVA/5727, YOU-12-4.

Therefore, during a UN meeting on disarmament in New York in June 1982, the Foreign Ministers met to discuss largely the subject of the Iraq-Iran war. Cheysson sought to use his amiable relationship with Mojsov to discuss the recent NAM conference in Havana and the Movement's views on, and approaches towards, the conflict.³⁷ Lazar Mojsov revealed that French views largely corresponded with the participants' and that he had tried to convince the Iranians and Iraqis to soften their positions, lest the conflict lead to a "chain reaction in the Gulf and provoke an intervention by the two Super Powers." ³⁸

French and Yugoslav attitudes also converged over the ongoing disputes between Chad and Libya. France, who had intervened on the side of Chad, was pleased to hear that the Yugoslavs had been encouraging Tripoli to "adopt authentically non-aligned positions." Both Ministers were also keen to underline the importance of the Organisation for African Unity, whilst Cheysson highlighted France's support of the Organisation due to France's preference for "regional structures that allow, without external intervention, the finding of solutions in different localities and regional security arrangements." France's preference for regional solutions became highly pronounced during the early phase of the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

Political Émigrés: A Thorn in the Side of Franco-Yugoslav Relations

In spite of early causes for optimism for Franco-Yugoslav relations in the Mitterrand and post-Tito era, the issue of Yugoslav political émigrés remained problematic. Following the aforementioned case of Émile Guikovaty, a further French journalist was expelled from Yugoslavia in November 1981. Kosta Christitch, the Head of Foreign Politics for *Le Point*, was visiting Yugoslavia to report on the visit of Claude Cheysson. However, on the night

39 Ibid.

³⁷ TD DFRA NEW YORK 1194, ENTRETIEN DU MINISTRE AVEC LE MINISTRE YOUGOSLAVE DES AFFAIRES ETRANGERES, 11 June 1982, AD, 1930INVA/5726, YOU-12-2.

³⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid

of 21 November he was called in his hotel and in the morning was put aboard the next flight for Paris.⁴¹

In France, the Quai conveyed its disappointment over 'l'affaire Christitch' to the Yugoslav Ambassador. The Yugoslavs responded that Christitch, who had previously been prohibited from entering Yugoslavia, had been expelled because "of contact he had made with characters from the opposition." A spokesman for the Yugoslav Foreign Ministry declared that Christitch "had abused Yugoslav hospitality and by starting to meet with elements of the opposition, it demonstrates that his intentions in coming to Yugoslavia were outside of the visit of Cheysson."

Following the death of Tito and the riots in Kosovo the previous year, the Yugoslav authorities were particularly sensitive to political dissidents. They were concerned that the Yugoslav émigré community in France was trying to destabilise the regime from abroad. A group of political émigrés in Paris planned a demonstration outside the Yugoslav embassy in Paris on 13 June 1981. The Yugoslavs requested that the demonstration be banned and that a greater security detachment be assigned to the Yugoslav Ambassador in the following days. The request was meant to be passed to the Cabinet for consideration. It was denied, although increased security was provided. The Yugoslav representative could not comprehend why France would authorise such a demonstration of "terrorists from abroad who openly call for the dismemberment of Yugoslavia." However, the demonstration was allowed to proceed and around 200 people – comprised mainly of Kosovo Albanian and Croatian émigrés – gathered in *Place Victor Hugo* draped in the

⁴¹ MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, Fiche a/s: Expulsion de M. Kosta Christic [sic], 30 November 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-3-3/1.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ TD BELGRADE 520, M. CHRISTIC, 27 November 1981, AD, INVA1930/5715, YOU-3-3/1.

⁴⁴ MAE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, NOTE A/S: Manifestation anti-yougoslave.-, 12 June 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-13-3.

Albanian Flag and the flag of the Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, NDH). 45

The Yugoslav émigré population in France caused great concern for Belgrade, especially given the federal republic's sensitivity to terrorism against Yugoslav representatives abroad. There were about 15,000 Yugoslav political émigrés in early 1980s France. The most notable diaspora in this respect were *Ustaše* – members of the Croatian fascist movement in power during World War II – of which thousands were dispersed around the world notably in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), the US and Australia; it was estimated there were around fifty in France.⁴⁶

Given the number of opposition groups that were proliferating abroad, the Yugoslav authorities had begun attempting to oversee all economic emigration to prevent further opposition being mounted abroad. They were also trying to 'survey', which the Quai noted was *double entendre* for 'eliminate', leaders of the opposition.⁴⁷ Several émigré Croatian separatist groups had emerged over the preceding two decades and were among the world's most prolific terrorists.⁴⁸ Indeed, they carried out two prominent attacks in the previous year: in July the Yugoslav Ambassador in Brussels had been attacked and a member of his family had been murdered in August; and there had been bombs set off in Munich and Frankfurt. The French noted that, in this respect, the Yugoslav authorities were not averse to using extreme methods: namely abduction or assassination.⁴⁹ Throughout the preceding two decades the Yugoslav secret police had carried out a number of kidnappings or executions across Europe.⁵⁰ This is what the French authorities

⁴⁵ TD BELGRADE 221, 15 June 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-13-3.

MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, Note A/S: Activités de l'émigration politique en France., 18
 November 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-13-3.
 Ibid.

⁴⁸ Tokić, Mate Nikola. "The End of 'Historical-Ideological Bedazzlement': Cold War Politics and Émigré Croatian Separatist Violence, 1950-1980", *Social Science History* 36, no. 3 (Fall, 2012), 422.

⁴⁹ MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, Note A/S: Activités de l'émigration politique en France., 18 November 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-13-3.

⁵⁰ Shain, Yossi. "The War of Governments against their Opposition in Exile", *Government and Opposition* 24, no. 3 (July 1989), 354.

presumed happened in the case of Mate Kolić, who was killed on 19 October 1981 in Cachan in Paris' southern suburbs.⁵¹ The Quai concluded that vigilance for these potential acts needed to be maintained and that, although the Yugoslavs could exaggerate the threat of their political opponents, the resurgence of nationalism in Yugoslavia justified the French authorities' particular attentions in this area.⁵²

The French authorities were particularly vigilant with regards to a certain Mirko Vidović. A Croat raised in the small village of Bila in present-day BiH, he had become a French national in 1971. He returned to Yugoslavia in 1972 where he was condemned to six years in prison for anti-regime activities: "propaganda hostile and offensive to Yugoslavia and its President"; and "enemy activities in liaison with terrorist émigré organisations." However he was released, following "difficult negotiations" between the French Foreign Ministry and the Yugoslav authorities, on the eve of the visit of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in December 1976. Upon his release, Belgrade was given strong assurances by France that Vidović would cease his anti-Yugoslav activities. Nonetheless, he published an article describing his experiences in a Yugoslav jail in 1977 and in 1980 he was elected the President of the Croatian National Council (*Hrvatsko narodno vijeće*, HNV) - the main opposition-in-exile to the Yugoslav regime. The Yugoslav authorities consistently lobbied the French to keep watch over Vidović's activities.

The Yugoslav Ambassador in Paris highlighted that it appeared entirely contrary to the spirit of Franco-Yugoslav relations that a French citizen should be at the head of an organisation that openly calls for the destruction of Yugoslavia. ⁵⁶ Moreover, Vidović was

⁵¹ MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, Note A/S: Activités de l'émigration politique en France., 18 November 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-13-3.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ MAE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, a/s: Monsieur VIDOVIC, 30 April 1980, AD, INVA1930/5715, YOU-13-3.

⁵⁴ Letter from the Ambassador in Yugoslavia to MAE, a.s. Visite du Ministre en Yougoslavia. Affaire Vidovic., 8 February 1980, AD, INVA1930/5715, YOU-13-3.

⁵⁵ Vidović, Mirko. "Inside a Yugoslav jail", *Index on Censorship* 6, no. 5 (1977), 52-57.

⁵⁶ MAE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, NOTE a/s: M. Vidovic., 29 May 1980, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-13-3.

making public demonstrations against the Yugoslav regime: he participated in a demonstration outside the Yugoslav embassy on 13 June 1981 and delivered a speech to the assembled crowd.⁵⁷ The Quai made a request to the Ministry of the Interior to approach Vidović to ask him to behave like a French citizen, "loyal to his host country".⁵⁸ This issue needed to be treated delicately however, as no acts of terrorist violence, to the knowledge of the French, could be attributed to Vidović.⁵⁹ Although, owing to the Yugoslav authorities' extreme sensitivity on the matter, it was in France's best interest to avoid, as far as possible, any activity that may embarrass the Yugoslav authorities and threaten Franco-Yugoslav relations.

A problem thus emerged for the French authorities when Vidović wrote to the Paris Police Prefect requesting that the HNV be allowed to hold a meeting in a Parisian Hotel in December 1981. On 20 November 1981, the Minister for the Interior, Gaston Defferre, wrote to the Minister for Foreign Affairs to ask for his opinion on authorising such a meeting, noting that the meeting posed no danger to public security. However, the Quai was concerned that it would have ramifications for Franco-Yugoslav relations. A reply followed on 24 November highlighting that, even if some of the HNV's members seemed moderate, they nonetheless possessed a doctrine that called for the dismemberment of Yugoslavia and the creation of a free Croatian, non-socialist, state. The effects of such a meeting taking place in France would have dire consequences for Franco-Yugoslav relations since the Yugoslav authorities would take the granting of any such meeting that would destabilise the internal balance of Yugoslavia as a "real and grave provocation."

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⁵⁷ MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, NOTE a/s: Entretien du Directeur d'Europe avec l'Ambassadeur de Yougoslavie (21 juillet), 23 July 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5726, YOU-12-2.

⁵⁸ MAE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, NOTE a/s: M. Vidovic., 29 May 1980, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-13-3.

⁵⁹ MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, NOTE a/s: Activité de M. Mirko Vidovic., 28 October 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-13-3.

⁶⁰ MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, NOTE a/s: Projet de réunion à Paris du Conseil National Croate., 24 November 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-13-3.

An attack against a group of Yugoslav workers in Brussels, which left two dead and three injured, highlighted how seriously the Yugoslav authorities took the matter. They heavily criticised the Belgian authorities' attitudes towards the crimes that had been perpetrated against Yugoslavs on Belgian soil. Belgrade criticised the Belgian government and declared that this attack "seriously compromised relations between Belgium and Yugoslavia." Furthermore, they were even more surprised that "contrary to what one may think, no serious measure had been taken on behalf of the Belgians."62 The attacks against Yugoslavs in Belgium over the preceding year had led to a cooling in relations between the two countries and the Yugoslavs were taken aback by the Belgian authorities' lax attitude towards anti-Yugoslav activities on their soil.⁶³

Accordingly, the Quai was against authorising such a meeting in France.⁶⁴ However, it appeared that the message did not reach Vidović who appeared on Swiss television claiming that he had been granted the authorisation to hold a meeting of the HNV in France. 65 Perturbed by this turn of events, the Yugoslavs insisted to the Quai that the HNV was a fascist organisation and included 13 war criminals amongst its ranks.⁶⁶ It appears that until 30th December 1981, the meeting was scheduled to take place in Paris.

The Yugoslavs sent an aide-mémoire regarding the activities of the HNV and its constituent groups to the Quai.⁶⁷ It highlighted several incidents of terrorism that had been attributed to the group in the preceding five years including the attempted assassination of a Yugoslav vice-consul in Lyon in 1975.⁶⁸ Indeed, experience had taught the Yugoslavs

⁶² TD BELGRADE 063, A/S.: ATTENTAT A BRUXELLES, 4 March 1982, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-13-3.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, NOTE a/s: Projet de réunion à Paris du Conseil National Croate., 24 November 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-13-3.

⁶⁵ MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, Note a/s: Projet de réunion à Paris du Conseil National Croate, 23 December 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-13-3. 66 Ibid.

⁶⁷ MAE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, Aide-Mémoire remis à l'Ambassadeur le 30 décembre 1981 par M. MELOVKSI Secrétaire Fédéral adjoint aux Affaires Etrangères, 30 December 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-13-3.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

that, following such meetings, there was an increase in terrorist and subversive activities against the Yugoslav regime. Therefore they called on the French authorities to prevent the HNV meeting and to stop Vidović from undertaking any further anti-Yugoslav activity in France.⁶⁹ Shortly thereafter, Vidović decided to move the meeting, scheduled to take place at the Hotel Arcade in the 15ème arrondisement, to New York.⁷⁰ Although Vidović cited economic reasons for the decision - much of the Croatian émigré community lived in the US, Canada, Australia and Argentina - it was evident that the pressure from the French authorities had forced Vidović to relocate the meeting.⁷¹

The Yugoslavs continued to pressure France to maintain surveillance over its political émigrés. Therefore, in an effort to better coordinate their security efforts, the Minister of the Interior, Gaston Defferre, visited Yugoslavia and held conversations with his counterpart, Stane Dolanc, and the Prime Minister, Milka Planinc. Dolanc appealed for French vigilance of Yugoslav political émigrés. Indeed, further anti-Yugoslav activities appeared to be emanating from France: Mirko Vidović once more envisaged holding a press conference in Paris on 19 March, which had originally been planned for Brussels; and the Albanian émigré community had produced a Memorandum that it had delivered to the European Parliamentary Assembly with the support of French Deputy Gérard Israél, who had supported other anti-Yugoslav actions. Furthermore, the Croatian émigré community envisaged celebrating the 41st anniversary of the creation of the NDH on 10 April 1982. The Yugoslavs expressed their concern, particularly regarding the Croatian communities and potential attacks in France, and hoped that the French authorities would

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⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, MISE A JOUR a/s: Activités de l'émigration politique en France., 11 January 1982, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-13-3.

⁷¹ Letter from Ministry for State, Interior and Decentralisation to MAE, Le prochain congrès du 'Conseil National Croate' (H.N.V.) se déroulera à New York (USA) et non à Paris comme prévu initialement., 29 December 1981, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-13-2.

⁷² TD BELGRADE 264, VISITE DE M. DEFFERRE EN YOUGOSLAVIE (16-18 Juillet)., 20 July 1982, INVA1930/5727, YOU-12-4.

MAE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, Note A/S: Démarche Yougoslave sur l'activité de l'immigration en France, 13 March 1982, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-2-15/1.
 Ibid.

do their utmost to prevent them. Dolanc also added that there could be no doubt that if the perpetrators of the Brussels attack were traced to France they would pursued br with all the vigour that was allowed.⁷⁵

Two further leaders of the HNV were believed to be traveling to Paris to talk with Vidović: Mate Meštrović – son of the famous sculptor and designer of the *Monument à la reconnaissance de France* in Belgrade's Kalemegdan Park – and Ivan Jelić. A press conference would then be held at the Hotel Niko on 19 March with an estimated 60 journalists in attendance. Furthermore, the HNV had recently declared that it intended to establish a permanent office in France and they would seek an audience with the Quai's representatives. The Yugoslavs warned the Quai that, if the HNV were allowed to establish an office and hold a press conference, then it would have "negative consequences" and "be a source of difficulties and problems" between the two countries. Yees Pagniez assured the Yugoslav authorities that the seriousness of this request would be transmitted to the relevant French authorities but also highlighted that, although France was absolutely committed to preventing terrorism, one of its guiding principles was the freedom of speech. The Yugoslavs were disappointed and thought the propaganda activities of the HNV were the first step towards violence.

France held to its principles and allowed the press conference to take place. The Yugoslav authorities stated that this affair could have very serious consequences for Franco-Yugoslav relations and that its population and politicians found it difficult to understand that a French socialist government would take this attitude, which could weigh heavily on the two countries relations. Indeed the Yugoslavs even went so far as to

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⁷⁵ MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, FICHE A/S: Manifestation anti-Yougoslave du 3 avril 1982, 15 April 1982, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-2-15/1.

⁷⁶ MAE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, Note A/S: Démarche Yougoslave sur l'activité de l'immigration en France, 13 March 1982, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-2-15/1.

⁷⁷ TD BELGRADE 078, 17 March 1982, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-2-15/1.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

describe it as "a serious political provocation." They warned their French counterparts that, "in France, especially on the Left, as so often in the West, there exists a naive romanticism in the name of human rights that allows the Vidovićs, Jelićs or Meštrovićs who want a return to the past that our countries fought against." 80

A further anti-Yugoslav demonstration took place in Paris on 3 April 1982. The Paris Prefect had authorised the demonstration without informing either the Ministry of the Interior or the Quai. Approximately 100 Albanian demonstrators met at *Place Victor Hugo* before setting off towards the Yugoslav embassy, at 54 *Rue de la Faisanderie*, whilst carrying anti-Yugoslav banners. *En route* they stopped for speeches on the *Rue de Longchamp* where they were joined by Croatian émigrés, some of whom had travelled from Belgium. The demonstration was daubed with more than twenty Albanian flags and six Croatian ones. Moreover, they also destroyed and trampled on Yugoslav flags whilst shouting "murderers", "Liberate Kosovo!" and "Yugoslavs = Gestapo!"⁸¹

Following these various incidents, Harris Puisais, an official representative of the Quai, met with Ambassador Popovski on 13 April 1982 to discuss the state of Franco-Yugoslav relations. Popovski was concerned that France had allowed both the HNV press conference and the demonstration to take place. Popovski recalled a document from 1972 that declared that "groups that advocate the violent overthrow of the Yugoslav government... will be systematically refused the right to set up subsidiaries in France, where they have none in existence or no legal structures." The Foreign Ministry responded that at its core this agreement had not changed but the recent meetings had not threatened public safety in France.

⁷⁹ TD BELGRADE 096, 25 March 1982, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-2-15/1.

⁸⁰ Ibid

⁸¹ MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, FICHE A/S: Manifestation anti-Yougoslave, 3 April 1982., AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-2-15/1.

⁸² MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe, NOTE A/S: Entretien de M. Puisais avec l'Ambassadeur de Yougoslavie (8 avril), 15 April 1982, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-2-15/1.

The Yugoslav press were clearly irritated that Albanian and Croatian émigrés were allowed to hold a demonstration in front of the Yugoslav embassy in Paris and openly questioned the French authorities' decision to allow such a demonstration to take place. The Yugoslavs complained that France had not understood the true motives of the demonstrators "to protest against the constitutional order of an ally." The separatist movements had been effective and had achieved a certain level of divergence between the two countries.

From U-Turn to Downturn

1983 was a watershed year for the Mitterrand experiment and, by extension, Franco-Yugoslav relations. Mitterrand made a famous intervention in the FRG *Bundestag* on 20 January 1983 in support of the deployment of NATO missiles. In doing so, Mitterrand implicitly supported the under-pressure Chancellor Kohl and disavowed the German Socialists. Although Mitterrand had attempted to define a nuanced stance in his support of 'Euromissiles', its subtlety was lost on many and he was wrongly labelled as an "Atlantacist". Nevertheless, the Yugoslavs, not wanting to repeat the rupture of 1974, remained quiet on the issue but its preference for disarmament was abundantly clear. 86

Mitterrand's move away from a European socialist path was completed in the spring of 1983. Following a vast nationalisation programme based upon traditional Keynesian economics in 1981, it soon became evident that Mitterrand's expansive economic policy was incompatible with the ongoing global recession and cohesion to the European Monetary System (EMS). After painful deliberations and three devaluations of

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⁸³ TD BELGRADE 251, 9 May 1983, AD, 1930INVA/5726, YOU-12-1.

⁸⁴ Bell, David S. François Mitterrand: A Political Biography (Malden: Polity, 2005), 103.

⁸⁵ Bozo, Frédéric. "France, the Euromissiles, and the End of the Cold War", in *The Euromissile Crisis and the End of the Cold War*, eds. Leopoldo Nuti, Frédéric Bozo, Marie-Pierre Rey and Bernd Rother (Washington, D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2015), 202.

⁸⁶ Letter from French Embassy in Belgrade to MAE, Note a/s entretien des personalités du Parti sur le discours du Président de la République aux Nations Unies, 2 October 1983, AD, 1930INVA/5726, YOU-12-1.

the franc apropos the German mark, the Socialists decided to stay with the EMS in March 1983 and instead embarked upon a course of *rigeur* (austerity). It was a truly spectacular U-turn that marked the abandonment of the 1981 economic programme. France was therefore set on a course towards participation in a Single Market, rather than a Common Market, and the Socialists wholeheartedly embraced the European project. Yugoslavia, with its continuing problems *vis-à-vis* the EEC, consequently became a diminishing interest for Mitterrand's France. Similarly Yugoslavia embarked on a course of prescribed austerity as it sought to implement reforms required by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). These two factors would necessarily affect Franco-Yugoslav economic relations.

Therefore, Mitterrand's visit to Belgrade in 1983 was not as significant as the Yugoslavs had originally hoped. The President's visit allowed the two countries to clarify points of convergence and divergence. However, it resulted in few concrete measures and Mitterrand's priority was an improvement of France's cultural presence in Yugoslavia. Even this was proving difficult given the budgetary restrictions that both states were facing, as evidenced by the closure of a French cultural centre in Split and a reduction in the number of education grants offered to Yugoslavs.⁸⁸ Furthermore, a formal Franco-Yugoslav cultural group that had been discussed had not met in the intervening months and only informal contacts had been made.⁸⁹

One area that remained fruitful was military cooperation. From 10 to 12 October 1984, Charles Hernu, French Defence Minister, visited Yugoslavia to meet his opposite number, Admiral Branko Mamula, with whom he enjoyed a warm relationship. A joint Franco-Yugoslav venture to construct a fighter jet was discussed between Hernu and Mamula in October 1984, which would be produced by 1995. The French company

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⁸⁷ Lee, Jae-Sung. "Between Ideology and Europe: The French Socialists and the EMS Crisis, 1981-1983", *International Area Review* 7, no. 2 (2004), 124-127.

⁸⁸ MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, NOTE a/s: La Yougoslavie et les relations franco-yougoslaves à la fin du premier semestre 1984., 12 July 1984, AD, 1930INVA/5726, YOU-12-1.

⁹⁰ TA SEGEDEFNAT 1025, 15 March 1984, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-4-3.

Dassault would work in partnership with the Yugoslavs who wanted to produce the fighter on their own soil. 91 For Mamula the modernisation of the Yugoslav army was essential and accordingly he discussed several measures with Hernu. 92 Mamula also expressed a desire that Yugoslavia should become an arms exporter and sought France's help in this respect as Franco-Yugoslav cooperation already existed in arms manufacturing. Nonetheless, the relationship between France and Yugoslavia was weakening. Furthermore, Mitterrand's foreign policy had begun to take shape in 1984 as he renewed the Franco-Soviet relationship and strong support for the European project. Yugoslavia was being left behind in France's vision for Europe.

The French authorities were beginning to privilege domestic business over its Yugoslav partners. The *Société Européen de credit foncier et de banque*, sought to claim reparation for goods lost after World War II totalling 145,261,307 Francs.⁹³ The Legal Adviser to the Yugoslav Ambassador stated that the 1950 Franco-Yugoslav Accord definitively acquitted Yugoslavia and therefore demanded that the French authorities put an end to the procedure. ⁹⁴ The case had the potential to greatly upset relations. Although a judge eventually resolved the matter in favour of the Yugoslav state, the 'pro-business' stance taken by the ostensibly 'socialist' French government soured relations between France and Yugoslavia.

Notwithstanding the cooling in the Franco-Yugoslav relationship, the Yugoslavs continued to look to France as their connection with the EEC. The Yugoslav Ambassador to France, Boris Snuderl, sought out the Director of Europe at the Quai d'Orsay to discuss the re-examination of the agreement between the EEC and Yugoslavia. 95 Snuderl hoped

⁹¹ TD BELGRADE 492, 13 November 1984, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-4-3.

⁹² TD BELGRADE 435, 13 October 1984, AD, 1930INVA/5715, YOU-4-3.

⁹³ TD BELGRADE 130, 29 March 1984, AD, 1930INVA/5726, YOU-12-1.

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⁹⁵ MRE, Sous Direction d'Europe Orientale, Note a/s: Entretien du Directeur d'Europe avec l'Ambassadeur de Yougoslavie (22 août 1985): relations CEE - Yougoslavie., 22 August 1985, AD, 1930INVA/5726, YOU-12-2.

that France might use its influence to help ensure better access to the Common Market for Yugoslav agricultural and industrial products. The Director for Europe recalled that, as had been mentioned in a previous meeting, the decision did not rest with France but with the community itself. 96 Snuderl warned that commercial exchanges with the EEC had produced a \$500 million deficit for the first six months of the year. Therefore, Yugoslavia's exchanges with EEC would diminish in favour of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON).97

A French abstention in a vote on Yugoslavia's request to join the Resettlement Fund of the Council of Europe as an associated member added to the Yugoslavs' rancour. The decision of the French greatly irked the Yugoslavs, as it prevented them from participating in discussions on the distribution of the Fund. 98 France noted that relations between Yugoslavia and the EEC had been damaged when a European Investment Bank loan for 380 million European Currency Units (ECU) to Yugoslavia was turned down following German, British and Dutch opposition, and an outright refusal from Denmark. 99 Although France had been open to the loan it had to accept the commission's proposal of ECU5 million to be given to Yugoslavia for cooperation. 100 However, this was the extent of France's support for Yugoslavia, as French diplomatic energy in the East was being diverted towards the reformist Mikhail Gorbachev and Mitterrand became a strong proponent of a renewed East-West détente. 101

The change in political course by the Mitterrand administration and Yugoslavia's increasing international isolation had a significant impact on the relationship. Furthermore, the change of Foreign Ministers, firstly in Yugoslavia and then France, altered the dynamic

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁸ MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, Note a/s; CONVERSATION EVENTUELLE DU MINISTRE AVEC M. RAIF DIZDAREVIC, 31 July 1985, AD, 1930INVA/5726, YOU-12-2. 99 Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Bozo. *Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification*, 9.

of the relationship. Claude Cheysson and Lazar Mojsov had enjoyed an amiable relationship. The Quai had described Mojsov as a "brilliant and eminent man, with whom the contacts of M. Cheysson were frequent and fruitful."102 His successor, Raif Dizdarević, was considered "an apparatchik without stature and a rigid dogmatic, of the most orthodox type."103

The Quai noted in 1985 that Franco-Yugoslav relations had lost some of their substance. Contact between ministers had plateaued owing to the internal problems that Yugoslavia faced and its need to maintain a low profile on the international stage. Commercial exchanges were also suffering, which affected bilateral relations. Yugoslavia was unable to fulfil its financial obligations towards France. An agreement to construct 5 Airbus 320 had also fallen by the wayside owing to the level of compensation demanded by the Yugoslavs and the refusal of France's other partners in the Airbus consortium to consent to the credits for the project. 104 Similarly the previously successful Renault-IMV venture had encountered problems owing to the Slovenian enterprise's poor economic situation. Dizdarević bemoaned the IMF's attitude towards rescheduling Yugoslavia's debts and that he was no longer satisfied with the discussions in Brussels regarding the agreement between Yugoslavia and the EEC. 105

In this respect, the Yugoslavs continued to look to France for support in its efforts to rebalance its economy and improve its relations with the EEC. On 4 July 1985, during a visit to Belgrade as co-President of the Committee for Franco-Yugoslav economic cooperation, the Director for Europe at the Quai met with a representative of the Yugoslav Foreign Ministry. The Yugoslavs were disappointed that the volume of commercial exchanges between the two countries did not fulfil its potential, which they blamed on

¹⁰² MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, SCHEMA D'ENTRETIEN DU MINISTRE AVEC M.

DIZDAREVIC, 10 May 1985, AD, 1930INVA/5726, YOU-12-2.

¹⁰⁴ MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe, NOTE a/s: Entretien du President de la République avec M. SUKRIJA, 17 May 1985, AD, 1930INVA/5726, YOU-12-2.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

"certain specific restrictions" limiting the access of Yugoslav goods to France and, more widely, Europe. ¹⁰⁶ Indeed, the IMF had necessitated that Yugoslavia open its markets to foreign investment and, having done so, it was now faced with the protectionism of the EEC. In this context, France had been supportive of Yugoslavia and supported the renewal of the financial protocol between Yugoslavia and the EEC, as it had done with the question of rescheduling Yugoslavia's debt. ¹⁰⁷ However, the IMF measures produced few positive effects as inflation and unemployment continued to grow in Yugoslavia.

Yugoslavia thus began to show serious signs of economic and political strain. The Serbian Communist Party had failed to make a convincing case for recentralisation to its partners in the SKJ. Thus, the Serbian intellectual elite seized on the issue of Kosovo in 1985 and harnessed it as a political tool to revive nationalist politics. 108 Defending the Kosovo Serbs became a cause célèbre of the Serbian intelligentsia, championed in particular by Dobrica Ćosić, culminating with the infamous leak in September 1986 of the 'Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts'. The Memorandum, which highlighted Serbia's perceived victimisation throughout Yugoslavia's history, provided Serbian nationalism with "its ideological and popular foundations." Shortly thereafter, Slovenian intellectuals published a nationalist programme of their own in Nova revija entitled 'Contributions to a Slovenian National Programme'. The two documents shared many similarities and provided significant momentum to the centrifugal forces that sought to dissolve Yugoslavia. However, Slovenia was largely ethnically homogenous and Yugoslavia's Slovenes were concentrated in their titular republic. The 'victimised' Serbs, on the other hand, were scattered throughout the Socialist Federal Republic, which would have dramatic consequences as nationalism became the driving force in Yugoslav politics.

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¹⁰⁶ MRE, Sous-Direction d'Europe Orientale, NOTE A/S: Entretien du Directeur d'Europe avec M. VERES et M. JOVANOVIC, 3 July 1985, AD, 1930INVA/5726, YOU-12-2.

Dragović-Soso, Jasna. 'Saviours of the Nation': Serbia's Intellectual Opposition and the Revival of Nationalism (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002), 139.
 Glaurdić. Hour of Europe, 18.

As Yugoslavia faced political crisis, France was experiencing a political novelty: cohabitation. The legislative elections of March 1986 had brought Jacques Chirac and the Rassemblement pour la République (RPR) to power. This would remain the case until May 1988. This unprecedented situation created a bitter power struggle between Mitterrand and Chirac for the control of France's foreign policy. 110 Much of the initial momentum for links between Yugoslavia and France had been driven by the Parti Socialiste, rather than by the President himself. Accordingly, without a Socialist in the Quai, the Franco-Yugoslav relationship plateaued as Yugoslavia turned inwards.

As Mitterrand's first presidential term came to an end, and he prepared for an electoral campaign against Prime Minister Jacques Chirac, the President's diplomatic advisers warned that the growth of nationalisms in Yugoslavia was "very preoccupying". 111 Furthermore, it had significant consequences for the economy too as Croatia and Slovenia complained that they contributed too much towards the development of other republics and provinces. With inflation above 170% and external debt surpassing \$20 billion, the Socialist Federal Republic was in a dire situation. 112

¹¹⁰ Cohen, Samy. "La politique étrangère entre l'Elysée et Matignon", *Politique étrangère* 3 (1989), 488.

¹¹¹ Présentation des lettres de créance de M. GAGRO, 23 February 1988, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/422.

¹¹² Ibid

Chapter Three – France and the Dissolution of Yugoslavia, May 1988-January 1992.

"Two Contradictory Emergencies"

On 15 May 1989 Yugoslavia ushered in its latest, and final, collective Presidency with the Slovene, Janez Drnovšek, as its President and the Serb, and close Milošević ally, Borisav Jović as his Deputy. It marked the end of the "generation of partisans" who had ruled theretofore. Without this shared experience and common cause, the political landscape in Yugoslavia became even more fractious.

In Slovenia, the population became increasingly set against the Yugoslav People's Army (*Jugoslovenska narodna armija*, JNA) following the arrest and imprisonment of four young journalists; the so-called 'Slovenian Spring'.² Immediately, the Serbian President Slobodan Milošević condemned the "antidemocratic" tendencies in Slovenia.³ Accordingly the Conference of the SKJ at the end of May set the Serbs against the other republics; this attracted the Elysée's attention. The diplomatic unit (*cellule diplomatique*) thought that the SKJ had been in decline since Tito's death and was being progressively discredited by its inability to manage the economic and constitutional crisis.⁴ The Elysée's analysis added that the SKJ was also increasingly the victim of "strong nationalist agitation, mainly at the instigation of the Serbs, and the leader of the League of Serbia, Mr. Milošević, whose nationalist and demagogic ideas are not without echoes."⁵

Over the summer of 1988, the worsening economic situation provided a fertile breeding ground for Milošević's nationalist ideas, which became far bolder as he sought to

¹ "Yougoslavie: nouvelle direction collégiale. La 'génération des partisans' disparait de la scène politique", *Le Monde* (17 May 1989).

² Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 49-59.

³ "Yougoslavie: M. Milošević s'en prend à la Slovénie", *Le Monde* (25 May 1989).

⁴ NOTE: A/s: Conférence fédérale de la Ligue des Communistes de Yougoslavie (29-31 Mai 1988), 7 July 1988, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/422.

⁵ Ibid.

oust political opponents in Serbia's autonomous provinces and Montenegro through so-called 'Rallies of Truth'. However, in France, the nature of Milošević's ambitions and politics were hard to discern and *Le Monde* reflected that he was a "Serb by nationality, he is at the same profoundly Yugoslav." This seemingly Balkan reformist had even been one of the founders of the *Banque Franco-yougoslav* in Paris. Therefore, the Yugoslav Ambassador in Paris, Božidar Gagro, sought to reassure the French that the situation in Yugoslavia was not as grave as the 'Rallies' suggested.

Following demonstrations orchestrated by Milošević's supporters in the Montenegrin capital of Titograd at the beginning of October, the East-European department in the Quai became increasingly concerned by events in Yugoslavia. Jacques Faure, a diplomatic adviser, wrote an extremely prescient report on Yugoslavia's trajectory: "National antagonisms constitute an ancient evil in Yugoslavia. However their expression until now has remained within reasonable limits. Owing to the social and economic crisis, they are resurfacing in an irrational and worrying way." Faure warned that, "Milošević, by stoking the traditional nationalism of the Serbs, has thrown himself into verbal escalation on the theme of the situation in Kosovo" and rightly believed that Milošević could seek to revoke the powers of Vojvodina and Kosovo. Turthermore, he thought Milošević's attacks against federal institutions revealed his ambitions at a federal level. Although the opposition to Milošević was slowly organising itself, the outbreak of greater-Serb nationalism worried the other republics and could, in case of trouble, bring into question the cohesion of the entire federation. Faure thus thought that the other republics would cede Kosovo to Milošević in the hope they could contain his ambitions to

⁶ "Yougoslavie, Slobodan Milošević: l'homme fort de la Serbie", *Le Monde* (18 October 1988).

⁷ Ibid

⁸ NOTE: Entretien du Directeur d'Europe avec l'Ambassadeur de Yougoslavie, 29 September 1988, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/422.

⁹ NOTE: A/s: Yougoslavie: situation intérieure, 13 October 1988, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/422.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

Serbia.12

There were further voices in France calling for vigilance of the Yugoslav situation. In the National Assembly, Deputy Charles Ehrmann, who had made two trade visits to Yugoslavia in the last decade, highlighted the plight of the Balkan federation. Ehrmann rightly indicated that Yugoslavia was experiencing more than just an economic crisis: "This crisis is also moral, with numerous financial scandals [most notably the Agrokomerc scandal]. It is taking an ethnic hue, pitting Serbia, the most populated republic, against other republics."13 He wondered: "All these violent internal movements do they not jeopardise stability in the Balkans, and maybe peace in Europe? Need I remind you that in 1914 it was in Sarajevo that the war began". 14 Ehrmann appealed to the Foreign Minister, Roland Dumas, to do more to support Yugoslavia. In response, Dumas revealed the line that the French government would pursue until the summer of 1991: "France intends to act to help Yugoslavia in this difficult period, without wanting to intervene in its internal affairs." ¹⁵ Milošević had suffered a minor setback at the Seventeenth Session of the Central Committee of the SKJ on 17 and 18 October, as one of his allies was given a vote of no confidence. 16 Dumas thus thought that the Central Committee had "rejuvenated itself" and could restore order to the country. 17 The Foreign Minister argued that France could do no more for Yugoslavia than it was presently and would continue to maintain trade and political dialogue. He reassured the Assembly that "this country, close to us in history and in what it represents, is at the heart of our concerns." ¹⁸

However, the information that Roland Dumas received from the French foreign ministry policy planning staff (*Centre d'analyse et de prévision*, CAP), and that continued

¹² Ibid

¹³ Assemblée nationale, Seconde session ordinaire de 1991-1992, Compte-rendu intégral du 2^e séance du mercredi 26 octobre 1988, *Journal officiel*, N° 31 [2] A.N. (C.R.), 27 October 1988. 1441.

¹⁴ Ibid.15 Ibid.

¹⁶ Glaurdić. *Hour of Europe*, 34.

¹⁷ Assemblée nationale, Seconde session ordinaire de 1991-1992, Compte-rendu intégral du 2^e séance du mercredi 26 octobre 1988, *Journal officiel*, N° 31 [2] A.N. (C.R.), 27 October 1988. 1441. ¹⁸ Ibid.

to inform his analysis, was faulty. Following its mission to Yugoslavia in November 1982, the CAP reflected that the "fundamental problems of Yugoslav society are the same as those of the Sovietised eastern countries." Yugoslavia was not encouraged by the hypothetical extension of the EEC adding that it "seems to feel at home in isolation." The CAP mission did not truly reflect the state of things in Yugoslavia and it appears that the Yugoslavs sought to deflect unwanted attention towards the need for Western Europe to "help Gorbachev". 21 Unlike Faure, CAP did not see cause for concern in Milošević's rapid ascent. Milošević, they suggested, had near unanimity on the Kosovo question but his authoritarian and centralising tendencies were criticised or ignored.²² However, the report lamented that, "Whilst all recognise the weakness of federal power, nobody is committed to demanding political reform based on strengthening central power, whether or not Serb. This political deadlock is no explanation whatsoever of the current nationalist ferment."23 In spite of this evident crisis, CAP believed: "Paradoxically, the prevailing impression is of relatively large internal political stability. Neither of the two pillars of Yugoslavia [Communism and Federalism] are being called into question."²⁴

However, those close to the President offered a slightly less optimistic view regarding the Federal Republic's prospects. Jean Musitelli, then a diplomatic adviser in the Elysée, rightly warned that:

> The factors of the crisis have amplified. Eight years after his death, Yugoslavia is still Tito's orphan. The dilution of central authority, the resurgence of national antagonisms, the arrival on the scene of a Serb leader with a populist and authoritarian tone (M. Milošević), the continuing economic stagnation

¹⁹ Note: a/s: Impressions de Yougoslavie Mission de C.A.P. à Belgrade (2-3 novembre 1988), 8 November 1988, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/422.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

(inflation at 200%, worrying debt of \$20 billion), all provide a worrying backdrop.²⁵

However, CAP's view, certainly more than Musitelli's or Faure's, seemed to be in keeping with the international community's analysis of events in Yugoslavia. Given the reformist aspirations of Mikhail Gorbachev – whom the West, and France, were enthusiastically courting – it was tempting to see Milošević in the same mould.²⁶

By the summer of 1989, the Serbian President had replaced the Communist leaderships in both autonomous provinces and Montenegro. His programme faced the greatest resistance in Kosovo, where riots once more erupted. Following the imposition of martial law in the southern autnomous province, Milošević installed a puppet and forced through constitutional change that revoked the autonomous status of Kosovo and Vojvodina under the 1974 constitution. Of the eight votes in the Federal Presidency, the Serbian President could now confidently control four. Milošević's 'coronation' came on the six hundredth anniversary of Serbia's defeat to the Ottomans on 28 June 1989 at Kosovo Polje in front of over a million Serbs. *Le Monde* compared the event to a mix between "the 'Fête de l'Huma' [Fête de l'Humanité, the annual festival of the French Communist Party] to the power of 10 and a papal homily in a mystical land."²⁷ In this curious atmosphere, Yugoslavia's highest political echelons watched on as the Serbian President addressed the assembled crowd:

Serbs in their history have never conquered or exploited others. Through two world wars, they liberated themselves and, when they could, they also helped others to liberate themselves. The Kosovo heroism does not allow us to forget that at one time we were brave and dignified and one of the few who went into

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²⁵ NOTE POUR LA PRESIDENT (Jean MUSITELLI), 28 November 1988, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/422.

²⁶ Glaurdić. *Hour of Europe*, 43-45.

²⁷ "La célébration du sixième centenaire de la bataille de Kosovo: La grande fête du nationalisme serbe", *Le Monde* (30 June 1989).

battle undefeated. Six centuries later, again we are in battles and quarrels. They are not armed battles, though such things should not be excluded yet.²⁸

Serb authorities pressured the Croatian authorities to authorise an imitation event in the town of Knin in the Krajina region. Although the Croatian authorities, hitherto notable by their silence, hoped to defuse the tension by acquiescing, the overt nationalism of the Serbs provoked strong public reaction in Croatia.²⁹ Further Serb demonstrations erupted throughout Croatia in the summer of 1989, stoking a dormant, yet potentially virulent, Croatian nationalism.

Within less than a fortnight of the Serbian President's battle cry at *Kosovo Polje*, he gave an interview in *Le Monde* advocating market economics as the panacea for Yugoslavia's ills. With the Federal President due to visit Paris as part of the bicentennial celebrations of the French Revolution, the Serbian President did not want to be usurped on the international stage by the Slovene Janez Drnovšek. To a Western liberal and capitalist audience, the Serbian President's westernising rhetoric was evidence that Yugoslavia was experiencing the same phenomenon as the rest of Eastern Europe.

We need fundamental reform and there can be no economic reform without political reform. We support the rehabilitation of the market because the market is the only democratic mechanism that can evaluate work. If there is no market, the bureaucracy will remain the arbiter, who fixes prices, decides your value, and that of others and your business, which has led us to an impasse. The Yugoslav system, which created the crisis, also encouraged separatism. Not just in the republics but also in enterprises, in the famous 'worker-based organisations', amongst communities, regions. This separatism is especially harmful in the relations between republics, which are practically states, and have widely different national structures. This separatism has contaminated the whole of our society.³⁰

By blaming Yugoslavia's problems on its economic model, Milošević was able to

²⁸ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 77.

²⁹ Glaurdić. *Hour of* Europe, 53.

³⁰ "Un entretien avec le président de la Serbie: En Yougoslavie le système économique et politique 'fait tout à l'envers'", *Le Monde* (12 July 1989).

cast himself in the role of a Balkan reformist, a wise move given the political popularity of Mikhail Gorbachev. Only a recentralisation of state power, he argued, could curb separatist enthusiasm in Yugoslavia's republics and repair the federation's broken economy. Slovenia, the most economically advanced Yugoslav republic, resisted this centralisation drive and proposed constitutional amendments that would provide it with the right to secede and an insurance policy against Serb hegemony.³¹

As history 'accelerated' in the second half of 1989 – Gorbachev announced the end of the Brezhnev Doctrine and the Berlin Wall fell – Serbia and Slovenia openly clashed over the future direction of Yugoslavia. The Yugoslav President, Janez Drnovšek, was invited to the bicentennial celebrations of the French Revolution, which Borisav Jović, Milošević's man in the Federal Presidency, tried to prevent.³² Drnovšek reflected that: "Clearly the Serbs were interested in preventing me from having contact with Europe and the West." Indeed, the Yugoslav President used the opportunity to make contacts amongst the multitude of heads of state and government present in Paris, including François Mitterrand. Slovenia reformed its republican constitution, which led to fierce Serb protestations. Drnovšek also spoke with Mitterrand's former Finance Minister, and President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors with whom he discussed future integration into the European Community.³⁴ In a press conference before he left Paris, Drnovšek emphasised his European orientation and preference for competition in markets and politics.³⁵

There was one final glimmer of hope for a unified Yugoslavia: the economic reforms of the Prime Minister Ante Marković. Marković, a Bosnian Croat, had been the CEO of 'Rade Končar', one of the firms that had benefitted from Franco-Yugoslav

³¹ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 78.

³² Drnovšek, Janez. Escape from Hell: The Truth of a President (Matigny: Editions Latour, 1996), 69.

³³ Ibid. 69-70.

³⁴ Ibid., 71.

³⁵ Ibid., 72.

economic cooperation in the preceding decade. He ascended to the Premiership in March 1989 from a list of six candidates including Milošević and Kučan. 36 Throughout 1989, Marković undertook delicate austerity measures seeking to halt Yugoslavia's rising inflation. The measures, whilst effective in certain areas, failed to halt the climbing inflation and Yugoslavia was gripped by hyperinflation in September 1989. Marković sought to embark on a more radical course of 'shock therapy' shaped by the ideas of the US economist Jeffrey Sachs who had worked with the Solidarność government in Poland.³⁷

Amidst this rampant hyperinflation and socioeconomic crisis, the French Prime Minister, Michel Rocard, visited Yugoslavia. Ahead of his visit he boldly declared that "there is a pump to be primed and a political signal to be given." Rocard, who had made several previous visits to Yugoslavia, reflected that:

> It is important for us to show the Yugoslavs, on one hand, and French public opinion, on the other, that we are not abandoning Yugoslavia. Under the impression that the events in Poland and Hungary are accelerating, it could seem that we have neglected you. This is not the truth.³⁹

The Matignon believed that for the Yugoslavs to rebalance their economy, the Yugoslavs "must accept a level of 'recentralisation' of the economy so that the central power can intervene with greater efficacy." 40 Le Monde accurately reflected the French position on the conditions France would attach to any aid: "For help in the same way as Hungary and Poland, you will have to, in turn, make new steps towards democracy by

³⁶ "Yougoslavie: six candidats au poste de premier ministre", Le Monde (13 January 1989).

³⁷ Glaurdić. *Hour of Europe*, 64.

³⁸ "Eviter la marginalisation", *Le Monde* (5 December 1989).

³⁹ "A la veille de sa visite à Belgrade M. Rocard affirme que la France 'n'abandonne pas la Yougoslavie'", Le Monde (6 December 1989).

⁴⁰ "Eviter la marginalisation", Le Monde (5 December 1989).

considering free elections for example."41

During a one day visit, Rocard's most substantial meeting was with his Yugoslav counterpart, Ante Marković. The visit was a particular coup for the Federal power, and particularly Marković and Drnovšek, as the French Prime Minister's scheduled meeting with Milošević was cancelled. Rocard revealed that he and Marković shared a "surprisingly similar analysis" of the crisis of communism in Eastern Europe. He suggested that Yugoslavia continue to move towards "political liberalism" but also a "certain intensification of powers of the executive", particularly in economic matters. In this respect, Rocard reflected, Yugoslavia faced "two contradictory emergencies".

France had suspended all 'supplementary' aid to East European countries until they made further steps towards democracy; Yugoslavia was included in this category. The Yugoslavs hoped that France, and the other countries of the EEC, would be able to offer "more concrete support" and reinforce exchanges and investments in Yugoslavia. However, France's support had clear and well-defined limits. Rocard offered France's backing in Yugoslavia's negotiations with the IMF and declared that France was prepared to "intensify not only exchanges but also cooperation."⁴⁵ However, this would not come at the expense of France's developmental aid to the 'South', particularly as Yugoslavia required "intelligent cooperation" rather than subsidies.⁴⁶

Shortly after his meeting with Rocard, Marković announced a "draconian austerity plan" during a special session of the Yugoslav Assembly on 18 December 1989. Seven

⁴¹ "A la veille de sa visite à Belgrade M. Rocard affirme que la France 'n'abandonne pas la Yougoslavie'", *Le Monde* (6 December 1989).

⁴² "Yougoslavie : La visite officielle du premier ministre français M. Rocard promet un accroissement de l'aide française", Le Monde (8 December 1989).

⁴⁴ "La fin de la visite du premier ministre en Yougoslavie M. Rocard préconise une 'libéralisation économique et politique'", *Le Monde* (9 December 1989).

⁴⁵ "YOUGOSLAVIE: La visite officielle du premier ministre français M. Rocard promet un accroissement de l'aide française", *Le Monde* (8 December 1989).

⁴⁶ Ibid.

new dinars – 1:10,000 against the old currency – were fixed against one deutschemark.⁴⁷ Furthermore, prices and imports would be liberalised although the price of vital services would remain centrally administered. The reforms would also create greater accountability at a regional level to uncover corruption. This 'shock therapy', which would increase unemployment, was intended to bring inflation back down to 13%. In spite of the harsh propositions, it appears that the civilian population was broadly supportive of Marković's reform package.⁴⁸ However, it faced tremendous resistance in two areas: firstly, from the entrenched conservative political elites, particularly in Belgrade, who held key decision-making positions in the distribution of federal funds, which maintained their power base; and the decentralising powers in Slovenia and, increasingly, Croatia were resistant to any drives for centralisation.

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the rapid acceleration of events at the end of 1989, François Mitterrand was greatly concerned that the 'Europe of Yalta' would be replaced by the 'Europe of Sarajevo'.⁴⁹ Therefore, rather unexpectedly and unbeknownst to his collaborators, Mitterrand proposed a new institutional framework for Europe during his New Year's speech, proposing a 'European Confederation'.⁵⁰ Roland Dumas reflected:

It must be said that, at that date, François Mitterrand had only one fear: that Europe would return to the heartbreak of 1919, with a multitude of microstates, in poorly drawn borders, unable to curb explosions of national violence that he dreaded above all. This is what he saw was fatally on the horizon of the Yugoslav drama. With a Confederation, in a political and legal framework, flexible and light-touch, he thought that European countries — all European countries and not only those of Central and Eastern Europe — could help to maintain the delicate balance of peace. ⁵¹

⁴⁷ "Création d'un dinar convertible: Le premier ministre yougoslave propose un vigoureux plan antiinflation", *Le Monde* (20 December 1989).

⁴⁸ Gagnon, Jr., V.P., "Yugoslavia in 1989 and after", Nationalities Papers 38, no. 1 (January 2010), 32-33.

⁴⁹ Bozo. "The Failure of a Grand Design", 412.

⁵⁰ MAE, Allocution de Voeux de M. François Mitterrand, Président de la République, 31 December 1989. Accessed on 6 August 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

⁵¹ Dumas, Roland. "Un projet mort-né: la Confédération européenne", *Politique étrangère* 3 (2001), 693.

François Mitterrand seemed amply aware of the impending crisis in Yugoslavia and hoped that, by tying it into a multilateral framework and creating a pan-European institution, he could dissipate the threat of resurgent nationalism. As Frédéric Bozo notes, France faced a conundrum: how could European construction be opened to the East without diluting the process? A two-tier system that would allow a period of transition towards greater integration was Mitterrand's vision. Evidently, the proliferation of smaller states would prohibit this evolution and, would in fact, reinforce Mitterrand's analysis that Europe was in fact heading back to 1919. Although Mitterrand's Confederation proposal ultimately failed in the face of resistance from East European countries who pursued an alternative 'third way', it was present in French foreign policy planning for Eastern Europe until summer 1991.⁵³

The Fourteenth Congress of the SKJ in January 1990 would have done little to assuage Mitterrand's fears. As the Slovenes and Croats pushed for constitutional reform towards greater decentralisation – with multiparty elections in the two republics slated for the spring of 1990 – they were consistently thwarted by the Milošević bloc. The writing was on the wall for the Slovenes who walked out of the Congress en masse, followed in short order by the Croatian contingent. The SKJ had lost its political monopoly in Yugoslavia and both Slovenia and Croatia would now look to reconfigure their relationship with the federal structure.

France was concerned about the implications of the latest developments in Yugoslavia, both economically and politically, but it continued to offer practical support. During an inter-ministerial meeting on 26 January 1990, the French Finance Minister revealed that he intended to approach the Yugoslav authorities for negotiations in light of Yugoslavia's latest political and economic developments. France also envisaged offering

⁵³ Ibid., 410-11.

⁵² Bozo, "The Failure of a Grand Design", 398.

financial support to Yugoslavia. The USSR owed Yugoslavia some \$2 billion, which the French proposed to loan to Yugoslavia so that they could import goods from the USSR and could therefore recuperate a part of the \$2 billion.⁵⁴

The Federal authorities were actively reaching out to Europe in the hope that it could help with Marković's reform package. Indeed, the "Yugoslavs vigorously put forward the view that the Community was paying insufficient attention to Yugoslavia compared to other East European countries." In fact, "They considered that Yugoslavia should receive priority as the beginner of reforms and a country outside a bloc." However the final quarter of 1989 through 1990 was marked by a proliferation of historical events: the unification of Germany; the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent US-led response; and the rapid retraction of the Soviet Union. With the Elysée firmly in charge of foreign policy, and suffering from personnel deficiencies, its resources were stretched thin. Indeed, France was not alone in this respect, with advisers and leaders throughout Europe struggling to keep pace with the speed of events.

The reunification of Germany, rather than the potential dissolution of Yugoslavia, was the major European preoccupation in 1990 and it consumed a great deal of French diplomatic energy. Although France was initially surprised by the pace of events leading towards German reunification, its President did not attempt to hinder or impede the course of events. He sought to carefully manage the course of events and tie German unification into a European framework. Tried and tested successfully with Germany, this became the *Mitterrandienne modus operandi* for managing the dissolution of Yugoslavia. That the US

⁵⁴ COMPTE-RENDU de la réunion interministèrielle tenue le vendredi 26 Janvier 1990 à 15 h 00 sous le présidence de M. ADAM, Chargé de mission au cabinet du Premier ministre, date unkown, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/422.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ TA COREU ARRIVEE 8327, 31 January 1990, AN, AG/5(4)/AH/35.

⁵⁷ Bozo. Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification, xvii.

⁵⁸ Bozo, Frédéric. "Mitterrand's France, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification: A Reappraisal", *Cold War History* 7, no. 4 (November 2007), 462.

abdicated any responsibility in relation to Yugoslavia cleared the way for a European solution.⁵⁹

'We would like Yugoslavia to remain Yugoslavia'

France welcomed Yugoslavia's move towards democracy. Although it remained preoccupied by humanitarian issues in Kosovo, it hoped the evolution towards democracy would help defuse the problem. The elections in Slovenia on 25 April returned a majority for the Democratic Opposition of Slovenia (*Demokratična opozicija Slovenije*, Demos) coalition with Milan Kučan elected as President. The elections took place in generally good spirit as the Slovenian Communist Party lost its grasp on power in Yugoslavia's westernmost republic. Slovenia now proposed a confederate form for Yugoslavia, which the election victors in Croatia also supported. The Croatian elections, however, were a far more tense business.

The Croatian Democratic Union (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*, HDZ) won the elections there on a platform of resurgent Croatian nationalism. Its leader, and newly elected President, Franjo Tuđman was a historian by training and a fierce nationalist in his politics. He was a Croatian reflection of the politics that Milošević and Ćosić had reinvigorated in Serbia. Croatian Serb communities were alarmed by the HDZ victory and greatly concerned that they would become stranded in an independent Croatia; its direct historical precursor had been deadly for vast numbers of Serbs. The Federal Government therefore sought to disarm the north-western republics. Since 1968, Territorial Forces (*Teritorijalna Obrana*, TO) were established in each republic in case of Soviet invasion. The federal government ordered the JNA to remove the arms from republics. Consequently, both the Croats and Slovenians began to arm clandestinely.

⁵⁹ Glaurdić. Hour of Europe, 81.

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⁶⁰ MAE, Situation en Yougoslavie, 20 April 1990. Accessed on 24 August 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

The Croatian Serbs coalesced around an ethnically based political party created in Knin: the Serb Democratic Party (*Srpska Demokratska Stranka*, SDS). By the end of July, under the impulsion of Milan Babić, a dentist from Knin, the Croatian Serbs had created a Serb assembly in Croatia and announced that it would hold a referendum on Serb sovereignty in August. Ahead of the referendum, the JNA started transferring arms from the republican TOs to SDS supporters in the Krajina region. The Tudman government declared the referendum illegal and attempted to seize control of local police stations on 17 August. This was the first armed confrontation between the Croatian government and the Krajina Serbs. As the JNA intervened Tudman backed down and withdrew. The Krajina Serbs established roadblocks and sealed the Krajina. The referendum proceeded and led to a near unanimous vote of autonomy for the Croatian Serbs. These events were, however, superseded in international attention by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and their significance was underestimated by the international community.

Borisav Jović, a close associate of Milošević, succeeded Drnovšek as the Yugoslav President. Both he and Milošević began to consider altering borders with the support of the JNA to incorporate those territories in Croatia that were populated by ethnic Serbs. Amidst this escalation, Jović travelled to Paris in November 1990. There he held a meeting with François Mitterrand. The French President expressed his concern to Jović that Yugoslavia would dissolve and feared that it was "a great danger to see a series of nationalities explode. In place of 32 or 33 states, we would have double! Although this preference stemmed from Mitterrand's vision for Europe, it was a clear indication to the Yugoslav President that France was against the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Mitterrand then inadvertently indicated that France, and Europe, would not intervene in Yugoslavia's

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⁶¹ Glenny, Misha. *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, 3rd Ed. (London: Penguin, 1996), 9.

⁶² Glaurdić. *Hour of Europe*. 96.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ ENTRETIEN François Mitterrand-M. JOVIC Président Yougoslavie, 19 November 1990, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/422.

affairs giving *carte blanche* to Jović and Milošević. The President told his Yugoslav counterpart that: "Only you can find a solution balancing the attachment to the Federal State and the respect for nationalities. These are extremely difficult problems. We have followed what has happened in Slovenia, in Kosovo." However, the solution that Jović and Milošević had was a Yugoslavia under Serb hegemony, which was entirely incompatible with minority rights. Mitterrand remained concerned by the situation in Kosovo but reflected that: "It's an internal problem, we will not intervene. It is not desirable that existing countries burst into several pieces. These problems must be exacerbated by economic problems?" 66

Whilst there was undoubtedly an economic crisis in Yugoslavia, it was a distant second to the threat posed by the ethno-political storm that was brewing between Croatia and Serbia. Mitterrand had indicated that he was prepared to allow the Yugoslav Federal authorities – whose actions in Kosovo he had already condemned – to find a solution internally. The events of 1990 had distracted France from the crisis in Yugoslavia and the significance of this tacit statement was missed. The election of Slobodan Milošević in December 1990 in Serbia's elections only strengthened his power, and resolve, to create a Serb-dominated Yugoslavia. In response the Croatian *Sabor* promulgated a new constitution providing for the right to secession and Slovenia held a successful referendum on its own eventual independence at the end of June 1991. The two north-western republics therefore preferred a move to a confederal arrangement for Yugoslavia, whilst Serbia remained the bastion of unified centralism.

The prospects for 1991 were, therefore, grim. The situation was exacerbated by a financial scandal wherein the Serb government had taken \$2 billion from federal funds, scuppering the federal government's budget.⁶⁷ With Marković's economic reforms

65 Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ "Yougoslavie: La Serbie impliqué dans un scandale financier", Le Monde (10 January 1991).

spluttering, and the north-western republics withholding a large amount of the federal contributions, the financial scandal further highlighted the need for independence to the domestic populations of Slovenia and Croatia. However, with France participating in Operation Desert Storm and Yugoslavia holding the Presidency of the NAM in early 1991, France remained in close contact with the Yugoslav authorities and was therefore reluctant to involve itself in its internal affairs.⁶⁸

Simultaneously, the crisis was mounting in Croatia as the Federal Government demanded the Croatian police force disarm and relinquish its weapons within ten days. Following crisis talks in Belgrade, armed conflict was averted as the Federal Presidency voted against a proposal by the JNA to use military force in Croatia. Tuđman publicly announced that "we were on the brink of civil war, the Yugoslav army had been mobilised in Croatia, put on a war footing, our militia too." Milošević realised that Yugoslavia could not be salvaged but he would ensure that the Serb territories in Croatia would remain within his reconfigured Federal Republic. The Serb President revealed to Western Ambassadors in Belgrade that he was prepared to relinquish Slovenia and, possibly, Macedonia, but he would be prepared to use force to maintain control of territory where

The EC continued to support Yugoslavia's territorial integrity as those who warned against Yugoslavia's potential violent demise were believed to be too alarmist.⁷² The US was becoming increasingly concerned about the situation in Yugoslavia and encouraged the Europeans to be more pro-active in attempting to regulate the crisis. The EC's attention

⁶⁸ MAE, Interview de M. Roland Dumas, Ministre d'état, Ministre des affaires étrangères, à Radio-France, 7 January 1991. Accessed on 24 August 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

⁶⁹ "Yougoslavie soulagement à Zagreb", Le Monde (29 January 1991).

⁷⁰ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 127.

⁷¹ Both. From Indifference to Entrapment, 74.

⁷² Ibid., 73.

had been drawn to the crisis unfolding in Yugoslavia and it agreed to send a 'Troïka' to Belgrade.⁷³

Aware that the situation was escalating, Tudman wrote to Mitterrand in an appeal to turn France's "attention to the situation in Croatia and in Yugoslavia, to support a peaceful and equitable dialogue between the Yugoslav republics to encourage the creation of a democratic union." Similarly the Slovenes had been speaking to Dutch officials and had made it abundantly clear that they would become independent and called for the conflict to "internationalised". At the end of February, BiH proposed creating an "asymmetrical republic" that would allow Slovenia and Croatia to increase their autonomy whilst those republics that wished to remain in a more centralised federation could do so. However, Mitterrand instructed his government officials and Ambassadors to refrain from communicating with the republican leaders in an effort to dissuade disassociation.

Any inventive or dynamic solution to the Yugoslav crisis was soon bulldozed by the events of early March. Clashes between the Croatian police and Serb reservists in the town of Pakrac in eastern Croatia, led to accusations in Belgrade of the "Massacre of unarmed people" by a "fascist terror", whilst Zagreb called the Serbs "bandits" and their leaders "bolsheviks and manipulators." Tudman accused Serbia of attempting to destabilise Croatia and warned that "Communist forces aspire to provoke incidents that would prevent the normal rotation of the presidency and therefore the appointment of the Croatian Stipe Mesić to the head of state on the 15 May... This is why there will be many

⁷³ MAE, Conférence intergouvernemntale sur l'union politique point de presse de M. Roland Dumas, 4 February 1992. Accessed on 24 August 1992. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr.

⁷⁴ Letter from Tudiman to Mitterrand, 14 February 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/230 (1).

⁷⁵ Both. From Indifference to Entrapment, 82.

⁷⁶ "YOUGOSLAVIE: les discussions de Sarajevo", *Le Monde* (24 February 1991).

⁷⁷ Glaurdić. *Hour of Europe*, 136.

⁷⁸ "YOUGOSLAVIE Violents incidents entre la police croate et des réservistes serbes", *Le Monde* (5 March 1991).

more troubles between now and 15 May."⁷⁹ However, the next major troubles erupted not in Croatia, but in Belgrade.

Over the first quarter of 1991, opposition to Milošević had been growing amongst the liberal population of Belgrade. Led by Vuk Drašković, and his Serbian Renewal Movement, a demonstration on 9 March 1991 – attended by tens of thousands in the capital's central square *Trg Republike* – called for press freedom, liberalisation and democratisation. Milošević and Jović ordered, with the acquiescence of the Federal Presidency, the deployment of JNA forces in the Serbian capital and the arrest of Drašković. However, rather than quelling the demonstrations, it led to an escalation.

Milošević's rule was, for the first time, significantly threatened. He called on Borisav Jović – as Federal President and Commander-in-Chief – to call a 'state of emergency' through Yugoslavia; this would enable him to pressure the Slovenes and Croats with the federal army. The JNA General Veljko Kadijević, the Minister for Defence, urged the Presidency to agree. The General knew that neither East nor West would be prepared to intervene in the event of a military takeover. In discussions with JNA General Blagoje Adžić, France had made it clear that it would not be opposed to such a move. The JNA was, however, unprepared to act unconstitutionally and would not launch a coup without the required authorisation. Milošević and Jović realised that they would not be able to achieve their ethno-territorial aim of uniting all Serbs in a Serb-led Yugoslavia. The Serbian President declared that the "The Republic of Serbia will no longer recognize a single decision reached by the Presidency under existing circumstances because it would be illegal."

The March events revealed that Milošević's popularity had rapidly declined but, more pertinently, that he was prepared to use force to maintain Serb unity, even against

⁷⁹ "Yougoslavie: après les troubles de Pakrac", Le Monde (6 March 1991).

⁸⁰ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 130.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid., 139.

domestic opponents. In attempting to declare a 'state of emergency', the Serbian President had also demonstrated his desire to use the JNA to secure his military aims in Slovenia and Croatia. His opponents in Slovenia and Croatia became increasingly vigilant and made defensive preparations.

In France, the seriousness of events had not passed unnoticed. The Minister for European Affairs, Elisabeth Guigou, revealed the government's response to the events in Yugoslavia in an interview for *RMC-L'Express*. The Minister was asked "if the army intervenes to restore order, can we allow events to unwind without reacting?" Guigou's answer was indicative of France's reading of Yugoslavia's predicament:

We hope we will not get there, obviously! Firstly, we have called for this internal crisis to be regulated through dialogue and consultation. Basically, today in Yugoslavia we have the explosion of a situation that is well-known: it's a country composed of six republics, two autonomous regions, three religions. So it is a country that has always lived in a form of fragmentation. It is a country where Communism tried to, precisely, tack on an artificial unity. So it is this artificial unity we see exploding today.⁸³

The problems in Yugoslavia in fact reinforced the *Mitterrandienne* interpretation of the evolution of Eastern Europe. The rhetorical device that Yugoslavia was an experiment bound for inevitable failure would be frequently deployed over the course of the Yugoslav conflict. Dejan Jović has described this as the "Ancient Ethnic Hatred" argument and is quite right to note that it "ought to be rejected in any form." Unfortunately, this was the interpretive prism through which Mitterrand understood the crisis in the Balkans. To an extent, the media also reproduced this discourse, as *Le Monde* described Yugoslavia as a "70 year stillbirth".85

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⁸³ MAE, Mme Elisabeth Guigou, Ministre délégué aux Affairs européennes invitée du forum RMC-L'Express, 17 March 1991. Accessed on 24 August 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

⁸⁴ Jović, Dejan. "The Disintegration of Yugoslavia: A Critical Review of Explanatory Approaches", *European Journal of Social Theory* 4, no. 1 (2001), 104.

^{85 &}quot;Un mort-né de soixante-treize ans, la Yougoslavie", Le Monde (20 March 1991).

Rather, it was economic and political disenchantment with the Yugoslav state that led to political protests in the 1980s through to the early 1990s. The Serbian and Slovenian, and later Croat, elites harnessed these demonstrations against their republican rivals, constructing their respective populations as 'others'. 86 It was an extremely cynical but effective tactic which eventually ethnicised political debate. However the idea that populations in the Balkans are inherently destined to conflict with one another is intellectually lazy, and a highly questionable foundation for political policy.

Despite this point of departure, France sought to dilute the problems in Yugoslavia by incorporating its minority problems into a multilateral framework. Elisabeth Guigou revealed that: "I think that what we are seeing in Yugoslavia is a concentration of all the difficulties we see in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe... it shows us how urgent it is to create a multilateral framework where all these Central and Eastern European countries, who are ultimately confronted with the same problems can meet and try and move past and overcome minority problems". This multilateral framework was Mitterrand's idea of a European Confederation. Although Guigou suggested a means to manage the crisis, it was still predicated on the idea that Yugoslavia would remain unified.

However, Milan Kučan wrote to Mitterrand declaring the Slovenes' intention to leave the Yugoslav federation. Kučan informed Mitterrand that "Yugoslavia as it is recognised and experienced today has no future.⁸⁸" Kučan hoped "to achieve an agreed dissolution of the old state and to find a path of common interests and possibilities to a new relationship in a community of sovereign states, appropriate to the new realities, and especially a coexistence based on economic rather than ideological grounds." The Slovenes' preference for independence was clear. Nonetheless, an EC declaration at the

⁸⁶ Jović, Dejan. "The Disintegration of Yugoslavia", 104.

⁸⁷ MAE, Mme Elisabeth Guigou, Ministre délégué aux Affairs européennes invitée du forum RMC-L'Express, 17 March 1991. Accessed on 24 August 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

<sup>Note a/s Yougoslavie - Texte de la résolution slovène sur la dissolution de l'actuelle Yougoslavie (20 fevrier 1991)/ Lettre de Milan Kucan à François Mitterrand, 18 March 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/422.
Bid.</sup>

end of March maintained its preference for a unified Yugoslavia and declared that "a unified and democratic Yugoslavia has the best chance of integrating into the new Europe."90

At the end of March, Milošević and Tuđman held two private meetings, whilst the six presidents of the Republics held the first of a series of negotiations on the country's future. Whilst the republican-level discussions produced little, the results of the meeting between the Croatian and Serbian Presidents were far more significant. Tudman thought he had secured a 'gentlemen's agreement' with Milošević and that Croatia "was going to be bigger than ever". 91 This expansion would, of course, come at the expense of BiH, which sits precariously between Serbia and Croatia. 92

Amidst these events Mitterrand met the enfeebled Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Marković, whose star had somewhat fallen as he had been systematically sidelined by Serbia, Croatia and Slovenia over the preceding six months. The discussions between the two men in London on 15 April, were focussed on Yugoslavia's economic problems. 93 Although Marković's economic reforms had made notable progress, the refusal of the republics to contribute to the federal fund had undermined the Prime Minister's efforts. Events had quickly overtaken the Prime Minister over the course of the spring of 1991 and his influence over Yugoslavia's future had become negligible.

