STORIES AND PAST LESSONS: UNDERSTANDING
U.S. DECISIONS OF ARMED HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION AND
NONINTERVENTION IN THE POST-COLD WAR ERA

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of The Ohio State University

By

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The Ohio State University
2003

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ABSTRACT

What factors appear influential to U.S. decisions of armed humanitarian intervention and nonintervention? Utilizing the “story model” mode of problem representation first utilized by psychologists Pennington and Hastie (1986; 1988) and adapted to the domain of foreign policy by Sylvan and Charlick-Paley (2000), this research seeks to answer this question by exploring how top decision makers within the Bush and Clinton administrations collectively represented problems in Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia in the early to mid-nineteen nineties. In particular, it explores whether decisions of armed humanitarian intervention and nonintervention appear linked to: (1) the invocation of historical analogies, (2) perceptions of threats and or opportunities to vital national interests, (3) perceived moral/legal imperatives, (4) pressure and interests related to domestic actors, such as the Congress, the public and the media, (5) institutional pressures and interests pertaining to U.S. membership in international organizations or alliances, such as NATO and or the United Nations, (6) the perceived relative ease and utility of intervention, and (7) vested military interests. An analysis of the collective elite discourse and evolving representations (or “stories”) of each crisis reveals, among other things, that decisions of armed humanitarian intervention and
nonintervention appear strongly linked to perceived pressure and interests pertaining to U.S. membership in international institutions, such as the United Nations and NATO and to perceptions of the relative ease and utility of such intervention. In addition, although analogies appear to influence and constrain elite representations of problems, they were invoked in the discourse in a piecemeal as opposed to a holistic fashion. Meanwhile analogies of past foreign policy “failures” and “successes” did not appear to correlate with decisions of armed humanitarian intervention and nonintervention as originally posited, although a correlation did exist when stories were classified according to a less stringent “activist” or “nonactivist” classification. Finally, the research also supports the importance of perceived domestic pressure – notably public opinion – to intervention decisions; the importance of “multilateralism” as a norm constraining elite decision making; and the tendency on behalf of decision makers to “demonize” one actor or groups of actors in extended conflict situations.
For Michael, Camryn and Catherine
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to acknowledge and thank my dissertation chair, Dr. Donald Sylvan. If it were not for his continual guidance and inspiration, encouragement in time of doubt, and patience throughout the many stops and starts along the way, this research would not have been completed. I would also like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Chadwick Alger, for his thoughtful support and encouragement over the years, and Dr. Ted Hopf, for his insightful comments and analysis.

To the staff and faculty in the Political Science Department at Utah State University, thank you for the use of the department’s resources and facilities, as well as the support, advice, encouragement and friendship that helped sustain me throughout the dissertation process.

Finally, I must acknowledge my many friends and family members who never lost faith in me and whose love and support made this dissertation possible. A special thanks to my mother, whose unflagging optimism, infinite patience and endless hours of child care made possible the time necessary for researching and writing; and to my father, for his intellectual curiosity, interest and sympathy to the trials and tribulations of an aspiring academic and working parent. Above all I want to thank my husband Mike and my two daughters, Camryn and Catherine, who have provided me with the
encouragement, love, laughter and inspiration to follow and complete my goals while
also putting such work in greater perspective.
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CHAPTER 1

UNDERSTANDING INTERVENTION DECISIONS

When and why does a state intervene militarily into the affairs of another state? Since the end of the cold war and more recently since the events of 9/11, the question of military intervention has garnered new salience. America’s global war against terrorism and conflict with Iraq has added a new chapter to the debate over military intervention, a debate that began prior to the new millennium. In the wake of the cold war, civil and ethnic conflicts erupted around the globe, creating “failed states” and conditions conducive for gross abuses of human rights and advanced human suffering. In addition, the cold war norm of nonintervention outside of the East-West struggle lost its significance. As the number of “complex emergencies” within states has grown, the debate over whether or not outside actors are obligated to intervene in the affairs of other states for humanitarian reasons or are prevented from such action due to state sovereignty has also increased. As extremism, human suffering and general internal strife are expected to continue, the debate surrounding outside military intervention is not likely to be soon resolved.
**Intervention and the United States**

As the prominent actor in world affairs, the United States has found itself in the middle of this controversy. Alone or as part of a multilateral contingent, the U.S. has been and continues to remain at the center of the debate over military intervention. Countries around the world have decried America’s interventions in such countries as Somalia, Kosovo and Afghanistan as imperialism. Others, both domestically and externally, have questioned their timing and selectivity. In short, the American response (or lack thereof) to humanitarian conflicts in the post cold war era is puzzling. While the U.S. chose to militarily intervene to stem the humanitarian crisis in Somalia in 1992, it was reluctant to get militarily involved in the humanitarian crisis in Bosnia during the same period. Likewise, while the U.S. administration more or less looked away from the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 it chose aggressive armed intervention in Bosnia one year later. Understanding the puzzling nature of the American response to internal conflicts is the focus of this research.

As the end of the cold war ushered in a new era of complex threats, problems and uncertainties, understanding how U.S. foreign policy decision makers have coped with this new environment is critical to forging more effective policy responses in the future. This research argues that in order to understand American decisions of armed intervention and nonintervention in the post cold war environment, one must first understand how decision makers represented the problems they were facing. An individual’s “problem representation” or mental construction of a given situation or problem not only delineates what options are or are not available to solve a problem but also whether or not the problem requires action, or intervention, in the first place.
Research on problem representation assumes that the way an individual perceives an issue or problem influences what, if any, options they see as available for its solution. When faced with a particular event or problem, an individual develops a mental understanding of that phenomenon, one shaped and colored by their own individual ontology, or “knowledge level, experiences and beliefs” which in turn constrains that individual’s assessment of options.\(^4\)

The “Story Model” and the Public Discourse

Much of the research and psychological and cognitive literature on foreign policy decision making is individualistic in its orientation, leading scholars to explore the decision making processes of key individuals. However, in democratic societies, decision making in the domain of foreign policy is primarily a collective enterprise. Utilizing many of the insights from more individualistic psychological studies and research, a number of scholars have sought to understand group decision making processes and dynamics.\(^5\) Some of the most intriguing work on group decision making has been based on understanding how information is highlighted as important and causally organized into “stories” through group social interaction.\(^6\) According to Sylvan and Charlick-Paley, a “story” is a composite of a group’s “common social and substantive meanings that helps to delimit the group’s problem space.”\(^7\) In other words, the story model argues that individuals faced with a common problem will, through the iterative process of social interaction, develop a common “story” or narrative concerning the salient features and causal pathways pertaining to that problem. According to Pennington and Hastie, decision makers construct an “intermediate representation” or
“story” of the salient information, and it this story as opposed to the original information or “raw evidence” that is the basis of the final decision. Thus, variability in stories corresponds to variability in decisions. Moreover, once a story is formed, new information is either ignored or accommodated to fit with the existing story that then guides individual and group decision making. Figure 1 illustrates the story model as originally posited by Pennington and Hastie.

According to a number of empirical studies, the story model appears to be a common if not “the” most common mode of problem representation utilized in group decision making contexts. And, given that most foreign policy decisions are collective in nature, the story model appears naturally suited to exploring the foreign policy decision making process. Building upon the research of Sylvan and Charlick-Paley who adapted the story model to understand how Soviet and French military officers represented the loss of empire, this research seeks to examine how U.S. decision makers represented selected “complex emergencies” that have fueled the debate surrounding humanitarian intervention. By examining stories within the public discourse of decision making elites, in particular, administration officials in charge of publicly explaining, describing and justifying U.S. foreign policy actions to an external audience, I seek to determine how successive American administrations collectively represented the humanitarian crises that have arisen since 1991 in an effort to better understand the varied responses to these conflicts.

As with the Sylvan and Charlick-Paley’s adapted-story model, as story builders I expect decision makers to draw upon expectations about their own roles and relationships
Figure 1: The Original story model.

that may predate the story event or problem. A modified version of the Sylvan and Charlick-Paley’s adapted story model is seen in Figure 2. My version differs primarily from the Sylvan and Charlick-Paley model to the extent that it includes “past lessons” as
possible variables, coloring and constraining other aspects of the representation. These lessons may appear at different points in the collective “story” depending on when and in what context they are invoked in the discourse. As in the other story models, the “story” or collective representation of the problem is triggered by some event or change in the decision makers’ external environment.

Collective perceptions of key relationships with other actors are another important element of the model. In the stories measured, I expect that the important relationships will vary depending on the conflict and context. These relationships may include those among administration officials and the state, Congress, society (which would include the media, the public and interest groups), the military (and other relevant governmental bureaucracies), external actors (e.g., other states, IGOs and publics), and the state/society targeted for possible intervention. Nonrelational characterizations of the situation are also included, such as the described degree and/or scope of the problem or crisis. Like the previous story models, I also expect responses to occur within a system of administrative and personal goals. Hence, these perceptions, or public “characterizations” of both the nature of the situation and key actor relationships are seen as influencing or constraining the goals with regards to the initiating event. The combination of lessons (if applicable), roles and goals subsequently conditions the responses that administrative officials suggest or take towards the problem and the perceived consequences of those actions.

This research therefore assumes that the public discourse is in and of itself part of politics and worthy of exploration. Although individuals may hold private views that differ from those they express publicly and decision makers may at times publicly differ
in their characterization of a given issue or problem, the dominant public discourse that emerges will be an overt reflection of the political process. In other words, personal views will be self-censored to reflect environmental constraints (e.g., organizational, domestic) while minority views will fail to be repeated both over time and by other elites within a given administration. Therefore, the dominant public discourse or “story” that

**Figure 2:** Adapted-story model.
emerges from the elite discourse is seen as an overt representation of the political process and the overall best depiction of the administration’s collective view of the problem and subsequent link to policy choice.12

In short, this research argues that the story model’s reflection of the dominant elite problem representation is the end product of individual cognitive, bureaucratic, and societal interpretations of the foreign policy problem as filtered through the political policy process itself. As the public manifestation of often time private political processes, the model’s elements or component parts can be viewed as reflective of the group’s general consensus of a given problem that in turn serves as the basis for its decision making and public defense, justification and explanation of administration policy. It seeks not to prove causation but rather demonstrate correlation between the collective representation and the administration’s policy. It differs from thick historical description and other analysis in that it highlights only those elements in relation to a given problem publicly deemed important or relevant by the decision making elite themselves. Consequently, this research argues that the story model mode of problem representation helps to systematically clarify the factors most likely to have influenced administration decision making and subsequent policy.

**Understanding Intervention Decisions: The State of the Literature**

While American decisions of armed humanitarian intervention have sparked much debate, no clear answers to the question of why interventions take place have emerged. One reason for the lack of answers is that much of the scholarship on the issue of intervention is devoted to understanding the normative and prescriptive questions of
when should the U.S. and other actors use force to accomplish humanitarian ends or if force is used, how it should be employed. Understanding why the U.S. chose options that it did receives secondary consideration. This gap in the literature is significant since prescriptive questions of when should the U.S. and other actors militarily intervene in the affairs of another state can not fully be answered without a clear understanding of why past decisions were made and the resulting consequences of those actions.

Another limitation with much of the literature is that its primary focus is upon multilateral as opposed to unilateral actions and decision making, given that many post-cold war humanitarian operations have been conducted in conjunction with the UN and or NATO. Again, individual state deliberations and decision making often receive secondary attention. However, such a focus ignores the fact that UN and NATO action (or inaction) is dependent upon the prior decisions of individual member states and, more significantly, the fact that a powerful determinant of a collective response to internal conflicts “has been the level of interest on the part of the United States and the willingness of U.S. government to exercise leadership.” Therefore, understanding the individual decisional calculus that precedes or precludes multilateral intervention, particularly on the part of the United States, is an important facet of decision making that demands further exploration.

My search for answers to questions of armed humanitarian intervention and nonintervention was guided by a basic assumption. First, I expect to see a systematic difference in the stories leading to intervention as compared to nonintervention. In other words, I expect to find persistent elements within the elite discourse or narrative leading to armed humanitarian intervention that are noticeably absent in cases of nonintervention.
To account for this variation and in order to better understand U.S. foreign policy in the post cold war era, this research systematically tests seven factors culled from the literature on the use of force and humanitarian intervention pertaining to: (1) relevant past “lessons” or historical analogies; (2) clear threats or opportunity elating to national vital interests; (3) moral/legal obligations; (4) pressure from domestic actors; (5) institutional pressures, obligations and interests emanating from membership in international governmental organizations (IGOs), such as NATO and the United Nations; (6) the ease and utility of military intervention, and (7) bureaucratic interests.

