FROM KINSHASA TO KANDAHAR: Canada and Fragile States in Historical Perspective
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BOSNIA:
From Failed State to Functioning State

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Introduction

The concept of failed states originated with a 1992 article in *Foreign Policy* by Gerald Helman and Steven Ratner.[1] One of the countries that Helman and Ratner explicitly identified as a failed state was Bosnia in the early 1990s. After declaring its independence in April 1992, Bosnia was the scene of the most vicious of the wars in the former Yugoslavia. By the end of the war in late 1995, Bosnia's population had decreased, through death and migration, from 4.3 million to less than 2 million.[2] Moreover, the tactics of the combatants were especially odious. Both sides targeted civilians through city sieges and ethnic cleansing. However, the Bosnian case is not just an example of a failed state; it is also an example of how, with the help of the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a failed state can be turned back into a functioning state.

This chapter has two objectives. First, it briefly describes, and assesses the success of, the UN peacekeeping operation that was deployed in Bosnia from February 1992 until the summer of 1995, when it was replaced by NATO. Second, this chapter analyzes Canada's contribution to the UN

Figure 1: Map. (Credit: Marilyn Croot)

peacekeeping operation, and explores how the Bosnian mission reflected a fundamental shift in Canadian foreign policy. Although Canada participated in a multilateral fashion, its participation in the Bosnian peacekeeping operation was important in several respects. Canadians held several senior leadership positions. For example, General Lewis MacKenzie was the first commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and led the critical task of re-opening the Sarajevo airport in the summer of 1992. Canada was also one of the largest troop contributors to UNPROFOR, with a peak contribution of 2,400 soldiers.

Canada's participation in UNPROFOR also represented a fundamental break from its past practices and policy preferences. First, it showed support for the dissolution of a federation. Leery of establishing a precedent

Figure 2: Canadian Major-General Lewis MacKenzie commanded the UN Protection Force charged with keeping Sarajevo's airport open and humanitarian aid flowing. He is shown here with Colonel Michel Forestier of the French Army, who was responsible for airport security. (Credit: DND Photo e011160351/LAC)

that might weaken its position with separatist forces in Quebec, Canada had previously supported the maintenance and unity of ethnically mixed countries. Second, it illustrated a willingness to support greater intervention into the internal affairs of states. In Bosnia (as well as Somalia and other operations in the early 1990s), Canada used its own military contribution on the ground and encouraged its coalition partners to move beyond the traditional concepts of peacekeeping—consent, impartiality, and limited use of force—to more forceful styles of peacekeeping. Early, or first generation, peacekeeping involved the UN interpositioning troops between two countries to monitor ceasefires. Later, or second generation, peacekeeping drew the UN into internal conflicts and greatly expanded its tasks to include monitoring/conducting elections, demobilizing troops, protecting humanitarian convoys, monitoring no-fly zones, and protecting

designated "safe areas."[3] Finally, the ultimate success of the Bosnian case provided an example of turning a failed state into a functioning state, encouraging Canada and its allies to intervene militarily in other failed states.

The Bosnian Conflict

Modern-day Yugoslavia was created at the end of World War II by Marshall Josip Broz Tito, the leader of the Yugoslav partisans. Yugoslavia was a federation of six republics: Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Montenegro. Although the boundaries of these republics were based on ethnicity, each republic contained substantial minority groups with strong ethnic identities. This was particularly true of Bosnia. Under Tito's highly centralized, dictatorial Communist government, these ethnic nationalisms were held in line.

This changed during the 1980s. As Yugoslavia's economy started to collapse, Croatia and Slovenia, the economic powers, demanded ever greater autonomy. This was granted, gradually turning Yugoslavia into a decentralized state. However, nationalist stirrings were not confined to Croatia and Slovenia. A key moment in the lead-up to Yugoslavia's disintegration was the 1987 rise of Slobodan Milošević to the Serbian Presidency. Part of Tito's unification strategy had been to keep Serbian nationalism controlled, a feeling that was summed up by Serbian nationalists with the phrase "a weak Serbia makes a strong Yugoslavia."[4] Milošević capitalized on this simmering Serbian nationalism by attempting to speak for all Serbs, no matter where they lived.

The catalyst for the war in Bosnia was a crisis in Kosovo, an autonomous province in Serbia of mainly Albanian ethnicity, but with a Serbian minority. A series of incidents in Kosovo in the late 1980s—dissolving the Kosovo Assembly, restricting the Albanian language, and repressing the Kosovar Albanians—revived old fears of Serbian nationalism and spurred the independence movements in the other republics. As a constitutional crisis erupted and dragged on for much of 1989–91, Yugoslavia slowly unravelled. Croatia and Slovenia formed their own armies, while paramilitary groups were organized by Serbians in the Krajina region of Croatia. All sides were preparing for the inevitable civil war. Finally, on 25 June

1991, Croatia and Slovenia declared themselves independent. The Serbs, backed by the Yugoslav National Army (JNA), responded with force, and the Yugoslav conflict had officially begun.

The first Yugoslav war pitted Serbia against Slovenia. It lasted only a week before the JNA, which was controlled by Serbia, gave up and allowed Slovenia to secede. There were two major reasons why the war in Slovenia was so short. First, Slovenia was the most homogenous republic, with a population that was over 90 percent Slovene. Thus, there was no large ethnic minority in Slovenia attempting to keep it in Yugoslavia. Second, Slovenia did not share a common border with Serbia, which was the republic most determined to keep the federation united.