In spite of the 'gentlemen's agreement', tensions continued to heighten in Croatia as the Krajina Serbs clashed with the Croatian police force in Plitvice National Park. In response, the Krajina Serbs and the newly formed Serb Autonomous Oblast of Slavonia declared their secession from Croatia claiming to be an integral part of Serbia. The JNA positioned itself as an interposition force, but it was evidently a foil for the Krajina Serb

⁹⁰ MAE, Declaration des Douze sur la Yougoslavie, 27 March 1991. Accessed on 24 August 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr.

⁹¹ Silber and Little. Death of Yugoslavia, 144.

⁹² See Chapter Four.

⁹³ Note pour Monsieur Le Président: Entretien avec M. MARCOVIC à Londres le 15 avril - Relations économiques, 12 April 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/424.

police chief Milan Martić and the Krajina Serbs to prepare for war. The Krajina Serbs ramped up their defences, which resulted in a violent clash between Serb irregulars and Croat police forces in the town of Borovo Selo on 2 May; twelve Croats were killed and over twenty wounded. It became quickly apparent that the worthiness of the 'gentlemen's agreement' between Milošević and Tuđman was commensurate to their own levels of 'gentlemanliness': non-existent. The Croats and Serbs started to clash openly after the events of Borovo Selo and Milošević's supporters blocked the ascension of the Croat Borisav Jović to the Yugoslav Presidency on 15 May. Four days later, Croatia voted overwhelmingly in favour of independence in a referendum. The significance of which was entirely obvious: Yugoslavia had *de facto* ceased to exist. 94

The Quai started to consider the possible outcomes of the dissolution of Yugoslavia. Jacques Faure, believed that: "1. the maintenance of the federal state appeared doubtful 2. the collapse of the country - with violent jolts - could surface at any moment... but is not inevitable; 3. A confederation is not impossible." However during the visit of Ante Marković on 23 and 24 May, France's foreign policy players publicly behaved as though Yugoslavia was not experiencing an existential crisis. Guigou told Marković that:

France understands and encourages your efforts. They constitute probably a reasonable basis of an agreement between the peoples of Yugoslavia. France is convinced, this you know, that it is up to the Yugoslavs and them alone, through political dialogue, to stay away from internal and external interference and determine the future shape of their state. This richly diverse unified state is the partner that Europe expects. It is also indispensable to a balanced development in the Balkans and the continuation of inter-Balkan cooperation. ⁹⁶

Marković still clung to the feint hope that Yugoslavia could be salvaged but it

⁹⁴ Silber and Little. Death of Yugoslavia, 155.

⁹⁵ Note a/s: situation en Yougoslavie, 11 May 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CDM/48.

⁹⁶ MAE, Toast prononcé par le Ministre d'état de la ville et de aménagement du territoire, lors du dejeuner offert en l'honneur du Premier Ministre de la République Socialiste Fédérative de Yougoslavie, 23 May 1991. Accessed on 24 August 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

would require far greater assistance from the international community than it had seen theretofore. As Pierre Morel noted, France "had spared no political gestures of support to Yugoslavia." ⁹⁷ Indeed, France's support was for a unified Yugoslavia, which could then be better incorporated into Europe. The Prime Minister Edith Cresson asserted that "Yugoslavia cannot be part of Europe unless she remains united." However, Marković had hoped for more concrete support from France and made an impassioned plea for greater assistance:

The factors of disintegration are at work in Yugoslavia, factors which are mostly a cause of the external economic sphere but that have direct and powerful repercussions. We understand the reasons for the international community's concern. Equally, we understand that a greater integration of Yugoslavia in the European Community, which we seek, is dependent on a number of conditions. However, this should not bring into question at this moment the understanding, solidarity and material aid of the international community and France towards us. Moreover, it seems to us that the principle of this aid and support could have a decisive importance for the stability of Yugoslavia.⁹⁹

Marković hoped to negotiate an aid package for Yugoslavia and thought it would be a clear political message to reinforce the authority of the central government *vis-à-vis* the republics. France, it was noted, had supported without reservation the principle position that had been stopped by the European Council in Dublin, which recognised the calling of all Central European countries (except Albania) to benefit from an association agreement. France had also demanded that the commission begin formal negotiations no later than the beginning of the next year. Although France was extending support to Yugoslavia, it had certainly not singled it out as a special case and it would be treated as

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⁹⁷ NOTE POUR MONSIEUR LE PRESIDENT : Relations économiques avec la Yougoslavie - Votre entretien M. Markovic (vendredi 24 mai à 17 h 30), 24 May 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/424.

⁹⁸ Wood, Pia-Christina. "France and the Post Cold War Order: The Case of Yugoslavia", 131.

⁹⁹ ALLOCUTION PRONOCEE PAR LE PREMIER MINISTRE MONSIEUR ANTE MARKOVIC, 23 May 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/424.

¹⁰⁰ NOTE POUR MONSIEUR LE PRESIDENT: Relations économiques avec la Yougoslavie - Votre entretien M. Markovic (vendredi 24 mai à 17 h 30), 24 May 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/424.

part of the evolution in Eastern Europe. Mitterrand's approach was to create a framework for the evolution of Eastern Europe, and this equally applied to Yugoslavia.

At the end of May, the President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, alongside the President of the European Council, Jacques Santer, undertook a mission to Belgrade. They offered the Federal Government economic assistance if Yugoslavia could satisfy four criteria: (1) a single market, currency and central bank; (2) a single army; (3) a common foreign policy; and (4) shared human and minority rights system. However, Yugoslavia had already passed the point of no return on many of these points and the proposal was dismissed.

Although France, and other Western European countries, continued to express their preference for a unified Yugoslavia, the newly reunified Germany was becoming increasingly concerned by the evolution of events. Mitterrand and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl sent a joint message to the Yugoslavs calling on them to accept the Europeans' conditions and to relaunch political dialogue. The French alterations to the declaration were few, but demonstrated French priorities. France wanted to ensure that the issue of minority rights was included in the speech, which had been excluded: the German draft read, "the strict respect of Human rights for all citizens", whilst the French read "the strict respect for Human rights and guarantees for the minorities". France's alterations demonstrated one of its major preoccupations: minority rights. Indeed, Mitterrand had long pondered whether, in fact, a unified Yugoslavia was compatible with "the respect for minorities", having previously told Borisav Jović that, "that's the whole problem."

¹⁰² Glaurdić. Hour of Europe, 135.

¹⁰³ Ibid

MAE, Message de M. François Mitterrand, Président de la République, et du Chancelier Helmut Kohl, adressé à tous les membres de la présidence collégiale de Yougoslavie, au Premier Ministre Ante Marković et à toutes les républiques Yougoslaves, 29 May 1991. Accessed on 24 August 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

¹⁰⁵ Message du Président Mitterrand et du Chancelier fédéral Helmut Kohl adressé à tous les membres de la Présidence collégiale de Yougoslavie, au Premier minsitre Ante Markovic et à toutes les républiques yougoslaves, 29 May 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/422.

¹⁰⁶ Védrine. Les mondes, 604.

Slovenia's secession from Yugoslavia therefore presented a lesser problem than Croatia's. A mostly ethnically homogenous republic, the Yugoslav authorities revealed that they had conceived a strategy to allow for the eventual exit of Slovenia from the federation on 26 June 1992. The JNA would be used to reinforce the external borders of Yugoslavia, but also to reinforce the power of the federation to the remaining republics. As such it would send a clear message to Croatia and BiH. Nonetheless, Ante Marković continued to hope that the European Community would dissuade all the republics from the temptation of separatism.¹⁰⁷

The international community was still not prepared to relinquish the idea of a unified Yugoslavia, which was reaffirmed one week before Slovenia's declaration of independence. The CSCE Council declared that it was committed to democracy, unity and territorial integrity in Yugoslavia. Germany, however, was beginning to argue for the recognition of Slovenia and in a meeting of the EC's twelve Foreign Ministers on 23 June, Hans-Dietrich Genscher appealed for the immediate recognition of Slovenia and Croatia; he stood alone. The EC would not extend international recognition to Slovenia and Croatia and neither would the US who, like France, thought that recognition "would constitute a grave danger for Europe." Roland Dumas gave a clear indication of France's response:

This is a region that throughout its history has been a powder keg, the Balkans. It is here where World War I originated. We believe that any dismemberment of the Yugoslav state risks leading to a period of instability, conflicts, that could lead to the resurgence of old quarrels, local internecine strife, and for now, throughout the West and everywhere in the world, the views that are

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¹⁰⁷ TD DIPLOMATIE 12193, 7 June 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/424.

¹⁰⁸ Glaurdić. Hour of Europe, 167.

¹⁰⁹ Védrine. Les mondes, 606.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

expressed are in favour of maintaining the federal state... Slovenia and Croatia are saying that they want to try and find a new institutional arrangement.¹¹¹

The US Secretary of State James Baker publicly declared that the US would not recognise Slovenia and was "ready to help Yugoslavia on the condition that its internal situation normalises." Similarly, Jacques Attali, a former adviser to Mitterrand and the President of the European Bank for Development and Reconstruction, told Belgrade that he was favourable to the maintenance of a unified Yugoslavia. He believed that "divisions and scissions are synonyms of under-development" adding that "If Yugoslavia wants to cooperate with us, we will help." 113

On 25 June 1991 both Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence and sovereignty. The following day Milan Kučan wrote to Mitterrand to announce the adoption of the "Constitutional Charter on the Independence and Sovereignty of Slovenia". In his letter he stated that "The Republic of Slovenia wishes to develop and promote profitable relations with your country, founded on respect and mutual interests." He continued: "the Republic of Slovenia wishes to establish diplomatic relations with your country as soon as possible." However, Slovenia, and Croatia, would wait over six months before France, and the EC, would grant *de jure* international recognition.

'The Phony War'

True to France's diplomatic dispatch at the beginning of June, the JNA moved to secure Yugoslavia's borders under the authorisation of Marković; without a President or supreme commander of the JNA, the decision fell to the Prime Minister: Ante Marković. The

¹¹¹ MAE, Interview accordée par M. Roland Dumas, Ministre d;état, Ministre des Affaires étrangères àRTL, 27 June 1991. Accessed on 24 August 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.
A RTL.

¹¹² "YOUGOSLAVIE: la visite de M. Baker à Belgrade, *Le Monde* (23 June 1991).

^{113 &}quot;M. Attali estime que 'les scissions sont synonymes de sous-développement", Le Monde (23 June 1991)

¹¹⁴ Letter from Milan Kučan to François Mitterrand announcing the adoption of the Consitutional Charter on the Independence and soveriegnty of Slovenia, 26 June 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/422.

Slovenian President, Milan Kučan ordered the Slovenian territorial forces to surround the JNA and cut off supplies to their barracks. On the afternoon of 27 June, the Slovene forces shot down a helicopter over Ljubljana whilst it was en route to resupply a nearby barracks. Slovenia had declared war on the JNA.¹¹⁵

The US abdicated all responsibility as the US Secretary of State James Baker felt the Europeans should take charge arguing that, "they will screw it up and this will teach them a lesson and teach them to burden share." Europe was overly confident in its ability to solve the crisis in Yugoslavia. Fortuitously, the EC Council had scheduled a meeting for 28 June and there decided to dispatch a "Troïka" of EC Foreign Ministers to Yugoslavia: Jacques Poos, Gianni de Michelis and Hans van den Broek. At the European Council meeting Mitterrand told the trio of Foreign Ministers that they "must remind the authorities in Belgrade that we are in favour of the unity of Yugoslavia and that if the violence continues, community aid will be suspended." The Luxembourg Foreign Minister Jacques Poos optimistically declared "This is the hour of Europe, not the Americans!"

During the course of the European Council meeting, the Troïka flew to Belgrade and then Zagreb to hold emergency meetings. The trio demanded: (1) a resolution of the presidential crisis; (2) the suspension of the declarations of independence for a period of three months; and (3) the army's return to its barracks. The Troïka returned victoriously to the EC Council meeting, boasting of their success. Mitterrand was not as triumphalist and recalled that the EC was monitoring the situation and its economic aid was dependant upon this monitoring. The President told the Council that "Only force or law can prevent

¹¹⁵ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 174.

¹¹⁶ Glaurdić. Hour of Europe, 182.

¹¹⁷ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 209.

¹¹⁸ "Après la 'suspension' des déclaration d'indépendance slovène et croate", *Le Monde* (1 July 1991).

¹¹⁹ Gow. Lack of Will, 51.

¹²⁰ MAE, Conférence de presse de M. François Mitterrand, Président de la République, à l'issue du Conseil Européen, 29 June 1991. Accessed on 24 August 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

certain federal republics from moving towards autonomy. It needs to be the law." Mitterrand's caution was well-placed: almost immediately the ceasefire failed.

On 30 June Milan Kučan sent a telegram to Mitterrand to announce that the JNA had violated the EC Troïka brokered ceasefire. He appealed to the French President: "In order to avoid furtherbloodshed [sic] and the brutaldestabilization [sic] of central Europe, it is most important for the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Croatia to begiven [sic] international politivcal [sic] support, and in this connection, the earliest international recognition of the Republic of Slovenia and the Republic of Croatia is of crucial importance." Recognition of Slovenia and Croatia would transform the JNA into an invasion force under international law and the Iraq example, just one year previously, had demonstrated the international community's response to invasion. The scrambled nature of the telegram only reinforced the seriousness of the situation in Slovenia.

The Troïka flew back to Belgrade on 30 June chastened by their previous experience. The EC also employed an arms embargo against the whole of Yugoslavia in an attempt to demonstrate a unity of purpose behind the Troïka. In Belgrade, the three Foreign Ministers pressured the Federal Presidency to elect Stipe Mesić as its President, having blocked it since 15 May. Milošević, who needed to bring the army back under civilian control, tactfully made it seem as though this would be a major concession on his behalf. Therefore, Hans van den Broek declared that he would make a public statement on behalf of the EC in support of Yugoslavia's unity; Europe would be supporting Milošević's nationalist programme! With Mesić installed as President, the Troïka once more left Yugoslavia. Again the ceasefire failed to hold and the fiercest fighting theretofore erupted between the JNA and Slovenia's TO.¹²³

Amidst this renewed fighting, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the German Foreign

¹²¹ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 210.

¹²² Telex sent from Kučan to Mitterrand, Ljubljana, June 30 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/422.

¹²³ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 179.

Minister, called on the CSCE to establish an observation mission to ensure that the ceasefire agreed on 1 July was respected. Genscher had just returned from a CSCE mission to Yugoslavia, as Germany held the chairmanship of the organisation. An action under its auspices suited Germany who would be better equipped to influence policy there rather than under the Dutch Presidency in the EC. However, as Yugoslavia itself was a member of the organisation decisions could not be made against its wishes. ¹²⁴ The CSCE was essentially a dead-end forum for dealing with the Yugoslav crisis at this point.

Roland Dumas called on the Yugoslavs to respect the principles of the CSCE and the Paris Charter, amidst "the current tragedy that could wake old divisions and conflicts from the past." The Foreign Minister also recalled that "France recognises two essential principles that are maintaining the integrity of states and self-determination of peoples." These two issues would be highly problematic in solving the Yugoslav crisis, particularly with regard to Croatia and BiH.

Pierre Morel, diplomatic adviser to Mitterrand at the Elysée, was talking extensively with France's partners about the Community's next move. Genscher, who had been in Yugoslavia, relayed a message from Stipe Mesić that there had been a military *coup d'état* in Belgrade and argued that the EC should offer immediate recognition to Slovenia and Croatia. Indeed, the French Defence Minister noted that all the major command posts in the JNA had been given over to Serbs in the preceding days. ¹²⁷ In the face of this Serb attempt to hegemonise Yuoglsavia's federal apparatus, the French Ambassador in Germany, Serge Boidevaix, reflected that Bonn was increasingly under pressure from public opinion to recognise the two republics. Genscher was in regular telephone contact with the two republics and sought to ensure they would cooperate with

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¹²⁴ Libal. *Limits of Persuasion*, 17.

¹²⁵ "Au conseil des ministres M. Mitterrand insiste sur la mobilisation du gouvernement pour l'emploi", *Le Monde* (4 July 1991).

¹²⁶Ibid

¹²⁷ NOTE POUR LE PRESIDENT DE LA REPUBLIQUE; objet: Situation en Yougoslavie, 4 July 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/12041.

the EC.¹²⁸ Morel advised Boidevaix to underline the fact that "bringing the unity of action of the Twelve into question will have grave consequences." As such Genscher kept his CSCE partners abreast of what was occurring in the EC negotiations, not wanting the EC to become the main forum for international mediation of the crisis.

Significantly the Dutch Foreign Minister, Hans van den Broek – with whom Genscher had disagreed profoundly over German unification – was opposed to the recognition of both republics. The Netherlands held the Presidency of the EC for the second six months of 1991 and it would therefore play a significant role in the Community's policy. This was a recurring feature throughout the crisis: the Community (or later Union) member that held the Presidency held significant sway over the direction of policy. Similarly, the US shared the Dutch preference for a unified Yugoslavia as Deputy National Security Adviser Robert Gates told Morel that "the US continues to desire a unified Yugoslavia". Its recent change in tone, which had grown firmer, regarding the Federal Authorities was only intended to demonstrate to Belgrade that you could not command unity through the force of arms. 132

In light of the above, and given France's own priorities, Roland Dumas advised that France should argue for prioritising a ceasefire, call for the withdrawal of forces and a moratorium on independence to restore political dialogue. In the meantime, the EC should not alter its position and reaffirm the Troïka's mandate. Moreover, Dumas envisaged sending observers under the auspices of the Western European Union (WEU), which would require authorisation from the CSCE in its forthcoming meeting. The French Foreign Minister envisaged two possible configurations for this observation initiative: a

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¹²⁸ Libal. Limits of Persuasion, 17.

¹²⁹ NOTE POUR LE PRESIDENT DE LA REPUBLIQUE; objet: Situation en Yougoslavie, 4 July 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/12041.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Ibid.

lightly equipped team or an intervention force with armoured vehicles that could be in situ within eight days. 134

At the meeting of the EC Foreign Ministers on 5 July, the Community demanded an immediate ceasefire threatening the immediate recognition of Slovenia *and* Croatia if the Belgrade authorities failed to comply. To demonstrate their determination, the Community placed an arms embargo on Yugoslavia and froze economic aid to the country. France immediately undertook the necessary steps to implement this decision. During the meeting of the Foreign Ministers, Dumas, and British Foreign Minister Douglas Hurd, sought to contain Genscher and secure a three month moratorium on independence. Notwithstanding, they also made important concessions towards the German position: primarily the threat of recognition, the right to self-determination, and acknowledgment that a "new situation" had arisen. The Troïka was once more dispatched to Yugoslavia and concluded an agreement with the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes on the island of Brioni. The EC would send a Monitoring Mission (ECMM) to Yugoslavia whilst negotiations on the future of Yugoslavia would take place over the following three months.

As Hans van den Broek secured the Brioni agreement, Tudman warned: "congratulations, but beware: this was Slovenia, but the next one is Croatia." Indeed, what the Europeans failed to realise was that the Slovenian conflict represented the last violent jolts of an army still attached to a federal and unified Yugoslavia. Chastened and embarrassed by its experiences in Slovenia, it would thenceforth be far more pliable with regards to Milošević's goal to create a Greater Serbia in coordination with the Krajina Serbs.

¹³⁴ Ibid

¹³⁵ MAE, Yougoslavie: communiqué de l'Hôtel Matignon, 6 July 1991. Accessed on 24 August 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

¹³⁶ Libal. Limits of Persuasion, 19.

¹³⁷ Both. From Indifference to Entrapment, 106.

'The Yugoslav Crisis could break the European Community'

With the conclusion of hostilities in Slovenia, Jacques Blot, the Director for Europe at the Quai d'Orsay, undertook a visit to Yugoslavia. During his conversations there, all his interlocutors expressed the opinion that there was no longer the basis for a federal Yugoslavia. Indeed, the Foreign Minister, Budomir Lončar, thought that the best that could be hoped for was a union of sovereign states, although he added there was no longer a basis for dialogue. Therefore, Blot thought it likely that Milošević and Tuđman were secretly studying a readjustment of boundaries. 139

Nonetheless, the priority was still preventing a resurgence of war in Slovenia and Blot thought that France could "make discrete contacts with the federal army wherein there are officers who were trained in France." On military matters, Blot also revealed that Jacques Delors had spoken with the NATO Secretary General Manfred Wörner who said that NATO was "neither ready nor prepared to act." This was still clearly a European problem.

France was certainly concerned about the implications of the Yugoslav crisis for Europe. Accordingly the head of the CAP, Jean-Marie Guéhenno, reported on the consequences of the crisis in Yugoslavia for the construction of Europe warning that it could lead to the "lebanonisation" of Europe. With this suspicion in mind, and aware that the Krajina Serbs would not live in an independent Croatia with only a minority statute for protection, the Dutch Foreign Ministry suggested that the EC should consider border changes. The suggestion was dismissed entirely out of hand by the Community. 143

Therefore, Guéhenno suggested a European effort to replace the federal state as

¹³⁸ NOTE POUR LE PRESIDENT DE LA REPUBLIQUE; OBJET: Yougoslavie. Compte rendu de la mission du Directeur d'Europe en Yougoslavie de 9 au 12 juillet, 15 July 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CDM/48.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Note A/S: LA YOUGOSLAVIE ET LA CONSTRUCTION POLITIQUE EUROPEENE, 19 July 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CDM/48.

¹⁴³ Both. From Indifference to Entrapment, 107.

arbiter and guarantor, arguing that "a new European authority that would take up these two responsibilities is, without doubt, the most audacious option, but perhaps the least disagreeable." Guéhenno suggested that the Community could play a similar role to that of an administrator of an insolvent company. If a purely Yugoslav solution failed then "this may be the role that the Community will have to take the risk of assuming", only on the conditions that it is explicitly requested by all Yugoslav parties and approved by the CSCE. Such a solution would require a greater European involvement and would involve either the recreation of a federal Yugoslav authority or integration into a confederation under the aegis of the Community. Throughout the interim period, Guéhenno noted that an *ad hoc* European body would have to be created to arbitrate disputes between the republics and guarantee the individual rights of the minorities that felt threatened. The Community would therefore need to reinforce their dialogue with an increased military presence on the ground, the responsibility for which would fall to the WEU. 146

Guéhenno believed that such a solution would speed up the devolution process at the heart of the European Community and reconcile the two conflicting tendencies that trouble Europe, "a more and more pressing claim to identity... and moving beyond nation states". He concluded:

The Yugoslav crisis can break the European Community. It can also help it take a decisive step, if the Germans and French come together to build on this important subject, a common position, that would neither be rushing ahead in the recognition of minorities or the preservation of the status quo, but a revolutionary acceleration of the process of the devolution of powers by which we go beyond the logic of nationalities: we will only stabilise the borders by accepting a new distribution of powers. ¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁴ Note A/S : LA YOUGOSLAVIE ET LA CONSTRUCTION POLITIQUE EUROPEENE, 19 July 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CDM/48.

146 Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

This report seemingly reaffirmed the President's thinking or shaped policy as many of its suggested measures became policy. Therefore, following Guéhenno's suggestions and with Croatian Serb forces expanding the territory of the Krajina throughout the summer of 1991, François Mitterrand proposed the creation of a WEU 'interposition force' on 25 July.

Following the conclusion of hostilities in Slovenia, the JNA had retreated into Serb-held territories in Croatia. Following an escalation of attacks targeted against ethnically heterogeneous areas in the second half of July, the French President kept warning the Serbs that "you cannot make a federation through force." Therefore, France envisaged a European interposition force being deployed to Croatia, still in the vain hope of salvaging the Federation. Mitterrand envisaged the WEU becoming "the full-blown defence arm of the EC" but his proposal was rejected by the British and the Dutch who feared the effect it could have on NATO. 151 Nonetheless, General Philippe Morillon was tasked with studying such a force's implementation. 152 Indeed, diminishing NATO influence was an important aim of an initiative intended to find a *European* solution to a *European* problem. This was an integral part of Mitterrand's post-Cold War vision for an independent Europe.

A solution was becoming an increasingly pressing matter as fighting continued to escalate at the end of July. At an EC meeting on 29 July, Dumas and Genscher convinced their counterparts to quadruple the ECMM and extend it to Croatia, although it required Belgrade's authorisation. Therefore, on 2 August, the EC once more dispatched the Troïka to Belgrade. It was entirely futile as the trio proposed a similar ceasefire to the one

¹⁴⁹ Védrine. Les mondes, 609.

¹⁵⁰ Gow. Lack of Will, 162.

¹⁵¹ Both.. From Indifference to Entrapment, 111.

¹⁵² Morillon. Croire et Oser, 11.

¹⁵³ Glaurdić. Hour of Europe, 198.

employed in Slovenia, which Milošević rejected out of hand. Although the federal authorities and the Croats accepted the proposal, the Serbian President reportedly told the three Foreign Ministers that "diplomats, businessmen and foreign tourists are always welcome in our country, soldiers, on the other hand, are asked to stay at home." Without ECMM observation, international support, or support from Slovenia or BiH, Tuđman's Croatia had been isolated and was set against Serbia and the JNA.

Fighting in early August, particularly in the region of Western Slavonia, was punctuated by sporadic ceasefires, each new pause offering the Europeans hope that they could solve the conflict. France sought to regulate the conflict through two bodies, the WEU and the UNSC, and continued to encourage dialogue between the conflicting sides. Indeed, France proposed a move towards the UNSC, but the US blocked it. Indeed, France therefore proposed "rapid consultations of the populations... under strict international control. Indeed it a peace conference. However, the situation was evolving for the establishment of a peace conference. However, the situation was evolving far more rapidly on the ground than would allow for such an initiative. On 12 August, a new Serb Autonomous *Oblast* was proclaimed in Western Slavonia and a week later the JNA commenced operations against the eastern towns of Vukovar and Osijek. This offensive created a wave of refugees fleeing the conflict and by the end of August only 15,000 of Vukovar's 50,000 population remained in the town.

The failure of the August Coup in the USSR afforded the West a greater freedom of manoeuvre in Yugoslavia. The Europeans had been cautious *vis-à-vis* Yugoslavia because they were reluctant to destabilise Gorbachev's position in the USSR. But the failure of the

154 "L'instransigence de Belgrade", *Le Monde* (6 August 1991).

¹⁵⁵ "Au conseil des ministres La France préconise une 'consultation rapide' des populations concernées en Yougoslavie", *Le Monde* (8 August 1991).

¹⁵⁶ Initiatives Françaises pour la Yougoslavie, date unknown, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/203.

¹⁵⁷ "Quelle 'consultation populaire'?", Le Monde (9 August 1991).

¹⁵⁸ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 194.

Coup removed the same conservatives in Moscow who had been supporting Belgrade. The EC planned to release a statement regarding the Yugoslav crisis at its forthcoming General Affairs Council (GAC) meeting on 28 August.

Ahead of the meeting, the Dutch drafted a statement strongly condemning the Serbian republic and the JNA, and proposed a settlement which would exclude Serbia and Montenegro from the negotiations. 160 The meeting itself was fractious and highlighted quite how far the EC would have to go to construct its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Roland Dumas criticised the Dutch draft and considered it far too "anti-Serbian"; he was supported by Britain and Greece. Spain, Luxembourg and Ireland all agreed with the Dutch analysis but suggested the tone of the statement should be modified. Denmark, Belgium, Portugal, Italy and the Commission all supported the Dutch draft. 161 This placed a great pressure on the German Foreign Minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, whose own views aligned largely with the Dutch statement. However, ahead of the GAC, Dumas and Genscher had coordinated their positions, hoping to present a strong Franco-German front. Mitterrand and Kohl had long been working towards a unified Europe. Therefore Genscher could not sacrifice the work towards a CFSP for his personal feelings. 162 Genscher proposed the creation of an EC-brokered peace conference and Dumas suggested the creation of an arbitration commission. 163 The Arbitration Commission would be led by François Mitterrand's former Justice Minister and President of the Constitutional Council of France, Robert Badinter. The lawyer had written to Mitterrand two days previously to suggest such an initiative. 164 By the end of the GAC, the ministers had reached a compromise that incorporated a mollified version of the Dutch

¹⁵⁹ Glaurdić. Hour of Europe, 206.

¹⁶⁰ Both. From Indifference to Entrapment, 116.

¹⁶¹ Ibid

¹⁶² Bozo, Mitterrand, the End of the Cold War, and German Unification, 312-16.

¹⁶³ Both. From Indifference to Entrapment, 116.

¹⁶⁴ INITIATIVES FRANCAISES POUR LA YOUGOSLAVIE, date unknown, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/203.

statement and created an EC Peace Conference and arbitration commission. However, it did single out the Serbs for criticism and condemned their attempts to present a *fait accompli*. The Yugoslavs would need to agree to, and observe, a ceasefire before the Conference would start its work. The EC would send a special representative – the former Dutch Ambassador to Paris, Henry Wyndaendts – and Hans van den Broek to Belgrade to negotiate the terms of the international mediation. In support of the EC's initiative, President Mitterrand would hold talks with Tudman and Milošević in the course of the two following days.

In his meeting with Tuđman, Mitterrand was on sharp form. When Tuđman accused the Serbs of attempting to re-establish Communism in Yugoslavia, Mitterrand responded, "I didn't know that the Serbs were such dreamers!" The President would not be duped by the rhetoric of either of his interlocutors over the course of their meetings. However, in a more serious refrain, Mitterrand told his Croatian counterpart that Europe was not fundamentally against Croatian independence, but "there must be a treaty, an agreement on borders and arbitration could help you." The problem, of course, was that the Serbs of Croatia did not want to live in an independent Croatia and Mitterrand therefore sought guarantees for the twelve & of Serbs in Tuđman's republic. However, Tuđman wished to maintain Croatia's republican borders, which Mitterrand conceded was "perfectly legitimate."

In his meeting with Milošević, the French President was treated to a similar diatribe but, this time, on resurgent Croatian fascism. Mitterrand had a clear warning for Milošević:

To settle the problem between you and Croatia through force, I fear it will not stop there. We must have a legal international settlement. In 1991, the

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¹⁶⁵ Both. From Indifference to Entrapment, 116.

¹⁶⁶ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 220.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid

¹⁶⁸ Védrine. Les mondes, 610.

¹⁶⁹ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 220.

European states are not ready to fight the war of 1914 again. You cannot restart it. If you are the strongest, you might impose your will at first, *but then you will be isolated*. We must resort to a court of international arbitration [emphasis added]. 170

In Yugoslavia, Wynaendts had begun his efforts to secure agreements from Zagreb and Belgrade to the EC's peace plans. The Dutch Ambassador quickly secured an agreement in Zagreb but talks were difficult in Belgrade. The main sticking point was the deployment of EC monitors; Belgrade saw them as an infringement upon Yugoslav sovereignty and would not welcome German or Italians in such a capacity owing to the historical connotations. Once Wynaendts had assured his interlocutors that they would be deployed in a purely civilian role the Serbian bloc in the Federal Presidency acquiesced. ¹⁷¹ Seemingly Mitterrand's intervention helped to motivate Milošević who convinced Jović to sign by telling him "ne izolovati" (no isolation). ¹⁷² The ECCY would start on 7 September.

However, despite having secured an agreement for the two parties to begin internationally brokered negotiations, France remained wary of its European partners. The same day that the EC released its statement condemning the Serb attempts to produce a *fait accompli*, the French Ambassador, Michel Chatelais, in Belgrade wrote to Dumas. The purpose of the note was to inform the Foreign Minister of the relationship between the FRG and Croatia. Chatelais believed that the FRG's policy *vis-à-vis* Croatia had encouraged Tuđman to harden his position, which, the federal authorities had argued, prevented them from softening theirs.¹⁷³ If the ECCY were to succeed it would thus have to play a careful balancing act between Croatian and Slovenian aspiration and Serbian inflexibility with regards to Bosnian and Croat Serb minorities. This Serb obstinacy would prove insurmountable.

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¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 221.

¹⁷¹ Wynaendts, Henry. L'Engrenage (Paris: Editions Denoël, 1993), 76.

¹⁷² Ibid

¹⁷³ Letter from Michel Chatelais to Roland Dumas; A/s : La RFA et La Croatie, vu de Belgrade, 28 August 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CDM/48.

Ahead of the proposed start of the ECCY, the Serbs supported by the JNA continued to take control of territory in Croatia in an attempt to strengthen Milošević's hand. The two forces established an extremely effective military strategy: the JNA would utilise heavy weaponry in support of conscripts and local Serb irregulars. 174 Shortly thereafter, Tudman mobilised Croatia's nascent forces to blockade JNA barracks and requisition arms.

International condemnation of the Serbs understandably grew and the inauguration of the ECCY came under threat. 175 In Germany, Hans-Dietrich Genscher was facing evermore increasing pressure to recognise Croatia and Slovenia and indeed threatened recognition if Belgrade did not negotiate in good faith. ¹⁷⁶ Similarly, the French government was coming under increasing domestic pressure to condemn the Serbs. Although Mitterrand was hurt by the accusations that he was "proserbe", he stuck steadfastly to his 'even-handed' approach.¹⁷⁷

In a Cabinet meeting on 4 September 1991, Mitterrand reflected that the aim of his meetings with Milošević and Tuđman was "to see - through mediation, dialogue and arbitration – everything we could still get out of Yugoslavia. That's the problem, rather than knowing who is the good and who is the bad."¹⁷⁸ The President rejected the criticisms of "half of France [who], for domestic political reasons, support the policy of foreign countries and finds German political influence excellent and values French friendships and influence in this region for nothing."179 The debate around Yugoslavia was becoming increasingly moralised, which overlooked the complexity of the situation. Mitterrand sought to go beyond the moralism of the crisis and establish a European modus operandi to

¹⁷⁴ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 190.

¹⁷⁵ Glaurdić. Hour of Europe, 209.

¹⁷⁶ Libal. Limits of Persuasion, 45; "YOUGOSLAVIE Controverse en Allemagne sur l'éventuelle reconnaissance de la Croatie", Le Monde (30 August 1991).

¹⁷⁷ Morje Howard, Marc and Lise. "Raison d'état or Raison populaire? The Influence of Public Opinion on France's Bosnia Policy", in International Public Opinion and the Bosnia Crisis, eds. Richard Sobel et al. (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2003), 109-111.

¹⁷⁸ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 222.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid

European crises that had the potential to proliferate in the east of the continent.

Ahead of the opening session of the ECCY – which would be chaired by the former British Foreign Secretary, Lord Peter Carrington - France produced a draft memorandum of its Yugoslav policy. It consisted of seven points that were a perfect encapsulation of Mitterrand's 'even-handed' approach based upon dialogue, international law and mediation. Its first point noted that the federation could only exist through agreement and could not be brought about by force. Secondly, France promoted all possibilities of a negotiated settlement that respected the desires of the population so that they can preserve a link between the republics. Its third point recalled the need for a peaceful dialogue based on democracy, law, respect for human rights and guarantees for minorities. It also called for the right to self-determination but, at the same time, added that Yugoslavia should be able to continue to exist for those who wished to remain associated. In the case of a republic disassociating itself from the Federation, it would have to take into account: (1) the interests of the other republics; (2) domestic law for specific provisions on borders and minorities; and (3) defining terms for international recognition. Finally, France would continue to privilege action through the EC before other bodies. 180 It was a fair and sensible policy that would, had there been the political wills between the parties to settle. have presented a peaceful solution. Crucially though, there was no desire in Belgrade to resolve the conflict in this way. Roland Dumas announced France's Yugoslavia policy at a press conference ahead of the opening session of the ECCY. 181

France's proposals would soon be put to the test following an acrimonious opening session of the ECCY. Carrington quickly realised that reconstructing Yugoslavia would be a fool's errand and he began constructing a plan that would be based around the republic's six constituent units. The republics would be granted as much sovereignty as they desired

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¹⁸⁰ Projet de "Memorandum Français sur la Yougoslavie", 7 September 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CDM/48.

¹⁸¹ MAE, Conférence de la Haye, Déclaration de M. Roland Dumas, Ministre d'état, Ministre des Affaires étrangères, 7 September 1991. Accessed on 24 August 1991. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

and could choose which inter-republican institutions they wished to participate in. It would be a Yugoslavia à la carte. 182 However, it sugested that the republican borders would take on an international character. Minorities would then be left in a state with no federal guarantor of their rights. This was France's primary concern.

On 11 September, Mitterrand hosted the British Prime Minister, John Major, at the Élysée where the two discussed Yugoslavia. They were both concerned that, in the face of continually growing public pressure, Germany would move towards recognition sooner than their European partners. The two leaders discussed the need to curb German enthusiasm for recognition and they shared their worries over the danger that Yugoslavia posed for European unity. Mitterrand told Major that, "I rely a great deal on your country. We are bound to the Germans, but on this issue we have a problem." ¹⁸³ Major thought that, "It's like a house of cards, if Germany gets involved it will touch everyone. Use your influence over the Germans. We will do so too." The President joked that, if the ECCY failed, "the Germans will send their army to Croatia and the English and us [France] will send ours to Serbia." ¹⁸⁵ Seemingly, the President's humour was lost on the extremely serious John Major who rejected the notion of sending troops to Yugoslavia. 186

That same day Mitterrand held a press conference at the Élysée on matters of foreign policy; Yugoslavia featured prominently. Mitterrand bemoaned the demise of the Balkan state. Although he thought Slovenia and Croatia would achieve independence, he, somewhat provocatively suggested that Croatia was seeking to do it through force of arms. The President pondered: "How can we, European countries, who have strong links with the people of this region and who were at the origin of the creation of Yugoslavia after World War I, how could we be indifferent to the fate of this country, which, in its way, which is

¹⁸² Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 210.

¹⁸³ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 225.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid

not necessarily ours, has maintained a certain common reality and political reality in this part of Europe?"¹⁸⁷ He recalled a quote from Otto von Bismarck following the Prussian defeat of Austria at Sadowa to explain the difficulties experienced by Western Europeans in the Balkans: "They [the Austro-Hungarians] know what to with the South Slavs. Not us."¹⁸⁸ Mitterrand concluded by warning that Europe must not allow a "kind of permanent guerrilla war between countries who have been at the origin of many great wars that we've been involved in."¹⁸⁹

The following day Tudman wrote to Mitterrand regarding the President's press conference. After the EC's declaration on 28 August, Croatia had felt encouraged to escalate their military efforts in the hope that European intervention would be forthcoming. 190 The Croat President pleaded with his French counterpart to use "all [his] authority so Croatia receives aid and so we quickly find a solution within the European Union or the United Nations." 191 The Croatian President continued, "the human losses and destruction in Croatia have reached a new level, that only the international recognition of Slovenia and Croatia together with an energetic action by the international forces of peace can stop the aggressors before it's too late." 192 Indeed, following the Croat move to block the barricades, fighting erupted in a crescent shape running from Gospić in the south, north to Karlovac then eastward to Vukovar. 193 The JNA cooperated with Serb volunteers in the heavy bombardment of Vukovar that killed some eighty people, whilst Croats retaliated by systematically killing Serb community leaders in Gospić. 194 Amidst this escalation, and its dire consequences for the civilian population, the Dutch Presidency cautioned Croatia

¹⁸⁷ MAE, Conférence de presse de M. François Mitterrand, Président de la République au Palais de l'Élysée,

¹¹ September 1991. Accessed on 24 August 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Both. From Indifference to Entrapment, 119-20.

¹⁹¹ Letter from Tudjman to Mitterrand, Zagreb, 12 September 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/230 (1).

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 191.

¹⁹⁴ Glaurdić. *Hour of Europe*, 217; Silber and Little, *Death of Yugoslavia*, 192.

against military escalation stating that it would not lead to European intervention. 195

The German diplomacy was greatly irritated by the Dutch criticism of Croatia and thus Genscher and his Italian counterpart, Gianni de Michelis, held a bilateral meeting in Venice. Afterwards they announced that, if peace negotiations in The Hague failed, then they would recognise Slovenia and Croatia regardless of other EC members' decisions. A particularly testy exchange of accusations between Germany and the Netherlands followed, culminating in the Dutch Presidency attempting to call Germany's bluff by rehabilitating the French proposal for a WEU peacekeeping force. As Norbert Both astutely notes, the Dutch rightly assessed that Germany would be morally obliged to support the proposal but would be prohibited from contributing for constitutional reasons. ¹⁹⁶ Its influnce over the EC's policy direction in Yugoslavia would therefore diminish without a troop contribution.

The Dutch made public their proposal on 17 September as Lord Carrington secured a ceasefire between the parties. France was greatly enthused by the suggestion as it provided an opportunity to build the WEU in to the defence arm of the EC. Hubert Védrine outlined the potential shape of a WEU intervention force in a note for the President, envisaging an interposition force, mandated by the UNSC, implemented through the WEU, which would allow members of the EC to contribute. In this way, the diplomatic adviser highlighted, it was important to bear the forthcoming Maastricht Treaty in mind. 197 Such a measure could increase European unity.

With Germany becoming increasingly vocal in the direction of recognition and the final preparations for the Maastricht Summit in December in full swing, Mitterrand and Kohl met the following day. The two heads of state held a frank and open discussion on the Yugoslav crisis. The discourse that was growing in the French and German press was one that suggested that France supported Serbia and Germany supported Croatia, which greatly

¹⁹⁵ Both. From Indifference to Entrapment, 119.

¹⁹⁶ Both. From Indifference to Entrapment, 120-1.

¹⁹⁷Note from Hubert Védrine to François Mitterrand, 17 September 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CDM/48.

concerned Mitterrand. The French President warned Kohl: "If we continue like that, we could break the Community. We must not allow too many differences of opinion among its members. I am ready to compromise with you, but we must talk." Kohl reassured Mitterrand that Maastricht was his priority and that Germany would not act alone. He two men thus reached a compromise: Mitterrand suggested that they approach the UN to obtain a peaceful revision of borders between Croatia and Serbia and, in turn, owing to Germany's inability to contribute to an interposition force, France would renounce its initiative. The priority, they agreed, was European union. A joint declaration followed the meeting recalling the importance of Franco-German cooperation and reaffirming the two nations' support for the ECCY. They equally condemned attempts to change borders through the use of force. Its innovation was the suggestion of creating a demilitarised zone (DMZ) between the two conflicting sides, which would be occupied by a peacekeeping force requiring the permission of all parties. The peacekeeping forces would be coordinated by the WEU with support from the CSCE and the UN. Description of continuous continuous and the coordinated by the WEU with support from the CSCE and the UN.

As Mitterrand and Kohl released their joint declaration, the EC Foreign Ministers met once more. The discussion centred on the dispatch of a peacekeeping force to Yugoslavia. Following the Kohl-Mitterrand meeting, both Genscher and Dumas pushed in tandem for an approach to the UNSC with the aim of establishing a DMZ and creating a WEU peace force. However, the British Foreign Minister, Douglas Hurd, put up tremendous resistance to the idea, and without his consent, the WEU was only asked to study the feasibility of intervention. Britain still privileged its Anglo-American security relationship and was unprepared for the WEU to become the defence arm of the EC. Hurd

¹⁹⁸ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand. 227.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

MAE, Déclaration conjointe de M. François Mitterrand, Président de la République, et du Chancelier de la République fédérale d'Allemagne, M. Helmut Kohl, sur la Yougoslavie, 19 September 1991. Accessed on 24 August 1991. http://basedoc.diplomtatie.gouv.fr/.
 Ibid.

thought that the military intervention could only lead to escalation or a shameful withdrawal, he thus recommended firmer sanctions and an arms embargo.²⁰³ The resultant EC declaration was thus vague. It recognised that "a new situation exists in Yugoslavia" that would require "new forms of relations and new structures" but partially abdicated responsibility adding that it was for "those who live in Yugoslavia to determine their own future."²⁰⁴

France therefore drafted a resolution for the UNSC that included several references to the creation of an "emergency force" and Chapter VII of the UN Charter that authorised use of force. As the Yugoslavs agreed a ceasefire on 22 September, Douglas Hurd worked hard to dilute the French proposition and had tasked the British representatives in New York with ensuring that the more proactive measures were removed from the final draft. ²⁰⁵ Dumas telegrammed Mitterrand, relaying the trouble he faced in New York: "There is strong resistance to all decisions of the Security Council that intervene directly in Yugoslav affairs... The idea of an interposition force is not yet ripe." ²⁰⁶

With the UNSC set to meet on 25 September 1991, Pierre Morel wrote a note to Mitterrand regarding the proposed peacekeeping force. Morel had spoken to US National Security Adviser, Brent Scowcroft, who revealed there were differences at the heart of the Bush administration regarding the European initiative. Personally, Scowcroft thought that the move towards a European peacekeeping force was inevitable and he personally supported it since it was necessary to separate the belligerents. Morel explained why it was necessary for the Europeans to work through the WEU, which Scowcroft understood, but he was unsure whether the State Department or the Pentagon shared his sentiments. Finally Morel raised the logistical support that any European operation would necessitate, which

²⁰³ Libal. *Limits of Persuasion*, 54.

²⁰⁴ MAE, Déclaration des Douze, 19 September 1991. Accessed on 24 August 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

²⁰⁵ Glaurdić. *Hour of Europe*, 224.

²⁰⁶ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 271.

would entail NATO, and particularly US, support. Scowcroft reflected, "I think at the end of the day, we will be able to do this for you. For my part, I will go as far as I can to support you in this action." France was committed to establishing a European peace force to resolve a European problem. However it faced resistance from the proponents of a continued Euro-Atlantic alliance in the post-Cold War era, namely Britain and sections of the US administration.

The UNSC meeting culminated in resolution 713 that most notably created an arms embargo that covered the whole of Yugoslavia. Notably it omitted any mention of a peacekeeping force. The embargo greatly favoured the JNA who had a massive advantage in its arsenal. This therefore reinforced the Croats' need to requisition arms from the JNA barracks and in fact led to an escalation in fighting; the exact opposite of the resolution's intention. Therefore the Croats were unwilling to allow the JNA to leave their barracks, which angered General Kadijević. Henry Wynaendts worked desperately to bring about a settlement between Tuđman and Kadijević. Having reached an agreement to lift the siege of the JNA barracks on 29 September, the Croats immediately seized four barracks in Bjelovar, which the authorities claimed was the work of 'irregulars'. The level of mutual mistrust between the JNA and Croatia now precluded any ceasefire.

Jacques Faure, once again, provided an informed and subtle analysis of the situation in Yugoslavia at the end of September. Owing to "the failure of the consistent policy of internationalising the matter, presenting Croatia as a victim of aggression and to obtain recognition of Croatian independence in crisis", the Croats continued to fight.²¹⁰ Similarly, Kadijević was dealing with a weakened federal army, which had been brought about by: the departure of Slovenian and Croatian officers; the refusal of BiH and

 $^{^{207}}$ NOTE POUR LE PRESIDENT DE LA REPUBLIQUE; Objet : Youglsavie, 25 September 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CDM/48.

²⁰⁸ Security Council resolution 713, Socialist Federal Rep. of Yugolsavia, S/RES/713, 25 September 1991.

²⁰⁹ Wynaendts. L'Engrenage, 113.

²¹⁰ NOTE; A/s : Conseil Affaires générales du 30 septembre - Yougoslavie, 28 September 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CDM/48.

Macedonia refusal to send conscripts to the army; the Serbianisation of the army; and paramilitaries breaking the ceasefire. ²¹¹ Notwithstanding, and angered by the Croatian duplicity *vis-à-vis* the garrisons, Kadijević issued an ultimatum to the Croats: for every military object seized by the Croats, the JNA would destroy a civilian object of vital importance. ²¹² Moreover, the JNA began operations against the coastal town of Dubrovnik, now with extra support from Serbian territorial forces. Tudman wrote to Mitterrand highlighting offensives against UNESCO world heritage sites in Split and Dubrovnik, perhaps attempting to appeal to Mitterrand the aesthete. ²¹³ Patently, the JNA was now a tool of Serbian expansionism, as they attacked towns that were overwhelmingly populated by Croats. Shortly thereafter, Milošević and his allies declared that the Yugoslav Presidency could operate without the representatives from Slovenia, Croatia, BiH and Macedonia. This coup sounded the death knell of the federal architecture, which thenceforth became entirely an instrument of Serbia.

In this context, Tuđman, Miloševic and Kadijević met in The Hague for discussions with Carrington and van den Broek. With the moratorium on Croatian and Slovenian independence due to expire on 7 October, the meeting produced a ceasefire and four points of principle for a basic solution: "(1) a loose association or alliance of sovereign and independent republics, (2) protection for human and minority rights with possible special status for certain areas, (3) no unilateral change of borders, and (4) a perspective of diplomatic recognition at the end of the negotiating process." With Serb agreement, these points of principle directly implied that independence and recognition might be the outcome of negotiations and provided a slight glimmer of hope that the ECCY might resolve the crisis.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Libal. *Limits of Persuasion*, 58.

²¹³ Letter from Tudman to Mitterrand, 5 October 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/422.

²¹⁴ Ahrens, Geert-Hinrich. *Diplomacy on the Edge: containment of ethnic conflict and the minorities working group of the conferences on Yugoslavia* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center, 2007), 47.

The following day, Tudman wrote to Mitterrand asking him to "take urgent and effective measures to stop the destructive war in Croatia."²¹⁵ The Croatian President stated that, although a ceasefire agreement had been signed the previous day by Milošević and Kadijević, the Yugoslav army had continued their assault on Croatia throughout the night and into the morning. Tudman disparaged the international diplomatic efforts, highlighting that "After all the ceasefire agreements already signed and the agreement reached yesterday at The Hague based on conditions for a political solution, it has become clear that these calls are not enough. To stop the extension of the excesses of war, immediate and concrete actions by the international community are necessary."²¹⁶ The Croatian President was aware that the EC Foreign Ministers were holding an informal meeting in the Dutch castle of Haarzuilens that day and hoped for a firm message from Europe directed towards Belgrade.

At the informal meeting, Genscher and Dumas proposed a document that demonstrated the Community's "desire to remain united in the face of Yugoslav crisis". Adopted by the majority of members, the two reaffirmed the Community's desire to send a "clear message of firmness" to the parties in Yugoslavia, and welcomed the progress made by Carrington on 4 October. Furthermore, the Ministers indicated that recognition would come following a general settlement. France preferred recognition after the agreement of a general settlement. In principle, it was a sensible strategy that sought to solve the Yugoslav crisis in its entirety. In this respect, the Elysée's policy was influenced by the French Ambassador in Belgrade, Michel Chatelais. The Ambassador warned:

²¹⁵ Letter from Tudman to Mitterrand, 5 October 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/422.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ MAE, Conseil informel des Ministres des Affaires étrangères, Conférence de presse de M. Roland Dumas, Ministre d'état Ministre des Affaires étrangères et de M. Genscher, Vice-Chancelier Ministre des Affaires étrangères propos de M. Roland Dumas, 6 October 1991. Accessed on 24 August 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

Madness, sometimes with suicidal tendencies, sometimes criminal, has seized the main protagonists of this drama who have convinced the people that they are leading a war of liberation... the war will feed off war... Bosnia-Hercegovina, where the peoples are mixed in an inextricable way, risks being the next front. The fighting is already at its 'borders'.²¹⁸

The Yugoslav crisis would thus have to be solved holistically. However, when Hans van den Broek set a two-month ultimatum for a general settlement to be reached, Paris was concerned by the seemingly short time-frame.²¹⁹ Carrington was similarly worried, labelling the schedule as "wholly unrealistic".²²⁰ However, the Dutch, hoping to secure a foreign policy success, were determined to resolve the crisis within their Presidency of the Community.²²¹ In the following fortnight, the Working Groups of the ECCY would work diligently to produce a proposal for the six republics at the plenary session on 18 October.

This approach created two problems: France's preference for recognition predicated on a general settlement implied that Serbia could block recognition if it remained uncooperative in negotiations. Similarly, Germany's preference for a quicker recognition encouraged the Croats and Slovenians to simply weather the storm for two months. The approach was symptomatic of the difficulties Europe faced in constructing a Common Foreign and Security policy, which was still very much a work in progress. Furthermore, it was once more creating a notable divergence between Paris and Bonn.

With calls in Germany continuing to grow in the face of attacks against Croatia's historical and picturesque Dalmatian coast, France attempted to persuade London to soften its position to maintain European unity. On 9 October 1991, Pierre Morel held a "very direct" conversation on the topic of Yugoslavia with Stephen Wall, diplomatic adviser to

²¹⁸ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 273.

²¹⁹ Glaurdić. Hour of Europe, 232.

²²⁰ Both. From Indifference to Entrapment, 125.

²²¹ Ibid. 126.

John Major.²²² Morel thought that the reticence of Great Britain towards any idea of European action would lead Chancellor Kohl to think that it would become impossible for the FRG to continue to follow a European line. However, the Brits were concerned that any engagement in Yugoslavia would necessarily lead to an escalation. Morel warned that, by trying to keep Europe apart from the conflict, they in fact risked being sucked into a far larger crisis in the Balkans and Central Europe that could spread if they failed to isolate and stop the conflict in Yugoslavia itself. The French adviser was clearly rattled by Britain's intransigence and decried the British abstention as "another form of 'national politics' inherited from the turn of the century, as much as the pro-Croatian and pro-Serb reflexes of others."223 Morel added that, "it would not be possible to maintain a European line if Britain was in the background." However, Wall was unmoved by Morel's words and merely stated that Europe should not "underestimate the economic weapon". 224 Throughout the European mediation in Yugoslavia, Britain remained resolutely realist and was the greatest brake on international initiative.

With European unity increasingly strained, Mitterrand wrote to both Tudman and Milošević on 11 October in an attempt to secure their cooperation with the ECCY. The French President stated that the right to self-determination had to be respected, which the peoples of Yugoslavia had the right to exercise peacefully and democratically. The parties must then reach a just and peaceful solution, which would enjoy an international guarantee. The rights of minorities, and everything there associated, must also be ensured, conforming to the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris. Mitterrand stated that it was essential that the fighting stop so that observers could play their role and so that more progress could be made in the ECCY and the Badinter Arbitration Commission. If fighting resumed, France would be prepared to implement sanctions against those responsible and establish a

²²² NOTE POUR LE PRESIDENT; Objet: Yougoslavie: entretien avec M. Stephen Wall, 9 October 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CDM/48.

²²³ Ibid.

²²⁴ Ibid

humanitarian mission.²²⁵

Following Mitterrand's intervention, the parties convened once more in The Hague on 18 October where Lord Carrington's 'Arrangements for General Settlement' – which the ECCY Working Groups had pieced together – were immediately rejected by Milošević. Although Lord Carrington had not raised the issue of Kosovo, and indeed the Europeans had continued to neglect the issue in favour of the crisis in Croatia, Milošević realised that the 'Arrangements' would apply to minorities in Serbia, as well as those in Croatia. This was unacceptable as it would entirely undermine his populist power base. Surprisingly, the five other republics voted in favour of Carrington's proposal.²²⁶

With Milošević's rejection of the 'Arrangements', the EC, the US and the USSR released a tripartite declaration, which stated that they were "particularly troubled by reports of continued attacks against civilian targets by elements of the federal army and Serb and Croat irregular forces." Indeed, the JNA had undertaken a massive bombardment of Dubrovnik and another ten Croatian towns with the worst excesses of war being carried in the town Ilok, near Vukovar. Similarly, Croat troops exacted reprisals on Serb civilians in Gospić. 229

As the ECCY held its seventh session on 25 October, Vukovar and Dubrovnik were experiencing a merciless pounding from JNA artillery. Milošević, under strong domestic pressure to resist the 'Arrangements', was extremely obstinate in the meeting and continued to reject Carrington's proposal.²³⁰

The EC Foreign Ministers met three days later and issued their sternest declaration thus far. In particular, van den Broek and Genscher pushed for a firm condemnation of

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²²⁵ Letter from Mitterrand to Tudiman and Milošević, 11 October 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/422.

²²⁶ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 213.

²²⁷ MAE, Déclaration tripartite, Communauté européenne, États-unis et URSS, 18 October 1991. Accessed on 24 August 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

²²⁸ "Yougoslavie: avant un dixième cessez-le-feu L'armée fédérale a massivement attaqué Dubrovnik et une dizaine d'autres villes croates", *Le Monde* (19 October 1991).

²²⁹ Glaurdić. Hour of Europe, 236.

²³⁰ Ahrens. *Diplomacy on the Edge*, 48.

Serbia with the Dutch Foreign Minister arguing that "it was now a matter of putting the Serbs under pressure and forcing them to take up clear positions at the next plenary session of the Yugoslavia conference". ²³¹ Dumas provided some resistance to the general tone of the declaration but acquiesced in the face of the majority opinion. ²³² Having previously condemned the attacks against Dubrovnik, the resultant declaration of the meeting condemned the Serbs "plan to establish a greater Serbia." ²³³ If Serbia failed to cooperate the EC would: (1) continue the ECCY negotiations with the cooperative republics "in the perspective of recognition of the independence of those republics wishing it"; (2) implement "restrictive measures" against those parties that do not cooperate; and (3) ask the UNSC to "examine without delay the question of new restrictive measures on the basis of Chapter VII." ²³⁴ The Europeans, antagonised by the Serbs' obstinacy, appeared to be finding a meaningful common approach.

In a press conference following a meeting with Gorbachev, Mitterrand sought to remain even-handed in his analysis of the conflict following the Foreign Ministers' firm declaration. France, and the international community, faced significant problems in reconciling the right to self-determination with the inviolability of international borders. Reaffirming France's support for self-determination, the President warned that the internal administrative borders of Yugoslavia would not necessarily translate into internationally recognised and guaranteed borders.²³⁵ Mitterrand remained greatly concerned by minority rights:

²³¹ Both. From Indifference to Entrapment, 128.

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²³³ MAE, Déclaration des Douze sur la situation en Yougoslavie, 28 October 1991. Accessed on 24 August 1991. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

²³⁴ Thid

²³⁵ MAE, Conférence de presse conjointe de M. François Mitterrand, Président de la République, et de M. Mikhaïl Gorbachev, Président de l'Union des Républiques Socialistes Sovietiques: interventions de M. Mitterrand, 31 October 1991. Accessed on 24 August 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

We need guarantees for international borders... and for the protection of minorities because these populations are interwoven and within a federated state things are very different: a Serb in Croatia feels protected if there is a federal state, he is in his country. A Serb, moreover a Serb community, in an independent Croatia loses its support. Immediately ethnic conflicts resurface. One could use the same argument in regards to Croats in Serbia, or the many Albanians in Kosovo etc...²³⁶

Ahead of the next plenary session of the ECCY, the JNA with Serb reservists, had undertaken their 'final operation' to capture Vukovar. The Federal Air Force launched sixty-five aerial sorties against Vukovar and surrounding targets.²³⁷ At the meeting Milošević remained obstinate in spite of Carrington's offer to remove the question of Kosovan and Vojvodinian autonomy from the 'Arrangements'. Unfortunately, the move tacitly suggested that, the more Milošević rejected the proposal the more the Conference would bend to his will.²³⁸ Therefore, in the National Assembly, Roland Dumas reaffirmed France's commitment to the principle of self-determination but owing to significant problems – namely minority rights and internationally guaranteed borders – the Foreign Minister noted that it needed to be carefully managed, which was the raison d'être of the ECCY and the Badinter Arbitration Commission.²³⁹ The French Foreign Minister's restrained tone sat at odds with the EC's latest response as its Foreign Ministers decided to demonstrate the credibility of their threats in the face of Serb obstinacy and withdrew from 'Yugoslavia' all economic aid and benefits it received from the Community.

The return of the US to the scene at the scheduled North Atlantic Council (NAC) meeting two days later, however, marked a shift back towards an overall even-handedness and a preference for a unified Yugoslavia. The US pressured Germany not to break from the non-recognition consensus that had been established within the Community.²⁴⁰

²³⁶ Ibid.

²³⁷ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 196.

²³⁸ Glaurdić. *Hour of Europe*, 242.

²³⁹ MAE, Réponse de M. Roland Dumas, Ministre d'état Ministre des Affaires étrangères à une question d'actualité de l'Assemblée Nationale, 6 November 1991. Accessed on 24 August 1991. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

²⁴⁰ Libal. *Limits of Persuasion*, 71.

Notwithstanding, in its first statement on the Yugoslav conflict, NATO condemned the JNA's attacks on Dubrovnik and other Croatian towns.²⁴¹ In the margins of the NATO meeting, the EC Foreign Ministers reaffirmed their measures taken two days earlier. They also supported a move to apply an oil embargo through the UNSC.²⁴² These universal measures were, however, applied to all republics equally, which in turn reinforced the superiority of the JNA and Belgrade. Furthermore, the EC declaration reinforced the need for a 'global solution' to the crisis prior to recognition. However, from a legal perspective, without Croatian and Slovenian independence it would be difficult to single out Belgrade for punitive sanctions as the envisaged embargos applied to the *entirety* of Yugoslavia. Once more, the Community faced a seemingly intractable problem.

In a press conference following the summit, one journalist reflected that the Community had failed in Yugoslavia and asked Mitterrand what lessons the institution could learn from its 'failure'.²⁴³ The President was irritated by the line of questioning and gave a frank appraisal of the situation:

What is true is that nobody has imagined sending armies to Yugoslavia. One can imagine the kind of interposition forces which the United Nations has: they are not fighters, they separate the combatants... Europe does not have the means to impose its views, that is the reality. This is not a failure, we are at the starting point of a new dimension of political strategy in Europe, but we are only at a starting point.

With the peace process at a standstill, Carrington called a recess. Mitterrand and Kohl held their scheduled 58th Franco-German summit on 15 November and once more Yugoslavia formed a central part of the discussions. The two men again sought to reaffirm their unity of purpose ahead of the negotiations on the Treaty of European Union in

²⁴¹ "La fin du sommet de l'alliance atlantique à Rome L'OTAN souhaite engager le dialogue avec les pays d'Europe de l'Est", *Le Monde* (9 November 1991).

²⁴² Libal. *Limits of Persuasion*, 72.

²⁴³ MAE, Conference de presse de M. François Mitterrand, Président de la République à l'issue du sommet, 8 November 1991. Accessed on 24 August 1991. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

Maastricht on 9 and 10 December. Mitterrand reaffirmed his support for self-determination but again highlighted the intractable dilemma between determination and the borders of Yugoslavia. He argued that:

If you want to avoid the permanent guerrilla warfare and bloody conflicts that risk engulfing the whole of Europe in difficult choices and differences of opinion, that will not be negligible, it is necessary for the European community, it is necessary for our countries, Germany and France, to play a role of appearement, of agreement, of comprehension... If self-determination is just one more element in the conflicts that leads to its worsening, I do not think we have the intention to intervene militarily between the belligerents. So legal documents, important as they are, would not prevent the continuation and worsening of the war itself.

The President's analysis, namely that recognition would not resolve the war, had earlier been advocated by seasoned Yugoslav expert and ECCY mediator Ambassador Geert-Hinrich Ahrens who, in an internal paper, noted that "recognition would neither end the war nor restore lost territories to the Croats."²⁴⁴ However, the situation on the ground would soon test the limits of Franco-German cooperation and would require a more abrupt and direct response.

'We must guard the unity of the Community at all costs'

The fighting in Croatia escalated to horrific levels, best demonstrated in Vukovar, which fell to the JNA on 18 November. Almost immediately, attitudes changed in the highest echelons in Europe. The Dutch Foreign Ministry thought that the crisis had shifted "from the political to the moral level."²⁴⁵ The Dutch Presidency, which heretofore had largely been content to pursue even-handedness shifted dramatically in favour of 'selectiveness'

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²⁴⁴ Ahrens. *Diplomacy on the Edge*, 48.

²⁴⁵ Both. From Indifference to Entrapment, 129.

against the Serbs and began advocating for recognition.²⁴⁶ The Dutch had abandoned any hope of a negotiated settlement and had moved towards recognition of Croatia and Slovenia within their existing borders.

With nearly one-third of Croatia now in the hands of the Serbs, and satisfied with its territorial control, the Yugoslav Presidency called for UN peacekeepers in an attempt to freeze the conflict in stasis. France, who had long been in favour of a peacekeeping force, supported the initiative and France's permanent representative thought that "Everything indicates that the Yugoslav population, which is the main victim of this crisis, places a great hope in the United Nations response." France therefore supported the UN Secretary General's decision to send his special envoy, the former US Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, to Yugoslavia to study the possibility of sending UN mandated peacekeepers there. Furthermore, it had the potential to forestall the recognition issue which was rapidly gaining a head of steam, particularly since neither Germany nor the Netherlands were members of the UNSC. However, owing to UN reluctance – the organisation was already over-stretched in Cambodia and poorly equipped to deal with simultaneous crises – the enthusiasm of other UNSC members quickly dissipated. Furthermore, the Dutch were keen to press ahead with recognition in order to prevent Milošević from using the UN to consolidate his gains in Croatia. 248

Pierre Morel suggested to President Mitterrand that the Dutch Presidency had moved towards a policy recognition owing to German pressure. Morel reflected that, "Chancellor Kohl can slow, but not stop the determined course of the Germans to recognition. All the same, Genscher is tirelessly trying to substantiate the idea that recognition should interfere with Maastricht on 10 December."²⁴⁹ Indeed, Germany moved

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ MAE, Intervention prononcée par le Représentant permanente de la France devant le Conseil de sécurité des Nations-Unies, 15 November 1991. Accessed on 24 August 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

²⁴⁸ Both. From Indifference to Entrapment, 130.

²⁴⁹ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 275.

quickly to seize on the pressure for recognition. In the German Bundestag on 19 November, Kohl indicated that "before Christmas one must come to a decision in this matter." Genscher was far more forthright in his proclamations, particularly on the subject of borders, and he equated anybody who questioned the borders in south-eastern Europe as questioning the very stability of Europe. Genscher also criticised the deployment of UN peacekeepers, which he believed the Serbs would use to achieve recognition of their territorial acquisitions. ²⁵¹ These were thinly veiled criticisms of French policy.

The Elysée sought to move quickly and stem this move towards recognition through two methods: the acceleration of the moves towards a UN peace-force; and a Franco-German initiative offering recognition in existing boundaries in return for minority rights guarantees. However, Mitterrand was seemingly swimming against the tide as his Minister for Humanitarian Action, Bernard Kouchner, had returned from a humnaitarian mission to Dubrovnik and argued in favour of recognition. In the face of this growing pressure, and with his vision for post-Cold War Europe slipping away, Mitterrand, ever the contrarian, made some ill-considered remarks in an interview for the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*:

You ask me who is the aggressor and who is the victim? I am incapable of telling you. What I do know is that the history of Serbia and Croatia, for a long time, is replete with dramas of this nature, notably during the Second World War where many Serbs were killed in Croatian camps. You know that it was Croatia that was part of the Nazi bloc and not Serbia. Ever since Tito disappeared, the latent conflict between Serbs and Croats was going to reappear. It's fact.²⁵⁴

The President's outburst obscured a far more practical and pertinent question he

²⁵² Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 276.

²⁵⁰ Libal. *Limits of Persuasion*, 78.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 277.

posed: would the border between Croatia and Yugoslavia automatically assume an international character?²⁵⁵ Mitterrand was determined that these fundamental questions should be resolved before recognition. Mitterrand relayed his worries concerning minorities and the potential for conflict in BiH and Macedonia to John Major on 2 December. In a meeting with the British Prime Minister he reflected that recognition "will ruin the peace conference. We want guarantees on the borders and a minorities' statute."²⁵⁶ Sadly prescient, the President continued: "If Bosnia and Macedonia become independent – and how can we not recognise them? – we will start another war."²⁵⁷ Mitterrand and Dumas therefore sought to reach a quick compromise with their German counterparts.

Following a long conversation with Hans-Dietrich Genscher on 3 December, Dumas informed Mitterrand that the Germans would not take any unilateral decision on recognition prior to 16 December, but it would come before Christmas.²⁵⁸ In the meantime, neither Genscher nor Kohl would make statements that would hinder France but the German Foreign Minister encouraged France to recognise the two republics in a joint initiative. Mitterrand agreed but on the condition that the recognition of new states was undertaken through an agreement with the EC or the UN once they had filled conditions on borders and minorities. However the Chancellor would not delay recognition under any conditions. Hubert Védrine worried that in one fell swoop the Germans would reduce the idea of a common foreign policy to nothing if they undertook unilateral recognition.²⁵⁹ At dinner the same evening, Kohl and Mitterrand talked in detail on the question of recognition. Mitterrand still could not persuade the German Chancellor to reconsider his timeframe. Kohl had delayed recognition of Slovenia and Croatia as long as he could and

²⁵⁵ Serbia had, in fact, been a part of the Nazi bloc under the collaborationist regime led by Milan Nedić.

