

The Ousting of Boutros-Ghali and the American Unipolar Moment:  
The Deterioration of the UN-U.S. Relationship during the war in Bosnia-  
Herzegovina (1989-1997)

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## List of Abbreviations

**DPA:** UN Department of Peacekeeping Affairs  
**DPKO:** UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations  
**EC:** European Community  
**EOSG:** Executive Office of the Secretary-General  
**FRY:** Former Republic of Yugoslavia  
**ICTY:** International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia  
**IFOR:** Implementation Force  
**NATO:** North Atlantic Treaty Organization  
**NSC:** U.S. National Security Council  
**OAU:** Organization of African Unity  
**UNSC:** Security Council  
**UN:** United Nations  
**UNPROFOR:** United Nations Protection Force (first UN peacekeeping force in Bosnia)  
**VOPP:** Vance-Owen Peace Plan

## Cast of Characters

### **United Nations and European countries**

*Jean-Claude Aimé*: U.N. Secretary General's Chief of Staff (1990-1997)  
*Yasushi Akashi*: Senior UN Envoy to the Former Yugoslavia (1993-1995)  
*Boutros Boutros-Ghali*: U.N. Secretary-General (1990-1997)  
*Jan Eliasson*: Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Humanitarian Affairs (1992-1993)  
*Charles Hill*: Special Adviser on Policy to the U.N. Secretary-General (1992-1996)  
*David Owen*: Co-Chairman of the European Union International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia; author of the Vance-Owen Peace Plan  
*General Philippe Morillon*: Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (1992-1993)  
*Rupert Smith*: Lieutenant General, British Army; Commander of UN forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina (1994-1996)  
*Cyrus Vance*: Secretary of State under President Jimmy Carter (1977-1980), author of the Vance-Owen Peace Plan

### **United States**

*Madeleine Albright*: U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. (1993-1997); Secretary of State (1997-2001)  
*James Baker III*: U.S. Secretary of State under George H.W. Bush (1989-1992)  
*Sandy Berger*: U.S. Deputy National Security Advisor under Clinton (1993-1997)  
*George H.W. Bush*: President of the United States (1989-1993)  
*Warren Christopher*: U.S. Secretary of State under Clinton (1993-1997)  
*Bill Clinton*: President of the United States (1993-2001)  
*Bob Dole*: Republican Senator for Kansas, (1969-1996), Majority Leader of the United States Senate (1995–1996), Republican nominee in the 1996 U.S. Presidential Election  
*Lawrence Eagleburger*: Secretary of State under George H.W. Bush (1992-1993)  
*Jesse Helms*: Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (1995-2001)  
*Richard Holbrooke*: Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, chief negotiator of the Dayton Peace Accords (1994-1996)  
*Anthony Lake*: National Security Advisor under Clinton (1993-1997)  
*James P. Rubin*: Senior Adviser and Spokesman for Madeleine Albright (1993-1996)  
*Strobe Talbott*: Deputy Secretary of State under Clinton (1994-2001)  
*William Perry*: Secretary of Defense under Clinton (1994-1997)  
*Colin Powell*: Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staffs (1989-1993)

### **Federal Republic of Yugoslavia**

*Alija Izetbegović*: President of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1990-2000)  
*Radovan Karadžić*: President of the Bosnian Serb Republic (1992-1996)  
*Slobodan Milošević*: President of the Republic of Serbia (1989-1997)  
*Ratko Mladić*: General, Commander of Bosnian Serb Army (1992-96)  
*Franjo Tuđman*: President of Croatia (1992-1999)

## Introduction

*“The office of secretary-general is, by design, weak yet pivotal.... Yet in a world organization whose member states differ vastly in wealth, power, and size, the secretary-general often serves as the fulcrum for cooperative progress. But all comes down to politics, again and again.”*

– Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 9.<sup>1</sup>

On New Year’s Day in 1997, United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali boarded a plane from New York to his home country of Egypt. He had just become the only UN Secretary-General to ever have been denied a second term. The only country that had opposed his re-election at the Security Council, and used its veto to deprive him of it, was the U.S. During the flight, he began reflecting on his legacy and the events of the last five years that led to his ousting.<sup>2</sup> Upon his arrival in Cairo, he began writing his memoir, *Unvanquished*, in which he told the story how he and the UN were “scapegoated, abused and permanently damaged” by the U.S. and officials of the Clinton administration. He argued that they had single-handedly destroyed the potential for the UN to create a “post-Cold War structure for international peace and security,” and turned peacekeeping operations into tragedies when they attempted to seem involved, while simultaneously evading difficult decisions and responsibilities.<sup>3</sup>

In the memoir, the 1992-1995 war and peacekeeping operation in Bosnia-Herzegovina is where Boutros-Ghali’s contempt towards the U.S. is most glaring.<sup>4</sup> Richard Holbrooke, the American architect of the Dayton Accords that formally ended the war, also cited the conflict as the main reason for the United States’ decision to oust Boutros-Ghali:

“More than any other issue, it was his performance on Bosnia that made us feel he did not deserve a second term... Although the American campaign against Boutros-Ghali, in

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<sup>1</sup> Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished: A U.S.-U.N. Saga*, 1st ed, New York: Random House, 1999, 9.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, 335.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*, 336-7.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Barnett, “Review: UN Vanquished,” *Global Governance* 5, no. 4 (1999), 514.

which all our key allies opposed us, was long and difficult ... the decision was correct, and may well have saved America's role in the U.N.”<sup>5</sup>

Over the course of the war, the U.S.-UN relationship deteriorated dramatically, and disagreements between the two over how to manage the conflict proliferated. To understand the decline of this relationship, a brief explanation of the war and the post-1989 context is crucial.

The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina had the highest death toll of the Yugoslav wars that took place between 1991 and 2001.<sup>6</sup> Yugoslavia was first formed at the end of World War I, and after breaking up during World War II, was reunified by the leader of the Yugoslav Communist League, Josip Broz Tito, who ruled from 1945 to 1980.<sup>7</sup> Despite being extremely dictatorial, Tito was immensely popular, and the first communist leader to defy Stalin by refusing to allow Yugoslavia to become a Soviet satellite. The Soviet threat, and the narrative that all ethnic groups had fought to liberate the country during World War II, allowed Tito to encourage unity and peace across ethnic lines.<sup>8</sup> As Richard Ullman explains, Yugoslavia was a state built upon a hypothesis that its eight ethnic groups (Serbs, Croats, Bosniaks, Macedonians, Kosovars, Albanians, Slovenes and Montenegrins) would gradually begin identifying themselves under a common Yugoslav identity. Yet upon Tito's death in 1980, it became clear that achieving this idealistic vision depended mainly on his popularity and authoritarianism. Provincial demagogues rapidly scrambled to assert their power in different regions by fostering ethnic conflict.<sup>9</sup>

In the early 1980s, Slobodan Milošević, the head of the Serbian Communist party, used explosive ultra-nationalist rhetoric to become the Serbian prime minister. As aggressive Serbian

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<sup>5</sup> Richard C. Holbrooke, *To End a War*. 1st ed. New York: Random House, 1998, 202.

<sup>6</sup> Richard H. Ullman, ed., *The World and Yugoslavia's Wars* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1996), 2.

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of State, “The Breakup of Yugoslavia, 1990–1992,” Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute, accessed November 29, 2023, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1989-1992/breakup-yugoslavia>.

<sup>8</sup> UNC-Chapel Hill Center for European Studies, “Background: Tito's Yugoslavia | CES at UNC,” Center for European Studies: A Jean Monnet Center of Excellence, accessed January 6, 2024, <https://europe.unc.edu/background-titos-yugoslavia/>.

<sup>9</sup> Ullman, *The World and Yugoslavia's Wars*, 9.

nationalism escalated, the ethnic and regional groups that peacefully coexisted under Tito began violently separating.<sup>10</sup> Slovenia was the first to declare its independence in 1991, followed by Croatia. Violence erupted when the Serb-dominated Yugoslav army attempted to prevent them from breaking away, with militias seizing cities with Serbian minority populations. These hostilities, however paled in comparison to the brutality that ensued after Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence from Yugoslavia in early 1992.<sup>11</sup> Bosnia-Herzegovina's population was 44 percent Bosniak Muslim, 31 percent Bosnian Serb, and 17 percent Croat. Fearmongering perpetuated by Milošević and Radovan Karadžić, the leader of the Serb Democratic Party in Bosnia,<sup>12</sup> prompted the Bosnian Muslim president, Alija Izetbegović, to hold a referendum that resulted in a majority vote in favor of independence.<sup>13</sup> In response, Serb and Yugoslav forces seized over 70 percent of Bosnian territory, and their political leaders explicitly stated their objective as the formation of a larger, independent Serbia.<sup>14</sup> For the Serbian minority in Bosnia, living under an independent Muslim government was intolerable.<sup>15</sup> The Yugoslav People's Army, a vestige of Tito's multicultural vision, became a tool for Serbian nationalists to assault the Bosnian Muslim population,<sup>16</sup> waging a vicious campaign of ethnic cleansing, rape and terrorism<sup>17</sup> that killed approximately 100,000 Bosnians, and expelled 2 million.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of State, "The Breakup of Yugoslavia, 1990–1992."

<sup>11</sup> James Dobbins et al., "Bosnia," in *America's Role in Nation-Building*, 1st ed., From Germany to Iraq (RAND Corporation, 2003), 87–110, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/mr1753rc.13>, 87.

<sup>12</sup> William C. Banks and Jeffrey D. Straussman, "A New Imperial Presidency? Insights from U.S. Involvement in Bosnia," *Political Science Quarterly* 114, no. 2 (June 1, 1999): 195–217, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2657737>, 200.

<sup>13</sup> Ullman, *The World and Yugoslavia's Wars*, 2.

<sup>14</sup> Banks and Straussman, "A New Imperial Presidency?," 200.

<sup>15</sup> Ullman, *The World and Yugoslavia's Wars*, 2.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid*, 10.

<sup>17</sup> Michael N. Barnett, *Empire of Humanity: A History of Humanitarianism*, 1. printing, Cornell Paperbacks History/World, Political Science (Ithaca, NY: Cornell Univ. Press, 2013), 175.

<sup>18</sup> Brendan Simms and D. J. B. Trim, eds., *Humanitarian Intervention: A History* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 368.

During the first half of the 1990s, the war in Bosnia was the “locus of humanitarian interventionist outrage”<sup>19</sup> and the most brutal war Europe had witnessed since the World War II.<sup>20</sup> Horrific images of Bosnians starving in camps were reminiscent of the scenes of the Holocaust.<sup>21</sup> As western audiences watched the horrors unfold with 24-hour news coverage, public opinion increasingly favored robust military intervention from their governments to end the bloodshed.<sup>22</sup> Bosnia was one of a series of regional conflicts that emerged in after the Cold War, often listed alongside Kuwait, Haiti, Somalia, and Rwanda, in which international organizations or coalitions of states intervened with the goal of peacekeeping.<sup>23</sup>

In the West, the end of the Cold War was a triumph for the principles of freedom, human rights and justice, and a chance to create a “new world order” where these ideals would be universalized. The U.S., proclaiming itself as a victor against communism, viewed the post-Cold War years as a chance for the UN to “fulfill its promised role as the guardian of international peace and security.”<sup>24</sup> For almost five decades, the organization had served as little more than an arena for the Soviet-American rivalry, hindering it from taking action towards fulfilling its mission of maintaining global security.<sup>25</sup> At last, it appeared that the goals of the UN and the victorious superpower, the U.S., were aligning to allow a more active and unified Security

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<sup>19</sup> Stephen Wertheim, “A Solution from Hell: The United States and the Rise of Humanitarian Interventionism, 1991–2003,” *Journal of Genocide Research* 12, no. 3–4 (December 1, 2010): 149–72, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2010.522053>, 151.

<sup>20</sup> Ullman, *The World and Yugoslavia's Wars*, 1.

<sup>21</sup> Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 175.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid*, 5.

<sup>23</sup> Klejda Mulaj, “Dilemmas of Reacting to Mass Atrocities: Humanitarian Intervention to End Violent Conflict in the Western Balkans,” *Democracy and Security* 7, no. 2 (2011): 140.

<sup>24</sup> Simon Chesterman, *Just War or Just Peace? Humanitarian Intervention and International Law*, Oxford Monographs in International Law (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003), 232.

<sup>25</sup> Michelle Getchell, “The United Nations and the United States,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199329175.013.497>.

Council (UNSC) to realize its guiding objective of international peace and stability.<sup>26</sup> Yet when these ambitions were put to the test in Bosnia, as in other conflicts, they largely failed.

This thesis seeks to investigate, and enhance previous understandings of, why the UN-U.S. relationship deteriorated over the course of the war in Bosnia through a closer examination of the individual policymakers who lead the international response to the conflict.

The scholarship on the underlying causes of tension in the UN-U.S. relationship has, correctly, attributed it to various structural and organizational issues. John Moore and David Malone argue that the main hindrance to a reciprocal relationship was the constant oscillation of American policy between support for UN as a vehicle to resolving problems that the U.S. did not want to address, and an isolationist perception that it was as a threat to American power.<sup>27</sup> Alynna Lyon asserts that U.S. politics diminished the UN's popularity: internal budget struggles and partisan conflicts between Congress and the president affected whether the U.S. upheld its financial commitments to the UN, and politicians scapegoated it in their campaigns.<sup>28</sup> With its unprecedented global hegemony after 1989, the U.S. did not depend on the UN to influence global politics at all: its only appeal was that it could serve as a malleable tool to promote national interests. The UN could either expand the U.S.'s opportunities or impose constraints on its freedom and superpower status – when the latter occurred, the relationship suffered.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, the Security Council's unequal hierarchy transformed it into a battlefield for power politics and state rivalries, preventing the creation of a mutually beneficial relationship and

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<sup>26</sup> Chesterman, *Just War or Just Peace?*, 4.

<sup>27</sup> David M. Malone, "U.S.–UN Relations in the UN Security Council in the Post-Cold War Era," in *US Hegemony and International Organizations: The United States and Multilateral Institutions*, (Oxford University Press, 2003), <https://doi.org/10.1093/0199261431.003.0004>; John Allphin Moore and Jerry Pubantz, *To Create a New World? American Presidents and the United Nations* (New York: Peter Lang, 1999), 324.

<sup>28</sup> Alynna Lyon, *US Politics and the United Nations: A Tale of Dysfunctional Dynamics* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2016), 7.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 21-22.

effective cooperation between the UN and the U.S.<sup>30</sup> Lise Howard argues that unexpected losses of American soldiers in UN peacekeeping operations were the most significant factors in damaging the relationship.<sup>31</sup> Finally, Benjamin Rivlin emphasizes the importance of Congressional resistance to UN activities that had the potential to challenge domestic agendas. He argues that American dissatisfaction with Boutros-Ghali as an individual was not the real issue, but rather, the complicated, deeper questions about U.S. leadership at the UN and the world organization's international role.<sup>32</sup>

These assessments are correct – organizational and structural issues were important factors in the deterioration of the U.S.-UN relationship. However, not enough attention has been paid to the role of individual policymakers' ambitions in international affairs. Using Bosnia as a case study in which personal tensions between individuals were exhibited most prominently, this thesis argues that the conflicting foreign policy visions, clashing personalities, and turbulent interpersonal relationships of key U.S. and UN policymakers exacerbated the deeper structural issues that caused the deterioration of the U.S.-UN relationship.

The aim of this thesis is not to claim that policymakers' personalities were part of the principal reasons for the relationship's decline. However, focusing on individual policymakers illuminates an aspect of the relationship that has not been studied sufficiently. As Margaret Hermann and other constructivist scholars have argued, leadership matters in international relations. Individuals and their guiding philosophies on foreign affairs influence their states' and organizations' motives, policies, and decision-making processes. Leaders' personalities,

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>31</sup> Lise Morjé Howard, "Sources of Change in United States-United Nations Relations," *Global Governance* 16, no. 4 (2010): 485–503.

<sup>32</sup> Benjamin Rivlin, "Leadership in the UN, 1997: The Secretary-General and the U.S.: A Symbiotic Relationship under Stress," *International Journal* 52, no. 2 (1997): 197–218, <https://doi.org/10.2307/40203197>, 217.

ideologies, and the extent to which they seek to redefine or remain within the boundaries of their roles, affects their responses to global challenges and perception of external threats.<sup>33</sup> The fact that both Boutros-Ghali and Clinton administration officials challenged the constraints of their roles, developed personal animosities, and disagreed on certain issues over others, should not be overlooked.

While some scholars have paid attention to the impact of personality in the U.S.-UN relationship, and are therefore essential to developing my argument, they have not granted both sides equal attention or put them in conversation with each other, nor in this specific conflict. John Allphin Moore and Jerry Pubantz's *To Create a New World? American Presidents and the United Nations* examines the relationship every American president has had with the UN since its foundation, and argues that U.S. presidents have played an important role in determining the trajectory of the UN's history.<sup>34</sup> James D. Boys' *Clinton's Grand Strategy: US Foreign Policy in a Post-Cold War World* elucidates the personal beliefs and characters of the individuals who shaped Clinton's foreign policy doctrine.<sup>35</sup> Chih-Hann Chang's *Ethical Foreign Policy?: U.S. Humanitarian Interventions* provides insight into the policymakers who were most impactful in the Clinton administration's decision-making process in Bosnia.<sup>36</sup> Adekeye Adebayo's biography of the Boutros-Ghali provides essential insight into the man who oversaw the UN's response to Bosnia and contributed to transforming its international role, yet remains an understudied figure.<sup>37</sup> Finally, Vincent Auger's in-depth analysis of the ousting of Boutros-Ghali and the key

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<sup>33</sup> Margaret G. Hermann, "Explaining Foreign Policy Behavior Using the Personal Characteristics of Political Leaders." *International Studies Quarterly* 24, no. 1 (1980): 7–46. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2600126>.

<sup>34</sup> Moore and Pubantz, *To Create a New World? American Presidents and the United Nations*, 1-2.

<sup>35</sup> James D. Boys, *Clinton's Grand Strategy: US Foreign Policy in a Post-Cold War World* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

<sup>36</sup> Chih-Hann Chang, *Ethical Foreign Policy? US Humanitarian Interventions*, Ethics and Global Politics (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011).

<sup>37</sup> Adekeye Adebajo, *Boutros Boutros-Ghali: Afro-Arab Prophet, Proselytiser, Pharoah, and Pope* (London: Routledge, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003365884>.

figures who campaigned to remove him is essential to understanding how these tensions came to a head. I add to these authors' critical findings by examining the interactions between individual officials as well as granting equal attention to those on both the U.S. and the UN sides.

The archival and primary sources analyzed in this paper are the foundation of my argument. The Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, held at Stanford University's Hoover Institution Library and Archives, reveal the roots of the Secretary-General's mounting resentment towards Clinton officials, elucidate the principal causes of his discontent with U.S. foreign policy, and illuminate his personal traits. The collection contains memoranda, correspondence, writings, news clippings, drafts of his memoir, and the personal notes he kept during his term. In his personal notes, Boutros-Ghali attempted to understand the logic of U.S. foreign policy and expressed his resentment towards the Clinton administration, indicating the increasingly declining standing of the relationship during the war in Bosnia. *Unvanquished*, the book in which he seeks to take revenge on the U.S., illustrates his perspective on his escalating disputes with the U.S. The personal papers of Boutros-Ghali's special consultant on policy, Charles Hill, further demonstrate how UN officials felt scapegoated by the Clinton administration.

To examine the foreign policy approaches and personalities of American decisionmakers, I analyze declassified documents from the William J. Clinton Presidential Library & Museum and the memoirs of key U.S. policymakers. These include: *Madam Secretary* by Madeleine Albright, the U.S. ambassador to the UN; *To End a War* by Richard Holbrooke, the architect of the Dayton accords; *6 Nightmares: Real Threats in a Dangerous World and How America Can Meet Them* by Anthony Lake, Clinton's National Security Advisor; *Chances of a Lifetime*, the memoir of Warren Christopher, the Secretary of State; and Bill Clinton's *My Life*.<sup>38</sup> Russell

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<sup>38</sup> Madeleine Albright, *Madam Secretary* (New York: Miramax Books, 2003) ; Holbrooke, *To End A War*. ; Anthony Lake, *6 Nightmares: Real Threats in a Dangerous World and How America Can Meet Them*, 1st ed (Boston: Little,

Riley's *Inside the Clinton White House: An Oral History*,<sup>39</sup> a collection of interviews with Clinton's closest aides, further highlights their first-hand experiences.

Analyzing these sources through the lens of individual personalities reveals that Boutros-Ghali's uniquely assertive approach to his role, tactless diplomatic style, and refusal to yield to the American sense of entitlement to dictate UN policy, combined with the Clinton administration's ambivalence, inexperience, and determination to safeguard its prestige, exacerbated the structural and organizational factors that primarily caused the U.S.-UN division.

The first chapter of this thesis examines the period from November 1989 to April 1992, from the end of the Cold War to the beginning of the war in Bosnia. It demonstrates how the shared spirit of optimism, and similar foreign policy visions of key figures, that emerged after the end of the Cold War appeared to offer an opportunity for a mutually beneficial and reciprocal UN-U.S. partnership.

The second chapter, which spans the course of the Bosnian War from April 1992 to October 1995, traces the escalating tensions in the U.S.-UN relationship as the two sides struggled to achieve a consensus on how to manage the conflict and mutually blamed each other for the continuation of the war. By highlighting moments of escalation between officials, this chapter demonstrates that U.S. and UN policymakers' clashing personalities and diverging views on the international order sparked disagreements over the use of force and the extent of their decision-making power in managing the conflict.