The second war, between Croatia and the JNA and Serbia, was much more violent. Its first six months were hard-fought and bloody, climaxing in the siege of Dubrovnik. In addition, there were several instances of "ethnic cleansing" during the early stages of the war. Ethnic cleansing can be defined as "the elimination, by the ethnic group exercising control over a given territory, of members of other ethnic groups." In practice this included "harassment, discrimination, beatings, torture, rape, summary executions, expulsions, shelling of civilian population centres, relocation of populations by force, confiscation of property, and destruction of homes and places of worship and cultural institutions."[5] By January 1992, it appeared that the two sides had agreed to a ceasefire.

Conflict in the former Yugoslavia, however, was not over. Rather, Croats and Serbs trained their eyes on Bosnia. Each planned on helping their respective compatriots inside Bosnia to create a Greater Croatia or a Greater Serbia. Bosnia, nicknamed "little Yugoslavia" because its ethnic mix was similar to that of the country as a whole, faced a dilemma. The Bosnian government, with the exception of the Bosnian Serb component, wanted to remain part of a united Yugoslavia. However, after Croatia and Slovenia left, the Bosnian government decided that it had no choice but to secede as well. A referendum on independence was held on 1 March 1992 and passed overwhelmingly. Bosnia was recognized as a sovereign state by the European Community, the United States, and Canada in April 1992, and was accepted into the United Nations in May.

Bosnian Serbs, who made up 31 percent of the population, boycotted the referendum and launched an attack against the Muslim-dominated Bosnian government. The Bosnian Serbs were also supported by elements

of the JNA. At the beginning of the war there was an alliance between the Muslims and the Bosnian Croats against their common enemy, the Serbs. In fact, a formal defence treaty had been signed by the president of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Alija Izetbegović, and the president of Croatia, Franjo Tuđman. However, by the spring of 1993 this alliance had collapsed and the war had turned into a three-way fight with the Bosnian Croats joining the Bosnian Serbs in their attacks on the Muslims. The fighting between Bosnian Croats and Muslims ended with the signing of a ceasefire and the formation of the Bosnian Federation on 23 February 1994.[6]

The war in Bosnia led to a frightful humanitarian tragedy. By 21 April 1992, the conflict had resulted in over 230,000 displaced persons.[7] This number would continue to grow, so that by the end of the first year and a half of fighting there were 150,000 killed, 150,000 missing, and about two million refugees—all from a pre-war population of 4.3 million.[8] However, it was the nature of the suffering that grabbed the world's attention. The ethnic cleansing that had first begun in Croatia became even more widespread in Bosnia. Helsinki Watch asserted that genocide was being committed in Bosnia, particularly by the Bosnian Serbs.[9] The most arresting images emerged from the siege of Sarajevo. Sarajevo, which is the capital of Bosnia and inhabited by all three ethnic groups, came under siege on 4 April 1992. This led to severe rationing of food and gas. It was as a result of the dire humanitarian situation in Bosnia, which seemed to take on greater importance because it was in Europe's backyard, that UNPROFOR was deployed.

There were essentially three combatants in the Bosnian civil war, although there were also many additional paramilitary groups beyond the control of the three command structures. First, there were the Bosniacs, who were almost exclusively Muslim. The Bosniacs were led by Alija Izetbegović, who had been elected president of Bosnia in 1990. According to the last pre-war census in 1991, the Muslims represented 44 percent of Bosnia's 4.3 million inhabitants.[10] Although the Bosniacs in power quite rightly referred to themselves as the Government of Bosnia (there was some minor representation in the cabinet from the two non-Muslim ethnic groups), it was essentially a Muslim organization. Izetbegović was infamous for his "Islamic Declaration" of 1970, which called for "the creation of a united Islamic community from Morocco to Indonesia."[11] Izetbegović subsequently recanted this idea and promised a pluralistic Bosnia,

though many Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats feared that he was trying to turn Bosnia into an Islamic, rather than a secular, state.

Second, there were the Bosnian Serbs. Led by Radovan Karadžić and the Serbian Democratic Party of Bosnia-Herzegovina, they constituted 31 percent of the population. The Bosnian Serbs formed their own "parliament" in Pale and desired a union or close association with Serbia. Karadžić insisted that "it is impossible for Serbs to live together with other peoples in a unitary state."[12] The relationship between the Bosnian Serbs and Serbia, as events would later show, was not always cordial, nor were their war aims congruent. While many in the international community believed that Milošević could control Karadžić, it was soon apparent that Karadžić had his own goals and objectives.

Third, there were the Bosnian Croats, representing 17 percent of the population. The major Bosnian Croatian organization was the Croatian Defence Council led by Mate Boban, who wanted to form an autonomous Bosnian Croat republic with some type of association with Croatia proper. In fact, some observers considered Boban to be simply a puppet of Tuđman, and there were divisions among the Bosnian Croats, with some groups supporting an independent and unified Bosnia. These divisions led to the conflicting strategies that the Bosnian Croats pursued throughout the war, particularly in their tenuous alliance with the Bosniacs.