²⁵⁶ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 278.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 278.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 279.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

the pressure from public opinion and the German political class had forced him to act. ²⁶⁰

With the Maastricht meeting set for 10 December, Robert Badinter responded to three questions from Lord Carrington – which he had submitted to the Arbitration Commission on 20 November – and announced the Commission's Opinion. The Commission ruled that: (1) Yugoslavia was in a process of *dissolution*; (2) in the process of succession the states should act in accordance with principles and rules of international law, particularly regarding human rights and the rights of peoples and minorities; and (3) it is the republics' decision whether to form a new association. The Commission's opinion destroyed the claims by Belgrade that they were trying to preserve Yugoslavia. Surprisingly, Mitterrand's close ally Badinter had produced a ruling that chimed entirely with the German Foreign Ministry rather than the Elysée. In the meantime, Croatia enacted human rights laws dealing with the status of minorities and reached a final agreement with the JNA *vis-à-vis* the blockade of barracks and personnel. Following Tudman's assurances to Bonn that he would continue to cooperate with the ECCY, there remained few obstacles to Germany's recognition of Croatia and Slovenia. However, Kohl and Genscher continued to face resistance from the international community. ²⁶²

At the Maastricht negotiations, the subject of Yugoslavia was conspicuous by its absence, although outside of the sessions Major and Mitterrand lobbied their partners to take a common position to "stem the rush of the Germans". Moreover, the UN Secretary General wrote to the Community on 14 December warning against an uncoordinated recognition believing it could precipitate a conflict in BiH. That same day Mitterrand wrote to Kohl hoping to persuade the German Chancellor to delay recognition:

²⁶⁰ Ibid

²⁶¹ Trifunovska, Snežana (ed.). *Yugoslavia Through Documents: From Its Creation to Its Dissolution* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1994), 415-18.

²⁶² Libal. *Limits of Persuasion*, 79.

²⁶³ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 280.

My dear Helmut, the changes in Europe and the emergence of new states provides a first opportunity to demonstrate our will to put in place a common foreign policy. From the document on the recognition of new states that France and Germany are ready to propose to the Community, the first of its kind, we must pay particular attention to a common position on the Yugoslav case. I know your intention to recognise Croatia and Slovenia without delay and I understand the reasons that have led you to adopt this position. I am for my part, as you know, very occupied by the consequences of an act of recognition, which, in the current climate, risks the extension, even a generalisation, of the conflict. I have been, in this regard, impressed by the terms and tone of the UN Secretary General's letter. I believe we must take count of our responsibility, bearing in mind all the factors that affect our decision. We must guard the unity of the Community at all costs and particularly Franco-German unity in this case. That is why I consider it necessary that we adopt in the application, as in the document, the same position in terms and on the date of recognition of the Yugoslav republics. In my mind, such an approach would not delay the act of recognition beyond a reasonable time.²⁶⁴

Nonetheless, the following day, Kohl replied to Mitterrand. The German President took note of Mitterrand's words and indicated he was keen to work in the manner prescribed by the Franco-German document on recognition.²⁶⁵ However, he would not delay recognition, which both he and Genscher confirmed would occur before Christmas.

On 16 December the EC Foreign ministers met and, in spite of pleas from Carrington, Cyrus Vance and US President George Bush to delay recognition, issued two declarations. The first declaration outlined the conditions, seemingly based upon the Franco-German document, which new states would have to fulfil to receive international recognition: (1) respect for the Charter of the UN, the Helsinki Final Act and the Charter of Paris; (2) human rights and minorities guarantees; (3) respect for the inviolability of borders, which could only be altered through peaceful negotiation and agreement; (4) a commitment to settle outstanding issues of succession and regional dispute through arbitration. Specifically, the Yugoslav republics would also have to accept the provisions for human rights in Lord Carrington's 'Arrangements' and continue to support

²⁶⁴ Letter from Mitterrand to Kohl, 14 December 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CDM/48.

²⁶⁵ Letter from Kohl to Francois Mitterrand, 15 December 1991, AN, AG/5(4)/CDM/48.

²⁶⁶ Libal, Limits of Persuasion, 84.

the work of the UN and the ECCY. The Community therefore welcomed all republics who sought recognition to submit their requests by 23 December; a decision would then be applied on 15 January following further rulings from the Badinter Arbitration Commission. Despite the newly adopted position, Germany recognised Croatia and Slovenia unilaterally on 23 December.²⁶⁷

Sensing that his opportunity to secure territory in Croatia was slipping away, Milošević once more approached Cyrus Vance to intervene in Croatia and sought to bring the Krajina Serbs into line. Simultaneously, on 11 January, the Badinter Commission announced its opinions on the questions posed by the EC.²⁶⁸ Opinion No. 2 clarified the legal position of Serbs in Croatia and BiH and ruled that they were entitled to minority rights and guarantees under international law but they did not have the right to secede from their respective republics. ²⁶⁹ Opinion No. 3 ruled that the internal administrative borders between Croatia and Serbia, and BiH and Serbia, would become internationally recognised borders.²⁷⁰ The Commission expressed a reservation regarding the recognition of Croatia citing concerns regarding human and minority rights, but it was on a technical and legal basis rather than in response to human rights concerns.²⁷¹ Slovenia's request was far simpler and the Commission ruled that it satisfied the conditions laid out by the EC on 16 December.²⁷² The most controversial decision was the Commission's Opinion on BiH. It ruled that BiH failed to meet the requirements as, owing to Serb resistance at a governmental level, it was impossible to ascertain the will of its population. The Commission therefore recommended an internationally-monitored referendum on Bosnia's

²⁶⁷ Ibid 85-6

²⁶⁸ Opinion Nos. 2 through 7 are reproduced in: Trifunovska. *Yugoslavia Through Documents: From Its Creation to Its Dissolution*, 474-95.

²⁶⁹ Ibid., 474-8.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., 479-85.

²⁷¹ Glaurdić. *The Hour of Europe*, 279.

²⁷² Trifunovska. Yugoslavia Through Documents: From Its Creation to Its Dissolution, 495-500.

independence.²⁷³ Singling out BiH, and therefore delaying its recognition, would leave the central republic isolated and highly vulnerable.²⁷⁴

In light of these rulings the EC Foreign Ministers recognised Croatia and Slovenia on 15 January 1992, but delayed recognition of BiH until it held a referendum. The US lobbied the EC to reconsider its decision on BiH.²⁷⁵ However, the newly gained international recognition of Croatia speeded the creation of a UN peacekeeping mission in Croatia and, although the Krajina Serbs rejected the plan proposed by Cyrus Vance, Milošević applied sufficient pressure to the Krajina Serb leader Babić to ensure the implementation of the 'Vance Plan'. France had long been keen to participate in a peacekeeping mission and offered to send a large contingent of peacekeepers of approximately three-to-four thousand troops.²⁷⁶ On 21 February 1992, UNSCR 743 created the United Nations Protection Force, which was a 15,000-strong force deployed to four sectors in Croatia labelled United Nations Protection Areas (UNPAs).²⁷⁷ The French peacekeepers were deployed in the Northern Sector and were the most numerous nationality; a clear demonstration of France's commitment to the UN as an institution for conflict resolution. UNPROFOR's mission would be to fully demilitarise and demobilise the UNPAs.²⁷⁸ However, it would never fully achieve its aim and its installation in Croatia allowed the JNA to withdraw to BiH in preparation for potential conflict there. Significantly, although the Europeans had achieved their Union at Maastricht, the damage created by disagreements over the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia would take considerable time to mend. In the meantime, as Mitterrand had warned, the prospect of independence in BiH brought with it the prospect of war.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ See Part Two.

²⁷⁵ Ahrens. *Diplomacy on the Edge*, 136.

²⁷⁶ "Yougoslavie: la guerre en croatie La France est prête à participer à une force de l'ONU", *Le Monde* (8 January 1991).

²⁷⁷ Security Council resolution 743, *Socialist Federal Rep. of Yugolsavia*, S/RES/743, 21 February 1992.

²⁷⁸ Gow, *Lack of Will*, 102-108.

PART TWO:

France and the Bosnian War.

Chapter Four – "Beyond Diplomacy": French Initiatives and Humanitarian Intervention in Bosnia-Hercegovina, April-September 1992.

'Highway of Hell': Warning Signs in Bosnia-Hercegovina

Bosnia-Hercegovina (BiH) was Yugoslavia's most ethnically heterogeneous republic. The Muslims, who were the third largest ethnic group in Yugoslavia, had been granted nationality status under the 1974 constitution but, unlike other nationalities, did not form the majority in any republic. They were, nonetheless, the largest ethnoreligious group in BiH, accounting for 43.47% of the population in 1991. The Serbs and Croats constituted 31.21% and 17.38% of the population respectively, whilst 5.54% classified themselves as "Yugoslavs". However, historically citizens of BiH, regardless of 'ethnonational identity', had been denied the right to define themselves as "Bosnians". Bosnians of an Orthodox religious confession had to pronounce themselves either "Serb" or "Yugoslav"; whilst Catholics could choose between "Croat" and "Yugoslav". Nonetheless, in the pre-war period ethnoreligious identity was a secondary identifier in a largely secular society, particularly in Sarajevo, and the suggestion of civil war between neighbours was unimaginable.

However, it was flanked by Croatia and Serbia whose respective leaders had openly espoused virulent nationalism. In Serbia, Milošević had openly associated with the political stances of Dobrica Ćosić and the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, which called for the creation of a Greater Serbia including territories in BiH. Tuđman had openly declared that many Bosnian Muslims were "incontrovertibly of Croatian origin" and moreover that BiH and Croatia were "an indivisible geographic and economic entity".² Indeed, extremist politicians even claimed that the Muslims were Croats and Serbs who

¹ Maček, Ivana. *Sarajevo Under Siege: Anthropology in Wartime* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009), 125.

² Malcolm, Noel. Bosnia: A Short History (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), 218.

had converted in the period of Ottoman rule; BiH could thus be divided between the two republics. From such perspectives, and based on an ethnonational rationale, the division of BiH between Croatia and Serbia seemed to be the logical conclusion of Yugoslavia's demise.

Accordingly, Bosnian officials became increasingly concerned by the escalating rhetoric of the nationalists in the neighbouring republics. Bosnian voters were treading unfamiliar ground and, inexperienced in democratic elections, many failed to recognise the intractable contradiction in voting for nationalist parties whilst supporting the continuation of BiH.

Initially, the leader of the ostensibly Muslim 'Party for Democratic Action' (Stranka demokratske akcije, SDA) Alija Izetbegović formed a government comprised of all three major parties. Throughout the first half of 1991, Izetbegović continued to support a unified Yugoslav state, albeit in a looser, confederate form, which the EC continued to advocate.³ The moves towards independence by Slovenia and Croatia greatly worried the Bosnians, who, without their western neighbours, would be left behind in a rump Yugoslavia under Serb domination. The SDA and Croatian Democratic Union in BiH (Hrvatska demokratska zajednica Bosne i Hercegovine, HDZ-BiH) gave their full support to Zagreb in its clashes with the Serbs; the Serbian Democratic Party (Srpska Demokratska Stranka, SDS) condemned the Croats.

Therefore, the SDS began to undermine the stability of Bosnian political institutions by boycotting the Parliament and declaring that Izetbegović was not entitled to preside over the Bosnian Serbs nor represent them internationally.⁴ They intended to tear apart the communitarian spirt of Bosnia by increasingly ethnicising political debates. When the SDS in Croatia created the 'Serb Autonomous *Oblast* of Krajina', its tactics were soon

³ See Chapter Three on Bosnia's 'asymmetrical' proposal for Yugoslavia.

⁴ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 234.

replicated by its Bosnian counterpart. The SDS declared that three Serb populated areas in northern Bosnia were henceforth SAOs, which created a corridor from Krajina in Croatia to Serbia-proper. Indeed, throughout 1991 Milošević envisaged swallowing the whole of BiH into a Yugoslavia that would also include Serbia, Montenegro, and the Croatian Serbs.⁵

In spite of these significant warning signs, the brewing crisis in BiH was ignored in favour of solving the immediate crisis in Croatia, but also trying to pursue a common European line with regards to Croatia and Slovenia. Politically, raising the question of BiH at a European level would further have endangered the unity of the Twelve of Europe.

As the conflict in Croatia escalated throughout the month of September, attacks against religious buildings started to unpick the communitarian fabric of BiH. These attacks had clear ethnoreligious content and were intended to create ethnic separation. As such, the population groups felt increasingly threatened and their search for security became essential.⁶ The legitimacy of the institutions that had represented stability and security in the preceding forty years had been eroded over the preceding decade, owing to their inability to deal with economic challenges. They were replaced by nationalist political parties who thus offered the security afforded by sharing a collective identity and providing solace in an uncertain time. However, the parties acted as vehicles for more radical nationalists who were prepared to employ violence to establish the ethnic division of BiH.

This process had been exacerbated by the Bosnian Serb leadership who insisted that the only way that BiH could avoid an ethnoreligious civil war was to ethnically partition the country. One only need glance at an ethnic map (see map 1) of BiH to see the ridiculousness of this proposition.

⁵ Glaurdić, Josip. "Inside the Serbian War Machine: The Milošević Telephone Intercepts, 1991-1992", East European Politics and Societies 23, no. 1 (February 2009), 91.

⁶ Maček. Sarajevo Under Siege, 124.

Following two resolutions passed by the Bosnian Parliament on 15 October 1991, which called for Bosnian sovereignty and eventual withdrawal from Federal Yugoslavia, the SDS leader Radovan Karadžić made a harrowing statement to the Parliamentary Assembly on the evening of 14 October 1991:

You want to take Bosnia-Hercegovina down the same highway of hell and suffering that Slovenia and Croatia are travelling. Do not think that you will not lead Bosnia-Hercegovina into hell, and do not think that you will not perhaps lead the Muslim population into annihilation, because the Muslims cannot defend themselves if there is war - How will you prevent everyone from being killed in Bosnia-Hercegovina?⁷

When the vote came on Bosnian sovereignty on the morning of 15 October, the SDS walked out on the Parliamentary Assembly and the Croats and Muslims voted in favour.

Milošević's rejection of the EC Conference's "Arrangements for General Settlement" on 18 October highlighted the Serb leader's unwillingness to abandon his aim of creating a Greater Serbia. Reinforcing Milošević's rhetoric, the Bosnian Serbs created their own "Assembly of the Serb Nation in Bosnia-Hercegovina" in the territory they dubbed *Republika Srpska* (RS) on 24 October and on 9-10 November the Serbs held their first separate plebiscite, choosing to remain part of "Yugoslavia". In the intervening period, Lord Carrington had also suspended the EC Peace Conference during the NATO Rome Summit on 8 November in the face of Serb intransigence to his draft proposals contained in the "Arrangements for General Settlement". The lack of consensus between the Europeans and the ineffectiveness of their diplomacy only strengthened the resolve of the Bosnian Serbs and thus increased the unlikeliness of a peaceful resolution of BiH's present impasse.

In December, as the Germans pushed for recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, the European Community offered each of Yugoslavia's six republics recognition if they met its

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⁷ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 237.

criteria for new states. Applications for recognition would be considered by the Badinter Arbitration Commission, who would report its findings on 15 January 1992. As discussed in the previous chapter, the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia separate from an overall framework for the entirety of Yugoslavia torpedoed any remaining hope for the EC Peace Conference. Following a meeting with Carrington and Portuguese Ambassador José Cutileiro on 19 December, Izetbegović decided that BiH would apply for recognition.

In spite of warnings from the JNA, the Bosnian Presidency pressed ahead with EC recognition; Izetbegović still held out a rather naïve hope that the JNA would spring to BiH's defence. Significantly, JNA troops withdrew from Croatia and Slovenia into BiH, which had been considered the safest republic to concentrate military hardware and production during the Titoist period owing to its mountainous terrain and central location. In early 1992, the local population in the north western *opština* of Prijedor observed the increased military presence in and around the municipality.⁸

Once the SDS had declared the creation of the Autonomous *Oblasts*, in coordination with the JNA, they began a systematic campaign of disarming and neutralising non-Serb populations to render them defenceless in any forthcoming conflict. Thus the SDS, JNA and Serb paramilitary groups would be able to expel non-Serb populations through coercion or extermination to create an ethnoreligiously homogeneous Greater Serbia.

Europe once more

Having secured the 'Vance Plan' in Croatia, Cyrus Vance met Lord Carrington in Lisbon on 5 January - Portugal now held the Presidency of the EC for six months - and the former British Foreign Minister announced that he would convoke a new session of the ECCY the

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⁸ *Opština:* a regional municipality.

following week.⁹ Carrington proposed talks on BiH within the framework of the EC Conference and, as the EC Presidency had passed from the Netherlands to Portugal, Carrington asked the Portuguese diplomat José Cutileiro to take charge of the negotiations. The recognition of Croatia and Slovenia on 15 January and the eventual installation of UNPROFOR in the UNPAs held the conflict there somewhat in stasis.

However, the Badinter Arbitration Commission considered that BiH's application for recognition was insufficient, as it "had not expressed the true will of the entirety of the republic's population." To rectify this, the Commission suggested that BiH hold an independence referendum under CSCE supervision. The Bosnian authorities set the date for the referendum as 29 February and 1 March.

Carrington was slow to turn his attention to BiH, in spite of warnings and the evident potential for conflict. Indeed, the European mediation efforts lacked real leadership as the EC sought to heal rifts caused by the chastening exchanges over Slovenian and Croatian recognition. It was not until 6 February that Cutileiro held a series of discussions with leaders of the three ethnic groups and secured an agreement on a "mini peace conference to discuss the independence and sovereignty of Bosnia-Hercegovina and to find a solution that suits all." On 13 and 14 February the EC mediators convened a meeting and the three main parties outlined their preferences for BiH but little was achieved in these discussions. The parties agreed to reconvene the following week in Lisbon. 12

Back in the Portuguese capital, Cutileiro presented his first draft of the constitutional arrangements for BiH to the three leaders. The plan was a disaster. The Portuguese Ambassador, although enthusiastic, was certainly no expert on BiH at this point

⁹ "Yougoslavie: après un nouvel accord de cessez-le-feu, les combats se sont apaisés en Croatie", *Le Monde* (5 January 1992).

¹⁰ Stephen Terret. The Dissolution of Yugoslavia and the Badinter Arbitration Commission, PhD Diss., University of Liverpool, (1998), 175.

¹¹ "En Bosnie-Herzégovine Lord Carrington organise une conférence sur l'avenir de la République", *Le Monde* (8 February 1992).

¹² "La conférence sur la Bosnia-Herzégovine sans résultats", *AFP* (15 February 1992)

and his plan reflected a lack of comprehension of the complexity of the republic's ethnoreligious makeup. The Carrington-Cutileiro Plan proposed three constituent units in BiH, each with broad responsibilities (see map 2). The SDS had long supported such a 'cantonisation' of BiH and the Carrington-Cutileiro plan merely validated and legitimised the ethnoreligious content of the SDS's programme, particularly the autonomous regions, in the hope that the Bosnian Serbs would not resort to violence.

BiH held its independence referendum on 1 March.¹³ The SDS called a boycott of the referendum and erected barricades to prevent the delivery of ballot boxes to the 'Serb Autonomous Regions'. However, 64.4 & of the population did vote in the referendum, including several thousand Serbs outside of the Autonomous Regions.¹⁴ 99.7 & of respondents voted in favour of independence. On the evening of 1 March, Izetbegović appeared on television to announce the results. Immediately following the announcement, Serbs erected barricades in the capital, with Sarajevan Muslims responding in kind. It took several days of negotiations to defuse the situation.

Once initial hostilities had died down, the EC diplomacy efforts resumed on 7 March. The EC had continued to withhold recognition in the vain hope that its diplomacy may find a workable solution to the Bosnian problem. Cutileiro returned to Sarajevo on 16-18 March, this time with a 'Statement of Principles for New Constitutional Arrangements for Bosnia and Herzegovina', which had taken into consideration the preceding talks. On 18 March 1992 the three sides of the conflict in BiH agreed upon the 'Statement of Principles'. The EC had manoeuvred itself into a corner: if the EC recognised an independent and sovereign BiH, the Bosnian Serbs would surely resort to violence, yet whilst the Bosnian Serbs continued to negotiate on the Carrington-Cutileiro plan no

¹³ Gow. Lack of Will, 84.

¹⁴ Malcolm. Bosnia, 231.

recognition would be forthcoming. The Bosnian Serbs held all the cards and therefore the HDZ-BiH and SDA quickly repudiated the agreement.

Accordingly on 6 April, the EC decided to recognise BiH "to demonstrate that they refused to yield to the blackmail exercised by the most extremist Serb elements." Simultaneously, the EC made a gesture towards the Serbs and proposed lifting the EC sanctions against Yugoslavia if it respected the terms that Cutileiro had been negotiating. This gesture towards Serbia appeared to emanate from France as Roland Dumas remarked that it was essential to appear balanced and therefore to make a gesture to Belgrade. On raising the sanctions against Belgrade, Dumas stated that, "One cannot ignore the links between Serbs in Serbia and those of Bosnia-Hercegovina and it was necessary to send signals to Belgrade". Once more, the message from the Europeans was confused and contradictory.

At the beginning of April, Carrington insisted that a French politician assume the role of vice-President of the ECCY. The French recommended Thierry de Beaucé who had previously served in the Foreign Ministry working in cultural relations before becoming a special adviser to President Mitterrand. French peacekeepers, diplomats and politicians were assuming several important positions in the international community's structures for resolving the Yugoslav crises.

Following a day of heavy shelling in Sarajevo, de Beaucé and Henry Wynaendts held negotiations with Franjo Tuđman and Slobodan Milošević in Zagreb and Belgrade on 9 and 10 April respectively. Alongside issues on UNPROFOR in Croatia, De Beaucé also addressed the issue of BiH reflecting after the meetings that, "we all hope that a solution will be found through dialogue within the recognised borders."

¹⁷ "Roland Dumas: 'faire des gestes équilibrés en direction de la Serbie'", AFP (6 April 1992).

¹⁵ "CEE Yougoslavie (Urgent)", AFP (6 April 1992).

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁸ Wynaendts. L'Engrenage, 175.

¹⁹ "L'adjoint de Lord Carrington satisfait de ses entretiens à Zagreb et à Belgrade", AFP (10 April 1992).

The same day that de Beaucé and Wynaendts were holding meetings in Zagreb, Cutileiro travelled to Sarajevo on 10 April to hold talks with representatives from the three parties. ²⁰ The EC called for an immediate ceasefire in BiH and sent a strong warning that, "Violations of the principle of territorial integrity will not be tolerated and will not be without consequences for the future relations between the EC and those who will be held responsible." ²¹ The EC, demonstrating its detachment from reality, continued to call on the three parties to adhere to the agreement that they had signed in Sarajevo on 18 March, which the conflict had already rendered unworkable. The conflict continued to expand and it became quite evident that the JNA was supporting the Bosnian Serbs, as reports surfaced on the clearly partisan role of the federal army. ²²

The CSCE released a declaration expressing their extreme worry and condemning the activities of the Bosnian Serbs and the JNA. Roland Dumas was quick to exclude France, and Europe, from this declaration, declaring that the Twelve of Europe were unhappy with the formulation of the declaration proposed by certain members of the CSCE.²³ However Germany supported the American threat as Genscher called for the suspension of Yugoslavia from the CSCE if Serbia failed to adopt a fundamentally different attitude towards the UN, the CSCE and the ECCY.²⁴ Conversely, Dumas considered that the EC had already "warned Serbia" and stressed that it was essential to "look towards dialogue, appeasement and a ceasefire and not the exasperation of feelings of confrontation."²⁵

²⁰ "Alors que les combats gagnent de nouvelles régions, L'état d'urgence général est instauré en Bosnie-Herzégovine", *Le Monde* (10 April 1992).

²¹ "Les Douze appellent à un cessez-le-feu immédiat en Bosnie-Herzégovine", AFP (11 April 1992).

²² "Alors que les dirigeants bosniques lancent un appel à l'aide internationale les combats s'étendent en Bosnie-Herzégovine", *Le Monde* (11 April 1992).

²³ "Le menace d'exclusion de la Yougoslavie: une première dans l'histoire dans la CSCE", *AFP* (16 April 1992).

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ "Roland Dumas: Les Douze ne sont pas favorables à l'exclusion de la Yougoslavie de la CSCE", *AFP* (16 April 1992).

The international debate on Yugoslavia was once more marked by Franco-German discord. France therefore sought to gain the upperhand and Dumas revealed that France was preparing an initiative for Sarajevo following the upcoming report of Cyrus Vance. Germany, not wanting to be upstaged, announced that the WEU, under German Presidency, would send a peacekeeping force to BiH.²⁶

On 22 April, Dumas announced that France would send aid and medicine to the civilian population of BiH and evacuate women and children of French nationality. He added that, "the United Nations must hurry to intervene in order to avoid a greater evil and new disaster caused by a conflict that more and more resembles a civil war." In announcing this initiative, Dumas deplored the few results that the international community had obtained in the face of the drama that had hit the Bosnian republic. France would thus seek to rouse the international community from its slumber and lead through example by establishing a humanitarian airlift. In Bernard Kouchner, France had a young and energetic yet highly experienced humanitarianist to lead its efforts.

Kouchner was a rising star in French politics and the Minister for Health and Humanitarian Aid had begun to occupy a central role within the Mitterrand administration. He had trained as a medical doctor before creating the NGO *Médécins sans frontières* (MSF). MSF was a highly influential organisation that strongly influenced the idea of 'humanitarian intervention' employed, predominantly in Africa, in the 1980s.²⁸ The UN built upon Kouchner's humanitarianism and it would become incorporated in UNPROFOR's approach, particularly in BiH. Thoroughly convinced by the righteousness of his cause and methods, Kouchner became deeply engaged with France's policy towards the Bosnian crisis.

²⁶ "Appel à la formation d'une force de paix européenne en Bosnie", AFP (16 April 1992).

²⁷ "Aide de la France à Bosnie-Herzégovine", AFP (22 April 1992).

²⁸ See Allen, Tim, and David Styan. "A Right to Interfere? Bernard Kouchner and the New Humanitarianism", *Journal of International Studies* 12, no. 6 (August 2000), 826-842.

Kouchner arrived in Sarajevo on 23 April accompanying a delivery of 25 tonnes of humanitarian aid and medicines for the Bosnian population. He declared that he was in favour of a UN intervention in Bosnia, owing to his belief in the 'right to intervene', and reflected that "it's too bad that only the command post of the peacekeepers is installed in Sarajevo and the troops elsewhere."²⁹

BiH remained high on the European agenda as Dumas held a meeting with his German and Polish counterparts in Trémolat in southwestern France. The three issued a joint communiqué calling for an emergency meeting of the UNSC and the deployment of a peacekeeping force to re-establish peace in BiH.³⁰ The French Ambassador to the UN, Jean-Bernard Mérimée delivered the letter to the UNSC President that evening.³¹ The combined weight and influence of a Franco-German proposal propelled Boutros-Ghali to announce that the UN was ready to act in BiH.

Subsequently, Dumas held a meeting in Paris with his Portuguese counterpart Joao de Deus Pinheiro to discuss the possibility of sending EC or WEU observers to BiH under a UN mandate. In spite of Europe's difficulties in Croatia, Boutros-Ghali still called upon the Europeans to take their part of the responsibility for solving the Bosnian crisis. Dumas also thought that "Europe should take initiatives... to advance any proposed solutions to the Yugoslav crisis." Seemingly the Croatian crisis had done little to deter France from once more seeking to use the former Yugoslavia as a means to achieve a common European foreign policy.

Yugoslavia was thus high on the agenda when the EC met in Lisbon on 30 April.

Ahead of the meeting Belgrade had proclaimed the creation of the Federal Republic of

146

²⁹ "Bernard Kouchner se prononce pour une intervention des Casques bleus en Bosnie", AFP (25 April 1992)

³⁰ "La France, l'Allemagne et la Pologne demandent une réunion d'urgence du Conseil de sécurité sur la Bosnie Herzégovine", *AFP* (24 April 1992).

³¹ "La France en faveur de l'envoi d'une force de maintien la paix en Bosnie-Herzégovine", *AFP* (24 April 1992)

³² "MM. Dumas et Pinheiro examinent la possibilité de dépêcher des observateurs européens", *AFP* (28 April 1992).

Yugoslavia (FRY), consisting of Serbia and Montenegro. It offered the EC an opportunity to place conditions on its recognition of the newly defined Yugoslavia. Therefore the EC required a withdrawal of JNA troops from BiH before they would recognise FRY. Once more France and Germany clashed over a common approach on the issue. Germany favoured strict economic sanctions against Serbia threatening further possible diplomatic sanctions. France, however, continued to preach equivalency amongst the warring sides, believing that a balanced approach would be more productive.³³

France thus attempted to seize the initiative in solving the Bosnian conflict in Lisbon. Given France's preference for an internationalised and multilateral solution, Dumas wanted to closely coordinate the efforts of the UN and the EC and proposed sending an observation mission to BiH under the leadership of Marrack Goulding, head of peacekeeping operations for the UN. Accordingly Boutros Boutros-Ghali dispatched Goulding to Sarajevo to study the possibility of creating a peacekeeping operation in BiH.³⁴

Whilst negotiations between the three parties had continued in Lisbon, the situation in Sarajevo had steadily deteriorated. General Philippe Morillon – based in Sarajevo at UNPROFOR headquarters – worked with the Bosnian presidency and the JNA in an effort to prevent further escalation. However, by 2 May, Morillon's efforts had been rendered obsolete as the JNA began shelling the capital. As the situation in Sarajevo continued to deteriorate, supporters of the Bosnian Presidency blocked the federal barracks. The JNA retaliated by undertaking a heavy bombardment of Muslim strongholds in Sarajevo. As Izetbegović returned from the Lisbon talks, he was taken hostage by the JNA. He secured his release against the liberation of General Milutin Kukanjac, who was pinned down by

³³ "Le CEE exige un geste de la Serbie", AFP (1 May 1992).

³⁴ "M. Goulding en Bosnie-Herzégovine en début de semaine prochaine", AFP (1 May 1992).

government forces in the Marshall Tito barracks. However, the exchange convoy was attacked by government forces who aimed to requisition arms from the JNA.³⁵

It had become clear that UNPROFOR in its present state was not equipped to deal with the crisis in BiH; neither in terms of its mandate nor equipment. As fighting resumed in Sarajevo on 5 May, Morillon spent the evening at the residence of UNPROFOR commander Satish Nambiar in Stojčevac, where the latter decided that UNPROFOR could no longer maintain a presence in Sarajevo and its HQ would have to be relocated either in Zagreb or Belgrade.³⁶ As such, it withdrew on 15 May, leaving behind a small contingent of French peacekeepers.

The EC also considered its role as a mediator in the crisis in BiH, as the Portuguese Foreign Minister Jauo de Deus Pinheiro thought that "The situation is tragic and unacceptable and could lead the European Community to seriously rethink whether or not to continue to make sacrifices in order to mediate in a conflict that parties involved apparently seem set to continue."³⁷ With the resumption of hostilities on 5 May, the EC decided to "temporarily reduce" its presence in Sarajevo; the EC contingent was reduced by more than half.³⁸ EC observers throughout BiH were withdrawn from Bihać, Banja Luka, Tuzla and Mostar following the death of a Belgian observer.³⁹

Europe continued to offer little deterrence to the Bosnian Serbs as the Portuguese Prime Minister, Anibal Cavaco Silva, declared that the purpose of the EC in BiH was not "to make peace, but to guarantee it" adding that "sending soldiers in these conditions would only make them easy targets." Europe's response to the war in BiH was slowly taking shape: to provide enough aid to sustain the civilian population whilst encouraging or

³⁵ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 264.

³⁶ Morillon. Croire et oser, 42.

³⁷ "La CEE pourrait 'sériusement repenser' son rôle de médiateur en Bosnie-Herazégovine", *AFP* (4 May 1992).

³⁸ "Le CEE 'reduit temporairement' son personnel à Sarajevo", AFP (5 May 1992).

³⁹ Ibid

⁴⁰ "Il n'appartient pas à la CEE de faire la paix", AFP (6 May 1992).

pressuring the "warring parties" to negotiate a settlement through international mediation.⁴¹

As fighting continued throughout BiH and casualties continued to rise, the members of the EC decided to remove their Ambassadors from Belgrade, which seemed to one commentator to be in stark contrast to earlier disagreements within the EC and perhaps a cause for optimism.⁴² The US quickly followed suit and recalled Warren Christopher from Belgrade.⁴³ Furthermore, following reports from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) special envoy José-Maria Mendiluce on the conditions in BiH, the CSCE decided to suspend FRY from all questions relating to all former republics until 30 June.⁴⁴ The international community thought that diplomatic sanctions would be sufficient to discourage the Serbs from undertaking further attacks. However the international isolation of Serbia only fed the nationalist myth of Serbian victimisation.⁴⁵

As Europe pushed for greater sanctions against FRY, France continued to insist on the necessity of sending a UN deployment to BiH. Boutros-Ghali thought that the situation did not allow for a deployment. ⁴⁶ Spokesman for the Quai d'Orsay, Daniel Bernard, announced that, in spite of Boutros-Ghali's preferences, France was "thinking of a small contingent of a few hundred men, mandated by the UN and drawn from European forces ... to perform basic and essential humanitarian tasks, such as the protection of humanitarian convoys, to provide airport access and the protection of negotiators." ⁴⁷

The following day the UNSC called on the Secretary General to prepare a study on the feasibility of humanitarian intervention along the lines that France had proposed.

⁴¹ See Jones, Chris. "'N'ajoutons pas la guerre à la guerre': French Responses to Genocide in Bosnia", 150-163

⁴² "La CEE et la crise yougoslave", AFP (11 May 1992).

⁴³ "Rappel de l'ambassadeur américain à Belgrade", AFP (12 May 1992).

⁴⁴ "Yougoslavie CSCE (Urgent)", AFP (12 May 1992).

⁴⁵ Seierstad, Åsne. With Their Backs to the World: Portraits from Serbia, trans. by Sindre Kartved (St. Ives: Virago, 2004), 7.

⁴⁶ "La Commission européenne envisage des mesures 'plus drastiques'", *AFP* (15 May 1992).

^{47 &}quot;Paris insiste pour l'envoi de 'quelques centaines d'hommes' mandatés par l'ONU en Bosnie", *AFP* (14 May 1992).

Nonetheless, Boutros-Ghali remained resistant to the idea of sending peacekeepers to BiH and even questioned the efficacy of the UNPROFOR mission in Croatia.⁴⁸ Notwithstanding, France was pleased with the UNSC's efforts and the Quai believed that UNSCR 752 "was going in the right direction" and the "desired way" adding that "we continue to consider the desirability of, at least, making a few hundred observers available to deploy in Bosnia-Hercegovina, in order to at least ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid and the protection of negotiators."

As the EC and UN struggled towards implementing its humanitarian intervention 1,200,000 displaced people fled the conflict, which one representative from the UNHCR described as: "without doubt the worst refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War." The Quai stated that the situation in BiH was "more and more preoccupying" and wanted the UN to convene a meeting of the interested parties the following week in Geneva. However a spokesman for the Secretary General declared that the UN was not prepared to host such a meeting particularly at a time when Carrington had reconvened the ECCY in Lisbon. This was in spite of the fact that the UN had admitted Slovenia, Croatia and BiH as new members on 22 May. Sa

As in 1991, European inefficiency alarmed the US and Secretary of State James Baker thus revealed that he would not exclude military action against the Serbs if the forthcoming political, economic and diplomatic sanctions failed.⁵⁴ Europe recoiled at such a suggestion and the British foreign secretary Douglas Hurd called for continued pressure against the Serbs but entirely dismissed any military action stating that "Nobody is ready to send soldiers into Yugoslavia who risk being stuck there indefinitely without an end in

⁴⁸ "Yougoslavie: la mission des 'casques bleus'", *Le Monde* (15 May 1992).

⁴⁹ "La France estime que la résolution 752 va dans le bon sens", AFP (18 May 1992).

⁵⁰ "Plus d'un million de personnes déplacées dans l'ex-Yougoslavie", AFP (18 May 1992).

⁵¹ "La France juge la situation en Bosnie 'de plus en plus préoccupante'", AFP (21 May 1992).

⁵² "L'ONU dément vouloir tenir une réunion sur la Bosnie la semaine prochaine à Genève", *AFP* (21 May 1992)

⁵³ "La Bosnie-Herzégovine, la Croatie et la Slovénie nouveaux membres de l'ONU", AFP (22 May 1992).

⁵⁴ "Mise en garde américaine à la Serbie", *Le Monde* (25 May 1992).

sight without knowing what the human losses would be."⁵⁵ The Belgian Foreign Minister added support to Hurd's cautious note adding that "Do we want the WEU to be responsible? Are you ready to assume the responsibility for all the victims that intervention would lead to?"⁵⁶

Europe was unable to agree on a sanctions policy so a military commitment was certainly not forthcoming. Indeed, France and Germany continued to clash over the speed and strength of the sanctions.⁵⁷ As Serbia was becoming increasingly isolated from the international arena, France was concerned that the ability to negotiate with the aggressors would be lost and the inevitable outcome would be all-out conflict. Indeed, international isolation seemed to be the worst that the international community dared threaten as British Prime Minister John Major called on Serbia to end the violence in BiH threatening Belgrade with "international isolation".⁵⁸

At a meeting in Lisbon, the EC debated immediate sanctions against FRY for which ten were in favour whilst France held some reservations citing concerns that Europe might burn its bridges with Belgrade.⁵⁹ The new German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel was particularly vocal in calling for sanctions against Serbia.⁶⁰ Elisabeth Guigou wanted to clarify that France's goal was not to delay any decision on sanctions but to ensure that they were pursued through the right channels, that being either the Foreign Ministers Council of the EC or the UNSC. Any sanctions would therefore, Guigou argued, be more effective. Nonetheless, the EC agreed on sanctions in principle.⁶¹

In spite of French reluctance, the EC eventually adopted a commercial embargo against FRY on 27 May and diplomatic sanctions on 2 June; the UN followed suit a day

^{55 &}quot;M. Hurd préconise la 'pression' sur la Serbie, mais répugne à une action militaire", AFP (23 May 1992).

⁵⁶ "Mise en garde de la Belgique", AFP (23 May 1992).

⁵⁷ "Mise en garde de la communauté internationale", AFP (24 May 1992).

⁵⁸ "M. Major demande à la Serbie de faire cesser la violence en Bosnie", AFP (26 May 1992).

⁵⁹ "En dépit de réticences françaises et grecques les Douze pourraient arrêter des sanctions économiques contre la Serbie", *Le Monde* (26 May 1992).

⁶⁰ "L'Allemagne réclame une action internationale contre la Serbie", AFP (27 May 1992).

⁶¹ "Les Douze adoptent définitivement leurs sanctions contre Belgrade", Le Monde (2 June 1992).

later.⁶² However, these measures had little effect as heavy bombardments continued on Sarajevo, killing 16 people, which led to the suspension of the ECCY as the Bosnian government delegation withdrew.⁶³

Washington called for a firm response sensing that Milošević was tired and his resistance was weakening.⁶⁴ The embargos had contributed to a worsening of conditions in Serbia, which added to growing unrest towards Milošević's rule in Serbia.⁶⁵ Indeed, there were anti-Milošević and peace demonstrations in Belgrade during the month of June.⁶⁶

In spite of the Serbs' supposed weakening, the bombardment of Sarajevo continued throughout late May. Accordingly the WEU refused to rule out military intervention in BiH. It began to explore military strategies such as the creation of 'protection zones', similar to those employed in Northern Iraq.⁶⁷ Indeed, the Bosnian government continued to call for intervention as the Foreign Minister, Haris Silajdžić, complained that "the UN sanctions against the Serb-Montenegrin Yugoslav republic have changed nothing".⁶⁸

François Mitterrand in Sarajevo

Following a meeting between Roland Dumas and Silajdžić, France began to focus on reopening the airport for humanitarian deliveries. The airport was pivotal to the French policy of humanitarian intervention and formed the centrepiece of its Bosnia policy. As Peter Andreas notes: "The particular form of humanitarianism in Bosnia served the strategic objective of avoiding more direct and risky military engagement with profound

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ "Risque d'escalade de la violence après la tuerie de Sarajevo", AFP (28 May 1992).

⁶⁴ "Washington estime que Slobodan Milosevic est 'fatigué'", AFP (1 June 1992).

^{65 &}quot;Pression accrue sur le président serbe", AFP (10 June 1992).

^{66 &}quot;Serbie sur fond de grèves et de manifestations anti-Milošević", Le Monde (16 June 1992).

⁶⁷ "Le président de l'Assemblée de l'UEO suggère la création de 'zones de protection' des populations en Bosnie", *AFP* (1st June 1992).

⁶⁸ "Seule une intervention militaire internationale peut aider la Bosnie", AFP (3 June 1992).

political repercussions on the ground."⁶⁹ However France did not follow the implicit logic that many critics believed: that direct military engagement would solve the Bosnian crisis. By opting for humanitarian intervention France was demonstrating its vision for post-Cold War conflict resolution.

The following day the Secretary General of the Foreign Ministry, Serge Boidevaix, met with Slobodan Milošević in Belgrade to persuade the Serbian leader to apply the conditions of UNSCRs 752 and 757, otherwise there could be no renewed dialogue.⁷⁰ The Bosnian Serbs conformed to the provisions of UNSCR 757, which called upon them to cease attacks against the airport. However, they continued their bombardment of Sarajevo itself as monitors watched on.⁷¹ Nonetheless, the UN would consider Belgrade's cooperation in reopening the airport as a demonstration of its goodwill.⁷²

In securing the parties' agreement to UNSCR 757, the UN was able to pursue Boutros-Ghali's primary mission in BiH: the delivery of humanitarian aid to Sarajevo. Indeed, on the ground Bernard Kouchner was attempting to force the issue as he attempted to lead an aid convoy to Sarajevo from nearby Visoko. However, after repeatedly trying to negotiate access to Sarajevo with the Bosnian Serbs, Kouchner was forced to leave the aid in Visoko, which would then be distributed by UNPROFOR and the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) *Pharmaciens sans Frontières*. On his return, Kouchner gave an interview on radio station France Info and bemoaned the need to "negotiate from barricade to barricade, militia to militia" and that "I think we will get there, but it will take time and above all the maintenance of international pressure" although he thought it could take "a

⁶⁹ Andreas, Peter. *Blue Helmets and Black Markets: The Business of Survival in the Siege of Sarajevo* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 13.

⁷⁰ "Le secrétaire général du ministère français des Affaires étrangères à Belgrade", AFP (4 June 1992).

⁷¹ Donia, Robert J. Sarajevo: A Biography (London: Hurst & Company, 2006), 302.

⁷² "Prochaine réunion du conseil de sécurité sur l'état des négociations concernant la réouverture de l'aéroport de Sarajevo", AFP (5 June 1992).

few days or a few weeks."⁷³ In a further interview on TF1 he also suggested that "it is necessary to break the encirclement of Sarajevo airport and to bring food and medicine there."⁷⁴ The public and political gaze was fixed upon the airport as a panacea for BiH's humanitarian woes and accordingly the credibility of the EC and the UN, and by extension France, became increasingly attached to this issue.

On 8 June Boutros-Ghali reported back to the Security Council about the feasibility of sending a peacekeeping presence to protect the airport, which he thought would require approximately 1,000 men.⁷⁵ The following day the UNSC approved military protection for Sarajevo airport under UNSCR 758, which authorised the Secretary General to send further personnel once the different parties had agreed to a ceasefire.⁷⁶ Once more Paris expressed its readiness to contribute troops towards the extension of UNPROFOR, with a spokesman for the Quai noting that the "resolution corresponds to France's wishes for a long time to see Sarajevo airport cleared to allow the delivery of humanitarian relief needed by the population."

The Commander of UNPROFOR Lewis MacKenzie departed for Sarajevo to enact the resolution.⁷⁸ Shortly after his arrival, an unknown group attacked a convoy that was transporting MacKenzie through the capital.⁷⁹ The attack left one French soldier seriously injured.⁸⁰ The Quai condemned the attacks adding that, "It is up to all parties concerned to respect the decisions of the Security Council and in particular to ensure the proper conduct

⁷³ "M. Kouchner remet une partie de l'aide humanitaire à Visoko et renounce à se rendre en Sarajevo", *AFP* (7 June 1992).

⁷⁴ "Ce qui se passe à Sarajevo est 'absolument effrayant'", AFP (8 June 1992).

⁷⁵ "Plus de mille hommes et 20 millions de dollars pour assurer la sécurité de l'aéroport de Sarajévo, selon l'ONU", *AFP* (8 June 1992).

⁷⁶ "Le conseil de sécurité approuve le principe d'une protection militaire de de l'aéroport de Sarajevo", *AFP* (9 June 1992).

⁷⁷ "Paris exprime sa disponibilité à participer à l'extension de la FORPRONU en Bosnie", *AFP* (9 June 1992).

⁷⁸ "Arrivée de l'aide humanitaire française à Sarajevo", *AFP* (10 June 1992).

⁷⁹ "Yougoslavie Bosnie (Urgent)", AFP (10 June 1992).

^{80 &}quot;Un 'casque bleu' français légèrement blessé", AFP (10 June 1992).

of the mission of UN observers at the airport in Sarajevo and in Sarajevo in general."81 Simultaneously France dispatched 50 soldiers for the first phase of securing the airport.⁸² The reinforced UN contingent arrived on 11 June as a precarious calm lingered over Sarajevo. MacKenzie began negotiations with the Bosnian Presidency and Carrington announced that he would return for negotiations once the airport had been reopened.⁸³

The negotiations were more difficult than MacKenzie had envisaged.⁸⁴ The links between the political leadership of the SDS and the Bosnian Serb militia made the reopening of the airport even more difficult, as Bosnian Serb soldiers told MacKenzie "that a lot of their colleagues had been killed securing the airport" and "MacKenzie won't take the airport from us. We will kill you all [UNPROFOR] if you try."85 Nonetheless, MacKenzie secured a ceasefire that would come into effect at 06h00 on 15 June. Therefore, under escort from the Bosnian Serbs, a thirty-man UNPROFOR reconnaissance party began to assess the condition of the airport. At this point, the airport became the focus of international attention as journalists the world over travelled to Sarajevo to report on the situation.

Bernard Kouchner was becoming impatient and warned the UN that "we must not resign ourselves to the eternal wait for a ceasefire to enact a humanitarian plan."86 Kouchner had also been lobbying Marrack Goulding and Jan Eliasson, who were in charge of the UN's humanitarian missions, to convince them to do everything possible to ensure the delivery and distribution of humanitarian aid to Sarajevo. 87 Kouchner's warnings became more salient as the ceasefire in Sarajevo collapsed spectacularly on the morning of

^{81 &}quot;La France juge 'inadmissible' l'attaque d'un convoi de la FORPRONU à Sarajevo", AFP (11 June 1992).

^{82 &}quot;Départ de cinquante militaires français pour la Yougoslavie", AFP (10 June 1992).

^{83 &}quot;Lord Carrington veut se rendre à Sarajevo dès la réouverture de l'aéroport", AFP (12 June 1992).
84 "Progression difficile de l'opération de protection de l'aéroport de Sarajevo", AFP (13 June 1992).

⁸⁵ Mackenzie, Major General Lewis. Peacekeeper: The Road to Sarajevo (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1993), 207.

⁸⁶ "Il ne faut pas se résigner à l'attente éternelle du cessez-le-feu", AFP (16 June 1992).

⁸⁷ Ibid

17 June at 05h00, having lasted approximately 40 hours. 88 In spite of the collapse, Dumas said that "the action should be continued in Sarajevo despite the difficulties on the ground to achieve the liberation of the airport and allow the delivery of humanitarian aid."89

MacKenzie nonetheless felt that he had made great progress in talks to reopen the airport. Carrington thus proposed talks with Milošević, Tuđman and Izetbegović in Strasbourg on 25 June. UNPROFOR also secured an agreement on the means for heavy weapons control, which could have allowed peacekeepers to occupy the airport within days. 90 It appeared that the UN-EC combination was making some minor yet noticeable progress in breaking the latest political impasse. However, appearances were deceiving and the US, perhaps sensing the inevitable collapse of negotiations and diplomatic progress, accused Belgrade of being duplicitous.⁹¹

US doubts were justified as UNPROFOR efforts to reopen the airport were suspended on 20 June as fighting intensified in the surrounding area. 92 Therefore aid continued to be delivered by road via the 'humanitarian corridor' that Kouchner had created. France was the only nation that was successful in delivering aid to the Bosnian capital. One Sarajevan reflected the French humanitarian aid was "symbolic, given the enormous needs, but important because it shows that we are not totally abandoned."93 However, following an attack against French volunteers, the French government decided to slow its aid programme until fighting abated.⁹⁴

Having just returned from Sarajevo, where he had been accompanying an aid delivery, the public intellectual Bernard-Henri Lévy – often referred to publicly as 'BHL' – lobbied the President to act in BiH. He called Mitterrand's long-serving personal secretary

89 "M. Dumas: l'action pour dégager l'aéroport de Sarajevo doit être poursuivie", AFP (17 June 1992).

⁸⁸ MacKenzie. Peacekeeper, 217.

⁹⁰ "Accord sur les modalités de contrôle de l'artillerie autour de l'aéroport de Sarajevo", AFP (19 June 1992).

⁹¹ "Washington accuse Belgrade de duplicité", AFP (18 June 1992).

⁹² MacKenzie. *Peacekeeper*. 222.

^{93 &}quot;Sarajevo tente d'organiser sa survie", AFP (22 June 1992).

^{94 &}quot;Le gouvernement français décide de retadrer 'provisoirement' les opérations d'aide à Sarajevo", AFP (22 June 1992).

Marie-Claire Papegay on 23 June, through whom he managed to arrange a meeting with the President that morning on France's Bosnia policy. Over the course of a long meeting Lévy struggled to engage the President.

Sensing that he had failed to convince the President to reappraise his Bosnian policy, Lévy concluded by commenting on Izetbegović. Lévy thought that he had found in "this well-read man, this man of texts and law, something of Léon Blum or better, an air of Salvador Allende, on the eve of the assault on the palace of La Moncada, in the famous photo where he has his miner's helmet and his big glasses." This comparison clearly resonated with the French President, who had previously entertained the idea that a similar fate could befall him as that of the Chilean President, and certainly saw himself as a man of action. He very had a note from Izetbegović appealing for help, which he proceeded to read to the President. Mitterrand was clearly taken by the notion that Izetbegović's predicament was comparable to that of Salvador Allende. Nonetheless Lévy left the meeting with no clear indication of Mitterrand's response to Izetbegović's latest appeal. However the President would later reveal to Dumas that it was Lévy's intervention that persuaded him of the need to seize the act. He

Aware that the international mood was building towards a crescendo, and amidst increasing domestic criticism, Mitterrand held a private conversation with Dumas regarding a new initiative for Yugoslavia. ⁹⁹ The President told his Foreign Minister: "I want to strike a decisive blow. I feel that it is necessary to change the rhythm and to go off the usual paths of classic diplomacy. I am thinking of going to Yugoslavia." ¹⁰⁰ The

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⁹⁵ Lévy, Bernard-Henri. *Le lys et la cendre: journal d'un écrivain au temps de la guerre de Bosnie* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1996), 64.

⁹⁶ Friend. The Long Presidency, 201.

⁹⁷ Lévy, Le lys et la cendre, 65.

⁹⁸ Dumas. Le fil et la pelote, 357.

⁹⁹ In the late summer of 1991, revelations emerged regarding Mitterrand's political past. See Goslan, Richard Joseph. *Vichy's Afterlife: History and Counterhistory in Postwar France* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), 109-110.

¹⁰⁰ Dumas. Le fil et la pelote, 356.

President suggested either Belgrade or Sarajevo but Dumas warned against going to Belgrade.

Mitterrand wanted Kouchner to accompany him but also wanted the visit to remain absolutely secret until the last moment, thus Dumas called Kouchner to inform him that he had to attend the forthcoming Lisbon summit that began on 26 June. Mitterrand wanted Dumas to stay behind "to cover the rear in case of difficulties and to manage it diplomatically." The two would meet the following day in Lisbon to plan the visit.

The theatre of such a visit spoke to the dramatic aspect of the President's personality. There were several precedents for the President's penchant to go 'beyond diplomacy'. Following two attacks against international forces in Beirut, which killed 58 French soldiers, Mitterrand immediately flew to the Lebanese capital. Similarly in January 1985, as pro-independence voices mounted in the French overseas territory of Nouvelle Calédonie, the French President personally intervened to try and calm tensions between opposing groups. ¹⁰²

In Lisbon, Dumas and Mitterrand met in the French embassy, where the President asked his Foreign Minister's opinion on the envisaged visit to Yugoslavia. Dumas responded that:

You cannot start in Belgrade... The critics will come from all sides. We will visit the red tyrant, the butcher of Sarajevo. We continue to privilege our alliance with the Serbs. I can hear now certain comments from the opposition and I read certain editorials before they've even been written. 103

Mitterrand agreed with his Foreign Minister but still warned against sharing the information with anyone, even those in the French delegation present in Lisbon.

¹⁰¹ Ibid

¹⁰² "La visite de M. Mitterrand à Sarajevo", *Le Monde*, (30 June 1992).

¹⁰³ Dumas. *Le fil et la pelote*, 356.

The following day the Lisbon summit opened as the US Secretary of State James Baker called on European leaders "to kick Yugoslavia out of all international organisations". ¹⁰⁴ Boutros-Ghali also issued an ultimatum to the Serbs calling for the end of hostilities and the relinquishing of heavy weapons by Monday 29 June. If they failed to do so then UNSC would meet to determine the means to ensure that the civilian population of Sarajevo received aid and relief. Diplomats at the UN suggested that resistance could lead to military action. ¹⁰⁵

As the summit began, Sarajevo endured some of the heaviest bombardment it had seen theretofore. In the face of such blatant disregard for the international community's warnings and sanctions, Mitterrand designated the Serbs as the main aggressors for the first time in the conflict. The French President stated "Serbia is the aggressor today, even if the origins of the conflict are far deeper." Mitterrand said that the crisis in Bosnia had brought the credibility of the European Council into question and that if a solution was not found quickly then it could have a negative impact on the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. France was due to hold a referendum on the Treaty in September.

European leaders spent the afternoon discussing the Yugoslav crisis and Mitterrand demanded the strengthening of the embargo imposed on Serbia. The French President also called for the Europeans to put their military means at the disposal of the UN. ¹⁰⁸ In the afternoon, Mitterrand prepared the ground for a French initiative in a meeting of the European Council. During this session, Mitterrand handed Dumas a piece of paper outlining the plans for the trip to Sarajevo. Particular attention was to be paid to media relations, and it was decided that the photographer Claude Azoulay and a journalist from

¹⁰⁴ Baker Calls on European allies to isolate Yugoslavia", AFP (26 June 1992).

¹⁰⁵ "Serbs Defy Ultimatum From UN and Persist in Shelling Sarajevo", New York Times (28 June 1992).

¹⁰⁶ "Après l'ultimatum de M. Boutros-Ghali à la Serbie Les Douze 'n'excluent pas des moyens militaires'", *Le Monde* (28 June 1992).

¹⁰⁷ "Le Président Mitterrand avance une série de propositions", AFP (27 June 1992).

¹⁰⁸ "Après l'ultimatum de M. Boutros-Ghali à la Serbie Les Douze 'n'excluent pas des moyens militaires", *Le Monde* (28 June 1992).

the AFP should accompany the party. 109 Dumas was tasked with preparing the operation and alerting international figures and organisations of his supposed departure for Yugoslavia.

On the Saturday morning, at the insistence of Roland Dumas, Bernard Kouchner arrived in Lisbon. In making preparations for the trip, Dumas continued to suggest that he would be making the dangerous trip to Sarajevo. The Foreign Minister briefed his colleague on France's latest BiH initiative:

We are leaving for Sarajevo today, you and me. You know the terrain, you know the access: prepare our voyage. It will make a small noise. Our partners in the twelve do not know but France cannot allow the situation to worsen. 110

Similarly Mitterrand prepared Helmut Kohl for France's latest initiative. Over breakfast Mitterrand revealed that a French initiative on Bosnia was forthcoming, although he spared the details, and asked for his German counterpart's discretion. As Carine Germond notes, Mitterrand and Kohl had excellent personal relations, and agreed that close Franco-German cooperation was necessary to direct Europe. They therefore sought to use European and international opportunities to their advantage. Mitterrand forewarning Kohl is therefore unsurprising and was, in fact, essential to Franco-German cooperation on the former Yugoslavia.

Dumas spent the morning in a specially prepared suite in a Lisbon hotel arranging the trip. He spoke directly with Milošević who warned that:

It's dangerous. Therefore go through Belgrade. There, we 100% guarantee your safety... A helicopter will take and bring you back from Sarajevo without

¹⁰⁹Dumas. *Le fil et la pelote*, 357.

¹¹⁰ Kouchner. Ce que je crois, 25.

¹¹¹ Germond, Carine. "Dynamic Franco-German Duos: Giscard-Schmidt and Mitterrand Kohl" in *The Oxford Handbook of the European Union*, eds. Jones et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). Accessed on 25 July 2015. http://goo.gl/oFOtEi.

difficulty. You are not obliged to see us, nor even greet us. I understand the idea of your mission. 112

Dumas and Kouchner spent the rest of the morning speaking to UNPROFOR members, Ambassadors, and, eventually, Izetbegović. All warned that the visit was very dangerous and tried to deter the Foreign Minister. Indeed, it was certainly dangerous as the latest ceasefire had broken down that morning. 113

Following the final session of the Lisbon summit, Mitterrand held a brief press conference. In the corridor outside the conference room, he revealed to Helmut Kohl that the President himself was set to take an initiative very shortly. The President had told Dumas to round up the photographer Claude Azoulay and the AFP journalist Véronique Decoudu to tell them to join the President's party at the airport.

Just prior to their supposed departure, Dumas informed Kouchner that it was in fact the President who would be travelling to Sarajevo. Dumas told Kouchner, "You know your responsibility. I entrust the President to you." Kouchner vowed to bring him back but wondered what they would actually do in Sarajevo, Dumas replied: "Demonstrate that whilst Europe is powerless. France is taking the initiative." Demonstrate that

From the presidential jet, Kouchner informed Lewis MacKenzie that it was the President, rather than the Foreign Minister as he had forewarned, who would be arriving in the Bosnian capital. The shocked General was taken aback and responded: "My God! Do you know the date? ... You French are mad." Of course, the President realised the significance of the date and sought to harness its symbolism as a diplomatic tool.

En route Kouchner and Mitterrand had a long discussion on the links between humanitarianism and politics. Kouchner enquired of the President what had provoked this

¹¹² Dumas. *Le fil et la pelote*, 361.

¹¹³ "Nouveau bombardement contre Sarajevo samedi", AFP (27 June 1992).

¹¹⁴ Dumas. Le fil et la pelote, 362.

¹¹⁵ Kouchner. Ce que je crois, 34.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Ibid

sudden intervention. The Minister attempted to advance the case for a more robust response to the Bosnian War, particularly against the Serbs. Typically, Mitterrand reasoned historically: "this business in the Balkans is a thousand years in the making, and the international community interests itself with it for two years... Without Europe we would have had war with the Germans. The Serbs wanted to save the Federation." Kouchner retorted that none of the efforts theretofore had prevented the systematic destruction of Bosnia by the Serbs. For the Minister, who had made several prior trips to Sarajevo, history was not a sufficient explanation nor an excuse for the tragedy unfolding in BiH, perpetrated predominantly by the Bosnian Serbs. Nonetheless, Mitterrand reasoned, "This war is cruel, inhumane, you must understand that the Serbs face a tradition that is too big for them, and they feel abandoned by the world." Kouchner wondered why the President continued to indulge the Serbs. Mitterrand responded ahistorically:

I have already told you this: I saw it happen in the most miserable German camps, the poorest, the most beaten prisoners: it was the Serbs, the only ones to have resisted the Nazi divisions and to be liberated by themselves, and where? Around Sarajevo, in the hills where we are going. Do not judge history without distance. Mistrust the immediate. And, I repeat it to you, take care with the media. 120

When word reached UNPROFOR in Sarajevo that the French President would arrive that evening, the rumour quickly spread amongst a thrilled French contingent. Georges-Marie Chénu, the French Ambassador to Croatia, called ahead of the President's visit and indicated to the UN in Sarajevo that Mitterrand intended to land in Sarajevo that very evening. General Lewis MacKenzie was astonished and advised Chénu that, owing to the

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 40.

¹¹⁹ Ibid..

¹²⁰ Ibid., 41.

¹²¹ MacKenzie. *Peacekeeper*, 241.

condition of the runway and continuing fighting at the airport, the President should delay his arrival until the following morning.¹²²

However, unaware of the dangers of landing at the airport, Mitterrand remained determined to land there on the evening of 27 June. MacKenzie "had two options: accept the impossibility of the plan and merely await word of the inevitable crash, as the President's aircraft tried to land at night in the middle of a war zone, at an airport controlled by the Serbs, without any landing aids; or try to facilitate his arrival by cleaning up the runway and marking the touchdown area." Rather than have the "President of France splattered over a mountainside beside the runway", MacKenzie opted for the latter and gathered a group of soldiers to negotiate a cessation of hostilities between the Bosniaks and the Serbs and to clear the runaway of debris, lest the presidential plane land only to puncture a tyre and skid into an adjacent minefield. 124

The pilots were becoming increasingly anxious about landing at Sarajevo after nightfall and contact with UN radio control became increasingly difficult. The Captain aborted the landing citing cloud cover. Instead the President flew to Split, where Chénu had made alternative arrangements for the presidential party. Preparations continued in Sarajevo throughout the night and MacKenzie told the Serb and Muslim liaison officers posted to the Postal, Telephone and Television (PTT) building:

This is important: tomorrow morning we are expecting a VVIP at the airport. He is coming here to try and help stop the war. If either of your sides do anything to interfere with the visit, it will be seen around the world on CNN and your side will suffer consequences. I strongly recommend that you get hold of your political and military leaders and tell them to cool it for the next twenty-four hours. There will be a group of UN soldiers on the runway at 0700 hours tomorrow morning to clean up the debris. Don't use them for sniper practice! 125

¹²² Ibid., 242.

¹²³ Ibid., 243.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 244.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 246.

That evening the Foreign Ministry publicly announced Mitterrand's intention to go to Sarajevo and that he would be spending the night in Split. Whilst there, the President refused to meet Tudman for fear of the political ramifications. Instead he met two Croatian ministers, who warned him against proceeding to Sarajevo owing to the date. Mitterrand told his Croatian partners that he was aware of its significance and explained to the oblivious Kouchner that, "It's the day of the assassination of Franz Ferdinand by the Serb revolutionary Gavrilo Princip". One of the ministers pointed out that "the tradition is that the Serbs go crazy on this day... They permit everything for the defence of their country, including assassination. You are in serious danger." The President was unphased by the dangers, and indeed relished the symbolism of such an anniversary.

In Paris, Roland Dumas continued to monitor the President's progress. He sent a message to Chancellor Kohl on behalf of Mitterrand to inform the German chancellor that, following their conversation in Lisbon, the French President had decided to go to Sarajevo. Dumas also spoke with Života Panić, the Minister of Defence, to ensure that the Bosnian Serbs would disengage their forces surrounding the airport. This would be achieved the following morning with assistance from UNPROFOR.¹²⁸

The following morning the President left Split on one of two French Super Puma helicopters that had been dispatched from Paris. They took off at approximately 9.30 local time and arrived at Sarajevo airport an hour later, where General MacKenzie and a group of French officers welcomed the President. The second helicopter had been hit by a single round of heavy machine gun fire, which would greatly complicate the return journey for the French delegation. 129 It also demonstrated that the President's safety was far from

¹²⁶ Kouchner. Ce que je crois, 43.

¹²⁷ Ibid

¹²⁸ Dumas. Le fil et la pelote, 363.

¹²⁹ MacKenzie. Peacekeeper, 256.

guaranteed during the visit. MacKenzie recommended that the President call for his jet to be sent and that a repair team be dispatched to fix the stranded Super Puma.

The President was taken to the UN headquarters in Sarajevo in the PTT Building. There Mitterrand spoke with General MacKenzie on the conflict. The Canadian relayed his personal assessment of the conflict to the President, stressing that he believed all sides were equally culpable. Furthermore, when MacKenzie explained that supposedly the Army of the Republic of BiH (*Armija Republike Bosne i Hercegovine*, ARBiH) fired at their civilians he detected a glimmer in the President's eye. ¹³⁰ He also asked Mitterrand to relay a message to Izetbegović: "Stop the harassment of federal forces at the airport and the agreement [reopening of the airport] can be applied." For the Bosnian government, preventing the reopening of the airport was a sensible strategy. In its present state, the ARBiH was comprehensively less well-armed than the Bosnian Serbs and could only possibly hope to win the conflict through international intervention. The airport impasse had, as journalist David Rieff reflected, made the besieged city "the most famous place in the world." In allowing the airport to be reopened the government would resign itself to accepting humanitarian intervention as the international community's *modus operandi* in BiH.

The Canadian General was thus shocked to learn that Mitterrand intended to speak only with Izetbegović and not the Bosnian Serbs nor Croats and feared that his existence in Sarajevo would become even more difficult once the French delegation had left. Thus he appealed to the President to meet Karadžić, and after deliberations with Kouchner, Mitterrand agreed.¹³³ The President had been keen to avoid the Bosnian Serbs for fear of the damage that it would do to his public image. MacKenzie thus suggested the airport for

¹³⁰ Ibid

¹³¹ Braunstein, Matthew. *Mitterrand à Sarajevo: 28 juin 1992, Le rendez-vous manqué* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001) 82.

¹³² Andreas. Blue Helmets, 3.

¹³³ MacKenzie. Peacekeeper, 254.

the meeting and Mitterrand corrected the General saying that it would be only a brief greeting of five minutes. MacKenzie, aware of the Bosnian Serbs' cunning, told the President that the meeting would last as long as the Bosnian Serbs saw fit, as fighting would engulf the environs of the airport as soon as the meeting started, preventing the President's departure.¹³⁴

Following his meeting with MacKenzie, Mitterrand began his tour of the besieged capital (see map 3). An armoured vehicle took the President from the PTT building to the Presidency, where he was greeted by his Bosnian counterpart. Mitterrand told Izetbegović that he had come to Sarajevo to witness for himself what was truly happening and recalled that it reminded him of the German towns that he had traversed in 1945 and that it had suffered to the same degree. Is a conversation with Bernard-Henri Lévy, Izetbegović later claimed that, "I told him [Mitterrand] and showed him proof of the existence of concentration camps and I was waiting for his reaction upon his return to France. Such a revelation would almost certainly have provoked a concerned reaction from the former POW. However, although Izetbegović went to lengths to describe the systematic campaign the Serbs were waging against the Muslim population, which was harrowing in itself, he did not provide *proof* of the existence of concentration camps.

Following their meeting, the two Presidents walked to the nearby Koševo hospital. En route thrilled Sarajevans greeted the French President who had visited their besieged and beleaguered city. ¹³⁸ Passers-by cried "Mitterrand, you are our last hope! Thank you for your courage!" as sporadic canon shots reminded the Sarajevans of their plight. ¹³⁹

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¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Lévy. Le lys et la cendre, 532.

¹³⁶ Ibid

¹³⁷ Musitelli, Jean. Interview with Author, Paris, 19 September 2014.

¹³⁸ Karahasan, Dževad. trans by Slobodan Drakulić. *Sarajevo – Exodus of a City* (Sarajevo: Connectum, 2010). 126.

¹³⁹ "La visite de M. Mitterrand à Sarajevo", Le Monde (30 June 1992).