The third chapter of this thesis recounts the events after the war from November 1995 to December 1997, beginning with the Dayton peace negotiations that ended the war. It focuses on

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Brown, 2000) ; Warren Christopher, *Chances of a Lifetime* (New York: Scribner, 2001); Bill Clinton, *My Life*, 1. ed (New York: Knopf, 2004).

<sup>39</sup> Russell L. Riley, *Inside the Clinton White House: An Oral History*, Oxford Oral History Series (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016).

the ousting of Boutros-Ghali – the culmination of the U.S.-UN’s disputes over Bosnia – how the Dayton Accords strengthened American prestige, and the publication and reception of *Unvanquished*.

## Chapter I: Post-Cold War Idealism and Optimism in the U.S.- U.N. Relationship

*“And now, for the first time, we have a real chance to fulfill the U.N. Charter's ambition of working to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person ... promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.”*

– George H.W. Bush, *Address to UN. General Assembly*, September 24<sup>th</sup>, 1991<sup>1</sup>

Globally, the reunification of Germany was hailed as the beginning of a new era, ripe for fostering democracy and freedom, as the fall of the wall ended the polarizing East-West divide that had characterized the majority of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The euphoria of the post-Cold War years was accompanied by pressing questions about what role the United States, now the sole global hegemon, would occupy in the unipolar international system. The Cold War had stifled multilateral cooperation, as Soviet-American competition had paralyzed the UNSC. In the 1980s, the Reagan administration went as far as to call for a halt in paying U.N. fees and withdrew the U.S. from multiple UN agencies.<sup>2</sup> However, the end of the Cold War ushered in a new era of cooperation and optimism in the partnership between the UN and the U.S.

The following chapter explores the UN-U.S. relationship during the immediate post-Cold War years, from November 1989 to April 1992, before the Bosnian War began. It outlines the Bush administration's vision for the UN, Clinton's foreign policy platform during the 1992 campaign, Congressional hearings about UN and humanitarian intervention, and the ambitions of the newly elected Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In the U.S., an attitude of optimism emerged about how the UN, with American leadership and support, could promote American national interests and advance its mission of human rights expansion and international collective security.

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<sup>1</sup> Reuters. “Mideast Diplomacy: Excerpts From Bush’s Address to General Assembly: For a ‘Pax Universalis.’” *The New York Times*, September 24, 1991, sec. World. <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/09/24/world/mideast-diplomacy-excerpts-bush-s-address-general-assembly-for-pax-universalis.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Phyllis Bennis, “U.S.-UN Relations,” Institute for Policy Studies, December 1, 1996, <https://ips-dc.org/us-un-relations/>.

Multilateral cooperation through the UN seemed to be the best way to shape the new world order on American terms, and these sentiments were mirrored by the UN's aspiration to expand peace and freedom in the post-Cold War world. Bush's diplomatic skills, and confidence that the UN could serve national interests, fostered a positive relationship between the U.S. and the UN.

### *I. The U.S. and UN in the "New World Order" and Debating Humanitarian Intervention*

George H.W. Bush was the only American president to serve as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, holding the position in the 1970s. He displayed staunch support of the UN throughout his presidency, as well as developing a close friendship with the Secretary-General at the time, Javier Perez de Cuellar. Even during the unipolar moment of unrivaled American power, the president's policies supported engagement with the UN.<sup>3</sup> When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, Bush responded forcefully, spearheading a broad UN coalition of international allies to stand against Saddam Hussein.<sup>4</sup> Taking advantage of the new American hegemony, Bush established solid U.S. leadership in the international arena, collaborating closely with allies to pursue his foreign policy objectives. His speeches displayed a strong faith in the UN's potential to act as a vehicle for enacting positive change on a global scale in the post-Cold War era.

Bush was familiar with the organization's inner workings and had developed strong personal relationships with diplomats from all regions.<sup>5</sup> While he had adopted a more realist perspective towards the UN as ambassador,<sup>6</sup> during his presidency, he began to view it as "an appropriate

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<sup>3</sup> Mark Leon Goldberg, "George H.W. Bush Was the Strongest Supporter of the UN of Any Modern US President." UN Dispatch, December 1, 2018. <https://undispatch.com/history-lesson-when-funding-the-un-was-a-bi-partisan-cause/>.

<sup>4</sup> Nina Esperanza Serianne, *America in the Nineties*. 1st edition. America in the Twentieth Century. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2015),16.

<sup>5</sup> Moore and Pubantz, *To Create a New World?*, 291-292.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*, 295.

venue and instrument for the United States' efforts at multilateral action."<sup>7</sup> This shift was due to his belief that the organization had changed dramatically after 1989, and could now serve American interests.<sup>8</sup> His policies improved the UN's prestige and public support, granting it the opportunity to be reborn into an effective governing body under the close instruction of the U.S.<sup>9</sup>

Addressing the General Assembly on September 25<sup>th</sup>, 1989, Bush articulated his hope for the future of the United Nations within the new liberal world order. His words epitomized post-Cold War euphoria: "Freedom's advance is evident everywhere... we are witnessing an ideological collapse: the demise of the totalitarian idea of the omniscient, all-powerful state." He drew parallels between the foundation of American democracy and the nascent global trend towards freedom and declared: "the 21<sup>st</sup> century must be an era of emancipation ... Nothing can stand in the way of freedom's march." He outlined a vision of global solidarity in advancing liberty, suggesting that this moment entailed a new era for the UN: "the possibility now exists for the creation of a true community of nations built on shared interests and ideals... it is time that we...deliver that destiny [freedom] into the hands of men and women everywhere." He asserted that peace, freedom, and human rights could be expanded globally through international cooperation, and the U.S would prioritize and spearhead this effort.<sup>10</sup>

This optimistic rhetoric was invigorated further by the success of multilateral action against Hussein. In a 1990 speech to Congress, Bush called the invasion of Kuwait a "rare opportunity to move towards a historic period of cooperation" and highlighted the importance of the U.S.'s partnership with the UN in taking down the dictator. For Bush, this unified response

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<sup>7</sup> Moore and Pubantz, *To Create a New World?*, 293.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 296.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 297.

<sup>10</sup> George H.W. Bush, "Address to the 44th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, New York." The American Presidency Project. <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/address-the-44th-session-the-united-nations-general-assembly-new-york-new-york>.

marked the beginning of a new phase in UN history: “We’re now in sight of a United Nations that performs as envisioned by its founders...backing up its words with action.” For the first time, the U.S. stood alongside its allies to realize “the dream of a new world order”.<sup>11</sup> His words pointed to a newfound importance of the UN in serving U.S. interests through multilateral collaboration.

This spirit was underlined again in his address to the General Assembly on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1990. He proclaimed, “I have never been prouder that the U.S. is the host country for the United Nations... Not since 1945 have we seen the real possibility of using the United Nations as it was designed, as a center for international collective security.” He envisaged a “new partnership of nations that transcends the cold war ... based on consultation, cooperation and collective action... to increase democracy, increase prosperity ... and reduce arms.”<sup>12</sup> At the General Assembly the following year, he defined the bounds of the U.S.’s global ambitions: “The United States has no intention of striving for a Pax Americana...we seek a Pax Universalis, built upon shared responsibilities and aspirations.” Bush also warned that “small, virulent” conflicts would emerge in the post-Cold War years: the fall of the USSR caused previously “suppressed ethnic rivalries” to re-emerge. In his view, the UN could now act as a “vehicle through which willing parties can settle old disputes.”<sup>13</sup> These speeches embodied Bush’s hopeful attitude towards the organization, and a public rhetoric of faith in the power of international collaboration to build a future of freedom, peace, and human rights. The administration’s efforts to redefine America’s

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<sup>11</sup> George H.W. Bush. “Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the Persian Gulf Crisis and the Federal Budget Deficit.” *Public Papers – George Bush Library and Museum*. September 11, 1990, <https://bush41library.tamu.edu/archives/public-papers/2217>.

<sup>12</sup> George H.W. Bush. “CONFRONTATION IN THE GULF; Transcript of President’s Address to U.N. General Assembly.” *The New York Times*, October 2, 1990.

<sup>13</sup> Reuters. “Mideast Diplomacy: Excerpts From Bush’s Address to General Assembly: For a ‘Pax Universalis.’” *The New York Times*, September 24, 1991, sec. World. <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/09/24/world/mideast-diplomacy-excerpts-bush-s-address-general-assembly-for-pax-universalis.html>.

role in the world, and its belief that the United States had to “take an active role in settling regional conflicts”, paved the way for Bush to cultivate a positive relationship with the UN.

In light of Bush’s new strategy of using the UN to promote U.S. interests, Congressional committees began directing their attention towards the question of how to rectify the organization’s shortcomings and strengthen its capacity to fulfill the expanded role Bush envisaged. The questions they posed regarding humanitarian intervention and UN reforms would become central in American foreign policy, international responses to regional conflicts, and most importantly, U.S.-UN relations. In a 1991 Congressional hearing before the House Select Committee on Hunger, policymakers assessed the efficacy of UN humanitarian emergency responses and made recommendations for reforms in the organization. The record of the hearing provides insights into one of the most pressing dilemmas of the unipolar moment: humanitarian intervention. For committee members, the UN’s role as an indispensable provider of disaster relief made implementing structural changes urgent, demonstrating the increased importance the U.S. placed on the UN during these years. Echoing Bush, one representative stated, “we finally have a real opportunity to make the UN the effective provider of humanitarian assistance that it can and should be.”<sup>14</sup> The consensus was that deficiencies had to be corrected as soon as possible to successfully address “the serious transnational problems” facing the international community.<sup>15</sup> According to John Bolton, the Assistant Secretary for International Organizations at the time, resolving its flaws required “substantial reforms within the Secretariat”. He saw the next Secretary-General as crucial to advancing these aims: “The election of a new Secretary-General... provides an excellent window of opportunity for implementing these long overdue

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<sup>14</sup> U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Select Committee on Hunger, *Decades of Disasters: The United Nations’ Response*, 102<sup>nd</sup> Cong., 1<sup>st</sup> Session, July 30, 1991, 2. <https://congressional-proquest-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/congressional/docview/t29.d30.hrg-1991-hhs-0007?accountid=10226>.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*, 5.

reforms.”<sup>16</sup> Bolton asserted that the U.S. would guide and work closely with the next Secretary-General to enact these reforms.<sup>17</sup> As this thesis demonstrates, the view of pressing to lead the Secretary-General to make reforms would later spark tensions between the superpower and the UN.

The debate surrounding humanitarian intervention was also indicative of the role the U.S. envisaged for the UN: it would be reinforced, but only with strong American involvement. Although the U.S. did not want to “simply be the policeman of the world”, multilateralism required the UN to enact major reforms to benefit both the international community and the U.S.<sup>18</sup> One witness encapsulated a dilemma that is fundamental to understanding the American foreign policy in the 90s: “When egregious violations of human rights occur, the world community need not helplessly watch... the right to provide humanitarian intervention must be balanced...who decides when to intervene? Based upon what standards?” He asserted that under the new world order, “the right to intervene is ... is complimentary to state sovereignty”.<sup>19</sup> Acting against human rights abuses was essential, even if it entailed curbing state sovereignty:

“I would certainly prefer the United Nations to take the lead in this question of intervention, but I would argue ... that the time has come when humanitarian intervention under certain circumstances when egregious violations of human rights occur anywhere, should be considered a right of the world community.”<sup>20</sup>

The consensus was that UN ought to become the principal vehicle for tackling international problems, but its structure and response mechanisms did not yet meet American standards.

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<sup>16</sup> *ibid*, 4.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid*, 12.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid*, 21.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid*, 23.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid*, 24.

The issue of humanitarian intervention through the UN was further discussed at a House hearing on “The Future of U.N. Peacekeeping Operations” in March 1992.<sup>21</sup> Bolton warned of a global unleashing of “pent-up hatreds”, stating: “Religious and ethnic animosities long crushed under the dictator’s boot heel are now coming to the fore. Yugoslavia has already broken apart because of such tensions.” Indeed, the conflict brewing in the Balkans would be pivotal in challenging the idealist vision of multilateral cooperation against human rights violations. Bolton stressed that the U.S. could not retreat into isolationism, as it would result in grave consequences for the world’s recent advances towards freedom. He asserted that peacekeeping was “the best bargain” for maintaining geopolitical stability and containing regional conflicts that threatened the U.S.<sup>22</sup> His statement indicated the UN’s increased importance in American national interests during the post-Cold-War period, as there was a strong will to establish the organization as a vehicle to resolve conflicts the U.S. hoped to avoid confronting directly. Another expert identified the flaws of U.N. peacekeeping: it was expensive, depended on the support of great powers, and was not applicable to every situation. Yet he still concurred that these operations should be supported: they were “the cheapest alternative” for maintaining peace and serving U.S. interests.<sup>23</sup> He suggested that restructuring the Secretariat would allow the U.S. to transform the UN into a dominant international actor.<sup>24</sup>

These hearings demonstrate that policymakers seeking strategies to maintain regional stability considered the UN the best way to create international peace and help realize Bush’s new world order. Thus, Congressional support for UN peacekeeping, and the desire to strengthen

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<sup>21</sup> U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The Future of U.N. Peacekeeping Operations*, 102<sup>nd</sup> Congress, 2<sup>nd</sup> Session, March 25, 1992. <https://congressional-proquest-com.ezproxy.cul.columbia.edu/congressional/docview/t29.d30.hrg-1992-foa-0006?accountid=10226>

<sup>22</sup> *ibid*, 27.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid*, 50.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*, 73.

the organization's capabilities, illustrates the reciprocal UN-U.S. relationship immediately after the end of the Cold War.

In the Balkans, the release of "pent-up hatreds" Bolton had warned about threatened to wreak havoc on the precious moment of peace in Europe. In October 1990, the National Intelligence Estimate warned that Yugoslavia would likely dissolve within two years, descend into "intractable and bitter" ethnic violence, and little could be done to preserve the country's unity.<sup>25</sup> The American reaction to the conflict would put the UN-U.S. relations to the test.

## *II. Bush's Opponent and a New Secretary-General at the United Nations*

While policymakers contemplated the U.S.'s new global role, and the challenges and opportunities of the post-Cold War years, the 1992 presidential election was in full swing. Governor of Arkansas, Bill Clinton, won the Democratic nomination, but few believed he could implement a successful foreign policy agenda. His political experience was limited to domestic issues, and his weak background in foreign affairs undermined his credibility against Bush, the "foreign policy president". Reconciling his domestic political platform – Bush's weakness – with a robust foreign policy vision became a key focus.<sup>26</sup> On the campaign trail, Clinton accused the administration of lacking clarity and being weak in the face of challenges to democracy and human rights.<sup>27</sup> He claimed Bush lacked clarity and "real leadership on Bosnia"<sup>28</sup> – a war in

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<sup>25</sup> U.S. Department of State. "The Breakup of Yugoslavia, 1990–1992." Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute.

<sup>26</sup> Boys, *Clinton's Grand Strategy*, 15.

<sup>27</sup> Chih-Hann Chang, *Ethical Foreign Policy?* 60.

<sup>28</sup> Elaine Sciolino. "THE CLINTON RECORD: Foreign Policy; Bosnia Policy Shaped by U.S. Military Role." *The New York Times*, July 29, 1996, sec. U.S. <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/07/29/us/the-clinton-record-foreign-policy-bosnia-policy-shaped-by-us-military-role.html>.

which, following chapters demonstrate, Clinton's foreign policy position and leadership strained the U.S.-UN relationship.

On April 1st, 1992, addressing the Foreign Policy Association in New York, Clinton outlined his foreign affairs agenda, striving to prove he could take on the presidency's international obligations despite his lack of expertise. He attacked Bush for invoking "a new world order without enunciating a new American purpose" and slammed him for not acknowledging Croat and Slovenian sovereignty. It is imperative to note that from the beginning, Clinton endorsed multilateralism, but never rejected unilateral military action: "we will never abandon our prerogative to act alone when our vital interests are at stake."<sup>29</sup> His administration later adopted a strategy of "assertive multilateralism",<sup>30</sup> but as he promised during the campaign, international collaboration would be subordinate to American interests when necessary.

Clinton's campaign team devised an original "grand strategy" that emphasized the necessity of strengthening America domestically to promote security and freedom abroad. His advisers drew an explicit connection between foreign and domestic policy,<sup>31</sup> striving to garner support from Americans frustrated by the economic recession and Bush's lukewarm approach to domestic politics.<sup>32</sup> Some scholars attribute his victory to his rags-to-riches story and charismatic performances in front of cameras.<sup>33</sup> Still, presenting a strong stance on foreign policy, despite his lack of experience, was crucial to proving that he could meet the exigencies of the unipolar moment. Clinton's foreign policy strategy, and future rapport with the UN Secretary-General,

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<sup>29</sup> Boys, *Clinton's Grand Strategy*, 22.

<sup>30</sup> Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations*, Princeton Paperbacks (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 9.

<sup>31</sup> Boys, *Clinton's Grand Strategy*, 18.

<sup>32</sup> Serrienne, *America in the Nineties*, 29.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid*, 38.

would be consequential in determining the trajectory of U.S.-UN relations, and the international community's response to the outbreak and intensification of war in Bosnia.

In January 1992, Yugoslavia had completely dissolved,<sup>34</sup> and a new Secretary-General was sworn in at the UN, soon to be assigned the responsibility of spearheading the international response to the conflict in partnership with Clinton. Boutros Boutros-Ghali was the first African and Arab Secretary-General,<sup>35</sup> and the first to occupy the position since the end of the Cold War.<sup>36</sup> Previously serving as Egypt's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and aiding in negotiating the Camp David Accords, Boutros-Ghali was a prolific academic with an impressive repertoire in law, international affairs and political science.<sup>37</sup> After the U.S.'s preferred candidate, Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, withdrew his candidacy, Boutros-Ghali was selected as a compromise candidate. Bush officials had hoped for a younger candidate who would enact reforms over two terms – Boutros-Ghali, however, announced he only intended to serve for a single five-year term.<sup>38</sup> Other diplomats complained he was “too old and frail”, and thus incapable of implementing the reforms the UN urgently needed.<sup>39</sup> Despite these reservations, the U.S. accepted his appointment, and rather than using its veto,<sup>40</sup> abstained during the UNSC vote.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> U.S. Department of State. “The Breakup of Yugoslavia, 1990–1992.”

<sup>35</sup> Adekeye Adebajo, *Boutros Boutros-Ghali: Afro-Arab Prophet, Proselytiser, Pharoah, and Pope* (London: Routledge, 2022), 2, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003365884>.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*, 77.

<sup>37</sup> United Nations, “Boutros Boutros-Ghali | United Nations Secretary-General,” <https://www.un.org/sg/en/formersg/boutros.shtml>.

<sup>38</sup> Auger, “Case 362 - Ousting Boutros-Ghali: The Clinton Administration and the Politics of the United Nations,” 5.

<sup>39</sup> Judith Miller. “Man in the News: Boutros Boutros Ghali; A ‘Born’ Secretary General.” *The New York Times Archives*, November 22, 1991. <https://archive.nytimes.com/www.nytimes.com/books/97/07/20/reviews/ghali-born.html>.

<sup>40</sup> Auger, “Case 362 - Ousting Boutros-Ghali: The Clinton Administration and the Politics of the United Nations,” 5.

<sup>41</sup> Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 332.

A lifelong scholar of the United Nations, Boutros-Ghali was acutely aware of the limits to his office and the obstacles that UNSC power dynamics posed to the UN's competences and effectiveness. Nonetheless, he was ambitious about the potential for reforms to enable the organization to assume a broader range of global responsibilities, especially in the areas of democratization, conflict resolution and economic development.<sup>42</sup> Under his leadership, the UN authorized an unprecedented number of peacekeeping missions, deploying 75,000 peacekeepers to 17 conflict zones between 1992 and 1994. Only 13 had been launched during the four decades prior.<sup>43</sup> From 1987 to 1994, the UN's peacekeeping budget ballooned from \$230 million to \$3.6 billion.<sup>44</sup> This increase reflected a nascent ideological divergence from the traditional, founding norms of international relations. As Mark Mazower explains, the 90s witnessed the rise of "conditional attitudes toward sovereignty" and a new wave of interventionism legitimized by moral principles and international law.<sup>45</sup> The rise of a global human rights movement prompted leaders to reconceptualize sovereignty and its inviolability.<sup>46</sup>

This shift is evident in Boutros-Ghali's *Agenda for Peace*, which defined the theoretical framework behind an expanded UN role in peace and security.<sup>47</sup> He presented the landmark document in front of the UNSC in January 1992, proclaiming that "the time for absolute and exclusive sovereignty...has passed."<sup>48</sup> The document outlined his vision for a new UN strategy which included preventive diplomacy, peace enforcement, peacekeeping, and post-conflict reconstruction. It reflected the broader subordination of national sovereignty to universal principles of human rights. For example, "peace enforcement" would allow the U.N. to "act with

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<sup>42</sup> Adebajo, *Boutros Boutros-Ghali*, 80.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid*, 2.

<sup>44</sup> Mark Mazower, *Governing the World: The History of an Idea* (London: Allen Lane, 2012), 382.

<sup>45</sup> *ibid*, 379.

<sup>46</sup> Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace*, 7.

<sup>47</sup> *ibid*, 10.