Several points need to be made when describing the pre-war ethnic composition of Bosnia. In contrast to the situation in Croatia, Bosnia's ethnic communities did not live in clusters but were distributed across its territory. This made the option of partition very difficult. Of Bosnia's 112 administrative units, Bosniacs held a majority in 37, Serbs in 32, Croats in 13, and 30 contained no majority at all. Moreover, there was plenty of intermarriage among the ethnic groups during the pre-war years. This meant that over 16 percent of Bosnian children in 1991 were from mixed marriages.[13] The situation was further complicated by the tendency of Bosnian Serbs, when they did live together, to congregate on the western side of Bosnia, the part of the country most removed from Serbia, which bordered the east. Thus, a critical strategic goal of the Bosnian Serbs was to secure a land route between Serbia and the west region of Bosnia.

Bosnia's ethnic dimensions led to one final consideration for the international community. There was great concern about the potential for intervention by neighbouring states. Keeping Serbia and Croatia from

continuing their war in Bosnian territory was, of course, a prime consideration, but there were also great fears that the war could spread throughout southern Europe.[14] These fears were expressed by United States Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger in late August 1992: "I think there's a real chance that this conflict can spread. It's what has terrified us all from the very beginning. It's been nothing but one escalation after another."[15]

The Bosnian conflict constituted a humanitarian crisis with accusations, from all sides, of ethnic cleansing, systematic rape, and even genocide. These atrocities were the catalyst for action from the international community. The conflict was being fought by three distinct, and unequal, ethnic groups: the almost wholly Muslim Bosniacs, who controlled the internationally recognized Bosnian government, but possessed few arms and had no regional sponsor; the Bosnian Serbs, who lacked recognition, but were well-armed and were receiving logistical support from Serbs in Belgrade; and the Bosnian Croats, who also lacked recognition, but were receiving assistance from Croats in Zagreb.

The unequal footing of the combatants, which turned the weaker Bosniacs into the clear victims, also divided the great powers. The Europeans, particularly the British and the French, viewed the conflict as a civil war. Although they acknowledged that Serbia was assisting its ethnic cousins in Bosnia, the Europeans correctly argued that the conflict was fought almost exclusively by Bosnians. Americans, however, insisted that the war was a simple case of Serbian aggression against Bosnia. In Washington's eyes, it was 1990 and Iraq's invasion of Kuwait all over again. Finally, efforts at conflict resolution were complicated because the nature of the ethnic distribution meant that partition without war was seen as an unlikely situation. Thus, UNPROFOR was deployed, in an internal conflict which had the potential of spreading, in order to prevent humanitarian suffering.

UNPROFOR in Bosnia

The UN's first presence in Bosnia arrived before the war had officially begun. The UN established the headquarters of UNPROFOR, which was responsible for monitoring the conflict in Croatia, in Sarajevo on 26 March 1992. The decision to place the headquarters of UNPROFOR in the

Bosnian capital was controversial. The UN hoped that its mere presence in Sarajevo would prevent conflict from erupting in Bosnia. However, the military leadership of UNPROFOR worried that "once we put the UN flag up in front of our headquarters, it will be a lightning rod for every problem in and around Sarajevo; yet we'll have neither mandate nor resources to deal with inevitable requests for help."[16]

The UN commanders were right—the establishment of UNPROFOR's headquarters in Sarajevo was a major error. This decision not only caused logistical difficulties for the Croatian operation but also failed to stop the conflict in Bosnia from igniting. Moreover, the UN's Sarajevo headquarters soon became a target for all sides in the Bosnian conflict. With no mandate in Bosnia, the UN was powerless to act and eventually had to transfer its civilian workers back to Zagreb. As the UN secretary-general noted in a report to the Security Council, "the establishment of UNPROFOR's headquarters in Sarajevo has not prevented a savage conflict from breaking out there."[17]

The UN was gradually creeping toward establishing a separate peacekeeping operation in Bosnia.[18] The UN judged that the fighting in Bosnia was due to the "concerted effort by the Serbs of Bosnia-Herzegovina."[19] It was also determined that the Bosnian Serbs were being assisted by Serbia. On 15 May 1992, the UN adopted Security Council Resolution 752, demanding "that Bosnia-Herzegovina's neighbours take swift action to end" all forms of interference "and respect the territorial integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina."[20] Two weeks later, after the brutal shelling of a Sarajevo breadline, the Security Council, acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter (the UN's enforcement mechanism), imposed comprehensive economic sanctions on Serbia because of its involvement in the Bosnian conflict.[21]

Resolution 752 also asked Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to "review the feasibility of protecting international humanitarian relief programmes … and of ensuring safe and secure access to Sarajevo airport."[22] The Sarajevo airport agreement was a major milestone for both the establishment of a peacekeeping operation in Bosnia and the role Canada would play in the conflict. Responding to this initiative, the secretary-general suggested that the UN could "provide armed protection for convoys of humanitarian supplies en route from Sarajevo Airport to distribution centres within that city." However, he warned that this type

of mission would not only be "extremely difficult and expensive" but also "could make it more difficult to secure the cooperation" that UNPROFOR needed in Croatia.[23] The Security Council, in Resolution 757, requested that Boutros-Ghali work with the Bosnian parties to achieve a "security zone encompassing Sarajevo and its airport," in order to "ensure unimpeded delivery of humanitarian supplies" throughout the city.[24]

On 5 June 1992, after three days of negotiations between Cedric Thornberry, the director of civil affairs for UNPROFOR, and the three Bosnian factions, an agreement was reached to re-open the airport. The deal gave UNPROFOR full responsibility for the functioning and security of the Sarajevo airport.[25] Canadian Major-General Lewis MacKenzie, who led the largest contingent in Sarajevo, was named UNPROFOR commander.