**Deciding to Intervene: Hypotheses**

*“Lessons” of History: Precedent and Historical Analogies*

The tendency to invoke historical analogies in reference to current events appears quite common in the public discourse of top governmental decision makers, as the frequent references to “Pearl Harbor” after the U.S. terrorist attack on September 11, 2001. In fact, the use of historical precedent and analogy in foreign policy decision is perceived to be so prevalent that some have labeled it a ‘syndrome.’ scholars studying the use of history in foreign policy decision making have found that while it can prove invaluable in dealing with current problems, providing decision makers with critical perspective and guidance, the misguided and perhaps overuse of history can also prove problematic, causing decision makers to overlook key differences in situations and contexts.
The reliance upon historical analogies has also been noted with regards to decisions of armed humanitarian intervention.\textsuperscript{18} According to Ramsbotham and Woodhouse:

One of the main lessons from the Rwandan tragedy is the difficulty of ‘learning lessons.’ Faced by the unexpected, the temptation is always to ‘fight the last war.’ The ‘success’ of ‘Operation Provide Comfort’ in Iraq encouraged similar action in Bosnia, without adequate thought about the difference in context. The ‘failure’ of ‘Operation Restore Hope’ in Somalia led to paralysis when the Rwandan genocide began.\textsuperscript{19}

Other scholarship has also cited the importance of precedent and analogy in relation to state responses to humanitarian intervention. For instance, George Herring argues that American leaders relied heavily upon history in the war in Kosovo and, that given the frequency with which history was invoked in defense of policies, analogies likely played important roles in the framing and policy selection of decision makers.\textsuperscript{20} Others have argued that analogies from WWII and Balkan history were used by U.S. decision makers to justify nonintervention in Bosnia.\textsuperscript{21}

Meanwhile, from the perspective of prescriptive analysis, Lori Damrocsh has argued that precedents should guide state responses to humanitarian conflicts, and cites the comparisons and contrasts that were made between Iraq and Yugoslavia as examples. For Damrosch, the differential American response in these cases went against the “objective of treating like cases alike [which] is fundamental to the evolution of a system based on law rather than power.”\textsuperscript{22} What Damrosch fails to consider is why the differential response to those cases existed in the first place. In other words, how were those two cases or problems represented by the relevant state actors? Such questions are
important to understanding and recognizing decision making patterns associated with post-determined failures of policy.

The literature on cognitive psychology has noted that when confronted with novel situations or those characterized by uncertainty and incomplete information, decision makers often utilize heuristics, or simplifying rules of thumb, to guide or aid the decision making process.\textsuperscript{23} Falling back on the “lessons” of history embodied in historical analogies is one such heuristic commonly utilized by foreign policy elites.\textsuperscript{24} As noted by Robert Jervis, “what one learns from key events in international history is an important factor in determining the images that shape the interpretation of incoming information.”\textsuperscript{25} More specifically, scholars such as Yuen Foon Khong and Yaacov Vertzberger have argued that policymakers use historical analogies as diagnostic aids to help, among other things, define a given situation or problem, circumscribe roles of self and others, provide prescriptions for a solution, eliminate options and justify or persuade policy choice (to both self and others).\textsuperscript{26}

This research posits several hypotheses in order to determine what if any apparent influence analogies played in the U.S. decisionmaking surrounding the American response to post cold war humanitarian crises. First, as previously mentioned, I expect to see a substantive difference in the elite stories advocating intervention than those advocating inaction. Thus, when looking at analogies, I expect that past military “successes” are more likely to be invoked within elite stories favoring aggressive military intervention, while past military “failures” were more likely to be invoked in stories generally opposing intervention and aggressive military action. Second, in terms of story structure, I posit that the invocation of precedent will shape the process of story
formation itself. In other words, the perceived “lessons” of a previous action or inaction will act as a constraint, shaping the parameters of the current problem space and subsequent selection of options.

However, contrary to the argument made by some scholars that decision makers utilize history in a strict analogue fashion (i.e., AX:BX:AY:BY or since event A and event B share characteristic X, A and B also must share characteristic Y), I argue that history is utilized in the communal policy process in a more conscribed manner. In other words, analogies do not constrain or shape the foreign policy elite’s entire collective representation of a given problem but may instead influence particular aspects of a given representation, such as the perception of goals, relationships and or assessment of the feasibility of select options. In sum, I posit that analogies do influence the foreign policy process by promoting or bolstering decision decision making tendencies or proclivities towards or away from armed intervention. However, they are but one part of a more complex collective representation of a given problem.

Threats or Opportunities Relating to Vital National Interests

Traditional logic suggests that the decisional calculus behind acts of intervention is relatively simple: states intervene militarily in the affairs of other states based on calculations of either threat or opportunity. In other words, states act rationally based on calculations of vital national interests (traditionally defined as anything that works to preserve or enhance material-economic military power and or security). According to such logic, one would then expect that states would undertake armed humanitarian intervention in the affairs of other states only when such intervention is seen as either
threatening or enhancing such interests. Thus, it is posited that *decision makers are likely to favor armed intervention the more that they argue vital national interests are at stake.*

However, in the post-cold war world, how common are those clear threats and opportunities to the so-defined national interest? Moreover, what is the national interest?²⁸ The definition of what is or is not in the national interest is open to multiple interpretations and depends on individual perceptions of the problem at hand. For the most part, analyses of U.S. interventions either loosely or narrowly define the national interest along realist terms or take it as given.²⁹ Others suggest a more expansive notion of the concept. Holly Burkhalter argues that national interest should include the moral necessity of countering crimes against humanity. She argues that “Just as it is in America’s vital national interest to deter those who engage in international terrorism, drug trafficking, nuclear proliferation, and environmental degradation, so too is it in our vital interest to prevent and quell mass killings of noncombatants, wherever such crimes occur.”³⁰ In the post cold war world, defining national interests and the threats to those interests – let alone ranking such threats and interests – has become more difficult, given the absence of any clear consensus on the issue.³¹ Consequently, it becomes more important to systematically evaluate how governmental elites collectively define the national interest in the varied foreign policy contexts in order to assess how pertinent these interests actually are in determining U.S. policy and behavior.

*Moral and or Legal Imperatives for Action*

In contrast to material calculations of interests, constructivists argue that norms and ideas matter. While there is a debate as to their regulative or constitutive effects,
most constructivists argue that norms are indicative of socially constructed identities and interests that lead states to act according to a “logic of appropriateness” as opposed to a “logic of material consequences.” Along these lines, scholars have posited the idea of a “moral or legal” imperative spurring U.S. armed humanitarian intervention. As the foremost democracy and one of the most vocal supporters of human rights, it has been argued that the United States has a moral obligation to intervene into areas of crisis to promote democracy and support, uphold and protect human rights. Moreover, as a party to various international human rights conventions, such as the 1948 Convention against Genocide, the United States has a legal obligation to uphold and protect human rights. Among those prescribing such behavior is Leslie Gelb, who argues that stable democracies such as the United States have a moral imperative to intervene in situations of “strife, mass murder and genocide.” Others, like Lester Brune, attempt to examine whether or not such an imperative explains subsequent U.S. behavior. For instance, in his analysis of Somalia, Brune argues that a “moral imperative” as opposed to vital national interests compelled the American intervention in the region. However, up until 1994, he claims that a moral imperative was insufficient to warrant American intervention in Bosnia given the perceived lack of vital interests. Meanwhile, in his essay on international responses to the Kosovo conflict, David Rieff argues that the NATO intervention in the area was “undertaken more in the name of human rights and moral obligation than out of any traditional conception of national interest.”

In short, despite normative claims that a moral or legal imperative “should” guide U.S. behavior with regards to humanitarian intervention decisions, whether or not such factors actually enter into the elite decision making process requires a systematic inquiry
into elite representations of humanitarian problems. Given the growth in the international human rights regime since World War II, this research therefore aims to indirectly test the relative strength and influence of international norms and legal institutions on state decision making processes. To test these ideas, it is posited that armed intervention is more likely to be advocated the greater the perceived legal and or moral imperative for action. Moreover, it is posited that the determination of “genocide” will increase the moral/legal imperative for intervention.

**Domestic Interests**

Another possible factor behind humanitarian intervention is pressure and interests related to various attentive domestic actors. If, as stated by Robert Jervis, “intervention, like all foreign policy, remains deeply domestic,” then understanding the role that such actors like the media, Congress, and the mass public play in decisions of armed intervention is crucial. It should be noted that I recognize categorizing the media and Congress as “domestic” as opposed to “global” or “governmental” actors is debatable. However, I argue that the complex and reciprocal connections between these three actors justifies this categorization, particularly when looking at elite representations of decisional constraints and consequences, a contention that appears supported from the literature. For instance, in their assessment of 83 elite interviews, Steven Kull and Clay Ramsey found that U.S. policy makers viewed Congressional behavior and media coverage as reliable mirrors of domestic public opinion. Therefore, categorizing the media and Congress as domestic actors seems necessary in order to better understand what role public opinion and the general domestic social context play in the executive
decision making process. Therefore, it is posited that decision makers are more likely to favor armed intervention if such action is seen as strongly supported by Congress, the media and or the mass public.

However, when analyzing the elite narrative, each of these actors will be assessed separately to see if their relative influence conforms with expectations from the scholarly literature. For instance, in terms of Congress, the general assumption in the literature has been that as the boundary between international and domestic issues has increasingly blurred, particularly since Vietnam, the assertiveness of Congress in the realm of foreign policy has increased as has its general influence on foreign policy process. Aside from Congress, past literature on public opinion suggests that the public acts as a constraint upon, rather than a determinant of, U.S. foreign policy behavior. However, recent scholarship is just beginning to explore the relative impact of public opinion upon post-cold war decisions of armed humanitarian intervention.

Relating to and perhaps integrally connected with public opinion is the role of the media or the so-called “CNN factor” in bolstering or triggering humanitarian interventions. Apart from the attention to the subject, what role the media plays in such decisions remains unclear. For instance, Robert Entman suggests that the media’s power in defining issues, options and assessing government effectiveness has grown since the cold war. However, assessing the direction of its influence on government intervention decisions is complicated. Entman argues that while national media outlets “seem to provide the most consistently interventionist elite voices in post-Cold War America” their emphasis on visual details and casualties can also trigger public pressure against
involvement. Other analyses of specific cases downplay the “CNN factor” in post cold war interventions, arguing that media pressure factored minimally in such decisions.

One of the problems with assessing media influence on executive decisions stems from the lack of knowledge regarding the exact nature of the media’s relationship with other actors. One growing body of research on media-government relations suggests that the two actors are not entirely independent of one another given the media’s dependence on government sources for foreign policy-related information. In an analysis of mainstream new coverage and Congressional opinion, a marked correlation was found between media news slant and the range of opinion within Congress. Aside from the media-Congress connection, the public opinion-media-foreign policy connection also appears complex. In his essay on the growth of media influence, Entman suggests that the media can affect government policy and public opinions by its coverage of perceived public opinion, even if this perception is significantly different from actual polling data. This idea of perceived or “anticipated” public opinion as a factor influencing foreign policy decision making and behavior is supported by other scholars. It also underscores the importance of looking at problem representations. In short, assessing to what degree the media, public opinion or Congress factored into U.S. decisions of armed humanitarian intervention requires first delving into the extent that such factors appeared in elite representations of specific foreign policy problems.

*International Institutional Interests and Obligations*

International institutional obligations, pressures and interests are other possible factors influencing decisions of intervention that have been little explored in the post-cold
war world. From a constructivist perspective, alliances and other international institutional arrangements help mutually constitute actor identities and provide a forum for normative creation and promotion.\textsuperscript{48} Therefore, a constructivist perspective might suggest that international organizations such as the UN or NATO help mutually constitute actor roles and identities, leading states to adopt policies and undertake humanitarian intervention to the degree that such action is viewed as consistent with their organizational identity, interests and values. A rational functionalist perspective, on the other hand, would argue that states join IGOs and enter into institutional agreements to the extent that such organizations and alliances help them resolve collective action problems.\textsuperscript{49} From this perspective, the U.S. participation in armed multilateral humanitarian interventions could be understood as an attempt to resolve and or alleviate humanitarian problems and crises that the U.S. had neither the means nor incentive to resolve on its own. In either case, the invoking of institutional interests in the discourse could be viewed as support for both perspectives and would suggest that international institutions matter.\textsuperscript{50} Thus, it is posited that \textit{decision makers will either favor or oppose armed intervention to the extent that it is seen consistent with promoting or hindering institutional interests and objectives of key multilateral organizations, such as NATO or the United Nations, in which that state is a member.} With the end of the cold war and the collapse of the East-West conflict, it could be argued that the possibility and opportunity for multilateral cooperation has been enhanced, leading the United States to undertake humanitarian interventions in situations where it would have been heretofore more reticent. Consequently, it is also posited that \textit{decision makers will be more likely to favor armed humanitarian intervention if such action is seen as advocated or supported}
by key allies or other states pertinent to U.S. foreign policy interests. Again, a look at elite problem representations should reveal to what degree, if any, alliance or institutional interests or obligations influenced or constrained American decisions regarding humanitarian interventions.