<sup>48</sup> Adebajo, *Boutros Boutros-Ghali*, 95.

or without the consent of parties to ensure compliance with cease-fires” by employing “heavily armed national forces operating under the direction of the Secretary-General.”<sup>49</sup> The agenda recommended the implementation of “preventive deployment”: a “1.7 billion rapid reaction U.N. force of 16,000 troops” so that the organization would not be burdened by the task of recruiting new troops in each new mission.<sup>50</sup> The document, a sort of “revolutionary manifesto” for the UN, was readily endorsed by key member states – the most powerful being the U.S.<sup>51</sup>

Aside from the proposals it put forward, the document exhibited many of the same ideals found in Bush’s speeches and the Congressional hearings. Boutros-Ghali also highlighted the exceptionality of the post-Cold War period, calling it “a second chance to create the world of our Charter”<sup>52</sup> and encouraged member states “to seize the moment for the sake of the future.”<sup>53</sup> He saw the same potential for ethnic tensions to threaten international security,<sup>54</sup> and was adamant that the United Nations should confront these challenges head-on, writing:

“Under Article 42 of the Charter, the Security Council has the authority to take military action to maintain or restore international peace and security. While such action should only be taken when all peaceful means have failed, the option of taking it is essential to the credibility of the United Nations as a guarantor of international security.”<sup>55</sup>

The goals Boutros-Ghali articulated appeared to align with the new foreign policy ideals that were garnering support in the United States. The UN was on a new route to assuming greater engagement in international affairs, just as American policymakers had encouraged. With these

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<sup>49</sup> Doyle and Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace*, 10.

<sup>50</sup> Adebajo, *Boutros Boutros-Ghali*, 95.

<sup>51</sup> Doyle and Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace*, 144.

<sup>52</sup> Boutros Boutros-Ghali, “An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking, and Peace-Keeping: Report of the Secretary-General Pursuant to the Statement Adopted by the Summit Meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992,” January 31, 1992, <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/145749>, 45.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid*, 48.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid*, 6.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid*, 25.

shared sentiments, a mutually beneficial cooperation between the UN and the U.S. could be anticipated.

In *Unvanquished*, Boutros-Ghali reflects on the farewell letter Bush sent him in January 1993, at the end of his term. The former president wrote: “My intent has been to be supportive of the UN, and of you personally, based on my philosophy that together there is much we can do. Boutros – I will miss working with you.”<sup>56</sup> These words embody the spirit of hope towards multilateralism in the post-Cold War years, Bush’s skill in nurturing diplomatic connections, and the reciprocal relationship between the UN and the U.S. after 1989. For the first time since the end of World War II, it seemed that the two were embarking on a collaborative journey to ensuring the success of the liberal democratic order and the international supremacy of human rights. Both envisioned a world ruled by freedom and justice, enforced by a global governing body with the authority to override national sovereignty in cases of egregious human rights violations. However, when unprecedented acts of violence in Bosnia and debates about military intervention put these ambitions to the test, conflicting perspectives and incompatible personalities contributed to forging a rift in the UN-U.S. relationship, eroding the possibility of realizing a new international order characterized by a multilateral championing of universal peace and human rights.

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<sup>56</sup> Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished: A U.S.-U.N. Saga*, 66.

## Chapter II: The Rise of Tensions in the U.N.-U.S. Relationship during the Bosnian War

*“The most devilish fiction writer could have hardly invented a more confused plot.”*  
– Jonathan Eyal, *The Wall Street Journal*, May 30, 1995.<sup>1</sup>

With the eruption of the Bosnian war, the international community struggled to reestablish peace in the Balkans. In 1992, both the UN and the U.S. refrained from becoming deeply involved, and few tensions emerged in the relationship while Bush was in office. However, the years 1993 and 1994 witnessed the increased involvement of the international community, and the emergence of serious disagreements between the new Clinton administration and Boutros-Ghali. In 1995, the U.S.’s hegemony and prestige was threatened by its failure to prevent the genocide in Srebrenica, and a major policy transformation ensued: it asserted its military strength, sidestepped Boutros-Ghali, and took matters into its own hands. This chapter traces the trajectory of the war and explores the most important points of contention to demonstrate how the UN-U.S. relationship deteriorated over the course of the war in Bosnia.

This section also highlights the unique experiences, foreign policy approaches and personalities of Clinton officials and Boutros-Ghali, and their impact on the international struggle to develop a response to the conflict. The key issues over which the U.S. and the UN clashed most vehemently were American rejections of internationally agreed-upon diplomatic settlements, the U.S.’s refusal to commit ground troops, the power struggle over decision-making on the use of force, and the failures of the UN peacekeeping mission. This chapter demonstrates that over the course of the war in Bosnia, clashes resulting from deeper organizational and structural issues were exacerbated by conflicting foreign policy objectives, incompatible diplomatic styles, and unique personal traits of key decisionmakers.

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<sup>1</sup> “The Cost of Half-Measures”, Jonathan Eyal, *The Wall Street Journal*, May 30, 1995, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 210, Folder 5, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

## I. 1992: The Outbreak of War and Limited U.S.-UN Involvement

At first, the UN and the U.S. both pursued a policy of minimal involvement in Bosnia, and as a result, the relationship did not suffer significantly. This section introduces Boutros-Ghali's unpopular personality and approach to his office, as well as the U.S.'s refusal to commit ground troops – a point of contention throughout the conflict.

In April 1992, Serbian aggression catalyzed armed conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. On April 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, the European Community (EC) and the U.S. recognized Bosnia's independence from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Led by Karadžić, Bosnian Serbs occupied the country and laid siege to Sarajevo.<sup>2</sup> The Security Council, condemning the violence, declared it would aim to reinstate peace.<sup>3</sup> Boutros-Ghali concurred that the situation was alarming, especially because the fighting obstructed the delivery of humanitarian aid. He stated, controversially, that all sides bore “some of the responsibility for the outbreak of the conflict”<sup>4</sup> – yet most in the West viewed Serbia as the aggressor and Bosnia as the victim. He told the UNSC that he could not recommend deploying additional peacekeepers, but the UNSC ignored his advice. His recommendations aligned with the wishes of the Bush administration, however, which was acutely aware of Congress's growing opposition to funding more expensive peacekeeping operations.<sup>5</sup> American officials did not perceive the conflict as a threat to national interests<sup>6</sup> and, leery of becoming embroiled in another Vietnam, opposed using force against the Serbs.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Reuters, “Chronology-What happened during the war in Bosnia?,” July 21, 2008, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-warcrimes-karadzic-bosnia/timeline-what-happened-during-the-war-in-bosnia-idUSL2164446420080721/>.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Lewis, “U.N. Chief Opposes Bosnia Peace Force,” *The New York Times*, April 25, 1992, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/04/25/world/un-chief-opposes-bosnia-peace-force.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Quotes from SG's Reports, Letters and Statements on Former Yugoslavia, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 210, Folder 5, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>5</sup> Lewis, “U.N. Chief Opposes Bosnia Peace Force.”

<sup>6</sup> Mulaj, “Dilemmas of Reacting to Mass Atrocities,” 144.

<sup>7</sup> Moore and Pubantz, *To Create a New World?*, 309.

Secretary of State, James Baker III, stated plainly: “ we don’t have a dog in that fight.”<sup>8</sup> Overall, in 1992, the U.S. retreated and allowed the European Community (EC) to spearhead the international community’s response to the conflict.<sup>9</sup>

In March 1992, the Bosnian government held a referendum on independence, which the Serbian minority boycotted – the catalyst for the unprecedented violence of the Bosnian war.<sup>10</sup> Bosnia received support from the EC and the UN, with the Security Council admitting it to the General Assembly on May 20<sup>th</sup>.<sup>11</sup> Shortly after, the Yugoslav Army shelled a bread queue in Sarajevo, and horrifying footage of the massacre was broadcasted around the world.<sup>12</sup> With over 100 injured and 16 killed, the Bread Line Massacre was the most brutal assault on civilians since the war had begun,<sup>13</sup> and alarmed the international community. On the 31st, the UNSC imposed sanctions against Yugoslavia, demanding it accept Bosnia’s “territorial integrity”.<sup>14</sup>

As the conflict unfolded in the first months of his term, Boutros-Ghali’s character and approach to his position were closely scrutinized by the press. The media quickly formed his public image: assertive, arrogant, and dismissive of “diplomatic niceties”.<sup>15</sup> *The Economist* wrote that he was “not a table-thumper, a politician or even a good speaker,” and offended member states by accusing them of “overstepping” and “prying” into a civil war by deploying additional peacekeepers in Bosnia.<sup>16</sup> He was a “formidable diplomat not afraid of ruffling feathers”, who

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<sup>8</sup> Riley, *Inside the Clinton White House: An Oral History*, 217.

<sup>9</sup> Mulaj, “Dilemmas of Reacting to Mass Atrocities,” 144.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Department of State, “The Breakup of Yugoslavia, 1990–1992,” Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute, accessed November 29, 2023, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1989-1992/breakup-yugoslavia>.

<sup>11</sup> General Assembly Resolution 755, *Application of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, S/RES/755* (20 May 1992).

<sup>12</sup> Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, 210.

<sup>13</sup> John F. Burns, “Mortar Attack on Civilians Leaves 16 Dead in Bosnia,” *The New York Times*, May 28, 1992, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/1992/05/28/world/mortar-attack-on-civilians-leaves-16-dead-in-bosnia.html>.

<sup>14</sup> Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, 211.

<sup>15</sup> Auger, “Case 362 - Ousting Boutros-Ghali: The Clinton Administration and the Politics of the United Nations,” 5.

<sup>16</sup> “Boutros-Ghali and the Weight of the World”, *The Economist*, May 23, 1992, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

believed wide-reaching reforms were essential for the UN to rise to the opportunities offered by the post-Cold War era.<sup>17</sup> Yet the major administrative reforms he instituted almost immediately upon his arrival were not well-received, and his first press conference was “disastrous”. He was very honest about the fact that his main setback was a lack of funding, and publicly stated that the U.S. was a billion dollars behind in its arrears. His insistence on the U.S.’s responsibility to pay its dues persisted, later souring his perception within the Clinton administration.<sup>18</sup> Boutros-Ghali’s personal rapport with U.S. officials were strained early on in his term: Albright, the U.S. ambassador to the UN, recounted in her memoir that her predecessor “described him as ‘vain, petulant and impulsive’”, with an unpleasant and unprofessional attitude that had “driven morale within the Secretariat to an all-time low.”<sup>19</sup> Over time, the press and UN member states became increasingly critical of Boutros-Ghali’s personal style, seemingly apathetic approach to Bosnia, and determination to assume a more assertive role than previous Secretary-Generals. These personal characteristics would soon foster hostility in his relationship with Clinton’s officials.

In the summer of 1992, Serb-run concentration camps, where Bosnian Muslims were tortured, sexually abused and killed, were unveiled to the public.<sup>20</sup> A form of psychological warfare, they were designed to traumatize non-Serbs and deter them from returning to their homes.<sup>21</sup> The public drew parallels to Nazi death camps, calling for the international community to enact firmer action against the Serbs. On June 29<sup>th</sup>, a UN resolution deployed additional

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<sup>17</sup> Paul Lewis, “UN Chief’s First 4 Months”, *The New York Times*, May 2, 1992, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 208, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>18</sup> “Feathers Ruffled, Funds Exhausted”, May 3, 1992, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 208, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>19</sup> Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 321.

<sup>20</sup> Serrienne, *America in the Nineties*, 79.

<sup>21</sup> Hikmet Karčić, *Torture, Humiliate, Kill: Inside the Bosnian Serb Camp System* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2022), <https://www.loc.gov/item/2021758700>, 6.

United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) peacekeeping troops.<sup>22</sup> The U.S., however, did not so much as comment on the atrocities.<sup>23</sup> Clinton, who had become the Democratic Party's nominee in July, called for the launching of NATO air strikes<sup>24</sup> and lifting the arms embargo, which the UNSC had imposed on Yugoslavia in September 1991.<sup>25</sup> He declared that the UN and the U.S. should do "whatever it [took] to stop the slaughter of civilians,"<sup>26</sup> seizing the opportunity to display a tough foreign policy position and address his most glaring weakness. He claimed he would be tougher on Serbia than Bush and asserted that human rights should be a central foreign policy concern. He encouraged the U.S. to lead the effort to gain UNSC approval for air strikes,<sup>27</sup> and criticized his opponent for granting the Europeans too much responsibility in managing the conflict.<sup>28</sup>

On August 13<sup>th</sup>, the UNSC called on nations to take "all measures necessary" to deliver humanitarian aid.<sup>29</sup> Yet again, Bush did not offer to provide American troops.<sup>30</sup> His administration did participate however, in the first major conference on peace negotiations in Yugoslavia, held in London from August 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>, 1992. At the conference, the international community reiterated its commitment to Bosnian sovereignty, proclaimed a general ceasefire (which was never implemented)<sup>31</sup> and agreed to create a no-fly zone in the region. It tightened

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<sup>22</sup> "Draft Resolution," 29 June 1992, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 9, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>23</sup> Serrienne, *America in the Nineties*, 79.

<sup>24</sup> Bill Clinton, *My Life*, 510.

<sup>25</sup> Stanley Meisler, "U.N. Refuses to Lift Bosnia Arms Embargo," *Los Angeles Times*, June 30, 1996, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1993-06-30-mn-8607-story.html>.

<sup>26</sup> *The New York Review*, December 18, 1997, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 204, Folder 1, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>27</sup> E.J. Dionne Jr., "Clinton Turns Sights to Foreign Policy," *The Washington Post*, July 29, 1992, sec. 1, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1992/07/29/clinton-turns-sights-to-foreign-policy/af5bda94-0d08-43fa-8ea9-54e6010579b2/>

<sup>28</sup> Natalie Pierce, "The Clinton Years: Assessing Success in the Bosnian Genocide Intervention" *Global Tides* 5 (2011), 12.

<sup>29</sup> Banks and Straussman, "A New Imperial Presidency?", 200.

<sup>30</sup> Serrienne, *America in the Nineties*, 81.

<sup>31</sup> Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, 216.

sanctions and threatened stronger measures if the Serbs did not take steps towards a peaceful settlement.<sup>32</sup> Lawrence Eagleburger, Bush's new Secretary of State, delivered a speech emphasizing the threat the conflict posed to the realization of the ideal vision for the post-Cold War era: "There is a chilling echo today in the former Yugoslavia of some of Europe's darkest moments.... The civilized world simply cannot afford to allow this cancer in the heart of Europe to flourish...".<sup>33</sup> Yet the administration continued to refrain from intervening, reluctant to use military force unless American interests were directly under threat.<sup>34</sup>

Boutros-Ghali hailed the conference "as a crucial first step toward ending" the war, and Eagleburger was optimistic about its impact.<sup>35</sup> In reality, the event mostly reiterated the principles of the previous Geneva Conference that addressed the conflict, disappointing both the Bosnian Serbs and the Bosnian government, and had little impact on the progression of the war.<sup>36</sup>

Halfway into his first year, negative press about Boutros-Ghali continued to proliferate. He was perceived as aggressive towards governments, described as "arrogant" and "heavy-handed" and was accused of alienating Third World diplomats. Although critics often acknowledged the validity of his stances, UN employees resented his behavior and the "unfriendly nickname 'Boo-Boo'" had "firmly stuck".<sup>37</sup> One article, "The Security Council's Unhumble Servant," suggested that while his critiques were usually justified, he angered wealthy UN member states by calling out their failure to pay their dues. He did not seem to care that he

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<sup>32</sup> Eugene Robinson and John M. Goshko, "Conferees in London Agree to More Bosnia Peace Talks," *Washington Post*, August 28, 1992.

<sup>33</sup> Intervention at the London Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Acting Secretary Eagleburger, August 26, 1992, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>34</sup> Morgan T. Rees, "'We Don't Have a Dog in the Fight': Ethnic Cleansing in Bosnia," in *Ideas and the Use of Force in American Foreign Policy: Presidential Decision-Making in a Post-Cold War World*, (Policy Press, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1332/policypress/9781529215908.003.0002>.

<sup>35</sup> Robinson and Goshko, "Conferees in London Agree to More Bosnia Peace Talks."

<sup>36</sup> Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, 216.

<sup>37</sup> "Shades of arrogance from humble servant", Yaroslav Trofimov, *The Australian*, 20 August 1992, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

was making enemies, especially when it came to Bosnia. After the UNSC demanded he break the siege of Sarajevo, he “blew up”, “snarling” that the UN’s resources were needed more in countries like Somalia, and Bosnia was not a top priority simply because it was in Europe. The article argued that unless he changed his demeanor, he risked hostility from every powerful government, which would prevent him from achieving any of his objectives.<sup>38</sup> Another journalist highlighted his controversial labeling of the Bosnia crisis as “a rich people’s war”, and his staff’s estrangement under his “strict and capricious management style”, posing the question of whether he was “motivated by his own pride, or by a wish to defend the organization”.<sup>39</sup> He infuriated the U.K. delegation to the UN when he said that the British press was criticizing him “maybe because I’m a wog” (a derogatory British term for a Middle Eastern person).<sup>40</sup> He openly stated that UNSC members’ egos were the source of his problems<sup>41</sup> – a view he held most strongly in his encounters with the U.S.

In the presidential debate on October 11<sup>th</sup>, Clinton announced his intended policy in Bosnia: opposing the arms embargo, launching air strikes against those blocking humanitarian aid, and collaborating with European countries to bring peace. Like Bush, he opposed committing ground troops, which sowed conflict in his relationship with the headstrong Boutros-Ghali. On November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1992, Clinton was elected as the 42<sup>nd</sup> President of the U.S.:<sup>42</sup> a change of leadership which would affect the future of the U.N.-U.S. relationship.

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<sup>38</sup> “The Security Council’s Unhumble Servant,” *The Economist*, August 8, 1992, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 208, Folder 3, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>39</sup> “The hunting of Boutros-Ghali”, Ian Williams, *Tribune*, 21-28 August 1992, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 208, Folder 3, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>40</sup> Leonard Doyle. “UN Chief Accuses British of Racism.” *The Independent*, August 3, 1992. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/un-chief-accuses-british-of-racism-1538086.html>.

<sup>41</sup> Auger, “Case 362 - Ousting Boutros-Ghali: The Clinton Administration and the Politics of the United Nations”, 7.

<sup>42</sup> Boys, *Clinton’s Grand Strategy*, 41.

In his final days, Bush took some steps to condemn the Serbs' ethnic cleansing,<sup>43</sup> but in the eyes of the public, his administration had overlooked the crisis. Boutros-Ghali had also limited engagement, announcing that UNPROFOR's mandate was solely to "relieve the suffering of the civilian population" by delivering humanitarian aid. At a Sarajevo press conference, on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1992, he told Bosniak Muslims that their situation was "better than in ten other places all over the world.... [A]t least you have the world public opinion ... a peace process... [and] the presence of the United Nations." Although he assured them that he did not want to invalidate their suffering and was simply explaining that the UN was "taking care of Bosnia",<sup>44</sup> he received strong backlash, and his statement was widely interpreted as insensitive. Later, he claimed he had made a "political argument" that conflicts receiving international attention were more likely to be settled, and accused the press of taking his words out of context to intentionally depict him as indifferent.<sup>45</sup> Holbrooke, who overheard a crowd criticizing Boutros-Ghali in his Sarajevo hotel, remarked in his memoir that the statement was "peculiar and ill-advised ... to make anywhere, but especially here."<sup>46</sup>

Overall, the UN operation in Bosnia faced widespread criticism. One article branded it a "prime example of how not to run peacekeeping and humanitarian aid operations", and called for the UN to reevaluate its entire peacekeeping philosophy.<sup>47</sup> Boutros-Ghali refuted the accusations that the UN was not doing enough, writing that Bosnia was the main crisis "absorbing our attention and draining our resources" and UNPROFOR had successfully prevented mass

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<sup>43</sup> Serrienne, *America in the Nineties*, 81.

<sup>44</sup> Quotes from SG's Reports, Letters and Statements on Former Yugoslavia, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 210, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Library & Archives, 6.

<sup>45</sup> "Note for Mr. Gharekhan, Re: Secretary-General statements on conflict in Bosnia", Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 210, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>46</sup> Holbrooke, *To End A War*, 49.

<sup>47</sup> "The perils of trying to keep the peace", *The Daily Telegraph*, 22 October 1992, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 210, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

starvation.<sup>48</sup> Under-Secretary-General of Humanitarian Affairs, Jan Eliasson, highlighted the central problem the UN was facing in humanitarian crises. The lack of international consensus on how to reconcile national sovereignty with UN humanitarian operations created a “gap between [member states’] expectations and [UN] resources” that could become “dangerously wide”.<sup>49</sup> This was the case in Bosnia, where the combination of member states’ high expectations and reluctance to provide resources hindered the UN’s ability to mitigate the conflict.

In this initial stage of limited international involvement, both the Bush administration and the UN were under fire for failing to prevent ethnic cleansing. While UN-U.S. relations were not particularly strained, the Americans’ refusal to provide troops and pay dues planted the seeds of resentment. Most importantly, Boutros-Ghali’s first year in office revealed his difficult character, heavy-handed approach to his office and a diplomat who struggled to cultivate interpersonal relationships, setting the stage for a wider U.S.-UN conflict amongst policymakers.