Implementing the airport agreement, which involved supervising the withdrawal of anti-aircraft weapons and the concentration of heavy weapons at agreed locations throughout Sarajevo, was not easy. Word of the airport agreement had led to renewed fighting between the Bosniacs and the Bosnian Serbs. As General MacKenzie noted, "this is a characteristic of peacekeeping assignments throughout the world: anytime there is a chance that UN action will freeze the status quo on the ground, the parties to the conflict go on a last-minute offensive to make as many territorial gains as possible before the appointed time for the ceasefire arrives."[26] Accordingly, each Bosnian party made additional demands that were not part of the original agreement. The Bosnian Serbs had effective control of the airport and did not want to give it up. Karadžić proposed that the Bosnian Serbs operate the airport for the UN, while the Bosniacs demanded that all heavy artillery be moved twenty kilometres outside of Sarajevo.[27] Although three of the basic conditions of the June 5 agreement were not yet established—a ceasefire, the complete concentration of heavy weaponry under UNPROFOR supervision, and the establishment of security corridors to allow for the delivery of humanitarian aid—UNPROFOR was taking strides to re-open the airport.[28] These efforts were aided by a surprise visit from French President Francois Mitterrand on 28 June. Finally, five days later, the Sarajevo airport was reopened, secured by Canadian and French troops, and nine planes full of humanitarian aid landed. This was a major achievement.

After the opening of the Sarajevo airport, UNPROFOR's mandate evolved to include additional tasks. First, it established a peacekeeping

Figure 3: The war in Bosnia demanded a more robust form of peacekeeping and troops equipped with heavy firepower. A Cougar armoured personal carrier is shown patrolling the winter roads of Bosnia. (Credit: DND Photo CFJIC ISC93-20060-23)

operation, solely for Bosnia, which was responsible for protecting humanitarian aid convoys.[29] Second, it created a no-fly zone over Bosnia and enlisted NATO to enforce the ban.[30] Third, it declared six safe areas in cities throughout Bosnia: Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zepa, Goražde, Bihac, and Srebrenica. These safe areas, as UN Security Council Resolution 819 put it, "should be free from any armed attack or any other hostile act."[31] Fourth, it agreed to monitor the February 1994 ceasefire agreement between the Bosniacs and the Bosnian Croats.[32]

UNPROFOR's mandate officially expired on 20 December 1995, when it transferred its authority to the NATO Implementation Force (IFOR). However, UNPROFOR's role as a peacekeeping operation effectively ended much earlier, when NATO's Operation Deliberate Force was launched on 29 August 1995. For several weeks, NATO used its superior air power to target Bosnian Serb ammunition and fuel depots, radar and communications sites, and command posts across Bosnia. The use of air strikes was a clear move away from peacekeeping and toward peace enforcement.

According to one Western diplomat, the strikes were also able successfully to "bomb [the Bosnian Serbs] to the negotiating table."[33] A temporary agreement was reached with the Bosnian Serbs on 14 September 1995, and the air strikes were ended. This interim agreement led to intense, high-level peace negotiations brokered by US diplomat Richard Holbrooke, which culminated in the Dayton Agreement of 21 November 1995.[34] Integral to the Dayton Agreement was the decision to implement it with sixty thousand NATO troops, a third of whom would be American.[35]

Assessing UNPROFOR's Success

There are four principal ways to measure the success of UNPROFOR.[36] The first indicator is whether UNPROFOR effectively fulfilled its four-part mandate. Though UNPROFOR had multiple tasks, it must be concluded that it was moderately successful. Despite being subject to frequent closure due to attacks or threat of attack, UNPROFOR reopened Sarajevo's airport, which handled more than 150,000 tons of humanitarian relief between 3 July 1992 and 30 May 1995. The UN force was more successful in enforcing the no-fly zone and monitoring the ceasefire between the Bosniacs and the Bosnian Croats. Crucially, however, UNPROFOR was unable to protect the humanitarian convoys that delivered aid from the airport, nor could it protect the safe areas. UNPROFOR was powerless to prevent the siege of Sarajevo and other cities. The situation was even worse in Srebrenica where, despite the presence of a thousand Dutch peacekeepers, the safe haven was overrun by Bosnian Serb forces in July 1995. It is estimated that around seven thousand civilians were killed in Srebrenica.