Ease and Utility of Intervention

Apart from political or institutional obligations and interests are calculations of the relative ease and utility of armed humanitarian intervention. For example, Lori Damrosch argues that the proximity of military and logistical support was key to the NATO intervention in Kosovo and subsequently makes the case less generalizable as a precedent for future interventions. Meanwhile, Solarz and O’Hanlon argue that the United States should intervene only in cases where there is a clear indication that outside forces could make a difference. This notion of the utility of intervention is reflected in the work of Cushman and Meštrovic. In their analysis of the public discourse surrounding the Bosnian conflict, they argue that one of the master “frames” influencing actors responses towards the region was the idea that outside intervention in the Balkans could do little to stop the conflict given the age-old nature of the region’s interethnic hatreds and disputes.

Along those lines, it is posited that decision makers will be more favorably disposed to armed intervention the greater the perceived ease and utility of such intervention. This hypothesis seeks to test to what degree logistical and other military concerns pertaining to the relative ease, risks and associated utility of military operations influenced American decision making about whether or not to undertake armed
humanitarian interventions. This appears to imply rational decision making, where
decision elites when faced with a problem undertake a clear cost/benefit calculation in
their assessment of options. Whether the American decision making process actually
follows this rational ideal should be revealed in the collective elite stories across the
cases.

Bureaucratic Politics

Finally, another possible influence upon intervention decisions is the varied
interests of bureaucratic actors within the administration. The bureaucratic politics model
of decision making argues that foreign policy choices are the result of bargaining and
compromises among government agencies. Following this logic, Weiss and Collins
suggest that in the post-cold war environment, the military may be more influential in
intervention decisions given their desire to justify and protect vulnerable and diminishing
defense budgets. Given the centrality of the military to any U.S. intervention decision,
the degree to which vested bureaucratic interests influence elite decision making seems
worthy of investigation. As a result, it is posited that military elites will likely favor
armed intervention in an effort to promote and or justify defense budgetary priorities
within government. Following the logic underlying the “military industrial complex,”
the decline in defense budgets following the collapse of the Soviet threat lends itself
intuitively to the logic that the need to maintain or expand the defense budget in the face
of competing budgetary priorities might compel the military to take a more broad and
aggressive stance towards the use of force in general and armed humanitarian
intervention in particular.
Case Selection and Methodology

Although states often called for and the U.S. often justified the intervention into the affairs of others states for “humanitarian” reasons during the cold war, there appears to be a consensus in the literature that the end of the cold war ushered in a qualitatively different type of humanitarian intervention.\(^{56}\) During the cold war, humanitarian interventions were primarily limited to the protection of U.S. nationals and aid to assist the alleviation of human suffering associated with natural disasters. Gross abuses of human rights were, in and of themselves, rarely causes for intervention given the greater preoccupation with the global strategic balance. Since the cold war’s end, the nature of humanitarian intervention has changed due to the increase in civil wars and civilian deaths, the growing demand for UN action and the inclusion and subcontracting of regional and nongovermental actors.\(^{57}\) In short, the change in context has wrought a change in response.

In order to assess the qualitatively different nature of the American response towards intervention, I have chosen to use the comparative case studies and Alexander George’s technique of “structured focused comparison” to explore the U.S. decision making process in this changed context.\(^{58}\) The cases themselves were selected based upon the following criteria. First, given the apparent increase in humanitarian intervention in the post-cold war era, only conflicts after 1991 were considered. Second, the cases chosen for examination had to exhibit the characteristics of a “complex humanitarian emergency.” These events are defined as “war-induced and sudden catastrophes involving substantial increases in involuntary displacements and in suffering (especially as measured by famine, disease, and human rights abuse) of noncombatants
accompanied by a crisis and oftentimes a collapse of state authority." Third, understanding variations in decisions required variation in types of cases selected for examination. Therefore, cases of U.S. armed humanitarian intervention were considered with an equal number of cases of nonintervention. For the purposes of this research, “armed humanitarian intervention” is defined as the use of military force that includes the deployment of ground troops and or the use of sustained and intensive air strikes to: (1) protect aid workers and or deliver humanitarian supplies; (2) assist with refugees or noncombatants embroiled within a humanitarian crisis or emergency. Finally, geographical and temporal considerations also influenced case selection.

Given the above criteria, four cases were selected for analysis, two cases of armed humanitarian intervention, Somalia (1992-1993), and Bosnia (1993-1995), and two cases of nonintervention, Rwanda (1994) and Bosnia (1992-1993). Of the four cases, two occurred on the African continent, an area traditionally deemed lacking in relevance to “vital national interests.” In contrast, the two Bosnian cases were centered in Europe, the site of America’s key historic allies and traditional economic and security interests. Finally, two of the cases, Somalia and Bosnia (1992-3) span two successive and ideologically different administrations, lending themselves to a more intriguing comparison.

In terms of methodology, my focus on problem representations and use of the story model is based on the idea that the scholar’s view of the situation and pertinent factors influencing the decision making process are not necessarily the same as that of the decision makers themselves. If a discrepancy in these two views potentially exists, it becomes imperative for the scholar to put aside his or her preconceptions and to instead
explore how decision makers actually viewed or represented the problems they were facing. In turn, the decision to explore the notion of collective problem representations via the elite public discourse was driven by two underlying considerations: first, the lack of access to private decision making documents and second, and perhaps most importantly, the belief that the public discourse is an excellent representation of the collective view of the problem as it is likely to reflect internal and external socio-political constraints consciously and unconsciously perceived by the government’s decision making elite.

Relating to the first point, given the relatively recent nature of these events, the bulk of materials utilized in this analysis were public as opposed to private in nature. Although access to classified documents and private discussions is generally preferred in order to get the most complete representation of the structure and process of U.S. foreign policy decision making, I argue that the public discourse is an excellent source for uncovering the government’s collective representation of foreign policy problems given that it is an overt representation of the political process itself. First, in democratic societies, decision makers are more or less required to publicly explain and justify their position, policy and actions on a regular basis. When decisions entail the threat or possible use of force, the importance of such public exposition is enhanced. Although one could argue the public discourse may be systematically biased in that elites tell the public only what they want the public to know, it this research assumes that the public discourse should still reveal common elements and causal connections that comprise the decision makers’ collective “story” or representation of a given problem.
Moreover, as previously mentioned, in democratic societies foreign policy decisions are the result of collective decision making among a variety of individual and bureaucratic actors. Therefore the public discourse is most likely to reflect the group “consensus” of the representation of a given problem, resulting from the political interaction of relevant governmental actors. Although disagreements among individual actors regarding a given problem representation may exist, it is the collective – not individual – representation that most matters. Therefore, the common “story” emerging from the government’s public discourse regarding a given problem is most likely to be the dominant collective representation of that problem as filtered through social-political process that, in turn, best illustrates the governments’ logic behind its respective policy choice(s).

To mitigate against source bias in the unveiling of the government’s collective problem representation, a wide variety of public sources in both formal and informal contexts were analyzed. In terms of post-cold war data sources, thousands of speeches, statements, testimonies, and interviews of key decision makers were obtained and analyzed from on-line full-text databases such as Lexis-Nexis. Other primary sources of information included the Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents published by the Federal Register, which contains formal and informal speeches, statements, interviews and comments of the President of the United States; and the State Department’s Dispatch magazine, which contains public speeches and statements by the president and his top advisors. In addition, burgeoning journal articles, memoirs and scholarly books pertaining to the subject matter were analyzed to supplement the primary
sources of information. When available, select declassified documents were utilized to further supplement the public record.

**Coding of Data**

In order to determine the administration’s collective “story” regarding a targeted issue or problem, statements of top administration officials were first coded individually and then aggregated according to major patterns or common “themes” which served as the basis for the collective story. First, statements of top U.S. administration officials publicly discussing or making reference to a given problem were individually analyzed then grouped into one of six different categories: (1) statements referring to nature of the situation or key actor relationships; (2) statements referring to the administration’s goals or objectives; (3) statements referring to the advocacy of certain options or a discussion of actions taken; (4) statements referring to preferred consequences of actions taken or advocated; (5) statements or references to past “lessons” or historical analogies; and (6) statements referring to new “lessons” learned from the administration’s experience with the problem. During the coding, individual elite statements were also sorted according to the various bureaucracies or interests that they represented (i.e. Defense Department, State Department, National Security Council, White House etc.) to ensure that a wide as possible array of bureaucratic and institutional interests were represented.⁶³

After all of the public statements of each administration official were individually analyzed and coded, the body of the administration’s statements was then analyzed for common patterns or “themes” with respect to each category. To be considered a major pattern or theme, a statement or idea with respect to each story category (i.e., the nature
of the situation or key actor relationships, goals, actions advocated etc.) had to be repeated by at least three different top foreign policy officials of the administration representing varied bureaucratic interests. For instance, with respect to Bosnia, “containing the conflict” was considered a primary goal of the administration from May to July 1993 since it was stated as such by the President, the Vice President and the Secretary of State multiple times and on multiple occasions during that time period.

Collectively, the common themes emerging from all of the categories represented a specific administration “story” (problem representation) with respect to a given time period. Consequently, when the themes in each category began to significantly change (e.g., change in the administration’s goals, options advocated and or changes in the nature of the situation or key actor relationships), usually in response to an event or change in the decision makers’ external environment, then a new “story” was seen as having emerged. For instance, following the murders of 24 Pakistani peacekeepers in Mogadishu in June 1993, the change in U.S. goals in Somalia, from supporting democratic “nation building” to “restoring security;” along with the corresponding changes in U.S. actions (e.g., from scaling back the U.S. military commitment to deploying U.S. special forces) and characterization of key actor relationships (e.g., from arguments that Somalia was the primary responsibility of the United Nations to arguments that the U.S. and U.N. were required to aggressively respond to the heinous actions) signaled that a new story had emerged with respect to the Somalia problem.

As the above discussion illustrates, the story model as I have used it has an underlying theory of politics. This is that foreign policy is not a realm of decision making by atomistic individuals. Rather, it is a social and political domain whereby key
decision makers exchange information and interact with one another on a regular basis. This political and social interaction is thus assumed to be influential and hierarchical in the sense that certain individual definitions of the situation and problem come to take on greater collective salience or precedence than others (as a result of this social and political process). This precedence is assumed in my analysis by the fact that these definitions/characterizations of the problem (partially represented as “themes”) are consistently repeated by multiple decision making elites across the administration over a specified temporal period. Therefore, I am bracketing internal political-social processes and interactions in my model for two reasons: (1) methodologically, given the recent nature of the cases I can not get at such private interaction and internal processes without greater access to private decision making documents, and (2) my assumption that the public rhetoric is itself an overt manifestation of this process.

Finally, I recognize that public discourse is subject to multiple interpretations and that different individuals can look at the same statement and derive multiple and diverse meanings and interpretations. While I would argue that some element of subjectivity is impossible to remove entirely from discursive analyses given inherent conscious and unconscious human biases and infallibility, I do believe scholars can try to control for such bias through careful process tracing and by paying close attention to both the immediate and broader context in which such discourse is imbedded. Consequently, throughout this research, in interpreting public statements I have tried to be sensitive to their immediate political-social context. In other words, whenever possible, I have tried my best to capture the meaning of such statements as imbedded in the author’s immediate discourse, whether it be a public speech, impromptu interview with reporters,
congressional hearing or White House briefing. Moreover, I have also considered and tried to place such statements within the context of the broader political debate and discourse. As illustration of this logic, at the end of each case I discuss those story elements that I feel are potentially most controversial in their interpretation and the reasons underlying my interpretation.