## *II. 1993-4: The New Administration and Emerging Tensions in the UN-U.S. Relationship*

In 1993, a new President and foreign policy team, with significantly different personalities and perspectives than their predecessors, inherited the Bosnia issue. They endorsed a stronger reaction to the conflict and U.S. global military presence, often clashing with Congress, the Pentagon and the UN. With the administration’s rejection of the first proposal for a diplomatic solution, the Vance-Owen Peace Plan (VOPP), and the struggle over the dual-key agreement, 1993 marked a major shift in American policy toward Bosnia.<sup>50</sup> From 1993 to 1994, the first major disagreements between the UN and the U.S. emerged, revealing sharp differences in

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<sup>48</sup> Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 68.

<sup>49</sup> “United Nations and the Humanitarian Challenge”, Jan Eliasson, 21 October 1992, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 210, Folder 1, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>50</sup> Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, ii.

decisionmakers' foreign policy approaches, diplomatic styles, and experiences in international affairs.

Clinton had one of the worst transitions into office: the Democratic Party had not been in power for nearly the whole last 25 years, and Clinton's foreign policy team reflected it.<sup>51</sup> The transition period revealed problems that would persist throughout his term: Clinton's unwillingness to take on complex problems, indecisiveness, ambiguous foreign policy doctrine,<sup>52</sup> and "chaotic management style".<sup>53</sup> On almost every foreign policy issue, he was torn between satisfying the constantly shifting attitudes of voters and realizing his own goals in international affairs.<sup>54</sup> Rather than giving orders, his natural inclination was to engage in long debates and empathize with both rivals and friends.<sup>55</sup> Lake provides valuable insight into Clinton's personality and foreign policy approach: he was a "natural politician" who loved people and politics, but had to learn the hard way that the best foreign policy decisions were those that created long-term, even delayed success, not those instantly made headlines.<sup>56</sup> Sandy Berger, Clinton's first Deputy National Security Advisor (NSA), described him as "the most eclectic president we've had in many, many years. He didn't stay inside the box...[he] would reach a conclusion and then he would subject that conclusion to the counterargument."<sup>57</sup> Lake recalled that when he worked with Clinton on foreign policy, the president would try to sell "humanitarian intervention...on strictly emotional appeals" – typically unsuccessfully.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Serrienne, *America in the Nineties*, 49.

<sup>52</sup> Boys, *Clinton's Grand Strategy*, 41.

<sup>53</sup> *ibid*, 50.

<sup>54</sup> Moore and Pubantz, *To Create a New World?*, 316.

<sup>55</sup> Boys, *Clinton's Grand Strategy*, 239.

<sup>56</sup> Lake, *6 Nightmares*, 260.

<sup>57</sup> Riley, *Inside the Clinton White House*, 190.

<sup>58</sup> *ibid*, 189.

Clinton's actions in Bosnia displayed his indecisiveness and inexperience, qualities that exasperated Boutros-Ghali and deepened the rift forming between the U.S and the UN.

Clinton's weak background in international affairs, tendency to avoid hard decisions and prioritization of domestic issues made choosing an effective foreign policy team imperative.<sup>59</sup> For Secretary of State, Clinton chose Warren Christopher, the "invariably reserved"<sup>60</sup> former Deputy Secretary of State under President Carter.<sup>61</sup> Few believed he was qualified to take on such an important position during the critical unipolar moment, finding him unexciting and wary of his lack of foreign policy philosophy.<sup>62</sup> In an administration would later advocate for strong military intervention in Bosnia, Christopher initially believed the U.S. had to avoid another Vietnam,<sup>63</sup> and preferred to conduct diplomacy through an outdated case-by case approach.<sup>64</sup> Anthony Lake was appointed as National Security Advisor. In his view, deciding whether to act multilaterally or unilaterally depended entirely on what would best serve the U.S. in a specific scenario.<sup>65</sup> The future star of the administration was the U.S. ambassador to the UN, Madeleine Albright, later appointed as the first female Secretary of State. According to Holbrooke, Albright "performed with a toughness that was productive if not always popular."<sup>66</sup> At the UN, she developed a reputation as a "vigorous advocate of American global interests, blunt to the point of rudeness in her argumentation." Yet she was also politically savvy, sociable, witty and well-liked

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<sup>59</sup> Boys, *Clinton's Grand Strategy*, 45.

<sup>60</sup> Joseph W. Campbell, *1995: The Year the Future Began* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2015), 114.

<sup>61</sup> Boys, *Clinton's Grand Strategy*, 45.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid*, 46.

<sup>63</sup> Chang, *Ethical Foreign Policy?*, 91

<sup>64</sup> *ibid*, 68

<sup>65</sup> *ibid*, 70.

<sup>66</sup> Holbrooke, *To End A War*, 202.

with those she worked with.<sup>67</sup> Albright would become the main villain of *Unvanquished*, as her hawkish views on the use of force elicited Boutros-Ghali's chief opposition.

Many believed this team lacked the experience to shape American foreign policy in the unipolar world.<sup>68</sup> The team was aware of the daunting task ahead: shaping the global role of a country that had just become the only surviving global hegemon. Nancy Soderberg, the deputy NSA from 1997, explained: "It took us two and a half years ... to figure out the new rules of the post-Cold War era. Nobody gave us a book ... [and trying] to rewrite the rules for the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a messy process..."<sup>69</sup> They were faced with one question more than any other: what the criteria, conditions and tactics for American intervention were.<sup>70</sup> Striving to decrease the economic costs of American global interference, the Clinton administration's guiding doctrine was "assertive multilateralism", which envisioned the U.S. exerting its influence through multilateral organizations like the UN and NATO.<sup>71</sup> Clinton's team saw Bosnia as the "key test of American policy in Europe",<sup>72</sup> and a chance to implement the doctrine – one of the top U.S. priorities in Bosnia was to help fortify the UN system. Collaborating with other nations was seen as the best strategy to avoid committing troops and putting American soldiers at risk.<sup>73</sup>

Initially, Clinton sought take a stronger course of action on Bosnia than his predecessor, as his campaign had promised. As soon as he entered office, he declared it was the most urgent foreign policy issue,<sup>74</sup> regularly assembling National Security Council (NSC) meetings about the ever-worsening crisis.<sup>75</sup> Lake recounted that the unconfident and inexperienced Clinton, unsure

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<sup>67</sup> Lippman, *Madeleine Albright and the New American Diplomacy*, 6-8.

<sup>68</sup> Boys, *Clinton's Grand Strategy*, 48.

<sup>69</sup> Riley, *Inside the Clinton White House*, 188.

<sup>70</sup> Chang, *Ethical Foreign Policy*, 70.

<sup>71</sup> Auger, "Case 362 - Ousting Boutros-Ghali: The Clinton Administration and the Politics of the United Nations", 6.

<sup>72</sup> Holbrooke, *To End A War*, 50.

<sup>73</sup> Holbrooke, *To End A War*, 103.

<sup>74</sup> Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, 228.

<sup>75</sup> Boys, *Clinton's Grand Strategy*, 239.

of the best strategy to adopt, winced every time the conflict was brought up.<sup>76</sup> Lake and Albright, on the other hand, advocated strongly for the use of force based on moral principles of protecting human rights,<sup>77</sup> stances which created a tumultuous relationship with the Defense Department.<sup>78</sup> The Pentagon believed the correct course of action was minimal involvement,<sup>79</sup> and grew increasingly vexed while working with a team that endorsed using the military for moral ends. NSC officials described meetings with Clinton's officials as "group therapy sessions", "existential debates" about the U.S.'s role, and "graduate-student seminars".<sup>80</sup> Over and over, Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staffs, reiterated that the U.S. did not "do mountains", "valleys" or "weird ethnic guerrilla groups."<sup>81</sup> In his memoir, he recalled his reaction to Albright asking, "'What's the point of having this superb military...if we can't use it?' I thought I would have an aneurysm."<sup>82</sup> These internal disputes further clouded the administration's sense of direction in international affairs,<sup>83</sup> impacting its dealings with the UN.

Soon, a new relationship between Clinton's officials and the UN's "unhumble servant" was born. Albright described her first encounters with Boutros-Ghali as enjoyable and friendly: she was struck by his confidence, intelligence, and sophisticated style. One of their first meetings was about how to improve the American perception of the UN – which instead declined dramatically over the course of Clinton's presidency. Retrospectively, she wrote that their relationship peaked in these first encounters – later, she pioneered the campaign to veto his re-

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<sup>76</sup> Lake, *6 Nightmares*, 144.

<sup>77</sup> Chang, *Ethical Foreign Policy?*, 91.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, 69.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, 91.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*, 90.

<sup>81</sup> Boys, *Clinton's Grand Strategy*, 238.

<sup>82</sup> Colin L. Powell and Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey*, 1st ed (New York: Random House, 1995), 576.

<sup>83</sup> Boys, *Clinton's Grand Strategy*, 238.

election.<sup>84</sup> During the war, their relationship deteriorated drastically, along with that of the institutions they represented.

The vision of assertive multilateralism was never fully realized: in Boutros-Ghali's view, Clinton's administration "quickly threw up barriers against effective action" in Bosnia.<sup>85</sup> The first was the Clinton administration's rejection of the Vance-Owen Peace Plan (VOPP), which had major ramifications on the resolution of the conflict and the UN-U.S. relationship. The plan, authored by diplomats Cyrus Vance and David Owen, proposed partitioning Bosnia into ten provinces composed of distinct ethnic groups.<sup>86</sup> The international community overwhelmingly supported it, as it fulfilled different ethnic groups' demands for territorial autonomy and prevented Serbian aggression.<sup>87</sup> Boutros-Ghali believed it represented all groups fairly and would transform Bosnia into a "multiethnic", peaceful state. Cyrus Vance, Carter's former Secretary of State, was confident the U.S. would concur, but the opposite occurred.<sup>88</sup> To his amazement, when met with Christopher in February, it seemed he had not even "read even a short factual information sheet" on the plan. Owen was incredulous that Christopher was "so badly briefed to meet his old boss... who was under virulent public attack over a plan his critics claimed favored ethnic cleansing."<sup>89</sup>

The plan was indeed being received terribly in the U.S. An article by the highly regarded realist political scientist John Mearsheimer claimed it offered "nothing but trouble", because it would weaken the government and provoke the Serbs.<sup>90</sup> Another journalist called Vance the

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<sup>84</sup> Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 210.

<sup>85</sup> Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 68-9.

<sup>86</sup> Boys, *Clinton's Grand Strategy*, 240.

<sup>87</sup> Steven L. Burg Shoup Paul S., *Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention: Crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1990-93* (New York: Routledge, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315704494>, 405.

<sup>88</sup> Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 69.

<sup>89</sup> *The New York Review*, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 210, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>90</sup> "The Answer", *The New Republic*, Mearsheimer and Pape, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 210, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

“embodiment of the Vietnam syndrome,” and encouraged strikes on Serb military positions instead.<sup>91</sup> Even the U.S. Committee for Refugees advocated for a robust military intervention over the VOPP, calling the conflict “a case where force becomes necessary in the pursuit of humanitarian ends.”<sup>92</sup>

In his memoir, Clinton explained that he believed the VOPP prevented Bosnian Muslims from defending themselves.<sup>93</sup> On February 5<sup>th</sup>, the New York Times reported that the administration believed the plan “rewarded ethnic cleansing”, and the UN “should not impose a diplomatic settlement on the victim just because the aggressor agreed to it.”<sup>94</sup> When Boutros-Ghali learned that without consulting him, the U.S. had advised the Bosnian Foreign Minister against accepting the VOPP,<sup>95</sup> he saw “the chances of peace being thrown away.” American opposition had dealt the plan “a death blow.” On the 10<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. presented its own plan, baffling everyone: it was almost identical to the original plan, other than reducing the requirement of 30,000 troops, half of which would have been American. To the UN, evading military responsibility appeared to be the U.S.’s primary concern.<sup>96</sup> Boutros-Ghali believed the Americans would reject any peace plan that was proposed, because all would inevitably ask them to contribute troops. Frustration in Europe rose, as governments began resenting “Washington’s tendency to criticize their performance but not contribute any troops of its own.”<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> “Cyrus Vance’s Bad Example”, January 13<sup>th</sup>, 1993, Charles Hill Papers, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 210, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>92</sup> “Statement of Roger P. Winter, Director, U.S. Committee for Refugees, on Human Rights and Humanitarian Needs of Refugees and Displaced Persons In and outside Bosnia and Hercegovina before the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe”, January 25, 1993, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 208, Folder 4, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>93</sup> Clinton, *My Life*, 511.

<sup>94</sup> “Bosnia Notes, NYT, 5 Feb 93” Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 208, Folder 4, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>95</sup> Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 70.

<sup>96</sup> *ibid*, 69.

<sup>97</sup> *ibid*, 71.

On February 23<sup>rd</sup>, Boutros-Ghali met with Clinton to discuss the VOPP, an interaction where their personal and political differences became apparent. Clinton's notes highlighted that the U.S. sought "a no-fly zone enforcement resolution" and "a settlement acceptable to all parties." In a memo to Lake before the meeting, Boutros-Ghali was described as "energetic, determined and intellectual", and "the most effective Secretary-General the UN has had in a long time." However, he had an "undeniably difficult personal style", was "aloof," stubborn, and could "mistake an interlocutor's failure to say no as an assent".<sup>98</sup> Boutros-Ghali, conversely, was warned that Clinton never said "no", and he would have to listen attentively to understand when "yes" actually meant "no".<sup>99</sup>

During the meeting, the Secretary-General stressed that the UN was weak, and the "key to its effectiveness" was to improve its reputation in the U.S.— thus, Clinton's support for the UN and the VOPP was essential. Clinton assured him that he too wanted the UN to be strong, and was willing to "work through" the VOPP's framework to bolster the UN's "strength and durability."<sup>100</sup> Clinton agreed to support the plan, if the borders of the provinces were modified — which Boutros-Ghali interpreted as a case of Clinton saying "yes" when he meant "no".<sup>101</sup> In the "friendly" conversation, the Secretary-General agreed to Clinton's proposal of airdropping humanitarian supplies, but while he said he preferred the operation be coordinated with the UN, Clinton wanted to maintain the option of conducting it unilaterally. A UN report on the meeting later called the airdrop initiative a tactic for Clinton to show he was unafraid of being tough and

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<sup>98</sup> Memorandum for Anthony Lake, Materials for the President's Meeting with UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, "Declassified Documents Concerning U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Somalia · Clinton Digital Library," <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/101838>, 36.

<sup>99</sup> Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 72.

<sup>100</sup> Memorandum of Conversation: Meeting with Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali of the United Nations, "Declassified Documents Concerning U.N. Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Somalia", Clinton Digital Library," <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/101838>, 95.

<sup>101</sup> Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 72.

to “project an image of command presence”.<sup>102</sup> In another meeting with Albright, she calmly assured Boutros-Ghali that the U.S. and NATO would respect the UN’s authority.<sup>103</sup>

“By March, we seemed to be making some progress,” Clinton wrote in his memoir, “but we were a long way from a unified policy.”<sup>104</sup> The international community was divided: the U.S. was set on launching air strikes and lifting the arms embargo, which the Europeans – fearing retaliation against their soldiers on the ground– firmly opposed.<sup>105</sup> Vance solemnly told Boutros-Ghali: “We are on the brink of a major war.”<sup>106</sup> The Secretary-General’s personal notes summarized the dire situation: “US opposes UN/EC negotiation...situation worsens; US decides on airdrops; air drops fail... Balkans again becomes tinderbox for conflict/confrontation among outside powers.”<sup>107</sup>

This pessimism was mirrored on the American side. In April, Christopher conceded: “The United States simply doesn’t have the means to make people in that region of the world like each other”.<sup>108</sup> Clinton recounted feeling completely lost on how to proceed. Every option had a downfall: lifting the arms embargo would weaken the UN, unilaterally bombing the Serbs would divide NATO, and sending American soldiers would risk their lives “under a UN mandate [he] thought was bound to fail”.<sup>109</sup> His efforts to press for harsher measures met resistance from the UNSC. Britain and France, whose troops were at risk of being targeted, were committed to

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<sup>102</sup> “Proposed AirDrop Operation in Bosnia and the President’s Meeting with UN Secretary General”, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 3, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>103</sup> Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 72.

<sup>104</sup> Clinton, *My Life*, 511.

<sup>105</sup> Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, 229.

<sup>106</sup> Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 72.

<sup>107</sup> Notes on Bosnia, 4 March 1993, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 4, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>108</sup> Boys, *Clinton’s Grand Strategy*, 241.

<sup>109</sup> Clinton, *My Life*, 513.

finding a diplomatic solution. Russia, which had links to the Christian Serbs, was even less inclined to accept a military reaction.<sup>110</sup>

That month, the VOPP officially failed.<sup>111</sup> The warring parties, who had been prepared to accept it, retracted their support when the U.S. announced the Washington Declaration, a plan that would create six safe areas around Bosnian Muslim enclaves.<sup>112</sup> Boutros-Ghali blamed Washington for persuading the Bosnian Muslims to reject the plan, and consequently giving the Serbs the opportunity to drop negotiations and escalate their attacks.<sup>113</sup> In April 1993, the first safe zone was established in Srebrenica,<sup>114</sup> a town which would later be remembered as “the West’s greatest shame”.

Clinton had become permanently embroiled in the “greatest collective security failure of the West since the 1930s”,<sup>115</sup> and his wavering foreign policy was beginning to impact his public image. The U.S.-endorsed “lift and strike” policy, (lifting the embargo and launching air strikes), was “all but dead”, and Clinton could “no longer blame the situation on his predecessor.”<sup>116</sup> One article criticized him for consistently “bending himself into a pretzel”, questioning if there was a “core” “to his marshmallowy, all-inclusive empathy”.<sup>117</sup> Clinton’s uncertainty, inability to make difficult decisions, and inconsistent foreign policy exacerbated the rising tensions with Boutros-Ghali and the UN.

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<sup>110</sup> Moore and Pubantz, *To Create a New World?* 321.

<sup>111</sup> Shoup, *Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*, 263.

<sup>112</sup> Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, 232.

<sup>113</sup> Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 73.

<sup>114</sup> Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 83.

<sup>115</sup> Clinton, *My Life*, 512.

<sup>116</sup> “U.S had, but lost, the chance to lead”, *The Washington Times*, 19 May 1993, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 3, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>117</sup> Newsweek, May 24, 1993, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 3, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

On May 4<sup>th</sup>, Boutros-Ghali proposed a plan in which NATO would have operational control of a force of 70,00 UN peacekeeping troops, whose primary authority rested in the UNSC. In his view, sending this number of troops was the only way to protect UN forces from Serb attacks. The U.S. rejected the proposal vehemently, which Boutros-Ghali interpreted as an indication that the U.S. wanted UNPROFOR to act as a “scapegoat for problems created by the great powers’ continued unwillingness to act decisively.” When Albright proposed a complete abandonment of the international framework on Bosnia that had been agreed upon in London, Boutros-Ghali was incredulous at the “insouciant disregard for .... a formal international diplomatic process ... I could not fathom what they wanted.”<sup>118</sup> Boutros-Ghali was not only repeatedly left feeling confused and angered by Clinton officials’ constantly changing opinions, but particularly their confident assertion of how they wanted things to get done, and expectation that their recommendations would be carried out without question. He was perplexed and irked by the hegemon’s deliberate alienation of other countries and attitude of entitlement. His naiveté in awaiting the sole global superpower to behave any differently, and strong resistance to its approach, continued to inflame his relations with U.S. officials.

The war was essentially over by the spring of 1993– the Serbs had seized territory and ethnically cleansed the Muslim population without facing any consequences.<sup>119</sup> In his notes from May 9th, Boutros-Ghali wrote: “US/UN/Eur have failed. Serbs have won.” His hopelessness was tangible: “Crisis is over... There is nothing the US or Europe will do to roll this back... [M]ilitary action will be ... fruitless and... [lead to] US humiliation.”<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 84.

<sup>119</sup> *ibid*, 87.

<sup>120</sup> “Bosnia”, 9 May 1993, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 4, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

In June, an intense, long-term struggle over whether to launch air strikes, and who had the over them, began. Boutros-Ghali, adamant to maintain some authority over the use of force, formalized the “dual-key arrangement”, which stipulated that the UN Secretary-General would have the power to veto NATO air strikes.<sup>121</sup> He justified the decision by contending that air strikes could be interpreted as acts of war against the Serbs, and provoke attacks against UNPROFOR.<sup>122</sup> His insistence on maintaining the arrangement and the “primacy of the United Nations” infuriated American officials,<sup>123</sup> who were eager to make military decisions unilaterally. Even though Clinton supported air strikes, the UN’s control left him powerless.<sup>124</sup> The dual-key arrangement, one of, if not the most, significant and heated disagreements, demonstrated how Boutros-Ghali’s obstinacy clashed with hawkish American officials, who resented the Secretary-General’s desire to retain authority and limitation on the U.S.’s military power.

In September, Clinton shifted his policy again, proposing that the U.S. participate in the multilateral efforts of the UN and NATO to enforce the no-fly zone. Republican Senator Bob Dole, an emblem of American hostility towards UN, opposed it vehemently.<sup>125</sup> Clinton wrote that in October, he was preoccupied with “fending off efforts in Congress to limit [his] ability to commit American troops to...Bosnia.”<sup>126</sup> He had given up, deciding that the war was “a matter for the parties to resolve.”<sup>127</sup> To Boutros-Ghali, it seemed that the administration had placed the

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<sup>121</sup> “Clinton on Bosnia, Then and Now as a Candidate,” *The Washington Post*, September 11, 1995, Proquest Historical Newspapers.

<sup>122</sup> Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 85-7.