The success of UNPROFOR can be assessed by the extent to which it facilitated conflict resolution. The Dayton Agreement ended the war in 1995, but UNPROFOR's role in shaping that accord was limited. It was the combination of NATO air power and US political strength that led to the signing of the peace settlement. Some Western diplomats and UN administrators have argued that UNPROFOR was "invaluable" to the continuation of political negotiations in Bosnia by its efforts to constrain the fighting.[37] As one UN peacekeeping official argued, "without UNPROFOR there would be no agreement to reach. Everyone would have died in the

fighting."[38] However, the Bosniacs and their supporters argue otherwise, contending that UNPROFOR's presence prevented an earlier resolution of the conflict and, instead, helped prolong the fighting.[39] This less favourable view of UNPROFOR's ability to facilitate conflict resolution in Bosnia is the more accurate. UNPROFOR was deployed in Bosnia for almost four years, but a peace agreement was only reached when the mission was, for all intents and purposes, taken out of their hands. As Professor Michael Wesley has concluded, UNPROFOR was "worse than ineffectual"; they acted "as impediments to the termination of the conflict."[40]

Was UNPROFOR successful at containing the conflict? There was great fear in many Western capitals that the fighting in Bosnia would spread throughout the region, but, in fact, the conflict remained in Bosnia. Military experts state that without the constraining presence of UNPROFOR, the Bosnian Serbs would have captured all of Bosnia.[41] This might have led to either the spread of war throughout the Balkans or Croatian intervention. Either of these consequences would have led to a larger war, possibly involving regional or great power intervention. However, UNPROFOR's failure in important parts of its mandate led NATO countries to deploy 60,000 troops to Bosnia. The arrival of that many troops from North America and Western Europe could hardly be seen as containing the conflict.

Finally, was UNPROFOR successful at limiting casualties? While UNPROFOR was moderately effective at limiting factional fighting and protecting Bosnian civilians from shelling and sniper fire, it failed to stop the widespread ethnic cleansing that took place on its watch. Admittedly, ethnic cleansing had begun in Bosnia with the start of the war in April 1992, a month before UNRPROFOR arrived in Sarajevo. Moreover, the peacekeepers' role was limited to that city until their mandate was expanded in September to embrace the entire country. Over the next three years, however, the force proved unable to stop the killing; the Srebrenica Massacre provides especially painful evidence that UNPROFOR was powerless to stop ethnic cleansing in Bosnia.

UNPROFOR was ultimately a failed peacekeeping operation. The only area where UNPROFOR received even a partial passing grade was in its mandate performance, and even there its inability to protect designated safe areas represented a deep stain on its mission. Meanwhile, under every

other indicator of success—facilitating conflict resolution, conflict containment, and limiting casualties—UNPROFOR failed.

Why did UNPROFOR fail? The UN Secretariat argued that UNPROFOR "has not, of course, ended the war in that strife-torn country, but it has been neither mandated nor equipped to do that."[42] UNPROFOR was deployed as a half-measure because the Security Council members were not initially prepared to commit to a large-scale operation in Bosnia, but neither could they ignore the crisis. Thus, a humanitarian peacekeeping operation was created to alleviate civilian suffering while negotiations to end the conflict proceeded. As one Bosniac official correctly stated, "the UN redefined the conflict to meet their solution."[43] The underlying truth was that peacekeeping was "used as a palliative, an alibi, an excuse to cover the lack of political will to confront the reality of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina."[44]

Assessing Canada's Contribution to UNPROFOR

Canada was one of the largest troop contributors to UNPROFOR, supplying over 6 percent of UNPROFOR's maximum strength of 40,000. At its peak, Canada supplied 2,400 troops plus unarmed military observers and civilian police officers, and at critical junctures, such as June–July 1992, Canada was the single largest, most equipped, and best trained contingent. Canada also arrived early and stayed late. Its first troops arrived in April 1992 and stayed until the end of the UN mission in December 1995.[45] Only the British and French supplied more troops than Canada to UNPROFOR over its lifetime.

Although the Canadian contingent performed many different tasks in Bosnia, it filled two roles that were very important: opening the Sarajevo airport and protecting the safe area of Srebrenica. The first task, carried out in July 1992, was a major accomplishment for UNPROFOR, as it created a crucial corridor with the outside world to bring in humanitarian relief supplies. As force commander Lewis MacKenzie recalled twenty years later, "for 30 days, commencing July 2, Canadian soldiers led by Lieutenant-Colonel Michel Jones and operating in an extremely dangerous environment facilitated the delivery of approximately 300 tonnes of

food and medical supplies a day to a city that was short of both. Soldiers risked their lives rescuing Sarajevans who were wounded and exposed to sniper fire."[46] To complete the assignment, the 850-strong Canadian battle group, a combination of the Royal Canadian and Royal 22nd regiments, brought in some heavy firepower: a hundred armoured personnel carriers, anti-tank missile systems, and high-explosive ammunition. They also expanded the rules of engagement to allow for the use of force to protect the mission. In both of these instances, MacKenzie was violating the existing rules for UN peacekeeping.[47]

The second task was protecting the safe area of Srebrenica. In March 1993, a 330-strong Canadian company was dispatched through Bosnian Serb–occupied territory to Srebrenica with a multi-pronged agenda: establish observation posts in the city, facilitate the delivery and distribution of humanitarian aid, disarm the Bosniacs inside the city, and protect the city from the Bosnian Serb forces. This was a dangerous mission and the Canadians were often under fire, but they were relatively successful in establishing Srebrenica as a safe area. The city was still under threat from Bosnian Serb attacks, and the surrounding countryside was being ethnically cleansed. Srebrenica was, as Canada's External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall described, like "living in a ghetto or in a fortress. There is no freedom of movement, no freedom of economic activity."[48]

The Canadians remained in Srebrenica until March 1994, when they were replaced by a Dutch contingent. While the Canadians were largely successful in protecting Srebrenica, the same could not be said of their replacements. In July 1995, one thousand Dutch peacekeepers were forced to evacuate the city under threat from the Bosnian Serbs, led by General Ratko Mladić, who had a substantially larger force massed on its outskirts. When the peacekeepers fled, Mladić's forces entered the city and separated the military-aged men from the women, children, and elderly. The men were murdered and many of the women were raped. Over seven thousand people were massacred. Mladić would later be indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia for his part in the Srebrenica massacre. He is currently on trial in The Hague with a decision expected in 2016.