**Chapter Outline**

This research begins its exploration of variables influencing the American decision making process in Africa. Chapter two is devoted to exploring the first significant armed humanitarian intervention in the post-cold war era: the Bush and Clinton administrations’ intervention in Somalia. While the deaths of American servicemen in the streets of Mogadishu became a source of new “lessons” pertaining to American armed humanitarian intervention in the post cold war world, it also underscored past lessons from Vietnam regarding the use of force and the importance of domestic support. These “lessons” had a dramatic impact on American and decision making in Rwanda with disastrous consequences for Rwandan citizens. The American decision not to intervene in Rwanda during the 1994 genocide of Tutsi civilians is explored in chapter three.

Following the examination of armed intervention and nonintervention in Africa, American decision making in an area of the world more traditionally tied to U.S. interests is explored. Chapters four and five are devoted to understanding the complex and lengthy decision making processes of the Bush and Clinton administration towards the crisis in Bosnia. While chapter four covers the period spanning two different
administration’s decisions to avoid military engagement in the growing conflict in Bosnia from 1992 and 1993, chapter five explores the Clinton administration’s evolving activist orientation towards the conflict, culminating in the sustained NATO military air campaign and diplomatic efforts in the summer and fall of 1995. The final chapter summarizes the findings from the four cases and assesses the factors that appear most influential in determining the U.S. position towards armed humanitarian intervention in the early to mid-nineteen nineties. Chapter six concludes with a discussion of other insights culled from the four cases and suggests promising areas for further research.

1 “Complex emergencies” is a common term that emerged in the humanitarian aid community to define such conflicts. Weiss and Collins argue that “A complex emergency combines internal conflicts with large-scale displacements of people and fragile or failing economic, political and social institutions. Other symptoms include noncombatant death, starvation or malnutrition; disease and mental illness; random and systematic violence against noncombatants; infrastructure collapse; widespread lawlessness; and interrupted food production and trade.” See Thomas Weiss and Cindy Collins, Humanitarian Challenges and Intervention, (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000), p. 4.

2 For an example of the debate, see Michael Keren and Donald A. Sylvan, eds., International Intervention: Sovereignty versus Responsibility, (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2002).


4 See Donald A. Sylvan and Deborah M. Haddad, “Reasoning and Problem Representation in Foreign Policy, in Donald A. Sylvan and James F. Voss, Problem Representation in Foreign Policy Decision Making, (NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 189.


7 Sylvan and Charlick-Paley, 699.

8 Pennington and Hastie (1988), 523.

9 Pennington and Hastie argue that there is a universal episode schema that expresses a state of relationships that begins with events which lead to the initiation of a main character’s psychological state and his or her goals. These three variables then provide the basis for the character’s actions and the ultimate consequence of the action taken.


11 This research considers key administrative officials to be the President, Vice President, Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, National Security Advisor, the U.S. Permanent Ambassador to the United Nations, the White House Press Secretary, State Department and Defense spokespersons and other key administrative officials involved in decision making and consultation who are also charged with explicating or defending the administration’s foreign policy in public forums.

12 Since the story model aims to reflect the dominant group consensus or representation of a given problem, it does not claim to represent every individual, group or societal representation of that same problem that may or may not counter the dominant elite discourse. In other words there may indeed be individual cognitive, bureaucratic or societal representations of the given foreign policy problem that differ from the dominant elite discourse. However, if these representations are not voiced or discussed publicly by other elites within the administration then they can not be regarded as part of the model or the dominant collective representation of the problem and are assumed to have been deemed extraneous or resolved privately during the political decision making process.


Cushman and Mestrovic, This Time We Knew.

Damrosch, Enforcing Restraint.


The work on heuristics argues that they are more likely to be used: (1) by experts or novices; (2) in times of high information or cognitive overload; (3) in ambiguous situations or (4) situations where time is a factor; and (5) when the issue or problem is perceived as less salient. See for instance, Sherman and Corty, “Cognitive Heuristics.”


For a discussion of the difficulties of using “vital national interests” as a guide for foreign policy action, see Haass, Intervention, 69-71.


34 Brune, *The United States and Post-Cold War Interventions*.


Damrosch, *Enforcing Restraint*.


For instance, starting in the 1950s many developing countries urged western intervention to uphold “human rights” in South Africa and Southern Rhodesia with little effect. Meanwhile, Presidents Reagan and Bush justified intervention in Grenada and Panama respectively in part due to “humanitarian” considerations that were essentially defined as the protection of U.S. nationals. See Ramsbotham and Woodhouse, *Humanitarian Intervention*, especially pp. 33-66.


The technique of structured focused comparison is designed to limit spurious findings through the careful selection of cases and the rigorous consideration of alternative explanations. For the seminal description of the technique, see Alexander George, “Quantitative and qualitative approaches to content analysis,” in I. Pool, ed., *Trends in Content Analysis*, (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1959), 7-32.


I argue that by focusing on the collective story as opposed to the individual, the question of strategic or motivated bias becomes subsumed in the dominant discourse. I assume that the public discourse is going to be reflective of individual cognitive biases filtered through political goals and processes. In other
words, individual policymakers who look at the problem through lens colored by their own strategic, motivated and unmotivated biases must interact with other individual policymakers with their own but most likely different biased lenses. The dominant discourse is thus reflective of the private social and political interaction amongst these individuals.

62 Such an assumption is supported by the research of other scholars doing discursive analysis, Khong and Underhill-Cady, who concluded from their research that there was a remarkable consistency in what the elite said in public as well in private; See Khong, Analogies at War, 58-62; See also Joseph B. Underhill-Cady “Doing Battle with Death: U.S. Foreign Policy and the Discourse of War: 1898-1968” (Ph.D., diss., University of Michigan, 1995), fn. 33.

63 In cases where public statements from top officials regarding a particular problem or issue were absent or relatively sparse in number, foreign policy statements of lower administration officials speaking on the subject were included in the analysis. For example, early in the Rwanda crisis, top administration statements on the issue were either absent or relatively few in number. Consequently, statements of lower administration officials on the subject, such as the American Ambassador to Rwanda and the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, were included in the analysis.

64 There were three exceptions to the “three then theme” rule: (1) since the president is responsible for making final foreign policy decisions and is at the top of the bureaucratic and information hierarchy, his statements were weighted more heavily. In other words, if a statement or idea was consistently and repeatedly enunciated on different and varied occasions by the president and one other member of the administration on a different occasion, it was thus considered an administration theme. For instance, after entering office, President Clinton repeatedly stated that his post-cold war presidency was analogous to that of Truman’s following World War II to the extent that it underlined the importance of U.S. leadership in shaping the international institutional architecture for a new and uncertain era. This theme was repeated by the Ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, and was thus seen as an important “past lesson” in the story of the UN takeover of the mission in Somalia in the spring of 1993. (2) In rare instances where there was a noted absence of top administration statements on the selected subject, certain key statements by top administration officials were given more weight. For instance, after the Clinton administration entered office in January 1993, Secretary of State Christopher gave an address on February 10 on Bosnia that was, for many months, the administration’s only official public statement on the issue. Therefore, in the coding of themes it was more heavily weighted as a source of the administration’s collective view of the Bosnian problem. (3) Occasionally within the “consequences” and “future lessons” elements of the model. Decision makers rarely state publicly all their desired consequences from U.S. policy. While many desired consequences of U.S. policy are obvious from the official discourse others are less evident but congruent with elite statements, other elements of the model and or the broader political discourse. For instance, while a reduction of starvation and death appeared as an evident and politically acceptable desired consequence of the Bush administration’s policy in Somalia in August 1992, deflecting criticism of administration action in Africa and Bosnia was less likely to be politically and publicly acknowledged by administration officials. However, when elite statements were considered within the broader political context and discourse, such a desired or perceived consequence of U.S. policy seemed apparent. Despite such exceptions, in general and for the most part, the “themes” emerging from the discourse were statements/ideas repeatedly made by multiple top officials representing different bureaucratic interests across the administration on multiple and varied occasions.
CHAPTER 2

THE SOMALIA INTERVENTION

On November 24, 1992, the Bush administration sent troops to Somalia to assist humanitarian efforts aiding thousands dying from disease and starvation. Initially seen as a success, later the intervention would be deemed by many as a policy failure. How did an effort to save Somalis transform into combat against them? Somalia is key to understanding U.S. policy towards armed humanitarian intervention in the post-cold war world. What was the Bush administration’s last major foreign policy act became the Clinton administration’s baptism by fire. This chapter will explore U.S. policy in Somalia by examining the evolution of problem representations of key decision makers. From an analysis of the social narrative or “story” of key decision makers within the two administrations, this chapter will explore how representations of the problem in Somalia influenced the selection of options and subsequent policy behavior of the Bush and Clinton administrations.

The Somalia story will be divided into “critical junctures” in the social narrative that, for this research, are defined as measurable changes in the stated goals of the administration, its characterization of the situation or key actor relationships and
subsequent advocacy of policy options with respect to a given problem. Five such junctures are identified in the Bush and Clinton administrations discourse regarding Somalia: (1) the story surrounding the Bush administration’s decision to intervene with a U.S. military airlift in Somalia or “Operation Provide Relief”; (2) the story surrounding the Bush administration’s decision to forcibly intervene with U.S. troops as part of UNITAF or “Operation Provide Hope”; (3) the story surrounding the Clinton administration’s decision to have U.S. troops participate in the second United Nations Operation in Somalia, UNOSOM II; (4) the “Get Aidid” story surrounding the Clinton administration’s decision to support the pursuit of the Somali General under UNOSOM II; and finally, (5) the Clinton administration’s “Withdrawal” story, following the deaths of eighteen American soldiers in the streets of Mogadishu. After analyzing the evolution in the representation of the Somalia problem over the successive administrations, hypotheses pertaining to key factors promoting changes in the representation that subsequently influenced decisions to use and support the use of force will be assessed.

Events Leading to U.S. Intervention

In January 1991, Mohamed Siad Barre, the military leader who ruled Somalia since 1969, was violently overthrown. The subsequent civil war and fighting between rival clans led to the displacement of over one million people while the accompanying drought contributed to the deaths of up to 300,000 from famine in 1992 alone.¹ The United States became formally involved in Somalia when, in response to the outbreak of violence, it undertook a military evacuation of the U.S. embassy in Mogadishu starting on January 2, 1991.² Three months later, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs,
Herman Cohen, made a declaration of disaster on March 25, 1991. At that time, with the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) became active under USAID procedure. The OFDA initially worked with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to provide assistance to displaced persons and civilian casualties of war since the United Nations had pulled most of its operations out of the country due to security concerns. The first of three waves of famine struck southern Somalia in April and lasted until late 1991.³ At the urging of the OFDA and the Department of State, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) expanded its operations in Somalia, which were to become the organization’s largest relief operation since World War II.⁴ Aside from the efforts of the ICRC and other relief organizations, there was little state involvement on the ground in Somalia.

In late January 1992, the United Nations became a more active player in the conflict, reportedly at the urging of the United States.⁵ By March 3, the United Nations, led by U.N. Undersecretary General James Jonah, successfully brokered a tentative ceasefire between Mogadishu’s two major clan leaders, Mohammed Farah Aidid and Ali Mahdi.⁶ According to the agreement, the clan leaders agreed to accept the deployment of up to 500 U.N. peacekeepers to escort humanitarian deliveries around Mogadishu and its environs.⁷ The estimated 250,000 civilians in Mogadishu had been devoid of relief efforts since December 1991 due to the perceived danger and extreme violence in the area. Two days after the signing, a U.N. sponsored relief ship turned back from the capital after coming under fire. At that time, the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Somalia concluded that the only way to solve the situation in Somalia was through outside force
but as one United Nations official involved in the mission put it “the world is not ready for it.”

The second wave of famine in Somalia peaked in April-June 1992 and was brought on by former president Barre’s scorched earth tactics in his retreat to southern Somalia. A third mortality wave, primarily resulting from the spread of infectious disease within the malnourished populace, followed shortly thereafter. Although the African Bureau of the State Department and OFDA described events in Somalia as catastrophic by the spring of 1992, top officials within the administration appeared reluctant to take further action. On April 25, United Nations Security Council authorized UNOSOM I (Security Council Resolution 751) with the purpose “to create and maintain cease-fire agreements between factions and to provide humanitarian assistance.” The plan included sending 50 unarmed military observers to monitor the fragile ceasefire agreement. Two days earlier, the New York Times reported that Assistant Secretary of State, John Bolton prevented the United Nations Security Council from sending its planned force of 500 armed troops to Somalia to protect relief workers due to the Bush administration’s concerns of congressional opposition to financing new peacekeeping bills in an election year.