During the walk, Izetbegović turned to Kouchner and explained that "Women are deported after having been raped, and they are directing innocent men, civilians, unarmed, to *extermination camps* [emphasis added]."¹⁴⁰ This was also interpreted to Mitterrand. However, Kouchner believed that the claim of "extermination camps" was out of proportion, but recalls to "have promised, with the approval of the President, to try to open the camps."¹⁴¹

When he reached the hospital, the French President witnessed first-hand the effects of shelling on the city's civilian population. In the city's only emergency room he found "a woman with a torn cheek, a girl paralysed in the legs, recumbent soldiers." ¹⁴² Having visited the hospital, Mitterrand and Izetbegović walked to the bakery on Vaso Miskin Street where, on 27 May, the shelling of a breadline left sixteen people dead and tens more injured. Mitterrand laid a single red rose at the shrine to the victims' memory. The two Presidents then held a joint press conference. The visit had a clear emotional impact on the President, who remarked that "One can really see an imprisoned population, subjected to murderous blows. One feels a great sense of solidarity when one sees it."143 Asked by a journalist why he had decided to make the visit, Mitterrand responded that he "believes in the symbolic strength of acts" and that he hoped "to seize the universal conscience to come to the aid of a population in danger ... what is happening is not acceptable." ¹⁴⁴ Symbolism was the most potent weapon that Mitterrand had at his disposal and he employed it in an effort to secure the reopening of the airport. He told the assembled press that he wished to see the airport reopened so that aid could be delivered, under military protection if necessary.

¹⁴⁰ Kouchner. *Ce que je crois*, 47.

¹⁴¹ Ibid 47

¹⁴² "La visite de M. Mitterrand à Sarajevo", Le Monde (30 June 1992).

^{143 &}quot;L'arrivée à Sarajevo de M. Mitterrand", AFP, (28 June 1992).

¹⁴⁴ Ibid

Although Mitterrand had designated the Serbs as the aggressors only two days previous, he was keen to highlight that his mission was "not to make war with anybody" and that "France is not the enemy of any of the republics of the region". However the President was keen to stress that the example of Sarajevo was different and that the *amitié Franco-Serbe* makes France "all the more free to say that this is not acceptable." After leaving the press conference, Mitterrand departed for the airport to return to Paris. In the course of the afternoon, the President's jet had landed at the airport. However, a drunken Bosnian Serb had driven into the President's jet, damaging the wing, and himself, in the process, which would delay take-off. However.

As Mitterrand arrived at the airport he was greeted by Radovan Karadžić, Ratko Mladić and Nikola Koljević. Karadžić told Mitterrand that he was preparing to hand control of the airport to the UN. As the group walked inside, machine gun fire erupted outside as Lewis MacKenzie had predicted. With fighting around the airport and a damaged jet, the President was effectively the hostage of the Bosnian Serb delegation. MacKenzie thus suggested that Mitterrand hold a small meeting with the Bosnian Serb delegation. delegation. 148

Karadžić and Mladić launched into their tired tropes about Islamic fundamentalism in BiH and the threat it posed to Europe, leaving their audience unimpressed. Karadžić tried to convince the President that the Bosnian Serbs were entitled to their own independent territory, to which Mitterrand curtly retorted, "Perhaps. But you are going about it in the wrong way." In response, Mladić went on the offensive claiming that the Bosnian Serb who had driven into the President's jet, of which Mitterrand was not aware, had been under Muslim gunfire. Just as Mladić revealed this, the pilot of the jet entered to

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¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ MacKenzie. Peacekeeper, 260.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 260-1.

¹⁴⁹ Kouchner, Ce que je crois, 48.

reveal that it had been repaired and was ready to depart. Karadžić ended the meeting by telling the President, "You feel sorry for yourself, but for one Bosniak death, there are one hundred Serbs that you ignore!" Kouchner recalls that Mitterrand looked Karadžić directly in the eye and replied, "You mock me and you say stupid things. You are losing your cause. I do not believe you." This curt retort marked the end of the conversation.

After some deliberation, Mitterrand decided to leave in the repaired jet. Before leaving he asked MacKenzie what assistance France could usefully offer him in Sarajevo. MacKenzie requested that once the Bosnian Serbs handed over the airport, the UN would need humanitarian aircraft to land almost immediately to "kick-start" the operation. Furthermore, he requested a company of French marines be dispatched to secure the airport. The President duly obliged.

In the aircraft en route to Split, Kouchner once more tried to convince Mitterrand of the necessity to intervene. Mitterrand responded, "Who? France alone? No. We will not add war to war. Only the naïve, liars and some fiery intellectuals can think of that." The visit to Sarajevo appeared only to reaffirm Mitterrand's resolution to solve the crisis through humanitarian aid and a political solution.

Reaction to the President's visit was greeted in the Parisian press with near unanimous praise. The conservative newspaper *Le Figaro* considered that the President had recaptured French public opinion with panache. It reflected that:

The French have always been receptive to such feats - Bonaparte at the bridge of Arcola, Clemenceau in the trenches, de Gaulle advancing under fire towards the nave of Notre Dame. One cannot help thinking that Mitterrand was inspired by the examples of this man that he has for half a century, so admired (without saying it) and so hated (without hiding it). 154

¹⁵⁰ Ibid..

¹⁵¹ Ibid

¹⁵² MacKenzie. Peacekeeper, 260.

¹⁵³ Kouchner, Ce que je crois, 50.

¹⁵⁴ "La visite de François Mitterrand à Sarajevo", AFP (29 June 1992).

Libération thought that Mitterrand had retaken the initiative in solving the Bosnian crisis, having swum against the tide in trying to negotiate with Serbia over the preceding months. Moreover, *Liberation* noted, the visit will have buoyed the Sarajevans as not only was Mitterrand the French President, nor a member of the twelve of Europe, he was one of the P5 and therefore represented far more than France. 155

However, internationally reaction was slightly more tempered. German officials appeared to be irked as theretofore France had appeared to be the most reticent to act against Serbia. However, on Sunday evening Mitterrand personally called Helmut Kohl and "the bittersweet reactions of his [Kohl's] entourage left no trace" as Kohl had realised, owing to their conversation in Lisbon, that Mitterrand was planning an initiative of such a magnitude. In contrast, the German press praised the personal courage of Mitterrand. However, and perhaps still offended over recognition disagreements in December 1991, the German press accused the President of breaking from a unified European approach..

In Britain, across the board the press praised the "personal courage" of the French president. Douglas Hurd, the British Foreign Minister, had expressed a similar sentiment saluting "the courageous act of an aging French president", underlining that "nothing in Europe, nor in Maastricht, prevents a country from taking such an initiative."

In the short-term, the President's visit appeared to have brought about the reopening of the airport; the declared aim of his visit. The Bosnian Serbs relinquished control of the airport on the afternoon of 29 June, although as part of the agreement reached with the UN the Bosnian Serbs were also required to remove artillery from around

¹⁵⁶ Cohen, Roger. "Conflict in the Balkans: Mitterrand Trip Welcomed Only in Paris and Sarajevo", *New York Times* (29 June 1992).

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Dumas. Le fil et la pelote, 363.

¹⁵⁸ "La presse britannique salue le 'courage personnel' de M. Mitterrand", AFP (29 June 1992).

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ "Coups de chapeau et reserves pour le 'cavalier seul' dans le pays de la CEE", AFP (29 June 1992).

the airport, which encountered problems.¹⁶¹ Twenty UNPROFOR observers were placed in the area surrounding the airport and a French *Transall* transport aeroplane landed that evening carrying aid and food. The following morning three more transporters, carrying aid, medicine and equipment to repair the airport, landed without incident.¹⁶²

However the Sarajevan population were soon able to discern the purpose of Mitterrand's visit and the initial Francophile enthusiasm quickly dissipated. A week after the President's visit, the Bosnian newspaper *Oslobođenje* bemoaned the humanitarian policy of the West that sought only to deal with the "symptom of the disease". The article also perceptively reflected that Mitterrand sought to use the symbolism of his Sarajevo visit to counter criticism domestically and also to demonstrate internationally that Europe could act without US interference. Let Izetbegović recalled that, "Many regret the reopening of the airport and this 'humanitarian' policy of the West, which had definitively relegated the struggle for rights, justice and laws. Instead, we had a policy of alms imposed on us, which, of course, did not meet our expectations."

The President's visit precipitated a flurry of diplomatic activity. Carrington once more renewed the ECCY paying tribute to "a spectacular gesture" and adding that the President's visit would probably have "a very important effect for the population of Sarajevo." Furthermore the UNSC authorised the deployment of 1,000 more peacekeepers to protect the airport, whilst Britain declared that it was ready to participate in a humanitarian airlift. 167

The EC began its humanitarian airlift to Sarajevo on 2 July, with five French and one British transporter planes delivering over 600 tonnes of aid and material to the Bosnian

¹⁶¹ "La concentration de l'artillerie serbe 'ne se déroule pas bien'", AFP (30 June 1992).

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Smaljović, Ljiljana. "Dogovor o spasavanju Sarajeva", *Oslobođenje* (5 July 1992).

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Lévy. Le lys et la cendre, 533.

¹⁶⁶ "Lord Carrington veut se rendre en Yougoslavie", AFP (29 June 1992).

¹⁶⁷ "Le Conseil de sécurité autorise le déploiement d'un millier de 'casques bleus'", Le Monde (1 July 1992).

capital.¹⁶⁸ The following day, Carrington flew to Sarajevo to meet Izetbegović as he tried to seize on the initiative given by Mitterrand's visit.¹⁶⁹ However, once more European mediation failed to achieve any progress as Carrington concluded "the three communities are not very happy living together."¹⁷⁰

Internationalising the Crisis

France proposed a new diplomatic initiative at a meeting of the Group of 7 (G7) by calling for the creation of an international conference on Yugoslavia. Jean Musitelli, spokesman for the Élysée, indicated that the G7 "should not rule out the possibility of an international conference bringing together the UN, the European Community and all parties in the Yugoslav crisis." Musitelli also indicated that France had not ruled out the possibility of sending ground troops, not peacekeepers, to protect the aid convoys, adding that "These are not empty words." 172

The following day, as a CSCE summit opened in Helsinki, France sent military helicopters to Sarajevo, which led journalists to question Musitelli whether this was a separate French initiative. However Musitelli soon confirmed that they were sent in support of UNSCR 761; the resolution that had authorised the deployment of a further 1,000 UN peacekeepers to secure the airport. 173 Secretary of State Baker also reported that George Bush had told Alija Izetbegović that he would consider the possible use of aerial force to destroy the Serbs' heavy artillery. 174 The Foreign Ministers of the WEU and NATO would also hold meetings during the course of the CSCE summit to discuss the situation in Yugoslavia. The international community was beginning to undermine the

¹⁶⁸ "Début du pont aérien de la CEE pour ravitailler Sarajevo". *AFP* (2 July 1992).

¹⁶⁹ "Lord Carrington à Sarajevo", AFP (3 July 1992).

¹⁷⁰ "Pas de progrès dans les négociations en Bosnie-Herzégovine, selon Lord Carrington", *AFP* (3 July 1992).

^{171 &}quot;Avertissement' aux belligérants et proposition de conférence internationale", AFP (7 July 1992).

¹⁷² "Les principaux points de la déclaration du G7 sur l'ex-Yougoslavie", AFP (7 July 1992).

¹⁷³ "La décision française d'envoyer des hélicoptères à Sarajevo", AFP (9 July 1992).

¹⁷⁴ "Washington n'exclut pas l'usage de la force pour détruire les armements serbes", AFP (9 July 1992).

threat of force, particularly since it was evident that there was a lack of will to engage militarily with the Bosnian conflict.

This was not lost on the Bosnian Serbs who continued to negotiate at a political level as they attempted to present a *fait accompli* on the ground. Following its ministerial meeting on the morning of 10 July, the WEU reverted to type announcing that they would study the possibility of enacting a naval blockade against Serbia; a rather empty threat. The following NATO meeting concluded that the NATO forces would support this measure and would help to ensure that the embargos against Belgrade were respected.

On the concluding day of the CSCE summit, Mitterrand sought to clarify France's position in regards to sending troops to BiH. The French President explained that France did not envisage sending troops to take part in the fighting in Yugoslavia but it was prepared to send peacekeepers to assure the protection of humanitarian convoys. Mitterrand perceived that France "is not in the mindset to send troops to fight on the ground but it is in the state of mind to send troops to protect humanitarian supplies." France had rolled back on its thinly-veiled threats from the day previous. Nonetheless the President reaffirmed France's commitment to execute the decisions of the UN and once more called for the creation of an international conference for Yugoslavia. 178

Whilst in Helsinki, Mitterrand held a meeting with Franjo Tuđman to discuss the issue of Bosnia-Hercegovina. At that stage, the Croatian President advocated the cantonisation of BiH owing to its ethnic composition. However, Mitterrand was keen to warn Tuđman that this was not the point of view of the Bosnians themselves. Mitterrand believed that "in each village there is a little of everybody [each ethnic group]", which

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¹⁷⁵ "Réunion des ministres de l'UEO sur la Yougoslavie", AFP (10 July 1992).

¹⁷⁶ "CSCE OTAN UEO (Urgent)", AFP (10 July 1992).

¹⁷⁷ "M. Mitterrand: la France n'envisage pas d'envoyer des troupes pour prendre", *AFP* (19 July 1992).

Tuđman disputed. The Croatian leader argued that "cantonisation will be possible but the Bosnian leadership opposes it and wants a unified Islamic state." ¹⁷⁹

Tuđman appealed to France and the international community directly to pressure Izetbegović into accepting the EC's solution. "The international community and Europe, at the heart of which France plays an important role, must oblige the representatives of the three peoples of Bosnia-Hercegovina to negotiate around a table and to find solutions for a shared life in the interior of Bosnia-Hercegovina." Tuđman continued, "It must be a democratic and peaceful solution. The Serbs and Croats are in favour of cantonisation, the Bosniaks are not. It is necessary to impose a peaceful solution." 181

Tudman thought that "the problem is the Croatian part of Bosnia formerly included in the Banovina created in 1929, which now feels threatened and wants to re-join. I don't want it. We have recognised Bosnia-Hercegovina; but it will not survive as a unified state, but as a union." 182 Tudman had revealed his vision for the former Yugoslav space (see map 4). The Croatian President derived his concept of the Croatian 'nation' from his revisionist historical interpretations of Yugoslavia. As Gordana Uzelak notes therefore, "the population of territories which Tudman considers as historically Croatian becomes a part of the Croatian state." Although Tudman sought to hide his intentions from Mitterrand, he was prepared to accept the loss of some Croatian territory if it were compensated for in BiH.

Mitterrand pointedly stated that thus the "Croats are doing the same thing in Bosnia as the Serbs." The difference, Tudman declared, was that the Croats did not attack the Bosnians, they were defending Croatian territory. Nonetheless, Mitterrand noted that

¹⁷⁹ Entretien du Président de le République avec M. Tudjman Président de la Croatie à Helsinki (10 July 1992), 14 January 1993, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/230.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Uzelak, Gordana. "Franjo Tudjman's Nationalist Ideology", *East European Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (January 1998), 457.

¹⁸⁴ Entretien du Président de le République avec M. Tudjman Président de la Croatie à Helsinki le 10 Juillet 1992, 14 January 1993, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/230.

Bosnia was an internationally recognised state and was present at Helsinki, at the same invitation as all others. Tudman conceded that Croatia had even recognised BiH but was concerned that Izetbegović wanted a unified Islamic state. Mitterrand again retorted that the Bosnian leader had made no indication that this was his intention.

Following the CSCE summit, its members released a statement expressing their concern that, "The authorities in Belgrade bear primary responsibility." Once more, implicit threats and heightening rhetoric had resulted in few measures that would actually exert little influence over the fighting in BiH. Indeed the UNPROFOR spokesman in Sarajevo, Fred Eckhard, criticised the measure, complaining that "the Adriatic coast is a long way from Sarajevo". The task of UNPROFOR seemed to be growing daily as reports emerged that the Bosnian Serbs had launched an attack against the Bosniak enclave of Goražde. This marked the start of a vast offensive by the Bosnian Serbs throughout BiH that saw them lay siege to many strategically located towns and led to another mass exodus of Bosniak civilians. 188

The new wave of ethnic cleansing created a surge in refugee numbers, who were fleeing towns in eastern BiH into neighbouring republics. Accordingly, Tuđman wrote to Mitterrand to highlight the growing refugee crisis in BiH. He wrote that: "Croatia cannot deal with the number of refugees coming from BiH. Many swim across the Sava River. Croatia has more than 650,000 refugees about 361,500 from BiH." He highlighted the fact that the Serbs were taking advantage of the focus on Sarajevo and the "only remaining solution lies in a rapid and energic [sic] military intervention by international forces." ¹⁹⁰ The Croatian Minister for the Interior, Ivan Jarnjak, also made an appeal to Europe to

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¹⁸⁵ "CSCE Sommet Yougoslavie (Urgent)", AFP (10 July 1992).

¹⁸⁶ "Opération navale occidentale: réaction du porte-parole de la FORPRONU", AFP (10 July 1992).

¹⁸⁷ "Goražde, après Vukovar, Dubrovnik et Sarajevo", AFP (12 July 1992).

¹⁸⁸ "Plusieurs villes assiégées, de nombreuses victimes", *Le Monde* (14 July 1992).

¹⁸⁹ TD ZAGREB 30, 12 July 1992, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/230 (1).

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

accept refugees from BiH as Croatia could not continue to support the vast numbers that were fleeing from the war in its eastern neighbour.¹⁹¹

Intelligently, with renewed talks led by Carrington scheduled for 15 July, Karadžić called for an immediate ceasefire. The Bosnian Serbs had made significant progress in cleansing the east and could thus attend the talks in a strong military position. At the talks at the auction house Christie's in London, where Carrington was a chairman, the Bosniaks stuck steadfastly to the line that they would not engage in direct negotiations with the Bosnian Serbs until a ceasefire held for seven days and the Serbs relinquished control of their heavy weapons to the UN. 193 Once more, the talks made little progress, although Karadžić assured Carrington that he was ready to respect a ceasefire around Sarajevo and guarantee the safety of the 'humanitarian corridor'. With the media focus fixed on the capital, this was an astute move that also allowed the Bosnian Serbs to continue their offensive in the countryside of BiH. 195

There was also cause for cautious optimism amongst the European diplomacy. In Belgrade, the ascension of the writer Dobrica Ćosić to the position of President of the FRY and Milan Panić, a Serbian American multimillionaire pharmaceutical tycoon, as Prime Minister led to new hopes that renewed dialogue may halt hostilities. ¹⁹⁶ The early moodmusic from the Panić premiership appeared promising as he proposed the demilitarisation of BiH under the control of the UN and called for one hundred days to bring peace to the former Yugoslavia. ¹⁹⁷ The newly installed Prime Minister wrote to Mitterrand to express his "sentiment of admiration and respect for the act of great courage and wisdom of a statesman that you demonstrated by visiting Sarajevo." Panić added that, "I want to walk

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¹⁹¹ "Appel à l'Europe du ministre croate de l'Intérieur pour accueillir les réfugiés de Bosnie", *AFP* (15 July 1992).

¹⁹² "Le leader serbe en Bosnie appelle à un cessez-le-feu immédiat". AFP (14 July 1992).

¹⁹³ "Lord Carrington lance à Londres un nouveau round de pourparlers sur la Bosnie-Herzégovine", *AFP* (15 July 1992).

¹⁹⁴ "Reprise difficile à Londres des négociations sur la Bosnie-Herzégovine", AFP (15 July 1992).

¹⁹⁵ "La guerre en Bosnie continue de faire rage en dépit des efforts de paix", AFP (16 July 1992).

¹⁹⁶ "Échec de l'offensive de charme des nouveaux dirigeants yougoslaves", AFP (10 July 1992).

¹⁹⁷ "Milan Panić propose la démilitarisation de la Bosnie sous contrôle de l'ONU", AFP (14 July 1992).

along the path that you have traced, Mr President, by visiting Sarajevo."¹⁹⁸ Indeed, the new Yugoslav Prime Minister did trace Mitterrand's footsteps and visited Sarajevo on 19 July.¹⁹⁹

The British Foreign Secretary was also following in the President's footsteps as he arrived in Sarajevo on the morning of 17 July, as a fourteen day ceasefire was signed between the three parties in London.²⁰⁰ In Sarajevo, Hurd declared that the EC would not accept the ethnic partition of BiH, although he immediately undermined himself by stating that he did not foresee military intervention to impose a particular solution on the ground.²⁰¹ Hurd perfectly encapsulated the contradictory European approach to solving the Bosnian conflict, which in turn provided the Bosnian Serbs with an implicit confirmation that they could continue to try to create a *fait accompli* partition in BiH. Hurd had set the parameters for European policy, which was based on its poorly perceived understanding of the Bosnian Serbs' war aims.²⁰²

Following the conclusion of the talks in London, the three parties agreed to a ceasefire that would come into effect at 18h00 on 19 July. Furthermore, the UN announced that it was ready to assume a supervisory role for the transfer of the Serbs' heavy weapons. In Belgrade, Hurd declared that he was more optimistic that the ceasefire would hold, although he warned that "the moment of truth had come" and that "the response will come on the ground and not a signature at the bottom of a document." Whilst Hurd was in Belgrade, Mitterrand received Panić in Paris for talks, where the Yugoslav Prime Minister told Mitterrand that he could "count on him to introduce a

¹⁹⁸ TD BEGRADE 1038, 8 August 1992, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/362.

¹⁹⁹ "M. Panić fait une visite clair Sarajevo dimanche", AFP (19 July 1992).

²⁰⁰ "CEE Bosnie Yougoslavie (Urgent)", AFP (17 July 1992).

²⁰¹ "M.Hurd: pas de partition de la Bosnie-Herzégovine ni d'intervention militaire", AFP (17 July 1992).

²⁰² "Arrivée de M. Douglas Hurd à Belgrade", AFP (17 July 1992).

²⁰³ "L'ONU prête à assumer le rôle de supervision des armes lourdes en Bosnie-Herzégovine", *AFP* (17 July 1992).

²⁰⁴ "M. Hurd: le moment du test est arrivé", AFP (18 July 1992).

peace."²⁰⁵However, as the deadline for the ceasefire came, its chances of success were slim. The UN had again closed the airport amidst fighting as the deadline passed.²⁰⁶ Once more, the aggression emanated from the Bosnian Serbs and the EC considered expelling FRY from all international organisations.²⁰⁷

UNPROFOR reopened the airport on 21 July following a lull in fighting, which allowed Carrington to reach Sarajevo to hold discussions.²⁰⁸ Simultaneously, in Zagreb Izetbegović and Tuđman signed an agreement of friendship and cooperation and called on the EC and the US to take effective measures against the forces of FRY who continued to attack BiH and equally Croatia.²⁰⁹ Significantly this marked an agreement between the two to formally join forces against the Serbs and a temporary cessation in hostilities against one another.²¹⁰

The agreement led to a renewed push by the Bosnian Serbs. Once more UNPROFOR threatened to close the airport amidst heavy fighting.²¹¹ Boutros-Ghali declared that UNPROFOR would be unable to undertake supervision of the heavy weapons around the airport; the UNSC remained determined.²¹²

That same day, two French UN armoured vehicles escorted a humanitarian delivery to Goražde; one struck a landmine en route.²¹³ Following this incident, Roland Dumas highlighted the fragility of the humanitarian mission in BiH and declared on France Soir that the "action must be strengthened."²¹⁴ Having reflected that the refugee crisis in BiH had taken France "by the throat", the Foreign Minister added: "We must move up a gear,

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²⁰⁵ "Sur fond de guerre en Bosnie-Herzégovine", *Le Monde* (18 July 1992).

²⁰⁶ "La trêve des armes impossible en Bosnie-Herzégovine", AFP (20 July 1992).

²⁰⁷ "CEE Yougoslavie (Urgent)", AFP (20 July 1992).

²⁰⁸ "Réouverture de l'aéroport de Sarajevo et arrivée de lord Carrington", AFP (21 July 1992).

²⁰⁹ "Signature d'un accord sur l'amitié et la coopération entre la Croatie et la Bosnie", AFP (21 July 1992).

²¹⁰ "La Bosnie-Herzégovine et la Croatie s'allient contre la Serbie", AFP (22 July 1992).

²¹¹ "L'aéroport de Sarajevo reste ouvert malgré malgré d'importants combats", AFP (22 July 1992).

²¹² "M. Boutros-Ghali déconseille la supervision des armes lourdes par l'ONU en Bosnie-Herzégovine", *AFP* (22 July 1992).

²¹³ "Un blindé escortant le convoi du HCR vers Gorazde roule sur une mine: au moins un blessé", *AFP* (23 July 1992).

²¹⁴ "Roland Dumas: 'notre action doit être renforcée' en Yougoslavie", AFP (24 July 1992).

beyond humanitarian assistance, and find political solutions to the Yugoslav crisis."²¹⁵ Moreover, German and US rhetoric had continued to heighten; the ruling Christian Democrats in Germany called for military intervention unless the ceasefire agreement signed in London was respected.²¹⁶

The UNSC called on the EC to consider the enlargement of the ECCY to address the problems in the former Yugoslavia. Therefore, Britain – who now held the EC Presidency – decided to hold a conference in London in the second half of August that would bring together the three parties in conflict, the EC and the UN. In preparation the British Foreign Office invited the three parties to London to hold discussions under EC auspices and chaired by Cutileiro. 219

At the meeting Cutileiro reaffirmed the line that negotiations were possible whilst fighting continued. ²²⁰ Once more the negotiations reached their disheartening conclusion of no settlement. The Bosnian government continued to refuse the ethnic cantonisation of BiH, which Karadžić continued to support, knowing fully well that the situation on the ground greatly favoured his side. The Bosnian Croats were repesented by Mate Boban who continued to call for the Bosnian Serbs to withdraw from the areas that they had conquered. ²²¹ Haris Silajdžić raised the issue of atrocities in BiH and called for the creation of an international tribunal to try Karadžić and the Serb leaders, comparing them to Hitler and his cronies. ²²² Still seeking to acquire the Bosnian government's acceptance to his 'General Statements', Cutileiro announced the immediate creation of a human rights

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ "Des responsables du parti d'Helmut Kohl réclament une intervention militaire en Yougoslavie", *AFP* (21 July 1992); "BOSNIE Washington hausse le ton", *Le Monde* (22 July 1992).

²¹⁷ "Yougoslavie (Urgent)", AFP (25 July 1992).

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ "Discussions sur la Bosnie lundi à Londres", AFP (25 July 1992).

²²⁰ "Les combats en Bosnie n'empêchent pas la recherche d'un accord politique, selon M. Cutileiro", *AFP* (27 July 1992).

²²¹ "Poursuite des pourparlers constitutionnels sur la Bosnie", AFP (28 July 1992).

²²² Ibid

committee in BiH.²²³ Izetbegović also petitioned the UNSC to lift the arms embargo against BiH so that the Bosniak population could protect itself against the worsening atrocities.²²⁴

The summer of 1992 had revealed the horrific extent of the Bosnian Serb campaign of ethnic cleansing that had ravaged BiH. This systematic campaign had largely been ignored in the Western press, as news reporting had fixated on the plight of Sarajevo. The Bosnian Serbs' campaign aimed to remove the cultural and territorial ties of Bosnian Muslims to the regions that the Serbian leaders envisaged as part of Greater Serbia. This led to massive population displacement as refugees fled towards Muslim-held urban centres or towards neighbouring republics. This created Bosniak enclaves throughout BiH, wherein Bosniak civilians lived under siege.

Stories emerged in the international media concerning the existence of concentration camps in BiH. In a series of articles for *New York Newsday* at the end of July, the journalist Roy Gutman exposed the existence of a network of concentration camps. These articles were widely replicated throughout French media over 3 and 4 August and film footage captured by an ITN news team from the Omarska concentration camp was broadcast on 7 August.²²⁵ Furthermore, the haunting image of 'the young thin man', ('*le jeune homme maigre'*) Fikret Alić, was widely-printed and led to comparisons with Nazi extermination camps.²²⁶

On 3 August the UN confirmed the existence of a single 'prisoner camp' in a stadium in Bosanski Novi on the border between Croatia and BiH.²²⁷ The Quai called for "immediate access without restrictions" for the International Committee of the Red Cross

²²³ "Le médiateur européen confirme la création d'un 'comité pour les droits de l'Homme' en Bosnie", *AFP* (29 July 1992).

180

²²⁴ "La Bosnie très réticente à l'intervention envisagée à l'ONU", AFP (10 August 1992).

²²⁵ Krieg-Planque, Alice. "Purification Ethnique": Une formule et son histoire (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2003), 33.

²²⁶ Ibid., 37-43; see also Massonneau, Valérie. "L'horreur qu'on ne voudrait plus voir", *Paris Match* (20 August 1992).

²²⁷ "L'ONU confirme l'existence d'un camps de prisonniers musulmans en Bosnie", AFP (3 August 1992).

(ICRC) and UNHCR.²²⁸ Meriel Beattie writing for *Le Monde* had also begun to investigate camps near Prijedor but was restricted access by Bosnian Serb militiamen. However, she could make out hundreds of men imprisoned on a sports field in the distance.²²⁹ Sports stadiums and fields across BiH provided a readily available and well-constructed infrastructure for prison camps throughout BiH.²³⁰

The existance of concentration camps greatly concerned the President owing to his own experiences in World War II. He told a meeting of the Council of Ministers that "all humanitarian convoys must be protected, all camps must be visited, controlled and open."²³¹ Mitterrand believed that the solution was to increase the humanitarian effort by gaining access to the camps and reinforcing the mandate for aid delivery.

Roland Dumas affirmed the President's view and added that France would learn the truth about the camps and the behaviour of those involved in them, which required "the right to go there and see the physical cruelty which the people collected there have been victims of." Therefore Dumas called on Kouchner to visit the camps; he entered the camps of Manjača and Omarska on 14 August. There he saw 700 Bosniak men penned into a stable, all appearing to have lost more than 10 kilos and reflected that "the infirmary was a place for people to die". 234

Calls for stronger intervention emerged from within Mitterrand's own party as André Billardon, the Socialist Deputy for Saône-et-Loire called for the UN to mount a firm response and not to exclude military intervention. He added that France should be involved in any such action.²³⁵ Furthermore both *Le Figaro* and *Le Quotidien de Paris* were openly

²²⁸ "La France demande le libre accès aux camps de détenus pour le HCR et le CICR", AFP (3 August 1992).

²²⁹ Beattie, Meriel. "L'existence de camps de detentions serbes en Bosnie" *Le Monde* (5 August 1992).

²³⁰ Mills, Richard. "Velež Mostar Football Club and the Demise of 'Brotherhood and Unity' in Yugoslavia, 1922-2009", *Europe-Asia* Studies 62, no. 7 (2010), 1124.

²³¹ "Le président Mitterrand: 'tout camp doit être visité, contrôlé, ouvert', AFP (5 August 1992).

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Kouchner. *Ce que je crois*, 52.

²³⁴ Ibid

²³⁵ "Serbie: M. Billardon (PS) n'exclut pas que la France participe à une intervention militaire.", *Le Monde* (6 August 1992).

calling for Western military intervention.²³⁶ Mitterrand held steadfastly to his humanitarian approach and warned that "adding war to war will resolve nothing."²³⁷

The ICRC had yet to confirm whether these camps were in fact *concentration* camps, much to the frustration of Simone Veil, former Health Minister under Giscard d'Estaing. A survivor of Auschwitz-Birkenau, she condemned the International Red Cross declaring that "The HCR talks explicitly of concentration camps. The International Committee of the Red Cross refuses to confirm it. Everyone passes the buck in the face of the Yugoslav drama."²³⁸

Interventionist voices were also growing in opposition parties in neighbouring Germany with many advocating military intervention, lifting the arms embargo for Bosniaks and Croats and a new Nuremberg trial.²³⁹ In Britain, former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was calling for an ultimatum and military action against the Serbs, whilst former French Foreign Minister Michel Jobert called for the bombing of Serb artillery and infrastructure.²⁴⁰

Therefore Boutros-Ghali called upon European organisations to be ready to assume the role of controlling heavy arms in BiH, as he wrote "European countries and the regional organisations are particularly well-placed for an urgent action."²⁴¹ As Boutros-Ghali continued to protect the UN from becoming more deeply involved in BiH, the US was calling for a UNSCR to allow CSCE to send a verification mission to judge whether or not crimes against humanity had been committed in the course of the conflict.²⁴² The Bosnian government had released their own list pertaining to the network of camps under

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²³⁶ "Le conflit yougoslave à la Une de la presse parisienne", AFP (8 August 1992).

²³⁷ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 350.

²³⁸ "Camps en Bosnie: colère de Mme Simone Veil contre la prudence du CICR". AFP (10 August 1992).

²³⁹ "Surenchères de solutions-miracles pour l'ex-Yougoslavie", *AFP* (5 August 1992).

²⁴⁰ "Margaret Thatcher pour un ultimatum et des actions militaires contre la Serbie", *AFP* (6 August 1992); "Bosnie: M. Jobert propose de bombarder l'artillerie et les infrastructures serbes", *Le Monde* (6 August 1992).

²⁴¹ "Bosnie-Herzégovine: appel de M. Boutros-Ghali à l'Europe", AFP (5 August 1992).

²⁴² "Pressé d'agir, Washington annonce des initiatives sur l'ex-Yougoslavie", AFP (5 August 1992).

Bosnian Serb control, which claimed that 97,000 people were held in 94 camps across BiH.²⁴³

Europe responded and called for immediate unrestricted access to the camps in BiH and appealed to Belgrade to use its influence over the Bosnian Serbs. In a communiqué, the EC called on all parties to conform to international human rights and the Geneva Convention.²⁴⁴ In an effort to support Europe, NATO declared that it was studying the possibility of supporting humanitarian aid delivery through military means, although a spokesman highlighted that it would take several weeks.²⁴⁵ Georges Kiejman, the governmental minister for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, declared that France "will be ready to study the neutralisation of heavy arms in possession of the Serbs", although he was also keen to stress that any heavy arms under the control of Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats would also be targeted.²⁴⁶ Therefore, France would seize the UNSC to draft a resolution to increase the capacity of UNPROFOR in Yugoslavia.²⁴⁷ Whilst highlighting that the situation in BiH was "extremely complex", Kiejman indicated that if the Bosnian Serb commander would not open the camps that there were "other means than those of discussion."²⁴⁸

The Dutch Foreign Minister, Hans van den Broek, expressed his support for military protection for humanitarian convoys and the need to gain unrestricted access to the camps.²⁴⁹ London also called for an immediate meeting of the UN Commission on Human Rights to investigate the camps, as Douglas Hogg prepared to meet leaders in Brussels to

²⁴³ "La Bosnie-Herzégovine communique à l'ONU une liste des camps de détention", AFP (5 August 1992).

²⁴⁴ "La CEE réclame un accès "immédiat" aux camps de Bosnie", AFP (6 August 1992).

²⁴⁵ "Les pays de l'OTAN étudient les moyens militaires d'assurer l'acheminement de l'aide humanitaire", *AFP* (6 August 1992).

²⁴⁶ "La France 'prête à envisager la neutralisation des armes lourdes' en Bosnie-Herzégovine", *AFP* (7 August 1992).

²⁴⁷ "La France va saisir les membres du Conseil de Sécurité d'un projet de résolution sur la Yougoslavie", *AFP* (7 August 1992).

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ "Les Pays-Bas favorables à une protection militaire des convois humanitaires", AFP (7 August 1992).

prepare for the creation of an enlarged conference.²⁵⁰ NATO also planned an extraordinary meeting of its Ambassadors to discuss the options available to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid in BiH.²⁵¹ The UNSC also announced that it envisaged the limited use of force to protect the delivery of humanitarian aid.²⁵² Chancellor Kohl expressed his support for such an approach.²⁵³ Critically, Russia also supported a reinfocement of UNPROFOR; although it was keen to stress that this was only if reports from BiH proved to be well-founded.²⁵⁴ However the mandate would only provide for humanitarian deliveries.

The US was keen to highlight that it was not prepared to see its troops embroiled in a guerrilla war and was therefore only prepared to offer air support. Douglas Hogg added that, "The only objective justifying the massive use of force would be to obtain a peace agreement and there is no reason to think that the use of force would bring a peace agreement. Elisabeth Guigou, added further weight behind the humanitarian intervention line, stating that "there is no question of going to war in Yugoslavia because we will not solve this conflict with cannon shots." However, Guigou did add that it was Europe, following a French initiative, which had called for the humanitarian aid to be accompanied by military means. That same day Douglas Hurd revealed that London, Paris and Washington were very close to an agreement for the protection of humanitarian deliveries. The international community had well and truly adopted the *Mitterrandienne* line.

The Bosnian government themselves were resistant to the type of intervention envisaged by the UNSC and would have preferred the Bosnian Serb artillery to have been

²⁵⁰ "Douglas Hogg à Bruxelles et en Europe de l'Est la semaine prochaine", AFP (7 August 1992).

²⁵¹ "Réunion extraordinaire vendredi prochain des ambassadeurs des pays de l'OTAN", *AFP* (7 August 1992).

²⁵² "Le Conseil de Sécurité envisage une opération militaire", *AFP* (7 August 1992).

²⁵³ "Le chancelier Kohl en faveur d'une protection militaire pour les convois humanitaires", *AFP* (8 August 1992).

²⁵⁴ "La Russie exprime sa 'grande inquiétude' à propos de la situation en Bosnie", AFP (7 August 1992).

^{255 &}quot;Les réticences américaines à l'égard d'une intervention militaire en Bosnie", *AFP* (8 August 1992).

²⁵⁶ "Londres redit son opposition à l'usage de la force en Bosnie", AFP (8 August 1992).

²⁵⁷ "Pas question d'aller 'faire la guerre' en Yougoslavie", AFP (9 August 1992).

²⁵⁸ "Recours à la force militaire en Bosnie", AFP (9 August 1992).

neutralised.²⁵⁹ Nonetheless the US, France and Britain were close to an agreement regarding a new UNSC resolution that would authorise "all means necessary" to ensure the delivery of humanitarian aid to the Bosnian population.²⁶⁰ However, there were clear differences over who should contribute the ground troops to secure the delivery: Washington flatly refused; Germany's constitution strictly forbade sending troops outside of NATO territory; the Bosnian government refused Italian troops; and Britain had already declared its reluctance to send ground troops to BiH.²⁶¹ France, however, was proactive and the government dispatched Bernard Kouchner to study the resolution's implementation.²⁶²

As these discussions continued, political pressure continued to grow in France as politicians from all sides of the political spectrum called on the French government to act.²⁶³ Furthermore a limited survey by the French Institute of Public Opinion found that 61% of French people favoured direct military intervention in BiH under the auspices of the UN.²⁶⁴

In France, the opposition criticised the government for its insufficient solution to the crisis in BiH. The criticisms were often aimed at the President. Former Prime Minister Jacques Chirac called for prompt aerial operations and criticised Mitterrand for demonstrating an excessive sympathy for the Serbs and accused the President of committing an "historic error". He also declared himself to be "worried by the accumulation of serious errors that characerised French diplomacy for three years" and

²⁵⁹ "La Bosnie très réticente à l'intervention envisagée à l'ONU", *AFP* (10 August 1992).

²⁶⁰ "Confirmation par Washington de progrès vers le vote d'une résolution de l'ONU", *AFP* (10 August 1992).

²⁶¹ "Bosnie: Divergences entre les Occidentaux", *Le Monde* (10 August 1992).

²⁶² "M. Kouchner en Yougoslavie dès l'adoption de la résolution en cours d'examen par la Conseil de securité", *AFP* (11 August 1992).

²⁶³ "Bosnie: Les réactions en France", *Le Monde* (10 August 1992).

²⁶⁴ "Les Français favorables à une intervention militaire en Bosnie dans le cadre de l'ONU, selon un sondage", *AFP* (11 August 1992).

²⁶⁵ "Bosnie: Il faut organiser des 'opérations aériennes ponctuelles' déclare au 'Monde' M. Jacques Chirac", *Le Monde* (12 August 1992).

went so far as to suggest that Mitterrand was complicit in the war's continuation.²⁶⁶ Charles Millon, who would become Defence Minister under the Juppé government in May 1995, judged the resolution insufficient and called on France to pursue concerted diplomatic action with a credible threat of force.²⁶⁷ Further political parties and interest groups called for military intervention and condemned Mitterrand's policies.²⁶⁸ Indeed, given Mitterrand's sensibilities towards concentration camps - he was himself a former POW and had assisted in liberating the concentration camps in Germany - he found the polemics against him to be particularly unpleasant.²⁶⁹

Nonetheless, Mitterrand rejected the calls for further intervention reflecting that there was no other possible action for France other than in the framework of the United Nations.²⁷⁰ The President was confident that the "belligerents, and particularly the Serbs, would be reluctant to face an international force of the type that will engage the United Nations."²⁷¹ Even Bernard Kouchner now declared that "a war is impossible and would only complicate the conflict", adding that "the conditions of detention of the prisoners are improving, even if they are still horrible."²⁷²

On 13 August the ICRC published a communiqué confirming the poor treatment of innocent civilians in camps and called for urgent measures to bring about respect for the Geneva Convention and the end of the practices of mass population transfers.²⁷³ Furthermore, the first extraordinary session of the UNHCR focussed on the practices of the

²⁶⁶ "Tollé de l'opposition contre la 'non-intervention' française et silence du Parti socialiste", *AFP* (14 August 1992); "M. Chirac juge M. Mitterrand 'objectivement complice' de la poursuite de la guerre", *Le Monde* (15 August 1992).

²⁶⁷ "Bosnie: M. Millon (UDF) juge 'insuffisante' la solution proposée", *Le Monde* (12 August 1992).

²⁶⁸ "Bosnie: M. Briant (CNI): 'Le devoir d'agir doit s'imposer'", *Le Monde* (12 August 1992); "Bosnie: Pour l'UFAC, il faut 'imposer la paix aux belligérants'", *Le Monde* (12 August 1992).
²⁶⁹ Musitelli, Jean, Interview with Author, Paris, 19 September 2015; See also "Bosnie: M. Jack Lang

²⁶⁹ Musitelli, Jean, Interview with Author, Paris, 19 September 2015; See also "Bosnie: M. Jack Lang dénonce les 'basses attaques' contre M. François Mitterrand", *Le Monde* (17 August 1992).

²⁷⁰ "Le président Mitterrand exclut toute intervention autre que strictement humanitaire", *AFP* (13 August 1992).

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² "Les conditions de détention des prisonniers 'se sont améliorées', selon M. Kouchner", *AFP* (15 August 1992).

²⁷³ "CICR Yougoslavie (Urgent)", AFP (13 August 1992).

Bosnian Serb authorities and condemned them "in the strongest possible terms".²⁷⁴ Thus the senior officials of the CSCE met in Prague to define European participation in securing the delivery of humanitarian aid. Later that day the UNSC unanimously adopted resolutions 770 and 771. The former urged the parties to stop fighting, provide access to any prisons or camps, and authorised "any means necessary" to secure the delivery of humanitarian deliveries under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Significantly, resolution 771 was the first resolution to condemn the practice of 'ethnic cleansing'.²⁷⁵

In France, Roland Dumas announced that he was ready to send a contingent of 1,100 peacekeepers to ensure the implementation of the resolutions.²⁷⁶ The Minister of Defence Pierre Joxe hoped that "the example of its [France's] determination could have a ripple effect", reflecting that France did not want to, nor could, act alone.²⁷⁷ Nonetheless, France remained one of the most proactive members of the international community in sending troop contributions to UNPROFOR and shaping the policies of the UN and Europe, for better or worse.

Maastricht and London

France's initatives had not been driven solely by humanitarian motivations. Just as a crisis in Yugoslavia had threatened the Maastricht Treaty a year previous, so too had it in August 1992. With a referendum due in France on 20 September, the war in BiH became a central issue in the public debate. For critics of the Maastricht Treaty and European Union, BiH demonstrated exactly the flaws that a multilateral institution with a common foreign and security policy would face and be unable to solve. For the supporters of Maastricht, the crisis in Yugoslavia demonstrated the necessity of greater integration to prevent future

²⁷⁴ "Les autorités serbes sur le banc des accusés à la commission des Droits de l'Homme de l'ONU", *AFP* (13 August 1992).

²⁷⁵ Security Council resolution 771, Former Yugoslavia, S/RES/771, 13 August 1992.

²⁷⁶ "Contingent français de 1.100 hommes à la disposition des Nations Unies", AFP (14 August 1992).

²⁷⁷ "M. Joxe: la France 'ne souhaite pas agir seule", AFP (15 August 1992).

ethnonational conflicts in Europe.²⁷⁸ Support for Maastricht amongst the French population had appeared guaranteed at the beginning of June, with 69% of the population in favour. However, by 20 August this had dropped to just 53%.²⁷⁹ The importance of a successful conference in London was clear.

Ahead of the conference, Britain announced that it would make 1,800 peacekeepers available to protect humanitarian convoys under resolution 770.²⁸⁰ Italy also offered to provide 1,500 troops to help secure the border and protect humanitarian convoys.²⁸¹ Seeking to tie the initiative into the debate on Europe, Pierre Joxe was quick to highlight in a press conference that Britain's decision was a major evolution for the situation in BiH and declared that it represented a "pledge to build a new relation throughout Europe."²⁸²

Lord Carrington had privately announced his intentions to resign his role as the President of the ECCY and Cyrus Vance had earmarked Lord David Owen to replace him.²⁸³ Prior to his appointment, Owen had been rather bullish in his calls for air strikes. He therefore feared that the French would resist his appointment. As Britain held the EC Presidency, the decision on who to appoint as the Community's negotiator fell to them. Aware that the French government was struggling ahead of the referendum on the Maastricht Treaty, John Major appeared on French television alongside Mitterrand to lend support to the pro-Maastricht campaign and was able to use this as leverage to ensure the appointment of David Owen as EC mediator.²⁸⁴

France's position as one of the main European policymakers towards the conflict in BiH was also coming under increasing pressure domestically. On 20 August, Roland Dumas faced the Commission for Foreign Affairs of the National Assembly where

188

²⁷⁸ "Référendum sur Maastricht: la montée du 'non'", AFP (20 August 1992).

²⁷⁹ Ibid

²⁸⁰ "Londres met à disposition 1.800 soldats pour la Bosnie", AFP (18 August 1992).

²⁸¹ "L'Italie prête à fournir 1.500 hommes", *AFP* (20 August 1992).

²⁸² "M. Joxe souligne l'importance des décisions britannique et italienne d'envoyer des troupes dans l'ex-Yougoslavie", *AFP* (20 August 1992).

²⁸³ Owen, David. *Balkan Odyssey* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1995), 22.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 24.

France's policy towards BiH was roundly criticised. Alain Juppé, future Foreign Minister, declared that "French diplomacy has committed many errors by not solemnly condemning the odious practice of ethnic cleansing and by not condemning those truly responsible, that it is to say the government of Mr. Milošević." Juppé added that France had, in not supporting any military intervention, only encouraged the Serbs in their campaign. Similarly, Charles Millon, the President of the *Union Démocratique Française* in the National Assembly called on Mitterrand to "solemnly condemn the practice of ethnic cleansing." Dumas indicated that he believed the forthcoming London Conference would resolve many of the fundamental issues that were causing the crisis in BiH. 287

To ensure that the Conference was as effective as possible Roland Dumas met with his German opposite Klaus Kinkel to coordinate their positions. This may have been due to a fear that an Anglo-American lead on BiH was forthcoming, with Cyrus Vance as the head of the UN mediation and David Owen at the head of the EC's. Owen reflected that the French "would be suspicious of anything that smacked of an Anglo-American axis." However, the US had made it quite clear that it had limited ambitions with regards to the London Conference, particularly since George Bush was approaching an election campaign. ²⁹⁰

The Yugoslav Prime Minister Milan Panić had declared that the London Conference would mark a turning point in the Yugoslav crisis.²⁹¹ Panić, who had established himself as a rival to Milošević and Ćosić in FRY, hoped that successful negotiations would lead to a softening of sanctions against his republic. Panić had written to Mitterrand ahead of the conference and confided that:

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²⁸⁵ "Bosnie: 'La France a fait tout ce qu'elle devait faire' déclare M. Roland Dumas devant la commission des affaires étrangères de l'Assemblée nationale", *Le Monde* (20 August 1992).

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ "Avant la conférence de Londres sur le conflit dans l'ex-Yougoslavie", *Le Monde* (22 August 1992).

²⁸⁹ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 23.

²⁹⁰ "Washington sans illusion avant la conférence de Londres", AFP (23 August 1992).

²⁹¹ "La Conférence de Londres pourrait marquer 'un tournant' dans la crise yougoslave, selon M. Panié", *AFP* (21 August 1992)

I am particularly concerned that many countries continue to deal with Mr Milošević and his government, rather than me and my government. They accuse Mr Milošević of being the individual most responsible for the civil war and its tragic consequences and yet they refuse to recognise and deal with me and my government of peace. That is putting form before substance.²⁹²

Panić was reaching out to Mitterrand once more in the hope that the French president may be able to bring about a change in this respect. He was committed to ending the war and hoped to use the Conference to this end.²⁹³ The international community would increasingly pin its hopes of removing Slobodan Miloševć on the Serbo-American busninessman.

The participants began to arrive in London on 24 August. The following day Lord Carrington confirmed in a press conference that he would be stepping down from his role as the EC mediator and that David Owen would replace him. Carrington's replacement had hoped for an effective stick to go alongside any carrots that may have been presented at the Conference. However, the international community was reluctant to provide a credible threat of force. Indeed, Boutros-Ghali even went so far as to state that he believed that the carrot was more useful than the stick to solve the crisis in Yugoslavia. ²⁹⁴ That same day, NATO had also failed to reach an agreement about the appropriate measures to take to protect the humanitarian convoys. ²⁹⁵ All signals ahead of the Conference pointed to it being the latest episode in the long series of the international community's prevaricative policymaking.

As the conference opened, the UN had already untertaken to create a permanent structure for negotiations at its headquarters in Geneva. Following an opening speech by

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²⁹² TD Belgrade 1038, 8 August 1992, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/362.

²⁹³ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 287.

²⁹⁴ "M. Boutros-Ghali privilégie la 'carotte' sur le 'bâton'", AFP (25 August 1992).

²⁹⁵ "L'OTAN ne trouve pas d'accord sur une intervention de protection militaire en Yougoslavie", *AFP* (25 August 1992).

John Major, other parties were invited to give statements. Roland Dumas highlighted that it was France that had initially called for the enlargement of the Conference on Yugoslavia and that France had long been at the forefront of the international efforts.²⁹⁶

The Foreign Minister prioritised four objectives for the Conference: the renewal of political dialogue, also including minority rights in the Sandžak and Kosovo; the reduction of violence and a reinforcement of the arms embargo; to ensure the delivery of essential humanitarian aid; and finally to obtain strict respect for Human Rights. Thus Dumas proposed two measures: to ask the Badinter Commission to give its opinion on minorities' rights and guarantees so that the new International Conference for Former Yugoslavia would have a legal framework; and the creation of an international criminal court to judge crimes.²⁹⁷ Dumas also called on the Bosnian government to authorise surveillance and reconnaissance flights over Bosnian territory, suggesting that a no-fly zone may be required.²⁹⁸

That evening the London Conference adopted a declaration of principles that would provide the foundations for future negotiations on the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. ²⁹⁹ A work programme for ICFY was drawn up that would be chaired by Cyrus Vance as the UN's representative and David Owen for the EC. The ICFY would continue to seek the assistance of the Abitration Commission, as Dumas had hoped, as well as creating a working group on "Humanitiarian Issues". ³⁰⁰

On the second day of the London Conference the various parties lambasted the Serbs. Under pressure, they agreed to withdraw their heavy arms from a "significant portion" of Bosnian territory, which would then be put under the control of the UN.³⁰¹ Karadžić also offered to withdraw from two-fifths of the territory that the Bosnian Serbs

²⁹⁹ "Adoption de la déclaration des principes", AFP (27 August 1992).

²⁹⁶ Statement of Roland Dumas, 26 August 1992, Balkan Odyssey Digital Archive [herafter BODA], 2/1/2/9.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

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³⁰⁰ Work Programme of the Conference, 27 August 1992, BODA, 2/1/12.

³⁰¹ "Les Serbes vont se retirer d'une 'portion significative' de Bosnie-Herzégovine", AFP (27 August 1992).

already occupied. The coercive and concerted approach appeared to be paying dividends. Therefore, in a parallel meeting the WEU announced that it would put a further 5,000 troops at the disposal of the UN; one of their objectives would be the control of the heavy arms.³⁰²

Initially the London Conference seemed to be a success. The Conference produced two documents that, had they been adhered to, would have led to a very different outcome to the war in BiH. The "Specific Decisions by the London Conference" and "Statement on Bosnia" papers provided a blueprint for the Conference in Geneva and also secured an agreement that the Bosnian Serb side would place all heavy weapons around Sarajevo, Bihać, Goražde and Jajce under UN supervision within a week.³⁰³

At the end of August, David Owen organised the permanent Conference in Geneva and met EC Foreign Ministers in preparation. He also met Mitterrand in Paris who specifically warned against aggressive force against the Serbs and ruled out air strikes.³⁰⁴ Therefore, the stick that Owen needed to bring the Serbs to heel had already been withdrawn by Mitterrand. Once more, the international community resorted to the threat of the 'total isolation' of Serbia. Dumas reflected that, "we would naturally like to act quickly, but the situation is complex."³⁰⁵ Owen also urged caution and suggested that it was too soon to tell whether the agreements at the London Conference had been violated and that his peace mission should be judged over a timespan of months.³⁰⁶

ICFY was created in difficult circumstances. An Italian aid plane was shot down on 3 September, which UNPROFOR members blamed on Bosnian Croats, and led to the suspension of flights to Sarajevo airport.³⁰⁷ Furthermore, on 9 September, two French

³⁰⁵ "Conférence de Londres sur l'ex-Yougoslavie", Le Monde (29 August 1992).

³⁰² "UEO Yougoslavie (Urgent)", *AFP* (27 August 1992).

³⁰³ Statement on Bosnia by the Conference, and agreement by Karadžić and Koljević, 27 August 1992, BODA, 2/1/11; Specific Decisions of the Conference, 27 August 1992, BODA, 2/1/10.

³⁰⁴ Owen, Balkan Odyssey, 25.

³⁰⁶ "Lord Owen: une mission de paix qui devra être jugée 'sur plusieurs mois'", AFP (1 September 1992).

³⁰⁷ "Fortes présomptions' à Zagreb sur une destruction en vol de l'avion italien", AFP (4 September 1992).

peacekeepers, Sergeant-Chief Vaudet and Corporal Madot, were killed as government forces attacked an UNPROFOR logistical convoy, hoping to pin the blame on the Bosnian Serbs to provoke US intervention.³⁰⁸ Pierre Joxe asked the Bosnian authorities "to ensure the safety of soldiers of all countries who come to their aid" and called on them to punish the perpetrators of the attack.³⁰⁹

In light of these attacks against UNPROFOR members, the UNSC began discussing measures to further protect the peacekeepers and humanitarian deliveries. As Vance and Owen were in Sarajevo meeting Izetbegović, France, representing the WEU, was pushing in the UNSC for a greater freedom for UNPROFOR peacekeepers to retaliate to aggression. Dumas also tried to convince his partners in the EC to support his calls for aerial support for humanitarian convoys. France was the largest single contributor to UNPROFOR with 1,500 peacekeepers on the ground, and therefore wanted to be able to provide greater protection for its troops. On 14 September the UNSC passed resolution 776, which enlarged the size of UNPROFOR to cover BiH and also permitted the use of self-defence.

Although an important step had been taken that provided UNPROFOR with a mandate to employ limited force, the upcoming referendum on the Maastricht Treaty had become the dominant political issue in France as fighting continued in BiH. Although the war, amongst many issues, had threatened the 'oui' vote, the government narrowly secured its desired result on 20 September, as 51% voted in favour. The Mitterrand administration had carefully navigated the summer of 1992 and resultantly had ensured that France played a leading role in directing the international response to the war in BiH.

³⁰⁸ Owen, David. Balkan Odvssev, 44; Morillon, Croire et oser, 104.

³⁰⁹ "Le ministre français de la Défense: les autorités bosniaques doivent veiller à la sécurité des soldats qui leur viennent en aide", *AFP* (9 September 1992).

^{310 &}quot;Les Européens veulent obtenir une plus grande liberté de riposte en Bosnie", AFP (10 September 1992).

^{311 &}quot;Les Douze cherchent à assurer une protection efficace de l'aide humanitaire", AFP (11 September 1992).

³¹² "Les résultats du référendum sur l'Union Européenne, *Le Monde* (22 September 1992).

Chapter Five – France and the Vance-Owen Peace Plan, October 1992 - May 1993.

Almost immediately after the conclusion of the London Conference, reports in the US press emerged that Bosnian Serb Army (*Vojska Republike Srpske*, VRS) forces had carried out massacres of Bosniak citizens. Immediately, Roland Dumas called upon the UN to launch an enquiry into the potential war crimes and went so far as to employ the term 'genocide'. Characterising the crimes as genocide infers responsibilities on the international community under the 1948 Genocide Convention. Accordingly the Security Council passed UNSCR 780 on 6 October 1992, which expressed the Council's concern at the continuation of "widespread violations of international humanitarian law" and called upon the Secretary General to establish a Commission of Experts to investigate any reported violations of the Geneva Convention. Dumas offered French experts for the inquiry commission adding that "The international community should shed light on the massacres and practice of ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia, which have outraged the conscience of mankind."

With the harsh Bosnian winter on the horizon, the no-fly zone (NFZ) over BiH that Dumas had previously advocated at the London Conference was enacted by the UNSC on 9 October under UNSCR 781, thus allowing safe passage of humanitarian aid deliveries. However, the Bosnian Serbs frequently violated the NFZ within a week of its creation with little more than international condemnation as a consequence.⁴

Simultaneously, negotiations in Geneva continued and reinvigorated discussions on future constitutional arrangements for BiH. ICFY faced several difficulties in negotiating a

¹ "Des massacres en Bosnie: M. Dumas parle de 'génocide' et demande à l'ONU d'enquêter", *Le Monde* (30 September 1992).

² Security Council resolution 780, Former Yugoslavia, S/RES/780, 6 October 1992.

³ "M. Dumas propose des experts français pour la commission d'enquête de l'ONU", AFP (8 October 1992).

⁴ "Des avions serbes bosniagues ont violé la zone d'exclusion le weekend", AFP (14 October 1992).

settlement for BiH, particularly since the conflict between the Bosniaks and the Bosnian Croats had recently escalated. Furthermore, Morillon held negotiations with the leaders of the three communities' military forces on the subject of demilitarising Sarajevo.⁵

Slobodan Milošević was once more coming under domestic pressure with elections for the Serbian presidency due in December 1992. Both Milan Panić and Dobrica Ćosić cooperated with ICFY, much to Milošević's chagrin, and Vance and Owen hoped that Ćosić would oust Milošević. Ćosić requested a meeting with Mitterrand, which Védrine advised against.⁶ Jean Vidal reflected, in a note for the President, that the former dissident turned President was "reasonable in spite of his ultranationalism" and he was a more likely alternative to Panić.⁷ In the end, Ćosić opted not to stand.⁸

Making Plans

On 27 October, the Bosnia Working Group of the ICFY presented 'Options for BiH' to the Conference's Steering Group. Over the following months and through negotiations this plan evolved into the 'Vance-Owen Peace Plan'. The Steering Group's initial plan envisaged 7-10 regions, which would have ethnic majorities but importantly would retain their multi-ethnic and multicultural character. Significantly, it also envisaged a single unified Bosnian state with a central, albeit weakened, government.

November in BiH began with a 'week of peace', wherein conditions on the ground were the complete antithesis of the initiative's title. Fighting between Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats had also intensified, particularly around the southern town of Mostar. Therefore, planning in the ICFY Working Group on BiH continued as Vance and Owen tried to put pressure on Milošević from within Serbia to win Serb support for the VOPP.

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⁵ "Zone d'exclusion aérienne: le général Morillon à Sarajevo mercredi", AFP (6 October 1992).

⁶ Note pour le Président de la République, 12 November 1992, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/362.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 57.

⁹ "Une 'semaine de tranquillité' en Bosnie commence dans la violence", AFP (1 November 1992).

Milan Panić, who had openly challenged Milošević at the London Conference, had decided to run for the Serbian Presidency in the elections of December 1992. Panić ran against Milošević on a campaign slogan of 'Now or Never'. The same slogan seemed appropriate for the Bosnian population as winter tightened its grip on the mountainous republic.

Following the investigations that had been established under UNSCR 780, reports reached the UN at the beginning of October that heightened the need for a solution. France, through its Ambassador to the UN, Jean-Bernard Mérimée, reported that it had received witness testimony attesting to massacres and war crimes in BiH, adding that:

The stories highlight a process: occupation and destruction of a village, executing some of the inhabitants, transferring others to camps where they were subjected to ill-treatment and harsh prison conditions, elimination of the most influential members, possibly release or exchange of the others provided they abandon their property and declare they will never return to their properties.¹⁰

The publication of these reports led to an increasingly vocal advocacy for military intervention. Significantly, the Democrat Bill Clinton had won the presidential election in the United States on 3 November 1992. In his election campaign Clinton had been calling for a more robust response to the Bosnian Serbs' campaign of ethnic cleansing and had criticised George Bush's lack of action to protect the Bosniak population.¹¹

Vance and Owen refused to exclude military action in BiH during a press conference in New York.¹² Indeed, several ideas began to circulate at this time, which would influence the discourse and structure of the VOPP. The Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) had actively played a role in trying to protect the Bosniaks and launched an initiative to lift the arms embargo. At the behest of the OIC a special meeting of the

¹⁰ "Paris a transmis à l'ONU des informations faisant état de destructions de villages et d'exécutions en Bosnie", *AFP* (10 November 1992).

¹¹ "Si Bill Clinton veut l'oublier, le Monde se rappelera à lui", *AFP* (13 November 1992).

¹² "Bosnie: Lord Owen et Cyrus Vance n'excluent pas une intervention militaire internationale 'en dernier recours'", *AFP* (13 November 1992).

UNSC was called on the subject of selectively lifting the arms embargo, which was rejected. Instead, the UNSC adopted further sanctions against Serbia. Whilst this measure was presumably intended to place further pressure on Milošević ahead of the upcoming presidential elections, these sanctions in fact played into Milošević's rhetoric about the West. Milošević unleashed a wave of propaganda against Panić, whom the pro-Milošević state-run media claimed was a US American agent determined to impose further sanctions against Serbia. That Panić spoke Serbian with an American accent, having moved to the US in the 1950s, only reinforced this idea in the eyes of many rural Serbs.

The OIC held its Sixth Extraordinary Session of Foreign Ministers on 1-2 December 1992 with David Owen in attendance alongside the UNHCR Special Rapporteur Tadeusz Mazowiecki. At the Conference, Izetbegović called on the OIC to use its influence to continue to pursue the lifting of the arms embargo in the UN and to put greater pressure on the Serbs. The Conference also lamented the lack of protection for the population. The British, who still held the EC Presidency, declared that military intervention would be a "grave error". However, the day after the OIC Conference the long-awaited opinions of the Commission of Experts established under resolution 780 condemned the practice of ethnic cleansing and held the JNA and Serbian political leaders responsible for crimes against humanity in BiH, adding that the "international community will do everything possible to bring them to justice."

These reports led to criticism in France of the UN efforts and the French contribution. A report published by the Finance Commission in the Senate criticised the UN's bureaucratic system for hindering the operation in BiH. Senator François Trucy condemned the UN's shortcomings and French inconsistences in its diplomacy adding that,

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¹³ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 291.

¹⁴ Karčić, Hamza. "In Support of a Non-Member State: The Organisation of Islamic Conference and the War in Bosnia, 1992-1995", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 33, No. 3 (2013), 326-7.

¹⁵ "La Grande-Bretagne contre une intervention armée de l'ONU", AFP (3 December 1992).

¹⁶ "Le 'nettoyage ethnique' en Bosnie-Herzégovine", Le Monde (3 December 1992).

although France prided itself on having the greatest number of peacekeepers on the ground, it had little influence "in the quiet of the New York headquarters of the UN."¹⁷ The danger to French peacekeepers was also raised, given their imprecise mandate on when to respond with force.

The parallel UN intervention in Somalia initially seemed to be far more successful than in BiH. Nonetheless, Roland Dumas was keen to stress that the precedent set by 'Operation Restore Hope' in Somalia was not necessarily applicable to BiH. When questioned by a journalist whether the mission in BiH would be extended Dumas responded that, "There are times when we must listen to public opinion but also take responsibility as leaders." The British Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, echoed his French counterpart's sentiment, stating that, "In Somalia, the warlords force humanitarian action. In Bosnia-Hercegovina there is a civil war supported from the outside by the Serbs in Belgrade."

As the UN was focussing on its operation in Somalia, and Roland Dumas claimed it as a victory for Mitterrand's policy of humanitarian intervention, daily life continued to deteriorate in Sarajevo. As humanitarian organisations squabbled over strategy, the airport had once more been closed to all flights.²⁰ Furthermore, there had been resurgence in attacks against UN personnel, which reinforced Admiral Lanxade's and Senator Trucy's earlier criticisms of the UNPROFOR mission and its mandates. It was necessary for Defence Minister Pierre Joxe to make a statement declaring that France did not currently envisage withdrawing from Yugoslavia in spite of the difficult conditions for the

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¹⁷ "En ex-Yougoslavie comme au Cambodge : Un rapport du Sénat condamne la 'légèreté' de la France face aux missions de maintien de la paix confiées à l'ONU", *Le Monde* (3 December 1992).

¹⁸ "Opération 'Restore Hope': une première phase de 'nettoyage' militaire de un à deux mois, selon M. Dumas", *AFP* (6 December 1992).

¹⁹ "Impossible d'agir en Bosnie-Herzégovine comme en Somalie, selon M. Hurd", AFP (7 December 1992).

²⁰ "Désaccord entre les organisations humanitaires concernant la stratégie à adopter en Bosnie-Herzégovine", *AFP* (4 December 1992); "La situation continue à se dégrader à Sarajevo", *AFP* (9 December 1992).

peacekeepers who "for higher reasons related to the nature of the mission, cannot fight back."²¹

It was clear that, once more, the credibility of the international community's commitment to BiH was being questioned, particularly given the evident will to respond to the crisis in Somalia. For the first nine days of December, the Bosnian Serb forces made significant territorial gains in and around Sarajevo. Philippe Morillon warned David Owen of a further Bosnian Serb attack on the capital, whose aim would be "to move toward the centre of the city from both the West and South to hold at least half the city as negotiating leverage in future talks." Therefore at its Edinburgh Summit, the European Council declared itself in favour of the use of force to ensure that the Bosnian Serbs respected the NFZ and the creation of 'safe zones' in Yugoslavia. France also stressed the need to gain access to detention camps once more with military accompaniment if necessary. Jean Musitelli indicated that the European Council could ask the UNSC to "authorise the implementation of this no-fly measure by force", which, he added, had already "suffered a number of violations."

Roland Dumas thus instructed Jean-Bernard Mérimée to make the first approaches to other UNSC members to put in place a new resolution to allow the use of force to protect the NFZ. Dumas added that France was ready to act in this respect and hoped that other Western countries would participate.²⁴

The British were sceptical about the French initiative on the NFZ and preached prudence.²⁵ Russia was also perturbed by the move towards force and instead called for the

²¹ "M. Joxe: il n'est 'pas question de partir' de l'ex-Yougoslavie", AFP (10 December 1992).

²² "Extract from memo from General Morillon's UN Command HQ, Kiseljak, on situation in Sarajevo in first nine days of December 1992" in *Bosnia-Hercegovina: The Vance-Owen Peace Plan*, ed. Owen, David (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 167.

²³ Kohn, Francis. "Urgent: Le sommet favorable à l'usage de la force pour faire respecter", *AFP* (12 December 1992).

²⁴ "La France va saisir le Conseil de Sécurité lundi sur le respect de l'interdiction de survol de la Bosnie", *AFP* (14 December 1992).

²⁵ "Londres sceptique sur l'initiative française pour imposer l'interdiction de survol de la Bosnie", *AFP* (14 December 1992).

lifting of sanctions against Serbia. However, Dumas was convinced of the necessity to resort to force, stating that "it is more necessary than ever to maintain the pressure on the Serb leaders. The sanctions declared by the Security Council must be applied with rigour."²⁶ On 15 December, Boutros-Ghali thus called on NATO to study the possibility of supporting a new UNSCR. Paris, London and Washington all supported the move, although the Brits were the most reluctant citing concerns about their peacekeepers' safety.²⁷

The following day, Vance and Owen chaired a meeting of the Ministerial Steering Committee of ICFY where Owen stressed three points with regard to BiH: firstly, the necessity of an International Criminal Court for Yugoslavia; secondly, the need to protect the NFZ through force; thirdly, a reinforcement of existing sanctions.²⁸ The US Secretary of State, Lawrence Eagleburger, emerged from the meeting by naming Milošević, Karadžić and Mladić as potential war criminals and hinted that the arms embargo needed reassessing.²⁹ Following this hardened US rhetoric, NATO prepared to discuss its potential means and strategy for enforcing the NFZ in BiH. France hinted that it would be prepared to participate, on a case by case basis, in peacekeeping missions under the umbrella of NATO.³⁰

On 17 December, NATO Foreign Ministers met in Brussels to discuss means to maintain pressure on Belgrade. However, Ministers were divided on the use of force to enforce the NFZ with France and the Netherlands in favour, whilst Britain continued to call for a policy of isolation.³¹ France, not part of the integrated command structure of

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²⁶ "La communauté internationale a 'plus que jamais le devoir d'agir' devant la situation en ex-Yougoslavie, selon Roland Dumas", *AFP* (14 December 1992).