Shift in Canadian Foreign Policy

The Bosnian operation illustrated a major shift in Canadian foreign policy. It supported Bosnian independence from the former Yugoslavia and even took military action to defend Bosnia from external, as well as internal, actors who wished to partition the country. Traditionally, Canada had always supported the unity of federal states. This was due to the spectre of Quebec separatism in Canadian domestic politics. The fear of nationalism, and its potential to break up the federation, was one of the sources of commonality that Canadian diplomats often brought up with their Yugoslav counterparts during the Cold War era.[49] Even when Yugoslavia started to collapse in the late 1980s, Ottawa initially favoured keeping the country united.[50] Yet, by the early 1990s, Canada was supporting the self-determination of the breakaway Yugoslav republics. When Slovenia and Croatia announced their independence on 25 June 1991, Canada, following the lead of Germany, officially recognized the new states on 16 January 1992. Progressive Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney explained that "the Yugoslav federation as we have known it no longer exists and cannot be reconstituted by force."[51] Canada extended diplomatic recognition to Bosnia on 8 April 1992, a month after a referendum—boycotted by the Bosnian Serbs—overwhelmingly affirmed Bosnian independence.

It is important to note that Canada recognized these secessionist states in the midst of a major national unity crisis back home. The Meech Lake Accord, designed to convince Quebec to sign the 1982 Canadian Constitution, was unravelling, while support for separation spiked in Quebec. The federal cabinet was in full disarray. A prominent minister and close Mulroney confidant, Lucien Bouchard, bolted from Cabinet and formed the Bloc Québécois, a new nationalist party. When the Parti Québécois formed the provincial government in 1994, it immediately launched plans for a second referendum on Quebec sovereignty. Although the 1995 referendum was narrowly defeated, the spectre of Canada breaking apart could not be separated from Ottawa's support of Bosnia's secession from Yugoslavia. Canadian officials maintained that secession was permissible in failed states, such as Yugoslavia, but not in highly developed democratic states such as Canada.

The second major shift was to support greater intervention, including military intervention, into the internal affairs of states. This was a fundamental break from Canada's previous policy of non-intervention in failed states. Even in cases of humanitarian crises, such as Biafra in the 1960s, and Bangladesh and Cambodia in the 1970s, Canada was a firm believer in Article 2.7 of the UN Charter, which stated that "nothing contained in the present Charter shall authorize the United Nations to intervene in matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state or shall require the Members to submit such matters to settlement under the present Charter; but this principle shall not prejudice the application of enforcement measures under Chapter VII."

But Canada reversed this historic policy in the case of Bosnia. In the spring of 1992, Mulroney pleaded for "the UN and its member states" to "intervene earlier and stronger in the future to prevent such disasters…. What kind of signal does it send when the world turns a blind eye to the carnage?" Bosnia "followed the rules established by the UN" and "they took the world's word, but they were left to fend for themselves against heavily armed opposition." The result has been "a disgrace for humanity."[52] A year later, McDougall further emphasized this point. "We have to reconsider the UN's traditional definition of state sovereignty," she argued. "I believe that states can no longer argue sovereignty as a licence for internal repression, when the absolutes of that sovereignty shield conflicts that eventually could become international in scope." There should be "no protection to those guilty of breaches of the common moral codes enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."[53]

As the conflict in Bosnia escalated, despite the presence of UN peacekeepers, Canada began advocating, both at the UN and in NATO, for greater military intervention. Canada wanted to expand the rules of engagement for the troops on the ground (including the Canadian contingent), give more authority for NATO warships in the Adriatic (which included the Canadian destroyer HMCS *Iroquois*) to enforce the arms embargo, and authorize the use of air strikes. This support for more aggressive rules of engagement was a direct consequence of MacKenzie's experience in changing UN Chapter VI rules, which limited peacekeepers to light arms and to shooting only in self-defence, to more robust rules of engagement in order successfully to defend the Sarajevo airport. This meant, as MacKenzie explained, "if those bastards fired at the aircraft

when it was landing, unloading or taking off, then we could take them out."[54] In other words, the UN's rules of engagement shifted from permitting individual self-defence to allowing "self-defence" of the mission. This reconceptualization of self-defence would later be used for much of UN-PROFOR's mandate—for example, in protecting the UN's designated safe areas. Demanding, and in many cases using, greater degrees of force did not come without consequences. UN peacekeepers, including Canadians, were sometimes taken hostage by the much larger Bosnian Serb army. For example, in November 1994, fifty-five Canadian peacekeepers were taken hostage, and again, in May 1995, video footage of Canadian Captain Patrick Rechner handcuffed to a pole in Pale was transmitted across the globe. More tragically, twenty-three Canadians lost their lives in Bosnia.