<sup>123</sup> “Boutros-Ghali Gets Ready for Air Strikes”, Julia Preston, *The Washington Post*, 12 February 1994, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>124</sup> “Clinton on Bosnia, Then and Now as a Candidate.”

<sup>125</sup> Banks and Straussman, “A New Imperial Presidency?”, 201.

<sup>126</sup> Clinton, *My Life*, 555.

<sup>127</sup> Selection of Clinton statements on Bosnia, *The New Republic*, August 7, 1995, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 2, Hoover Institution and Archives.

Balkan crisis “on the back burner . . . [and b]lamed the failure of its Bosnian policy on the Europeans, who were understandably furious.”<sup>128</sup>

The U.S.-UN division deepened dramatically in October 1993, when 18 American soldiers operating under a UN peacekeeping operation were killed in Somalia.<sup>129</sup> The event caused widespread outrage and embarrassment in the White House, public opposition to peacekeeping operations surged, and deterred the Clinton administration from aggressively intervening in Bosnia for months. Not “crossing the Mogadishu line” became a strict boundary in American foreign policy,<sup>130</sup> and the political ramifications of Somalia effectively killed assertive multilateralism.<sup>131</sup> Boutros-Ghali wrote in his memoir that after the Serb victory and Somalia, “all that remained [in Bosnia] was for the United States to continue to appear desirous of taking forcible action while counting on America’s NATO allies to prevent any such action”.<sup>132</sup> He was convinced that the U.S. was using the UN as a scapegoat for its failures around the globe.

In 1994, the U.S. became more fully engaged in the conflict as violence against civilians escalated,<sup>133</sup> using limited NATO air strikes against the Serbs’ strongholds. However, Western powers remained incapable of taking credible and effective action that did not pose significant risks. The U.S.’s encouragements for stronger force were not accompanied by real action, because American policymakers were unsure of their objectives and the UN opposed military action that threatened peacekeepers on the ground.<sup>134</sup>

In January, Serb mortar shells killed six children in a safe zone in Sarajevo, and the Bosnian Prime Minister wrote an open letter to Boutros-Ghali, saying that UNPROFOR’s failure

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<sup>128</sup> Boys, *Clinton’s Grand Strategy*, 245.

<sup>129</sup> Chang, *Ethical Foreign Policy?*, 79.

<sup>130</sup> Boys, *Clinton’s Grand Strategy*, 246.

<sup>131</sup> Chang, *Ethical Foreign Policy?*, 78.

<sup>132</sup> Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 88.

<sup>133</sup> Shoup, *Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*, 407.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid*, 263.

to protect children's lives "mocked the dignity of the United Nations." Support for air strikes was increasing in Congress: it was "embarrassing and dangerous" for the U.S. to ignore Europe's problems.<sup>135</sup> Clinton echoed this desire for stronger air power, asserting that the Serbs had to "understand that we are serious."<sup>136</sup> Boutros-Ghali slightly shifted his position on air power, suggesting it could be employed if the Serbs attempted to obstruct efforts to reopen the airport,<sup>137</sup> and delegated the authority to order air strikes to UN commander Yasushi Akashi.<sup>138</sup> At a press conference, Boutros-Ghali denied that he had withheld decision-making power on strikes, and called the U.S.'s refusal to participate in peacekeeping on the ground a "universal problem."<sup>139</sup> However, despite Boutros-Ghali having handed the veto to Akashi, the UN still had the final authority on air strikes.

On February 5<sup>th</sup>, Serb forces shelled a market in Sarajevo, killing 66 and injuring 200—the most civilians killed in any attack in Sarajevo. William Perry, the U.S. Defense Secretary, warned that the U.S. would "consider stronger action, including air strikes" if the killing of civilians continued.<sup>140</sup> UN condemnation in the press spiked when reporters discovered that a number of UN soldiers had been smuggling Sarajevans through extortion.<sup>141</sup> Others argued that

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<sup>135</sup> Richard H. Curtiss, "U.S.-U.N. Moment of Truth Arrives With Overt Invasion of Bosnia," *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* (Washington, United States: American Educational Trust, March 31, 1994).

<sup>136</sup> *The Washington Times*, Jan 10<sup>th</sup>, 1994, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 208, Folder 6, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>137</sup> "Washington Backs UN Proposal for Air Attacks on Serbs in Bosnia", 1 February 1994, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 208, Folder 6, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>138</sup> "Threat of pullouts forces UN chief to review Bosnia role", *The London Times*, 2 February 1994, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 208, Folder 6, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>139</sup> "UN Secretary-General Shifts Blame Over Bosnia-Herzegovina", *Los Angeles Times*, 2 February 1994, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 208 Folder 6, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>140</sup> Tony Smith, "Shelling of Sarajevo Market Kills 66, Wounds Hundreds" *Washington Post*, February 6, 1994, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1994/02/06/shelling-of-sarajevo-market-kills-66-wounds-hundreds/e609f25a-a855-4a11-bd28-546eb3561917/>.

<sup>141</sup> "No more lies; The United Nations has failed in Bosnia", David Rieff, 6 February 1994, *The Sunday Times of London*, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 210, Folder 5, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

the U.S. and EC had played a “scandalous role” in the “murder of Bosnia”, and it was too late.<sup>142</sup> After this massacre, the international military involvement in Bosnia increased significantly.<sup>143</sup>

In a press conference on February 9<sup>th</sup>, NATO Secretary-General, Manfred Woerner, announced that NATO would use air power to establish a safe zone around Sarajevo, from which heavy weapons would be eliminated, and respond forcefully to any attacks on the city.”<sup>144</sup> The Serbs complied, fearing NATO’s threat.<sup>145</sup> On February 28<sup>th</sup>, NATO shot down Serb bombers violating the “no-fly zone”: the first military action in history of NATO’s history. Clinton hoped this would encourage “the allies to take a stronger posture toward Serb aggression.”<sup>146</sup>

In the spring of 1994, the Clinton administration began to rely more heavily on force to end the war by using air strikes, directly intervening, and lifting the arms embargo.<sup>147</sup> Clinton officials increasingly criticized the UN and set strict standards for U.S. involvement in peacekeeping in PDD-25, the new policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations. While Albright saw UN peacekeeping as a benefit to the broader American national security strategy, she believed the UN had not proved its ability to react “effectively when the risk of combat is high, and the level of local cooperation is low.” The principle of impartiality posed was a detrimental obstacle when military credibility was necessary. The document asserted American supremacy: “We may act through the UN ... or we may act alone. But we will do whatever is necessary to defend the vital interests of the US.” A strong pillar of PDD-25 was that as “the

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<sup>142</sup> “Now, Bosnia Without Bosnians”, Bogdan Denitch, *The Washington Post*, 13 February 1994, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 210, Folder 5, Hoover Institution & Archives.

<sup>143</sup> Shoup, *Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*, 315.

<sup>144</sup> “News Conference with Manfred Woerner”, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 1994, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 210, Folder 5, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>145</sup> Shoup, *Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*, 402.

<sup>146</sup> Clinton, *My Life*, 582.

<sup>147</sup> Shoup, *Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*, 300.

largest single financial contributor to the UN”, the U.S. was entitled to greater authority over peacekeeping.<sup>148</sup>

American frustration was also apparent in a fax from the U.S. mission to the UN, in which expressed concern with “seemingly partisan actions on the part of the UN Special Representative” and suggested UNPROFOR commanders had covertly tolerated Serb violations of safe zones. “All the good we have done together,” it stated, “is at risk if the UN forces on the ground undermine the UN’s own credibility, not to mention that of NATO.” They argued that air strikes were essential if the Serbs did not abide by UN and NATO policy.<sup>149</sup> For UN officials, these criticisms further undermined the organization’s already vulnerable state and weakened credibility. The notes on Boutros-Ghali’s objectives for a meeting with Christopher convey his acute concern with the rise of animosity from the U.S.:

“Reestablish a good working relationship with Christopher...ask U.S. to take care in its public criticism of the UN. Even when warranted, such attacks can undermine the UN and make effective performance harder to achieve.... Urge the U.S. to take an engaged, responsible, and cooperative role with the UN.”<sup>150</sup>

His talking points further demonstrate alarm about the effect of American criticism: “I hope that the U.S. will take care in its comments about the UN effort on the ground. When criticism goes beyond a certain point, it undermines all our endeavors.”<sup>151</sup> His pleas were ignored. After Akashi failed to mediate cease-fire talks in June, the UN’s role in Bosnia decreased significantly.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Madeleine K Albright and Anthony Lake, “The Clinton Administration’s Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations,” 1994.

<sup>149</sup> “Data Fax Cover Sheet United States Mission to the United Nations”, May 10, 1994, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 1, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>150</sup> “Secretary-General’s Meeting with the Secretary of State, 27 May 1994, 4.00pm Washington.”, 25 May 1994, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 1, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>151</sup> “Talking Points for use with Secretary Christopher”, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 1, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>152</sup> Shoup, *Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*, 302.

The months between November 1994 and the end of July 1995 witnessed the most desperate moments of the crisis, according to Holbrooke.<sup>153</sup> In November, disputes between the UN and the U.S. over managing the conflict escalated further, as well as animosity towards Boutros-Ghali's approach to his role, as reflected by Albright's thoughts on him in an interview:

“We have had and will probably continue to have some disagreements about how he and how we view his job. He can be a supernegotiator and diplomat. Then the second job would be to be the manager of the United Nations system, and the third an international policymaker. We think he ought to do more of the first two and less of the third.”<sup>154</sup>

Another pivotal development was the Republican victory in the midterm elections, when the party gained control of both houses of Congress. The Secretary-General became the target of the Republicans' long-term hostility towards the UN,<sup>155</sup> and Clinton butted heads with Congress, which was unwilling to include UN funding in the budget.<sup>156</sup> At this stage, the Americans began to reduce their military involvement: NATO's unity, and positive relations with the U.S.'s allies within NATO, was valued more than a resolution to the conflict.<sup>157</sup> In his notes from November 30<sup>th</sup>, Charles Hill wrote: “Someone in the WH [White House] seems to have concluded that sticking to Clinton's hapless policy on Bosnia was not worth the breakup of NATO... this is worse than chaos, it is asinine.”<sup>158</sup> His letter to the Executive Office of the Secretary-General on December 12<sup>th</sup> highlights the fact that the UN-U.S. split undermined the international response to the conflict. The fighting parties were “exploiting the differences among the forces trying to end the war in Bosnia” to “keep the UN/NATO/US effort off-balance, fragmented and ineffective.”<sup>159</sup> In December, a UN report warned that the diplomatic effort could not succeed in the long-run,

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<sup>153</sup> Holbrooke, *To End A War*, 61.

<sup>154</sup> Auger, “Case 362 - Ousting Boutros-Ghali: The Clinton Administration and the Politics of the United Nations,” 6.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid*, 7.

<sup>156</sup> Serriane, *America in the Nineties*, 59.

<sup>157</sup> Shoup, *Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*, 312.

<sup>158</sup> Note, “30 Nov 94”, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 208, Folder 5, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>159</sup> Letter from Charles Hill to the EOSG, 12 December 1994, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 208, Folder 5, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

withdrawing UNPROFOR would be “embarrassing” and trigger in a humanitarian crisis, but an American military campaign against the Serbs would be neither internationally supported, nor successful.<sup>160</sup> In a letter to Izetbegović, Kofi Annan, Boutros-Ghali’s deputy, defined the UN’s limits of NATO activities in Bosnia. NATO was only permitted to use force with authorization from the Secretary-General, and its ability to act was based on Security Council resolutions.<sup>161</sup> By the end of 1994, the war reached a stalemate, and the U.S. became the leader in developing a settlement that would later be the foundation for the Dayton Accords.<sup>162</sup> In December, Jimmy Carter secured a 4-month long ceasefire, and hostilities temporarily ceased.<sup>163</sup> The encounters and disagreements between the UN and the U.S. in this stage of the war illustrate how conflicting personalities and views on the use of force exacerbated the clashes between the Secretary-General and American hegemony.

### *III. 1995: The Point of No Return and the U.S.’s Replacement of the UN in Bosnia*

1995 was the most significant year for determining Bosnia’s future,<sup>164</sup> as well as the culmination of many of the UN-U.S. tensions. The dramatic escalation of developments in Bosnia began posing a threat to Clinton’s reelection and undermining American prestige on the international stage.<sup>165</sup> The UN hostage crisis and the Srebrenica massacre marked the most important turning points of the war and the most consequential events for the UN-U.S.

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<sup>160</sup> “Bosnia and Herzegovina, Reconstructing a Policy”, 15 December 1994, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 210, Folder 4, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>161</sup> “Letter from USG Annan to Pres Izbegovic and Dr. Karadzic, 12/94”, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 210, Folder 4, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>162</sup> Shoup, *Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*, 408.

<sup>163</sup> *ibid*, 314.

<sup>164</sup> Daalder, “Decision to Intervene.”

<sup>165</sup> Boys, *Clinton’s Grand Strategy*, 247.

relationship. In 1995, U.S. decisively took over the international response to the war, firmly circumventing the UN's power.

In January, Dole introduced an act to restrict American forces and funding for peacekeeping operations. When Boutros-Ghali tried to directly persuade Republican representatives directly that this would not be in American interests, Albright recalled that he was “radioactive”, and only succeeded in exacerbating the Republicans’ steely antagonism towards the UN.<sup>166</sup> With a solution seemingly out of reach, Lake called Bosnia “the cancer eating away at American foreign policy”.<sup>167</sup> In March, the Serbs violated Carter’s agreement, attacking Sarajevo, hijacking UN vehicles and closing the airport to obstruct the delivery of humanitarian aid.<sup>168</sup>

One of the greatest catalysts for the widening rift between the U.N. and the U.S. was the UN hostage crisis, when UNPROFOR soldiers were held hostages by Serbian forces after NATO launched limited air strikes. The hostage crisis embodied the threat that the American endorsement of air strikes posed to UN personnel on the ground, and further inflamed the tensions between Boutros-Ghali and the U.S.

In May of 1995, Sarajevo witnessed the worst violence since NATO’s first intervention in February 1994.<sup>169</sup> Boutros-Ghali’s notes from May 24<sup>th</sup> reveal his anxiety about the state of affairs: “we appear to be entering a...more dangerous period than yet encountered since the end of the Cold War... US has pressed for a/s [air strikes]...will they take responsibility to deal with the consequences?”<sup>170</sup> The consequences of air power, as the UN and European governments had

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<sup>166</sup> Auger, “Case 362 - Ousting Boutros-Ghali: The Clinton Administration and the Politics of the United Nations,” 9.

<sup>167</sup> Ivo H. Daalder, “Decision to Intervene: How the War in Bosnia Ended,” Brookings, accessed October 16, 2023, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/decision-to-intervene-how-the-war-in-bosnia-ended/>.

<sup>168</sup> Report of the Secretary-General Pursuant to Security Council Resolutions 982 (1995) and 987 (1995), May 1995, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 1, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>169</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> Note, 24 May 1995, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

feared all along, fell on the troops on the ground. After NATO launched limited air strikes to react to the attacks,<sup>171</sup> Serb forces held 400 peacekeepers hostage to deter additional strikes.<sup>172</sup> “Exactly what UN warned against has happened,” Hill wrote to Boutros-Ghali.<sup>173</sup> In a report to the UNSC, Boutros-Ghali identified the “inherent deficiencies” of the U.S.-designed safe areas agreement as the reason UNPROFOR could not protect civilians, and were now victims themselves.<sup>174</sup>

The impact of the hostage crisis was immense, not only for UNPROFOR but for the UN’s legitimacy and its philosophy of creating peace without overt military force. Boutros-Ghali’s viewed it as catastrophe that threatened the UN’s credibility, capacity to conduct future peacekeeping operations, and the full range of its activities.<sup>175</sup> Indeed, the press was extremely critical, with one journalist calling the UN policy one of “deliberate vulnerability” and comparing the UN to a mentally disordered person. It urged the peacekeeping force to drop its fantasy of impartiality and “fight a real war”.<sup>176</sup> Holbrooke’s memoir illustrated how the hostage crisis fomented distrust towards UN amongst American policymakers as well. After the peacekeepers were freed in June, Holbrooke wrote that “evidence of secret deals between the Serbs and the UN” to negotiate their release was uncovered. After the hostages were released, the

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<sup>171</sup> Daalder, “Decision to Intervene.”

<sup>172</sup> Morgan T. Rees, ““What Should I Tell My Daughter?”:The Massacre at Srebrenica,” in *Ideas and the Use of Force in American Foreign Policy: Presidential Decision-Making in a Post-Cold War World*, <https://doi.org/10.1332/policypress/9781529215908.003.0003>, 3.

<sup>173</sup> “Airstrikes”, 26 May 1995, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>174</sup> Report of the Secretary-General Pursuant to Security Council Resolutions 982 (1995) and 987 (1995), May 1995, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>175</sup> “SG material to add to Report”, 29 May 1995, Report of the Secretary-General Pursuant to Security Council Resolutions 982 & 987, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>176</sup> “Brought into focus: Serb action has forced the United Nations to reconsider its role in Bosnia,” *Edward Mortimer*, 31 May 1995, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

Serbs' attacks intensified dramatically without despite a halt in air strikes. Although the Americans never confirmed the details, suspicions about these secret deals spread rapidly.<sup>177</sup>

With the defeats of May, June saw the humiliated international community struggle to regain its footing. "What is the answer?" Clinton asked. "If we do something else, it might make it worse."<sup>178</sup> Boutros-Ghali's notes continued to demonstrate a negative perception of the U.S.'s policy toward Bosnia: "Americans want ... to appear to take stronger action while actually avoiding direct involvement."<sup>179</sup> In another note, he lamented that the U.S. did not have a real policy in Bosnia because the administration's only motive was to never send their own troops, leading them to "get tough [on air strikes] whenever that danger arises". The direct result was "incoherence" and chaos." He bemoaned the difficulty and absence of "guidelines" on managing conflict after the Cold War.<sup>180</sup> The dejection and disillusionment in his notes is striking: "Those who ceaselessly work for peace (or try to avoid war) create and prolong war."<sup>181</sup>

The most significant turning point of the conflict occurred in July 1995, when Bosnian Serb forces executed approximately 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica – a supposedly UN-protected "safe" zone.<sup>182</sup> The Serbs successfully committed a genocide under the watch of Dutch peacekeepers, who stood by passively, held back by a mandate that allowed them to deliver aid, but obliged them to remain impartial.<sup>183</sup> In March 1993, UNPROFOR General Philippe Morillon had assured Bosnian refugees in Srebrenica that they were finally out of

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<sup>177</sup> Holbrooke, *To End A War*, 64.

<sup>178</sup> "Clinton on Bosnia, Then and Now as a Candidate."

<sup>179</sup> 2 June 1995, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 3, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>180</sup> "Bosnia" 16 June 1995, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 3, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>181</sup> Note, 17 June 1995, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 3, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>182</sup> Mazower, *Governing the World*, 384.

<sup>183</sup> Barnett, *Empire of Humanity*, 177.

harm's way, thanks to the peacekeepers' protection in the safe zone.<sup>184</sup> Instead, a genocide was carried out without any resistance from the UN. The event dealt a massive blow to the UN's prestige, severely undermining its credibility and drawing widespread criticism from the public. With the media drawing parallels to the atrocities of the Holocaust, Srebrenica transformed how the conflict was viewed and subsequently triggered a monumental shift in policy.

Srebrenica catalyzed a radical pivot in American policy towards Bosnia – now, the war was undermining the Clinton administration's credibility and moral high ground, making it appear weak and flippant in the face of the crime that was never supposed to occur again.<sup>185</sup> French President Jacques Chirac announced that the position of the “‘Leader of the Free World’ was ‘vacant.’”<sup>186</sup> Criticisms of Clinton's passivity rose from both sides of the aisle, which accused his administration of “back-pedaling, incoherence, and fecklessness” throughout the war, and now of allowing genocide to occur under its watch. Bosnia was beginning to tarnish Clinton's reputation and harm him politically.<sup>187</sup> The war, now reframed enabled interventionists to take over the U.S. response in an attempt to salvage Clinton's legacy. From this point forward, the president became decisive and unapologetic about using force.<sup>188</sup> Lake observed that compared to 1993, his meetings with Clinton during this period were “crisp and presidential”: he was finally “in command of the subject”.<sup>189</sup> After the humiliation in Srebrenica, the U.S. firmly established its authority over policy in Bosnia, stepping up to the challenge of defeating the Serbs once and for all, and proving it possessed the military might of a sole global hegemon.

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<sup>184</sup> Tom Blanton and Emily Willard, “Srebrenica Conference Documents Detail Path to Genocide from 1993 to 1995,” National Security Archive, July 1, 2015, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB519-Srebrenica-conference-documents-detail-path-to-genocide-from-1993-to-1995/>.

<sup>185</sup> Rees, “‘What Should I Tell My Daughter?’”, 2.

<sup>186</sup> Boys, *Clinton's Grand Strategy*, 247.

<sup>187</sup> Campbell, *1995*, 107-8.

<sup>188</sup> Rees, “‘What Should I Tell My Daughter?’”, 2.

<sup>189</sup> Lake, *6 Nightmares*, 144.