²⁷ "Yougoslavie OTAN ONU (Urgent)", AFP (15 December 1992).

²⁸ Owen. Balkan Odvssev, 81.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ "Paris prêt à participer à la préparation militaire d'éventuelles missions de maintien de la paix de l'OTAN", *AFP* (16 December 1992).

³¹ "L'OTAN et la Yougoslavie: ouverture de la réunion des ministres des Affaires étrangères", *AFP* (17 December 1992).

NATO, was awkwardly placed to influence NATO strategy and therefore sought to maintain a UN involvement in peacekeeping operations.

The following day, the UNSC began to examine two new resolutions: firstly, a proposition from the Bosnian government supported by the OIC to lift the arms embargo; and secondly, a French initiative that condemned the campaigns of mass rape in BiH and called for all detention centres to be closed immediately.³² France, alongside Britain, opposed the lifting of the arms embargo and would remain an obstinate opponent to any further suggestion of such a measure. Roland Dumas believed that lifting the arms embargo would be a failure because giving arms to the Bosniaks would not appease the conflict.³³ However, the Quai d'Orsay was delighted that the UNSC voted unanimously in favour of resolution 798 calling for the immediate closure of all detention centres.³⁴

The General Assembly requested that the UNSC envisage selectively lifting the arms embargo if the Serbs continued to violate UN resolutions after 15 January 1993; the vote was passed overwhelmingly. Europe, lacking a unanimous approach to the arms embargo, abstained from the General Assembly vote.³⁵ Vance and Owen were also opposed to lifting the arms embargo, both of whom were awaiting two major events before they revealed their major initiative: the presidential election in Serbia and the inauguration of Bill Clinton in the US.³⁶

Meanwhile, with negotiations due to start in Geneva on 2 January, Morillon tried to increase pressure on the Bosnian Serbs. The General invested himself heavily in the success of the VOPP and evoked the possibility of military intervention if the negotiations in Geneva failed to create a workable solution in BiH. He publicly pondered whether a

³² "Deux nouvelles résolutions sur l'ex-Yougoslavie à l'ONU", AFP (18 December 1992).

^{33 &}quot;La réunion de Genève sur l'ex-Yougoslavie Lord Owen et M. Cyrus Vance rejettent l'idée d'une intervention armée", Le Monde (18 December 1992).

³⁴ "Satisfaction de la France après le vote de la résolution du Conseil de Sécurité sur les camps de détention", AFP (18 December 1992).

³⁵ "ONU Yougoslavie (Urgent)", AFP (18 December 1992).

³⁶ "La réunion de Genève sur l'ex-Yougoslavie: Lord Owen et M. Cyrus Vance rejettent l'idée d'une intervention armée", Le Monde (18 December 1992).

military victory "could be achieved in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the question is what will be the price for the future?"³⁷

One uncertainty had been settled ahead of the Geneva negotiations: Milošević had won in Serbia's presidential election, although the circumstances of his election were questioned internally by Panić's supporters.³⁸ France was disappointed by the result. Bernard Kouchner had hoped that Milan Panić would triumph, adding that "If not, there will be war."³⁹ Influential voices within France were once more calling for military intervention as the President of the National Assembly addressed a letter to the Prime Minister Pierre Bérégovoy, affirming that "a majority of deputies want a firmer engagement from France."⁴⁰

It became clear that there was cross-party support for stronger intervention with deputies from the three major parties writing an open letter to Mitterrand demanding him to send Belgrade an ultimatum. The letter declared that its signatories were "horrified by the barbarity of the Serbian forces" and "scandalised by the wait-and-see policy of the democratic countries that plays into the hands of the torturers. The terms of the ultimatum would include: lifting the sieges of Sarajevo, Mostar, Tuzla, Bihać, Travnik and Goražde and establishing a security perimeter of 40km around each town; the immediate liberation of all detention camps; and a definitive break with the principles of ethnic cleansing. The letter proposed the aerial bombardment of specific military targets if the Serbian government failed to adhere to the terms.

This growing domestic pressure appeared to affect French policy. In an interview for France 2 Dumas declared that military action was now necessary to enforce the NFZ

³⁷ "Le général Morillon évoque l'éventualité du recours à la force en Bosnie-Herzégovine", *AFP* (20 December 1992).

³⁸ "Défaite catastrophique' de Milan Panic, selon les Socialistes", AFP (21 December 1992).

³⁹ "Tour de garde' international à Sarajevo dès janvier, selon Bernard Kouchner", *AFP* (20 December 1992).

⁴⁰ "Bosnie: M. Emmanuelli assure qu'une majorité de députés souhaite 'un engagement plus ferme' de la France", *Le Monde* (25 December 1992).

⁴¹ "Lettre ouverte à M. Mitterrand pour réclamer un ultimatum à la Serbie", AFP (22 December 1992).

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

over BiH.⁴⁴ The Foreign Minister added that "it is necessary that actions of force be undertaken against planes, possibly against the runways of planes, helicopters if they are found, in a way that these offences... cease."⁴⁵ On 28 December Dumas held a series of meetings in Geneva with Boutros-Ghali, Andrei Kozyrev, the Russian Foreign Minister, and representatives from the OIC. Boutros-Ghali and Kozyrev remained highly reluctant to see force employed in BiH, whilst Bill Clinton had affirmed that the US would continue to pursue a tougher approach.⁴⁶ The use of force to ensure respect for the NFZ would therefore be considered by the UNSC only if the Geneva negotiations chaired by Vance and Owen in January 1993 failed.⁴⁷

On New Year's Eve, in his annual address to the French people, Mitterrand gave his strongest suggestion that France would contribute to a military intervention in BiH during his New Year's Eve address. Having reflected that Western Europe had made significant progress towards greater integration, the President pointed to the fragmentation of Eastern Europe, particularly in Yugoslavia. "You can measure", stated Mitterrand, "thanks to the images that come to us, the ruthlessness of war in Bosnia, with its atrocious ethnic cleansing, its camps of misery and death, rape and torture." The President declared that a solution would have to be found through the UN, noting that "Arbitration, conciliation, dialogue, we have tried them all". "France", he noted, "is the source of most of these propositions in this direction." He continued, "Nearly 5,000 [French] soldiers are on the ground to come between the combatants, to help, to save lives. No other country has made such an effort. What more can we do?" Therefore Mitterrand outlined his terms for further French engagement: "I will only consent to it if the United Nations takes

⁴⁴ "M. Dumas: une action militaire en Bosnie est aujourd'hui 'nécessaire'", AFP (27 December 1992).

⁴⁵ Ibid

⁴⁶ "Bill Clinton affirme la 'détermination' des États-Unis", AFP (28 December 1992).

⁴⁷ "Yougoslavie conference (Urgent)", AFP (2 January 1993).

⁴⁸ "Voeux du Président François Mitterrand", 31 December 1992, accesssed on 2 June 2015. http://www.ina.fr/video/CAB93000023/voeux-du-president-francois-mitterrand-video.html.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

responsibility and if the Americans and Europeans engage with us."⁵¹ If the Geneva negotiations failed Mitterrand would "expect the Security Council to order to disengage the airspace of Bosnia and the routes that will allow us to reach the prison camps and martyr cities, like Sarajevo."⁵² The French President had given his clear and unequivocal support for the forthcoming negotiations in Geneva.

The Vance-Owen Peace Plan

On New Year's Day 1993, Alija Izetbegović declared that, like the war in BiH, the Geneva negotiations had been imposed upon the Bosniaks and that they would not accept an imposed peace.⁵³ Izetbegović was under intense domestic scrutiny for negotiating at the same table as Karadžić and was buoyed by the ambivalence of the incoming Clinton administration towards the VOPP. However, Owen warned that the failure of the Geneva negotiations would lead to "a considerable intensification of fighting", which could lead to a western intervention.⁵⁴ Therefore, that the negotiations in Geneva began against a backdrop of relative peace and calm in Sarajevo was cause for quiet optimism amongst the international community.⁵⁵

The version of the VOPP that was presented to the negotiators on 2 January 1993 envisaged a decentralised state consisting of 10 provinces that would be granted "substantial autonomy... while denying them any international legal character." The provincial governments would be established according to the pre-war census; a significant mistake as the war had rendered that poll entirely obsolete. It also required that hostilities

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ "Le président bosniaque: les negociations de Geneve ont été 'imposees'", AFP (1 January 1993).

⁵⁴ "M. Owen prevoit une 'intensification considérable' des combats en cas d'échec à Geneve", *AFP* (2 January 1993).

⁵⁵ "Calme relatif a Sarajevo avant l'ouverture des négociations de Geneve", AFP (2 January 1993).

⁵⁶ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 89.

cease within 72 hours and aimed to demilitarise Sarajevo first before the rest of the country.⁵⁷

Mitterrand placed France firmly behind the Geneva negotiations and sought a meeting with the outgoing US President George Bush to discuss the matter. Bush travelled to Paris on 3 January.⁵⁸ Following the discussions, the two heads of state held a press conference where they confirmed that the use of force could be implemented to ensure respect for the NFZ but it would be imprudent to talk about further intervention whilst the Geneva negotiations were underway.⁵⁹ However, and to Mitterrand's likely relief, Bush was keen to point out that there would be no NATO or US intervention that would endanger the peacekeepers that were already on the ground in BiH.⁶⁰ Bush could not speak on behalf of his successor.

As the negotiations in Geneva continued, Roland Dumas revealed that the three communities had asked for France's good offices to ensure that a suitable agreement was reached for all parties. France's neutrality in 1991 and 1992 had afforded it a level of diplomatic flexibility that other countries had lost. The Foreign Minister called for continued pressure on the Serb contingent with a potential recourse to military action, he also declared that the VOPP was "not bad in itself but it will, without doubt, be necessary to adapt it." 61

The Bosnian Croats accepted the VOPP without reservation. The Bosnian Serbs considered that it was "acceptable as a basis for starting negotiations", since the plan did not allow for the creation of a separate Serb entity. The biggest hurdle to ensuring compliance with the VOPP was Izetbegović, for whom the map was far from acceptable.

⁵⁷ Owen. Balkan Odvssev. 90.

⁵⁸ "Le conflit dans l'ex-Yougoslavie dominera les entretiens Bush-Mitterrand", AFP (2 January 1992).

⁵⁹ MAE, Conférence de presse conjointe de M. François Mitterrand, Président de la République, et de M. George Bush, Président des États-Uns d'Amérique. Accessed on 6 June 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

⁶⁰ M. Bush: pas d'action qui mette en danger les troupes sur le terrain", AFP (3 January 1992).

⁶¹ "Bons offices de la France en Bosnie-Herzégovine, selon M. Dumas", AFP (3 January 1992).

As the first round of negotiations reached their end on 4 January, to be reconvened on 10 January, Owen wrote directly to Mitterrand who he "thought could help most with Izetbegović." 62

Away from Geneva, France – alongside Russia, Britain, the US, and Spain – was considering a military operation to ensure respect for the NFZ.⁶³ France intended to have a draft resolution before negotiations recommenced in Geneva.⁶⁴ Whilst Ratko Mladić refused to rule out the removal of Bosnian Serb heavy weaponry, Dumas had secured agreement from the three Presidents in the Geneva negotiations for "Sarajevo to be declared an open town."⁶⁵ In a letter sent from Dumas to Boutros-Ghali, the French Foreign Minister added that he had also secured an agreement that "the forces that encircle it [Sarajevo] are removed to more than thirty kilometres of the capital."⁶⁶ France was certainly using its good offices in support of the VOPP. Therefore, following Owen's aforementioned letter to Mitterrand, the French President granted Alija Izetbegović an audience in Paris on 9 January.

In a quite odd decision, Izetbegović decried the West as appeasers ahead of his Paris engagements, comparing the situation in the Balkans to that prior to the Second World War. In a press conference in New York, Izetbegović pronounced that, "Today, there is an atmosphere of Munich with certain people in favour of an accord with Hitler, while others advocated resistance." He continued:

Unfortunately, there are a lot of parallels. At the time, it was Czechoslovakia. Today, it is Bosnia-Hercegovina. At the time, it was Hitler. Today, it is

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⁶² Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 92.

⁶³ "Zone d'exclusion aérienne: Américains, Russes, Français, Britanniques et Espagnols se retrouvent a New York", *AFP* (5 January 1993).

⁶⁴ "La France souhaite qu'une resolution soit prête avant la fin de la semaine", AFP (6 January 1993).

^{65 &}quot;Roland Dumas a obtenu un accord pour que Sarajevo soit declarée 'ville ouverte'", AFP (6 January 1993).

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ "Le président Izetbegović dénonce 'les Chamberlain et Daladier' d'aujourd'hui", AFP (7 January 1993).

Milošević. At the time, there was Chamberlain and Daladier. Today, there are others.⁶⁸

Although Izetbegović did not name Mitterrand or Major, the allusion was quite clear. Whilst Izetbegović had been in New York, the Bosnian vice-Prime Minister Hakija Turaljić had been murdered by Bosnian Serbs whilst he was being escorted to the airport by French peacekeepers.⁶⁹ Colonel Patrice Sartre, leading the escort mission, attempted to negotiate his way past a Bosnian Serb roadblock on the road linking the city centre and the airport. Three British warrior vehicles offered the French colonel assistance, which he refused, telling the British captain that, "This is a French problem!"⁷⁰

Once the Bosnian Serb militiamen at the blockade discovered that Turaljić was inside the vehicle, they fired seven bullets killing the vice-Prime Minister. Morillon publicly announced Turaljić's death calling it "an appalling tragedy", adding that it would surely have consequences on the negotiations in Geneva.⁷¹ Indeed, the murder threatened the very continuation for the Geneva negotiations. Mitterrand condemned the killing but thought "We must give a last chance to peace. We must try to find a solution to this conflict."⁷²

A note from Jean Lévy prior to Mitterrand and Izetbegović's meeting highlighted the worsening situation for the domestic population in BiH, particularly owing to the wintry conditions there. With the Geneva Conference due to reconvene the following day, Lévy noted the difficulties that the VOPP would encounter, particularly from the Serbs. 73 It also reflected on the difficulties in the UN in agreeing on a draft of a resolution regarding the protection of the NFZ in Bosnia through force, particularly on the wording of the

oo Ibid.

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⁶⁹ "Yougoslavie Bosnie ONU (Urgent)", AFP (8 January 1993).

⁷⁰ Rieff, David. Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West (New York: Touchstone, 1996).

⁷¹ "Yougoslavie Bosnie ONU (Urgent)", AFP (8 January 1993).

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Audience du Président Izetbegović chez le Président Mitterrand, 8 January 1993, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/204.

resolution. The means to bring the resolution into place would also lead to a certain delay owing to technical and logistical issues.⁷⁴

Lévy thought that the French President should relay that the guarantees offered by the international community in support of the VOPP were serious and that the Bosnian President should therefore consider them as such. However, perhaps seeking to give Mitterrand some bargaining power, Lévy noted that it was important for the Bosnian Muslims to avoid being blamed for the failure of the VOPP as it would considerably hinder any future measures taken by the international community.⁷⁵

Mitterrand impressed on Izetbegović his belief that it was absolutely essential to continue with negotiations "without any illusions about Serb sincerity." Nonetheless, Izetbegović complained that the map of the VOPP was "unacceptable" and underlined that "without recourse to force we can do nothing".

Mitterrand confided in Boutros-Ghali in a meeting on the same morning that: "I took a bet on successful negotiations. The Serbs have won the war. The Muslims should stop otherwise they will be locked into a system that will be terrible for them." Therefore, President Mitterrand had alluded to Izetbegović the fact he was considering raising the arms embargo. 79

Thus Mitterrand sounded out his European allies on the idea of lifting the arms embargo. The response was short and shrift: the Russians were entirely against it; Britain, citing concerns owing to ground troops in BiH, was reticent; Italy, Spain and Greece were only slightly less reluctant than Britain.⁸⁰ France was sufficiently invested in the success of the VOPP to consider lifting the embargo at this time.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 577.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 578.

In the Security Council, France was clashing with the US over the wording of a draft presidential statement, proposed by Russia, "calling on the parties to reach without delay an agreement on the Vance-Owen Peace Plan." The US, concerned how other Islamic countries would react to such pressure being placed upon the Bosnian Muslims to acquiesce to the VOPP, was reluctant to give their wholesale support to the draft, questioning the phrase "without delay". France supported the wording but the US suggested amending the draft presidential statement to include "taking note of the peace plan proposed by the Co-Chairmen". Jean-Bernard Mérimée reflected that "taking note' was tantamount to 'rejecting'". Notwithstanding, France threw its weight entirely behind the VOPP but with Clinton set to be inaugurated on 20 January, found the US to be a difficult partner in persuading the Bosnian government to acquiesce.

As the negotiations resumed in Geneva, Dumas once more declared France's support for the peace process: "France very clearly privileges the negotiations and dialogue to achieve peace." The French Foreign Minister also called on the camps to be liberated by force. He tasked Kouchner with organising a convoy to liberate prisoners from the detention camps and, somewhat overstepping the mark, added that this "liberation will become effective through force." Hubert Védrine had previously suggested the idea to Mitterrand following a discussion with Bernard-Henri Lévy. Given Mitterrand's preference for the UN, Defence Minister Pierre Joxe was quick to highlight that any such mission would have to be carried under that organisation. The following day Dumas rowed back on his prior statement declaring that France was not "waiting to escape the

⁸¹ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 93.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Ibid., 94.

⁸⁴ "Roland Dumas: la France 'privilégie les négociations et le dialogue pour la paix'", *AFP* (11 January 1993).

⁸⁵ "M. Roland Dumas demande que les camps de Bosnie soient liberés 'par la force'", *AFP* (10 January 1993).

⁸⁶ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 577.

⁸⁷ "Prudence dans la classe politique après les déclarations de Roland Dumas", AFP (11 January 1993).

constraints" of the UN, adding that "it is necessary that these resolutions be executed, in the framework that has been chosen, that of the UN."88

Meanwhile, in Geneva, the negotiations collapsed as Radovan Karadžić refused to acquiesce to the VOPP in spite of pressure from Slobodan Milošević. Karadžić wanted to return to the capital of the Bosnian Serb territory, Pale, to discuss the proposals with the Bosnian Serb Assembly. Vance and Owen therefore referred to their employers: the UN Secretary General and the EC respectively. With Boutros-Ghali reluctant to employ enforcement of the NFZ and the Russians concerned about the role of NATO in any such operation, the responses to Karadžić's obstinacy were predictably tame.

Following a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the EC in Paris on 13 January, the Danish Foreign Minister – Denmark now held the EC Presidency – announced the Community's response: "If progress is not made, we are preparing a very strong weapon, the total isolation of a community [Serbia] and its citizens." At this meeting Owen also pressured the EC to use its influence in the UNSC to establish an international criminal tribunal specifically for the former Yugoslavia. In the US Bill Clinton also called for the creation of a tribunal to try war criminals. France, who had already established a group of "high-level specialists" to examine such a legal process, would share their findings with the Danish Presidency.

The following day, David Owen met with President Mitterrand. Owen hoped to reconfigure the map of the VOPP to give the Serbs a land corridor through province 3 (see map 5), with the Bosniaks being compensated with a larger province 1 and the Bosnian Croats could link provinces 1 and 10 to give them control of their border with Croatia. Owen also wanted to modify international boundaries, which France had recently been

⁸⁸ "Roland Dumas: la France 'n'entend pas sortir du cadre contraignant' de l'ONU'", *AFP* (12 January 1993).

⁸⁹ "CEE Yougoslavie (Urgent)", *AFP* (14 January 1993).

⁹⁰ "Bill Clinton demande une enquête sur les crimes de guerre en Bosnie-Herzégovine", AFP (15 January 1993).

⁹¹ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 98.

considering privately. 92 The co-President felt that he needed the support of one powerful EC country and saw in France the nation most clearly committed to the success of the VOPP. Owen reflected that, "I hoped that by involving Mitterrand I could tie Roland Dumas... step by step to the ICFY process."93 Once Owen had suggested these measures to Izetbegović in Zagreb the following day, he reported the outcome to President Mitterrand by letter. Izetbegović flatly refused as he thought it would encourage the creation of a Greater Serbia and he could only accept the creation of a guaranteed "throughway". 94 Nonetheless, Owen thought that, with some modifications, Izetbegović would be prepared to accept the map, which would then place the onus on the Bosnian Serbs to do the same.⁹⁵

As Vance and Owen negotiated in Zagreb, the UNSC continued to work on bringing about the enforcement of the NFZ. However, Russia remained hesitant and wanted to wait until the attitude of the Bosnian Serbs towards the VOPP became clearer. 96 The Bosnian Serb Assembly gave its accord to the VOPP, which Roland Dumas characterised as "a step and its encouraging but our job is not finished vet." However, it appeared to lend momentum to the third plenary session of the Geneva negotiations, which resumed on 23 January.

As the negotiations opened a substantial demonstration took place in Place de la République, Paris. 98 The scale of the demonstrations forced Mitterrand to clarify his position on BiH in response to a number of intellectuals engaged with the demonstration: "These figures are very respectable, but what are they asking for? War? France and its

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

^{94 &}quot;Letter from Lord Owen to President Mitterrand following their meeting on 14 January 1993" in Bosnia-Hercegovina: The Vance-Owen Peace Plan, ed. David Owen (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 235.

⁹⁵ Ibid

⁹⁶ "ONU Bosnie (Urgent)", AFP (15 January 1992).

⁹⁷ "Accord des Serbes de Bosnie: une étape encourageante, selon Roland Dumas", AFP (20 January 1993).

^{98 &}quot;Bosnie-Herzégovine: Manifestation contre la purification ethnique", *Le Monde* (21 January 1993).

army, alone, in combat that is, by its nature, bloody? Let me prefer other methods."⁹⁹ Indeed, support for the VOPP and the Geneva negotiations remained Mitterrand's preferred method. However, its future was being brought into question by the new US administration.

Whilst publicly declaring that Yugoslavia was a priority for the US, in private the US called the work of the ICFY into question as the new Secretary of State Warren Christopher "expressed doubts about whether it [the VOPP] can realistically be achieved, whether they can, in fact, find an agreement." Madeleine Albright, who was Clinton's nominee to become US Ambassador to the UN, had also undermined the latest European efforts stating in a US Foreign Relations Committee that, "I have watched with some amazement that the Europeans have not taken action. I believe that we must... press our European allies on this." The Clinton administration was incredibly naïve, bullish and irresponsible in its handling of the VOPP. It wished to project its own solution on to the crisis and, in turn, undermined the Geneva negotiations. This attitude had led Izetbegović to "think that the United States of America will finally decide to send means of defence to the Muslims." This was, in fact, far from the case.

However, the selective lifting of the arms embargo that covered the whole of Yugoslavia remained a contentious issue and would require a UNSCR to reverse its decision. This would be difficult to achieve given strong British resistance to such a measure. President Mitterrand had also publicly stated that: "The leaders of Bosnia, a country that is a victim of relentless war, do not require so much a military intervention but the means to defend themselves... but I am resistant to the general thrust for the use of

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⁹⁹ "Bosnie: M. Mitterrand affirme qu'il 'résiste à la poussée générale pour l'emploi de la force'", *Le Monde* (22 January 1993).

¹⁰⁰ "La Yougoslavie est une priorité de la diplomatie américaine, selon Warren Christopher", *AFP* (25 January 1993); Owen. *Balkan Odyssey*, 101.

¹⁰¹ Owen. Balkan Odvssev, 101.

¹⁰² "Les Musulmans bosniaques espèrent que les États-Unis leur fourniront des armes", *AFP* (24 January 1993).

force."¹⁰³ As ICFY prepared to move the peace talks to New York and the Security Council, the French President was holding steadfastly to his policy on BiH: 'adding war to war will resolve nothing.'

Before the talks reconvened in New York, the European Council of Foreign Ministers held a meeting in which they issued a statement in clear support of the VOPP.¹⁰⁴ Simultaneously in the US Vance and Owen met with the US Secretary of State Warren Christopher in an attempt to secure US support for the plan. Christopher emerged from the discussions and was publicly ambivalent on the prospects of its success.¹⁰⁵ The Clinton administration was creating international friction exactly at the time when Europe had coalesced around the VOPP. Furthermore, the US's reluctance to overtly support the plan placed the ICFY negotiators in a difficult position, particularly with regards to France and its position in Europe. Owen reflected that if the mediators bowed to US pressure and delayed its negotiations in New York then "Mitterrand would go off on his own with a purely French initiative." Of course the French President's capacity for individual and unilateral initiative has been evident throughout this study.

In spite of, and in stark contrast to, US ambivalence the whole of Europe remained committed to the VOPP as talks began in New York. David Owen briefed European Ambassadors to stand their ground against US attempts to modify the revised map that had been put forward. Furthermore, by moving the negotiations to New York, Vance and Owen tied the US into working directly within the Security Council where they had already secured majority support for their plan. Following discussion in the UNSC on 8 February, a revised map (see map 6) of the VOPP was agreed upon, which incorporated the changes that Owen had sought Mitterrand's support for in January.

¹⁰³ "Bosnie: M. Mitterrand affirme qu'il 'résiste à la poussée générale pour l'emploi de la force'", *Le Monde* (22 January 1993).

¹⁰⁴ Statement by the EU Council of Foreign Ministers, 1 February 1993, BODA, 5/5.

¹⁰⁵ "Bosnie-Herzégovine: Washington demande du temps avant de se prononcer sur le plan de paix", *AFP* (2 February 1993).

¹⁰⁶ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 109.

The need for a peace plan was evident as Izetbegović wrote to Mitterrand appealing for action to ensure that humanitarian aid reached Bosnian civilians. The Bosnian President highlighted that only, "Three humanitarian convoys reached Srebrenica during the past three months, while one convoy (43 tons of food) reached Žepa." Indeed, Vance and Owen had received indications from peacekeepers on the ground that the humanitarian situation was deteriorating, which had added new impetus to their efforts. 108

On 10 February Warren Christopher announced the Clinton administration's much vaunted policy on BiH. The policy amounted to little more than qualified support for the VOPP with six principles that would thenceforth guide US policy on BiH. Warren's statement outlined: a special US envoy to be assigned to the peace negotiations; the need for a negotiated rather than an imposed settlement; a tightening of sanctions against Serbia; a reduction of suffering; a readiness to employ military force to enforce a negotiated settlement; and broad consultation with partners and allies throughout the process. ¹⁰⁹ Publicly, France favourably welcomed the US initiative. Daniel Bernard, spokesman for the Quai, stated that, "The American declaration, and it is very positive, privileges the pacifist option since it excludes a military intervention before the signing of an agreement". ¹¹⁰ Bill Clinton also sent his Western partners a memorandum declaring that the US would rally to the VOPP and officially renounced any potential unilateral US military intervention. ¹¹¹

Contrary to French interests, however, the US President advocated an important role for NATO, which led Mitterrand, in a cabinet meeting, to call the entire French

¹⁰⁷ Izetbegović, Letter to Mitterrand, 9 February 1993, AN AG/5(4)/CD/203.

¹⁰⁸ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 115.

¹⁰⁹ Gow. Triumph of the Lack of Will, 244.

¹¹⁰ "Satisfaction de la France après la prise de position américaine", AFP (11 February 1993).

¹¹¹ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 578.

involvement into question: "If this were to turn into a NATO monopoly, I will re-examine the very principle of our participation. We are only committed to the United Nations." 112

Protecting a Peace Plan

On the ground in Bosnia, the situation in the Muslim enclaves was becoming more and more desperate, particularly in the eastern enclave of Srebrenica. Philippe Morillon had long hoped for a civil authority to support him in negotiations in BiH. Thus Jean Vidal wrote a note for Hubert Védrine on 5 February requesting that France send an Ambassador to Sarajevo as soon as possible. Vidal could see no reason to object to this adding that, "The uncertainty around the Vance-Owen Plan does not appear to me to be a sufficient reason to procrastinate." Quite the opposite in fact, owing to French support for the VOPP, it was a necessity.

The French diplomacy dispatched Henri Jacolin, who arrived in the capital on 12 February. *Le Monde* described him as "an ambassador without an embassy". He immediately set about making contact with Izetbegović, other members of the government and local religious leaders. Since he spoke Serbo-Croat he quickly became well-known amongst the Sarajevans.

Early in February, a small group of inhabitants had escaped the eastern enclave of Srebrenica and made their way to Sarajevo. They had come to protest to the Bosnian government about the lack of aid and support for the eastern enclaves. The former mayor of Srebrenica, Murat Efendić, who was acting as the representative of the people of the eastern town in Sarajevo, went to see Morillon to discuss the situation in Srebrenica and Cerska.

¹¹² Ibid

¹¹³ Note pour Hubert Védrine, 5 February 1993, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/203.

¹¹⁴ "La guerre dans l'ex-Yougoslavie: Un ambassadeur sans ambassade", *Le Monde* (21 March 1993).

Morillon had also received information from MSF, journalists and the UNHCR reinforcing the survivors' claims. The General thus believed that what was occurring in the east of BiH greatly threatened the peace process and that, "an offensive was underway, in which the Serbs had decided to empty these enclaves, whilst leaving an open corridor, because they were enraged... because of what had happened on Orthodox Christmas in the neighbouring villages, which they had attributed to Nasirović [Naser Orić] and his supporters." Morillon warned the Serbs that if they undertook such an offensive, "they were going to risk a new Vukovar, which public opinion will never forgive them for". The General was determined to give the VOPP a fighting chance and pleaded with the Mayor of Srebrenica:

Let me go there, let me put observers in place, you say that it's not you and that you want peace. I want to believe you, I believe your sincerity. Show your sincerity, allow me to go there. And me, by my presence, through observers, in fact, because I do not ask to place men with aims, I could help you to consolidate the ceasefire. If I am not there, there will never be a ceasefire that holds.¹¹⁷

The Sarajevans were also growing increasingly frustrated with the West's humanitarian intervention in BiH and sought to draw greater attention to the plight of Bosniaks in the east of the country. To achieve this, the Sarajevan municipal authorities refused to receive further international aid in solidarity with the enclaves in the east.

This brought humanitarian issues to the fore once more as the US and Russian special representatives to ICFY met to harmonise their policies on BiH on 13 February. This marked a significant step in the international community's mediation in Yugoslavia as it brought pressure to bear from both of the former Cold War superpowers.

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¹¹⁵ Morillon, Philippe. Interview Transcript, Brook Lapping documentary series *Death of Yugoslavia* [hereafter BL-DY], 3/56, 22.

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 23.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 22.

¹¹⁸ "Début des pourparlers americano-russes sur le conflit bosniaque", AFP (13 February 1993).

Bernard Kouchner travelled to Sarajevo in an effort to relieve the east enclaves. There he met with Morillon and Izetbegović to discuss methods of delivering aid and to arrange prisoner exchanges. The same day an aid convoy left Belgrade headed for the eastern town of Cerska, which many people were fleeing for government-held Tuzla. By refusing aid in Sarajevo, the Sarajevan authorities had effectively paralysed the UN's humanitarian intervention and in doing so had drawn significant attention to the plight of Bosniaks in the east of BiH. It certainly seemed to be effective as the French press began to focus on the Bosnian Serbs' campaign in the east of BiH and *Le Monde* asked: "Intervention, must we rethink humanitarian action?" 121

On 19 February, Morillon thus accompanied an aid convoy to Goražde, having negotiated its passage with the Bosnian Serbs. For four weeks the Bosnian Serbs had denied aid organisations access to the town. Therefore the General employed his influence to secure the delivery to the besieged population. The same day, the UNSC renewed and updated UNPROFOR's mandate now specifically referencing Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which provides for the use of military force for self-protection whilst acting in the pursuit of UN resolutions. That evening, Mitterrand appeared on France 3 in support of UNPROFOR and reinforced his UN-centred approach:

I believe that the rescue operation in the new republics of the former Yugoslavia must be decided upon by the UN and not by individual countries, otherwise such and such a country will oppose the interests of another. And do not forget that it is there, in Sarajevo, that the First World War started. 124

¹¹⁹ "Arrivée de Bernard Kouchner à Pale", AFP (13 February 1993).

¹²⁰ "Un convoi du HCR tente de ravitailler une enclave de l'est de la Bosnie", AFP (14 February 1993).

¹²¹ "L'est de la Bosnie: une région musulmane que les Serbes n'entendent pas abandonner", *Agence Frace Presse* (15 February 1993); "Débats ingérence: Faut-il repenser l'action humanitaire?", *Le Monde* (19 February 1993)

^{122 &}quot;Le general Morillon va tenter lui-même de faire passer un convoi a Goražde", *AFP* (18 February 1993).

¹²³ "Le mandat de la FORPRONU sera prolongé avec des règles d'engagement renforcées", *AFP* (19 February 1993).

¹²⁴ "Pas question d'aller 'faire la guerre' dans l'ex-Yougoslavie, declare M. Mitterrand", *AFP* (19 February 1993).

The President also declared that, "nearly all efforts have come from France". 125 Indeed, the next French initiative came to fruition through the UN as the UNSC created the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, which Roland Dumas had "devoted all his energy to achieving" and Robert Badinter had proposed to Mitterrand in the summer of 1992. 126

At the end of February, the US secured the agreement of the UN Secretary General to undertake humanitarian airdrops, which Germany and Russia offered to assist with at the beginning of March. The need for humanitarian aid to Muslim enclaves was becoming ever more pressing as the Bosnian Serbs began a 'land-grab' in the east of BiH in attempt to present a *fait accompli* in case the VOPP came to fruition. The UNHCR declared that ethnic cleansing had once more resumed in BiH as the town of Cerska fell to the Bosnian Serbs. ¹²⁷ The Europeans firmly condemned the latest round of atrocities committed by the VRS and, in a public statement, declared that they would be in contact with the US and Russia to "put pressure on those responsible for these atrocities and to guarantee the free access of international aid." ¹²⁸ For Roland Dumas, this only further necessitated the need for the success of the VOPP and he sensed "in his Russian partners in Moscow a willingness to assist in the search for a solution in Bosnia-Hercegovina." ¹²⁹ The French Foreign Minister added that, "it is essential that the international community, including the US and Russia, commits itself fully to support the Vance-Owen Plan, which represents the only settlement of the current conflict in Bosnia-Hercegovina." ¹³⁰

It is in this context that, on 5 March, Vance and Owen asked the French Ambassador to the UN, Jean-Bernard Mérimée, to encourage François Mitterrand to invite

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Védrine. Les mondes, 644.

¹²⁷ "Réprise de la purification ethnique en Bosnie et chute imminente de Cerska selon le HCR", *AFP* (2 March 1993).

¹²⁸ "Les Douze condamnent les 'atrocités commises par les Serbes de Bosnie", AFP (3 March 1993).

¹²⁹ "M. Dumas demande a la communauté internationale de 's'engager a fond' pour soutenir le plan Vance-Owen", *AFP* (3 March 1993).

¹³⁰ Ibid.

Slobodan Milošević to Paris. The ICFY co-Presidents wanted to encourage the Serbian President to put pressure on Karadžić to sign the VOPP and believed that Mitterrand "could personally be of crucial importance in achieving this." The President reluctantly agreed and the meeting was scheduled for 11 March.

Before hosting Milošević, Vance, and Owen at the Élysée, Mitterrand met with Bill Clinton in the Oval Office at the White House on 9 March. There the two discussed their parameters for military intervention in BiH. Mitterrand explained to Clinton, that:

> I am saying no to a battle of conquest. I will not expose the French army to a guerrilla war. The Bosniaks' game is to confuse everyone: they need an international war, and a holy war [guerre sainte]. 132

Clinton outlined his conditions noting that he would only engage troops when "the moment comes, and if Congress accepts it, to guarantee a peace agreement already agreed between the parties." Although the Bosnian government continued to hope for Western intervention, it would not be forthcoming.

The day after he returned to Paris, Mitterrand met with Milošević, Vance and Owen. Mitterrand later reflected that, "I did not really want to become personally involved in this negotiation, which threatened to fail, but Lord Owen insisted and I thought that I could be of some use."134 David Owen later reflected that the President had rendered the peace process a great service. However, Mitterrand paid careful attention to detail and was keen to ensure that there were no pictures of the two Presidents shaking hands for fear of the domestic public reaction. 135

¹³¹ Owen, Balkan Odyssev, 123.

¹³² Védrine. Les mondes. 645.

¹³³ Ibid

¹³⁴ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 579.

¹³⁵ Védrine. Les mondes, 645.



Meeting between Slobodan Milošević, François Mitterrand, Cyrus Vance and David Owen, Élysée Palace, Paris, 11 March 1993. 136

During the discussions, which lasted five hours, Owen reflected that Mitterrand "was in top form: he was well briefed and his interventions were timely and frequently delivered with great emotion, notably when he spoke of Serbia's historical ties with France and when drawing from his own personal experiences."¹³⁷ Mitterrand was a persuasive and powerful mediator in the meeting, adding timely and telling support to Vance and Owen's arguments. When Milošević argued that he could not bring the Bosnian Serbs to heel and that Serbia proper should not suffer for this, Mitterrand retorted: "Yet I consider you the third negotiator and you have no interest in prolonging the blockade... if not the war

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¹³⁶ MAE, "À l'initiative des co-présidents de la conférence de Genève, réunion entre M. François Mitterrand, President de la République; Slobodan Milošević, Président de la Serbie; Cyrus Vance, médiateur des Nations unies pour l'ex-Yougoslavie; Lord Owen, médiateur de la CEE pour l'ex-Yougoslavie; Roland Dumas, ministre des Affaires étrangères, 11 March 1993, PO11543.

¹³⁷ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 124.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

will take another intolerable turn and there will be new sanctions."¹³⁹ Indeed the issue of sanctions was the most promising means to extract any commitments from Milošević over BiH and Mitterrand left the discussions to reflect on how he could assist with the matter.

After an interlude, the French President re-joined the meeting at dinner. Owen reflected that, Mitterrand "had clearly thought long and hard about the importance Milošević attached to economic arguments... He had obviously decided that if progress was to be made, this bullet [lifting sanctions] had to be bitten, and he set out France's position in dramatic and unambiguous terms." Mitterrand called on Milošević to exert his influence over the Bosnian Serb leaders Ratko Mladić and Radovan Karadžić. The French President told his Serbian counterpart "either the Serbs persist, and they will be increasingly excluded and punished; or they re-join European society and enjoy its fruits." Mitterrand appealed to Milošević: "Lend us a helping hand" and "if the 'Vance-Owen Plan' is accepted we will demand the immediate lifting of sanctions." 142

Mitterrand had clearly laid out his terms and, although he conceded that it would be difficult, would seek to ensure support from other heads of state for his proposals. However, this offer was time-sensitive: legislative elections would take place in France in three weeks, following which Mitterrand would be far harder pressed to deliver on his offer. It appeared that an opposition victory was highly probable and Mitterrand would be a co-habiting President with a government which would likely consist of politicians he had clashed with over the issue of BiH. The Quai d'Orsay confirmed two days later that the VOPP would have to be signed in its entirety to bring about the lifting of sanctions against FRY.¹⁴³

¹³⁹ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 579.

¹⁴⁰ Owen. Balkan Odyssev, 125.

¹⁴¹ Védrine. Les mondes. 645.

¹⁴² Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 579.

¹⁴³ "La France pour l'application du plan Vance-Owen dans son intégralité", AFP (13 March 1993).

In the days after the Élysée meeting, Milošević was far more receptive to practical negotiations on the VOPP. Mitterrand's intervention in the negotiations in Paris had given the ICFY co-Presidents new momentum. The Serbian President was able to convince Karadžić to join the negotiations in New York on 14 March and to negotiate seriously. 144 As Karadžić joined the negotiations in New York, Mitterrand visited Boris Yeltsin in Moscow. There Mitterrand revealed that he was "very open to the idea of Russian participation in the application of the peace plan" and Yeltsin affirmed that there was "no real alternative to the Vance-Owen plan as a basis for the settlement of the conflict in Bosnia-Hercegovina." Russian involvement would necessarily preclude NATO hijacking the peace process and keep it firmly anchored in the UN, currently the VOPP's best hope.

'You are now under the protection of the United Nations'

Simultaneously, General Philippe Morillon was attempting to change the situation on the ground in support of the VOPP. The UNPROFOR commander had travelled to Zvornik on 10 March with the aim of travelling to Srebrenica the following day via Banja Koviljača. Amorillon hoped to help prepare for deliveries of humanitarian aid and to negotiate a ceasefire between the ARBiH forces in the town of Srebrenica and the Bosnian Serbs in the surrounding villages. On 11 March, a team from MSF attempted to deliver humanitarian aid to the town but had been forced to hand over a large proportion of its cargo to the Bosnian Serbs controlling access routes. Amorillon and his team left the now infamous village of Bratunac at 15h00 to reach Srebrenica. The Bosnian Serbs had destroyed the bridge on the main to road to Srebrenica the night before, which forced

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¹⁴⁴ Owen. Balkan odyssey, 126.

¹⁴⁵ "Le président Mitterrand mardi à Moscou: manifester son soutien à Eltsine", AFP (14 March 1993).

¹⁴⁶ "Le général Morillon à Mali Zvornik mercredi et é Srebrenica jeudi", AFP (10 March 1993).

¹⁴⁷ "Une équipe de MSF parvient à Srebenica après avoir été délestée d'une partie de son matériel par les Serbes", *AFP* (11 March 1993).

Morillon and his team to travel along a small and snowy mountainous road that had been mined by a member of the ARBiH forces defending Srebrenica. ¹⁴⁸ One of the aid trucks hit a landmine and was flipped into a ditch. ¹⁴⁹ Having lost their aid en route, the UNPROFOR party received a cold welcome when they reached the besieged town after nightfall.

In the morning, Morillon met with the commander of the ARBiH forces in the town, Naser Orić, whom he tried to convince that he could secure a ceasefire and the reestablishment of humanitarian channels to the town. However the General was unaware that Orić intended to prevent him from leaving the town later in the day by surrounding his vehicle with women and children. Orić hoped that it would draw international attention to the plight of the eastern town. In the afternoon, Morillon gathered the town council to introduce the team of observers that had accompanied his mission. The General envisaged sending another team to help with the opening of "humanitarian corridors" by road and air, and to assist with the evacuation of injured civilians. He is a ceasefire and the re-

Shortly thereafter, Morillon attempted to leave Srebrenica but was prevented from doing so by hundreds of women and children.¹⁵² Morillon tried to negotiate with the instigators of the demonstration but the women of Srebrenica had quite rightly deduced that holding Morillon hostage would draw greater international attention to the plight of their town. So desperate were the women to ensure that the French General would not leave, some slept on the roads with their children in the snow.¹⁵³ He tried to flee the town by the cover of dark, having organised a secret rendezvous with a UN vehicle outside an abandoned house.¹⁵⁴ However, the town's militia had discovered Morillon's plan and

¹⁴⁸ Morillon. Croire et oser, 167.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 170.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 172.

¹⁵² Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 295.

¹⁵³ Morillon. Croire et oser, 172.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 174.

prevented the vehicle from reaching the meeting point and thus the General had to return to Srebrenica

Early that morning Morillon made a speech in the centre of Srebrenica on a loudspeaker. The General famously announced to the assembled crowd that "You are now under the protection of the United Nations."155 The General would not leave Srebrenica until the first aid convoy arrived and the danger of a Serb attack had passed. 156 Lesser known are the statements that Morillon made to Serbia and the Bosnian Serbs over amateur radios.

> Peace is at your doors, it will ensure what you have asked for: the respect for everyone's right to liberty and dignity. Put your trust in the United Nations; put your trust in me. You know well that we are not your enemies. You must understand that this is also for you, the Serbs, that I am in and that I will stay in Srebrenica. 157

Morillon then asked the women of Srebrenica to allow him to leave to negotiate with the VRS forces nearby. The General wanted to ensure that humanitarian aid could reach Srebrenica and realised that this would require high-level political support to ensure that the Bosnian Serbs would acquiesce and allow the passage of humanitarian convoys. He was eventually allowed to leave on 13 March after promising to travel to Belgrade to demand an end to the Serb assault on Srebrenica. Therefore on 14 March, by radio link on the French television channel TF1, Morillon said that:

> I decided for my honour as a soldier that this is too much and then, during the night. I saw waves of refugees arrive in the town and this made my decision to stay until the security of this population is insured... It is necessary that pressure at a political, diplomatic and world opinion level continue so that this convoy arrives. It's a question of life and death. 158

¹⁵⁵ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 296.

¹⁵⁶ "Un convoi d'aide humanitaire de l'ONU autorisé à aller à Srebrenica", AFP (14 March 1993). ¹⁵⁷ Morillon. Croire et oser, 175.

¹⁵⁸ "Un convoi d'aide humanitaire de l'ONU autorisé à aller à Srebrenica", AFP (14 March 1993).

The UNPROFOR Commander certainly received support for his initiative in France. Alain Juppé of the RPR declared that, "This demonstrates that the presence on the ground of a peacekeeping force is the only way to roll back the Serbs." The French Prime Minister Pierre Bérégovoy paid tribute to Morillon and hoped that Slobodan Milošević would "take into account the necessity for this awaited convoy to arrive in the town. Otherwise it will be up to the international community to decide on and I think we cannot let things go on as they are today." ¹⁶⁰

However, by 16 March, there had been no progress in persuading the Bosnian Serbs to allow humanitarian aid to reach Srebrenica. The same day, negotiations recommenced in New York on the VOPP, and Karadžić remained uncooperative. The Bosnian Serbs' conduct around Srebrenica made the negotiations particularly difficult. Following negotiations with VRS leaders half-way between Bratunac and Srebrenica, Morillon advised that "there is no progress at this time." However, the Bosnian government provisionally accepted the VOPP on 14 March. In the eyes of the international community, the Bosnian Serbs did not appear to be willing to cooperate.

The Quai d'Orsay reaffirmed its desire to see the Serbs meaningfully contribute to the peace plan and its spokesman Daniel Bernard called the opening of Srebrenica "a test of Serbian will to contribute to the peace settlement". ¹⁶² Placing further pressure on the Serbs, Roland Dumas added that France was ready to send aid to Srebrenica by airlift, stating that, "If this operation was to take place, it would be necessary to implement United

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¹⁵⁹ "Les leaders politiques français rendent hommage à l'action du général Morillon en Bosnie", *AFP* (15 March 1993).

¹⁶⁰ "M. Beregovoy: hommage au general Morillon et mise en garde aux Serbes", AFP (14 March 1993).

¹⁶¹ "Pas de progrès dans les négociations avec les Serbes, declare le général Morillon", *AFP* (16 March 1993)

¹⁶² "Le ravitaillement de Srebrenica, un test de la volonté serbe de contribuer à la paix, selon Paris", *AFP* (16 March 1993).

Nations Security Council resolution 781 which prohibits flight over Bosnia."¹⁶³ Indeed, the enforcement of the NFZ became absolutely necessary as three planes from the direction of Titovo Užice launched bombs containing poisonous gas against Srebrenica. However, the negotiations on how to enforce the NFZ were particularly protracted owing to Russian concerns about the impact it could have on the negotiations. ¹⁶⁵

On 19 March Morillon succeeded in convincing the Serbs to allow an aid convoy to reach Srebrenica. He had persuaded the Bosnian Serb military leader Ratko Mladić to cease his attacks on the town and to stop the forceful expulsion of Bosniak civilians from the town. However, the conditions of the agreement with Mladić entailed disarming Srebrenica's population. This would ultimately prove to be a fatal miscalculation. Morillon accompanied the first convoy, believing it necessary as the town's population "only knew General Morillon." In spite of his agreement with Mladić the offensive continued, which Morillon attributed to insubordination on behalf of local Bosnian Serb commanders, one of whom was relieved of his post by Mladić at Morillon's behest. 168

These continued attacks greatly worried the inhabitants of Srebrenica and thus, once the food and medical supplies had been unloaded from the convoy, terrified women and children stormed the empty trucks in an effort to flee the besieged town. On the journey to Tuzla, six people died of asphyxiation. In response to the humanitarian catastrophe in Srebrenica that Morillon had brought to the world's attention, France dispatched a field hospital to the town and declared that it was ready to airlift injured civilians out of the town. However, the Bosnian Serbs blocked the French humanitarian

¹⁶³ "M. Dumas: le France prête à participer à l'envoi de vivres à Srebrenica", *AFP* (18 March 1993).

¹⁶⁴ "Bombardement aérien de la zone de Srebrenica, selon la radio bosniaque", AFP (19 March 1993).

^{165 &}quot;Les discussions sur la zone d'exclusion doivent reprendre dans sept jours", AFP (25 March 1993).

¹⁶⁶ Morillon, Philippe. Interview Transcript, BL-DY, 3-56, 41.

¹⁶⁷ "Le général Morillon à la tête du convoi pour Srebrenica", AFP (19 March 1993).

¹⁶⁸ Morillon, Philippe. Interview Transcript, BL-DY, 3/56, 42.

¹⁶⁹ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 296.

¹⁷⁰ "La France offre un hôpital de campagne à Srebrenica", *AFP* (20 March 1993); "Paris prêt à participer à une 'opération d'évacuation héliportée' des blessés et malades dans l'est de la Bosnie", *AFP* (20 March 1993).

dispatch from Belgrade, which led France to confirm that it would participate in the airdrops that the US had undertaken a month previously.¹⁷¹

Away from Srebrenica, the Bosnian government and the Bosnian Croats had signed the interim arrangement and provisional map of the VOPP in New York, although Izetbegović's signature was dependant on Serb acquiescence within a 'reasonable' timeframe. The Bosnian government had finally signed the VOPP, perhaps in the knowledge that it was about to lose some of its eastern territory in Srebrenica. For Dumas the government's decision to sign the VOPP was vindication of the French policy on BiH. He stated: "That the Muslims today accept the Vance-Owen plan shows that the way that [France] chose in proposing the peace conference, was the right solution." In this context, the Bosnian Serb offensive in the east stood in stark contrast to the Bosnian government's reluctant accord with the VOPP. Now the international community needed to coalesce around the plan.

On the ground Morillon continued to try to bring about peace in the east, a clear pre-requisite for the VOPP. His advisers reflected that the French General had become "dangerously obsessed with the fate of Srebrenica, and his own promise never to abandon it". Morillon decided to launch two new ambitious operations: to send one hundred peacekeepers to Srebrenica to prevent the town from falling to the Bosnian Serb forces; and to allow Bosnian Serbs in Tuzla and the surrounding areas to evacuate to Bosnian Serb held territory. However the Bosnian Serbs were deliberately preventing the evacuation of injured civilians from Srebrenica by shelling the town, which UNPROFOR denounced

¹⁷¹ "Premiers parachutages français en Bosnie en fin de semaine", AFP (23 March 1993).

¹⁷² "La signature du plan Vance-Owen par M. Izetbegović: une 'bonne nouvelle' pour M. Dumas", *AFP* (26 March 1993).

¹⁷³ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 297.

^{174 &}quot;Les nouveaux défis du général Morillon", AFP (22 March 1993).

as "deliberate sabotage".¹⁷⁵ Against this backdrop, Paris strongly encouraged Morillon to travel to Belgrade to talk with Milošević to obtain a ceasefire.¹⁷⁶ On 26 March, Morillon secured a tentative ceasefire that would commence on 28 March at midday, so that Srebrenica's wounded could be evacuated.¹⁷⁷

Cohabitation and Clinton

Meanwhile in France, the legislative elections of 21 and 28 March had presented the RPR-Union for French Democracy (*Union pour la Démocratie Française*, UDF) coalition with a landslide victory and a crushing defeat for the PS. The Mitterrand era had ostensibly come to an end, although the President was unwilling to relinquish his hard-earned power. The combative Jacques Chirac, who had positioned himself as the RPR candidate for the presidential elections two years later, called on Mitterrand to resign. Other conservatives did not support this demand but Chirac refused to be Prime Minister under Mitterrand.

Instead, the position at the head of the government fell to Édouard Balladur who chose Chirac's ally Alain Juppé as Foreign Minister. Balladur firmly believed that France was over-exposed in Yugoslavia and was concerned by the poorly defined mandate of the French peacekeepers on the ground. In this respect, Hubert Védrine was correct to note that Balladur reasoned "à l'anglais", demonstrating a mix of *sang-froid* and caution. ¹⁷⁸ Balladur was less flamboyant than Mitterrand and particularly on the question of Yugoslavia.

Mitterrand was now gravely suffering from the prostate cancer that he had kept hidden from the public. Nonetheless, the President had prepared for the second 'cohabitation' and had created an information network that would keep him well-

¹⁷⁵ "Srebrenica: La FORPRONU denonce un 'sabotage delibere' serbe", *AFP* (25 March 1993); Irrastorza, Pascal. "L'évacuation des blessés de Srebrenica suspendue après des tirs d'obus serbes", *AFP* (24 March 1993).

¹⁷⁶ "Paris souhaite 'très vivement' que le général Morillon puisse se rendre à Belgrade", AFP (25 March 1993)

¹⁷⁷ "Réunion cruciale à Belgrade pour la paix en Bosnie", AFP (26 March 1993).

¹⁷⁸ Védrine. Les mondes, 650.

informed.¹⁷⁹ The position of Hubert Védrine as Secretary General of the Élysée was key in this respect, acting as an intermediary between the Hôtel Matignon and the presidential palace.¹⁸⁰ Védrine reflected that, "from April 1993 to May 1995, Alain Juppé will fit... in with Mitterrand's foreign policy but not without bringing a new energy and a greater operational capacity to it."¹⁸¹ On the question of Yugoslavia, the main pillars of France's policy would remain the same: the prioritisation of a political solution and the presence of a UN peacekeeping force.¹⁸² With the fate of the VOPP yet to be decided and Mitterrand having so strongly supported the peace process, France continued to support the ICFY efforts.

Evidently one of the most pressing foreign policy matters for the new government was BiH, as the Bosnian Serb offensive in the east of the country continued. Only days after the elections in France, a further catastrophe befell the population of Srebrenica. As the UNHCR tried to evacuate Srebrenica's wounded on 31 March, Bosnian Serb forces shelled the town and killed several would-be evacuees. That same day, the UNSC voted to enforce the NFZ over BiH, giving a seven-day period before it came into effect and a further week before enforcement would start. NATO would play a vital role in the resolution's implementation. Significantly this marked the first ever combat role for NATO and France confirmed that ten Mirage 2000 RDI and four Mirage F1 CR would participate in the operation.

Russia had been vital in securing the agreement and offered its good offices to the Bosnian Serb Assembly in discussions on the VOPP map on 1 April. Nonetheless, the Assembly rejected the map on 3 April. The Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev

¹⁷⁹ Bell. François Mitterrand. 162.

¹⁸⁰ Védrine. Les *mondes*, 649.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 650.

¹⁸² Bozo. *La politique étrangère*, 212.

^{183 &}quot;Plusieurs morts lors d'une bousculade à Srebrenica, selon le HCR", AFP (31 March 1993).

^{184 &}quot;Zone d'exclusion aérienne: accord entre les pays occidentaux et la Russie", *AFP* (31 March 1993).

^{185 &}quot;La participation française à l'opération 'Deny Flight'", AFP (12 April 1993).

expressed his disappointment adding that, "we are very worried and I think that the rejection of the Vance-Owen plan by the Bosnian Serbs is a tragic error." ¹⁸⁶

As further evacuations continued in Srebrenica, often under fire, Bosnian Serb forces refused the entry of aid trucks to Srebrenica, allowing only empty transporters to access the town. On 4 April, the Bosnian government refused any further evacuations from the Srebrenica enclave on the grounds that it furthered ethnic cleansing. Exasperated, Morillon set out for Srebrenica on 7 April with a new aid convoy of five trucks and over a hundred Canadian peacekeepers. The General had not gained Serb consent, a pre-requisite of the peacekeeping mandate. He was halted and detained for seven hours by Bosnian Serbs in the town of Sokolac and three trucks were forced to turn around as the remainder of the convoy moved on to Zvornik. ¹⁸⁷ In Zvornik, women and children surrounded the two remaining convoy vehicles to prevent the General from reaching Srebrenica. The UNPROFOR commander had to limp back to Tuzla defeated and humiliated.

UN officials were gravely concerned by Morillon's activities in eastern BiH, feeling that by intervening in Srebrenica, the French General had exposed the weakness of UNPROFOR. As Ratko Mladić proposed a ceasefire on 9 March, the military staff of the VRS forces accused French peacekeepers and General Morillon of taking the side of the Bosnian government. General Manojlo Milovanović wanted Morillon to be withdrawn from BiH because, he stated, "he is the personal envoy of Alija Izetbegović and represents the Muslims." However, Boutros-Ghali stood behind Morillon and confirmed that the General had been "acting in conformity with UN resolutions." The newly appointed French Defence Minister François Léotard replied that it was not acceptable to question the neutrality of the peacekeepers, adding that, "It is very unjust to question the

¹⁸⁶ "M. Kozyrev qualifie de 'tragique erreur' le rejet par les Serbes de Bosnie du plan Vance-Owen", *AFP* (4 April 1993).

¹⁸⁷ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 297.

¹⁸⁸ "Les forces serbes accusent les Français de l'ONU dans l'affaire des munitions", AFP (9 April 1993).

¹⁸⁹ "M. Boutros-Ghali: 'le général Morillon a agi en conformité avec les résolutions de l'ONU'", *Agence France Press* (14 April 1993).

professionalism and neutrality of the peacekeepers, whether they're French or another nationality."¹⁹⁰ Léotard was visiting French peacekeepers in BiH, and was accompanied by Morillon to Bihać, where two French peacekeepers had recently been killed. ¹⁹¹ During his visit Léotard indicated that, following reports in *Le Monde* that the General Staff had requested his return, the General would remain in BiH for the time being. ¹⁹² Morillon was essential for the French presence on the ground, particularly since he was considered as "the man for negotiation" and in this respect he had not completed his mission. ¹⁹³

Izetbegović also wrote to Mitterrand regarding the rumour that France would retire Morillon from BiH. The Bosnian President thought that Morillon had been extremely responsible during his tenure and that "From the beginning General Philippe Morillon had demonstrated himself to be very communicative and ready to cooperate to resolve the Bosnia-Herzegovinian crisis." Izetbegović praised the General's preference for "concrete and operational actions over cabinet work and verbal conversations." The Bosnian President believed that this approach had done much to win over the population of BiH. Thus the General's actions in Srebrenica marked the peak of his achievements. Izetbegović was keen for the General's mandate to be extended, pleading that "we ask you to prolong his mandate in Bosnia-Hercegovina, which could be crucial for the peaceful resolution of the Bosnia-Herzegovinian crisis." Aware that accusations had been against Morillon for exceeding his mandate, Izetbegović also added that in Srebrenica Morillon had acted "perfectly in conformity with the name and the task of the forces under his command (United Nations Protection Force)." 195

¹⁹⁰ "M. Leotard: il n'est 'pas acceptable' de mettre en cause la neutralité des Casques bleus", *AFP* (9 April 1993)

¹⁹¹ "Le ministre français de la Défense, François Léotard, à Bihać", AFP (10 April 1993).

¹⁹² "L'état-major français n'a pas demandé à M. Leotard le rappel du général Morillon", *AFP* (10 April 1993). ¹⁹³ "Le maintien du général Morillon en Bosnie lié à l'évolution du mandat de la FORPRONU", *AFP* (11 April 1993).

¹⁹⁴ Letter from Izetbegović to Mitterrand, 18 April 1993, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/203.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid

On the ground the UN continued to try and evacuate Srebrenica but the Serb capture of the town became increasingly likely. On 12 April VRS forces launched a brutal attack against Srebrenica that killed 56 people in an hour, including schoolchildren. 196 These continued atrocities led France to pursue new sanctions through the UNSC, which Russia had previously postponed. This was the first initiative by the new government who declared that they would support further sanctions and were "determined to take, in coordination with its partners, new initiatives that can impose a way to avoid the spread of these tensions throughout the region." The US was also considering lifting the arms embargo if the Bosnian Serbs refused to sign the VOPP and continued their attacks against besieged towns. 198

However, sanctions would not be enough to stop the fall of Srebrenica, which seemed inevitable by 14 April. The local authorities asked an UNPROFOR member to deliver a surrender message to the UN headquarters in Belgrade. The UNSC and UNPROFOR faced a catastrophe. On the night of 14 April, the VRS pierced through ARBiH defence lines in Srebrenica and surrounded the town. The town had fallen by the morning. Aware that he had defeated the Bosniak forces in Srebrenica, Mladić allowed the Canadian company, which Morillon had previously tried to escort to Srebrenica, to enter the town. The Bosnian Serb General acquiesced largely because it would be implementing, what the UN inappropriately dubbed, a "disarmament agreement". ¹⁹⁹ To announce the 'surrender' of Srebrenica would lead to stronger calls for military intervention, which was entirely against UNPROFOR's interests. However, in New York the UNSC was debating a measure to make Srebrenica a 'safe area', which would compel UNPROFOR to protect the civilian population in Srebrenica.

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¹⁹⁶ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 298.

¹⁹⁷ "Nouvelles sanctions contre la Serbie: le vote pourrait intervenir dès cette semaine, selon Paris", *AFP* (14 April 1993).

^{198 &}quot;Des armes pour les Bosniagues si les Serbes poursuivent leurs attaques", Les Echos (15 April 1993).

¹⁹⁹ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 300.

The 'safe areas' policy was proposed by the non-aligned members of the UNSC who suggested a "Council of Protected Areas" as a means to force the major countries, which is the P5, to prevent a massacre in Srebrenica and Sarajevo.²⁰⁰ The 'safe areas' concept that emerged was far removed from the one originally envisaged by the non-aligned caucus of the UNSC. Resolution 819 was adopted unanimously and demanded that Srebrenica and its environs be treated as a 'safe area' free from hostilities and requiring the withdrawal of Bosnian Serb forces. Additional peacekeepers would then be placed in the town to ensure that it could not be used as a launch point for future Bosniak attacks against Bosnian Serbs.

Simultaneously on 16 April, Morillon held negotiations with Mladić at the Sarajevo airport. Mladić called for the complete surrender of ARBiH forces in the town, adding that he would allow women, children and the elderly to leave; men of fighting age would be considered prisoners of war. Morillon advised the Bosnian Army to accept the terms of truce so the UNHCR could begin evacuating Srebrenica. Mladić had achieved everything he had hoped to in Srebrenica without provoking international intervention: the population had been disarmed and weakened; and the battle lines had been frozen in place by the UN safe areas resolution. Srebrenica could be safely ignored and VRS troops and weapons deployed there could be safely moved to a more strategically important location in the battle for BiH. Thereon Srebrenica would fall victim to the Bosnian Serbs' political methodology of "slow-motion genocide" with its fate to be decided at a later date. 202

Alain Juppé demanded a vote on the total blockade of Serbia who he accused of mocking the international community. Although the US and UK were prepared to give a reluctant Russia a further day to consider the measure, France was adamant that the vote had to be taken on 17 April. Juppé stated that France "now calls for the vote in the shortest

²⁰⁰ Arria, Diego. Interview Transcript, BL-DY, 3/3, 2.

²⁰¹ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 303.

²⁰² Bećirević, Edina. *Genocide on the Drina River* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 82.

possible time in the United Nations Security Council that will totally isolate Serbia from the rest of the world."²⁰³ The blockade was preferable for Juppé because "it avoids putting the 5,000 French soldiers on the ground in a situation where they are under fire from one side or the other."²⁰⁴

Resolution 820, which emerged from these discussions, condemned the Bosnian Serbs' failure to sign the VOPP and their practice of ethnic cleansing, and implemented a blockade against Serbia. These sanctions would come into effect in nine days' time. During the intervening period David Owen travelled to Belgrade to once more convince Milošević to pressure the Bosnian Serbs to agree to the VOPP. However, increasingly frustrated by the Bosnian Serbs' bullishness, Owen indicated that he would consider military measures necessary against the Bosnian Serbs if they failed to sign the VOPP during a television interview.²⁰⁵

The Failure of the VOPP: A Catastrophe of Clinton's Making

Almost immediately the new Foreign Minister threw himself headlong into the challenge of BiH. Juppé, an astute, intelligent and energetic politician, realised the limits of French influence and that any future peace would require the agreement of both the US and Russia. Where Mitterrand had believed that US and Russian support for VOPP was important, Juppé did not believe that it would ensure Bosnian Serb acquiescence in and of itself. He was therefore prepared to place far greater pressure on the Bosnian Serbs than the

 $^{^{203}}$ "La France demande le blocus de la Serbie qui 'se moque' de la communauté internationale", AFP (17 April 1993).

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ "Extract of Lord Owen's interview on BBC 'Breakfast with Frost', 18 April 1993, in *Bosnia-Hercegovina: The Vance-Owen Peace Plan*, ed. David Owen (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 382.

French administration had theretofore. Juppé declared that thus far in the Bosnian crisis "the international community has been lax, it's obvious."²⁰⁶

The Foreign Minister referred to the events around Srebrenica as "a turning point" and added that "I say today with the greatest firmness: enough is enough." He was quick to add however that the new French government had only been "responsible for this matter for 15 days." The blockade provided the new administration in France with an opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to the VOPP and its firmer line against the recalcitrant Bosnian Serbs. The Quai d'Orsay declared that it was actively preparing for the blockade so that it could be readily implemented. Furthermore, the Quai added, it represented continuity in the French policy that aimed to pressure the Serbs to accept the VOPP. It also condemned continued attacks against Srebrenica, stating that "If there is surrender or a capture [of Srebrenica], the responsibility will be entirely with the Serbs."

Similarly the Clinton administration was increasingly irritated by the Bosnian Serbs' disregard for the international community's interventions in BiH. Without troops on the ground, unlike France and the UK, the US had decided that lifting the arms embargo against the Bosnian government would transform the conflict without the need to implement a settlement through force. The Quai was concerned by the US approach, given that both the State Department and Quai d'Orsay's studies on combining targeted airstrikes and lifting the arms embargo suggested that they would be ineffective without support from troops on the ground.²¹¹

In response to the US suggestion, François Léotard held a meeting with the UK Defence Minister Malcolm Rifkind on 19 April. Britain and France's positions aligned

²⁰⁶ "Report from UK Embassy, Paris, on comments by Alain Juppé, French Foreign Minister, 19 April 1993" in *Bosnia-Hercegovina: The Vance-Owen Peace Plan*, ed. David Owen (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), 399.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ "La France demande le blocus de la Serbie qui 'se moque' de la communauté internationale", *AFP* (17 April 1993).

²⁰⁹ "La France veut 'préparer activement' le blocus de la Serbie", AFP (18 April 1993).

²¹⁰ Ibid

²¹¹ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 581.

perfectly on the issue of air strikes, encapsulated by Léotard's statement in a joint press conference: "We are very apprehensive on the question of aerial intervention at the moment, until the UN peacekeepers are either regrouped or better protected." If military action were to occur in BiH, owing to France's large ground presence, Léotard also demanded greater representation for France in the UN's decision-making bodies in New York.

Sensing that the French government was reluctant to see the use of force, Clinton tried to exploit the perceived gap between the Elysée and the Matignon to bring about French acquiescence to US policies. Clinton called Mitterrand on 20 April in an effort to convince the French President that there were "a large number of options" to force the Serbs to "put an end to their aggression". The French were prepared to use force but remained committed to the arms embargo; the Elysée, the Matignon and the Quai shared this analysis. Accordingly, Alain Juppé publicly announced that, as the VOPP was "the only instrument available to us today for any chance of peace", France was "in the course of studying [targeted airstrikes]" although it would require a formal UNSC resolution. France was so thoroughly committed to the success of the VOPP that it was willing to consider the use of force to bring about its implementation.

As Owen continued his negotiations in Belgrade, the EC Foreign Ministers met in Copenhagen with BiH and the US proposal on the agenda. US rhetoric had gradually heightened since the fall of Srebrenica and public opinion in the US was increasingly frustrated with the peace process. The ICFY co-President warned the EC against

²¹² "Londres et Paris partagent les mêmes reserves sur les raids aériens en Bosnie", AFP (19 April 1993).

²¹³ "La Guerre en Bosnie-Herzégovine: M. Léotard s'en prend au commandement militaire de l'ONU", *Le Monde* (24 April 1993).