What explains this significant shift in Canadian policy, which was seen in Bosnia, as well as in other failed states like Somalia and Cambodia? First, the end of the Cold War allowed the concept of state sovereignty to be reconfigured. Studies of UN behaviour during the Cold War revealed a strong commitment to the non-intervention doctrine,[55] but the early years after the end of the Cold War provided an opportunity for intervening in internal conflicts that had been fuelled by the American-Soviet rivalry.[56] The end of the Cold War also ended the stalemate between the Americans and the Soviets on the Security Council. With fewer vetoes, or threats of vetoes, the Security Council could make bolder and bolder decisions. UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali pronounced that "the time of absolute and exclusive sovereignty . . . has passed; its theory was never matched by reality."[57] Between 1988 and 1994, the UN sent peacekeeping missions to Angola, Namibia, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Western Sahara, Cambodia, Croatia, Somalia, Macedonia, Mozambique, Haiti, Liberia, Rwanda, Chad, and Tajikistan, as well as to Bosnia. Canada also accepted this new conception of sovereignty. Prime Minister Mulroney announced in a major speech in 1991 that Canada was receptive to "re-thinking the limits of national sovereignty in a world where problems respect no borders."[58]

Second, Ottawa policymakers placed increasing importance on human rights in international relations. The severe humanitarian crisis in Bosnia, which included concentration camps, city sieges, refugees and internally displaced people, ethnic cleansing, civilian massacres, and the organized raping of women, required a strong response. Philosophers had

been developing the concept of humanitarian intervention for centuries. Michael Walzer, one of the key modern advocates of humanitarian intervention, argued that it was "justified when it is a response (with reasonable expectations of success) to acts 'that shock the moral conscience of mankind.'" As Walzer further noted, "when a people are being massacred, we don't require that they pass the test of self-help before coming to their aid. It is their very incapacity that brings us in."[59] This sentiment was repeated by McDougall in a speech to the UN General Assembly on 25 September 1991. McDougall argued that "a collapse of effective governmental authority in Yugoslavia, if it continues, could . . . endanger peace and security in neighbouring countries. So the concept of sovereignty must respect higher principles, including the need to preserve human life from wanton destruction."[60]

Third, Ottawa was influenced by the successful use of military force in the Gulf War, where a US-led, but UN-authorized, taskforce forcibly removed Iraq from Kuwait. The Gulf War showed Canada, which supported the operation both politically and militarily, the effectiveness of force in international relations. It also proved to Canadian policymakers that Canada did not have to restrict itself solely to UN peacekeeping operations but could participate in a range of military activities. When discussing Canada's military role in the Gulf War, External Affairs Minister Joe Clark cited its previous military action in Korea—and also foreshadowed future operations in Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Libya—when he said that "Canada will continue as a peacekeeper and we will continue as a peacemaker."[61]

Conclusion

Bosnia is significant for a number of reasons. First, it was, along with Somalia, one of the first failed states of the post–Cold War era. Second, it was the site of a large UN and NATO intervention. While the UN peacekeeping operation of 1992–95 was a failure, it did set the stage for a subsequent humanitarian intervention led by NATO that produced peace in Bosnia. Bosnia is an example of a failed state becoming a functioning state. From a Canadian viewpoint, Bosnia represented a major military and diplomatic

initiative. Canada put a large number of troops on the ground for a sustained period of time, and Prime Minister Mulroney took a personal interest in the operation, which saw him work the phones of other UN and NATO leaders. More significantly, Bosnia illustrated a fundamental shift in Canadian foreign policy in terms of dealing with secessionist states and doctrines of intervention. These shifts reflected the experiences of Canadian soldiers on the ground in Bosnia, as well as new strategic thinking in Canada by government officials in the Prime Minister's Office, External Affairs, and National Defence. More importantly, these shifts may have originated within the Mulroney government, but they have been adopted by successive Canadian governments led by Jean Chrétien, Paul Martin, and Stephen Harper. Concepts such as human security and the responsibility to protect, and military operations in more recent failed states such as Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Libya, can all be traced back to the principles enunciated during the Bosnian conflict.

Notes

1   Gerald B. Helman and Steven R. Ratner, "Saving Failed States," *Foreign Policy* 89 (Winter 1992–93): 3–20.

2   United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *Information Notes on the Former Yugoslavia* (July 1994), 11.

3   For a good description of these changes, see William J. Durch, ed., *The Evolution of UN Peacekeeping: Case Studies and Comparative Analysis* (Washington: Henry L. Stimson Center, 1993).

4   Mihailo Crnobrnja, *The Yugoslav Drama* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 99.

5   United Nations Department of Public Information, *The United Nations and the Situation in the Former Yugoslavia* (May 1993), 25.

6   United Nations document (hereafter UN doc), S/1994/291, Annex, 11 March 1994.

7   UN doc, S/23836, 24 April 1992.

8   Crnobrnja, *The Yugoslav Drama*, 178.

9   Helsinki Watch, *War Crimes in Bosnia-Hercegovina,* vols. 1–2 (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1992). Also see *New York Newsday* foreign correspondent Roy Gutman's 1993 Pulitzer Prize–winning series of articles on "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia. Roy Gutman, *A Witness to Genocide* (New York: MacMillan, 1993).