The idea that financing was a major obstacle to U.N. peacekeeping in Somalia is supported by statements of the United Nations Secretary General, Boutros Boutros Gali who, before he took office, called it a “disgrace” that the United Nations had not intervened in Somalia due to the lack of financing. In an interview shortly after the UNOSOM I authorization he stated, “It is not realistic for us to accept any new peacekeeping operations this year. We haven’t got the money.” However, the U.S.
representative to the United Nations, Thomas Pickering, resented implications that the United States was not living up to its financial obligations and was in fact blocking U.N. peacekeeping efforts in Somalia. In an editorial to the *New York Times*, Pickering argued that the Bush administration was supportive of the plan to send a 500-man security force to Somalia to help aid efforts and that it was the “lack of agreement between the principal Somali parties and the United Nations” – not financing – that was preventing its deployment.\(^{13}\)

In any case, it was clear that in the spring of 1992, Somalia was not a top priority within the administration. The lack of attention from senior policy makers was reportedly due to a variety of factors, including their preoccupation with other humanitarian problems, such as those in Yugoslavia and Iraq, the low priority the Somali crisis had been receiving by the news media and the perception that a durable ceasefire between the various factions was necessary before becoming more deeply involved in the conflict.\(^{14}\) Others have suggested that election pressures may have dampened the administration’s interest in Somalia since the President had been facing domestic criticism over his attentiveness to foreign policy while appearing uninterested and unconcerned about domestic policy and the economic recession. According to one Bush aid, the President’s campaign advisors were “fearful of accusations that all the President was about was foreign policy” and advised him to take a lower profile on all foreign issues until after the election.\(^{15}\)

By August 1992, the perception of the problem had changed enough to warrant greater U.S. involvement. In late July, the director of the United States Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, James R. Kunder, accompanied Republican Senator Nancy
Kassebaum to Somalia. Kunder became the most senior administration official to visit Somalia up until that time. That same week the State Department formed a special task force on Somalia, under the leadership of Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence S. Eagleburger, to decide what measures should be taken given Kunder’s assessment of the situation. Eagleburger informed his staff that the president wanted the department to be “forward leaning” on Somalia. On July 22, the Secretary General issued a pessimistic report to Security Council members estimating that one million Somali children were at immediate risk for malnutrition, four and one half million people were “in urgent need of food assistance,” and projected that there would be 500,000 refugees by the beginning of 1993. The report concluded that “[u]nder these circumstances, it is inevitable that people in Somalia have begun to lose any hope for the future.” On August 14, the White House announced its plans to deploy a military airlift and other measures to assist in the international relief efforts in Somalia.

THE INITIAL INTERVENTION STORY: “OPERATION PROVIDE RELIEF”

U.S. Goals, Nature of Situation and Key Actor Relationships

Prevent Deaths From Acute Famine

The initial American intervention story in Somalia revolved around the humanitarian goals of alleviating “growing suffering” and preventing “mass death by starvation.” This goal was a product of Bush’s perception of the crisis that, according to several accounts, was heavily influenced by a combination of reports brought to his attention in July 1992. The first was a cable from Smith Hempstone,
Bush’s Ambassador to Kenya, describing the extent of the disaster in Kenya and south-central Africa, including Somalia. After reading it, Bush reportedly wrote in the margin “this is a terribly moving situation. Let’s do everything we can to help.”

The second was the assessment report of OFDA Director, James Kunder. Finally, in mid to late July, the White House requested a briefing paper from the State Department (which coincided with a lengthy front page article on the Somali crisis in the *New York Times*). After reading the briefing paper, an administration official stated that Bush wrote in the margin that “he was very upset by these reports and he wanted something done, both in Somalia and northern Kenya.”

As seen in Figure 2.1, an analysis of relationships reveals a prominent theme in the administration’s discourse: the scope and relative severity of the Somali crisis. As stated earlier, the State Department’s African Bureau and the OFDA had been testifying to the severity of the crisis since the spring of 1992. On March 19, in testimony before Congress, Herman Cohen, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, called the Somalia famine “the most acute humanitarian tragedy in the world today” while Andrew Natsios, Assistant Administrator for Food and Humanitarian Assistance for USAID, stated that crisis proportionally rivaled “the Ethiopia famine of 1984.” Peter Davies, President and CEO of the Interaction, a coalition of 135 American relief, development and refugee assistance agencies, also later testified before Congress, “The tragedy is on a scale of Ethiopia in 1984-5: 1.5 million Somalis are in grave danger of dying.”

On August 3, James Kunder also described Somalia as “the world’s worst humanitarian crisis.” Other reports underscored the severity of the famine. In his influential cable to State, Smith
Figure 2.1: The story leading to the U.S. military airlift “Operation Provide Relief” (July-August 1992).
Hempstone, described conditions in northeast Kenya and Southern Somalia and argued that “if the world averts its eyes and the rains do not come, the human suffering in the northeast will be on a scale unknown in Kenya’s history.”26 Thus, at least according to lower level officials within the administration, there existed a moral imperative for U.S. and international action in Somalia.

**Somalia in State of Anarchy and Lawlessness with Children as Most Risk**

According to the discourse, Somalia was a failed state in anarchy with a population terrorized by unorganized teenaged gunmen unconcerned with assisting efforts at international relief. Herman Cohen, Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, noted, “Mogadishu’s population is at the mercy of hungry men, some not yet teenagers, who take orders from no one and live by the gun.”27 Andrew Natsios, who was appointed Special Coordinator for Somalia Relief by Bush in August 1992, stated that the “bane of relief work in Africa are young, teenage boys with guns.”28 In his announcement of the administrations’ August airlift, White House spokesperson, Marlin Fitzwater, stated that delivery of relief supplies would be the primary challenge of the international community “because armed bands are stealing and hoarding food as well as attacking relief workers.”29 In a later statement, Natsios argued that “[t]he problem is we’re not facing a civil war with two sides, or even three sides, or even four sides. We’re facing anarchy. There is no government at all. There is no rebel movement at all. There are simply factions that are armed…Everybody is committing human rights abuses in Somalia.”30

Of the afflicted population, most accounts of the crisis paid particular emphasis to the plight of Somali children. For example, in March 1992, Cohen noted, “estimates are
90 percent of casualties are noncombatants, and of these 75 percent are children.” In early August, James Kunder stated, “up to one fourth of all children in Somalia under the age of five have perished.” Smith Hempstone’s cable noted in July that in one of the Somali squatter camps he visited within Kenya, the camp’s doctor told him “that out of every 10,000 children under 5, 10 die every night.” Hempstone went on to write “the soul of a 2-year-old baby that weighs 10 pounds – and there are many such – must be very small.”

**International Aid Efforts Inadequate**

Another key relationship in the Bush administration’s initial story regarding Somalia was the idea that efforts by the United Nations and international NGOs were insufficient to deliver relief to all those in need. The idea that current U.S. and U.N efforts were perceived by administration elites as inadequate is supported by Andrew Natsios. Shortly after the announced airlift, Natsios testified before Congress that President Bush had contacted him to find out why current USAID efforts were not “more successful,” that he was “upset” by what was happening and that he wanted “something done now.” Why these efforts were not working appeared clear to those on the ground: the lack of security. On August 3, Kunder stated, “I think that I would paint the picture, the security picture in general, as one of chaos.” The food is there in Somalia, “the issue is getting the food distributed…The main problem is security.” Kunder argued that “a massive airlift doesn’t solve that fundamental problem;” however, he strongly supported the United Nations’ deployment of troops to ensure security “with or without” permission of the warring factions.
Actions Advocated and Taken

*Emergency Airlift: “Operation Provide Support”*

Kunder’s assessment of the situation appeared to be accepted by the administration although his advice on the airlift was not. In the White House statement announcing the emergency military airlift on August 15, Marlin Fitzwater stated that “the primary challenge that the international community faces is the delivery of relief supplies” and that the cooperation of the Somali factions was “the most important step to accelerate delivery of relief supplies and to minimize security problems.” However, Kunder’s doubts about the success of the military airlift seemed to have been countered by the administration’s desire to do more than merely support the United Nations’ deployment of 500 Pakistani peacekeepers to the region authorized by the Security Council in July. This desire was, however, constrained by another important relationship in the story: the perception that the absence of a clear government in Somalia made troop intervention problematic, both politically and militarily.

*Perceived Problems with Greater Use of Force*

Humanitarian intervention, like peacekeeping, traditionally requires the consent of the government. In failed states like Somalia with no clear government or legitimate leadership, the United Nations could choose to either send peacekeepers in without the consent of local parties or it could negotiate with the faction leaders to ensure the security of U.N. forces. Both options put peacekeepers at risk. While the former makes them potential targets in the conflict the latter threatens the neutrality of forces as it requires
deeper political involvement. Therefore, while the March ceasefire brokered by the U.N. with the warring clans had approved the deployment of up to 500 U.N. peacekeepers to Mogadishu, one clan leader, General Mohammad Farah Aidid leaders of the Somali National Alliance, had recanted his approval, delaying the U.N. deployment. Without such negotiated permission, the United States and the United Nations appeared reluctant to risk greater political or military involvement.

The reluctance to risk greater involvement is reflected in statements both by the State Department and the Pentagon. When asked why the United States and the United Nations did not send more troops to solve the problem of security in Somalia, Herman Cohen answered:

What you really have to do is send a massive force in effect to take over the country since there is no government there. This is a very important question because it is so precedent-setting. The United Nations has never really done that. It really means being prepared to send in fighting forces to go in against the will of the local military commanders, it means escalating the warfare that is already going on, it means putting at risk foreign troops who risk getting killed and wounded, and casualties…I think it would be a major political decision for the United States government to support this. And frankly, I don’t see that there really is a sentiment in favor of that, either in the Congress or in the general public.37

Military leaders, in their evoking of historical analogies, echoed Cohen’s assessment of the political and military obstacles to sending in military force for humanitarian purposes. Just two days prior to the announcement of the U.S. airlift, senior military leaders testified before the Armed Services Committee against humanitarian intervention in the former Yugoslavia. According to Stephen J. Hadley, Assistant Secretary of Defense for National Security Policy, using military force to stop violence without the consent of combatants “would require a very large force.” In addition “our own forces would
become the objects of attack” in “a guerilla war that could have no end. We would have, in essence, an occupation force continually at risk. The precedent is Lebanon, not Kuwait, and on a much large scale.”

Thus the U.S. airlift decision, announced on August 14 – two days after General Aidid’s announced acceptance of the U.N. troop deployment of 500 Pakistani peacekeepers to the Mogadishu Harbor – was viewed as a way of getting the U.S. more involved in Somalia at minimal risk. The U.S. would help move aid to remote areas unable to receive relief by other means while avoiding the security problems associated with operations on the ground. As one embassy spokesman stated, it was “simply an airlift operation” that did not call for political haggling with Somali warlords.