²¹⁴ "M. Clinton doit appeler M. Mitterrand mardi sur la Bosnie", *AFP* (20 April 1993); "Les présidents américain et français se sont entretenus de la Bosnie au téléphone", *AFP* (20 April 1993).

²¹⁵ "La situation en Bosnie-Herzégovine: M. Juppé n'exclut pas une 'frappe aérienne sur des objectifs terrestres'", *Le Monde* (23 April 1993).

acquiescing to US demands.²¹⁶ Nonetheless, and in an effort to convince the Bosnian Serbs to sign the VOPP, there were indications that the EC was prepared to consider military intervention as the Danish Foreign Minister declared that the EC was "excluding nothing... including a military intervention".²¹⁷

In Belgrade, Slobodan Milošević agreed to the VOPP on 25 April, with the previously agreed UN sanctions due to come into effect the following day. Milošević, who, as a political operator was motivated by personal power, was unprepared to further support Karadžić in the face of crippling sanctions that would have undermined his domestic support. The French approach of pressuring Milošević appeared to have paid dividends, but it had failed to account for the Bosnian Serbs' fierce independence: the Bosnian Serb Assembly declared that it was unable to make a final decision on the VOPP. This delayed the final decision by approximately three weeks with a referendum slated for 15-16 May. The Quai d'Orsay declared that, "France regrets that, in spite of tireless efforts of Lord Owen, to which it pays tribute, the negotiations to obtain the agreement of the Serbs to Vance-Owen plan have not succeeded." France called for peace and added that, "If this appeal is not heard, one must remember that the EC, gathered in Denmark on 24 and 25 April, has not excluded any new initiative."

Whereas, prior to the advent of the second *cohabitation*, France may have launched an initiative to secure Bosnian Serb acquiescence, the new government was far more conservative in its approach. Owen reflected that the new Prime Minister Balladur was "very precise and cautious involving French troops further in Yugoslavia" adding that, "There would certainly be less flamboyance about French policy from now on and instead

²¹⁶ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 142.

²¹⁷ "Le ministre danois des Affaires étrangères 'n'exclut rien'", AFP (23 April 1993).

²¹⁸ Owen. Balkan Odvssev, 144.

²¹⁹ "La France 'prend toutes dispositions' pour appliquer les sanctions contre la Yougoslavie", *AFP* (26 April 1993).

²²⁰ Ibid.

a careful calculation of interest."²²¹ Alain Juppé also preached prudence: "We must give a chance to the sanctions policy" and "test the good faith of President Milošević."²²²

On 28 April, Alain Juppé, sensing that the US was formulating its actions in BiH, suggested to Mitterrand and Balladur that he should meet with the British whom he thought would be more likely to accept targeted airstrikes without lifting the arms embargo. Moreover, Balladur stated that, "We must envisage regrouping our units and not always saying 'yes' to requests to increasing our numbers." ²²³ This would become a familiar refrain of Balladur over his premiership, and would greatly shape France's role in BiH over the following years.

Following discussions in New York, all parties agreed to negotiations in Athens, Greece, on 2 May. There, isolated and harassed, Karadžić agreed to the VOPP, with a caveat that he would need to secure the agreement of the Bosnian Serb Assembly in a meeting that was fixed for 8 May. Owen and, to a lesser extent, Vance had secured the signatures to the VOPP, which marked a huge step. However, the question of implementing the plan, and ensuring the Bosnian Serb Assembly agreed, was still unsettled, which left diplomats somewhat sceptical about the VOPP's implementation.

Parallel to the Athens Conference, the US had been developing its policy of 'lift and strike': lifting the arms embargo selectively and providing targeted airstrikes against the Bosnian Serbs. France's Ambassador to the UN, Jean-Bernard Mérimée, reflected that:

The American administration's interest in lifting the arms embargo is easily explained. This solution has the merit of simplicity and the total absence of engagement for Washington, in the form of an air presence or troops on the ground. It also allows, inexpensively, to win over the sympathy and opinions of Muslim governments.²²⁴

²²¹ Owen. Balkan Odyssev, 147.

²²² "M. Juppé: 'il faut donner une chance à la politique des sanctions'", AFP (27 April 1993).

²²³ Favier and Martin-Roland. *La Décennie Mitterrand*, 581.

²²⁴ Ibid.

Having just secured agreement from the three communities in BiH, the US threatened the unity of purpose that the international community had found in Athens: the UK and France would be extremely reluctant to see the implementation of such a policy whilst they had such a significant number of troops on the ground. Furthermore, the US policy raised institutional questions regarding the direction of any such implementation force: would it be directed by NATO and the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), the UN or a configuration of the two.

Alain Juppé was sceptical of the US's potential role in implementing the VOPP and called on "everyone", notably the US and Russia, to participate in an implementation force. Nonetheless, Clinton sent Warren Christopher to Europe to garner support for 'lift and strike' following the Athens Conference. Juppé was irritated by the US's untimely intervention. On 2 May, the Foreign Minister stated that, "there is a division of roles that does not seem acceptable to me: that of some having planes and dropping bombs and others, the Europeans, especially the French, on the ground." The Foreign Minister also added that "it will take an international force placed under the responsibility of the United Nations where everyone must be involved." Indeed, France and the US were divided over the shape of the implementation force as Warren Christopher travelled from London to Paris.

In France, Christopher met with Léotard, Mitterrand, Balladur and Juppé. During his meeting with Christopher, Mitterrand called for careful planning and prudence. He told the US Secretary of State that, "I agree with your approach to threaten and deter, but we must coldly examine the consequences." The President was greatly concerned about the results of the US's proposals to use aerial bombardment with such large numbers of French and British peacekeepers on the ground. Christopher highlighted that the US had come to

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²²⁵ "M. Alain Juppé : 'tout le monde' devra participer à la force de maintien de paix en Bosnie", *AFP* (2 May 1993).

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ Védrine. Les mondes, 654.

the "lift and strike" policy as the US congress would be unlikely to agree to send US ground troops to BiH and this policy would "allow the Muslims to defend themselves." Mitterrand conceded to Christopher that morally, he was right. However, as with the question of aerial force, Mitterrand urged careful calculations:

There is a certain paradox in denying weapons to the Muslims who are being attacked by both the Serbs and the Croats... if we decide not to give them our support. It's paradoxical and shocking. But, practically, such a measure will have adverse effects. Before it is even of some use (because it will take some time), such a decision will signal to the Serbs that the moment has come to accelerate the final phase of their offensive. And the arms that would eventually reach the Muslims would no longer be of use in a guerrilla war. Meanwhile, the Serbs will be assured control of towns, the nodes and means of communications, etc. I must also mention the problems posed by the presence of UN soldiers in Bosnia.²²⁹

Mitterrand added that he had no objection "in principle" to lifting the arms embargo but thought that Britain and the French government would resist such a measure.²³⁰ If the Serbs responded negatively to the VOPP, Mitterrand declared that it would be necessary to re-examine the issue.²³¹

This would soon be the case as, in Pale, the Bosnian Serb Assembly rejected the VOPP, overwhelmingly voting against ratification of the plan on the morning of 6 May 1993. A referendum would still take place on 15-16 May, wherein the question would be put to the Bosnian Serb population. However, the popular vote was a moot point, as it would invariably side with the Assembly, and the international community was now faced with many difficult decisions on the future of the VOPP. Milošević and Ćosić had intervened personally in the talks in Pale and the Serbian President was thoroughly

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid., 654-5.

²³⁰ Ibid., 655.

²³¹ Ibid.

disheartened by the result. He now attempted to dissuade the international community from taking punitive measures against the Bosnian Serbs.

The Serbian leadership in Belgrade proposed a five-point programme for the military imposition of the VOPP that included: a UN implementation force with the right to respond with force; that force should be constituted by Serbia's allies in the two world wars, namely France, Britain, Russia and America; the UN should issue a three-day ultimatum for the Bosnian Serbs to withdraw to 30km from the Bosnian enclaves; Yugoslav Army officers should liaise with the UN; and the Geneva negotiations should continue. Owen believed that Belgrade was prepared to accept UNSC-sanctioned action against the Bosnian Serbs and, had the US approached Russia for a joint initiative at this point, then the next two and a half years of fighting and some of the war's worst excesses may have been avoided.

In Paris, the Quai d'Orsay was deeply concerned by events in Pale. The Quai described it as a "grave decision that France regrets and from which we all draw all the consequences" adding that, "we are reflecting on all the initiatives that the situation requires and will liaise with our partners." The General Secretary at the Quai called a crisis meeting, believing that the US would soon call on the UNSC to lift the arms embargo. In such an instance France was prepared to use its UNSC veto.

To avoid such a conflict in the Security Council, Alain Juppé had envisaged an alternative solution: France should work towards the creation of several 'safe zones' that had been proposed by the non-aligned countries in the UNSC. Aware that the alternative was worse, Mitterrand acquiesced to the Quai's suggestion. That evening, the UNSC adopted resolution 824 creating "safe zones" in Sarajevo, Tuzla, Žepa, Goražde, and Bihać, alongside Srebrenica. The Quai was pleased with the wording of the resolution that

²³⁴ "Une décision grave que la France regrette', affirme Paris", AFP (6 May 1993).

²³² Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 158-9.

²³³ Ibid., 159.

²³⁵ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 582-3.

was "cautious on the means to assure the protection of these zones and it refers to another resolution to authorise the use of military force." ²³⁶

France also prepared a draft resolution for the UNSC that called for the implementation of border monitors and endorsed the VOPP declaring it to be "still alive". However the US was vacillating and announced that they were considering other options in Europe.²³⁷ Following the vote in Pale, Bill Clinton had an apparent change of heart on the 'lift and strike' policy after reading Robert Kaplan's *Balkan Ghosts*.²³⁸ The book argues that the conflict in the Balkans was the consequence of ancient ethnic hatreds and thus international intervention was doomed to fail.

Warren Christopher was now in Europe "pushing a policy that the President's not comfortable with."²³⁹ The US therefore moved to a policy of 'damage limitation', attempting to shield Clinton from any domestic or international criticism. Moreover opinion polls showed that over fifty & of American citizens were against air raids.²⁴⁰ The 'lift and strike' debacle was the latest in a series of US policy declarations that caused a Euro-Atlantic rift.

Warren Christopher returned from his European excursion and counselled the President and his foreign policy advisers not to risk greater friction with Europe over 'lift and strike'. ²⁴¹ Instead Christopher argued for a policy of containment to prevent the spread of conflict to Kosovo and Macedonia. ²⁴² Europe wanted to continue with sanctions and the reinforcement of the safe areas. However, France was considering means to protect the safe areas, which French experts had warned would be difficult. To call the US's bluff Juppé thus appealed to Russia and the US to send troops to reinforce the safe

²³⁶ Ibid., 583.

²³⁷ "Le Conseil de securite de l'ONU divise sur l'action a mener en Bosnie", *AFP* (7 May 1993); Owen. *Balkan Odvssev*, 160.

²³⁸ Drew, Elizabeth. On the Edge: The Clinton Presidency (New York: Touchstone, 1995), 157.

²³⁹ Ibid

²⁴⁰ "La situation dans l'ex-Yougoslavie : Les rétincences de l'opinion américaine", *Le Monde* (10 May 1993).

²⁴¹ Drew. *On the Edge*, 158.

²⁴² Ibid.

areas.²⁴³ Juppé correctly noted that, the reason "the reinforced sanctions have had an effect is due in large part to the strongest sanctions the international community has decided on."²⁴⁴ The US had failed to recognise this and, having suffered a severe diplomatic rejection, it began reformulating its policy on BiH.

France thus fleshed out its safe area policy as it circulated a non-paper to the US, UK and Russia on its thinking. ²⁴⁵ Juppé hoped this non-paper would serve as a basis for a UNSCR on the military practicalities of the safe areas and sought to tie the US and Russia to troop contributions. The memorandum envisaged that up to 12,000 peacekeepers would be required to defend the safe areas with American and Russian contingents; Juppé believed "the Serbs would think twice before attacking them." Furthermore, the Foreign Minister was unprepared to continue exposing French peacekeepers to the dangers in Yugoslavia, recalling before the National Assembly that, "there have been more deaths and injuries in Yugoslavia than during the whole Gulf War, including, alas, in the French contingent." Therefore, Juppé summarised his policy concisely: "the military way is the way of despair. We do not have the right to exclude it but we have a duty to do everything to not have recourse to this last resort." ²⁴⁸

The Bosnian Serb population returned a resounding rejection of the VOPP on 16 May 1993. Although Juppé had declared that the referendum had "no meaning", for the US it signalled the long-awaited death knell for the VOPP. The US State Department, now seeking to sweep the BiH issue under the carpet, attempted to dilute any forthcoming measures that could affect the US. The Clinton administration stepped down from the moral high ground that it had previously occupied on the VOPP. On 18 May Warren

²⁴³ "Zones protegées : les difficultés d'une protection efficace, selon les experts français", AFP (8 May 1993).

²⁴⁴ "Le référendum des Serbes de Bosnie 'n'a aucune signification', selon M. Juppé", AFP (13 May 1993).

²⁴⁵ Owen, Balkan Odyssev, 165.

²⁴⁶ "Le referendum des Serbes de Bosnie 'n'a aucune signification', selon M. Juppé", AFP (13 May 1993).

²⁴⁷ Assemblée Nationale, Séance du 12 Mai 1993. Accessed on 25 July 2015. http://archives.assemblee-nationale.fr/10/cri/1992-1993-ordinaire2/017.pdf.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ "Le référendum des Serbes de Bosnie 'n'a aucune signification', selon M. Juppé", AFP (13 May 1993).

Christopher spoke before the House Foreign Affairs Committee and adopted the 'Ancient Ethnic Hatred' argument. He declared that "you'll find indication of atrocities by all three of the major parties against each other. The level of hatred is just incredible." Clinton and Christopher were extremely sceptical about the prospect of protecting the safe areas and the President declared that he would not send US troops into a "shooting gallery". The US had changed its rhetoric to suit its new containment policy but had, in the process, destroyed the last peace plan that would maintain a unified state of BiH; every plan thereafter envisaged ethnic partition.

However, some members of the international community were unprepared to abandon the VOPP so readily and still envisaged protecting the safe areas. To this end Russia called a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the UNSC. However Warren Christopher, determined to abandon the VOPP, refused to attend the meeting, torpedoing the Russian initiative. Juppé would not be drawn on his position between the US and Russia and had planned to attend the Foreign Ministers' meeting and a separate meeting with Christopher. Washington, London and Paris instead conceived a new diplomatic initiative, which was presented to the Russians by Christopher and agreed on 20 May.

The US had previously distributed a new plan that envisaged dividing BiH into three zones: Serb, Muslim and Croat. In France, Mitterrand rejected this approach declaring before a cabinet meeting that, "such a division supposes new population displacement. This would cheapen human lives." Rather, the President called for relaunch of the VOPP with greater protection for the 'safe zones'. However given Balladur's preference to protect French peacekeepers, he was unconvinced that France should contribute towards any greater protection of the safe areas:

²⁵⁰ Power, Samantha. "A Problem from Hell", 308.

²⁵¹ Drew, On the Edge, 162.

²⁵² "La diplomatie internationale en panne face à la situation en Bosnie", AFP (18 March 1993).

²⁵³ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie Mitterrand, 583.

That would engage us for years. It is not necessary to respond now. There is no other initiative than to protect these zones by demanding the contribution of other countries but after a few months, we will have to answer the question, that is to say, to admit defeat... to a fait accompli. Obviously, I will not say this publicly.²⁵⁴

Mitterrand responded that, "this *fait accompli* can be contained... our silence will lead us towards solutions we do not want."²⁵⁵ However, in the context of *cohabitation* the President's influence over foreign policy was not as strong as it had once been. Instead the President and his cabinet reached a compromise.

The US proposed a 'Joint Action Programme' to Russia, which Christopher drafted hastily over dinner. Primarily, Christopher sought Russian blessing for the JAP and it was drafted with US public opinion and Russia at the forefront of the State Department's thinking.²⁵⁶ However, the US also needed to repair relations with Europe, particularly France and Britain. Similarly, the Quai under Juppé desired improved Franco-American relations and the JAP offered an opportunity to achieve this for both sides. This would come at the cost of damaging relations with Germany, who were greatly disappointed by the turn of events and began to call for lifting the arms embargo.²⁵⁷

However, for French agreement, the US would have to cede ground on the protection of 'safe areas'. Clinton and Christopher had both been sceptical of France's 'safe area' policies and held long and private negotiations with France ahead of a broader meeting with the other JAP signatories on this issue.²⁵⁸ On 22 May, following a meeting in Washington, the Foreign Ministers of the US, the UK, France, Russia, and Spain, issued a Joint Action Declaration that outlined the contours of the JAP: the VOPP was to be re-dubbed a 'process'; the creation of an International Criminal Tribunal for the former

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 584.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Drew. *On the Edge*, 162.

²⁵⁷ Ramet and Coffin, "German Foreign Policy Toward the Yugoslav Successor States, 1991-1999", 53.

²⁵⁸ Ibid

Yugoslavia; and a commitment to protect the six 'safe areas' in BiH. Officially, as the Quai confirmed, the VOPP "remained the basis for a political solution in Bosnia", but it would be implemented over a longer of period time.²⁵⁹ In reality, the VOPP had been abandoned in favour of the JAP that the US had circulated to foreign ministries on 18 May.

David Owen remained hopeful that the VOPP could have been implemented through the WEU but, with both France and Britain signatories to the JAP, this last hope was extinguished. In doing so France and Britain had strained relations with their European partners. Denmark, Germany, and the Netherlands, all opposed the move by their European allies. Given these sentiments, Mitterrand met personally with Helmut Kohl during the 61st Franco-German summit in Beaune in an attempt to repair the damage that had been wrought by France's adherence to the JAP and the abandonment of its European allies.

Simultaneously, in New York, France and Britain were pursuing the implementation of a UNSCR that would allow UNPROFOR to use force to protect the 'safe areas'. Hurd met Juppé in Paris, and the French Foreign Minister announced that, "Our analysis and ideas converge" and that the two would work together to ensure that the "safe zones were implemented" in the shortest possible time. On 4 June the Security Council issued UNSCR 836, which authorised the use of force in case of aggression against any of the six enclaves. ICFY would have to go back to the drawing board.

The period of *cohabitation* bore witness to a far greater realism in France's policy towards BiH. With Juppé and Balladur in power, a fundamental shift towards a more conservative and measured approach followed. Both were reluctant to see either Clinton or Yeltsin claim the credit for France's initiatives and earnest work towards a peace

²⁵⁹ "Le 'programme d'action commun' pour la Bosnie sous le feu des critiques", AFP (24 May 1993).

²⁶⁰ "Volonté commune franco-britannique de faire adopter une résolution sur les zones de sécurité", *AFP* (1 June 1993).

settlement. However, both men supported the main tenet of *Mitterrandienne* policy in BiH: to not add war to war.

Alain Juppé also agreed that BiH required a political solution rather than a military one. However, he was more pragmatic than Mitterrand and saw France's role as an international organiser, an arbitrator and mediator within the community, rather than a leader. Thus far, the limits of French power had been exposed in BiH and Juppé was not too proud to admit this. France's future efforts thereon would be under a diplomatic direction, aimed to create a greater dialogue between the US and Russia, and to heal the transatlantic rift caused by the 'lift and strike' debacle.

Chapter Six – France and the Tripartite Peace Plans, June 1993 - April 1994.

Over the course of the spring of 1993 fighting had intensified between the Croats and the Bosnian government, with the Bosnian Croats attempting to carve out an ethnically pure state of Herceg-Bosna. The Croatian Defence Council (Hrvatska vijeće obrane, HVO) forces in Herceg-Bosna had been subordinated to the Bosnian TO as part of the cooperation agreement between Izetbegović and Tuđman in July 1992. In the provinces that had been designated Bosnian Croat under the VOPP, the ARBiH resisted subordination to Croatian Defence Council control. Furthermore, many Bosniak citizens had been cleansed from Jajce by the VRS in September 1992 and fled to towns such Travnik, Novi Travnik, Vitez, Busovača, or villages near Bila and Zenica. This wave of refugees, with additions from eastern BiH, contained many military-aged men who replenished the ARBiH that had been defeated in Jajce and allowed the Bosnian government to seriously envisage taking offensive military action against the HVO and VRS.² Simultaneously, the Bosnian Croats, as discussed, accepted the VOPP immediately and saw it as a means to partition provinces 8 and 10 of the provisional map. However the newly reinforced ARBiH was unprepared to accept a fait accompli particularly in multiethnic Mostar, which "became a frontline in the fighting".³

David Owen warned European Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) on 8 June in Luxembourg that, "Partition within the box of the present boundaries of Bosnia-Hercegovina will mean too small a Muslim state. It will be to create a Palestine within Europe, a certain recipe for continued fighting, terrorism and discontent." Indeed, a quick glance at a map of the frontlines and entities of summer 1993 reveals the dire situation that

¹ Shrader, Charles R. *The Muslim-Croat Civil War in Central Bosnia: A Military History, 1992-1994* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003), 3.

² Ibid., 4.

³ Mills, Richard. "Velež Mostar Football Club and the Demise of 'Brotherhood and Unity' in Yugoslavia, 1922-2009", *Europe-Asia Studies* 62, no. 7 (2010), 1118.

⁴ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 182.

the Bosnian government faced. With the creation of a Greater Croatia and a Greater Serbia seemingly possible once more, Owen urged the Community to take a broader approach to the problem of BiH and to apply pressure to Tuđman, as well as holding Milošević to his VOPP commitments.

Aware of his government's dire strategic position, Izetbegović made a 'private' visit to France at the invitation of Bernard-Henri Lévy. Over the two days of 11 and 12 June, Izetbegović had a full itinerary. On the evening of 11 June, before the cameras of France 2 the Bosnian President launched an appeal to the French people calling for their moral support. Izetbegović read the appeal in French from a script, pleading that the Bosnian people be allowed to defend themselves. Alongside other media commitments, Izetbegović also had lunch with Mitterrand at the Élysée.

The Bosnian President was accompanied by Bernard-Henri Lévy and Nikola Kovać, a Bosnian Serb who had remained loyal to the Bosnian government.⁶ Mitterrand raised the subject of Goražde initially, which Lévy and Izetbegović were both quick to assert was worsening. Izetbegović recounted the fact that over the preceding 24 hours the Bosnian government had lost some fifty percent of the territory around Goražde and the situation in Srebrenica was equally desperate. The Bosnian President informed Mitterrand that on that very morning he had received a message from an amateur radio-operator destined for the two heads of state appealing for the two men to "Save Goražde".⁷

Izetbegović highlighted that Goražde was one of the six UN 'safe zones', the origins of which he attributed to France. Mitterrand declared that the UN resolution on the 'safe zones' was put in place to save lives but it had not been fixed by law and therefore Izetbegović needed to alert other powers. The French President then moved on to the subject of Sarajevo, asking "if the Serbs had wanted to take Sarajevo, could it be

⁷ Dejeuner offert par le Président de la République à M. Izetbegovic, 12 June 1993, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/204.

⁵ Institut National de L'Audiovisuel [hereafter INA]. "Appel Izetbegović." Accessed 2 April 2015. http://www.ina.fr/video/CAB93035411/appel-izetbegovic-video.html.

⁶ Dejeuner du President Izetbegovic chez le President Mitterrand, 12 June 1993, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/204.

achieved?" Izetbegović thought that the Serbs could not take Sarajevo; if they did it would come with heavy losses and the destruction of the town. The Bosnian delegation nevertheless made it clear that they believed that the majority of democratic Bosnians – Muslim, Croatian or Serbian – wanted a unified Bosnia and therefore the Bosnian government had accepted the Vance-Owen Peace Plan as it would bring peace.

However, for the Bosnian government the current situation was untenable, as Izetbegović protested:

We are the only legal government and we are deprived of arms. It's a nonsense! In practice, this embargo has only worked against Bosnia-Hercegovina because Serbia is a producer and exporter of arms. Thus the embargo has been a negative influence on the conflict.⁹

Mitterrand responded, "In any case, this was not at all the intention of those who decided on it." ¹⁰ Izetbegović replied sharply: "But, in politics, what counts is the consequences." ¹¹ Mitterrand remained undeterred from advocating the continuation of the embargo. The Bosnian President remarked that, "You cannot escape the following problem: either you defend us or you leave us to defend ourselves". ¹² Mitterrand revealed that he had spoken with Clinton, Major, and French military advisors who had all given him the same response on lifting the arms embargo: it would lead to the extermination of the Bosnian Muslims before they could receive arms. He qualified the statement by adding that, "these are not people who wish for the victory of the Serbs." ¹³

'BHL' highlighted the logical outcome of the West's approach: "This situation will one day drive the West to have to join the battle in Bosnia." Mitterrand conceded that the

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⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

situation had driven the international community closer towards conflict than thus far. Therefore he would continue to defend the arms embargo. Izetbegović demanded two measures: to defend the 'safe zones', particularly Goražde; and for UNPROFOR to defend the Bosnians or allow them to defend themselves. The Bosnian President argued that "the rebalancing of arms could lead to peace." 15 Although Mitterrand conceded that "It is an argument, but the risk is the liquidation of your [the Bosnians] resistance before you are armed." The President added that he had never hidden this but conceded that "the right to defend oneself seems fundamental". 16 The problem, he thought, was convincing the Security Council. Therefore, Mitterrand said that France would revisit the issue in the UNSC, although he felt it would be very difficult. 17 He conceded that, in calling for the lifting of the embargo, the Bosnians were demanding the most simple of rights: selfdefence.18

The Union of Three Republics

Whilst Izetbegović had been in Paris, Milošević had been in talks with Owen and Stoltenberg. In this meeting, the Serbian President proposed a new map for BiH (see map 7), which envisaged dividing the republic in three. Owen and Stoltenberg chaired discussions between the parties on this Serbian proposal on 15-16 June in Geneva, which crystallised a three-part ethnic division that would form the basis for the next three internationally-brokered peace plans. The Bosnian government was far from thrilled with the share of the map that had been designated to them and the task of the ICFY negotiators became to ensure a better deal for the Bosnian government and persuade Izetbegović that his interests could be represented through the new negotiations. 19 Europe had abandoned

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Gow. *Lack of Will*, 254-5.

the VOPP but the ICFY now had a new basis on which to negotiate. Moreover, the US condoned this approach, which ratified ethnic cleansing, having opposed the VOPP on exactly that basis.

This US *volte-face* greatly irritated Germany, alongside Warren Christopher's public criticism of Germany in the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia.²⁰ The US Secretary of State declared in an interview for *USA Today* that Germany had "a particular responsibility" in triggering the war and persuading the Europeans to act like them, adding that "Lots of specialists think that the problems we have there [Yugoslavia] today started with the recognition of Croatia and then Bosnia."²¹ Once more the conflict in BiH was deeply affecting Euro-Atlantic relations.

On 22 June 1993, in an effort to heal another rift caused by the Bosnian War, Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl discussed the Bosnian War over breakfast in Copenhagen before a European Council meeting. Kohl's Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel had been surprised by the ICFY co-Presidents' readiness to change the VOPP but Chancellor Kohl was more accommodating and realised that circumstances necessitated greater flexibility. As Sabrina Ramet and Letty Coffin note, Germany was still eager to be a "team player" and gave its support for a new plan, albeit whilst "gritting its teeth." However, Kohl was adamant that the result of adaptations could not be the creation of a new Palestine and to this end Germany used its political influence to pressure Tudman into cooperation on BiH. The Germans rightly reflected that any acceptance of ethnic partition of BiH was a validation of ethnic cleansing and they were therefore the last nation to abandon the VOPP.

A decision was due to be taken later in the day on the question of lifting the arms embargo or providing armed protection to the 'safe zones'. France had seized the UNSC

²¹ "Bosnie: l'Allemagne récuse les accusations de Warren Christopher", AFP (17 June 1993).

²⁰ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 192.

²² Ramet, Sabrina P., and Letty Coffin. "German Foreign Policy Toward the Yugoslav Successor States, 1991-1999", *Problems of Post-Communism* 48, no. 1 (January/February, 2001), 53.

²³ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 188.

on 14 June in an effort to quickly implement UNSCR 836 that had created the 'safe zones' and had made clear that lifting the arms embargo would raise the possibility of French withdrawal from UNPROFOR.²⁴ The French president postulated that,

Whatever the decision taken today... it will not be possible to maintain the two types of presence: this would succeed in giving a new impetus to the war on the ground, that is to stay the lifting of the arms embargo and the one to defend the safe areas though it may lead to potential fights to protect them. I recognise, it is evident, that humanitarianism does not answer the question on the political level. It has served as some cover for the Serbian and Croatian aggressors. But we took the decision to have troops on the ground. Must we now withdraw them? Withdrawal would be the logical consequence of a decision such as lifting the arms embargo or fighting in the safe areas. This would amount to changing the nature of the presence of foreign troops in Bosnia. 25

Kohl remained sceptical and thought that the least that those assembled could do was to suggest that the arms embargo *could* eventually be lifted. Édouard Balladur, who had accompanied Mitterrand, shared the President's analysis and repeated that it was necessary to choose between the two "mutually exclusive options": lifting the embargo or protecting the safe areas. Balladur added that, if the arms embargo were lifted it would no longer be possible to protect the safe areas. Kohl remained obstinate, replying that, "it cannot hurt to say that we are leaving this option open. Otherwise it gives the Bosnians the impression that they do not have a chance to one day see the embargo lifted." The French President shared his feelings on the potential outcome of lifting the arms embargo:

My intuition, but I can clearly be wrong, is that the reality will impose itself on our diplomatic theory. Even before the first anti-tank weapons are delivered or parachuted in to Sarajevo or Goražde, the war will end with extinction and we will move to the stage of guerrilla warfare.²⁷

²⁴ "La France a saisi le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU pour mettre en oeuvre rapidement la resolution 836", *AFP* (14 June 1993).

²⁵ Petit dejeuner Kohl/Mitterrand à Copenhague, 22 June 1993, AN, AG/5(4)/10879.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

The conversation moved to the subject of the 'safe zones'. Mitterrand pondered: "are we determined to defend the security zones? In fact, this plan goes against my feeling, because we this enter into the war, but I bow to political necessity." Kohl reflected that his French counterpart was right to believe that war would resolve nothing and that it would take hundreds of thousands of men. Nonetheless protecting the safe areas appeared to be the most sensible option for Mitterrand; it did not require many more troops and the Serbs would not attack UN troops. The President reflected that the reputation of the UN was at stake: "a people, guaranteed by the United Nations, is in danger of death. We would do worse than our predecessors who abandoned their Czech protégés." Kohl posed the reasonable question: "What would happen if the zones are not defended?" Mitterrand thought that it would discredit the UN, whilst Balladur highlighted that only a lack of will would lead to that, whilst lifting the arms embargo could lead to nothing else, highlighting that "we would wash our hands of this business." Both Germany and France prioritised "multilateralism in international crisis management" and, thus, had to protect the UN's reputation.

Mitterrand postulated that the Serbs had nearly achieved their aims and that the international community must settle for this and focus on creating a suitable territory for the three "elements" in BiH. He believed that "it would force the Serbs and Croats to fit into a state of Bosnia, whilst giving them rights they do not currently possess."³³ The President was again placing himself firmly behind the international mediation efforts, which he saw as a far more preferable solution to the creation of a Greater Serbia or Croatia. In this respect, Mitterrand thought that the autonomy of the Bosnian Serbs and

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² For an overview of German Foreign Policy towards the Yugoslav successor states see: Ramet, Sabrina P., and Letty Coffin. "German Foreign Policy Toward the Yugoslav Successor States", 48-64.

³³ Petit dejeuner Kohl/Mitterrand à Copenhague, 22 June 1993, AN, AG/5(4)/10879.

Croats was an important issue as they would be unwilling to relinquish the power they had acquired to either Belgrade or Zagreb. Thus isolating Pale and Mostar and increasing diplomatic pressure on Belgrade and Zagreb could provide a new impetus to the international peace efforts.

At the summit, the European Council agreed to support the UN in the rapid implementation of the 'safe zones'. Sources close to Mitterrand leaked the fact that, if the international community refused to provide military means to protect the 'safe zones', then the President would be prepared to partially lift the arms embargo in favour of the Bosnian government.³⁴ The President was putting his allies on guard in case they decided to abdicate their responsibilities. Mitterrand was frustrated with France's partners, which was evident in a cabinet meeting the following day:

We are committed to a 'safe zones' policy. Each country must make a commitment to participate in their defence without making excuses not to do so. Germany says that it cannot send troops and is arguing to lift the embargo, supported by Turkey and Izetbegović. It must be seen as a desperate solution that will create a widespread guerrilla war in the Balkans. It is an incredible injustice to see France calling this into question whereas others do nothing.³⁵

As negotiations continued in Geneva, and Owen and Stoltenberg began approaching a reasonable settlement that Izetbegović could present to the Bosniak population, fighting intensified on the ground as the Bosnian Serbs tried to protect the lines that they envisaged in the "Union of Three Republics" plan. Conversely, the Bosnian government had an interest in destabilising the lines that their public would not accept as a peace settlement. In this context, NATO was pressing the UN Secretary General to allow for a wide-reaching mandate to use aerial force. France remained concerned about the role envisaged for NATO in the chain of command in defence of the 'safe zones'. Mitterrand was greatly concerned that NATO would monopolise the use of force and undermine his

³⁴ "Les Douze ont achevé leurs discussions sur la Bosnie", AFP (22 June 1993).

³⁵ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 586.

approach through the UN. In such an event, France could be bypassed in the chain of command and would be unable to make decisions on the use of aerial force that could have direct implications for French peacekeepers. Bill Clinton understood the French President's attachment to the UN as a means to convey French influence and to direct policy. Therefore on 25 July the US proposed a tripartite mechanism for authorising air strikes between France, the US and the UK. Mitterrand called it a "preposterous idea" and believed that it was no substitute for the UN.³⁶

The issue was becoming more salient as the Bosnian Serbs had reinstalled heavy artillery on Mount Igman overlooking Sarajevo in an attempt to carve out the largest territorial coverage possible ahead of a peace agreement (see map 8). The US was keen to use NATO force to bring about a Bosnian Serb withdrawal. François Léotard flew to Washington for a meeting with his US counterpart Les Aspin to share French concerns on the implications for its troops on the ground. On his return Léotard confided to Mitterrand that, "The Americans accuse us of having a theological approach to this issue of the chain of command with our incessant references to UN resolutions."37 The President was reflective:

> It's curious, in a very religious country where each meal starts with a prayer that one would use the word 'theological' in a meaningless way. The American authorities need a foreign policy success. I've already seen that. We must remain on guard. It's in the interest of our country for us to oppose the will of NATO to monopolise everything.³⁸

Mitterrand's fears were allayed following a North Atlantic Council Meeting on 2 August 1993. Whilst the US had pushed for the use of military force, Canada held some fundamental questions about the implications for the peacekeeping operations on the ground. The NATO Secretary General, Manfred Wörner, issued a statement following a

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 587.

³⁸ Ibid.

full-day of negotiations outlining NATO's terms for intervention, which required wide consultation with the UN and UNPROFOR.³⁹ The chain of command had been greatly diluted and any recourse to force would be a slow process.

However, the Bosnian Serb forces on Mount Igman were proving to be a block on the negotiations in Geneva. Although Owen encouraged Milošević to pressure Karadžić and Mladić, the Bosnian Serb leadership had become over-confident in their own power but also regarding the international community's threat to use force. The US Joint Chiefs of Staff were keen to use NATO airpower to 'sober up' the Bosnian Serbs, which led to open disagreements between NATO and the UN. However, Juppé declared that NATO's decision was "an important step towards military action" that France agreed with. ⁴⁰ The French Foreign Minister spoke with Warren Christopher on the issue and the Quai confirmed that the US and France "shared the same analysis and the same determination" to force the Bosnian Serb withdrawal, deeming it necessary for the continuation of the Geneva negotiations. ⁴¹

However, Karadžić made a high-risk calculation that NATO countries would be unprepared to see reprisals against UNPROFOR peacekeepers in the event of air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs; he was right. Karadžić warned that air strikes threatened the continuation of peace negotiations and cautioned that he could not be held accountable for the actions of the VRS forces on the ground if NATO launched strikes. The Bosnian Serb leader warned: "If a single bomb hits a Serb position there will be no more talks. We would have an all-out war and catastrophe." The international community backed down and the negotiations in Geneva continued.

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³⁹ Press Statement by the NATO Secretary-General following their special meeting on Bosnia-Hercegovina,

² August 1994, BODA, 5/12.

⁴⁰ "M. Juppé: un 'pas important vers une action militaire", AFP (11 August 1993).

⁴¹ "Sarajevo: Paris et Washington réaffirment leur 'détermination' face aux Serbes", AFP (13 August 1993).

⁴² Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 338.

By 20 August, the three parties had agreed in principle to a new plan for the Union and David Owen distributed drafts of the Plan to the EC. The 'Union Plan' included: a constitutional agreement that included human rights courts; a draft agreement guaranteeing the Bosniaks access to the Adriatic; and an agreement to peacefully implement the settlement.⁴³ On 24 August, Milošević wrote to Mitterrand regarding the recently concluded Geneva negotiations. Milošević felt that Serbia had made the greatest sacrifice during the negotiations and therefore appealed to Mitterrand "to kindly employ the influence of your country to the effect that the package of solutions be accepted, and to create such conditions where – in the implementation stage – all the three parties would carry out all its provisions, conscientiously and with a sense of responsibility."⁴⁴

Meanwhile, Alain Juppé and Klaus Kinkel sought to bring pressure to bear on Franjo Tudman in support of the Geneva negotiations at the end of August. The fighting in Mostar, between Bosnian Croats and government forces, had continued and prevented the delivery of humanitarian aid to the town. Initially, Juppé and Kinkel focussed on ensuring the delivery of aid to Mostar appealing to Tudman for "moderation and restraint in the fate of Mostar and at the very least to allow the delivery of humanitarian aid." This joint initiative helped to heal differences that France and Germany had expressed over BiH and the General Agreement of Tariffs and Trade. In a PR coup Kinkel and Juppé secured Franjo Tudman's agreement to "promise to close the camps near Mostar, where 10,000 civilians are detained, or at least to allow the Red Cross to inspect them."

Whilst the negotiations stalled in Geneva, Juppé and Kinkel continued their work in support of the 'Union Plan'. The two Foreign Ministers announced publicly that they were preparing an initiative "to see how we can act with Mr. Izetbegović in a way that means the

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⁴³ Gow. Lack of Will, 255.

⁴⁴ Letter from Milošević to Mitterrand, 24 August 1993, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/362.

⁴⁵ "Zagreb 'attire l'attention' de Bonn et Paris sur 'la situation alarmante' des Croates en Bosnie centrale", *AFP* (27 August 1993).

⁴⁶ "M. Kinkel: les pressions de l'Allemagne sur la Croatie ont porte leurs fruits", AFP (5 September 1993).

agreement can be concluded as quickly as possible." The provisional map of BiH at that stage left the Muslim republic completely landlocked, which represented a major stumbling block for the Bosnian government. France and Germany therefore announced that they would send a mission of experts to the coastal town of Neum to study the feasibility of establishing a commercial port there. Kinkel announced that, "This contribution is conceived as a concrete support for the Geneva negotiations." The Franco-German report reached the co-Chairmen, Owen and Stoltenberg, as they prepared to host the final round of negotiations on the 'Union Plan' aboard the Royal Navy's HMS Invincible. The report noted that Neum was not a feasible commercial port and instead recommended the town of Ploče as a more viable alternative.

During the negotiations aboard the Invincible Tuđman agreed to grant the Bosniaks access to the sea via Ploče. Under the agreement, Sarajevo would be administered by the UN and Mostar by the EC. The three parties came to a tentative agreement, with Izetbegović deferring the decision to a Bosnian Assembly vote on 27 September. Although the Bosnian Croat and Serb Assemblies agreed to the plan, the Bosnian Assembly rejected the plan, primarily because the military leaders wanted to continue to fight to regain lost territory, particularly against the Croats. ⁴⁹

The 'Kinkel-Juppé Plan'

Although the 'Union Plan' had failed, Europe had now fully reconciled itself to support the principles of the Plan, including the more problematic aspects that legitimised ethnic cleansing. Furthermore, in a meeting of the FAC, Owen had reintroduced a 'globalization concept' noting that the crisis in BiH would only be solved through a global solution for

⁴⁷ "Bonn et Paris préparent une initiative commune auprès du president Izetbegović", *AFP* (10 September 1993).

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⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 220.

the former Yugoslavia.⁵⁰ On the issue of BiH, Milošević had been able to persuade Karadžić to return to negotiations on the basis of the 'Union Plan' but he was reluctant to see any further international interference in the internal affairs of Serbia.

However the US had continued to push for a partial lifting of the arms embargo in favour of the Bosnian government following the failure of the Plan. Bill Clinton was frustrated by British and French resistance to lifting the embargo, which led to a particularly public and testy Euro-Atlantic exchange of words. Warren Christopher sniped that "Western Europe is no longer the dominant area in the world." The Quai retorted that its stated position was "to prioritise a negotiated settlement between the parties, which is incompatible with lifting the arms embargo on the sale of arms, and at the same to call on a ground and air military presence to protect the most threatened zones." The French Foreign Ministry also recalled that the US had signed up to the JAP in May, which its current proposals bulldozed. 53

Mitterrand and Juppé remained greatly troubled by the humanitarian plight of Sarajevo and the US accusations. Juppé announced that the Quai had approached the Belgian Presidency of the EC to study methods of financing humanitarian aid for BiH whilst stressing that the delivery had become increasingly difficult. With a second winter under siege fast approaching in the Bosnian capital, France thus launched an initiative to reopen the humanitarian route between Split and Sarajevo. Indeed, revelations regarding massacres of Bosniaks by their former Bosnian Croat neighbours in Stupni Do had revealed that the situation on the ground was far from improving.⁵⁴ That they could be traced back to the highest echelons in Zagreb particularly disturbed the international

⁵⁰ Kinkel, Klaus, and Alain Juppé. Letter to Belgian EU Presidency, 7 November 1993, BODA, 1/5/1.

⁵¹ "EuroThrash: Our Allies Up in Arms; Why Clinton is Giving Europe the Jitters", *Washington Post* (24 October 1993).

⁵² Paris rappelle les engagement pris par Washington", AFP (18 October 1993).

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⁵⁴ Lieberman, Ben. "Nationalist narratives, violence between neighbours and ethic cleansing in Bosnia-Hercegovina: a case of cognitive dissonance?", *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 3 (2006), 297.

community. In a cabinet meeting on 27 October discussing this issue Alain Juppé declared that he felt as though he were "preaching in the desert", on the humanitarian situation in BiH.⁵⁵ The usually cautious Balladur was also frustrated: "We have gone from failure to failure for the past two years, this time we must achieve our goal of forcing open the road blocks."

During a European Council meeting in Brussels two days later, Mitterrand warned of a "risk of a serious European conflict at the start of the next century" that would be precipitated by ethnic divisions.⁵⁷ The President also highlighted that the delivery of humanitarian aid to Sarajevo had once more become problematic and warned his European partners that "we must be conscience and be vigilant of military aspects." Ahead of the Council meeting Mitterrand and Kohl had written a joint letter calling on the Community to "reinforce the humanitarian aid for the victims of war in Bosnia-Hercegovina, and to assure the delivery of aid to affected zones and towns." The following day the European Council issued a declaration that called for the "use of *all appropriate means* to support the convoying of humanitarian aid [emphasis added]", which Canada and the US questioned during a North Atlantic Council meeting on 3 November.⁶⁰

The following day Milošević indicated Serbia's terms for a new round of negotiations: "equal respect for the rights of the participants"; and "non-interference in internal Serbian matters." Milošević was concerned that Kosovo, the Sandžak and Vojvodina might be integrated into the latest round of negotiations given Owen's previous recommendations to enlarge the scope of any new peace plan. Furthermore, Milošević called for a relaxation of sanctions against Serbia, stating that a new conference "would not

⁵⁵ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 587.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ "Mitterrand: 'un risque serieux de conflit Européen'", AFP (29 October 1993).

⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹ "Une lettre de MM. Mitterrand et Kohl 'Un rendez-vous que l'Europe ne peut manquer'", *Le Monde* (29 October 1993).

⁶⁰ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 224-5.

⁶¹ "M. Milosević énonce 'deux conditions de la partie serbe' à une nouvelle conference sur l'ex-Yougoslavie", *AFP* (4 November 1993).

be acceptable if the Serb party remains under an embargo, whilst the Croatian party is privileged."⁶² Croatian actions in Stupni Do lent legitimacy to Milošević's appeal. However, the Bosnian Croats were suffering setbacks in their conflict with Bosniaks, losing the town of Vareš, with Tuđman making desperate appeals to Izetbegović to stop the offensive.⁶³

On 5 November, David Owen sent a COREU (CORrespondance EUropéenne) telegram to European Foreign Ministers outlining points for forthcoming discussions. Entitled 'Joint Action on the Former Yugoslavia', it outlined the ICFY co-President's priorities for a Bosnian Settlement. It noted that the HMS *Invincible* package could still be modified to accommodate Izetbegović's previous demands. However, Owen rightly noted that "By spring those maps will be as dead as the previous negotiations." In its approach, 'Joint Action on the Former Yugoslavia' chimed with France's approach to solving the conflict. Owen recommended that the European Foreign Ministers consider how "to use sanctions as a lever for peace" whilst noting that an "urgent settlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina is the only hope of avoiding the deaths of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands of people, the majority of whom are likely to come from the Muslim community." Realistically, Owen added that, "In the absence of a political settlement the best that can be hoped for is to alleviate suffering where possible, without exposing humanitarian personnel to excessive danger."

Following Owen's recommendations Juppé and Kinkel wrote a joint letter to the President of the FAC, Willy Claes. The two Foreign Ministers proposed a 'twin-track approach' citing the approach of winter for the Bosnian population and an increasing risk of renewed war in UNPAs in Croatia. The letter emphasised three priorities: "Securing

62 Ibid.

^{63 &}quot;M. Tuđman demande à M. Izetbegović d'arrêter l'offensive contre Vareš", AFP (3 November 1993).

⁶⁴ COREU Telegram: Personal for Foreign Minsters from Lord Owen, 5 November 1993, BODA, 3/1/35.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

humanitarian assistance for Bosnia; arriving at a solution for Bosnian based on the Geneva package; and establishing a *modus vivendi* for the areas of Croatia under UNPROFOR mandate in order, as an interim step, to prevent the danger of war there."⁶⁷

The 'Kinkel-Juppé Plan' (see map 9) made specific recommendations on humanitarian operations, including: increasing financial resources for humanitarian aid and an active encouragement for Islamic states to contribute; the establishment of humanitarian corridors from the Dalmatian coast to Sarajevo and the reopening of Tuzla airport; and the readiness of EC members to provide troop contributions and logistical supports for these endeavours.⁶⁸ The letter also declared support for the 'Union Plan' adding that implementation would be key to securing a deal. The Foreign Ministers indicated that Milošević appeared willing to negotiate and would demonstrate territorial flexibility on the map of BiH if the lifting of sanctions could be tied step-by-step to the Bosnian Serbs meeting their obligations under the agreements. This would be time-sensitive too, adding that "the sooner the Serbian side meets its obligations under the agreements to be concluded, the quicker things will move."

The Plan was also the first to place conditions on the Bosnian government stating that: "If the Muslims' current territorial demands are met and they still remain unwilling to sign the peace package, it will have to be made clear to the leaders in Sarajevo that military options do not have the slightest chance of success and they would thereby risk losing the support of the international community." Once these agreements had been reached, and a *modus vivendi* established in Croatia, the Foreign Ministers proposed a conference, dubbed 'London II' where, with the pressure and support of the EC, they hoped a deal could be achieved on those two issues. There would then be a 'London III' once all issues had been

⁶⁷ Kinkel, Klaus, and Alain Juppé. Letter to Belgian EU Presidency, 7 November 1993, BODA, 1/5/1.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.70 Ibid.

settled that would then allow for human rights issues in Kosovo, the Sandžak and Vojvodina to be regulated by an international monitor presence.⁷¹

The plan was intended to give David Owen renewed vigour and prestige ahead of any further negotiations and the ICFY co-President certainly welcomed the Franco-German initiative, reflecting that, "It was a development I both wanted and needed."⁷² In its efforts ICFY had often lacked the direct intervention and interest of the government's on whose behalf it had been convened. The Kinkel-Juppé Plan tied Germany and France to the peace process but was also intended to demonstrate the viability of a European CFSP. However, the plan remained resolutely realistic declaring that it "must also try to win the support and participation of the United States of America and Russia". 73 The plan came fully-loaded with carrots and sticks for all three parties, which was particularly salient given the ferocious fighting between the Bosnian Croats and Bosniaks.

The first priority for the EU was securing an agreement from the three parties in BiH. With a WEU Council meeting scheduled for 22 November, it was agreed that the Council of Foreign Ministers would hold an extraordinary session to discuss the Franco-German initiative. Britain supported the plan, albeit somewhat envious of the reinvigorated Franco-German alliance. 74 However, the US was extremely sceptical, remaining reluctant to see sanctions lifted against Serbia.

As France, Germany and Britain worked closely alongside the ICFY to add flesh to the bones of the new peace plan, Mitterrand wrote to Milošević to express his disappointment that the 'Union Plan' peace talks had failed, whilst recognising the contribution made by the Serbs. However, Mitterrand was aware that humanitarian convoys were still struggling to reach Sarajevo. He wrote to Milošević stressing that it appeared inconceivable to him that genocide would occur in Sarajevo and other besieged

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Owen, Balkan Odvssev, 227.

⁷³ Kinkel, Klaus, and Alain Juppé. Letter to Belgian EU Presidency, 7 November 1993, BODA, 1/5/1.

⁷⁴ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 229.

towns without a sudden catalyst; he hoped the Serbs would not provide one.⁷⁵ In this respect, the French President noted that it depended on all those involved in the negotiations and Serbia in particular. "The moment has come," declared Mitterrand "to escape the current language and conformism." The French President was personally appealing to his Serbian counterpart to support the Franco-German initiative as he declared that, "I would like to see Europeans such as you, us and those who want to associate with it, finally put an end to this tragic and dishonourable story. I hope that you will help with the success of a policy that will bring military and civil peace to these towns." ⁷⁷

At the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers on 22 November the EU demonstrated a unity of purpose in its order of business and remained optimistic that, without US intervention, a peace deal might be secured. Although the US expressed scepticism regarding lifting sanctions against Serbia, they remained distant from the EU initiative. Indeed, as the Foreign Ministers of the Twelve invited the three parties to Geneva on 29 November, the US, alongside Russia, was only invited in an observer capacity.

The EU set out its detailed position in an open session with all three parties before entering into bilateral negotiations with each party. The leaders of the three communities also outlined their conditions. Izetbegović accused the EU of a "complicity of crime", called for the end of the arms embargo and made territorial claims on the port of Neum. Tuđman was unwilling to cede Neum, and noted that French and German experts had already declared that Neum was not a viable commercial port. Milošević criticised previous EU measures but indicated that, "he wanted to look at the EU's latest proposals in

⁷⁵ Some thought that the Bosnian Muslims encouraged attacks against tehmselves so that the West would sympathise with them as "victims of genocide". See, for example, the following: Maček, *Sarajevo Under Siege*, 185; Franchet, Commandant. *Casque bleu pour rien: ce que j'ai vraiment vu en Bosnie* (Paris: J.C.

265

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Lattès, 1995), 26.

⁷⁶ Letter from Mitterrand to Milošević, Paris, le 15 novembre 1993, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/362.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

a positive light" and thought that "All three sides should sign the peace settlement and begin implementation immediately."⁷⁸

In the bilateral meetings, the EU Foreign Ministers divided their labour intelligently: Kinkel intervened mostly before the Croats and Juppé before the Serbs. Juppé highlighted that the EU desired to conclude the settlement before Christmas and that sanctions could then be incrementally lifted depending on Serb territorial concessions and implementation. The Foreign Ministers' interventions in Geneva had once more added momentum to the negotiations, which the co-Presidents continued through until 2 December in an effort to create a map for a Muslim majority republic that covered a third of the territory of BiH.

David Owen sent a COREU to the EU Foreign Ministers to report the outcome of the Geneva negotiations. Sarajevo was central to the negotiations, with a partition of the capital city under UN supervision appearing possible. Mostar would be split down the middle by its natural demarcation, the Neretva River, foregoing the need for EU supervision. David Owen reflected that, "Following the destruction of the [stari most] bridge and bitterness engendered over the last few months, it is a task we [the EU] could well do without." Finally, the issue of implementation was crucial to reaching an agreement with the Bosnian government pressing for a NATO ground force, with the HMS *Invincible* negotiations having fallen down owing to the Bosnian government's concerns over implementation. Owen urged the EU to reach security guarantees ahead of the next series of negotiations between the three parties slated for 12 December, which was rescheduled for 21 December.

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⁷⁸ Detailed account of EU Foreign Ministers' meeting with parties in Geneva, 29 November 1993, BODA, 3/4/9.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Report on the Geneva talks, 2 December 1993, BODA, 3/1/39.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

As fighting eased on the ground, bilateral meetings continued between the ICFY and the three parties. The European Union were eager that the Bosniaks be given 33.3% of the territory of BiH and were threatening to reinforce sanctions against the Serbs if they remained antagonistic.⁸³ Notwithstanding, the Bosnian Serbs were resistant to these changes. Alain Juppé thought that "The Serbs bear the primary responsibility for the impasse".⁸⁴ In spite of these difficulties, David Owen reported to the European Council on 10 December that the Kinkel-Juppé Plan remained on course.⁸⁵ However, if the negotiations failed, the Quai revealed that it would consider withdrawing its 6,000 peacekeepers stationed across Yugoslavia the following spring.⁸⁶

With negotiations scheduled for 21 December, the EU sent a series of requests to the three parties, which included two ill-judged statements: the first calling on the Serbs to renounce the partition of Sarajevo; the second on the Croats to renounce the partition of Mostar. Following negotiations between the three parties with the Co-Chairmen, the EU ministers held a series of meetings with the parties the following day, in the same format as at the end of November. Although Tudman and Milošević had been brought in to the negotiations, the parties had failed to reach an agreement the previous day, with the Bosnian Serbs unwilling to allow a link between the enclaves in the east and Sarajevo, and the Croats were equivocal about providing the Bosnian Muslims with access to the sea. ⁸⁷ The Bosnian Muslims were prepared to consider the partition of both Mostar and Sarajevo provided they received concessions from the Bosnian Serbs in the east, and they still desired sea access at Neum. The talks were in a delicate state ahead of the EU Foreign Ministers' mediation.

^{83 &}quot;Les Douze menacent de renforcer les sanctions contre les Serbes", AFP (11 December 1993).

⁸⁴ "Les conflits dans l'ex-Yougoslavie: Les Douze convoquent les belligérants", *Le Monde* (13 December 1993).

⁸⁵ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 235.

⁸⁶ "Paris réaffirme envisager un retrait au printemps de ses forces en ex-Yougoslavie", *AFP* (20 December 1993).

⁸⁷ Reports on talks on the EU Action Plan held in Geneva, 21 December 1993, BODA, 3/1/43.

These negotiations and the distance between the three parties had left Alain Juppé decidedly, and publicly, pessimistic ahead of the EU Foreign Ministers' intervention on 22 December, judging that the chances of a success remained as small as they had before. Nonetheless, the EU Foreign Ministers set about employing their influence to secure agreement from the three parties. The EU position was: 33.5% of the territory for the Bosnian Muslims; 17.5% for the Bosnian Croats; and temporary UN administration of Sarajevo. Karadžić rejected the final point, which caused Alain Juppé to launch into the Bosnian Serb leader viciously. Juppé also demanded the reopening of Tuzla airport, which Karadžić declared he would only do after a peace agreement had been signed. The French Foreign Minister "said he was outraged by Karadžić's remarks."

Co-Presidents Owen and Stoltenberg were left to pick up the pieces after a heated final session, with a further meeting agreed for 15 January. The EU had only succeeded in securing a ceasefire for Christmas. However, the fighting in BiH continued unabated with complete disregard for the supposed ceasefire. However, the Bosnian government forces in particular had relaunched an offensive with arms deliveries being supported by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Arab and Iranian countries. The 'Kinkel-Juppé Plan' had suffered a setback and France was experiencing diplomatic fatigue. Mitterrand's New Year's Eve speech reflected a change in attitude. Rather than the activist message of a year previous, the President reflected that "1993 will leave us with images of blood and death with Sarajevo as a symbol of a martyred population."

In a cabinet meeting on 5 January Alain Juppé despaired that, "None of the parties want peace, all of them are preparing for war, in particular the Muslim army in central

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⁸⁸ "Bosnie: Les Européens tentent sans grand espoir de forcer un réglement de paix", *Le Monde* (22 December 1993).

⁸⁹ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 240-241.

⁹⁰ "La trêve de fin d'année completement ignorée en Bosnie-Herzegovine", AFP (24 December 1993).

^{91 &}quot;Les discussions de Bruxelles s'achèvent sans accord, sauf sur la trêve de Noel", AFP (23 December 1993).

⁹² MAE, Allocution prononcée par le Président de la République lors de la Présentations des Voeux, 31 December 1993. Accessed 21 July 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

Bosnia, and UNPROFOR is under attack."⁹³ The Foreign Minister believed that it was necessary to "re-establish the credibility of the international community" and suggested that France use the upcoming NATO summit to obtain formal US support for the implementation of a negotiated settlement.⁹⁴ The following day, Juppé, with Mitterrand's blessing, addressed a letter to the 15 other members of NATO and Boutros-Ghali, in clear terms: "The action of UNPROFOR is paralysed. This situation cannot continue. We must reinforce its methods and reaffirm our readiness to use air strikes that would be needed."⁹⁵ However, Boutros-Ghali remained sceptical regarding the use of force and required convincing, with the Secretary General holding extensive talks on the subject in Paris on 8 January.

Juppé repeated his exasperated message to David Owen during a meeting on 7 January 1994. The French Foreign Minister threatened the withdrawal of French peacekeepers if the Kinkel-Juppé Plan failed, sensing that public opinion was changing on the conflict in BiH. However, there was a difference of opinion on withdrawal between the key decision makers on French foreign policy: Mitterrand wanted to stay; Léotard vacillated on his position; and Balladur and Juppé wanted to withdraw. For the Quai, it was essential to secure agreement on the Kinkel-Juppé Plan. With a NATO summit scheduled in Brussels for 8 January, the Foreign Minister urged Owen to ensure UK support for "bringing the US on board... including a specific commitment to the EU Action Plan." Furthermore, Juppé set a proposition that the EU "give Izetbegović another month before signing a peace settlement otherwise we [the EU] announce our intention to withdraw in April". Juppé therefore advocated a trilateral effort to convince Izetbegović to resume negotiations on the plan, which succeeded.

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⁹³ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 589.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 590.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 590-1.

⁹⁶ Owen. Balkan Odyssev, 243.

⁹⁷ Letter from Lord Owen to Secretary of State Douglas Hurd, 7 January 1993, BODA, 3/2/123.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Talks began on 9 January in St. Petersburg, although they made no real progress: Izetbegović was antagonistic towards Tuđman given that the ARBiH was making progress in Central Bosnia. Simultaneously, at the NATO summit in Brussels François Mitterrand called on the Organisation's members to strengthen its engagements in BiH, particularly in regards to the protection of peacekeepers. ⁹⁹ Clinton concurred, in spite of reluctance within his administration, and declared that NATO should be "ready to act" if the situation in Sarajevo and the 'safe zones' continued to deteriorate. ¹⁰⁰ France was willing to encourage NATO in order to secure the Kinkel-Juppé Plan as France had been central to its inception and it could therefore be a vehicle for French prestige.

The reopening of Tuzla airport for humanitarian deliveries was a further pertinent matter. The north-eastern town attempted to remain free of nationalist politics throughout the war and accordingly was the antithesis of the Bosnian Serb political project and its aim to create ethnically homogeneous zones.¹⁰¹ As such it stood as a direct challenge and obstacle to Bosnian Serb war aims, both territorially and ideologically.

Negotiations between the three parties continued on 18 and 19 January, but there was no progress on key issues. ¹⁰² Meanwhile, France continued to pressure the US into a greater military commitment towards implementing a peace settlement for BiH. Warren Christopher travelled to Paris for talks with Alain Juppé on 24 January, wherein the French delegation argued that the international community must carefully coordinate their diplomatic efforts: the US should pressure the Bosniaks; the Germans the Croatians; and Russia and France the Serbs. However, Christopher was clear that Washington was unwilling to pressure the Bosnian government to accept the Kinkel-Juppé Plan. ¹⁰³ The

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⁹⁹ "M. Clinton soutient le principe de frappes aériennes, mais M. Boutros-Ghali doute d'un engagement militaire", *AFP* (10 January 1994).

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ See Armakolas, Ioannis. "The 'Paradox' of Tuzla City: Explaining Non-nationalist Local Politics During the Bosnian War", *Europe-Asia Studies* 63, no. 2 (March 2011), 229-261.

¹⁰² Report on talks held in Geneva, 19 January 1994, BODA, 3/1/47.

¹⁰³ Védrine. Les mondes, 662.

meeting soured relations between Washington and Paris as the State Department declared that Juppé had "a strange moral calculus", adding that "it is hard to understand his logic". ¹⁰⁴ The Quai retorted: "if we are talking on a moral level the choice today is between merely watching the fighting or doing everything possible to stop it." ¹⁰⁵ Washington and Paris were further apart than they had been when the VOPP had collapsed. Following the meeting, Hubert Védrine reported to Mitterrand that:

In reality, I worry that the United States do not yet have a vision for the future or an idea how to bring these unfortunate people to coexist peacefully in the future and reconstruct their countries. They encourage the 'Bosniaks' to fight to the last Bosniak because it is a way to fight 'communist and fascist' Serbia. After the relentlessness of the political and military leaders of the three parties in conflict, the American attitude is without doubt the second cause of the continuation of the war. ¹⁰⁶

This transatlantic disparity came at exactly the time that Juppé was seeking a greater concertation of international diplomacy. On 25 January Mitterrand and Balladur sought to reunite the international community in a common approach and jointly called on "the international community to take its responsibilities by following a coherent policy and closely coordinating its efforts." The President and the Prime Minister reiterated the need "to put in place, by using force if necessary, the decision taken in Brussels [the NATO summit] to assure the relief of UNPROFOR in Srebrenica and the opening of the Tuzla airport." The declaration reflected Juppé's frustration with the three parties in the conflict. The appeal noted that the parties "do not appear, neither one nor the others, ready to conclude a peace" and France believed that it was essential to call "on all belligerents to make the necessary concessions." 109

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¹⁰⁴ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 252.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Védrine. Les mondes, 662.

¹⁰⁷ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 593.

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^{109 &}quot;La France appelle à la mise en oeuvre des décisions de l'OTAN sur la Bosnie", AFP (26 January 1993).

Russian responded by calling a 'special session' of the UNSC Foreign Ministers. 110

The Russians proposed that the UNSC adopt the EU Action Plan, call for a ceasefire and the end of blockades against humanitarian aid. The Quai was pessimistic about the outcome of such a meeting highlighting that the US would likely be unfavourable and that such a meeting sidelined many troop-contributing countries. 111 Immediately Izetbegović rejected the Russian proposal declaring that, "We will not accept any imposed solution." 112

The US reinforced its line that it would not impose a solution with Madeleine Albright declaring that there would be "no meeting, no pressures, no conference, no resolution." 113

Rather the US excluded such a move "now more than ever" believing that it would require military implementation that the Americans continued to categorically refuse. 114

Furthermore, the US Senate overwhelmingly voted in favour of a measure that urged Bill Clinton to lift the arms embargo against the Bosnian government. 115

With the three parties determined to continue fighting, and rumours abounding that Madeleine Albright sought to secure 40% of the territory for the Bosnian government, the EU Action plan fizzled out on 2 February during an ICFY Steering Committee meeting. 116 This was compounded by Helmut Kohl during a trip to Washington, where he declared that "Germany will not participate in any undertaking where the Muslim party will be subjected to an unjustified pressure." With its key European partner having abandoned a plan that it had jointly conceived, and the US once more bulldozing a peace plan, France had to accept the demise of the EU Action Plan.

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¹¹⁰ "Les États-Unis favorables à des consultations des membres du Conseil de sécurité sur la Bosnie", *AFP* (26 January 1994).

¹¹¹ "L'initiative diplomatique de Moscou devrait rester sans suite", AFP (26 January 1993).

¹¹² "Le président Izetbegovic rejette l'intiative russe sur la Bosnie", AFP (26 January 1993).

¹¹³ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, p. 594.

¹¹⁴ Ibid

^{115 &}quot;Le Monde en bref GMT (depuis jeudi 04h00 GMT)", AFP (28 January 1994).

¹¹⁶ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, p. 254.

¹¹⁷ "Fin de la visite de Helmut Kohl à Washington", AFP (1 February 1994).

A Massacre in a Marketplace

On 5 February 1994 Izetbegović wrote to François Mitterrand detailing events from the early afternoon in the Bosnian capital: "Sixty six civilians have been killed and one hundred ninety seven wounded, at the Sarajevo marketplace today... Since the beginning of the aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina more than 200,000 people have been killed, 16,000 children among them." ¹¹⁸ Mere hours after the shelling of the Markale Marketplace in Sarajevo, Izetbegović implored Mitterrand to use his influence "in order that the international community either fulfils its obligations towards Bosnia and Herzegovina or to lift the arms embargo to allow us to defend ourselves. Any other solution is equal to being an accomplice to this crime." ¹¹⁹

Initially there were issues in verifying the origins of the shell that caused the carnage in the capital. UN investigators concluded that the 120mm mortar had been fired from the northeast of the market. Although the evidence was inconclusive, it appeared beyond reasonable doubt that the shell had been fired from a Bosnian Serb position. 120

Juppé immediately launched a diplomatic initiative to bring about the immediate lifting of the siege of Sarajevo. The massacre provoked great shock and horror in the international community, which produced the galvanising effect that Juppé had previously hoped for in support of the EU Action Plan. In the night following the attack, the Quai published a communiqué that called for "the immediate lifting of the siege of Sarajevo, the rounding up of heavy weapons held by all the parties and their supervision by the UN." France hoped "that the methods to implement this action, including the recourse to aerial force, will be defined in the shortest time possible by the United Nations in cooperation with NATO." Juppé noted that there was a consensus that the NAC need to

¹¹⁸ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 253-254.

¹¹⁹ Letter from Izetbegovic to Mitterrand, 5 February 1994, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/203.

¹²⁰ Donia. Sarajevo, 329.

¹²¹ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 595.

¹²² Ibid.

meet as soon as possible, and that France would demand an ultimatum be put before the belligerents. 123

On 6 February the FAC met in Brussels to discuss the use of aerial force to break the siege of Sarajevo with the Belgian Foreign Minister calling on Boutros-Ghali to order selective air strikes against Serb heavy weapons around Sarajevo. 124 At the meeting, David Owen also urged the EU to continue its support of the Action Plan, and to try for a 'Sarajevo first' approach. Immediately following the meeting, Juppé spoke directly with Owen and confirmed that he remained supportive of the EU Action Plan, but believed that the priority was to now lift the siege of Sarajevo. The Foreign Minister's preference was for an ultimatum calling for the establishment of *cordon sanitaire* around Sarajevo, with the Bosnian Serbs withdrawing to a distance of 30 kilometres. Moreover, and with Balladur's blessing, Juppé realised that this would imperil UNPROFOR personnel, a consequence he fully accepted. 125

Juppé was keen to send a strong message on the day of the FAC meeting but, with David Owen eager to highlight some deficiencies in Juppé's demands, his fellow Foreign Ministers were not as strident in their approach. The French Foreign Minister was visibly disappointed that the FAC did not agree to launch an ultimatum. ¹²⁶ Following the meeting the EU called for the immediate lifting of the siege of Sarajevo and declared itself ready to use aerial force following consultations with NATO on 9 February.

NATO was typically more forthcoming than the EU and Juppé's approach paid dividends as the NAC issued the Bosnian Serbs with an ultimatum, giving them 10 days from 10 February to remove their heavy weapons to a distance of 20km from Sarajevo.¹²⁷ It also demanded an immediate ceasefire, which was almost immediately respected.

^{123 &}quot;Les serbes doutent de l'impartialité du rapport sur la tuerie de Sarajevo", AFP (6 February 1993).

¹²⁴ "Le massacre de Sarajevo relance le debat sur les frappes aériennes au sein des Douze", *AFP* (6 February 1993).

¹²⁵ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 257.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 259.

^{127 &}quot;OTAN Bosnie (Urgent)", AFP (9 February 1993).