Srebrenica further escalated tensions between the UN and the U.S.: the U.S. held the UN accountable for the massacre. The Clinton administration took the UN's failure to prevent genocide as evidence that the world organization, and Boutros-Ghali, could no longer be in control of the international response. In his memoir, Christopher regretted that they had not realized earlier that the U.S. was "the only hope for restoring a semblance of order and humanity"—no other nation or organization would have ever assumed such a challenge.<sup>190</sup> Albright and Holbrooke blamed the tragedy on the UN's stubborn adherence to the principle of impartiality, and most of all, on Boutros-Ghali's insistence on withholding NATO's freedom to make decisions on the use of force.<sup>191</sup> Albright's memorandum to Lake reveals the U.S.'s main motives for taking aggressive military action after Srebrenica: saving Clinton's chance in the next election, and maintaining the U.S.'s superpower status. Letting the Europeans – who had already done enough damage – take the lead was not a viable option anymore, in her eyes:

“I fear Bosnia will overshadow our entire first term. The failure of our European allies...has caused serious erosion in the credibility of the NATO alliance and the United Nations. Worse, our continued reluctance to lead an effort to resolve a military crisis in the heart of Europe has placed at risk our leadership of the post-Cold War world.”

Albright emphasized that the crisis was not only threatening American hegemony, but also Clinton's political survival and her own legacy. Forceful action had become indispensable, and UNPROFOR had to go.<sup>192</sup> Conversely, Boutros-Ghali opposed UNPROFOR's withdrawal.<sup>193</sup> His notes convey his resentment of the U.S.: “Every established principle of diplomacy and int'l

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<sup>190</sup> Christopher, *Chances of a Lifetime*, 252.

<sup>191</sup> Henry F. Carey, “U.S. Domestic Politics and the Emerging Humanitarian Intervention Policy: Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo”, 79.

<sup>192</sup> Memorandum for the National Security Advisor from Ambassador Albright, August 3, 1995, Clinton Presidential Records, 2.

<sup>193</sup> “Talking Points for the Press”, 19 July 1995, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 10, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

order – known to all in this century – was turned upside down and ignored.”<sup>194</sup> A cable from Akashi, summarizing his meeting with Holbrooke, reported that the U.S. “forcefully delivered” its message that air strikes were crucial to resolving the conflict and would “take place regardless of consequences for UNPROFOR”. The UN force commander retaliated that no safe areas were being threatened, and thus air strikes were not essential.<sup>195</sup> The emphasis on the “forceful manner” of the U.S. delegation demonstrates the sharp UN-U.S. division over use of air power. Boutros-Ghali’s repeated his warnings that preemptive air strikes would result in attacks against UNPROFOR troops in another letter to the NATO Security-General.<sup>196</sup>

His objections to launching further air strikes were brushed aside. August 1995 marked the moment that United States decisively overrode the United Nations’ decision-making power in Bosnia. In his memoir, Holbrooke vividly described the events that changed the course of the war and the administration’s relationship with Boutros-Ghali. On August 28<sup>th</sup>, thirty-five civilians were killed by a Serb shelling at a market in Sarajevo, the second-worst attack on civilians since the beginning of the war.<sup>197</sup> Boutros-Ghali issued a statement that “as usual, meant almost exactly the opposite of what it seemed to say.” He condemned the attack and ordered that his commanders react – another “device to avoid taking action,” in Holbrooke’s words.<sup>198</sup> The next morning, the press reported that Clinton was pressing for a robust military response from the UN and NATO. While Boutros-Ghali was on a flight and unreachable, Albright persuaded Annan to convince UN commanders to temporarily relinquish their veto on

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<sup>194</sup> “Bosnia notes July 1995”, 31 July 1995, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 10, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>195</sup> “UNPROFOR Communications, Outgoing Code Cable to Annan from Akashi, Subject: Visit of Mr. Richard Holbrooke”, 16 August 1995, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 10, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>196</sup> Letter from Boutros-Ghali to Willy Claes, Secretary-General of NATO, 15 August 1995, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 10, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>197</sup> Holbrooke, *To End A War*, 91.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid*, 92.

air strikes. For the first time, the U.S.'s only barrier to using force, the dual-key arrangement, had been lifted. Through NATO, the U.S. now had full control of the use of force.<sup>199</sup>

Gaining other NATO countries' approval to launch air strikes was the final step in what Clinton called "the long, tortuous process" to convince the Europeans to take harsher measures against the Serbs.<sup>200</sup> This time, however, convincing them meant asserting American authority, not asking for permission. After leaving a meeting in Paris in which he presented the U.S.'s plan, Lake recalled thinking to himself, "it's great to be an American". His message to the NATO allies was simple: "The United States would act with or without others ... We were taking the lead."<sup>201</sup> The U.S. had unapologetically stepped into its role as the sole world hegemon, leaving its allies the choice of being "either with us or against us".

On August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1995, Operation Deliberate Force began,<sup>202</sup> a massive NATO bombing campaign against the Bosnian Serbs. National Security Coordinator, Richard Clarke, described the decision as the moment in which officials knew their "commander-in chief was rational and comfortable with the use of force – he didn't blink."<sup>203</sup> Clinton's grit and conviction "hit [the Serbs] hard" and was "vital in persuading the Europeans and the UN that action was unavoidable."<sup>204</sup> It is crucial to recognize that Clinton's personal anxieties about his reputation and future in politics were a factor in the policy shift, and therefore were also contributors to the deterioration of the UN-U.S. relationship. Lake wrote that without question, one of Clinton's reasons for endorsing the policy was his sense that the war was undermining his reputation

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid, 98-99.

<sup>200</sup> Clinton, *My Life*, 512.

<sup>201</sup> Lake, *6 Nightmares*, 274.

<sup>202</sup> Rees, "What Should I Tell My Daughter?", 8.

<sup>203</sup> "Bill Clinton and the Bosnian Crisis," PBS: WGBH Educational Foundation, accessed February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024 <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/clinton-and-policing-world-bosnia/>.

<sup>204</sup> Holbrooke, *To End A War*, 103.

abroad.<sup>205</sup> As Lake explained in his memoir, Clinton knew that “if the intervention went well...his standing as President would rise – and it did”. He elaborated:

“There is no question that the President’s support for the Bosnia initiative ...was driven not only by his horror at the suffering...and damage to our interests, but also by the sense that the ongoing conflict was starting to damage him at home... [F]or political reasons Morris [one of Clinton’s advisors] urged the President to act. I am glad that he did.”<sup>206</sup>

For American officials, this moment was long overdue. Christopher wrote in his memoir, that they had waited “longer than was justifiable” for European countries to resolve the war. The United Nations had “claimed” to have the ability to enforce peace, but it lacked it at the most critical moments.<sup>207</sup> The Clinton administration’s response to the massacre altered the nature of American hegemony and its foreign policy approach in the post-1989 era.<sup>208</sup> Intervening was vital to keeping the U.S.’s influence in Europe, and from that moment forward, the U.S. pursued a more muscular and authoritative approach to international affairs.<sup>209</sup>

The last months of 1995 showed some of the clearest signs of the deterioration of the UN-US relationship. Boutros-Ghali’s opinion finally silenced, the NATO bombing forced the warring parties to agree to a ceasefire immediately after.<sup>210</sup> By September, the U.S. had also completely assumed the role of resolving the conflict diplomatically. On September 8<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. suggested the creation of a Bosnian republic divided between *Republika Srpska* and a Muslim-Croat Federation, which the foreign ministers expressed support for.<sup>211</sup> The letter Hill wrote the next day conveyed the disapproval of the deal, and a perception that the U.S.’s bold actions

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<sup>205</sup> Lake, *6 Nightmares*, 261.

<sup>206</sup> Lake, *6 Nightmares*, 251.

<sup>207</sup> Christopher, *Chances of a Lifetime*, 252.

<sup>208</sup> David N Gibbs, “How the Srebrenica Massacre Redefined US Foreign Policy,” *Class, Race, Corporate Power* 3, no. 2 (November 13, 2015), <https://doi.org/10.25148/CRCP.3.2.16092102>, 11.

<sup>209</sup> Boys, *Clinton’s Grand Strategy*, 249.

<sup>210</sup> Rees, ““What Should I Tell My Daughter?””, 8.

<sup>211</sup> Chang, *Ethical Foreign Policy?*, 111.

harm the UN most of all, leaving the battered organization to clean up the mess the Americans left in their tracks:

“[The U.S.] has done something needlessly stupid.... [T]he 8 September agreement ... is highly likely to lead to wider conflict in the future. DPA [UN Department of Peacekeeping Affairs] and DPKO [UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations] should now begin to plan for what we will have to do when the US. declares all this to be a success and walks away, leaving the UN to deal with the consequences.”<sup>212</sup>

Holbrooke, on the other hand, claimed that the Americans’ decision to take over the management of the conflict lifted a burden the UN had never wanted, and Boutros-Ghali had long been eager to rid himself of. On September 18<sup>th</sup>, Boutros-Ghali informed the UNSC that he was ready to withdraw UNPROFOR, willingly reducing “the UN’s role at a critical moment.” Holbrooke, more than happy to see them leave, was blunt in delivering his final thoughts on the Secretary-General:

“After a few meetings with him, I concluded that this elegant and subtle Egyptian... had disdain for the fractious and dirty peoples of the Balkans. Put bluntly, he never liked the place... He complained many times that Bosnia was eating up his budget, diverting him from other priorities, and threatening the entire UN system.”<sup>213</sup>

In October 1995, the warring parties agreed to a ceasefire and to meet the following month in Dayton, Ohio, for American-brokered peace talks.<sup>214</sup> The war had finally ended, leaving a country in ruins and thousands killed, wounded, and displaced. In the war’s wake was an irreversibly damaged relationship between Boutros-Ghali’s UN and the Clinton administration.

## *VI. Conclusions*

The UN-U.S. relationship suffered significantly over the course of the Bosnian War. The arrival of a new administration with stronger ambitions about how to handle the conflict collided

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<sup>212</sup> Letter to Jean-Claude Aimé From Charlie Hill, September 9, 1995, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 5, Hoover Institution and Archives.

<sup>213</sup> Holbrooke, *To End A War*, 172.

<sup>214</sup> Chang, *Ethical Foreign Policy?*, 111.

with Boutros-Ghali's commitment to the principle of impartiality in peacekeeping. The principal sources of Boutros-Ghali's frustrations were the Americans' endorsement of tough action, air strikes, and rejection of peaceful diplomatic solutions. In his view, the U.S.'s advocacy for harsh action against the Serbs, while refusing to provide ground troops and funding was blatant hypocrisy and proof that the UN was used as a scapegoat for all that had gone wrong in Bosnia.

For the indecisive and inexperienced Clinton administration, Boutros-Ghali's insistence on retaining his veto over air strikes was an obstacle to the Americans' ability to use force for moral objectives. His commitment to impartiality was interpreted as callous indifference by the interventionists, and his organization's response to Bosnia was seen as incompetent, ineffective and an obstacle to American interests. At the end of the war, the UN felt completely wrongfooted by the U.S. On the other hand, the Clinton administration regarded themselves as the heroes who had successfully employed force to bring rampant ethnic conflict to an end.

### Chapter III: The End of the Bosnian War and Boutros-Ghali's Leadership

*“The dream of the founders of the United Nations was... that it prove capable of transforming itself to engage effectively a world that must and will change in unforeseen ways. I believe that such a transformation is still possible and will succeed – if the United States allows it to do so.”*

– Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 338 <sup>1</sup>

*“It was always unfortunate that Boutros-Ghali did not have the skills to successfully manage the most important relationship for any secretary-general, which is smooth cooperation with the United States.”*

– James P. Rubin, Madeleine Albright's Spokesperson, May 24, 1999 <sup>2</sup>

In November 1996, the official results of the American presidential elections and the selection of the next UN Secretary-General were determined. On November 5th, Clinton delivered his victory speech in Little Rock, Arkansas, celebrating the revival of the American dream during his first term and looking optimistically toward the new century ahead. He envisioned a future in which people would have more unprecedented opportunities to realize their dreams than in any other moment in history.<sup>3</sup> Two weeks later, in New York, the 15 member states of the UNSC convened to determine Boutros-Ghali's future. 14 votes were cast in support of a full second term for him – one solitary vote, cast by the U.S., denied him the opportunity.<sup>4</sup>

This last chapter analyzes the period from Dayton Peace Accords, that officially declared the end of the Bosnian war in December 1995, to December 1999. It examines how the deterioration of the U.S.'s relationship with the UN culminated in the campaign to oust Boutros-Ghali. This section also discusses the rhetoric surrounding the UN during the 1996 American

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<sup>1</sup> Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 338.

<sup>2</sup> Paul Lewis, “Boutros-Ghali's Book Says Albright and Clinton Betrayed Him,” *The New York Times*, May 24, 1999, <https://www.nytimes.com/1999/05/24/world/boutros-ghali-s-book-says-albright-and-clinton-betrayed-him.html>

<sup>3</sup> “Transcript of Clinton's Acceptance Speech Following The 1996 Presidential Election November 5, 1996,” All Politics, <https://www.cnn.com/ALLPOLITICS/1996/elections/transcript/clinton.accept.2.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 317-318.

presidential elections, as well as Boutros-Ghali's writing process and the reception of, *Unvanquished*, in which told the story of how the U.S. "misused and abused the U.N."<sup>5</sup>

I. *American Leadership and U.N. Absence at the 1995 Dayton Accords*

In November 1995, the three leaders of the warring parties in Bosnia – Izetbegović, Milošević and Tudjman – arrived at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio.<sup>6</sup> Richard Holbrooke, selected by Clinton as the chief negotiator, arrived with Christopher to broker the peace talks.<sup>7</sup> The negotiations dragged on, appearing to be destined to fail until a settlement was reached at the eleventh hour, by Milošević himself.<sup>8</sup> After an excruciating process, the "General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina" was signed in mid-December at the French president's official residence, the Elysée Palace.<sup>9</sup> The Dayton Accords established "a multiethnic state with a tripartite presidency and autonomous ethnic enclaves", instituted a permanent cease-fire, and repatriated refugees.<sup>10</sup> They created a 51/49 partition between the Muslim-Croat Federation and Republika Srpska, a central bank and constitution, and bound the parties to adhere to the judgements of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. 60,000 NATO troops would serve as an implementation force (IFOR) to enforce the Accords, 20,000 of which would be American.<sup>11</sup> The accords were a landmark moment in American diplomacy that propelled the U.S.'s global standing, catalyzed a new era of U.S. foreign policy, and deepened the rift between the U.S. and the UN.

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<sup>5</sup> Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 337.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*, 103.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*, 109-111.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*, 103.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*, 121.

<sup>10</sup> Moore and Pubantz, *To Create a New World? American Presidents and the United Nations*, 323.

<sup>11</sup> Campbell, *1995*, 121.

Richard Holbrooke was the main negotiator of the Dayton Accords, a dynamic figure described as “colorful, charming, abrasive, explosive”, and unabashedly outspoken.<sup>12</sup> A New York Times article recounting one of his trips to Bosnia painted a detailed picture of the man behind the Accords. He was disliked by many of his colleagues – apart from Albright, who said they “were joined at the hip” on Bosnia<sup>13</sup> – who perceived his demeanor as unruly and overbearing. One critic said he was prone to throwing tantrums if he did not get his way, and his driving motivation was above all to elevate his reputation. Even his friends described him as theatrical, eager to impress, with a simultaneously “endearing and infuriating childishness”.<sup>14</sup> In his memoir, Christopher writes that the traits for which Holbrooke was often disliked – his aggression, ill-advised way of engaging with opponents, and tendency to try to woo to the media – were assets under the circumstances of Dayton.<sup>15</sup> While Christopher did not always understand Holbrooke’s actions, he trusted the negotiator’s instincts. During the talks, Holbrooke’s emotional turbulence, improvisation and sharp skills of persuasion were fully showcased.<sup>16</sup> In the end, his bullying,<sup>17</sup> bluntness and obstinacy were precisely the qualities that pushed the warring parties to finally end the war and concede to the power-sharing agreement.<sup>18</sup> From an early age, Holbrooke had an “unremitting thirst to make a historical mark” and had long-aspired to spearhead an important international negotiation.<sup>19</sup> Lake, who had shared experiences with Holbrooke in Vietnam, remembered the meetings prior to the peace talks fondly: “I was moved

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<sup>12</sup> *ibid*, 109.

<sup>13</sup> Holbrooke, *To End A War*, 202.

<sup>14</sup> Roger Cohen, “Taming the Bullies of Bosnia,” *New York Times*, December 17, 1995, sec. Magazine, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/109522075/abstract/9AF879F4981849C3PQ/1>.

<sup>15</sup> Christopher, *Chances of a Lifetime*, 256.

<sup>16</sup> Campbell, *1995*, 109.

<sup>17</sup> Cohen, “Taming the Bullies of Bosnia.”

<sup>18</sup> Boys, *Clinton’s Grand Strategy*, 250.

<sup>19</sup> Cohen, “Taming the Bullies of Bosnia.”

... this opportunity was what we had dreamed of when we were young.”<sup>20</sup> Dayton was Holbrooke’s chance to “make his life consequential”, and it was thanks to his “outrageousness and swagger” that peace was imposed. “American power, in the person of Holbrooke,” *The New York Times* proclaimed, “carried the day... it is a settlement the majority of the people in Bosnia will welcome.”<sup>21</sup> Years later, Holbrooke was “known to overstate” their impact, claiming for instance that had they not been enacted, Al-Qaeda may have planned the 9/11 attacks in Bosnia.<sup>22</sup> He embodied the U.S.’s confidence in its ability to lead diplomatic efforts, with his personality reflecting and mirroring a muscular approach to diplomacy.

The UN was not granted even a minor role in the Dayton negotiations. Holbrooke and Albright believed that the talks would be further complicated by the world organization’s participation. Holbrooke admired how Albright took on the difficult task of delivering the message that the UN “would weaken the search for peace” – a reality that was “painful” for “those of us who had grown up believing” in the UN’s importance.<sup>23</sup> His account of the signing of the Accords demonstrates the souring of personal and diplomatic relations with the UN and American allies. The French foreign ministry dubbed the Dayton Accords the “Treaty of the Elysée”, which Holbrooke described as “a strange, touching footnote to its sense of injured pride.” The American negotiators were seated behind “many officials who played no role” at the back of the room. Among the officials who gave final remarks was, “oddly, a man whose actions had contributed so little to the ending of the war, Boutros-Boutros-Ghali.”<sup>24</sup> In his memoir, the Secretary-General expressed his opinion on Dayton, calling it a deeply problematic and “strange

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<sup>20</sup> Lake, *6 Nightmares*, 151.

<sup>21</sup> Cohen, “Taming the Bullies of Bosnia.”

<sup>22</sup> Campbell, *1995*, 128.

<sup>23</sup> Holbrooke, *To End A War*, 202.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid*, 322.

artifact of the diplomatic craft”. He viewed the agreements as an emblem of American hypocrisy and a confirmation of Clinton’s ambivalent foreign policy towards Bosnia: the U.S. had blocked the VOPP, which would have granted 43 percent of a unified state’s territory to the Serbs. Yet three years later, the Dayton Accords that the Americans regarded with such pride gave the Serbs 49 percent in a state divided in half.<sup>25</sup> In one of his notes, he wrote that Bosnia was “carved up and undermined with most of its territory given de facto to a neighboring state”, and Clinton had initially “rejected the plans he later accepted” – drawing a parallel between the VOPP and the Dayton Accords.<sup>26</sup> Boutros-Ghali also emphasized that the UN’s complete exclusion from the negotiations was a prime example of the damage the U.S. inflicted on the UN during the post-Cold War years.<sup>27</sup> Campbell substantiates this claim, asserting that the Dayton Accords ushered in a new era of American foreign policy with an inclination to disregard and bypass the UN.<sup>28</sup>

While Boutros-Ghali’s negative view of the agreements was likely influenced by his personal experience with the U.S., the Accords were objectively flawed, simultaneously facilitating the coexistence of different ethnic groups and fostering division between them. The main contradiction, and impetus for future political instability, was the separation of territory into two ethnically defined, semi-autonomous entities with a feeble central government. Moreover, by granting the Bosnian Serbs – who had previously controlled one-third of the territory – half of the country, the agreements seemed to reward their ethnic cleansing of the Bosnian Muslims.<sup>29</sup> Their implementation suffered from a lack of coordination and disputes between Europe and the U.S.,<sup>30</sup> and the U.S.’s approach to promote American power and NATO’s dominance at the

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<sup>25</sup> Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 247-8.

<sup>26</sup> “Bosnia”, 27 January 1996, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 26, Folder 1, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>27</sup> Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 337.

<sup>28</sup> Campbell, *1995*, 104.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid*, 122-123.

<sup>30</sup> Dobbins et al., “Bosnia”, 101.

expense of the EC's influence.<sup>31</sup> Woodward argued that the Accords gave rise to an "unresolved political stalemate" that persisted for years afterwards, and by overlooking the Albanian issue in Macedonia and Kosovo, paved the way for the 1996-1999 conflict in Kosovo.<sup>32</sup>

Notwithstanding their shortcomings, the Dayton Accords were hailed as an incredible feat of foreign policy – Clinton's first major achievement in foreign affairs – significantly improving the administration's image on the international stage. Their success silenced critiques of Clinton's weak leadership in Muslim and European nations,<sup>33</sup> and their impact on the global prestige and future nature of U.S. foreign policy was remarkable. They revitalized American exceptionalism, helped American policymakers desert the "Vietnam syndrome", and galvanized a bolder interventionist U.S. foreign policy.<sup>34</sup> In the aftermath of their enactment, a new hubris and readiness to use American military power for diplomatic purposes surfaced.<sup>35</sup> By fortifying the role of American influence in the transatlantic alliance, Dayton aided the enlargement of NATO, transforming it into a prominent tool of Europe's collective security structure. As Chang put it, "without Dayton, an expanded NATO might appear meaningless and irrelevant to the future."<sup>36</sup>

For the American public, the stipulation that 20, 000 U.S. troops would be deployed to enforce the agreement was the most controversial aspect of the Accords.<sup>37</sup> To convince the public that deploying troops was a positive development, Clinton delivered a speech on November 27<sup>th</sup> praising the American diplomacy that facilitated the peace settlements. He declared that the need for American leadership was demonstrated by how the U.S. single-

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 107.