Consequences

Stem Deaths and Deflect Criticism of Inaction in both Balkans and Somali Crisis

It appears that aside from the goal of stemming deaths in Somalia, the Bush administration hoped that the humanitarian airlift might help deflect a growing chorus of domestic and international criticism directed at the administration for its relative inaction in the region. According to the discourse, media exposure of the Somalia conflict picked up considerably in July and August. Andrew Natsios, who had been involved in the crisis since 1991, noted at the beginning of September 1992 “this tragedy has not got the coverage until the last month that the tragedy in Ethiopia did in 1984.” Meanwhile, according to a State Department official, the Bureau of African Affairs had tried for months to get the attention of the Secretary of State, the top echelon of senior advisors, and the White House to no avail. Reportedly, the problem was “there are certain things
that are news, others that are not news. For many months, Somalia was not news.\textsuperscript{42} Once Somalia became news, the administration was likely more sensitive to its public image—an image that was increasingly coming under attack both domestically and internationally for what appeared to many as a foreign policy that was at best a double-standard or at worst racist.\textsuperscript{43}

In late July, congressional and international pressure to act in Somalia increased. On July 22, Senator Kassebaum told the House Committee on Hunger that a stronger U.S. and international response to the Somali crisis was needed, and that as many people were dying in one day in Somalia as were dying in one month in the “higher profile” Balkan conflict.\textsuperscript{44} On August 3, the Senate passed a resolution calling for the dispatch of U.N. peacekeepers to Somalia “with or without the consent of Somali factions.”\textsuperscript{45} Around the same time, the United Nations Secretary General, Boutros Gali, was involved in a much-publicized dispute with the Security Council. The Secretary General had for some time accused the Council of being “Europe-centric” and overly preoccupied with “fighting a rich man’s war in Yugoslavia while not lifting a finger to save Somalia from disintegration.”\textsuperscript{46}

Ironically, the final trigger for American action in Somalia likely came from Europe. By August the administration was faced with growing domestic and international pressure to act on the humanitarian crises in Bosnia.\textsuperscript{47} On August 8, revelations of concentration-like camps in Bosnia fueled a chorus of domestic and international criticism regarding U.S. inaction in the region. Such criticism appeared to be a critical factor in the Somali airlift decision. As later stated by the President’s National Security Adviser, Brent Scowcroft, “It [the Bosnian camp issue] probably did
have a significant influence on us. We did not want to portray the administration as wholly flint-hearted realpolitik, and an airlift in Somalia was a lot cheaper [than intervention in Bosnia] to demonstrate that we had a heart.”\textsuperscript{48} The demonstration of empathy and concern for humanitarian crises was likely more salient given the upcoming presidential elections and is reflected in the timing of the administration’s decision – announced on the eve of the Republican National Convention. As another American official in Nairobi put it, “It was a good week to do something. The White House figured they couldn’t gain votes by acting in Somalia but their image could be tarnished if they didn’t do anything.”\textsuperscript{49}

**UNITAF and U.S. TROOP INTERVENTION**

Shortly after its announcement the U.S. airlift had trouble taking off, revealing the apparent hastiness of the administration’s decision. First the Kenyan government, whose cooperation was required for the airlift, argued that the Bush administration had not consulted with them about using Kenya as a staging ground for operations. Second, as American food donations were unavailable until the first of October, the United States had planned in the meantime on assisting the ICRC deliver its relief supplies to remote areas in Somalia. The airlift was delayed when it ran against ICRC rules prohibiting supplies from being flown by military personnel or planes not carrying the Red Cross emblem.\textsuperscript{50}

Even after these problems were addressed, United Nations operations in Somalia (UNOSOM ) ran into obstacles. The five hundred Pakistani peacekeepers, authorized by the United Nations back in July, finally arrived in Mogadishu in September but were
never fully deployed due to equipment and logistical problems back in Pakistan and run-ins with General Aidid over consent and their location of deployment. The mission of the Pakistani battalion was to secure the port of Mogadishu, safeguard relief supplies to and from the airport and escort food supplies to relief centers. However, the battalion never made it past the airport due to heavy resistance from Aidid’s forces and strict rules of engagement that allowed them only to shoot in rigidly defined cases of self-defense and to move only when granted permission. When, in late August, the United Nations voted to send an additional 3000 peacekeepers, General Aidid threatened to “send them home in body bags.”

From September through October, fatalities increased as the starving masses in Somalia were hit with disease. Throughout the fall, the security situation also deteriorated as the influx of food increased the violence and competition among clans. President Bush sent a contingent of 2,400 Marines in September to provide search and rescue support for the U.N. troops in the region and to assist logistically with U.S. airlifts, but shooting incidents suspended the relief flights to remote areas inland by late October. Also around that time, relief efforts were effectively shut down in southern Somalia when the Kismayu airport and seaport closed due to security problems. On November 7, four days after Bush lost the presidency to Bill Clinton, the Port of Mogadishu closed due to a breakdown in security. By that time, it was estimated that only 20 percent of aid shipments were reaching starving citizens while the rest were being stolen. U.N. officials estimated that two million Somalis were in danger of starvation. Around November 17, eleven relief agencies operating in Somalia sent the Bush administration a letter
Figure 2.2: The story leading to the UNITAF intervention “Operation Provide Hope” (November – December 1992).
calling for an expansion of U.N efforts and claiming, “humanitarian agencies cannot work in Somalia without greater security.”  On November 24, a United Nations vessel carrying 10,000 tons of supplies was forced back to sea as it was fired upon while trying to dock at Mogadishu.  One day later, on November 25, President Bush surprised most observers at the time by offering to send U.S. military forces to help deliver food and medical supplies to Somalia.

THE SECOND INTERVENTION: “OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT”

Nature of Situation and Key Actor Relationships

Worsening Crisis and Failed International Efforts

By November, it is clear that some elements of the Somali story had changed. As seen in Figure 2.2, the first significant change in the representation of the problem was the determination that conditions in Somalia were worse than expected and had deteriorated due to an inability to provide adequate security for relief efforts. Perceptions of a much deeper crisis emerged soon after the United States’ airlift operation began. As stated by U.N. special representative in Somalia, Mohammed Sahnoun in early September, “We have so far seen only the tip of the iceberg. People were staying in their huts and dying. Now they have heard there is food around, they are coming out.” According to the Red Cross director for Relief in Somalia, “the dimensions of the problem are so large we have revised the figure.” In response to the increase in demand, the United States increased its airlift operations. However, these actions did not stem the deaths. On the day the U.S made its troop offer, the United Nations Security Council decided that the security situation in Somalia, in the words of Council President, Andre
Erdos of Hungary, “went too far to be tolerated and too far to use the same practices and methods that we have been using so far.” Accordingly, “[s]ince the situation continues to escalate we decided that we had reached a point beyond which we could not go, unless one just leaves the scene and leaves everything behind.” Another U.N. official put it more bluntly, “Somalia is the greatest failure of the United Nations in our time.”

The changed situation was acknowledged by President Bush in his speech to the nation on December 5, 1992. Bush stated that since the United States began its relief flights in Somalia,

[T]he security situation has grown worse. The U.N. has been prevented from deploying its initial commitment of troops. In many cases, food from relief flights is being looted upon landing. Food convoys have been hijacked, aid workers assaulted, ships with food have been subject to artillery attacks that prevented them from docking…Confronted with these conditions, relief groups called for outside troops to provide security so they could feed people.

**Necessity of Greater U.S. Action**

Directly related to the perceived failure of international efforts was the idea that the United Nations was incapable of solving the Somali problem multilaterally without the political and military leadership of the United States. In his speech, President Bush argued, “I understand the United States alone cannot right the world’s wrongs, but we also know that some crises in the world cannot be resolved without American involvement, that American action is often necessary as a catalyst for broader involvement of the community of nations.” Thus, the administration implied that it had a moral obligation to act, not only to spur greater international action, but also because of the unique capabilities of the American military. In questioning before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Lieutenant General Martin Brandtner of the U.S. Marine Corp was
asked if the United Nations turned to the United States because it was the only country with the equipment and training to secure the situation in Somalia. General Brandtner replied, “Yes…There is no other country in the world that could have done that.” As General Joseph P. Hoar, Commander of Central Command, noted of the United States Military “there are certain functions that we perform that perhaps nobody else can.”

These sentiments are reflected in President Bush’s statement about the necessity of U.S. action, “We’re able to ease their suffering. We must help them live. We must give them hope. America must act…Only the United States has the global reach to place a large security force on the ground in such a distant place quickly and efficiently and thus save thousands of innocents from death.” Herman Cohen, who previously had been dubious of the likelihood of the U.S. ever using force in Somalia, later echoed the sentiments. As one administration official argued, not only did the United States feel obligated to act, but there was a widespread notion among the administration that there were “no alternatives” to forceful action because of the failed relief effort. Public statements of Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney, also reflected this notion of force being the only option in Somalia.

**U.S. Goals**

*Save Children from Mass Starvation and Create Secure Environment*

Within the second story, the initial goal of preventing mass starvation remained with one minor and one major addition. First, saving the “people of Somalia” from mass starvation became more directly saving “the children of Somalia.” As stated by Bush, “The people of Somalia, especially the children of Somalia, need our help.” Secondly,
creating a secure environment, in effect, became the pre-eminent goal as it was perceived necessary in order to see the first achieved. Once a secure environment was established and the threat of mass starvation eliminated, the United States would be relieved by a smaller traditional peacekeeping force from the United Nations. According to President Bush, “we will create a secure environment…we will withdraw our troops, handing the security mission back to a regular U.N. peacekeeping force. Our mission has a limited objective, to open the supply routes, to get the food moving, and to prepare the way for a U.N. peacekeeping force to keep it moving.”

Thus, according to President Bush, the mission was clear: establish security by deploying decisive military force. Given that objective, under Chapter VII of the United Nations’ charter, the United States deployed 26,000 troops, accompanied by an additional 10,000 troops from more than 20 other nations, authorized to use “all necessary means to establish a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations in Somalia as soon as possible.” It would not be a U.N.-led operation but one endorsed by the U.N. like the two previous American-led collective security operations in Korea 1950 and in the Gulf War in 1991.

Past Lessons and Actions Advocated and Taken

Dangers of Incrementalism and Importance of Decisive Force

The idea of using “decisive force” to ultimately achieve humanitarian objectives emerged, to the surprise of many, from the Pentagon. The Department of Defense had made clear its unwillingness to use force for humanitarian purposes, particularly in situations lacking the consent of combatants, as in the former Yugoslavia. Consequently, the option of sending troops was not seriously considered. For the
military, the lessons of the past loomed large. Vietnam, in particular, was an important referent for decisions regarding the proper use of force and influenced the decision to employ overwhelming force to help solve the Somali conflict.

In an October *New York Times* editorial, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Colin Powell responded to what he perceived as a “spate of commentary” criticizing the military’s apparent reluctance to use force. Referring to failed military ventures under previous administrations, Powell emphasized the military’s successful record over the past three years, stating: “There have been no Bay of Pigs, no failed desert raids, Beirut Bombings, and no Vietnams.” Powell then revealed that “[t]he reason for our success is that in every instance we have carefully matched the use of military force to our political objectives” and that “President Bush, more than any other President, understands the proper use of military force.” For Powell, a former Ranger in Vietnam, a key lesson learned from that conflict that was later validated in the military successes of Panama and the Gulf War, was that if a political objective was worth doing and doable militarily, do it “decisively.” The idea of using overwhelming force to achieve political objectives was dubbed the “Weinberger-Powell Doctrine.” As stated by Powell in his memoirs,

The lessons I absorbed from Panama confirmed all my convictions over the preceding twenty years, since the days of doubt over Vietnam. Have a clear political objective and stick to it. Use all the force necessary, and do not apologize for going in big if that is what it takes. Decisive force ends wars quickly and in the long run saves lives. Whatever threats we faced in the future, I intended to make these rules the bedrock of my military counsel.

True to his word, these lessons appeared to have influenced his thinking regarding the current conflicts raging in Bosnia and Somalia. In an editorial response to military critics, Powell wrote:
Decisive means and results are always preferred, even if they are not always possible. So you bet I get nervous when so-called experts suggest that all we need is a little surgical bombing or a limited attack. When the desired result isn’t obtained, a new set of experts then comes forward with talk of a little escalation. History hasn’t been kind to this approach…We [the military] have learned the proper lessons of history, even if some journalists have not.  

Given this known reluctance about using force in humanitarian operations, policy makers were reportedly surprised when the Pentagon offered the use of ground troops to help solve the Somali problem. On November 21, during a meeting of the Deputies Committee, an interagency group representing National Security Council officials just below the Cabinet level, Admiral David Jeremiah announced, “if you think forces are needed” on the ground in Somalia “we can do the job.” At the time, the Council had been debating three options: (1) increased support for current U.N. peacekeeping efforts; (2) a U.S.-organized coalition effort under U.N. command with logistical support from the U.S. but without the participation of U.S. ground troops; (3) or sending a division or more of U.S. troops under U.S. command and control.  

The statement by Jeremiah, who was vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs with Powell, reportedly swayed thinking towards the troop option and represented what many described as a “sea change” in Pentagon thinking over the past week, although there is some evidence that the Pentagon had been planning for such an operation some time before.  

Reportedly, the Pentagon’s endorsement of action was predicated on General Powell’s conditions that any military action in Somalia be well-defined in nature and limited in duration and that it would not obligate similar missions elsewhere, particularly in Bosnia.  

The change in Pentagon attitudes was influenced, according to administration officials, by the mounting evidence of the scope of the tragedy, the belief that the mission
was doable and the perception that military force could “make a big difference,”
particularly when compared to the “intractable” conflict in Bosnia. As voiced by
Secretary of State, Eagleburger, “This is a tragedy of massive proportions and, underline
this, one that we could do something about. We had to act.” The perceived
effectiveness and “doability” of the mission pertains to the final relational aspect of the
story.