Furthermore, the NAC communiqué positioned NATO behind the EU Action Plan. Significantly, for the first time, a peace plan had secured Euro-Atlantic support.

Accordingly, Mitterrand ordered the casting off of the French aircraft carrier Foch and asked Balladur to authorise the participation of French air forces based in Italy. ¹²⁸ In Washington, Bill Clinton declared that "NATO is ready to act" warning the Bosnian Serbs that "Nobody should doubt the determination of NATO." ¹²⁹ In Paris, Mitterrand telephoned Bill Clinton to congratulate the US President and the Quai "rejoiced at the strong and clear decision of NATO." ¹³⁰ A communiqué from the Quai declared itself pleased with the support demonstrated by the US and added that, "France and its European and American partners must redouble their efforts in connection with Russia to promote an early conclusion of a peace agreement on the basis of the European Union Action Plan." ¹³¹ In this statement, the Quai alluded to one key outstanding issue: the role of Russia.

Russia was extremely hostile towards the NATO threat of force in BiH and, having denied a previous request, moved its peacekeepers then stationed in Croatia to Serb-held areas of Sarajevo on 16 February. The Russians presented this *fait accompli* the following morning and hoped to convince the Bosnian Serbs to withdraw their heavy weapons. Both Britain and France welcomed the Russian initiative, although the Quai was quick to qualify its praise declaring that it was important that "this initiative be translated into action and that all the conditions put forward by the NATO ultimatum are satisfied." Indeed the French cabinet had renewed its determination to use force if necessary and Mitterrand believed that "if it is necessary to strike... we must do so massively. [s'il faut frapper... il faudra le faire massivement.]" Aware that the NATO

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¹²⁸ Védrine. Les mondes, 664.

¹²⁹ "M. Clinton: 'L'OTAN est prête à agir'", AFP (9 February 1993).

¹³⁰ "La France 'se rejouit' de la décision d'OTAN", AFP (9 February 1993).

¹³¹ Ibid

¹³² "La France se félicite de l'initiative russe", AFP (17 February 1993).

¹³³ Védrine. Les mondes, 664.

machine had whirred into life, with Clinton in favour of massive strikes, Yeltsin sent a circular letter to Western leaders warning against "unpredictable consequences" if air strikes materialised. ¹³⁴ Instead, the Russian President called for all air strikes to require the authorisation of the UN Secretary General, whilst expressing his desire for Russia to become a "partner" of the West in conflict management and added that, "our partnership is being put to the test in Sarajevo." ¹³⁵ Yeltsin promised his Western 'partners' that he had put new pressure on Milošević and the Bosnian Serbs.

The outcome of this Russian diplomatic initiative was far from evident in the Élysée on the evening of 20 February with the ultimatum due to expire at midnight. Hubert Védrine reflected that, "the Élysée briefly regained the atmosphere of the Gulf War." With maps laid out, Mitterrand called General Jean Cot, the head of UNPROFOR in Yugoslavia, to clarify the situation on the ground: the withdrawal was progressing on schedule. Consequently the President spoke to Clinton in Washington who confirmed that air strikes would not be necessary. The Russian initiative had succeeded and all artillery had been withdrawn from around Sarajevo. Mitterrand wrote to Yeltsin to express his feeling that France "greatly appreciates the new efforts that you have undertaken with M. Milošević and with the Bosnian Serbs... that demonstrate that the Russian diplomacy had been heard."

Mitterrand also publicly acknowledged the Russian effort in a special broadcast to the French public, declaring that "the retreat of the heavy arms has been obtained thanks to the determination of the allies [les alliés] and the moderating intervention of Russia with the Serbs." Notwithstanding, Mitterrand reaffirmed France's significant

¹³⁴ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 597.

¹³⁵ Ibid

¹³⁶ Védrine. Les Mondes, 664.

¹³⁷ MAE, Bosnie-Herzégovine - Intervention du Président de la République: M. François Mitterrand, 21 February 1994. Accessed on 21 July 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

¹³⁸ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 597-8.

¹³⁹ MAE, Intervention du Président de la République: M. François Mitterrand, 21 February 1994. Accessed on 21 July 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

contribution: "I must stress the role of France who, since the start, is at the origin of all initiatives aimed at solving the conflict and who is it that has provided the UN with the largest contingent of peacekeepers?" Yet, the President was not ready to rest on his laurels, and he envisaged using this new allied consensus to lift the sieges on other towns in Bosnia. Therefore France proposed, through the UNSC, to place Sarajevo under the control of the UN and to re-establish vital services there, with the same strategy for the other 'safe zones'. However, both the US and Russia expressed doubts about the latest French initiative, particularly since the US was working towards its own diplomatic initiative.

Making Contact

Almost immediately, a greater US involvement brought about a significant change in the configuration of the parties in BiH. The UN Special Envoy, Charles Redman, and the US Ambassador to Croatia, Peter Galbraith, negotiated an agreement to create a Croat-Muslim Federation. In the Élysée Mitterrand had underestimated the potential of such an agreement and thought that "it would never work" believing that the grievances between the Croats and Muslims were too deep for them to successfully collaborate. The President reflected that: "this will be another agreement, similar to those that we've grown used to over the past two years." Alain Juppé shared the President's scepticism and thought that it presented a "mortal danger" for the Croats. However, the agreement solved many issues that had been intractable during negotiations: the Bosnian government's access to the sea; access to weapons for the government forces; and a united

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¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² "La France a transmis à ses partenaires un nouveau projet de résolution sur la Bosnie", *AFP* (23 February 1994)

¹⁴³ Védrine. Les Mondes, 665.

¹⁴⁴ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 600.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

front to fight against the Bosnian Serbs. ¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, Bonn, Zagreb's closest European ally, supported the agreement and offered economic incentives to Croatia to sign. Nonetheless, Alain Juppé warned that it was essential "to reintroduce a coherency to what appears today to be a sort of diplomatic proliferation." ¹⁴⁷

With the Croat-Muslim accord reached on 2 March, to be signed on 18 March, the French Ambassador to the US relayed to Paris that Washington believed the accord could lead to Bosnian Serb resurgence. This was particularly evident in the Bosniak enclaves that had previously been designated as UN 'safe zones', specifically because, with the Croat-Muslim accord, they prohibited a contiguous Serb land mass. Bihać, where the largest contingent of French peacekeepers was based, was particularly vulnerable in this respect and, on 11 March, a French peacekeeper was killed after three days of bombardment. French officers in the Bihać pocket requested air support via Yasushi Akashi, the Secretary General's special representative in Bosnia. However, the long-winded process gave the perceived Bosnian Serb culprits time to retreat before authorisation could be given. France had been greatly in favour of such a long-winded authorisation mechanism when it curbed NATO's enthusiasm.

Immediately, Édouard Balladur strongly criticised the long delay and administrative process to order the use of force to protect the peacekeepers. Having traversed the frontlines to reach the town of Bihać to make an unscheduled visit to French peacekeepers stationed there, the Prime Minister bemoaned that "Again, it has taken more than an hour before the administrative procedures have reached their conclusion... And when they did, the tank had disappeared." Having spoken to the officers in Bihać,

¹⁴⁶ Gow. Lack of Will, 262-3.

¹⁴⁷ "Alain Juppé appelle à une concertation entre Russes, Américains et Européens", AFP (2 March 1994).

^{148 &}quot;France Bosnie ONU (Urgent)", AFP (11 March 1994).

¹⁴⁹ Favier and Martin-Roland, La Décennie, 600-601.

¹⁵⁰ A preliminary UNPROFOR report revealed that the fire appeared to have originated from a Bosniak-held position. "Le soldat français tué à Bihać vraisemblablement victime d'un tir musulman, selon la FORPRONU", *AFP* (17 March 1994).

¹⁵¹ "Le Premier ministre français critique la lenteur du processus de riposte", AFP (13 March 1994).

Balladur revealed that he was "Extremely shocked by the casualness and incompetence of M. Akashi" and wrote to Boutros-Ghali demanding a streamlined procedure for the use of force to protect UNPROFOR troops. ¹⁵² Balladur revealed that, alongside Juppé and Léotard, France would examine ways to quicken the decision-making process. ¹⁵³ Juppé thought that the UN lacked the required resolve to use force in Bosnia and added that, "We must move more quickly and more determinedly." Although the UN rejected the criticisms, a spokesman for Boutros-Ghali indicated that the UN would, nonetheless, examine its procedures. ¹⁵⁵ The UN Secretary General was, however, unwilling to pass the authorisation for the use of force to a military leader and rather it remained under civilian control. ¹⁵⁶

Resultantly, the Bosnian Serb leadership, particularly Ratko Mladić, was becoming increasingly belligerent towards the international community, UNPROFOR and NATO. Mladić accused the French peacekeepers in Bihać of having "installed observation posts in front of the Muslims' positions along the line of confrontation with Serb units, so the Muslims use their strong position to open fire." The next Bosnian Serb challenge to UNPROFOR came in the eastern enclave of Goražde, which provided the international community with a galvanising event akin to that experienced following the Markale incident in February.

In the first week of April the Bosnian Serb forces, under the command of Mladić, launched a renewed offensive against Goražde. The UNPROFOR forces in the eastern pocket were under the command of the British General Michael Rose. Initially Rose was reluctant to use force, but when it became evident that Mladić intended to conquer the

152 Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 601.

¹⁵³ "Le Premier ministre français critique la lenteur du processus de riposte", *AFP* (13 March 1994).

¹⁵⁴ "M. Juppé: l'ONU en Bosnie manque de 'détermination' pour user de la force", AFP (14 March 1994).

¹⁵⁵ "Force aérienne: L'ONU rejette les critiques françaises, mais annonce un réexamen des procédures", *AFP* (14 March 1994).

¹⁵⁶ "Le soldat français tué à Bihać vraisemblablement victime d'un tir musulman, selon la FORPRONU", *AFP* (17 March 1994).

^{157 &}quot;Le general Mladić accuse les Casques Bleus français à Bihać", AFP (13 March 1994).

town, the British General called for air support at 18h55 on 10 April, having given significant warning to Mladić. ¹⁵⁸ This was the first air attack ever launched by NATO. The Quai confirmed its support for the measure and added that "France is ready to fulfil all its responsibilities." ¹⁵⁹

This did little to dissuade Mladić, as shelling resumed the following morning. Once more, Rose called on air support, which only further antagonised Mladić. The Bosnian Serbs broke off contact with UNPROFOR as David Owen spoke with the Bosnian Serb leaders Nikola Koljević and Momčilo Krajišnik in Paris. Krajišnik made it quite clear to Owen that the Bosnian Serbs would not stop their assault on Goražde until they had captured the town. ¹⁶⁰ As David Owen tried to leave Paris to fly to Zagreb, he encountered a large student demonstration outside the National Assembly that was demanding firmer action to protect Goražde. ¹⁶¹ International indignation was rising over the Bosnian Serbs' latest wave of attacks.

An escalation by the international community, however, would be unlikely, particularly given the deterioration in relations between Russia and its 'partners'. The Russian Foreign Minister warned that "It is a grave danger and a grave error to take such decisions without prior consultations with Russia." Yeltsin repeated this message during a meeting of the UNSC on 11 April 1994. In a manoeuvre reminiscent of the Russian intervention in February, Yeltsin declared that Russian mediation would be indispensable in bringing peace to BiH, particularly since the Bosnian Serbs had broken off communications with UNPROFOR. Moreover, Mladić had effectively taken hostage of

¹⁵⁸ Chronology of events in Goražde, 16 April 1994, BODA, 3/4/45.

¹⁵⁹ "La France soutient toute demande d'appui militaire y compris aérien de l'ONU pour Gorazde", *AFP* (10 April 1994).

¹⁶⁰ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 273.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 273.

¹⁶² "Russie Bosnie Goražde (Urgent)", AFP (11 April 1994)

UNPROFOR personnel stationed in Sarajevo by closing off access routes to the city. ¹⁶³ In Serb-held territory some 150 UNPROFOR personnel had been fully taken hostage. ¹⁶⁴

As the Bosnian Serb assault on Goražde resumed with new ferocity on 15 April, the ICFY Co-Chairmen were considering how best to solve the present crisis and settled on a solution that would incorporate the US and Russia, alongside France, Britain and Germany: a 'Contact Group'. With the US reluctant to work within the framework of the ICFY, a new administrative and coordination mechanism would need to be created. France enthusiastically supported the proposal and emphatically told Owen to act on his proposal, which would establish the Contact Group. ¹⁶⁵

As the situation deteriorated in Goražde, Akashi rejected calls for air strikes in exchange for Bosnian Serb promises to stop the shelling, withdraw to 3km from the town, and release UNPROFOR personnel. Nonetheless, the Bosnian Serb assault on Goražde resumed on 16 April, which resulted in the evacuation of personnel from the international community, including UNPROFOR, and Bosnian Serb forces occupied one half of the town. Izetbegović wrote to Mitterrand on 17 April 1994 regarding the situation in Goražde. To draw the French President's attention to the plight of the population of Goražde, Izetbegović remarked that "the Serbian aggressor, among other things, has launched a missile against an aircraft belonging to Armed Forces of France." ¹⁶⁶ Izetbegović thus highlighted that Mitterrand could infer "how this ruthless and well-armed force is used against 70,000 Bosniaks, mainly women and children, in Goražde." That same day Izetbegović wrote to Boutros-Ghali and told the Secretary General in no uncertain terms

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¹⁶³ "En réaction aux raids aériens de l'OTAN; Les Serbes de Bosnie recourent à l'intimidation contre les 'casques bleus'", *Le Monde* (14 April 1994).

¹⁶⁴ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 365.

¹⁶⁵ Owen. Balkan Odvssev, 277.

¹⁶⁶ Letter from Izetbegovic to Mitterrand, 17 April 1994, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/203.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

that "my people hold you responsible for this situation" and demanded his resignation should Goražde fall. 168

The following day, Mitterrand wrote to Boris Yeltsin, Andréas Papandréou and Boutros-Ghali, as well as speaking to Bill Clinton and Helmut Kohl. The French President sought to encourage the heads of state to create a new conference based on the principles of the EU Action Plan. ¹⁶⁹ Once again, discord had emerged amongst the parties that had tentatively called themselves 'partners' in February. Therefore, in support of the President's personal intervention, Juppé publicly advocated the creation of "a common position to jointly exercise pressure that can relaunch the diplomatic process." ¹⁷⁰ Similarly, at a meeting of the FAC, Juppé urged the EU to forge a common position with the US, Russia and the UN. Formally bringing Russia into the negotiations would provide a useful counterweight to US domination of the peace process. At the meeting, the EU called on the UNSC to vote on a resolution demanding a ceasefire in Goražde and the withdrawal of Bosnian Serb forces from the town. ¹⁷¹ However, the Bosnian Serb forces were becoming increasingly confident in their manoeuvres and continued to highlight the futility of the diplomatic process at this point.

On 19 April, Bosnian Serbs stormed the Lukavica barracks in Sarajevo and, from under the noses of the French peacekeepers, appropriated 18 anti-aircraft canons.¹⁷² These brash Bosnian Serb moves embarrassed the international community, particularly Russia who had hoped to once more play a mediating and conciliatory role. Boutros-Ghali wrote to the NATO Secretary General to authorise offensive air strikes to defend all six 'safe zones'.¹⁷³ However, with British personnel in Goražde, the British remained reluctant to authorise the use of air force, which created significant internal tensions with the US in

¹⁶⁸ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 369.

¹⁶⁹ Védrine. Les mondes, 666.

¹⁷⁰ "Alain Juppé propose la constitution d'un groupe d'études", AFP (18 April 1994).

¹⁷¹ "L'Union européenne demande le vote d'une résolution de l'ONU sur Gorazde", AFP (18 April 1994).

¹⁷² Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 602; Silber and Little. Death of Yugoslavia, 369.

¹⁷³ "Lettre de M. Boutros-Ghali à M. Woerner sur la question des frappes aériennes", AFP (18 April 1994).

NATO.¹⁷⁴ Rather, NATO and the UN called for the lifting of the siege of Goražde and issued an ultimatum to the Bosnian Serbs unless they fulfilled three conditions: an immediate ceasefire; the retreat of Bosnian Serb forces to 3km from Goražde by 23 April; and the withdrawal of heavy weaponry to a distance of 20km by 26 April. ¹⁷⁵ Initially, Yasushi Akashi announced that the withdrawal process was moving in the right direction. 176

The Quai viewed the ultimatum with "great prudence", with a spokesman indicating that "we must wait to see if what has been announced translates into facts." 177 Indeed, prudence was the best policy as it quickly became evident that the Bosnian Serbs had continued attacks against Goražde and Sarajevo with NATO requesting authorisation from Akashi to use air force. 178 However, the UN Special Representative denied the request as he was in negotiations in Belgrade trying to secure a much-needed diplomatic victory for himself. He did achieve a victory, albeit a minor one, and secured an agreement from Karadžić to cease hostilities around Goražde and to allow the dispatch of UNPROFOR peacekeepers to Goražde. 179 A Ukrainian deployment set out, shortly to be followed by a British and French contingent. However, the French contingent received orders from the French Defence Ministry shortly before they were due to depart for Goražde that they should return to their barracks. 180

Despite initial difficulties, the withdrawal process progressed on schedule as Alain Juppé, Warren Christopher and Douglas Hurd met in London to discuss the convocation of

¹⁷⁴ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 369.

^{175 &}quot;OTAN Bosnie Goražde (Urgent)", AFP (22 April 1994).

¹⁷⁶ Montois, Jean. "Acceptation des conditions de l'OTAN par les Serbes: réaction prudente de la France", AFP (22 April 1994).

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ "M. Silajdzic accuse M. Akashi de bloquer l'action de l'OTAN", AFP (23 April 1993).

¹⁷⁹ "M. Akashi: un premier contingent de casques bleus devrait être déployé a Gorazde dans l'après-midi", AFP (23 April 1994).

¹⁸⁰ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 371.

the Contact Group.¹⁸¹ France, particularly since *cohabitation*, had been working towards such an initiative that brought US and Russian power to bear in the negotiation process. The Contact Group would meet frequently at the levels of Political Directors and Ambassadors. Its first meeting coincided with the conclusion of the NATO ultimatum, which, as it had in the case of Sarajevo, passed without recourse to force.¹⁸² Immediately, the Group visited Sarajevo to "explain their aims and emphasize the new international solidarity in the search for a solution".¹⁸³

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¹⁸¹ "Rencontre entre MM. Juppé, Christopher et Hurd sur la Bosnie lundi à Londres", *Agence France Press* (24 April 1994).

¹⁸² "Les frappes aériennes ne sont pas nécessaires pour le moment à Gorazde, selon l'OTAN", *AFP* (27 April 1994).

¹⁸³ Lord Owen's account of the Contact Group negotiations, 14 May 1994, BODA, 3/4/46.

Chapter Seven – France and the Conclusion of the Bosnian War, May 1994 - December 1995.

The Contact Group Plan

Following the Bosnian Serb withdrawal from the environs of Goražde, the frontlines reached a relative level of stability and fighting on the ground eased. This provided the international community with an opportunity to attempt to develop a coherent policy for BiH. The Contact Group constructed its own map for BiH, which envisaged a 51-49 & split of the country, with the larger half for the Croat-Muslim federation (see map 10). The plan roughly divided the territory along the lines that had previously been agreed during the HMS *Invincible* negotiations but without such contention between the Bosnian government and the Bosnian Croats.

The Contact Group had moved to quickly construct a plan and agreed that the initial stages needed to be completed within 10-14 days with the first ministerial meeting scheduled for 13 May 1994. Initial meetings with Izetbegović and Karadžić innovated little, whilst Karadžić rejected the 51-49 split entirely out of hand.¹

Although there was a general consensus amongst the Contact Group on its plan, the embargos and sanctions remained contentious issues. The US continued to push for lifting the arms embargo, with its Senate voting to raise the embargo unilaterally on 12 May.² Moreover, Juppé indicated that, if the Contact Group Plan were to fail, France would be willing to consider lifting the arms embargo, describing the pressure from the US as "very strong".³ Ahead of a meeting of the Contact Group ministers in Geneva on 13 May, Juppé indicated that he had found in Washington "a willingness to create a close cooperation with

¹ Lord Owen's account of the Contact Group negotiations, 14 May 1994, BODA, 3/4/46.

² "Bosnie: Bill Clinton 'comprend le sentiment du Senat', selon la Maison Blanche", AFP (12 May 1994).

³ "Alain Juppé et l'embargo sur les armes en Bosnie", Les Echos (3 May 1994).

France".⁴ France also circulated a non-paper ahead of the Ministerial meeting, which sought to revive a global solution for Yugoslavia and the reestablishment of a constitutional framework based on a union of two republics.⁵ It also suggested that certain areas should have a designated special status and that the Bosnian Serbs should have access to the sea.

At the 13 May meeting, the Ministers agreed a timetable and to call the parties to a meeting on 24 May. Discussions would focus on a map and the establishment of "a light constitutional framework", whilst a parallel series of talks would attempt to bring an end to hostilities.⁶ In a second round of talks, envisaged one week on from the first, the parties could air their views so that they could be integrated into the plan, with a final ministerial meeting envisaged for 7 June. This plan would then be presented to the parties "on a take it or leave it basis" in mid-June.⁷ Party to the negotiations, David Owen reflected that, "There was a general feeling at the meeting, especially among those longest engaged in the negotiations that enough was enough and the time had come to make a final effort."

The parties convened with the Contact Group in a resort in Talloires, France, overlooking the Lac d'Annecy, close to Geneva. As the negotiations got underway the UNSC President released a statement calling on "the parties to resume, without preconditions, serious efforts to reach a political settlement." As the parties worked towards a settlement in the French lakeside resort, the Contact Group sent them a letter on 1 June drafted by Juppé and Kinkel urging them to accept the peace plan. However, Izetbegović remained reluctant to see a peace plan imposed on BiH, particularly sensing

⁴ "Alain Juppé fait état d'une large convergence de vues entre Paris et Washington", AFP (12 May 1994).

⁵ Lord Owen's account of the Contact Group negotiations, 14 May 1994, BODA, 3/4/46.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Statement reaffirming the need for an overall settlement in Bosnia-Hercegovina, 25 May 1994, BODA, 4/3/54

¹⁰ Védrine. Les mondes, 669.

that the tide of war could turn in his favour, much to Mitterrand's consternation. The French President told Izetbegović: "If you want war to continue, well, block the negotiations!" With the Bosnian Serbs continuing to break the agreements for the exclusion zone around Goražde, the Bosnian government refused to participate in the negotiations. 12

On 4 June, Owen wrote to Douglas Hurd, Alain Juppé and Klaus Kinkel urging the three Foreign Ministers to apply pressure to secure a strong backing from the State Department who were working from the basis that "we basically offer a solution, but it is up to them [the parties] to decide whether to accept." Owen indicated that there needed to be incentives to sign: for the Federation, if the Bosnian Serbs failed to sign, the arms embargo could be lifted, with tactical support from NATO air assets; for the Bosnian Serbs, if the Federation refused, they would see sanctions suspended and were reassured that the embargo would not be lifted. However, given the Clinton administration's unwillingness to see sanctions lifted against the Bosnian Serbs and unpreparedness to impose a settlement, Owen feared the US would require significant convincing. To this end, Mitterrand told Clinton, whilst the US President visited Paris in early June, that "we must impose peace."

Although the Contact Group were closer in coordinating their policies than at any time previous, lifting the arms embargo still remained a contentious issue. During a visit to Paris, Haris Silajdžić – now the Bosnian Prime Minister – questioned Mitterrand and Juppé on the implementation of the Contact Group Plan. Mitterrand remained opposed to the use of force whilst Juppé declared that, if the peace process failed, France would consider "the

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² "Double échec pour l'ONU et les grandes puissances dans leur efforts de paix", AFP (5 June 1994).

¹³ Letter to Klaus Kinkel, German Foreign Minister, regarding convincing the US for the Contact Group peace proposals, 4 June 1994, BODA, 3/1/70.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Védrine. Les mondes, 669.

retreat of its troops on the ground and lifting the arms embargo." ¹⁶ Although the US was in favour of lifting the arms embargo, it did not want to bear the full responsibility of the potential humanitarian catastrophe if the Contact Group followed a 'leave, lift and strike' policy. ¹⁷

However, by early July the Contact Group Ambassadors had created a coherent plan, which was discussed by the Foreign Ministers in Geneva on 5 July ahead of a meeting with the three parties the following day. The Contact Group had attempted to 'divide and rule' the parties during negotiations in late June, with the US focussed on securing the Bosnian government's agreement to the map and Russia on the Bosnian Serbs. The Ministers also agreed the incentives and disincentives, demonstrating a coherent and consistent approach. They presented the Contact Group Plan to the parties on 6 July with each side raising some objections to the envisaged map but not rejecting the plan outright.¹⁸

Alain Juppé and Douglas Hurd thus undertook a diplomatic mission to Pale, Sarajevo and Belgrade on 11 July in support of the Contact Group Plan. During the trip the Foreign Ministers met with resistance in Sarajevo and, in particular, Pale, which led Hurd to declare for the first time that Britain would consider raising the arms embargo. However, in Belgrade, Milošević was keen to impress that he had done all he could to force the hand of the Bosnian Serbs and continued to hope that sanctions against Yugoslavia would be lifted regardless of the outcome. Upon his return to Paris, Juppé

¹⁶ "En visite à Paris: Le premier ministre bosniaque estime qu'un compromis est possible sur le découpage du pays", *Le Monde* (6 June 1994).

¹⁷ Owen. Balkan Odyssev, 284.

¹⁸ "Les belligérants mécontents du plan de paix, mais reservent leur réponse", AFP (6 July 1994).

¹⁹ "Voyage de MM. Hurd et Juppé en Bosnie: un tournant dans la position de Londres", AFP (11 July 1994);

[&]quot;La visite de MM. Hurd et Juppé en ex-Yougoslavie: Les Serbes de Bosnie restent hostiles au plan de paix international", *AFP* (15 July 1994).

²⁰ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 604.

revealed to Mitterrand and Balladur that, if the peace plan failed, he would move towards lifting the arms embargo and the withdrawal of French from BiH.²¹

On 12 July 1994, Mitterrand therefore wrote to Milošević in support of the Contact Group Plan. The President highlighted that both the US and Russia supported the plan and that "This unity of views between the principal powers, including Russia, gives a new decisive importance to this new plan." The French President believed that the plan could only be successful if Milošević attempted to bring Serbia out of international isolation and stressed that "It is of the utmost necessity that you use your influence to ensure that the Bosnian Serb officials accept the proposed map within the given time." Mitterrand knew that:

"Without doubt, many questions will still remain to negotiate or to clarify... However I can assure you that only a restoration of trust between the Serbian people and international community, following the acceptance of the plan and its application on the ground, would allow these questions to be settled in a satisfying manner for the interested parties. France, you can be certain, will spare no effort in this sense." ²⁴

If, however, the plan were rejected or the Bosnian Serbs requested an alteration Mitterrand felt that he must "express [his] conviction that France would no longer oppose the adoption of measures that could trigger a dangerous process of escalation for all and, above all, for the peoples of the region."²⁵ In concluding, Mitterrand referred to *l'amitié Franco-Serbe* to impress his willingness to support Milošević. The French President reflected that, "The Serbian people, who have a long tradition of friendship with the French people, today finds itself before an historic choice in favour of peace that it must have the

²¹ Ibid.

²² Letter from Mitterrand to Milošević, Paris, 12 July 1994, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/362.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

courage to accomplish. France, through my voice, and in the name of our shared history, warmly encourages you in this."²⁶

On 18 July, the EU Foreign Ministers issued a statement urging the parties to agree to the Contact Group Plan, stating: "We are convinced that the peace plan that was handed over to the parties concerned on 6 July offers the only viable basis to find a peaceful solution... It should be accepted without conditions in the interests of the people suffering in the former Yugoslavia." The Croat-Muslim Federation threw its support behind the plan and Izetbegović appeared on television to announce the policy adding, "We can gradually come to end this injustice and ultimately reunite Bosnia-Hercegovina if we manage to develop our part of the country as a democracy." Meanwhile in Pale, the Bosnian Serb Assembly reached a decision, which Karadžić would deliver to Geneva on 20 July. Alain Juppé made a "final appeal" to the Bosnian Serb leaders hoping that "Pale does not choose war, because it is on the horizon if the answer is no." In Geneva, it transpired that the Bosnian Serbs had essentially rejected the plan.

Two days later, David Owen sent a COREU to the EU Foreign Ministers highlighting that "the authority of the EU itself is on the line". ³⁰ Owen believed that "The key as always is Milošević" and urged the EU Ministers to threaten the Serbian President with further sanctions unless he acted against the Bosnian Serbs. ³¹ Moreover, Owen advocated for 'leave, lift and strike' before winter, highlighting an inconvenient truth: "If the Croat and the Muslim forces are not sufficiently strong with outside air power, then the world will have to live with a Serb imposed solution."³²

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²⁷ "Nouvel appel des Douze aux belligérants pour qu'ils acceptent le plan de paix", *AFP* (18 July 1994).

²⁸ "Les dirigeants bosniagues se prononcent de nouveau en faveur du plan de paix", AFP (18 July 1994).

²⁹ "Alain Juppé lance un 'ultime appel' aux Serbes de Bosnie pour éviter la guerre", AFP (19 July 1994).

³⁰ Message from Lord Owen to the EU Foreign Ministers regarding the challenge to the CFSP, 22 July 1994, BODA, 3/1/74.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

On 25 July, as the Contact Group reconvened in Moscow, Boutros-Ghali indicated that, if the peace plan were entirely rejected, he would call for the total disengagement of UNPROFOR across the former Yugoslavia.³³ However, if the plan were accepted the UN Secretary General indicated that a Contact Group force would have to undertake its implementation.³⁴ France, attached to the role of UNPROFOR, was unconvinced by the Secretary General's strategy.³⁵

Russia sent a delegation to Pale on 27 July in an effort to convince the Bosnian Serb Assembly to reconsider their decision on the Contact Group Plan. The Russian intervention was to no avail though as the Assembly upheld its previous decision. ³⁶ Indeed, the Bosnian Serbs were once more demonstrating their hostility to the international community as they closed the 'blue road' that allowed civilians access to and from Sarajevo. Izetbegović wrote to Mitterrand to inform him that this had come as a result of orders from Karadžić. "The strangulation of Sarajevo," Izetbegović noted, "had begun again." The Bosnian President had therefore written to the President of UNSC to call an urgent meeting of the UNSC to bring measures against the Serbs. Izetbegović asked for Mitterrand's support in this. ³⁸

The Contact Group ministers met the following day and work quickly began on implementing new sanctions, which would be brought before the UNSC with the utmost haste.³⁹ The Contact Group issued a communiqué that welcomed the Federation's acceptance of the Contact's Group proposal and "emphasised that acceptance of the Contact Group's proposal is the essential first step for achieving an equitable and balanced

³³ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 605.

³⁴ "L'ONU souhaite confier à une force du Groupe de contact la mise en oeuvre du plan de paix en Bosnie", *AFP* (25 July 1994).

³⁵ "Le gouvernement trés reservé sur la proposition de M. Boutros-Ghali", *AFP* (26 July 1994).

³⁶ "Bosnie paix Serbes (Urgent)", AFP (28 July 1994).

³⁷ Letter from Izetbegović to Mitterrand, 27 July 1994, AN, AG/5(4)/CD/203.

³⁸ Ibid

³⁹ "Bosnie: les grandes puissances mettent la dernière main aux sanctions", *AFP* (29 July 1994).

overall settlement".⁴⁰ However, the Bosnian Serb war project – namely to create an ethnically homogeneous and sovereign Republika Srpska – could not be accommodated through the Contact Group Plan, and thus attaching peace to "acceptance" would prove to be a significant error.

Significantly Slobodan Milošević publicly declared himself in favour of the Contact Group Plan and stated that the Bosnian Serbs "must accept the international community's proposal". Therefore, Bosnian Serb politician Momčilo Krajišnik announced that Pale would organise a referendum in Republika Srpska on the Contact Group Plan. Furthermore, Karadžić announced that he wanted to revisit negotiations with the Contact Group immediately, although Paris immediately shot down the Bosnian Serb leader stating that his declarations "contain no new elements of a nature that responds to the requests of the Contact Group". On 3 August the Bosnian Serb Assembly rejected the Contact Group Plan for a third time whilst calling Krajišnik's proposed referendum for three weeks later.

Milošević was enraged by the Bosnian Serbs' obstinacy and disobedience and, having been influenced by Contact Group Foreign Ministers, declared a blockade between FRY and RS. A statement on 4 August from Belgrade read that the Federal Government decided: "To sever political and economic relations with the Republic of Srpska; To ban the stay of the members of the leadership of the Republic of Srpska (Assembly, Presidency, Government) in the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; As of

⁴⁰ "No. I.1-17: Communiqué on Bosnia issued by the Troika of the European Union and the Foreign Ministers of the Russian Federation, UK and USA, 30 July 1994" in *Former Yugoslavia Through Documents: From its dissolution to the peace settlement*, ed. Snežana Trifunovska (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1999), 127-8.

⁴¹ "Le président Milošević dit 'oui' au plan de paix", AFP (31 July 1994).

⁴² "M. Krajisnik évoque l'organisation d'un referendum sur le plan de paix", AFP (31 July 1994).

⁴³ "M. Karadzic n'annonce 'aucun element nouveau', selon Paris", AFP (1 August 1994).

⁴⁴ Silber and Little. *Death of Yugoslavia*, 380.

today, to close the border of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with the Republic of Srpska for all transports except food, clothing and medicine."⁴⁵

Belgrade's move did little to influence the Bosnian Serb population's vote on 27 August: the Plan was overwhelmingly rejected by over 90% of voters. 46 Furthermore, Karadžić indicated that he would "never accept" the Plan, adding that "We are going to take peacekeepers hostage, bring down planes and imprison all foreigners who are on our territory. We will do everything that is favourable for our people, without any restraint. 47 Indeed, the Bosnian Serb campaign in the north-east of BiH intensified as Karadžić and Mladić set about fulfilling their war aims. 48 Therefore the Clinton administration began to consider raising the arms embargo and Paris began to study withdrawal strategies for that eventuality. Indeed, Paris informed Washington that they would support raising the arms embargo so long as UNPROFOR had been evacuated. 49 However, Juppé advocated continuing negotiations, telling Warren Christopher that: "We must not count on lifting the arms embargo to resolve the problem, we must try to find a political fall back in common with the Russians before we resign ourselves to an acknowledgement of failure." Juppé advocated maintaining diplomatic activity and encouraged the isolation of the Bosnian Serbs.

The US began more direct diplomatic interventions with the Bosnian and Croatian governments with newly appointed US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke travelling to Zagreb and Sarajevo at the end of August.⁵¹ However, Russia was voicing its concerns that, in spite of Milošević's support for the Contact Group Plan, sanctions had not

⁴⁵ "No. I.1-18: Statement of the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia concerning the severance of relations with Republika Srpska, Belgrade, 4 August 1994" in *Former Yugoslavia Through Documents: From its dissolution to the peace settlement*, ed. Trifunovska. 128-9.

⁴⁶ "Référendum serbe bosniaque: Le 'non' atteindrait plus de 90%", AFP (29 August 1994).

⁴⁷ "M. Karadzic réaffirme qu'il 'n'acceptera jamais' le plan de paix international", AFP (27 August 1994).

⁴⁸ "Accélération de la purification ethnique serbe dans le nord-est de la Bosnie", AFP (2 September 1994).

⁴⁹ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 605.

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ "Richard Holbrooke à Sarajevo et Zagreb à la fin de la semaine", AFP (29 August 1994).

been raised against Belgrade.⁵² Cracks and fissures were appearing in the façade of the Contact Group as the EU Foreign Ministers met in Usedom, Germany, on 11 September 1994. At the meeting Juppé proposed gentle encouragement of Milošević but without giving him "exaggerated credit".⁵³ The French Foreign Minister also proposed that, much as the US had with the Muslim-Croat Federation, the Bosnian Serbs should be allowed a confederal link with Serbia. Juppé also bemoaned the lack of tougher enforcement of the exclusion zones and lambasted the notion of raising the arms embargo, declaring it to be "absurd".⁵⁴ As he had previously told Washington, Paris would only consider raising the arms embargo if UNPROFOR were withdrawn first. Douglas Hurd importantly noted that, if the embargo remained in place, it would be important for troop contributors to remain on the ground in BiH.⁵⁵ Juppé confided in his British counterpart that, "It will be a matter of avoiding a renewal of the debate on lifting the arms embargo."⁵⁶

The Clinton administration acquiesced on raising sanctions against Belgrade, provided that the UN inspectors stationed along the borders confirmed the blockade was being respected.⁵⁷ Moreover, Clinton offered \$30 million of aid to the Bosnian government if Izetbegović renounced his demand to lift the arms embargo.⁵⁸ The Clinton administration was greatly concerned about the period between UNPROFOR withdrawal and the delivery of arms to Federation forces, which would have led to an intensification of fighting and thus to greater calls for intervention in the States. Izetbegović accepted the demand but chastised Juppé for France's role in this policy and accused France of being on the side of "those responsible for 'ethnic cleansing'."⁵⁹ The Bosnian President's strong

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⁵² "Bosnie: risques de scission dans le Groupe de contact", *Sud Ouest* (3 September 1994).

⁵³ Account of the lunchtime discussions on Bosnia during informal EU Foreign Ministers meeting in Usedom, 11 September 1994, BODA, 3/4/49.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 606.

⁵⁷ "Yougoslavie Bosnie USA (Urgent)", AFP (26 September 1994).

⁵⁸ Ibid

⁵⁹ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 606.

admonishment of France had a deeper significance as Franco-Bosnian relations had soured over the pocket of Bihać in the west of BiH.

Paris-Bihać-Washington

The town of Bihać occupied a perilous position during the conflicts in BiH. In the north-western corner of BiH in the Cazinka Krajina region, the 'Bihać Pocket' was flanked on the west by the Serb-held Krajina territory in Croatia, and to the east by Serb-held territory in Western BiH. Consequently, from the start of the conflict, the Bihać pocket had been a hotly contested area between all three parties with the Bosniaks and Croats forming a tenuous alliance against the Bosnian and Krajina Serbs. The town was established as one of the UN 'safe zones' in May 1993. Completely isolated from the Bosnian government, the region's leading business man and counter-current member of the SDA, Fikret Abdić, led a rebellion against the Sarajevo regime. Having convinced elements within the ARBiH 5th Corps to support his mutiny, Abdić established a short-lived but not insignificant fiefdom in Bihać.

The creation of the Muslim-Croat Federation and a concertation of their two military forces led to a renewed offensive against the Abdić rebellion, which was eventually quashed in August 1994. Almost immediately, Serb forces sought to capitalise and attacked the Bihać pocket. Led by Mladić himself, the attack was repulsed and the ARBiH counter-attacked to a great effect. Rumours even circulated amongst Bosnian Serb sources that Mladić had been wounded or even killed, which the Bosnian Serb military moved quickly to quell. General Sir Michael Rose had once again threatened the

⁶⁰ See "Chapter One: Bihać Pocket", in O' Shea, Brendan. *Crisis at Bihać: Bosnia's Bloody Battlefield* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1998), 1-14.

⁶¹ Hoare, Marko Attila. "The Bosnian War's Forgotten Turning Point: The Bihać Crisis of Autumn 1994", *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* 24 (2011), 94.

⁶² "Des sources serbes démentent que le general Mladic ait été blessé", AFP (20 September 1994).

Bosnian Serbs with NATO air strikes, as he had in Goražde, but the Bosniak repulsion of the attack nullified that threat.⁶³ However, he did authorise the use of air force against a Bosnian Serb tank on the outskirts of Sarajevo. Mladić threatened reprisals against UNPROFOR members with French peacekeepers perilously positioned in Bihać.

As previously mentioned, the largest contingent of French peacekeepers was located in the Bihać pocket, and the head of UNPROFOR, the French General Bernard de La Presle, was studying a potential retreat strategy in coordination with NATO for peacekeepers in Bihać in response to the fighting in September.⁶⁴ Throughout October, the ARBiH forces began to make significant gains at the expense of the Bosnian Serbs in the north and south east of BiH.⁶⁵ With an ARBiH offensive likely in Bihać, and with Balladur eyeing a presidential campaign the following May, France decided to retire its near 1,300 men from the Bihać pocket at the end of October; a costly ground war was not something the Neo-Gaullist government could become embroiled in.⁶⁶ However, before the French peacekeepers could leave, the ARBiH launched a massive offensive to break its encirclement. The ARBiH forces broke through in the south and south east, capturing more than 200km² by the end of October.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, the French contingent was replaced by a Bangladeshi battalion, equipped with only 300 rifles.⁶⁸

As the Federation began to make headway on the ground, Clinton once more came under pressure from Congress to raise the arms embargo, with the US submitting a draft resolution to the UNSC for the embargo to be lifted in favour of the Federation in six

⁶³ "Le général Rose menace les Serbes bosniaques de frappes aériennes de l'un des envoyes speciaux de l'AFP", *AFP* (10 September 1994).

⁶⁴ "L'OTAN pourrait contribuer à terre à un eventuel retrait des Casques bleus de Bosnie", *AFP* (15 September 1994).

⁶⁵ Hoare. "The Bosnian War's Forgotten Turning Point", 94-5.

⁶⁶ "BOSNIE: La France retire ses 'casques bleus' de l'enclave musulmane de Bihać", *Le Monde* (19 October 1994).

⁶⁷ "Les Serbes bosniaques ont subi à Bihać leur premier revers majeur de l'un des envoyes speciaux de l'AFP", *AFP* (29 October 1994).

⁶⁸ Benda, Marc, and François Crémieux. *Paris-Bihać* (Paris: Éditions Michalon, 1995), 180.

months.⁶⁹ Buoyed by their successes and US encouragement, the Muslim-Croat Federation undertook an offensive in Sarajevo. France believed that in this context, the Bosnian government had become convinced to pursue a military solution to the conflict in BiH.⁷⁰ The escalating US rhetoric antagonised the Russians who called on the UNSC to take measures against the Bosniaks following the flight of thousands of Bosnian Serbs from the Bihać pocket. France called for a ceasefire in an effort to diffuse the situation, much to the anger of the Sarajevan authorities.⁷¹

By 14 November, the inevitable Serb counterattack had materialised in Bihać, launched from the Krajina. In the intervening period, the Republicans had won a significant majority in the elections for Congress, reinforcing the pro-Bosniak lobby on Capitol Hill. Thus Clinton, seeking to avoid unnecessary conflict with the Republicans, announced that the US would unilaterally lift the embargo against Bosnia and Croatia. In Paris, there were fears that the Contact Group was disintegrating. François Léotard wrote to his American counterpart, William Perry, expressing his concerns that, thenceforth, the Bosnian Serbs would no longer see UNPROFOR as a neutral force. The French Defence Minister relayed his fears in a letter: "Its [UNPROFOR] retreat will not be accomplished in a peaceful manner because the belligerents could be tempted to seize equipment by force, the Serbs anticipating the lifting of the arms embargo and taking the offensive and the Bosniaks opposing a retreat that would leave them without defence." Clinton dispatched the Undersecretary of State, Peter Tarnoff, to Europe to allay his partners' fears. In meetings with Juppé and Védrine, Tarnoff revealed that Clinton was personally hostile to lifting the embargo and that he would not force the issue in the UNSC.

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⁶⁹ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 606.

⁷⁰ "Washington soutient ouvertement l'offensive de Sarajevo", AFP (1 November 1994).

⁷¹ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 607.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

The Clinton administration remained in favour of using air strikes though and when Serb forces used two fighter planes stationed in the Krajina to bomb Bihać, it provided NATO with an opportunity to demonstrate its aerial might in BiH once more. UNPROFOR even confirmed that the Serbs had dropped a napalm bomb against the civilian population of the town, a device that had been banned under the UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons; fortunately, the device failed to detonate.⁷⁵

With increasingly vocal calls for NATO force to be brought to bear against the Serbs, Juppé condemned the escalating conflict: "There has been an offensive and there is now a counter-offensive all of which is quite unacceptable and against which we bear the strongest condemnation, but the only way to avoid these kinds of events is the cessation of [military] activities."⁷⁶ Although Juppé indicated that the Serbs bore the primary responsibilities for the latest renewal, he added that the government in Sarajevo had to bear some responsibility for the renewed conflict.⁷⁷ This comment, and France's policies, appeared to do irreparable damage to Franco-Bosnian relations. Haris Silajdžić summoned Henri Jacolin, the French Ambassador to BiH, and vented his frustrations at French policy:

The authorities in Paris are overtly anti-Bosniak contrary to French public opinion. M. Juppé is opposed to what we do to defend ourselves but is not moved in anyway by offensives undertaken by the Serbs. French UNPROFOR officers themselves have also adopted an anti-Bosniak position. There is today an alliance between France, Great Britain and Russia to block everything, in the United Nations as on the ground.⁷⁸

Indeed, the conflict in BiH had brought French and British foreign policy into greater alignment, which was reinforced by the good relationship shared between Douglas

⁷⁵ "Les Serbes ont laché sur Bihać une seule bombe au napalm qui n'a pas explosé, selon la FORPRONU", *AFP* (18 November 1994).

⁷⁶ "M. Juppé condamne le recours à la force en Bosnie", AFP (18 November 1994).

⁷⁷ Ibid

⁷⁸ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 608-9.

Hurd and Alain Juppé.⁷⁹ The day that Silajdžić admonished Jacolin in Sarajevo, France and Britain announced the creation of a Franco-British partnership in aerial defence, with the situation in BiH featuring heavily in the discussions.⁸⁰ The following day, the UNSC clarified the conditions for the use of force to assist UNPROFOR in pursuing its mandate in BiH and also extended such measures to Croatia, from where, significantly, the Serbs had launched their attacks against Bihać.⁸¹

Serb attacks intensified against Bihać on 20 November, which led Juppé to declare it "unacceptable that the international community leaves Bihać to be bombed without reacting" adding that he hoped that NATO would implement the UNSCRs from the previous day to attack Serb positions in the Krajina. The following day Juppé would see his demands fulfilled as NATO bombed the Udbina airbase in Serb-held Croatia. However, the raid failed to deter the Serbs who continued their assault on Bihać, coming within 2km of the boundaries of the 'safe zone' itself. This brought a further NATO attack against missile sites in and around the Bihać pocket, but this was less-welcomed amongst the Contact Group than the raid on 21 November.

As Washington continued to push for further air strikes, Russia stated that it was "extremely worried by the tendency to resolve the question of solving the conflict in Bosnia exclusively through force." Paris and London were equally concerned, particularly regarding reprisals against their peacekeepers in Sarajevo. Alain Juppé called for a ceasefire and for the Bihać 'safe zone' to be respected as the Bosnian Serbs entered

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⁷⁹ Hurd, Douglas. Interview with the Author, Hammersmith, 11 June 2014.

⁸⁰ "Création d'un groupe aérien franco-britannique, l'ATF remis à plus tard", AFP (18 November 1994).

⁸¹ Security Council resolution 958, *Bosnia and Herzegovina*, S/RES/958, 19 November 1994; Security Council resolution 959, *Bosnia and Herzegovina*, S/RES/95, 19 November 1994.

^{82 &}quot;Bihać: M. Juppé demande que l'Otan agisse contre les Serbes", AFP (20 November 1994).

^{83 &}quot;Frappe aérienne de l'OTAN contre l'aéroport d'Udbina", AFP (21 November 1994).

⁸⁴ "Les Serbes approchent du centre de la ville de Bihać, selon l'ONU", AFP (23 November 1994).

^{85 &}quot;La multiplication des raids aériens de l'OTAN satisfait les Américains", AFP (23 November 1994);

[&]quot;Sérieuses inquietudes' de la Russie après le nouveau raid de l'OTAN", AFP (23 November 1994).

its perimeter on 23 November. 86 John Major wrote to Mitterrand on 24 November, as the Bosnian Serbs closed in on the centre of Bihać:

I am worried by the thoughtlessness with which NATO embarks in this civil war day after day. To simply launch air raids does not move us an inch closer to a solution but risks, in contrast, putting UNPROFOR in an untenable situation.⁸⁷

As Major wrote to Mitterrand, the Bosnian Serbs were close to entering the town of Bihać itself, with Karadžić intending to disarm the ARBiH 5th Corps stationed in the town.⁸⁸ Mitterrand pragmatically reflected on the situation with François Léotard:

The Serbs have won. It's tragic but that's how it is. We cannot stop the course of events. UNPROFOR is powerless. Air strikes can do nothing in a country like that. The Serbs want to snub NATO and the UN. They have done that and have no need to occupy Bihać.⁸⁹

Mitterrand's prediction was extremely prescient as the Bosnian Serbs entered Bihać and, with the Bosnian forces having fled to the north of the province, respected the ceasefire that Yasushi Akashi had called for the day previous. NATO planes flew overhead as the Serbs entered the town but, citing adverse weather conditions, returned to base. However, it seems as though NATO and the UN were prepared to accept a *fait accompli*; France and Britain's fears over the safety of their peacekeepers had been allayed. The US Defence Secretary William Perry acknowledged that "The situation is really under the control of the Serbs." The Bosnian Serbs had faced down NATO, which had strengthened Karadžić's and Mladić's confidence and their position at the top of the

⁸⁶ "Les Serbes approchent du centre de la ville de Bihać, selon l'ONU", AFP (23 November 1994).

⁸⁷ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, p. 608.

^{88 &}quot;Stabilisation des combats a Bihać où l'ONU espère un cessez-le-feu rapide", AFP (24 November 1994).

⁸⁹ Favier and Martin-Roland, La Décennie, 608.

⁹⁰ "Les Serbes seraient entrés dans Bihać et semblent avoir cessé le feu", AFP (25 November 1995).

^{91 &}quot;OTAN Bosnie (Urgent)", AFP (25 November 1994).

⁹² "La situation est pratiquement sans issue, selon la Maison Blanche", AFP (28 November 1994).

Republika Srpska hierarchy. Furthermore, it led the Bosnian government to redouble their efforts to have the arms embargo selectively lifted. The Bihać incident led to a serious reassessment of US policy on the former Yugoslavia but the US was quick to assure its allies that it would not push for lifting the arms embargo, as the Undersecretary of State Peter Tarnoff assured them:

> We do not want to get involved in this pothole alone. We need our friends and allies, we need governments prepared to deploy men on the ground in humanitarian and military missions and we need diplomatic solidarity. As for the embargo, it cannot be lifted unilaterally, but through a Security Council decision.93

For Juppé the dramatic events in Bihać were the "consequence of contradictions and divergences within the last few months" and he thought it was necessary to "repair the cohesion of the Contact Group."94 Tarnoff's words were intended to assuage the US's Atlantic allies, but Clinton would come under increasing domestic pressure to lift the arms embargo through into the New Year. Thus, covertly, a US based company began training the Croatian military and arranged arms shipments to the Federation from Iran via Croatia. 95 The Clinton administration was formulating its policy that aimed to bring the Federation and Croatia into concertation against the Bosnian Serbs. 96

Franco-German relations had also been adversely affected with the conservative newspaper Frankfürter Allgemeine Zeitung accusing France and Britain of regressing back to a pro-Serb line.⁹⁷ The Kinkel-Juppé partnership of the year previous had deteriorated and been replaced by Hurd and Juppé, as Germany more closely aligned itself with the US.

⁹³ Favier and Martin-Roland, La Décennie, 609.

^{94 &}quot;Alain Juppé preconise une 'réaction forte' à l'attaque contre Bihać", AFP (26 November 1994).

⁹⁵ Ashbrook, John, and Spencer D. Bakich, "Storming to partition: Croatia, the United States, and Krajina in the Yugoslav War", Small Wars & Insurgencies 21, no. 4 (2010), 547.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 548.

⁹⁷ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 306.

France sought to reinvigorate the diplomatic initiative within the Contact Group. Thus the Contact Group was reunited on 27 November in Paris, with Juppé calling for a "quick and strong reaction" from the international community. During a Franco-German summit on 30 November, Helmut Kohl, François Mitterrand and Édouard Balladur formulated a confederal plan for Bosnia, with the Bosnian Serbs being allowed to associate with Serbia if they accepted the whole of the plan. Washington had already declared itself to be ready to discuss such a proposal and other diplomatic initiatives on 28 November.

Following a ministerial meeting on 1 December, NATO reaffirmed its stance in favour of negotiations, stating in a communiqué that: "We remain convinced that the conflict in Bosnia must be solved at the negotiation table." At a Contact Group ministerial meeting on 2 December, Juppé convinced his peers to adopt the Serbian confederation as its policy, as a concession to the Bosnian Serbs. The Contact Group also revealed that it was willing to make territorial modifications to the map in order to bring the three communities back to the negotiating table.

Meanwhile, the US had begun negotiating with the Bosnian Serbs directly again, which undermined Juppé's 'dual-track' approach of isolating the Bosnian Serbs on one hand and reaching out to Serbia on the other. Nonetheless, on the back of this initiative, Juppé and Hurd flew together to the former Yugoslavia, visiting Belgrade, Sarajevo, Zagreb, and Pale following the US's earlier initiative. They focussed their efforts on Milošević and hoped he could convince the Bosnian Serbs to return to the negotiation

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^{98 &}quot;Réunion à Paris du groupe de contact sur la Bosnie", AFP (27 November 1994).

⁹⁹ "Paris et Bonn demandent à l'ONU et l'OTAN de faire respecter les zones de sécurité en Bosnie", *AFP* (30 November 1994); Védrine, *Les Mondes*, 672.

¹⁰⁰ "La situation est pratiquement sans issue, selon la Maison Blanche", *AFP* (28 November 1994); "M. Perry: 'le temps est venu pour d'autres initiatives diplomatiques'", *AFP* (29 November 1994).

¹⁰¹ "Réunion ministerielle de l'OTAN: principaux points du communiqué", AFP (1 December 1994).

¹⁰² Védrine. Les mondes, 672.

¹⁰³ "Bosnie paix (Urgent)", AFP (2 December 1994).

table.¹⁰⁴ Milošević believed that the right to a confederation was the "best argument" to convince the Bosnian Serbs to accept a peace plan.¹⁰⁵

The return to diplomacy by the international community, and away from military intervention, infuriated Izetbegović, who publicly chastised Mitterrand at a CSCE summit in Budapest on 5 December: "Paris and London from the beginning have assumed the role of protectors of Serbia and prevented all attempts to stop the Serbian war." On having resumed talks with Milošević and reconfiguring the Contact Group map, Izetbegović added: "You, civilised countries, you want to invite to the negotiating table a creation based on tyranny and genocide." Mitterrand responded:

We French are saddened and offended when we hear it said that France should be responsible for all that has happened in Bosnia. What do you accuse us of? That we have not approved lifting the arms embargo. It seems to me that we were right. 108

The Bosnian President's outburst did little to dissuade Mitterrand from pursuing the diplomatic path to peace. The French President wrote to Clinton: "We must give every chance to the Contact Group. We must use every map on the table, including the Milošević map." However, Clinton was coming under ever-greater pressure in the US to lift the arms embargo with Congress once more raising the issue. Paris, in concert with London and Washington, once more began to study the withdrawal of its peacekeepers. The Clinton administration remained opposed to the withdrawal of UNPROFOR and settled on a clever formulation to deter hawkish US senators and congressmen from persistently

¹⁰⁴ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 609.

¹⁰⁵ "Le droit à la confédération est 'le meilleur argument' pour convaincre les Serbes de Bosnie, selon M. Milošević", *AFP* (4 December 1994).

¹⁰⁶ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 609.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Védrine. Les Mondes, 672.

¹¹⁰ "Retrait: Paris, Londres et Washington multiplient les signes de serieux", AFP (8 December 1994).

pressuring the President: if raising the arms embargo forces UNPROFOR to withdraw, the US will have to dispatch 15,000 ground troops to account for the deficit.¹¹¹

As rhetoric built towards the withdrawal of UNPROFOR in winter 1994, Radovan Karadžić announced on CNN that he intended to normalise relations with UNPROFOR. 112 This change of heart had been brought about by the sudden intervention of former US President Jimmy Carter, who was invited by Karadžić to use his good offices in the conflict in BiH. 113 Following a diplomatic mission to Pale and Sarajevo, Carter secured a four-month ceasefire, which commenced on 24 December. Surprisingly, the ceasefire held and, with Carter's intervention, the Bosnian Serbs agreed to join the Contact Group peace discussions once more. 114 As 1994 came to a close, the Contact Group had a basis to once more resume its work with all parties, as UN troops stationed themselves between the sides in contested areas.

Exit Europe, Enter USA

As François Mitterrand highlighted in his final New Year's Eve address to the French public, France would assume the Presidency of the European Union for six months on 1 January. The main thrust of the President's speech was the future of Europe and its centrality to France's future: "Have no doubt, France's future is through Europe. By serving the one, we serve the other." The French President also had a stark warning for his European compatriots during his final address to the European Parliament on 17 January. In a speech typical of France's eloquent President, Mitterrand recounted

¹¹¹ "Les États-Unis s'engagent, en cas de retrait de la FORPRONU, à envoyer des troupes au sol", *AFP* (8 December 1 994).

^{112 &}quot;USA Bosnie (Urgent)", AFP (14 December 1994).

^{113 &}quot;Jimmy Carter, le médiateur (encadré)", AFP (15 December 1994).

¹¹⁴ "Pale accepte de s'associer au processus de paix sur la base de l'accord Carter", AFP (29 December 1994).

¹¹⁵ MAE, Voeux du Président de la République: M. François Mitterrand, 31 December 1994. Accessed on 21 July 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

autobiographical anecdotes that highlighted the perilous path that European civilisation had traversed over the preceding century. He reflected: "Nationalism means war! War is not only in our past, it is also maybe in our future, and it's you... who are henceforth the guardians of our peace, of our security and this future!"¹¹⁷ The crisis in the former Yugoslavia had clearly reinforced the President's preference for greater European integration and concertation.

The President's warning was particularly salient in the Yugoslav context at the beginning of 1995. The so-called 'Zagreb-4' or 'Z-4' Ambassadors – consisting of the US and Russian Ambassadors to Croatia and Ambassadors Geert Ahrens and Kai Ede on behalf of ICFY – were facing an increasingly difficult task in January 1995 as the Croatian Government revealed it would not agree to a renewal of UNPROFOR's mandate in Croatia beyond March 1995. The 'Z-4' had worked tirelessly shuttling between Zagreb and Knin over the preceding three years in an attempt to broker a deal to reintegrate the Croatian Serbs into the Croatian state with an amount of autonomy. However, the Croatian Government was seemingly preparing for a military takeover of the Krajina. Inevitably, tensions between Zagreb and Knin heightened once more.

David Owen tendered his resignation to Mitterrand on 17 January but indicated he would only do so at a time that was convenient to the French Presidency of the EU. 120 Owen held France's efforts in the former Yugoslavia in the highest regard and thanked Mitterrand for his personal involvement, and particularly for his meeting with Milošević in March 1993, alongside the interventions of General Morillon and General de La Presle. 121

¹¹⁷ MAE, Discours du Président de la République, M. François Mitterrand à l'occasion de la Présentation du programme de la Présidence Française de l'Union Européenne au Parlement Européen, 17 January 1995. Accessed on 21 July 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

¹¹⁸ Rieff, David. "The Krajina War: Endgame for the United Nations", *World Policy Journal* 12, no. 3 (Autumn, 1995), 71.

¹¹⁹ Trbovich, Ana S. *A Legal Geography of Yugoslavia's Disintegration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) 304

¹²⁰ Letter of resignation from Lord Owen to President Mitterrand, 17 January 1995, BODA, 3/2/144.

¹²¹ Ibid.

Resignation at an inopportune time would have soured his relations with the French establishment. The French Presidency was unprepared to accept Owen's resignation at that time, and he thus continued.

With his resignation tentatively scheduled for June, Owen renewed his efforts and, aware that the Contact Group had ceased to function effectively, tried to closely tie Juppé to the peace process, eschewing the COREU mechanism and writing to the French Foreign Minister directly. In this vain, David Owen approached Juppé at the end of January believing that the Contact Group had "a six-week window of opportunity in which we might be able to pressurize the parties into a settlement, not just in Bosnia-Hercegovina but in Croatia as well." Owen indicated that Tudman was becoming more cooperative, as he was seeking recognition from Belgrade, and believed that a meeting between Tudman and Milošević in Paris at the invitation of President Mitterrand would be a useful initiative. 123

In the meantime, Juppé travelled to Washington aiming to bring about a "diplomatic rapprochement" between France and the US.¹²⁴ Upon his return Juppé met Owen, who had just met with Milošević and Tuđman, and revealed that, owing to pressure from Congress, the Clinton administration wanted to be fully involved in any discussions and needed a breakthrough within the next few weeks.¹²⁵ Juppé returned to the idea that a conference under the French EU Presidency would be a useful exercise, which Owen agreed with, having "always believed that there would need to be another 'London Conference' within the French Presidency."¹²⁶

Meanwhile, Owen suggested establishing a back-channel for negotiations with Karadžić, believing that "Private diplomacy was needed." ¹²⁷ Indeed, 'private diplomacy'

¹²² Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 312.

¹²³ Message from Lord Owen to Alain Juppé, 27 January 1995, BODA, 3/2/145.

¹²⁴ "Rapprochement diplomatique entre la France et les États-Unis", Le Monde (28 January 1995).

¹²⁵ Record of meeting between Lord Owen and French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé in Paris, 30 January 1995, BODA, 3/2/146.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

was the new *modus operandi* with Paris at its epicentre. With Mitterrand prepared to host a meeting between Tuđman and Milošević, the Quai would have to announce a meeting with Izetbegović for domestic consumption. 128 However, the Contact Group Plan would require some adjustment as Owen believed that Karadžić had never taken it seriously. Therefore, on legal issues, the two men also agreed that "It would make sense for Paris to act as the single focus."129

Juppé publicly proposed calling a "last chance" international conference, to prevent the renewal of fighting in BiH and Croatia in spring. 130 Juppé spoke with his counterparts in the Contact Group and received cautious ascension to his proposal.¹³¹ However, the parties themselves were unenthused with Milošević calling it a "serious waste of time" and Silajdžić glibly dismissed the initiative as BiH did not require "a new public relations conference." Without the support of the parties, Juppé's initiative was dead-on-arrival. Instead Paris launched an initiative focussed on lifting the sanctions against Belgrade if FRY recognised BiH and Croatia. 133

Running parallel to France's sanctions initiative, Owen and Stoltenberg, reporting directly to Paris, met with Karadžić and Krajišnik on 1 February in an attempt to reinvigorate discussions on the Contact Group Plan before renewed fighting in spring rendered it obsolete. Following the discussions Owen drew up eight maps along the 51-49% split negotiated under the Contact Group Plan, which he believed could be made acceptable to the Bosnian Serbs and the Federation. 134 However, Richard Holbrooke,

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ "Entretien à trois Hurd-Juppé-Kinkel jeudi à Londres", AFP (1 February 1995).

^{131 &}quot;Moscou 'ouvert' à un sommet sur l'ex-Yougoslavie", AFP (1 February 1995); "Entretien à trois Hurd-Juppé-Kinkel jeudi à Londres", AFP (1 February 1995).

^{132 &}quot;Refus et réserves à la proposition française d'un sommet sur la Bosnie", AFP (2 February 1995).

^{133 &}quot;Les Occidentaux restent divisés sur la question de la levée des sanctions contre Belgrade", Le Monde (13 February 1995).

¹³⁴ Memo from Lord Owen to Alain Juppé, 10 February 1995, BODA, 3/2/151.

Increasing US preponderance over the peace process led the Serbs, both in Belgrade and Pale, to believe that policy was "being directed from Washington with Russia sidelined and the EU having, when it comes to the crunch, no capacity or will to differ from the Americans." Owen detected a change in mood in Milošević owing to US influence on the international community's sanction policy and as such believed that "it will not be easy to find a new approach that will attract Milošević, Izetbegović and Tuđman." He was right.

As the ceasefire drew nearer to its conclusion, activity within the Contact Group became frenetic. With Croatia determined not to renew UNPROFOR's mandate, Milošević was unable to offer FRY recognition as he would be seen to be selling the Krajina Serbs "down the river". The US focussed on trying to secure Croatian agreement for a renewal of the UN mandate, whilst France and Britain focussed on the recognition of BiH. Diplomatic efforts were frantic as it became clear that the Bosnian government was preparing for a spring offensive. Juppé hosted Warren Christopher for a meeting in Paris on 22 March, in hope of reinvigorating the Contact Group and coordinating its constituent members' diplomatic efforts. He also proposed progressively lifting sanctions against Belgrade in the hope that it would prolong the truce in BiH and help talks between Croatia and Serbia. However, events on the ground had overtaken the politicians once more as fighting resumed in Tuzla. As fighting once more escalated, two French peacekeepers were shot and injured in Sarajevo, one in 'sniper alley', with Juppé and Balladur both

¹³⁵ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 315.

¹³⁶ Memo from Lord Owen to Alain Juppé, 8 February 1995, BODA, 3/2/150.

¹³⁷ Ibid

¹³⁸ Memo from Lord Owen to Alain Juppé, 17 February 1995, BODA, 3/2/152.

¹³⁹ "Poursuite des combats dans le nord-est de la Bosnie", AFP (22 March 1995).

¹⁴⁰ "Nouvelle initiative française", AFP (22 March 1995).

¹⁴¹ "Poursuite des combats dans le nord-est de la Bosnie", AFP (22 March 1995).

calling for immediate actions to be taken against those responsible. 142 Juppé confided in Balladur that "Douglas Hurd and I think that the diplomatic process has failed and the resumption of fighting in Bosnia is unavoidable." 143 Balladur gave the order to prepare the withdrawal of French peacekeepers in cooperation with NATO, although Paris was greatly concerned that they would be taken hostage as collateral as they retreated; this tactic would become commonplace in the summer of 1995. 144

As the ceasefire negotiated by Carter in December expired on 1 May, the former Yugoslavia looked as though it may once more descend into all-out war. The Croatian Army (*Hrvastka vojska*, HV) launched 'Operation Flash' against Western Slavonija following supposed attacks by Croatian Serbs against Croatian citizens on the highway between Zagreb and Lipovac, a town on the Serbian border. The HV cleansed Western Slavonija, a UNPA, and sent thousands of Croatian Serbs fleeing towards BiH and Serbia. 'Operation Flash' was a success for the Tudman government as the flight of Croatian Serbs from the region without having to use excessive coercion was palatable to the US. Although the UNSC publicly condemned Operation Flash, no sanctions were forthcoming. Therefore, this operation offered a blueprint for solving 'ethnically complex problems'. However, imposing this logic on any solution to the conflicts would require significant population exchanges, expulsions or exterminations to create a 'clean' solution. Unlike in January 1994 the US, as Védrine noted, now had a vision for the future but its 'clean' solution would create a lot of mess before it could be imposed.

In the context of this heightening tension in BiH and Croatia, and following Jacques Chirac's strong performance in the first round of the presidential elections, the

¹⁴² "Édouard Balladur demande que les auteurs du 'meurtre' d'un Casque bleu", *AFP* (14 April 1995); "M. Juppé demande a l'ONU de 'punir' les responsables de la mort du deuxième", *AFP* (15 April 1995).

¹⁴³ Favier and Martin-Roland. La Décennie, 610.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid

¹⁴⁵ Ashbrook and Bakich. "Storming to partition", 543.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 548.

French were privately indicating that the new government would look to withdraw from UNPROFOR unless the ceasefire was extended and UNPROFOR was reinforced. 147 Chirac, who won the presidential election on 7 May, sought to make a break with the past in the field of foreign policy. The new President would seek to break with the 'immobilism' of the late Mitterrand years through bold decisions and muscular diplomacy. As he entered the Élysée on 17 May 1995, BiH was once more in the midst of fighting with the US once more pushing for a robust response. The Bosnian War provided Chirac with an immediate opportunity to announce himself on the international stage. 148

Jacques Chirac and the Force of Will

Two days before Chirac's inauguration on 17 May, the President-elect tasked Alain Juppé to liaise with Douglas Hurd in Paris to discuss reinforcing UNPROFOR and the "impossibility of staying in place without a change." Upon Chirac's election, Juppé was transferred from the Quai to the Matignon and was an important point of continuity in the new administration. NATO continued to study UNPROFOR's retreat as fighting continued. There was one final lifeline for peace negotiations: following the earlier French initiative and three weeks of a US diplomatic offensive, Milošević was offering international recognition of BiH in its current boundaries in exchange for lifting international sanctions against FRY. Juppé warned in the National Assembly that: "if these talks are in vain, neither France, nor its partners, could maintain its peacekeepers in a powerless UNPROFOR that would lose its *raison d'être*." Juppé

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¹⁴⁷ Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 320.

¹⁴⁸ Bozo. *La politique étrangère*, 221.