<sup>32</sup> Woodward, "The Long Intervention", 1176.

<sup>33</sup> Boys, *Clinton's Grand Strategy*, 248.

<sup>34</sup> Campbell, *1995*, 126.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid*, 127.

<sup>36</sup> Chang, *Ethical Foreign Policy*, 113.

<sup>37</sup> Campbell, *1995*, 123.

handedly brought peace to Bosnia and Europe as a whole.<sup>38</sup> Unlike the ineffective UN peacekeepers, Clinton asserted that his troops would be adequately equipped with the military prowess to react forcefully to any violations.<sup>39</sup> Boutros-Ghali's notes on the speech convey his palpable disapproval of Clinton's self-congratulatory narrative. He called it "a skillful recasting of the truth", which was a fiasco caused by confusion, failed leadership, and impulsive decisions. He firmly believed that the U.S. supported the "crazy idea" of sending peacekeepers to Bosnia so it could later use the UN as a scapegoat and blame the Secretary-General for failing to end the war. "For four years we heard from Washington," he wrote, "that if only it weren't for that dastardly Boutros-Ghali, we'd have cleaned that mess up long ago." After the Serbs had already breached the principles of international, and the U.S. allowed the UN to take the fall, Clinton chose to become involved military only when the fighting had come to an end. Quoting Churchill, Boutros-Ghali wrote: "you can always count on the Americans to do the right thing – after they've exhausted all the alternatives."<sup>40</sup> His resentment is evident in another note from December 7<sup>th</sup>: "US/NATO now in a strange, twisted role. Not pko [peacekeeping operation], not p-e [peace-enforcement]. Because *UN discredited over 4 years*."<sup>41</sup> The Dayton Accords, and the self-aggrandizing rhetoric that accompanied them, reinforced Boutros-Ghali's hostility towards the U.S. and solidified the division in the interpersonal and institutional relationships.

Ultimately, the Dayton Accords that ended the war in Bosnia crucial to improving the U.S.'s international reputation and reinvigorating the country's faith in its ability to influence

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<sup>38</sup> Bill Clinton, "November 27, 1995," Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>39</sup> Moore and Pubantz, *To Create a New World?*, 323.

<sup>40</sup> "Hoover", 28 November 1995, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>41</sup> "Bosnia, 7 December 95", Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 209, Folder 2, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

global events by leading diplomatic and military efforts. Concurrently, the exclusion of the UN from the negotiations deepened the feelings of antagonism in the UN-U.S. relationship.

## II. “Operation Orient Express”: Albright’s Struggle and Ultimate Victory

The ousting of Boutros-Ghali, whereby the U.S. used its veto at the UNSC to prevent him from serving a second term, represented the culmination of tensions between the Secretary-General and the U.S. The story of his removal illustrates the pent-up resentment on either side, and the deterioration of UN-U.S. relations over the course of the Bosnian War.

On December 16<sup>th</sup>, Albright and Boutros-Ghali “shattered the United Nations’ normal atmosphere of decorous diplomatic discourse” when they broke out in a verbal argument that began with a disagreement over whether NATO or the UN should deploy a peacekeeping mission to Eastern Slavonia in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia. The *Washington Post* called it “the latest in a long series of disagreements that the United States has had with Boutros-Ghali over his belief that UN peacekeepers in the former Yugoslavia lacked the authority and strength to be effective.” The argument escalated when Boutros-Ghali called Albright’s language “vulgar”, and she retorted that his statement was “unacceptable”. Later in the day, a French diplomat concluded that Boutros-Ghali had probably meant to say her language was “tasteless”, and that the fight may have stemmed from a translation error.<sup>42</sup> Although the dispute may seem trivial, the argument was emblematic of the friction that emerged between Boutros-Ghali and Albright. The topic of the argument – whether the UN or NATO had the authority to deploy peacekeepers to Yugoslavia – reaffirms the incendiary nature of the Bosnia issue, and the extent to which it worsened U.S.-UN relations.

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<sup>42</sup> “U.N.’s normal decorous diplomatic discourse takes beating in dispute,” *The Washington Post*, December 16, 1995, Proquest Historical Newspapers.

If the public argument was an outward display of the tensions in their relationship, the next year witnessed its complete demolition. In fact, Albright had already begun her efforts to prevent Boutros-Ghali from serving a second term in October. She wrote in her memoir that when she realized the Secretary-General was running for another five-year term, she came to the decision that improving UN-U.S. relations meant Boutros-Ghali could no longer hold his position, which meant “a fight” was ahead. As the war was ending, she had begun persuading senior U.S. officials that the administration had to come up with a plan to prevent his re-election.<sup>43</sup> In a chapter titled “The Strength of My Own Voice”, Albright recounted her persistent effort to set U.S. foreign policy and the future of the UN on the right path.

Albright’s strong-willed, aggressive diplomatic style and “unabashed affection for the U.S.” drew both criticism and praise from her UN counterparts.<sup>44</sup> One journalist encapsulated one of the main reasons she sometimes faced opposition within the UNSC: “she is not always good at accepting the need to apply to the U.S. the same standards and expectations she requires of others.”<sup>45</sup> The grit and determination to achieve her goals, that she quickly developed to fulfill her role as the “one skirt” that balanced the UNSC’s “14 suits”<sup>46</sup> – a struggle she frequently referred to in her memoir – may have contributed to her zeal and tenacity in carrying out her plan to oust Boutros-Ghali.

Over the years, Albright’s list of complaints about Boutros-Ghali had mounted to the point where she believed he had to be eliminated for U.S. foreign policy and its relationship with the UN to proceed as she believed it ought to. In addition to her complaints his positions on Somalia and Rwanda, Albright described his “insistence on the dual-key system and his

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<sup>43</sup> Auger, “Case 362 - Ousting Boutros-Ghali: The Clinton Administration and the Politics of the United Nations,” 9.

<sup>44</sup> Lippman, *Madeleine Albright and the New American Diplomacy*, 16.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, 17.

<sup>46</sup> *ibid*, 9.

dismissal of the conflict as “a rich man’s war” as “indefensible”.<sup>47</sup> Holbrooke emphasized that Boutros-Ghali’s policy towards Bosnia was at the top of the administration’s list of reasons for denying him a second term.<sup>48</sup> The Secretary-General’s incessant criticism of the U.S. made Albright’s task of gaining Congressional support for the UN even more difficult.<sup>49</sup> The U.S. owed the organization \$1 billion for the numerous peacekeeping operations Boutros-Ghali had initiated during his term, embarrassing her in New York and weakening the domestic perception of the UN. She believed jettisoning the unpopular Boutros-Ghali would erode Congress’ intransigence.<sup>50</sup> One of her confidants later said that they “killed him” because Boutros-Ghali was “the billion-dollar man” – if he was in power, you lost a billion dollars, but if you got rid of him, “you had a shot at your billion.”<sup>51</sup> James P. Rubin, Albright’s spokesperson, explained that Boutros-Ghali had become emblem of the world organization’s arrogance and incompetence. Between the Secretary-General and the organization, Albright had deemed it more important to save the UN and convince Congress to settle its debt.<sup>52</sup> In 1998, Christopher wrote that Boutros-Ghali’s “name had become synonymous with everything that was wrong with the organization” – he was “a symbol of a bloated and impotent United Nations.”<sup>53</sup> Bob Dole, the Republican nominee running against Clinton, mocked him unremittingly. In almost every speech he made during the campaign, he said that he would be the one to make the choice of sending American soldiers somewhere, “not Boootrous Boootrous-Ghali” – a nickname which always sparked cheers and laughter. The popularity of the racist jabs directed at Boutros-Ghali indicated that many in the American government and electorate were eager to blame and see the departure of

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<sup>47</sup> Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 207.

<sup>48</sup> Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 202.

<sup>49</sup> Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 207.

<sup>50</sup> Lippman, *Madeleine Albright and the New American Diplomacy*, 24.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, 28.

<sup>52</sup> Auger, “Case 362- Ousting Boutros-Ghali: The Clinton Administration and the Politics of the United Nations,” 10.

<sup>53</sup> Lippman, *Madeleine Albright and the New American Diplomacy*, 23.

the first Arab Secretary-General from New York. Criticism of him in Congress was bipartisan, with many legislators viewing him as the face of the souring of UN-U.S. relations.<sup>54</sup> Brian Urquhart, a British civil servant who had closely advised five UN Secretary-Generals over 40 years, attributed the campaign to oust Boutros-Ghali to the “anti-internationalist, unilateralist, isolationist” and “xenophobic” vein in Congress.<sup>55</sup>

In October 1995, Albright began the year-long “fight” to remove Boutros-Ghali. She reminded Christopher and Lake that Boutros-Ghali’s term would expire in just over a year, and a replacement had to be selected, forcing it to the top of Christopher’s agenda.<sup>56</sup> Assisted by a few staffers, Albright shaped a plan for blocking Boutros-Ghali’s reelection, an initiative they named “Operation Orient Express.”<sup>57</sup> Over the next four months, she worked secretly to convince top administration officials that this would be the best course of action.<sup>58</sup> In January 1996, while on a flight to Bosnia, she brought the issue up to Clinton, who agreed with her proposal.<sup>59</sup>

Boutros-Ghali’s notes from January 27<sup>th</sup> demonstrate the extent to which the relationship had been damaged. He felt victimized, mistreated and had very little respect for the Clinton administration left at this stage. On Clinton’s foreign policy in Bosnia, he wrote:

“Bill Clinton has a 7-point foreign policy. 1) avoid the problem. 2) undercut others who try to solve it. 3) make things worse. 4) blame somebody else. 5) change course 180 degrees. 6) claim credit. 7) cover up the damage done.”

Elaborating on each point, he wrote that Clinton had not acted early enough to prevent ethnic cleansing, at a moment where it could have made a difference. His rejection of European diplomatic proposals was never substituted by his own recommendations, and when diplomacy

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<sup>54</sup> Barbara Crossette, “G.O.P. Makes an Issue of Replacing U.N. Chief,” *The New York Times*, June 15, 1996, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/06/15/world/gop-makes-an-issue-of-replacing-un-chief.html>.

<sup>55</sup> James Traub, “Uncle Sam Doesn’t Want You,” *The New Yorker*, November 24, 1996.

<sup>56</sup> Lippman, *Madeleine Albright and the New American Diplomacy*, 24.

<sup>57</sup> Auger, “Case 362- Ousting Boutros-Ghali: The Clinton Administration and the Politics of the United Nations,” 10.

<sup>58</sup> Lippman, *Madeleine Albright and the New American Diplomacy*, 25.

<sup>59</sup> Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 208.

appeared to be working at last, he called for aerial bombardment. Boutros-Ghali wrote that Clinton “made incompetence into a policy”, obstructed the possibility of achieving a peaceful diplomatic resolution, and when the UN “did exactly what Clinton wanted it to do” he “refused to let the UN pull out...and used [it] as a scapegoat for his administration’s incompetence.” Washington sent peacekeepers into a warzone, legitimized war criminals, allowed ethnic cleansing to go unopposed, and Clinton took credit for all the UN’s successes.<sup>60</sup>

In March, once Clinton gave the completed ousting plan the green light,<sup>61</sup> the next step was to coax the Secretary-General to give up his office of his own volition. On April 14<sup>th</sup>, two representatives of the Secretary of State delivered the message to Boutros-Ghali: the administration had decided against supporting his re-election.<sup>62</sup> On April 22<sup>nd</sup>, Christopher called him to avert him that the U.S.’s stance would not waver. The Secretary-General responded that despite their opposition, he would not withdraw his candidacy. Throughout May and the beginning of June, Christopher attempted to negotiate with Boutros-Ghali, offering him a one-year extension and reiterating that the U.S. would use its veto when the time came.<sup>63</sup> One journalist reported that Boutros-Ghali rejected the offer “with such haughtiness that even the usually phlegmatic Christopher lost his temper.”<sup>64</sup> When he said he would be only be satisfied with an extension of two and a half years, the frustrated Christopher put a stop to the negotiations.<sup>65</sup> Albright presented him with various alternative options – all of which he refused – including becoming the head of the Francophone Group, a member of the International Court

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<sup>60</sup> “Bosnia”, 27 January 1996, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 26, Folder 1, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>61</sup> Auger, “Case 362 - Ousting Boutros-Ghali: The Clinton Administration and the Politics of the United Nations,”10.

<sup>62</sup> *ibid*, 11.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

<sup>64</sup> David Rieff, “The Bill Clinton of the U.N.,” *The New Republic* (Washington, United States: New Republic, August 5, 1996).

<sup>65</sup> Auger, “Case 362- Ousting Boutros-Ghali: The Clinton Administration and the Politics of the United Nations,”12.

of Justice, and at the last minute, a UN “Secretary-General Emeritus” with ceremonial duties. In her eyes, his unwillingness to comply with the request to leave quietly was yet another display of his uncompromising, unlikable personality: “Ever stubborn, he refused to consider the various plans we put forward to ease him out in a dignified fashion.”<sup>66</sup> Rather than acknowledging that his sentiments towards the U.S.’s decision to oppose him may have been warranted, there was an expectation that the U.S.’s orders for the future leadership of the UN should be obeyed.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of June, Christopher went public with the administration’s decision,<sup>67</sup> leaking the story to *The New York Times*. However, Albright recounted, they “failed to get the diplomatic coordination right.”<sup>68</sup> The administration faced immediate backlash from UN officials who, suspecting that Dole’s antagonism towards Boutros-Ghali was the underlying reason, charged the U.S. with making a unilateral decision based on domestic politics and disregarding the wishes of other nations.<sup>69</sup> Member states particularly resented the fact that the U.S. delegation had not even released an official statement or informed anyone else at the U.N.<sup>70</sup> Countries from the developing world firmly supported Boutros-Ghali. Albright explained that despite few countries being genuinely enthusiastic about Boutros-Ghali, they were unwilling to oppose him out of fear for their own influence at the UN.<sup>71</sup> The French were adamantly against the U.S.’s actions, as was the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which unanimously supported the Secretary-General. Convinced that the loyalty to him was only “a mile wide and an inch deep”, the administration began its efforts to persuade the other member states to join them. American officials’ approach to garnering the support of the African bloc was “based on threats as much as

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<sup>66</sup> Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 209.

<sup>67</sup> Auger, “Case 362 - Ousting Boutros-Ghali: The Clinton Administration and the Politics of the United Nations,”13.

<sup>68</sup> Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 209.

<sup>69</sup> Lippman, Madeleine Albright and the New American Diplomacy, 26.

<sup>70</sup> Auger, “Case 362 - Ousting Boutros-Ghali: The Clinton Administration and the Politics of the United Nations,”14.

<sup>71</sup> Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 209.

persuasion.” The OAU expected Boutros-Ghali – the first Secretary-General from the continent – to serve a second term, as every other region’s Secretary-General had.<sup>72</sup> In October, Christopher traveled around Africa, warning representatives that if they did not endorse an alternative candidate, they would run the risk of not having an African Secretary-General serve a second term at all.<sup>73</sup>

Washington chose Kofi Annan to be Boutros-Ghali’s successor. His performance in the Bosnian War, which had ruined Boutros-Ghali’s standing, had the opposite effect of elevating him to the position of Washington’s top candidate. Annan had demonstrated that he was not afraid of employing force and was far more willing to enact American recommendations than Boutros-Ghali.<sup>74</sup> He also appeared to be “energetically committed” to Washington’s ideas for reforms within the organization.<sup>75</sup> In his memoir, Holbrooke stated that Annan had been the “most helpful”, and his “gutsy performance” in August 1995 confirmed Washington’s support of him to be Boutros-Ghali’s successor: “in a sense, Annan won the job on that day.”<sup>76</sup> Albright contrasted Annan’s positive traits against Boutros-Ghali’s flaws: the “soft-spoken” and “engaging” Annan was “a welcome change from the austere Boutros-Ghali.” She explained that, unlike Boutros-Ghali, he never attempted to shirk accountability for his mistakes and his Ghanaian nationality would allow the Americans to deflect the protests they anticipated – that the attempt to remove Boutros-Ghali was an insult to all of Africa.<sup>77</sup> During the years Annan served as Secretary-General, relations between the U.S. and the U.N. Secretariat improved, allowing for the emergence of a new wave of humanitarianism in Clinton’s second term.<sup>78</sup> In 2001, Annan

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<sup>72</sup> Auger, “Case 362 - Ousting Boutros-Ghali: The Clinton Administration and the Politics of the United Nations,” 14.

<sup>73</sup> Lippman, Madeleine Albright and the New American Diplomacy, 16.

<sup>74</sup> Mazower, *Governing the World*, 385.

<sup>75</sup> Moore and Pubantz, *To Create a New World?*, 337.

<sup>76</sup> Holbrooke, *To End A War*, 103.

<sup>77</sup> Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 208-9.

<sup>78</sup> Mazower, *Governing the World*, 385.

would receive the Nobel Prize for giving the world organization an “external prestige and an internal morale, the likes of which the organization had hardly seen in its over fifty-year history”.<sup>79</sup> Boutros-Ghali’s long-lasting refusal to defer to Washington, as this thesis has sought to highlight, had had the opposite effect on the UN’s global reputation and standing in the U.S.

With Albright’s objective made public, articles showed both criticism and support for the administration. One article slammed Boutros-Ghali’s actions in Bosnia:

“Bosnia clings to this Secretary-General .... [H]e showed the Bosnians a steady measure of indifference.... [T]he moral indifference and callousness of the Secretary-General was contagious.”<sup>80</sup>

One article in *The New Republic*, “The Bill Clinton of the UN”, drew similarities between Clinton and Boutros-Ghali, shedding light on their shared characteristics – a likeness that could be a potential source of their rivalry. It argued that Boutros-Ghali’s resemblance to Clinton was most evident in his “single-minded pursuit of re-election” and willingness to modify his principles on a whim if it benefited him politically. The author charged Boutros-Ghali’s “rule” at the UN Secretariat as “tyrannical and capricious.”<sup>81</sup> There was also a sense that the U.S. had “lost, hugely, in the court of world opinion.” The veto of his election made other member states collectively “outraged”: Albright united 183 nations, “something no one had ever been able to do before”. The U.S. had inadvertently made Boutros-Ghali into “an icon for those protesting America’s ‘arrogance of power’”.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> “2001-United Nations and Kofi Annan,” United Nations, accessed February 18, 2024, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/nobel-peace-prize/kofi-annan-2001>.

<sup>80</sup> “The Mark of Bosnia: Boutros-Ghali’s Reign of Indifference”, Fouad Ajami, *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 1996, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 26, Folder 18, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>81</sup> David Rieff, “The Bill Clinton of the U.N.,” *The New Republic* (Washington, United States: New Republic, August 5, 1996).

<sup>82</sup> Kurt Holden, “The Real Story Behind Clinton Administration’s ‘Win’ Over Boutros-Ghali,” *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* XV, no. 6 (February 1997), <https://www.proquest.com/docview/218787148>.

On November 19<sup>th</sup>, Albright vetoed the resolution that would have re-elected Boutros-Ghali. Her memoir captured her feeling of resilience in the face of widespread opposition: “I saw the seeming defeat as a turning point...we had taken a punch, but we were still standing...If Boutros-Ghali thought we would flinch at the last minute, he was wrong.”<sup>83</sup> In his memoir, Boutros-Ghali claimed that Albright was “openly attacking” him the day of the vote, telling representatives that he “could not even pronounce ‘United Nations’ and “fueling speculation that [the U.S.] had uncovered some wrongdoing in [his] past.” Her actions, however, only strengthened his determination to hold out his candidacy until the end.<sup>84</sup>

On December 5<sup>th</sup>, the President announced that Albright would be his next Secretary of State.<sup>85</sup> This development, along with the U.S.’s immovable determination to use its veto, turned any attempt to continue advocating for Boutros-Ghali into a fruitless endeavor. Member states began to rally around her, fearful of the consequences of going against Albright.<sup>86</sup> In his memoir, Boutros-Ghali acknowledged, “Albright could not be secretary of state and fail to defeat me.”<sup>87</sup> The fight was over, and Albright had emerged as the winner. On December 13<sup>th</sup>, Kofi Annan was chosen as the next Secretary-General by a unanimous vote at the Security Council.

Ultimately, the ousting of Boutros-Ghali was a groundbreaking accomplishment for Albright that enhanced her standing domestically and internationally. Diplomats who had criticized her throughout the years began lauding her, both in admiration of her tenacity and in fear of what she had proven herself to be capable of.<sup>88</sup> Her new appointment made the remainder

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<sup>83</sup> Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 211.

<sup>84</sup> Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 337.

<sup>85</sup> Lippman, *Madeleine Albright and the New American Diplomacy*, 27.

<sup>86</sup> John Goshko, “Boutros Boutros-Ghali, U.N. Secretary General Who Clashed with U.S., Dies,” *Washington Post*, February 16, 2016, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/boutros-boutros-ghali-un-secretary-general-who-clashed-with-us-dies-at-93/2016/02/16/8b727bb8-d4c1-11e5-be55-2cc3c1e4b76b\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/boutros-boutros-ghali-un-secretary-general-who-clashed-with-us-dies-at-93/2016/02/16/8b727bb8-d4c1-11e5-be55-2cc3c1e4b76b_story.html).