Somali Opposition is Unorganized & Military Inferior to U.S. – Somalia is Not Vietnam

By most accounts, an influential factor in the decision to use force in Somalia was
the perception that the operation would be relatively simple in military terms, especially
when compared to the administration’s representation of intervention into the intractable,
“Vietnam-like” Balkan conflict. There is significant evidence that American decision
makers viewed the opposition in Somalia as untrained, undisciplined, and military
inferior to U.S. forces – a perception that was likely reinforced by clan leaders. When
combined with a relatively treeless landscape that offered little cover or protection the
operation was viewed as “militarily doable.” According to Secretary of Defense Cheney
“[w]e are not going expecting that we will be engaged in heavy combat against well-
armed, hostile forces.” Cheney also stated that Somalia was “dramatically different from
Vietnam” since there was “no guerilla war underway against an established government”
and the conflict had little to do with ethnicity as the country was 99 percent Sunni
Muslim. Thus any comparison to Vietnam was a “total misreading of history.” Cheney
went on to argue that “there’s no question it’s a potentially dangerous environment
because there are a lot of people with weapons. But they are not that well organized.
You do not have a coordinated military force."\(^{83}\)

According to another administration official, the gunmen in Somalia were “a lot better at stealing blankets at feeding centers than opposing an organized force of well-armed troops.”\(^{84}\) Secretary of Defense Cheney later equated the operation to the 1991 humanitarian intervention in Northern Iraq after the Gulf War. In Iraq, according to Cheney, the United States, and the United Nations, “didn’t know whether or not it would be a hostile environment. It turned out that the Iraqis backed off and we were able to achieve our mission.”\(^{85}\) Like Cheney, Powell also saw the mission as not too taxing on the military. In an implicit comparison to Vietnam, Powell argued:

I don’t see it as a guerilla war. What I see it more like is just general lawlessness…there are some armed groups belonging to different faction leaders, but there is also a large number of, frankly, youngsters who are armed with weapons, so there is a degree of lawlessness, and I think that degree of lawlessness can be dealt with by sizable forces – U.S. and other nations’ forces – being there and looking like they can handle anything that comes their way.\(^{86}\)

Thus, there was an evident assumption from the onset that once presented with an obvious superior military force, the “outlaw” elements in Somalia would back-down, allowing for the resumption of aid and the imminent takeover of the operation by the United Nations.

This conviction led officials to ignore warnings by Smith Hempstone, the ambassador whose July cable reportedly swayed Bush into action. In another cable to Under Secretary of State Frank Wisner, Hempstone warned that the U.S. should think “three times before you embrace the Somali tarbaby” as the Somalis were “natural-born guerillas.” Referring to the death of 241 U.S. marines in Lebanon in 1983, Hempstone
stated, “If you liked Beirut you will love Mogadishu.” He also warned that the only benefit of intervention into Somalia would likely be “to reunite the Somali nation: against us, the invaders, the outsiders, the kaffirs (unbelievers) who may have fed their children but also have killed their young men.”

Hempstone’s warnings were summarily dismissed. As stated by Secretary of State Eagleburger, the administration “considered” them and “decided that he had probably exaggerated things substantially and we were going to go ahead.”

The administration seemed convinced that, according to Powell, the problem was “sort of like the National Guard going into a riot area and cleaning it up…The national guard doesn’t stay there forever, it turns its back over to the police, the ordinary people – the peacekeepers in this case. And that’s – that’s how we conceive of the problem.”

Thus, according to most officials, the general consensus was that the operation would take two to three months – despite President Bush’s reported desire to have the troops out by January 20, 1993 – the day of the Clinton inauguration.

However, despite the public perception that U.S. troops would be out of Somalia in short order, the perceived necessity of continued U.S. military involvement in Somalia was evident from the administration’s public statements. Shortly after the announcement of U.S. troop intervention, both Cheney and Powell spoke of the necessity of a continued U.S. military presence in the region. As stated by Powell,

At the very end of the operation, it may be necessary for some residual U.S. forces to remain for the simple reason that is as austere an environment for peacekeeping forces that will be staying there as it is for us, and we have certain unique capabilities in the armed forces of the United States that don’t exist in many other armed forces. So it may be necessary, in order to support our friends, to leave a few units, some
residual personnel. But I don’t think that will be very much, and I think it will be seen as simply additional contribution to the U.N. effort.91

Later, both Powell and Cheney specified that the additional U.S. presence would likely come in the form of an offshore Marine Amphibious Ready Group (MARG) so U.N. peacekeepers would know “that there’s a posse out there if they need one for the immediate future.”92 The idea that U.S. ground troops would not be needed as part of a continued U.N. peacekeeping effort appears based on the assumption that the follow-on United Nations force would be significantly large enough to maintain security, as assumption that would later prove problematic.93

Avoid Taking Sides and Imposing a Political Solution

From the discourse it is clear that the Bush administration did not want to get involved in the chaotic machinations of Somali politics as it desired to avoid the appearance of taking sides. Responding to comments made publicly by senior administration officials that the U.S.-led operation might need to be followed up a U.N protectorate, the White House spokesperson, Marlin Fitzwater, clarified the mission of the United States Unified Task (UNITAF) in Somalia: “We want to make it clear that this U.N. force would be designed to get humanitarian supplies in, not to establish a new government or resolve the decades-long conflict there or to set up a protectorate or anything like that.”94 Statements from Cheney and Powell reinforced this idea.95 However, the objective to keep the mission focused was at odds with the desire to ensure the security of U.S. forces and the vaguely articulated goal of “facilitating the process of
a political settlement under the auspices of the United Nations” as stated in the U.N. resolution.\(^{96}\)

With the resignation of U.N. special envoy, Mohammed Sahnoun, in late October 1992, political negotiations with clan leaders virtually ceased. General Aidid subsequently expelled U.N. coordinator, David Bassiouni, and refused to guarantee the safety of the 500 Pakistani troops in Somalia.\(^{97}\) Thus, the security of forces operating in Somalia remained a concern for U.S. decision makers. In particular, although the administration appeared reluctant to compare Somalia to Beirut, the Beirut experience did appear to factor into its approach to the problem. As previously noted, the military’s initial reluctance about armed humanitarian intervention centered on the danger of taking sides in a conflict and not having the means to control its outcome.\(^{98}\) The administration’s approval of a substantial U.S. military force alleviated concerns about the latter. Meanwhile, the decision to avoid systematically disarming the populace – despite the Secretary General’s demands that this was necessary for security – and the decision not to impose political solutions on the warring factions were aimed at addressing the former.\(^{99}\) The administration perceived that the implementation of these decisions was best handled politically.\(^{100}\)

With a strong recommendation by JCS Chairman Powell and Undersecretary of State Frank Wisner, President Bush assigned the task of negotiating the security of U.S. forces or the “political preparation of the battlefield” to veteran diplomat and former Somali ambassador, Robert B. Oakley.\(^{101}\) Oakley was a career Foreign Services Officer whose views had been shaped by his early posting in Saigon at the beginning of America’s escalation in Vietnam. However, despite the State Department’s assertion that
political reconciliation in Somalia was “an important U.S. objective” but not an objective of Operation Restore Hope, it seemed Oakley’s task was to nurture exactly that.

Reflecting upon his Vietnam experience, Oakley argued that in Somalia he wanted to “avoid the mistakes we made out there [in Vietnam], where we created structures and they were artificial…and when we left, they collapsed.” For Oakley, the United States was to act like a catalyst in Somalia. If the United States could bring the various factions together, the Somalis would be able to seize the initiative, rebuild their country and form new structures of government. In stating the objectives of the U.S. operation, Oakley noted:

The priority is to reach out and provide protection for humanitarian operations, but there’s a very important side benefit or additional benefit which we hope, working with the Secretary General’s representative, will produce an improvement of the overall security climate and create a political climate whereby some sort of consensus may eventually be achieved.

Oakley clearly understood the administration’s desire to limit the U.S. mission, but his public statements reveal the confusion regarding the operation’s overall political objectives and their relation to the U.S military and follow-up U.N. operations in Somalia. According to Oakley’s own account, the administration provided the diplomat with no formal guidelines regarding his relationship with the military side of Operation Provide Hope, which fell under the leadership of Lieutenant General Robert Johnston. The United States’ subsequent political role vis-à-vis the United Nations and its special envoy, Ismat Kittani, appeared equally vague. At one moment the administration stressed that the mission was a simple in-and-out operation and that U.S. was not and would not get involved in Somali politics; while at the next it stated that “all our good
works could go for naught if we do not follow through on the long and difficult process of reconstituting Somali civil society and government.”

The confusion regarding Oakley’s and the operation’s political role and objectives is evident from the envoy’s public statements. In reference to a meeting with clan leaders Aidid and Mahdi, Oakley stated:

This is not a political meeting. It’s a get acquainted meeting and to discuss some of these security related issues. I promise you the United States government is not going to get into the drawing the possible political architecture for the future of Somalia. And the United Nations has this mission. We’ll do what we can to help the Secretary General’s special representative, but this is not a political meeting.

Despite his public denials of political involvement, in their account of the UNITAF operation Oakley and Hirsch claim the first meeting with the clan leaders “was the starting point of the U.S. strategy for creating a benign security environment.” And, that over a period of time, Oakley encouraged leaders to take steps “first to allow for humanitarian activities and stop fighting and then to end the civil war and begin the process of reconciliation.”

The confusion and ambiguity regarding the operation’s political objectives was also reflected in statements by General Powell. In a special Department of Defense briefing, Powell tried to clarify what he saw as the United States, and later, the United Nation’s mission in Somalia.

It is not an operation either on our part or the subsequent U.N. part that will guarantee a weapons-free and violence free environment. But I think it’ll be an environment that is manageable. Manageable for what purpose? For the purpose not of the U.N. having responsibility for putting Somalia back together, but to ensure the continued delivery of humanitarian supplies to save lives and to do something about the starving people that we’re seeing on our television screens…We will not try to exercise any political authority. We will not be giving orders to the various faction
leaders, except as may perhaps become necessary as a result of establishing the security environment...We hope that in working with the major faction leaders, they will see that is in their interest to start to rebuild their country and not just continue to fight against one another. And we hope that the U.N. effort that will follow ours will also continue to build on that process.110

In short, it appeared that the administration believed that if it could work with the various faction leaders to create a secure environment then political reconciliation would naturally and spontaneously follow. While Powell claimed that it was not the U.N.’s job to nation-build or put Somalia “back together,” he also acknowledged the necessity of rebuilding the country and implied that the follow-up U.N. mission would have a role in that process. The desire to avoid any political involvement in the country led the administration to focus narrowly on the mission’s short-term security objectives while ignoring their long-term political ramifications. This lack of clarity regarding the political guidelines and objectives of U.S. operations in Somalia would later plague the follow-up operation under the leadership of the United Nations. It appears that perceived lessons of history regarding the proper use and force and the creation of political institutions influenced the administration’s assessment of options regarding the restoration of Somali security, leading the administration to focus heavily on the military aspects of the mission at the expense of the political.

**Consequences and Future Lessons**

*Appease Muslim Allies*

The final aspects of the second story relate to the perception of international pressures and opportunities. First, with regards to both domestic and international
political pressures, there is evidence to suggest that deflecting criticism and appeasing Muslim allies factored into the administration’s intervention decision. In May, Secretary General Boutros Boutros Gali reportedly told President Bush that the international Islamic community was aroused by the U.N.’s failure to protect Muslims in either Bosnia or Somalia. Muslim concern apparently increased following the revelations of Serb-held detention camps in early August. Later, around the time of the U.S. troop offer, news reports suggest that pressure from key Muslim allies, such as Saudi Arabia, as well as the greater Muslim community in general was increasing. Following the decision to send troops to Somalia, senior administration officials at the White House and the State Department reportedly stated that their views on intervention had been influenced by the fact that Somalia was a Muslim country. The Bush administration’s desire to deflect Muslim criticism by intervening in Bosnia is supported by Johnathan Howe, a retired U.S. Navy admiral who was involved the administrations deliberations in November 1992. Howe, who was later appointed the U.N. special envoy to Somalia, stated that the fact that the Somalia “was an African country and a Muslim country” weighed significantly into the Bush administration’s decision to intervene as, “It was a good signal to the Muslim world.”