¹⁴⁹ "Paris va appeler ses partenaires à plus de fermeté en Bosnie; Les pays contributeurs à la Forpronu attendent les prises de position du nouveau chef de l'État français sur le conflit dans l'ex-Yougoslavie.", *Le Monde* (17 May 1995).

¹⁵⁰ "Bosnie-Yougoslavie", AFP (21 May 1995).

¹⁵¹ Assemblée Nationale. "Séance du 23 Septembre 1995 [sic 23 Mai 1995]", *Journal Officiel de la République Française: Débats Parlemantarires* (23 May 1995), 17.

The SDS met in Banja Luka on 23 May to discuss Milošević's gesture. There they demonstrated their hostility towards the Serbian President's concession and reaffirmed that they still rejected the Contact Group Plan as the UN renewed sanctions against RS. ¹⁵² Furthermore, they announced the unification of the Bosnian and Krajina Serbs in an attempt to shore up their respective territories.

Without RS's acquiescence, the US diplomacy failed in Belgrade over the terms of reemploying sanctions against FRY in the case of non-recognition. From a public-facing perspective, the failure of the negotiations led by Robert Frasure allowed the US and NATO to once more present Belgrade and the Serbs as obstinate and would legitimise the future use of air force. Indeed, as it became evident that the talks in Belgrade had failed, Clinton publicly lamented the UN's refusal to employ air force around Sarajevo a week earlier, declaring himself "firmly in favour" and "very surprised that the UN prevented them." 154

With pressure from the West as Krajina was crumbling, and continued isolation from Belgrade to the east, the Bosnian Serbs became increasingly desperate in efforts to fulfil their war aims of creating an ethnically homogeneous RS. On 24 May, having requisitioned previously impounded heavy weapons, the Bosnian Serbs launched the deadliest wave of attacks against Sarajevo since the ultimatum of February 1994. Silajdžić immediately appealed to Washington to protect Sarajevo under the terms of February 1994. The UN issued an ultimatum to the Bosnian Serbs, which they disregarded. At 16h00 local time, NATO attacked two Bosnian Serb weapon dumps near Pale.

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¹⁵² "Les Serbes de Bosnie tentent de reserrer leur rangs", AFP (23 May 1995).

^{153 &}quot;Échec de la mission à Belgrade du médiateur Américain Robert Frasure", AFP (23 May 1995).

¹⁵⁴ "L'ONU a 'fait une erreur' en refusant le recours à des frappes aériennes", AFP (23 May 1995).

^{155 &}quot;Sarajevo demande à Washington d'intervenir", AFP (24 May 1995).

^{156 &}quot;Les frappes aériennes de l'Otan en Bosnie (encadré)", AFP (25 May 1995).

The new French Foreign Minister, Hervé de Charette, immediately issued a communiqué in support of the air strikes.¹⁵⁷ De Charette was quite different from his predecessor. Richard Holbrooke later reflected that de Charette "was a classic high French official, elegant aloof, always sensitive to real or imagined insults toward himself or France–a distinction that he did not seem to acknowledge."

However, the air strikes did not have the intended consequences of dissuading the Bosnian Serbs from further attacks. Immediately, Bosnian Serb forces took UNPROFOR members hostage, eventually totalling 360 of which 173 were French. The VRS then undertook a massive bombardment of Tuzla that left at least 71 civilians dead. The following day, NATO launched further air strikes, which led to further hostage taking by the Bosnian Serbs and their use as human shields. Alain Juppé was infuriated by the Bosnian Serbs and was prepared to withdraw UNPROFOR if another solution was forthcoming: If the current deployment of UNPROFOR is seen as an obstacle or impediment to the response of the international community, we should draw the conclusion from this by organising its withdrawal. Chirac phoned Milošević to express France's indignation and called on him to use his influence to secure the release of the peacekeepers.

On the ground, French peacekeepers launched a 'commando' operation against Bosnian Serbs around Sarajevo, without a modified mandate, in an attempt to retake a UN observation post from Bosnian Serb forces; one French soldier was killed in the

¹⁵⁷ "Approbation française des frappes aériennes de l'OTAN en Bosnie", *Agence France Press* (25 May 1995).

¹⁵⁸ Holbrooke, Richard. *To End a War*, Revised Edition (New York: The Modern Library, 1999), 185.

¹⁵⁹ "Durcissement de la confrontation entre les Serbes de Bosnie et les grandes puissances", *AFP* (29 May 1995); "France-Bosnie-Serbes", *AFP* (26 May 1995).

¹⁶⁰ "Les Serbes prennent l'ONU en otage pour faire cesser les raids", *Libération* (27 May 1995).

¹⁶¹ "M. Juppé: 'nous ne pouvons plus accepter que la communauté internationale soit...", AFP (26 May 1995).

¹⁶² "Libération de Casques bleus: M. Milošević a informé M. Chirac", AFP (2 June 1995).

confrontation. Such a military initiative would have been almost unimaginable under Mitterrand but with Chirac in the Élysée such proactiveness was encouraged. Indeed, Chirac criticised the military Chiefs of Staff for being too lax and leaving French peacekeepers at the mercy of UN policy. Herefore, the new President spoke with John Major to formulate a response to the hostage crisis with meetings of NATO, the EU and the Contact Group scheduled for the following day.

During the meetings, European and NATO Foreign Ministers expressed their preference for UNPROFOR to remain on the ground but agreed that they would need to be redeployed and better protected. ¹⁶⁶ In France, the hostage crisis remained the main priority with a particular emphasis being placed on securing their release, as one official remarked "we have three days of intense efforts ahead of us." ¹⁶⁷ Juppé condemned the NATO air strikes that led to the hostage crisis considering that they "were not well prepared" and that "they have put our soldiers' lives in danger." ¹⁶⁸ As London prepared to send reinforcements to BiH in support of the 30 British peacekeepers that had been taken hostage, Juppé outlined his plans: "We must equip peacekeepers with the means to defend themselves" with "the development of a rapid reaction force with the double-key of NATO and the UN." ¹⁶⁹ In the Contact Group meeting on 29 May in the margins of a NATO summit, de Charette proposed reinforcing UNPROFOR with heavy weapons and grouping them in more defensible positions. France would oppose any further air strikes until the hostage crisis had been solved. ¹⁷⁰ Russia was opposed to a "disguised" modification of the peacekeepers' mandate. ¹⁷¹

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¹⁶³ "La France somme l'ONU de 'durcir' le mandat des Casques bleus en Bosnie", AFP (27 May 1995).

¹⁶⁴ "Tensions entre le président Chirac et le chef d'état-major des armées", AFP (2 June 1995).

¹⁶⁵ "John Major et Jacques Chirac se sont entretenus de la Bosnie", AFP (28 May 1995).

¹⁶⁶ "Les casques bleus doivent rester et être renforcés en Bosnie", AFP (28 May 1995).

¹⁶⁷ "La France veut avant tout regler la question des casques bleus otages", AFP (28 May 1995).

¹⁶⁸ "M. Juppé critique les dernières frappes aériennes de l'OTAN en Bosnie", *AFP* (28 May 1995).

¹⁷⁰ "Le ministre français des Affaires etrangeres écarte toute frappe aérienne", AFP (30 May 1995).

¹⁷¹ "Réunion lundi du groupe de contact et opposition russe à une modification", AFP (28 May 1995).

Russia, who could have acted as an intermediary condemned the Bosnian Serbs and accused Pale of having "taken the bit between its teeth and not realising what it has done." Therefore Russia opted out of dispatching a diplomatic mission to Pale as it had done in the past. Russia's new *laissez-faire* policy towards BiH allowed for a more robust US approach, which was evident in Warren Christopher's rejection to renew negotiations with Pale. 174

The Bosnian Serb Information Minister announced that the hostages would only be released "When their governments and the UN have made peace with the Serbs." Nonetheless, the international community clung to the hope that Milošević could be convinced to recognise BiH and pressure Pale into a settlement, seemingly unaware that it would do little to prevent the Bosnian Serbs from continuing to pursue their war aims. In a further rejection of the international community's jurisdiction in BiH, Karadžić declared that all UN resolutions were thenceforth nullified.

Jacques Chirac sent General de La Presle to meet with General Mladić in Vlasenica on 29 May to discuss the French government's position on the recent events in BiH. Immediately, the French General indicated to Mladić that he was not at the meeting to represent the international community, the UN or the Contact Group, but France and its government. He told the Bosnian Serb General that "The objective of this meeting is to establish contact and prevent isolation of the RS, which I have never supported. If there is no contact there will be conflicts which will lead us to tragedy." De La Presle indicated that Juppé and Chirac were "open to new options" and with Jean-Bernard Merimée now the Chairman of the UNSC, France was reconsidering its deployment in BiH. With a

¹⁷² "Bosnie-Russie (Urgent)", AFP (29 May 1995).

¹⁷³ "Pas de mission russe de haut rang en Bosnie dans l'immédiat, selon M. Zotov", AFP (29 May 1995).

¹⁷⁴ "M. Christopher rejette l'offre de négociation des Serbes de Bosnie", AFP (1 June 1995).

¹⁷⁵ "Les Casques bleus seront liberés 'lorsque la paix sera rendue aux Serbes'", AFP (29 May 1995).

¹⁷⁶ "La diplomatie internationale sur tous les fronts", AFP (29 May 1995).

¹⁷⁷ International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, Prosecutor v Zdravko Tolimir, Exhibit P01407.E, Case No. IT-05-88/2, 24 November 2010, 154.

NATO meeting scheduled in the Netherlands the following day, France wanted "to keep NATO on a short leash" and therefore supported the "idea of a double key, for UNPROFOR to play a decisive role." De La Presle also acknowledged that "NATO has completely different ideas about the area. We will try to hold them back." 179

Aware that Mladić was similarly hostile to the Contact Group, de La Presle revealed that "France will propose that the Contact Group be disbanded and we go back to a single representative" but added that "What France will be able to get is closely linked to the results here on the ground in connection with: the condition of prisoners of war; the freedom of movement of UNPROFOR." De La Presle indicated that, if the hostages were released immediately, then France could achieve some positive steps to integrate Republika Srpska into the international community. If they were not, the General warned that UNPROFOR would soon leave BiH and would be unable to stop its place being taken by NATO. The threat of a NATO presence is one that de La Presle wielded freely and warned that UNPROFOR:

Contingents will be replaced with those from Islamic countries which are just waiting for the opportunity. One can count on the M [Muslims] to be clever enough to bring in the Muslim countries. I have been preventing this, but I had to accept Turkish forces and I think it would be a tragedy for this area and for Europe. ¹⁸³

De La Presle, displaying the prejudice that was present in some of the French UNPROFOR contingents in BiH, indicated that negotiations needed to succeed to prevent

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 155.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 158.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 159.

this eventuality.¹⁸⁴ On the Contact Group he revealed that France and Britain had been successfully working on the map and highlighted that, "The map can change through negotiations." De la Presle then added that "There would be no withdrawal of the Serbian side until a complete delineation of the territory is achieved." Perhaps de La Presle believed that he would be able to bring the Bosnian Serbs back to the negotiating process following the release of the hostages. However, his statements instead indicated to Mladić that the international community, and France and Britain specifically, were willing to accept changes to a map that had earlier been offered on a 'take-it-or-leave-it' basis. However, Mladić had no intention of achieving this through negotiation and instead wanted to create facts on the ground prior to negotiations through renewed ethnic cleansing.

Without a negotiated settlement for the release of the UNPROFOR hostages and no prospect of redefining the UNPROFOR mandate, France proposed the creation of a 'Rapid Reaction Force' in the UNSC, which would "signal a more muscular approach to the mission in Bosnia". 187 The proposal was met with Russian scepticism over the force's mandate whilst the US worried about the timetable of the force's creation. 188 Chirac spoke with Clinton on 2 June to clarify the role of the RRF, calling it a "multinational brigade of rapid reaction", which significantly indicated that it would require 4,000 or more troops. 189 Clinton indicated that he would be prepared to send US troops to BiH in support of UNPROFOR redeployment, which was broadly supported by public opinion, but cancelled

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¹⁸⁴ For examples of islamophobia in French UNPROFOR contigents see: Benda and Crémieux. *Paris-Bihać*; Lorentz, Jacques. *Appelé en Yougoslavie: Journal d'un casque bleu*, 2nd Ed. (Issy-les-Moulineaux: Muller, 1997); Commandant Franchet and Sébastian Fontenelle. *Casque bleu pour rien: ce que j'ai vraiment vu en Bosnie* (Paris: J C Lattès, 1995).

¹⁸⁵ Prosecutor v Zdravko Tolimir, Exhibit P01407.E, Case No. IT-05-88/2, 24 November 2010,160.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 161.

¹⁸⁷ "Force d'intervention rapide", *AFP* (1 June 1995); "M. Akashi: l'ONU n'adopte pas son mandat 'après consultation'", *AFP* (1 June 1995).

¹⁸⁸ "Force d'intervention rapide", AFP (1 June 1995).

¹⁸⁹ "M. Chirac évoque avec M. Clinton la constitution d'une 'brigade de réaction'", *AFP* (2 June 1995); "Une brigade de réaction rapide", *Sud Ouest* (3 June 1995).

the deployment of 3,500 US troops to Italy at the last moment.¹⁹⁰ The French President was starting to establish himself on the international stage and was keen to highlight that the Constitution placed the President at the head of the armed forces. At the funeral of two French peacekeepers killed in BiH Chirac outlined his guiding principles:

Our military presence in Bosnia is based on a simple and strong idea: the security of Europe is currently at stake in this region. We will no longer accept the return of ethnic hate and barbarism on the continent.¹⁹¹

Seemingly motivated by the French President's more muscular intervention, Milošević had convinced Pale to the release 120 peacekeepers in Bosnia, including 63 French. President The Bosnian Serbs were concerned about the possible reinforcement of UNPROFOR and vacillated between threats and concessions in an effort to avoid such an outcome. Whilst releasing the peacekeepers had been a concession, the Bosnian Serbs shot down an American F-16 over Bihać in retaliation. Maldić, seeking to antagonise the US, claimed that the Bosnian Serbs had captured the pilot and were holding him prisoner. Karadžić indicated that he would continue to hold the hostages unless he received guarantees that there would be no further air strikes. The Greek Defence and Foreign Ministers, who were in talks with the Bosnian Serbs, confirmed the cessation of air strikes to Karadžić. With aerial attacks seemingly ruled out, the creation of the RRF remained highly important.

¹⁹⁰ Kull, Steven, and Clay Ramsay, "U.S. Public Opinion on Intervention in Bosnia" in *International Public Opinion and the Bosnia Crisis*, ed. Richard Sobel et al. (Oxford: Lexington, 2003), 91; "Annulation de l'envoi de troupes Américaines en Italie", *AFP* (8 June 1995).

¹⁹¹ "La France ne tolérera ni l'humiliation ni la haine ethnique", Le Monde (3 June 1995).

¹⁹² "M. Milošević annonce la libération 'tres rapide' des otages", AFP (3 June 1995).

¹⁹³ "Les Serbes alternent menaces et concessions pour éviter le renforcement de la Forpronu", *Le Monde* (5 June 1995).

¹⁹⁴ "Le chasseur F-16 (encadré)", AFP (2 June 1995).

¹⁹⁵ "Les États-Unis ignorent si le pilote du F-16 abattu vendredi a pu s'ejecter", AFP (4 June 1995).

¹⁹⁶ "M. Karadzic exige des 'garanties' de non recours à des frappes aériennes", AFP (5 June 1995).

The 15 NATO and EU Defence Ministers officially finalised the details for the RRF at a meeting in Paris on 3 June, with its deployment envisaged for the end of the month. However, its creation would require a new UNSCR that appeared to be difficult, with the Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev warning that he was opposed to the force. To assuage Russian fears concerning reprisals and escalations in BiH, Britain and France agreed that the RRF would be deployed under a peacekeeping mandate, as UNPROFOR had. Initially it had appeared that Chirac wanted the RRF to act as an intervention force.

The release of a new wave of hostages on 7 June made the force's diluted mandate a slightly more acceptable decision for the governments on both sides of the channel.²⁰¹ Juppé and Hervé de Charette were keen to emphasise the closeness of the Franco-British RRF initiative with Douglas Hurd declaring that, "Since the Second World War, the French and British military have never been so close, working well together, and I am sure that will continue."²⁰² France pushed to have the UNSC pass a resolution on the RRF in the quickest time possible with Britain sending a forward unit to establish a working base in Sarajevo.²⁰³

As the first French elements of the RRF arrived in Split on 13 June, the Bosnian Serbs announced that they were releasing the final hostages; they were all released by 18 June.²⁰⁴ The hostage crisis had scarred Chirac who, during his first television interview since assuming the Presidency, called the Bosnian Serbs' tactics "a barbarous and scandalous act" and therefore the RRF would be "an energetic and effective support force

¹⁹⁷ "Une force de réaction rapide est mise à la disposition de la Forpronu", AFP (6 June 1995).

¹⁹⁸ "La Russie contre la Force de réaction rapide", AFP (5 June 1995).

¹⁹⁹ "Nouvelle libération d'otages et mise sur pied prudente de la FRR", AFP (7 June 1995).

²⁰⁰ Owen. Balkan Odyssev, 326.

²⁰¹ "Nouvelle libération d'otages et mise sur pied prudente de la FRR", AFP (7 June 1995).

²⁰² "MM. Hurd et de Charette soulignent l'étroitesse de leur collaboration", *AFP* (8 June 1995).

²⁰³ "Des troupes britanniques de la FRR auraient pris position sur le mont Igman dominant Sarajevo", *Le Monde* (9 June 1995).

²⁰⁴ "Les Serbes de Bosnie annoncent la libération de tous leurs otages", AFP (13 June 1995).

each time UNPROFOR soldiers are threatened or humiliated."²⁰⁵ However, the US was dragging its heels on the creation of the RRF as Clinton faced a foreign policy battle with Republicans in Congress who were reluctant to approve the \$200 to \$300 million required as the US contribution.²⁰⁶ Furthermore, with NATO announcing that they had completed withdrawal plans for UNPROFOR, Congress was concerned that the RRF would act as a means to implement the peacekeeping force's retreat.

Chirac appealed directly to the Capitol to support the creation of the RRF during his first state visit to Washington, labelling it absurd that the creation of the RRF would be the first step towards UNPROFOR's total retreat.²⁰⁷ Nonetheless, on 15 June, the Republican majority in Congress wrote to Clinton informing the President that they were categorically opposed to the creation of the RRF. Nonetheless, the UNSC passed resolution 998 on 16 June, which officially created the RRF with its peacekeepers working under a UN mandate but wearing their own nation's uniforms.²⁰⁸

Paris, and its partners, somewhat over-optimistically thought that the resolution of the hostage crisis could lead to a reinvigoration of the diplomatic process.²⁰⁹ It appeared to suggest that perhaps Belgrade was once more able to wield influence over Pale. Under the direction of Carl Bildt, who had replaced David Owen as ICFY co-President in early June, a new round of discussions got underway. Although the international community hoped that war fatigue would facilitate negotiations, fighting continued throughout the latter part of June.

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²⁰⁵ MAE, Point de Presse du Président de la République: M. Jacques Chirac, 13 June 1995. Accessed on 21 July 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

²⁰⁶ "FRR: Washington pourrait retarder le vote jusqu'à la semaine prochaine", AFP (14 June 1995).

²⁰⁷ "M. Chirac appelle le Congres Américain à agir sans delai sur la FRR", *AFP* (14 June 1995).

²⁰⁸ Security Council resolution, *Bosnia and Herzegovina*, S/RES/998, 16 June 1995.

²⁰⁹ "La libération des otages devrait rapidement relancer le processus diplomatique", AFP (19 June 1995).

France's Last Stand

One thorny issue that had plagued international peace plans for BiH after the failure of the VOPP had been the future status of the eastern Bosniak enclaves. As the international community undertook negotiations with Carl Bildt and Thorvald Stoltenberg at the helm, one of these 'safe zones' came under attack from the Bosnian Serbs: Srebrenica.

In April 1993, General Morillon had fixed international attention on the former spa and metal mining *opština*. By bringing a ceasefire to the town and securing the delivery of humanitarian aid, Morillon had disarmed the Bosniak population to bring about Serb acquiescence. A small contingent of UNPROFOR peacekeepers had been stationed in the enclave thereafter. On 31 March 1995, General Mladić had given the order to undertake operations around the enclaves, with General Milenko Živanović, head of the Drina Corps of the VRS giving order *Krivija 95*: attack Srebrenica.²¹⁰ Although the Bosnian Serbs claimed the offensive was in response to ARBiH attacks in the enclave, the French National Assembly, in its extensive report of 2001 on the genocide in Srebrenica, declared that it was "to create a favourable situation on the ground in case of negotiations." De La Presle's earlier meeting with Mladić during the hostage crisis tacitly acknowledged that changes to the map were required. Indeed, as Samantha Power notes, "Many western policymakers secretly wished Srebrenica and the other Muslim safe areas in eastern Bosnia would disappear." 212

On 6 July, the VRS began its assault on Srebrenica and targeted Dutch observation posts and their headquarters at Potočari. ²¹³ The Dutch battalion (Dutchbat) commander

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²¹⁰ André, René, and François Lamy, Événements de Srebrenica, Assemblée Nationale Rapport d'Information N° 3413 (11 December 2001). Accessed on 21 July 2015. http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/11/dossiers/srebrenica.asp.

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Power. "A Problem from Hell", 393.

²¹³ André, René, and François Lamy, Événements de Srebrenica, Assemblée Nationale Rapport d'Information N° 3413 (11 December 2001). Accessed on 21 July 2015. http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/11/dossiers/srebrenica.asp.

Tom Karremans requested close air support with the decision falling to the French General Gobilliard, who denied the request. The National Assembly inquest into France and Srebrenica believed that "It is evident that this lack of reaction from the Serb attack was a mistake: the lack of determination it conveyed to not defend UNPROFOR was very disturbing."²¹⁴ Indeed, if it was not prepared to protect its own then what protection could UNPROFOR offer the population of Srebrenica? Nonetheless, the Dutchbat commander refused to release the arms that had been impounded in Potočari to the mayor of Srebrenica, Ramiz Bećirović. 215 The town's position was perilous: it was undefended and indefensible.

The following day, Carl Bildt met Milošević and Mladić in Belgrade and the attack on the enclave resided. However, it resumed with a new ferocity on 8 July with a further call for aerial support being denied. On 9 July, the Bosnian Serbs made significant progress through the enclave, taking control of several UN observation posts with Dutch peacekeepers being taken hostage en route to the town of Srebrenica. 216 General Bernard Janvier received a request for air support from Karremans in Srebrenica and instead ordered the Dutch peacekeepers to establish a 'no-further line' on the road to Srebrenica, which they failed to do. It became quite clear to Mladić that, at this point, he would face little resistance in his efforts to capture Srebrenica, in spite of an ultimatum from Janvier and Akashi that stated if the Bosnian Serbs crossed the 'no-further line' then aerial force would be deployed.²¹⁷

On 10 July, aware that the VRS were quickly closing on the town, NATO declared that it was "always ready" to intervene in Bosnia. 218 Similarly, France revealed that its contingents of the RRF, notably its attack helicopters, were ready to provide support to

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ "Les forces serbes détiennent 20 casques bleus", AFP (9 July 1995).

²¹⁷ "Les Serbes poursuivent leur offensive, malgré les menaces de l'ONU", AFP (10 July 1995).

²¹⁸ "Srebrenica: l'OTAN, 'toujours prête', attend les demandes de l'ONU", AFP (10 July 1995).

Dutchbat.²¹⁹ By the afternoon, with Dutch peacekeepers installed in Janvier's requested location, the Bosnian Serbs launched an attack against UNPROFOR positions. This information reached the UNSC but its response was mild with Juppé sending a telegram to Merimée demanding that the parties withdraw.²²⁰ As Bosnian Serb infantry came within sight of the Dutch peacekeepers, Karremans once more called for air support. Janvier denied the request citing nightfall and the large number of refugees attempting to flee the town.²²¹ That evening confusion reigned in communications between the UNPROFOR and Dutchbat. UNPROFOR HQ informed Karremans that air strikes would be available for six o' clock the following morning provided he submitted a new request and provided targets for NATO. Curiously, Karremans explained to the town's population that air strikes would arrive the following morning without a new request.²²²

The following morning, NATO fighters circled in the sky above the enclave awaiting their targets. With a breakdown in communications between the General Quarters in Tuzla and Dutchbat on the ground, the fighters had to return to base to refuel and were thus unavailable until 14:00.²²³ Mladić used this window of opportunity to strike and captured the town itself. Eventually NATO undertook an aerial operation targeted on Bosnian Serb tanks.²²⁴ However, once the VRS had reached the town and the Dutch peacekeepers, the UN was far less willing to employ force for fear of the risks to UNPROFOR members. The UN announced that Srebrenica had fallen to the Bosnian Serbs.²²⁵ Throughout the episode Dutchbat had failed to fire a single shot to halt the

²¹⁹ "La France à propose le soutien de la FRR pour les casques bleus neerlandais", AFP (10 July 1995).

²²⁰ André, René, and François Lamy, Événements de Srebrenica, Assemblée Nationale Rapport d'Information N° 3413 (11 December 2001). Accessed on 21 July 2015. http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/11/dossiers/srebrenica.asp.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid

²²⁴ "L'OTAN confirme une 'opération de soutien aérien' sur Srebrenica", AFP (11 July 1995).

²²⁵ "Srebrenica est tombée aux mains des forces serbes, selon l'ONU", AFP (11 July 1995).

advancing Bosnian Serb ground forces and moved aside as the VRS entered the Potočari compound where many of the town's inhabitants had fled.

The National Assembly's inquest into Srebrenica reflected that: "The Serbs had taken Srebrenica and henceforth waited to settle the fate of Žepa and Goražde. But above all they intended to eliminate the Muslim populations so that these enclaves no longer existed". They undertook this process by systematically separating the men and boys from the women of Srebrenica. As the women were expelled from the town, the Bosnian Serb forces undertook a genocidal killing of more than 7,000 men and boys of Srebrenica over the course of 12-16 July 1995.

As the town fell, the international community's reaction was tempered, perhaps realising that the fall of the Muslim enclave simplified the map of BiH. As the Republicans in the US announced that they would once more seek to lift the arms embargo, a spokesperson for the White House indicated that the fall of Srebrenica had "not changed the situation of peacekeepers in Bosnia." However John Major warned that such intense fighting placed the UNPROFOR mission in peril and risked its withdrawal. Chirac's reaction was even firmer.

Chirac was irritated by the US's isolationism, protecting itself from troop commitments through NATO air force and seeking to lift the arms embargo. The French President declared that, "if Congress decides to lift the embargo" and if this decision was confirmed by the American government, UNPROFOR "will have to retreat immediately." Chirac sought to call the US's bluff and, in concert with Britain, called on the Serbs to withdraw from Srebrenica declaring that France was prepared to use military

²²⁶ André, René, and François Lamy, Événements de Srebrenica, Assemblée Nationale Rapport d'Information N° 3413 (11 December 2001). Accessed on 21 July 2015. http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/11/dossiers/srebrenica.asp.

²²⁷ "Les événements de Srebrenica n'ont pas changé la situation, selon Washington", AFP (11 July 1995).

²²⁸ "John Major: la poursuite des combats mettrait en peril la présence de l'ONU", AFP (11 July 1995).

²²⁹ "M. Chirac: la Forpronu se retirerait immediatement si Washington levait", AFP (11 July 1995).

force to re-establish the 'safe zone' if the UNSC mandated it.²³⁰ As the NATO Council examined the situation in Srebrenica on 12 July, de Charette announced that France was ready to put its entire means at the disposal of the UNSC to force the retreat of the Bosnian Serbs in Srebrenica and to return the Muslim population to the enclave.²³¹

For Chirac, Srebrenica had revealed the bankruptcy of UNPROFOR in its present configuration but also of the international community's engagement with BiH. In front of the two chambers of the French parliament, Chirac greatly criticised humanitarian intervention and, by extension, *Mitterrandienne* policy in BiH: "do not mix the types: to mix the military and the humanitarian is a mistake." On the issue of Srebrenica, Chirac added that, "If the enclaves are not respected, if Srebrenica is not rehabilitated, it is the entire UNPROFOR mission that is at stake." Alain Juppé similarly declared that, "France cannot accept the politics of the *fait accompli*" in Bosnia. The Chirac government had found its feet in international politics and was using its newly found voice to force the international community to act.

Hervé de Charette visited his Dutch counterpart to discover why Dutchbat had failed to defend Srebrenica having declared that UNPROFOR has "two very precise tasks: humanitarian aid and interposition. They did neither one nor the other. They eventually became the accomplices in what we have always refused [ethnic cleansing]. If that's the case, it is better to leave."²³⁵ Chirac telephoned Clinton and proposed that US helicopters drop French troops in Srebrenica to retake the town, which the US President believed was "hare-brained".²³⁶ Eventually Carl Bildt was able to dissuade Chirac from further pursuing

²³⁰ "Projet de résolution pour forcer un retrait serbe de Srebrenica", *AFP* (11 July 1995).

²³¹ "Srebrenica: la France prête à mettre 'tous ses moyens disponibles'", *Agence France Press* (12 July 1995).

²³² "M. Chirac: 'On se demande ce que fait la la FORPRONU'", AFP (12 Jully 1995).

²³³ Ibid

²³⁴ "M. Juppé: 'la France ne peut pas accepter la politique du fait accompli", AFP (12 July 1995).

²³⁵ "La Haye s'emeut des propos de M. de Charette", AFP (13 July 1995).

²³⁶ Power. "A Problem from Hell", 407.

the issue.²³⁷ However, this was an extremely astute strategy from the Chirac government who knew that the US was still unprepared to deploy ground troops in a combat role and was also prepared to accept a territorial *fait accompli* as they had with Operation Flash. France could retreat from its commitments in BiH not in shame but because the rest of the international community was not as committed to protecting the population as it was. The new President did not share his predecessor's faith in the effectiveness of multilateralism and was keen to undertake unilateral initiatives and lead by example. In terms of public relations, it was a master stroke that restored French prestige after it had been thoroughly downtrodden throughout the Bosnian conflict.

As reports emerged that, alongside vast forced expulsions, the Bosnian Serbs had committed atrocities in Srebrenica, Chirac's stand forced Clinton to admit that UNPROFOR's days "were numbered" in BiH.²³⁸ Sensing this to be the case, the Bosnian Serbs issued the peacekeepers in Žepa and Goražde with an ultimatum to leave the enclave whilst they continued the genocide in Srebrenica.²³⁹ On 14 July, the VRS attacked two UNPROFOR observation posts in Žepa, which led NATO to launch two fighters to survey the scene.²⁴⁰ In spite of the scenes in the eastern enclave, the UNSC and the US resisted French appeals for action in the other 'safe zones', only condemning the "unacceptable practice of ethnic cleansing."²⁴¹

Even France had resigned itself to the fact that Srebrenica had been abandoned and the time to recapture it had passed, but it continued to petition its partners to protect Tuzla, Goražde and Žepa.²⁴² Chirac had exposed the utter pusillanimity of the international community in the face of the Bosnian war's most visible horrors. Indeed, the international

²³⁷ Bildt, Carl. *Peace Journey: The Struggle for Peace in Bosnia* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998), 57-50

²³⁸ "Bill Clinton: les jours de la mission de l'ONU pourraient être 'comptés'", AFP (13 July 1995).

²³⁹ "Ultimatum serbe aux autorités de Zepa et Gorazde", AFP (14 July 1995).

²⁴⁰ "Zepa: survol d'avions de l'OTAN après le bombardement de postes de l'ONU", *AFP* (14 July 1995).

²⁴¹ "Le Conseil de sécurité condamne le nettoyage ethnique", AFP (14 July 1995).

²⁴² "Srebrenica perdue, les autres enclaves doivent être defendues", AFP (14 July 1995).

community's response was to call a conference in London on 21 July on the future of UNPROFOR, which effectively gave the Bosnian Serbs the greenlight to push ahead in their offensives in the meantime.²⁴³

On the ground, French peacekeepers embodied the new ethos of Chirac's BiH policy as they retaliated with great force against Bosnian Serbs on Mount Igman in Sarajevo. Following a Bosnian Serb attack on a UN convoy French peacekeepers launched 30 heavy shells, 9 tank shells and 30 smoke bombs against Bosnian Serb positions. One of the French UNPROFOR members highlighted that the attack had come on Bastille Day, which had bolstered their determination and pride.²⁴⁴

With this new bullishness, Defence Minister Charles Millon proposed the creation a multinational force, consisting of France, Britain, Germany and the US to occupy Goražde and protect Sarajevo to prevent their fall.²⁴⁵ If not, France would withdraw its contingents from BiH.²⁴⁶ Millon, following inconclusive meetings with his British and American counterparts, reflected: "There is no alternative solution. Either it is a programme of withdrawal with shame on the face of the entire international community... or the allies will decide to make very strong gestures in Goražde, on one hand, and Sarajevo, on the other."²⁴⁷ That Žepa was omitted from this plan indicates that, perhaps, the international community was willing to cede the territory to the Bosnian Serbs. Chirac was once more attempting to rouse the US from its isolationism, but, once more, the US prevaricated over the initiative; the US clearly favoured any operation to be carried out through NATO.²⁴⁸

The Foreign and Defence Ministers of the Contact Group and heads of diplomacy of the troop contributors gathered in London on 21 July to hammer out a new policy on

²⁴³ "Londres convoque une réunion internationale sur la Bosnie le 21 juillet", *AFP* (14 July 1995).

²⁴⁴ "Riposte massive des Casques bleus français contre l'artillerie serbe", *AFP* (14 July 1995).

²⁴⁵ "Bosnie-France", *AFP* (15 July 1995).

²⁴⁶ "Jacques Chirac exhorte les démocraties à défendre militairement Gorazde et Sarajevo", Le Monde (15

²⁴⁷ "Réunion 'jeudi ou vendredi' des ministres de la Defense et des Affaires", AFP (17 July 1995).

²⁴⁸ "Les États-Unis veulent des precisions de la France avant de lui repondre", *AFP* (15 July 1995).

BiH, with the fate of Žepa hanging by a thread and Goražde in grave danger. France's bullishness had caused it to be isolated and Chirac hesitantly declared that he was ready to accept an American ultimatum on Goražde underpinned by air strikes.²⁴⁹ Hervé de Charette had to concede defeat on France's proposition but was quick to qualify that "It is not at all a diplomatic failure."²⁵⁰

The international conference resulted in the West falling in line behind the US policy on the use of air force, issuing an ultimatum against the Bosnian Serbs in case of renewed attacks against Goražde. The RRF would provide ground support and reconnaissance. The British Defence Minister, Malcolm Rifkind, quickly proclaimed that "The meeting is a great success!" However, the Conference highlighted that the links with Russia fostered by the Contact Group had effectively ended and that, thenceforth, the US and NATO were at the forefront of operations. Clinton quickly declared that any use of force against the Bosnian Serbs would be decisive. Simultaneously, the US Special Envoy and Contact Group member Robert Frasure began US-led shuttle diplomacy and somewhat superseded Bildt and Stoltenberg. The US had begun to wake from its slumber and was directing the international policy on BiH, side-lining France and Europe in the process.

Pax Americana

In spite of the London Conference, Žepa fell to the Bosnian Serbs on 25 July. However, with the US at the helm, the loss of the eastern enclave recast the map of BiH in a way that made ethnic delineation far easier. Notwithstanding, the US was becoming increasingly

²⁴⁹ "La France 'prête a accepter' la proposition Américaine de frappes aériennes", AFP (20 July 1995).

²⁵⁰ "M. de Charette: si notre proposition n'est pas acceptée", AFP (21 July 1995).

²⁵¹ "Nouvelle mise en garde aux Serbes bosniaques et menaces de frappes aériennes", AFP (21 July 1995).

²⁵² Gow. Lack of Will, 275.

²⁵³ "Bill Clinton souligne que toute riposte aux Serbes sera 'decisive'", AFP (21 July 1995).

frustrated by the 'double-key' authorisation of air strikes in BiH, and Clinton spoke with Chirac on the subject, aware that the French President, supported by Boutros-Ghali, was concerned about the role of NATO.²⁵⁴ The French were now the greatest opposition to the US being able to finally lead policy on BiH and a story emerged in the *New York Times* that, in revenge for the death of two French peacekeepers, three French Mirage fighters had bombed Pale.²⁵⁵ Of course, if France had acted in such a way, its opposition to the US and its support of the 'double-key' would be entirely hypocritical. Washington was able to secure a modification of the 'double-key', which saw the UN military commanders on the ground given sole authority on behalf of the UN, removing the civil authority. In this case, it fell to General Bernard Janvier, and ergo France still held a key position in authorising NATO air strikes in BiH.²⁵⁶

As the US sought clarification on the 'double-key' and its Senate voted for the unilateral lifting of the arms embargo, the Bosnian Serbs had undertaken an offensive against Bihać on 26 July.²⁵⁷ NATO quickly began working on a plan to protect the 'safe zone'.²⁵⁸ Moreover, Croatia began to send assistance to the western pocket.²⁵⁹ Indeed, the Croatian war machine was whirring into life as the US warned that "The Serb offensive on Bihać is extremely serious and threatens to drag Croatia into the war to protect the enclave."²⁶⁰ The UN revealed that it was deeply concerned that Croatia would, in the following days, undertake an offensive against the Krajina Serbs.²⁶¹ Their fears would soon be realised.

²⁵⁴ "L'ultimatum aux Serbes bosniaques ne concerne que Gorazde", AFP (24 July 1995); Slama, Réné.

[&]quot;Divergences franco-américaines a l'ONU sur les frappes aériennes", AFP (25 July 1995).

²⁵⁵ "Washington convaincu que la France a bombardé Pale, selon le New York Times", AFP (25 July 1995).

²⁵⁶ "La déclaration de l'ONU sur les frappes aériennes en Bosnie (Encadré)", AFP (26 July 1995).

²⁵⁷ "Bill Clinton minimise la portée du vote du Senat", AFP (26 July 1995).

²⁵⁸ "Bihać: les militaires de l'OTAN ont commencà à travailler sur un plan", *AFP* (26 July 1995).

²⁵⁹ "La Croatie ne cherche pas a masquer son début d'aide militaire a Bihaé", AFP (27 July 1995).

²⁶⁰ "Washington: la nouvelle procédure de frappes vaut pour toutes les enclaves", AFP (27 July 1995).

²⁶¹ "L'ONU craint une action de la Croatie dans les prochains jours", AFP (28 July 1995).

Tudman launched an attack against Knin through Bihać, under the pretext that the Krajina Army and the VRS were planning to wipe out the Bihać pocket and then move to link the Self-Autonomous *Oblast* of Krajina with RS.²⁶² Russia moved to condemn the Croats through the UNSC but Germany and the US would not adopt a formal declaration.²⁶³ France, now aloof from the US strategy, condemned the latest attacks as Hervé de Charette stated that: "they [the attacks] are part of a logic of war, while France follows the logic of peace."²⁶⁴ Bildt and Stoltenberg organised a meeting between the Croats and the secessionist Krajina Serbs on 3 August 1995, but with Tudman ready to seize back the territory and reluctant support granted to the offensive by Clinton, the talks were doomed to fail.²⁶⁵

Until May, Tudman had still envisaged partitioning BiH between Croatia and Serbia and he sketched a map of his vision for the Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown at a banquet in London held to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the Second World War's conclusion (see map 11). Croatia required US support, and the US would not allow BiH to be wiped off the map. Therefore, Tudman sought to re-establish his authority over the Krajina. Between 4-7 August, Croatia launched 'Operation Storm' to reconquer Serb-held territories, sending 200,000 Croatian Serbs fleeing to RS and Serbia. The US immediately pounced on the offensive as its Defence Secretary William Perry declared that it offered "an opportunity to achieve a negotiated peace accord." The contours of *Pax Americana* were becoming more defined: mass population exchanges to create ethnically homogeneous territories in the region. Thus, the HVO pushed into BiH providing assistance to the ARBiH in driving the Bosnian Serbs eastwards.

²⁶² Ashbrook and Bakich. "Storming to partition", 545.

²⁶³ "Le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU divise a propos de l'offensive croate", AFP (31 July 1995).

²⁶⁴ "La France condamnera toute nouvelle action militaire croate", AFP (4 August 1995).

²⁶⁵ "Réunion à Geneve entre Croates et secessionnistes serbes de la Krajina", *AFP* (3 August 1995); Ashbrook and Bakich. "Storming to partition", 548.

²⁶⁶ Ashbrook and Bakich. "Storming to partition", 550.

²⁶⁷ "M. Perry: l'offensive croate ouvre la porte à une solution negociée", AFP (8 August 1995).

Washington attempted to renew the diplomatic process, whilst sending presidential adviser Anthony Lake to European capitals to secure support for its efforts.²⁶⁸ In the former Yugoslavia, Robert Frasure, supported by new delegations in Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia, sought to bring about a negotiated settlement once more. This settlement would maintain an independent BiH, with the Federation attached to Croatia and Republika Srpska linked to Serbia through confederal ties.²⁶⁹ The US envisaged a summit including the Contact Group and Tuđman, Izetbegović and Milošević.²⁷⁰

However, a week after proposing the conference the US diplomatic effort received a heavy blow when Robert Frasure, alongside two members of his diplomatic team and a French soldier, was killed when the vehicle he was travelling in plungde down a hillside outside Sarajevo.²⁷¹ The diplomatic effort momentarily halted, until Robert Frasure's replacement, Richard Holbrooke, was in place. In the meantime fighting continued in BiH as the increasingly pressurised Bosnian Serbs became desperate, bombing a refugee camp in Tuzla and engaging in heavy fighting with Croats in the southern town of Trebinje.²⁷²

As members of UNPROFOR began to withdraw from BiH at the end of the month, the Bosnian Serbs shelled Sarajevo killing 35 people on 28 August.²⁷³ Izetbegović was in Paris at the time, meeting with the US and Europeans to discuss the US's latest peace initiative. However, Izetbegović declared that he would suspend the negotiations unless the Bosnian Serb artillery surrounding Sarajevo was destroyed.²⁷⁴ De Charette assured Izetbegović that UNPROFOR would provide an appropriate response to the previous day's events.²⁷⁵ This was just the pretext that the US and NATO had been waiting for since the

²⁶⁸ "France-USA-Bosnie", AFP (10 August 1995).

²⁶⁹ "L'initiative Américaine prévoit une nouvelle conference sur la Bosnie", AFP (12 August 1995).

²⁷⁰ "L'initiative Américaine: des 'idées' de reglement et un sommet '5 + 3", AFP (12 August 1995).

²⁷¹ "L'accident de la délégation américaine entrave le processus diplomatique", AFP (19 August 1995).

²⁷² "Une mission d'observateurs européens attendue à Trebinje", *AFP* (23 August 1995); "Bombardements serbes sur le camp de refugies de Tuzla", *AFP* (23 August 1995).

²⁷³ "Washington favorable à une 'réponse militaire' au bombardement de Sarajevo", AFP (29 August 1995).

²⁷⁴ "M. Izetbegovic va demander une suspension des négociations de paix", AFP (29 August 1995).

²⁷⁵ "France-Bosnie-Serbes", AFP (29 August 1995).

London Conference a month earlier. On 30 August 1995, NATO launched 'Operation Deliberate Force', a campaign designed to inhibit the VRS and its heavy weapons. The RRF provided vital tactical support on the ground. One French Mirage jet that participated in the operation was shot down in the vicinity of Pale, with its two pilots being captured and taken hostage.²⁷⁶

Richard Holbrooke began his shuttle diplomacy in earnest with the significant assistance of NATO air force being brought to bear against the Bosnian Serbs. The campaign would continue until the Bosnian Serbs acquiesced and removed their heavy weapons from the exclusion zone around Sarajevo on 20 September. With the cover of NATO force the ARBiH, with significant support from the HVO, continued its offensive and drove the Bosnian Serbs further back until they held less land than at any point previously in the war. The Bosnian Prime Minister, Haris Silajdžić, declared in a television interview that the offensive would stop depending on how the Bosnian Serbs treated the peace process.²⁷⁷

The US continued to take the lead with Warren Christopher inviting the Foreign Ministers of Croatia, BiH and FRY on 26 September.²⁷⁸ However the Bosnian government threatened not partake in the discussions, as they remained concerned that RS wanted to leave BiH and unify with Serbia in the future. Similarly Tuđman announced that he would soon seek to liberate Vukovar, the last separatist stronghold in Croatia.²⁷⁹ However, the US was able to convince the Bosnian government to take part in the discussions, although there were significant differences between the parties.²⁸⁰ Nonetheless, the three sides

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²⁷⁶ "Un Mirage français abattu près de Pale, selon un responsable Américain", AFP (30 August 1995).

²⁷⁷ "L'arret de l'offensive croato-bosniaque depend des Serbes, selon M.Silajdzic", AFP (19 September 1995).

²⁷⁸ "Rencontre mardi à New York des ministres des Affaires étrangères bosniaque", *AFP* (21 September 1995).

²⁷⁹ "La logique de guerre relancée", *AFP* (24 September 1995).

²⁸⁰ "Pas d'accord après une première session de négociations", *AFP* (26 September 1995).

signed a provisional agreement as a constitutional basis ahead of further negotiations.²⁸¹ Richard Holbrooke then met with Hervé de Charette in his hotel suite at the UN.

De Charette was concerned that the Quai had been sidelined as Holbrooke chose to contact France through the President's *cellule diplomatique* at the Élysée.²⁸² The French Foreign Minister was eager to hold any forthcoming negotiations in France. He told Holbrooke: "The French press is saying that the United States had taken over the negotiations and left France standing on the sidelines... It must be held in France." As Holbrooke took his leave of de Charette, the Foreign Minister took the diplomat's arm and said, "This is very important to France." Eventually "to mollify them" the US agreed to the signing ceremony taking place in Paris. 285

Fighting diminished in BiH as a result of the agreement with the US securing a ceasefire from 10 October.²⁸⁶ If the ceasefire came into effect, and held, Clinton would invite the three heads of state – Milošević, Tuđman, and Izetbegović – to the US for intensive discussions on a peace plan for BiH; it worked.

On 1 November, the three Presidents arrived at the Wright-Patterson Air Base in Dayton, Ohio for three weeks of intensive negotiations. France, Europe and the United Nations who had played such a significant role over the preceding three years of the conflict had been sidelined by the US diplomacy. By the end the US had secured the 'Dayton Peace Accords', which resolved the conflict in BiH (see map 12). It split BiH along the 51-49 share that had been agreed as part of the Contact Group Plan and created a NATO implementation force (IFOR) to replace UNPROFOR.²⁸⁷ France would be charged with administering the south-eastern sector of BiH, which included Sarajevo (see map 13)

²⁸¹ "Les principaux points de la déclaration commune", AFP (28 September 1995).

²⁸² Holbrooke. To End a War, 186.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Ibid

²⁸⁶ "Cessez-le-feu en Bosnie à partir du 10 octobre", *Sud Ouest* (6 October 1995).

²⁸⁷ Gow. Lack of Will, 285.

and would contribute 10,000 troops to the force. It was initialled by the three Presidents in Dayton on 21 November, to be officially signed at a ceremony in Paris on 14 December.

Yet, for France there was one outstanding issue: the fate of the two pilots, Frédéric Chiffot and José Souvignet, who had been taken hostage on 30 August. The Bosnian Serbs had continued to hold the two men throughout the negotiations and the US were sufficiently pragmatic not to risk the entire peace process on their behalf. Chirac, however, made the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords in Paris contingent upon the release of the two peacekeepers with an international criminal lawyer for the ICTY, Gregor Guy-Smith, later noting that:

If there had been no Paris conference, there would have been no Dayton Peace Accord. Not only was a nation waiting for the return of these two gentlemen, the world was waiting for the return of these two gentlemen.²⁸⁸

Mladić's notebooks, which were seized whilst he was on the run in 2010, reveal that Jacques Chirac once more sent General de La Presle to speak with the Bosnian Serb General in early December to secure the release of the pilots. Chirac wanted a precise answer on the release of the pilots and had de La Presle deliver a message to Mladić to indicate that, "France has stated its readiness to support the lawful application of the Dayton agreement and object to the unfair transfer of Serbs, and is particularly interested in the situation in Sarajevo." Thus Chirac proposed that France should take over the role of holding Sarajevo, Goražde and Mostar. However, if the pilots were not returned to France "within hours or days" Chirac threatened Mladić with the following:

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²⁸⁸ Prosecutor v Perisić, Transcript, Case No. IT-04-81-T, 30 March 2011, 14798.

²⁸⁹ Prosecutor v Zdravko Tolimir, Exhibit P01427.E, Case No. IT-05-88/2, 24 November 2010, 141.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 142.

Having France withdraw its troops from Sarajevo and the staff would be moved to Igman, as would the battalion, which would suit the Muslims who want to enter those barracks, while the neighbourhoods would be left to the neighbourhoods. The Americans have been trying up to now to place a brigade in Sarajevo. In that case, France would implement the NATO plan.²⁹¹

Publicly France issued an ultimatum on 12 December that included possibly pushing for the reestablishment of economic sanctions and a reconfiguration of bilateral relations between France and Serbia.²⁹² The pressure paid off, as the two pilots were released on the day of the ultimatum and the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords at the Élysée took place two days later.²⁹³

In front of the world's media, Milošević, Tudman and Izetbegović signed the Dayton Peace Accords, officially titled the 'General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina', in *La Salle des Fêtes* in the Élysée Palace. As host, Chirac made the opening speech and was keen to emphasise the role that France had played in bringing peace to BiH. He recalled the 56 French lives that had been lost in the republic and reflected that: "France has spared no effort to the united, multicultural and democratic identity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is in this spirit that it will contribute to the full implementation of the agreement signed today." Indeed, France had spared little effort, and had been behind many initiatives aimed at maintaining a unified BiH. However, the more pragmatic, simplistic and robust diplomacy of the US over the course of the preceding six months had been more effective. To the quiet din of the international community's polite applause, the three leaders stood up and shook hands, marking the end of the bloodiest conflict in Europe since World War II.

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²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² "L'ultimatum de la France à la Serbie expire dimanche; Londres et Washington appuient Paris", *Le Monde* (11 December 1995).

²⁹³ "Bosnie-France-pilotes lead", AFP (12 December 1995).

²⁹⁴ MAE, Conférence de Paris sur la Bosnie-Herzégovine: Discours de Président de la République, M. Jacques Chirac (Paris, 14 December 1995). Accessed on 22 July 2015. http://basedoc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/.

Conclusion

France and Yugoslavia shared a far more complex historical relationship than the simple notion of the *amitié franco-yougoslav* suggests. This conception of a traditional friendship was a rhetorical device deployed at times of political expediency for one, or both, of the countries. As such, its vitality provides a useful perspective on the health of Franco-Yugoslav relations and the alignment of the two countries' foreign policy priorities. Throughout the twentieth century, Yugoslavia was a significant object of focus in French foreign policy. Accordingly, the Western Balkan state offers a useful viewpoint of French geopolitical preoccupations and European security dilemmas. France's early attempts to contest *les anglo-saxons* in Yugoslavia during the early-Cold War highlighted the Fourth Republic's reluctance to kowtow to US hegemony in the West. De Gaulle's unwillingness to engage with Yugoslavia – in part owing to his personal antagonism towards Tito – reflected the General's efforts to restore France to the highest ranks of international politics. The General did not see Tito's Yugoslavia as an equal, but as a junior partner and one that was over-achieving on the international stage.

By the time Mitterrand assumed the Presidency in 1981, Yugoslavia had certainly declined to the rank of a junior partner in international politics owing to its economic troubles and the death of its veteran leader Tito. However, as a symbol of a socialist 'Third Way' it still held a tremendous value and, as the newly elected PS embarked on its radical socialist programme, a reinvigorated *amitié* offered the French Socialists political credibility. However, the U-turn of 1983 represented a move away from an ideological socialism to a more technocratic vision, which was characterised by a commitment to the European political and economic project. In this respect, human rights and political freedom became more significant matters for Paris. Once more, this led to a divergence between France and the Yugoslav regime, which was increasingly reverting to authoritarianism in the face of political opposition caused by resurgent nationalism.

By the end of the 1980s, prescient voices in the French diplomacy were warning that the very future of the Yugoslav federation was at risk. However, events at the end of the Cold War overshadowed the developing existential crisis that confronted Yugoslavia. The predictability of the bloc system gave way to greater fragmentation, which Mitterrand was greatly concerned could threaten European peace and stability. The historical aspect of the President's analysis warned that events in the Western Balkans could once more provide the spark to a European conflict as it had in 1914. Amidst this process of fragmentation, Mitterrand sought to tie East European events into a pan-European framework by creating a European Confederation. In this context, a unified Yugoslavia was preferable to six new, potentially antagonistic, nations with potential minority problems. Therefore, reconfiguring Yugoslavia was a far more attractive proposition.

Throughout the Yugoslav crises, France sought to build and strengthen the multilateral institutions that Mitterrand saw as essential to establishing an international post-Cold War order. France remained a medium-sized power that would best be able to exert its influence through multilateral institutions where it was centrally-positioned amongst the world's most powerful nations. Mitterrand envisaged empowering these institutions in such a way that France's European and global vision could be achieved through them; US disengagement with Europe facilitated such an approach. Therefore, once it became evident that Yugoslavia was in a process of dissolution, France attempted to develop and strengthen European institutions through its crisis management. Through this experience, Europe would become more coherent and possess a stronger identity ahead of the impending Maastricht Treaty in December 1991. However, the reality was quite different. Although Germany, and particularly Helmut Kohl, attempted to hold the Community line for as long as possible, he eventually relented to public pressure and broke ranks with his European partners by recognising Croatia and Slovenia unilaterally on 16 December 1991. Independence in Croatia brought with it a cessation of hostilities, which

was protected by UNPROFOR. Sensing that, for the time being, a European peace force was a non-starter, France enthusiastically supported peacekeeping through the UN and was, throughout the Yugoslav crises, the single largest contributor of personnel to UNPROFOR.

European division over Yugoslavia led to a lack of leadership with regards to the deteriorating situation in BiH, much to the republic's detriment. By the time the EC engaged with Yugoslavia's most ethnically heterogeneous republic, BiH had already become embroiled in fratricidal and genocidal warfare. The deteriorating humanitarian situation led France to assume the mantle of European leadership as its Minister for Humanitarian Action, Bernard Kouchner, sought to alleviate the population's suffering whilst negotiators attempted to reach a political settlement. As the strangulation of Sarajevo by the VRS deprived the city's population of vital supplies, and amidst growing public concern in France, François Mitterrand made a dramatic visit to the besieged capital. His initiative encapsulated France's approach to the Bosnian crisis as he reopened the airport for humanitarian deliveries, bemoaned the horrific conditions for the civilian population and urged the leaders to reach a negotiated settlement. Therefore, throughout the Bosnian War, France proposed many key initiatives in this direction, which were often diluted by its partners in the inevitable polices of the lowest-common denominator that alltoo-often defines multilateral bodies. The opportunity to push serious initiatives through the UNSC often, and unfortunately, only came in the wake of the latest tragedy to befall the beleaguered populations of the former Yugoslavia. In these times, France remained determined to find a political solution, counselling against hasty moves towards unpredictable aerial campaigns.

Consequently, France steadfastly supported the internationally-brokered peace plans and offered necessary support and encouragement in an effort to bring about an end to the conflict. However, it required a unified approach to achieve the level of international

pressure required, and a willingness to implement the plans, for them to be successful. The distinct lack of political will to deploy combat-ready ground troops meant that any initiative would only be forthcoming in the face of the war's worst excesses; this was, in effect, the catalyst for Operation Determined Force and the Dayton Peace Accords. Mitterrand's amoral analysis accounted for this and sought to protect the population from such atrocities.

The VOPP was the most promising plan that could have maintained a unified BiH. Although there were deficiencies in the VOPP, as any plan aimed at trying to solve BiH's 'ethnic' problem, those nations and politicians who had been closely tied to the ICFY and the diplomacy of the Yugoslav crises supported it nonetheless, realising that its good far outweighed its bad. In this respect, France and, specifically, Mitterrand, were sufficiently nuanced in their moral and political calculations to understand the opportunity that the VOPP offered. However, the Manichaean moralising of the newly installed Clinton administration and its untimely championing of 'lift and strike' torpedoed the VOPP and, as such, represents a far greater diplomatic sin than any committed in Europe. Indeed, it would take two more years before a peace settlement could be imposed and it would require massive population expulsions and exterminations, sanctioned by the US in the case of Operation Storm, to bring about a map of Croatia and BiH more in keeping with US policy.

The election of Jacques Chirac in May 1995 brought a significant change to France's role in Bosnia and the international community. The Gaullist was far less concerned about multilateral institutions and resolving international crises, and more concerned with restoring French prestige in the context of a shameful international episode. Chirac, who thought of himself far more as the Commander-in-Chief than his predecessor, was prepared to sanction unilateral military actions and resort to force, as demonstrated by the establishment of the RRF. It was Chirac who proposed deploying the

RRF to recapture Srebrenica whilst the rest of the international community stood idly by. Therefore, although France had been sidelined by 'robust' US diplomacy, the President sought to gain international recognition for, and derive prestige from, France's involvement by hosting the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords at the Élysée Palace. Indeed, France deserves far greater recognition for its role in the dissolution of Yugoslavia, for better or worse.

Reflections

France's role in the international community's response to the dissolution of Yugoslavia is often overlooked and underestimated. It has frequently been portrayed as obstructive with many accounts choosing to focus on the words, rather than deeds, of François Mitterrand. This study has thus sought to integrate France in to the historiography of Yugoslavia's dissolution and, in doing so, provide a more nuanced evaluation of its role. Indeed, what emerges is an interesting narrative of Mitterrand's attempts to develop a French vision for post-Cold War security architecture in the midst of an international crisis.

In the field of French diplomatic history, this investigation seeks to build upon the work of Frédéric Bozo, who has reappraised, and provided a valuable insight into, France's role in the end of the Cold War. It also seeks to continue the work of scholars such as Josip Glaurdić and Norbert Both, both of whom have used archival documents to analyse Europe's and the Netherlands' roles respectively in Yugoslavia's dissolution. Regrettably, the archival basis for this initial study is incomplete and is one area for future study. It is hoped that the breadth of sources and secondary literature consulted herein provide sufficient support to the archival material.

What in many ways is a preliminary study demonstrates that there is significant scope for further potential research into French foreign policy in the post-Cold War period.

A detailed examination of French diplomatic practice during the second *cohabitation*

would provide an interesting insight into late *Mitterrandienne* policy. Similar investigations into the Transitrian War, the Nagorno-Karabakh War, and the Georgian Civil War, may offer a useful vantage point on France's diplomacy *vis-à-vis* the Russian Federation. More detailed historical investigations of Franco-Yugoslav relations, particularly during the presidencies of Pompidou and Giscard d'Estaing, would also provide illuminating perspectives on France's Cold War. Whilst a directly related comparison and 'sequel' to this study would be one on France's response to the Kosovo war.

Throughout this research project each chapter has uncovered new areas for further investigations. For example, the French UNPROFOR contingents are a consistent feature of Part Two of this study and would make for a fascinating history. Similarly, an investigation of the RRF, and a comparison with UNPROFOR, could lead to a useful analysis of post-Cold War peacekeeping. Indeed, by paying greater attention to France's post-Cold War vision and its efforts to develop multilateral institutions, scholars can continue to develop a more sophisticated understanding of the end of the Cold War and demonstrate that the move towards post-Cold War unipolarity was far from a foregone conclusion.

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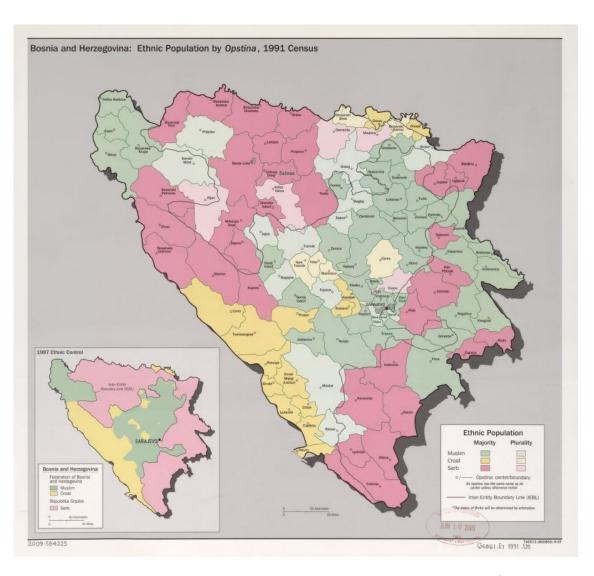
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Maps



Map 1 Bosnia-Hercegovina: Ethnic population by opština, 1991 census. 1

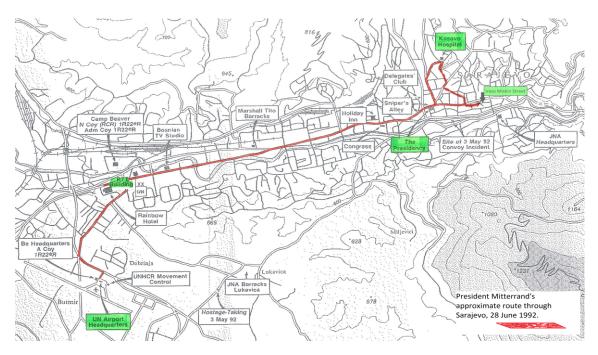
¹ Library of Congress, DI Cartography Center, 740573 (R00855), 8-97.



Map 2: Carrington-Cutileiro Plan, February 1992.²

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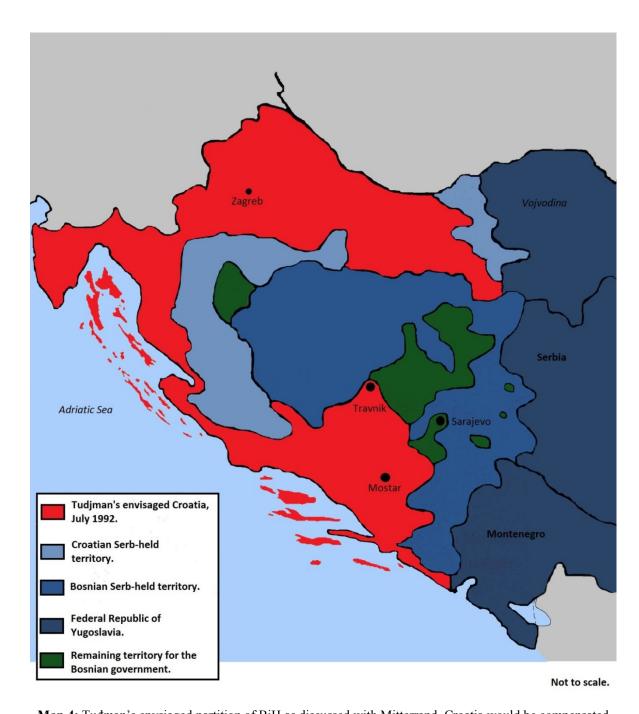
² Map taken from Partition Conflicts & Peace Process. Accessed 25 July 2015. http://www.partitionconflicts.com/partitions/regions/balkans/conflict/05_04_03/.



Map 3: President Mitterrand's approximate route through Sarajevo on 28 June 1992.³

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³ Map adapted by Author. MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper*, endpapers.



Map 4: Tuđman's envsiaged partition of BiH as discussed with Mitterrand. Croatia would be compensated for territory lost to the Krajina Serbs through territory in BiH.⁴

⁴ Map Drawn by Author.



Map 5: Vance-Owen Peace Plan, 2 January 1993.⁵

356

⁵ Map taken from Owen. *Balkan Odyssey*, 92.



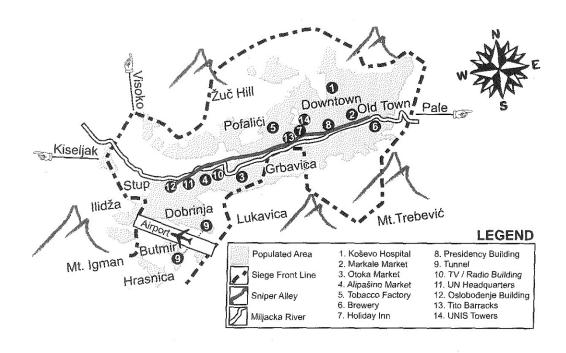
Map 6: Revised Vance-Owen Peace Plan, 8 February 1993⁶

⁶ Map taken from Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 93.



Map 7: Serb Proposal for Union of Three Republics, June 1993.⁷

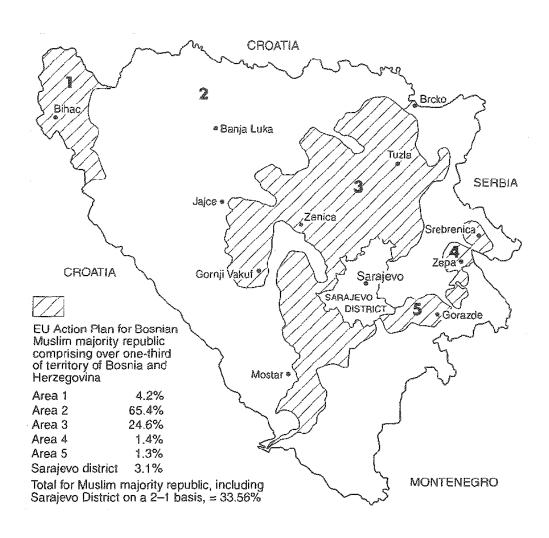
⁷ Map taken from Owen. *Balkan Odyssey*, 190.



Map 8: The Sarajevo Valley.8

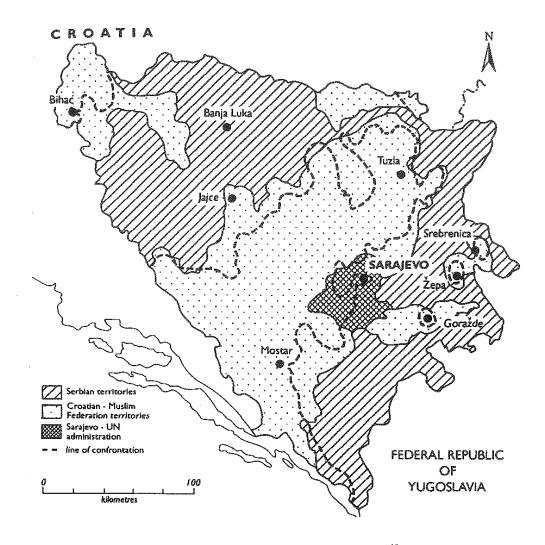
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⁸ Map taken from Andreas, Peter. *Blue Helmets and Black Markets: The Business of Survival in the Siege of* Sarajevo (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), xvi.



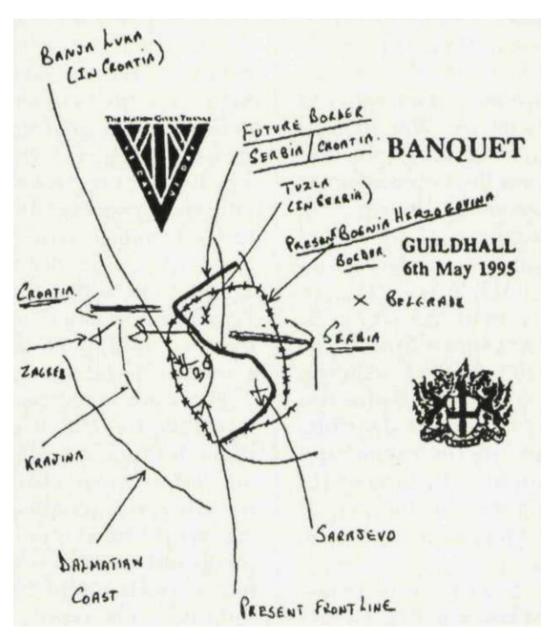
Map 9: EU Action Plan, December 1994-February 1994.9

⁹ Map taken from Owen. Balkan Odyssey, 237.



Map 10: The Contact Group Plan, July 1994. 10

¹⁰ Map taken from Gow. Lack of Will, 263.



Map 11: President Tuđman's envisaged partition of BiH, May 1995.11

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¹¹ Map taken from Drakulić, "Mapped Out", 15.



Map 12: Dayton Peace Accords, December 1995. 12

¹² Map taken from Gow. Lack of Will, 283.



Map 13: IFOR Areas of Responsibility in BiH. 13

¹³ Central Intelligence Agency, Impmentation Force (IFOR) areas of responsibility in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1996). Accessed on 25 July 2105. http://www.loc.gov/item/2009584319/.