10   All census figures about Bosnia are from United Nations, *The Blue Helmets: A Review of United Nations Peace-Keeping*, 3rd ed. (New York: UN Department of Public Information, 1996), 487.

11   Quoted in John Zametica, *The Yugoslav Conflict*, Adelphi Paper 270 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, Summer 1992), 38.

12   Quoted in Helsinki Watch, *War Crimes in Bosnia-Hercegovina*, vol. 1, 46.

13   Crnobrnja, *The Yugoslav Drama,* 23.

14   Kosovo and Macedonia were thought to be the next sites for the growing wars in the former Yugoslavia. In addition, all seven of the former Yugoslavia's neighbours—Italy, Austria, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Greece, and Albania—had interests in the Bosnian conflict. Also showing interest in the conflict were Russia and Turkey. For an analysis of the international dimension to the Bosnian conflict, see Zametica, *The Yugoslav Conflict*, 46–74.

15   Quoted in *New York Times*, 22 August 1992, A3.

16   Major-General (Retired) Lewis MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper: The Road to Sarajevo* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1993), 106–7.

17   UN doc, S/23900, 12 May 1992.

18   There had been forty military observers deployed to Mostar in April 1992 to monitor an initial ceasefire, but these observers were withdrawn a couple of weeks later.

19   UN doc, S/23900, 12 May 1992.

20   UN doc, S/Res/752, 15 May 1992.

21   UN doc, S/Res/757, 30 May 1992.

22   UN doc, S/Res/752, 15 May 1992.

23   UN doc, S/24000, 26 May 1992.

24   UN doc, S/Res/757, 30 May 1992.

25   For the full text of the Sarajevo Airport Agreement, see UN doc, S/24075, Annex, 6 June 1992.

26   MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper*, 204.

27   Ibid., 209–20.

28   UN doc, S/24263, 10 July 1992.

29   UN doc, S/Res/776, 14 September 1992.

30   UN doc, S/Res/816, 31 March 1993.

31   UN doc, S/Res/819, 16 April 1993. Also see S/Res/824, 6 May 1993 and S/Res/836, 4 June 1993.

32   UN doc, S/Res/908, 31 March 1994.

33   *Globe and Mail*, 31 August 1995, A1.

34   UN doc, A/50/790—S/1995/999, 21 November 1995.

35   UN doc, S/Res/1031, 15 December 1995.

36   This methodology is adapted from Duane Bratt, "Assessing the Success of UN Peacekeeping Operations," *International Peacekeeping* 3, no. 4 (Winter 1996): 64–81. For a more elaborate mechanism, see Paul F. Diehl, *Evaluating Peace Operations* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010).

37   Confidential interviews, New York, 8–16 November 1994.

38   Confidential interview, New York, 14 November 1994.

39   Confidential interview with Bosniac officials, New York, 15 November 1994.

40   Michael Wesley, "Blue Berets or Blindfolds? Peacekeeping and the Hostage Effect," *International Peacekeeping* 2, no. 4 (Winter 1995): 458.

41   Confidential interviews, New York, 8–16 November 1994.

42   UN doc, S/1994/300, 16 March 1994.

43   Confidential interview, New York, 15 November 1994.

44   Confidential interview, New York, 16 November 1994.

45   When NATO replaced the UN in Bosnia in December 1995, Canada remained in the country in varying numbers (the peak was 1,000 soldiers) and in several capacities. The last Canadian soldier did not leave Bosnia until 2010.

46   Lewis MacKenzie, "Coming to the Aid of Sarajevo," *Globe and Mail*, 3 July 2012.

47   Carol Off, *The Lion, the Fox, and the Eagle* (Vintage: Toronto, 2000), 190–91.

48   Quoted in Nicholas Gammer, *From Peacekeeping to Peacemaking: Canada's Response to the Yugoslav Crisis* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 160.

49   Ibid., 47–49.

50   Ibid., 56.

51   Quoted in ibid., 126.

52   Quoted in ibid., 98.

53   Quoted in ibid., 101.

54   Quoted in Off, *The Lion, the Fox, and the Eagle*, 191.

55   See Hugh Miall, *The Peacemakers: Peaceful Settlement of Disputes since 1945* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1992) and N. A. Pelcovits and Kevin L. Kramer, "Local Conflicts and UN Peacekeeping: The Uses of Computerized Data," *International Studies Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (December 1976): 533–52.

56   Lori Fisler Damrosch, ed., *Enforcing Restraint: Collective Intervention in Internal Conflicts* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1993).

57   Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping* (New York: United Nations Department of Public Information, 1992), 9.

58   Office of the Prime Minister, "Notes for an address by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney on the occasion of the centennial anniversary convocation," Stanford University, 29 September 1991.

59   Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (Basic Books: New York, 1977), 106–7.

60   Quoted in Tom Keating and Nick Gammer, "The 'New Look' in Canadian Foreign Policy," *International Journal* 48, no. 4 (Autumn 1993): 725.

61   Quoted in Gammer, *From Peacekeeping to Peacemaking*, 69.