<sup>87</sup> Boutros Boutros-Ghali, *Unvanquished*, 325.

<sup>88</sup> Lippman, *Madeleine Albright and the New American Diplomacy*, 27.

of her time at the UN far easier, as she pointed out in her memoir: “Who was going to oppose the next secretary of state?”<sup>89</sup> Ousting of Boutros-Ghali vastly improved Albright’s reputation in her own government, allowing her to form a strong relationship with the isolationist Senator Jesse Helms, who was struck by her determination to implement reforms and assert U.S. dominance in the organization he so disdained. The rekindling of their relationship allowed her to garner bipartisan support to pay off Congress’s debt to the UN, and her victory discredited previous criticisms that she did not have a long-term vision for American foreign policy.<sup>90</sup> Her endorsement of Annan also paid off in the years to come. The U.S. enjoyed a much closer relationship with the UN Secretariat during Clinton’s second term, which laid a strong foundation for the revival of humanitarian intervention.<sup>91</sup> She later wrote that Annan had shown himself to be a “popular, creative, and hard-working” Secretary-General<sup>92</sup> – the antithesis of his obstinate and disagreeable predecessor.

One of Boutros-Ghali’s drafts for a section of his memoir, found in his papers, recounts “the last supper” he shared with Albright on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 1996.<sup>93</sup> Now that the dust had settled – she had been appointed as the next Secretary of State, and her mission of expelling him had succeeded – he invited her over for dinner and asked what the “real” reasons for ousting him were. She responded that Congress was not supportive of the United Nations, and he was a symbol of it. The other principal accusation against him was that he sought to “control American military power” through the dual-key arrangement, making American military officials feel

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<sup>89</sup> Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 212.

<sup>90</sup> Lippman, *Madeleine Albright and the New American Diplomacy*, 27-8.

<sup>91</sup> Mazower, *Governing the World*, 385.

<sup>92</sup> Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 212.

<sup>93</sup> “The Last Supper, the 18<sup>th</sup> December 1996”, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 26, Folder 7, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

threatened.<sup>94</sup> He rejected this idea, claiming she was well aware that decisions had been made by French and British generals, to which she responded that despite her defending him to her colleagues, the perception that he had attempted to gain power over the U.S. military prevailed. Boutros-Ghali wrote that continuing to ask her became useless – she had no intention of explaining the real reason for ousting him:

“She led the campaign with determination and free-spiritedness, not letting a single opportunity to undermine my authority and tarnish my image slip, all while showing ... friendly smiles, [and] endlessly repeating testimonies of her friendship and admiration.”<sup>95</sup>

Boutros-Ghali described being betrayed by Albright and Washington, who despite her friendly exterior, “sacrificed him on the altar of U.S. domestic politics.”<sup>96</sup> The campaign to prevent his re-election illustrated the degree to which the Clinton administration could no longer tolerate a Secretary-General who did not adhere to the U.S.’s wills, as well as demonstrating how Albright’s unwavering resolve to assert American power ultimately prevailed over Boutros-Ghali and his criticisms of the U.S.

### *III. Writing Unvanquished: A U.S.-UN Saga (1997)*

On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1997, Boutros-Ghali left New York City, leaving behind a legacy as the first Secretary-General to have his re-election vetoed in the history of the UN.<sup>97</sup> Shortly after, he

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<sup>94</sup> Original text: “Vous symbolisez les Nations Unies et le Congrès américain est hostile aux Nations Unies. On vous reproche aussi d’avoir essayé de contrôler le pouvoir militaire américain. Dans le cadre du double jeu, où vous vous opposiez aux bombardements de l’OTAN en Serbie, cette prise de position a été très mal perçue par les milieux militaires de Washington.” – *ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> Original text: “Elle a accompli et réussi sa mission de diplomate, avec habileté. Elle a mené cette campagne avec détermination et indépendance d’esprit, ne laissant passer aucune occasion pour démolir mon autorité et ternir mon image, tout en me montrant un visage serein, accompagné de sourires amicaux répétant à satiété les témoignages de son amitié et de son admiration.” – *ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> Auger, “Case 362 - Ousting Boutros-Ghali: The Clinton Administration and the Politics of the United Nations,” 22.

<sup>97</sup> John Goshko, “Boutros Boutros-Ghali, U.N. Secretary General Who Clashed with U.S., Dies,” *Washington Post*, February 16, 2016, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/boutros-boutros-ghali-un-secretary-general-who-clashed-with-us-dies-at-93/2016/02/16/8b727bb8-d4c1-11e5-be55-2cc3c1e4b76b\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/boutros-boutros-ghali-un-secretary-general-who-clashed-with-us-dies-at-93/2016/02/16/8b727bb8-d4c1-11e5-be55-2cc3c1e4b76b_story.html).

began writing *Unvanquished: A U.S.-UN Saga*, in which he told the story of his experience as U.N. Secretary-General. Examining the evolution of his ideas by analyzing the memoir's first drafts provides insight into his personal understanding of the U.S.'s veto. The archives reveal that in his view, his ousting was not an isolated event solely impacting his career, but instead, a symbol of the U.S.'s abuse of the UN. He believed his re-election had been vetoed for domestic political motives and undermined the very ideal of international cooperation.

One of his responses to the articles criticizing his indifference in Bosnia from May 1996, demonstrated the defensive tone he adopted even before writing the memoir. In his eyes, all he had done force the "world's policy elites" to "face the facts: for them, lives in the West seem to count far more than lives elsewhere." In Bosnia, he blamed the shortcomings of UNPROFOR on member states' "confused and inconsistent mandates," which sent peacekeepers into a war without adequate funding or weapons.<sup>98</sup>

Out of all the nations he felt slighted by, his hostility towards the U.S. in his drafts and proposals for *Unvanquished* is most striking. The heading of one of the first handwritten proposals for the book is "Proposal: The US versus the UN – the case for the World", probably his first idea for the title of the memoir. It explained that the book would recount the untold truth of the "unprecedented diplomatic assault" on Boutros-Ghali, which received international attention but was overlooked by the American media. He wrote that his ousting was of "far-reaching significance", not only for him, but "for the entire project of the international cooperative order that ...has been constructed for over a century, but today is neglected and in jeopardy."<sup>99</sup> The importance that Boutros-Ghali ascribed to the event illustrated that from his

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<sup>98</sup> "Draft: Letter in Reply to Fouad Ajami/David Rieff Articles", 2 May 1996, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 26, Folder 18, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>99</sup> "Proposal: The U.S. versus the UN – the case for the world", Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 26, folder 3, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

perspective, the vetoing of his reelection exemplified a broader failure of the ideal of multilateral cooperation. To him, the feud with the U.S. represented far more than a personal quarrel – it was a pivotal historical moment with repercussions for the very survival of the international order.

The next proposal was confidential and much longer, describing the trajectory of the book in detail through vivid, dramatic language. He described the campaign against him as “unprecedented”, “unexplained”, with “intrigues of Shakespearean proportions”. After explaining that the UN’s role transformed when it became involved in almost every post-Cold War conflict, Boutros-Ghali asserted that in this new role, “the UN was both used and abused by the United States.” The intensity of his language conveyed the narrative he perpetuated– the UN was the primary victim of the global hegemon. He reiterated that the American public was unaware of the story, indicating the audience he strove to vindicate himself to. He presented the book as a previously unrevealed secret that only he could share: “no written records exist, other than my own notes, of my continual round of secret talks and one-on-one negotiations.”

The book would include sections on Somalia, Libya, Iraq and Haiti, Bosnia and in his brief summaries of the conflicts, the longest text is devoted to Bosnia. Even in the short synopsis of U.S.-UN relations during the Bosnian war, it becomes apparent that this was the conflict in which he felt most victimized by the U.S. The UN peacekeepers who were initially deployed by the U.S. – against Boutros-Ghali’s recommendations – were “humiliated” because the U.S. refused to provide military support, which made UNPROFOR unable to protect civilians. He claimed the U.S. had purposefully used the peacekeeping force as “an excuse for its own indecisiveness and as a scapegoat for the failure to prevent large-scale ethnic murders.” The main scapegoat, however, was Boutros-Ghali: “I became a lightning rod for the flashing antagonisms generated by the Bosnian conflict...I bore the brunt of the scorn heaped upon the UN.” It was

clear to the whole world that the U.S. was putting on a show of “acting tough” by using Boutros-Ghali as “a handy target for blame” to exempt them from taking real action. He was caught in the crossfire between the Clinton administration, which was eager to conduct air strikes against the Serbs, and European member states, who feared the Serbs would retaliate against their personnel on the ground. At the beginning of the war, UN peacekeepers – instead of an army – were sent into an ongoing conflict. After the war had *already* ended, the Clinton administration sent the U.S. army to keep the peace. For Boutros-Ghali, this was a prime example of how the U.S. turned “fundamental concepts their heads.”

He related his scapegoating in the 1996 presidential election, which made him “a domestic political issue” ridiculed by Dole and opposed by Clinton. In Boutros-Ghali’s view, the elections were the real catalyst for his ousting. He asserted that his confrontation with the U.S. jeopardized the future of the international cooperation, and implied that the U.S. was to blame: “Is America undermining, perhaps without realizing it, the institutions of international order that the U.S. itself has done the most to create and champion over the past century?” The dispute with the U.S. had occurred because his duties as Secretary-General “repeatedly thwarted Washington’s wishes,” and culminated in a situation only Washington opposed him.<sup>100</sup>

In a later summary of his arguments and chapters, Boutros-Ghali employed strong language to denounce Washington’s actions: “the Clinton administration declared war on Boutros-Ghali”. He wrote that the story of his ousting was a “mystery” because despite “many highly charged moments”, relations between Boutros-Ghali and American officials were good for four out of five years of his term– a claim which was not quite accurate. The “political assault against him”, pioneered by Albright, was so “puzzling” and “ill-conducted” that it triggered a

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<sup>100</sup> “Confidential Proposal”, January 2, 1997, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 26, Folder 3, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

“worldwide backlash of resentment against the U.S.” Having experienced first-hand the impact of the U.S. circumventing the wishes of the UN Security Council, his final, overarching proposal for the future was to advocate for “the democratization of international affairs.”<sup>101</sup>

With its scathing critique of the U.S., publishing *Unvanquished* was not the smoothest of endeavors. On December 18th, 1997, Charles Hill wrote to Boutros-Ghali that the editorial director of Random House, Jason Epstein, told Hill that the manuscript was “‘a disaster’, ‘evasive’, and ‘unpublishable’”, and warned that he “may have no choice” but to cancel the contract. Epstein said 50% of the manuscript would have to be cut, but as he had only read the first 100 pages, Hill recommended he finish reading the book.<sup>102</sup> The archives do not explain why Epstein’s opinion changed, or what parts of the manuscript were modified, but Random House published the book in 1999. In October 1999, Hill, now a professor at Yale, wrote to Boutros-Ghali that he was receiving feedback about the book from many in his circle who concurred that it was “the only accurate description of how Clinton has mishandled American foreign policy.”<sup>103</sup> He attached a book review which lauded the writing as having “the temperate style of a classic diplomat combined with a little self-deprecation,” and concluded that the was “very convincing.”<sup>104</sup>

The memoir was also met with significant criticism from those who saw it as nothing more than an embittered pariah’s attack on the U.S. and Albright. Michael Barnett’s review reflected resentment towards Boutros-Ghali’s vilification of the U.S. He wrote that Boutros-

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<sup>101</sup> “Unvanquished, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Summary of the argument and structure”, October 1, 1997, Boutros Boutros-Ghali Papers, Box 26, Folder 4, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>102</sup> Letter from Charles Hill to Boutros-Ghali, 18 December 1997, Charles Hill Papers, Box 107, “Correspondence”, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>103</sup> Letter from Charles Hill to Boutros-Ghali, 14 October 1999, Charles Hill Papers, Box 107, “Increments”, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

<sup>104</sup> “Culture Clash on the East River”, *Foreign Service Journal*, October 1999, Charles Hill Papers, Box 107, “Increments”, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

Ghali unfairly blamed the United States for almost every crisis and equated its officials with the war criminals. Barnett portrayed Boutros-Ghali as obsessed with the U.S., and the memoir as a last effort to get revenge. Boutros-Ghali's "contempt" was "odious", and his pejorative depiction of U.S. officials displayed his arrogant and disagreeable character more than theirs – Boutros-Ghali's personality flaws were apparent on every page. He concluded: "We are grateful that Boutros-Ghali decided to write this memoir of his five years as Secretary-General, but perhaps a tad relieved that five did not turn into ten."<sup>105</sup> Another reviewer asserted that the memoir was "an unsatisfying summation" of his time as Secretary-General, and it seemed his "ego" played a major role in his dispute with the U.S. It seemed his only objective was to write a "vendetta against Madeleine Albright" and as a result, Boutros-Ghali undermined his own tenure at the UN, "which was considerably more distinguished than this bitter volume would suggest."<sup>106</sup>

Albright wasted little space discussing *Unvanquished* in her memoir *Madame Secretary*, echoing Barnett by writing that Boutros-Ghali's book displayed "the attitude his colleagues found grating." She claimed that he had only admitted to making a single mistake in five years and held the U.S. responsible for every conflict. While she claimed she did not care about his jabs at her, she firmly denied Boutros-Ghali's allegation that her campaign for Secretary of State influenced her decision. Her final statement was that after five years of working with him, she "could have learned even more" about diplomacy from his wife, who greeted her warmly even after the ousting.<sup>107</sup>

The drafting and reception of Boutros-Ghali's memoir further illustrates the deterioration of UN-U.S. relations under his leadership, and his perception that the purpose of the U.S.'s

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<sup>105</sup> Michael Barnett, "Review Essay: UN Vanquished," *Global Governance* 5, no. 4 (1999): 516-520.

<sup>106</sup> David M. Malone, "Review of *Unvanquished: A U.S.-U.N. Saga*," by Boutros Boutros-Ghali", *The American Journal of International Law* 93, no. 4 (1999): 963-965, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2555363>.

<sup>107</sup> Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 212.

antagonism was to deflect blame without taking action. His unrelenting commitment to his beliefs contributed to the decline of the relationship, as they clashed with the Clinton administration to the extent that the U.S. no longer tolerated him Secretary-General.

#### *IV. Conclusions*

The events that following the Bosnian war – the Dayton Accords, the ousting of Boutros-Ghali, and the publication of *Unvanquished* – reflect the extent to which the UN-U.S. relationship had been damaged during the war due to opposing perspectives about the best way to manage the conflict. While Boutros-Ghali claimed that the veto of his reelection rendered the international order vulnerable, Albright maintained that eliminating him was the only way to salvage the UN’s opportunity to fulfill the ideals it was founded on.<sup>108</sup> The support of UN member states illustrated, according to a State Department official, that “at the end of the day, the UN needs the U.S. more than, with all due respect, it needs to retain its current leadership.”<sup>109</sup> The episode was a triumph of American exceptionalism and dominance on the international stage that like Dayton, helped reinvigorate the spirit of the U.S.’s superiority and justified its continued leadership of international affairs. Anthony Lake reflected this sentiment in his memoir:

“Diplomatically, whether we like it or not, the road to resolution for almost every major problem, no matter where on the globe it occurs, runs through Washington.... American diplomacy, backed by U.S.-led air strikes, brought Bosnia’s Serbs to the negotiating table ... Even when America doesn’t sit in the driver’s seat, our support is fundamental.”<sup>110</sup>

Dayton was first in a succession of ever more ambitious military operations overseas,<sup>111</sup> fueled by the American exceptionalism reflected in the words of Albright, who remained one of the

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<sup>108</sup> Auger, “Case 362-Ousting Boutros-Ghali: The Clinton Administration and the Politics of the United Nations,” 10.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 20.

<sup>110</sup> Lake, *6 Nightmares*, 275-6.

<sup>111</sup> Moore and Pubantz, *To Create a New World?*, 126.

most hawkish advocates of using military force: “We are the indispensable nation... We see further into the future than other countries.”<sup>112</sup> Her memoir concluded that it was in the U.S.’s interest to ensure that “societies endangered by natural or human-caused catastrophe” were rescued, and that the U.S. had a moral imperative to push for a more peaceful world.<sup>113</sup>

American politics were an important factor in the decision to oust Boutros-Ghali. As he mused in his memoir: “I had cooperated with the Americans in so many ways. My relations were good—I would not say excellent. But politics is politics.”<sup>114</sup> However, his argument that it was the *most* important, or only, factor does not capture the full picture. What Boutros-Ghali’s prideful personality represented, and his vision for an ideal future of international affairs – democratization, impartiality, and unanimous support among member states for the UN – exacerbated his confrontation with the U.S. He was not only vetoed to appease Congressional demands and win Clinton the election, but also because his convictions and interests ran counter to those of the U.S., which in a moment of unprecedented unipolar hegemony, could not tolerate a UN leader who imposed constraints upon its power. Banishing him from New York made way for Washington to assert itself more than ever, and wage “humanitarian” wars on its own terms.

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<sup>112</sup> Campbell, *1995*, 125.

<sup>113</sup> Albright, *Madam Secretary*, 161.

<sup>114</sup> Auger, “Case 362-Ousting Boutros-Ghali: The Clinton Administration and the Politics of the United Nations,” 22.

## Conclusion

*“To succeed, we must be realistic: resources must match responsibilities placed on the U.N. This is not a time for despair but for optimism. If we work cooperatively, the future can be unprecedentedly bright.”*

— Charles Hill, Special Consultant on Policy to the U.N. Secretary-General, to Jean-Claude Aimé, U.N. Secretary General’s Chief of Staff, May 24, 1994.<sup>1</sup>

Having seen how ineffectively the UN and the U.S. worked with each other in May 1994, Hill’s words seem excessively hopeful. The initial ambition to create a stronger relationship between the United States and the United Nations after the Cold War stalemate was ultimately unsuccessful. Peacekeeping operations in global conflicts were seen as opportunities to demonstrate the partnership’s potential to create a world in which human rights were respected, political stability prevailed, and freedom reigned around the seven continents. Yet the peacekeeping operation in Bosnia, as in other regional conflicts, seemed to deny that the UN and the U.S. could collaborate effectively.

As this thesis has demonstrated, these objectives were not realized in Bosnia not only because of structural issues such as the UN’s dependence on member states’ resources and support, and the exceedingly unrealistic standards set after 1989. Gaining insight into the characters and international outlooks of individual decisionmakers reveals that individual foreign policy approaches and diplomatic styles affected the UN and the U.S.’s inability to cooperate and resolve this conflict. Boutros-Ghali’s scathing, unfiltered critiques of the U.S., vanity, and unwillingness to compromise collided with the interventionist, strong-willed yet indecisive and inexperienced Clinton administration officials, who were suddenly given the immense responsibility of shaping the foreign policy of the only hegemon left standing.

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<sup>1</sup> Charlie Hill to Jean-Claude Aimé, May 24<sup>th</sup>, 1994, Charles Hill Papers, Box 72, General Correspondence Increments, Hoover Institution Library & Archives.

The replacement of Boutros-Ghali provided an opportunity for the U.S. to guide international diplomacy and peacekeeping in the direction it desired. The American decision to usurp the UN's responsibility of resolving the war in Bosnia was crucial in shaping its foreign policy for years to come. Bosnia illustrated the U.S.'s exceptionally powerful role in the modern world order, paving the path for the superpower to pursue its ability to determine the course of international affairs into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. At the same time, it clarified the bounds of the power of the UN, the limits of its peacekeeping operations and the relative weakness of its leadership<sup>2</sup> – with the fate of Boutros-Ghali serving as a cautionary tale for future Secretary-Generals.

From the ruins of Bosnia and other failed, or unattempted, interventions of the 90s, emerged a feeling that more forceful actions had to be taken to prevent the victories of genocidal warmongers, even if they transcended national borders and established principles of sovereignty. In 2001, the Canadian government sponsored the international Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, which produced a 2001 report known as “The Responsibility to Protect” (R2P). This doctrine, which asserted that the international community had an obligation to protect human beings whose rights were threatened, gained widespread support and became a justification for future humanitarian interventions.<sup>3</sup>

Gradually, the “muscular”, “humanitarian interventionist” trend in American foreign policy “fell out of fashion” among decisionmakers.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, it set an important precedent that allowed the U.S. to expand and maintain its powerful status for decades. As unprecedented, complex challenges face our ever-changing world, and new global powers seem to pose a risk to the United States' global hegemony, the U.S.'s relationship with the United Nations may once

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<sup>2</sup> Moore and Pubantz, *To Create a New World?*, 323.

<sup>3</sup> Rajan Menon, “R2P: It's Fatally Flawed,” *The American Interest*, June 12, 2013, <https://www.the-american-interest.com/2013/06/12/its-fatally-flawed/>.

<sup>4</sup> Campbell, *1995*, 128.

again become a pivotal element in shaping our international order. Personality and foreign policy outlooks of key individual policymakers will play inevitable play some role in the future of the U.S.-UN relationship. Depending on whether the next American administration espouses multilateralism, or instead chooses to revert to isolationism, the U.S.'s ability to work with the United Nations will be either strengthened or weakened significantly. The future of the relationship remains to be seen, but it will almost certainly continue to have an impact on how successful the international community will confront the many challenges that lie ahead.

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