**Strengthen U.N. Peacekeeping**

Finally, related to the perceived international pressure is the Bush administration’s perception of peacekeeping in the post-cold war world. One of the probable outcomes that the administration hoped would emerge from the U.S. intervention was the enhanced credibility of the United Nations as a peacekeeping and
peacemaking organization. Given the end of the cold war and the subsequent successes of the Gulf War and humanitarian operations in northern Iraq, President Bush viewed United Nations peacekeeping as an important part of his vision of global conflict resolution. He also saw the United States as playing a central part in that vision. Thus, intervention in Somalia was one way of advancing this objective and leaving the Presidency on a high note. Reportedly, friends and advisers of the President stated that after the election, Somalia provided Bush with a chance to exit with an “example of America’s global responsibility in a fragmented world.”

In an address before the U.N. General Assembly in September 1992, President Bush made clear his support for U.N. peacekeeping. Bush stated that “I welcome the Secretary General’s call for a new agenda to strengthen the United Nations’ ability to prevent, contain and resolve conflicts across the globe. And today, I call upon all members to join me in taking bold steps to advance that agenda.” Bush went on to state that he had ordered the Secretary of Defense “to place a new emphasis on peacekeeping” and to establish “a permanent peacekeeping curriculum in United States military schools.” Later, in November, when the United Nations Security Council unanimously supported the U.S.-led mission to Somalia, U.S. representative to the United Nations, Edward J. Perkins, called the vote “an important step in developing a strategy for dealing with disorder and conflicts of the post-cold war world. The post-cold war world is likely to hold other Somalia’s in store for us.” Consequently the administration viewed the U.S.-led intervention in Somalia as a way “to make the U.N. a more credible actor. It wasn’t a credible military actor before, now it will be. By not being a credible military actor, it wasn’t a credible political actor.”
The U.S. Has Both Opportunity and Obligation to Lead

In some of his final speeches before leaving office, President Bush stated what could be seen as the new lesson of Somalia: that the United States had an opportunity and moral responsibility to actively create a world compatible to our interests. For President Bush, the choice was simple, the United States, “can either shape our times or we can let the times shape us. And shape us they will, at a price frightening to contemplate – morally, economically and strategically.” Therefore, “it is the role of the United States to marshal its moral and material resources to promote a democratic peace. It is our responsibility, it our opportunity to lead. There is no one else.” Bush argued that was what his administration had tried to do, first in the Gulf War and then in Somalia. In addition, Bush argued that when deciding to use force, “the relative importance of an interest is not a guide.” Above all, it is important that “the United States can and should lead, but we will act in concert, where possible involving the United Nations or other multinational grouping.” But, Bush clarified, “a desire for international support must not become a prerequisite for acting…Sometimes a great power has to act alone.”

THE CLINTON TRANSITION

From the public narrative, it appears that the incoming Clinton administration was generally accepting and supportive of the Bush administration’s representation and response to the Somali problem. As stated by Clinton “I think that all of you know I have felt for a long time we should do more on Somalia. I’ve encouraged it and I applaud the initiative of President Bush and the administration.” Clinton later called the troop intervention “the right thing to do.” From all accounts, it appears that President Clinton
played no role in the Bush administration’s decision making with regards to Somalia, although he was kept abreast of events. However, prior to his inauguration, Clinton made more explicit the generally recognized notion that United States involvement in Somalia would likely crossover into the United Nations’ operation. In addition, Clinton hinted that this involvement might lead to a change in U.S. goals, leading to a more activist U.S. role. Referring to President’s Bush reported desire to remove U.S. troops by the time of the inauguration, Clinton stated, “everybody knows it’s going to take longer than that to build some sort of infrastructure in the country. I think the question is whether that can be done in a second stage with a multinational peacekeeping force, rather than a peacemaking and alleviation of suffering force… I don’t think anybody knows the answer to that.” Clearly, the Clinton administration was looking at the problem from a longer time frame.

Beyond the suggestion of a greater future involvement, the discourse suggests that the new administration generally accepted the assessment that the UNITAF operation in Somalia was “a success.” At the end of December 1992, Andrew Natsios commented that the operation was “much further along than I expected. Our worst fears have turned out to be baseless, and our most optimistic scenarios to be an understatement of what we’ve found.” Meanwhile, the Pentagon argued that Oakley’s political negotiations had been “amazingly successful.” Given that perceived success, there had subsequently been “no change” in the UNITAF mission with the transition from the Bush to Clinton administrations. In fact, aside from the top political leadership, the rest of the players in the story remained the same, including U.S. political envoy Robert Oakley and JCS chairman, Colin Powell. Oakley would eventually leave his post in March 1993, just
prior to the operation’s transfer to the United Nations, while Powell would stay on until the fall, retiring just days prior to the fateful October ambush.

Along with the new administration’s apparent broadening of goals, it is clear that events on the ground in Somalia were moving beyond the narrow Bush mandate. Driven by vague policy guidelines, the U.S. became more actively engaged in disarming local factions and more entwined in the institution building process. However, this shift in events made an already reluctant military more desirous of a quick exit. Although senior military officials viewed the mission as successful, they were also mindful of the past and fearful that a continued UNITAF presence would end up dragging the United States deeper into the Somali conflict. While seeing no analogy between Somalia and Lebanon, Maj. Gen. Charles Wilhelm, commanding general of the 1st Marine Division, argued that he did see some “very marked similarities” and argued that “Through a flow of events, we could be drawn in, and we’ve seen that before. That’s one of the lessons that history has taught us, perhaps more from Beirut than Vietnam.”

Shortly before the Clinton inauguration, it appeared clear that the United States would have to remain in Somalia for a longer period of time and in a more substantial fashion than outlined in Operation Restore Hope. This view was based on the growing conviction that a substantial U.N. follow-on force was unlikely without the backing of the U.S. military as several countries who played key roles in the UNITAF mission (e.g., Canada and France) refused to sign on to the second part of the operation. Their reluctance was reportedly due to concerns that the follow-on forces would have to operate under traditional peacekeeping rules of engagement as opposed to the “peace enforcement” rules authorized by U.N. Security Council for the UNITAF mission.
Three days before the Clinton transition, both Secretary of Defense Cheney and Secretary of State Eagleburger stated that a United States withdrawal in Somalia would be contingent on the U.N.’s ability to put together a multinational force that was large enough with the “muscular” capability to defend itself.130 Meanwhile, the details of the U.S. involvement were still under negotiation and would not be made clear until the United Nations issued its mandate for its second operation in Somalia on March 27, 1993.

UNOSOM II

The Clinton administration’s revised representation of the Somali problem became clear with the announcement of the UNOSOM II mandate although, as previously mentioned, parts of the story had been evolving for some time. Figure 2.3 illustrates the new administration’s perception of the problem. The story begins where the previous administration left off: at George Bush’s new lesson of the American role in a dawning new world order. A prominent theme in the new administration was the ready acceptance of the idea that a new era had arrived, ready to be defined. According to Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, the administration approached it “with an underlying sense of optimism.”131 Like the global environment facing Henry Truman after World War II, the Clinton administration viewed the current era as one of “great obscurity” that required decisive global leadership. Therefore, as stated by President Clinton, “In a time of dramatic global change we must redefine America’s broader purposes anew.”132 That redefinition of purpose meant that the United States had an opportunity and responsibility, as the world’s sole superpower, to remain active in world
Figure 2.3: The story leading to the UNOSOM II transition under the Clinton Administration (December 1992-March 1993).
affairs. As stated by President Clinton: “Will we repeat the mistakes of the 1920s or the 1930s by turning inward, or will we repeat the successes of the 1940s and the 1950s by reaching outward and improving ourselves as well? I say that if we set a new direction at home, we can set a new direction for the world.”

Moreover as demonstrated by the Gulf War and U.S. operations in Somalia, the administration viewed multilateralism as the best way to pursue U.S. interests as it increased American credibility while spreading the financial and military burden.

At his confirmation hearing, Secretary of State, Warren Christopher echoed those sentiments when he stated:

I want to assure the American people that we will not turn their blood and treasure into an open account for use by the rest of the world. We cannot let every crisis become a choice between inaction or American intervention. It will be this Administration’s policy to encourage other nations and the institutions of collective security, especially the United Nations, to do more of the world’s work to deter aggression, relieve suffering, and keep the peace…As the president-elect has said, our motto in this era should be: Together where we can; on our own where we must.

Clinton noted that although crises like Somalia had demanded his attention “from the first hours of my administration,” the United States had to focus on broader questions presented by the new era. “For if we act out of a larger sense of purpose and strategy, our work on the crises of the late 20th century can lay the basis for a more peaceful and democratic world at the start of the 21st century.”
Somalia is No Longer a U.S. Problem

Given these lenses, the Clinton administration viewed Bosnia and Somalia not so much “as problems as much as opportunities” to redefine America’s role and interests in the new era. However, in Somalia that role – at least with regards to U.S. responsibilities – appeared fairly resolved. According to the new administration, U.S. operations in Somalia had been a “real success.” The famine had ended and the country appeared on track towards political reconciliation, as illustrated by the ceasefire and provisional government agreements negotiated at two separate conferences in Addis Ababa in January and March, 1993. This political and humanitarian success was reinforced by statements regarding the improved security environment. Prior to his leaving in March, U.S. special envoy, Robert Oakley, noted that “the problem with clan warfare is virtually gone” and “the time has passed when political power flows from the barrel of a gun.” Given these sorts of assessments, the Clinton administration continued with ongoing efforts to downsize the American commitment in preparation for the U.N transition. The U.S. had fulfilled its mandate and created a manageable security environment for the United Nations, although U.S. and U.N planners did expect an early military challenge.

As originally planned, UNOSOM II was to be a United Nations operation, not a United States operation. As stated by Oakley, “The United States is trying in every way to signal that we don’t have any long-term interest in Somalia. We want the operation to succeed as a U.N. operation, not a U.S. operation. We want to be in a supporting role militarily. We don’t want to be in the lead role.” Secretary of Defense Aspin reaffirmed this argument, as did President Clinton when he stated that it was necessary
for Somalia “to go from a U.S. mission to a U.N. mission.” Like the new presidencies of JFK and Jimmy Carter, the president’s advisors were wary of making policy mistakes due to inadequate consideration of problems. Despite this awareness, the Bush administration’s representation of the Somali problem and subsequent plan for the imminent withdrawal of most U.S. forces appeared to be generally accepted.

The perceived resolution of America’s responsibility for the Somalia problem was reflected in the Clinton administration’s discourse or lack thereof. In nearly all of the scanty references to Somalia prior to June 5, 1993, President Clinton spoke of U.S. efforts there in the past tense. Meanwhile, in his list of “principal challenges to U.S. security” around the globe, Secretary of State Christopher only singled out South Africa among the African continent’s many troubled countries in need of American assistance. The administration’s diminished priority given to the Somali problem was reflected in the press. From April to June 1993, the press coverage of Somalia virtually dried up, leading U.S. servicemen still serving in the region to lament that they had been forgotten.

_U.S. Leadership Still Required But Others Must Bear More of the Burden_

Another prominent theme of the new administration’s story related to the need for greater U.S. support for multilateral efforts as the United States was no longer financially able to unilaterally shoulder the world’s problems. As the presidential campaign made clear, President Clinton’s focus was on a domestic economic recovery that meant, among other things, continued cuts in defense. And, as with the Bush administration, congressional resistance to increased financing for U.N. operations was an added
pressure pushing the administration to promote its policy of multilateralism.\textsuperscript{151} Still, since the United States was perceived as unique, having “singular power and influence,” continued leadership in Somalia was necessary.\textsuperscript{152} As stated by Ambassador Albright, “The United Nations needs us, and we need it.”\textsuperscript{153}

\textit{U.N. Unified and see Somalia as Opportunity}

The final relationship aspect of the story pertains to the idea that unprecedented cooperation provided the U.N. with an opportunity to fulfill its original collective security mandate. Shortly before the authorization of UNOSOM II, which established the first U.N. peacekeeping mission under Chapter VII of the U.N. charter, Ambassador Albright stated that the U.N. Security Council was “energized by the realization that we are all making history. While there are clearly different opinions on various issues, there is a remarkably unified outlook about our responsibilities.”\textsuperscript{154}

Key among those responsibilities was the movement towards a collective security system of peacekeeping, peacemaking or peace-enforcement, and state-building. According to Lt. Gen. Bir, the Turkish commander of the U.N. operation, Somalia was seen by the U.N. as a model and possible deterrent for other nations teetering on the brink of anarchy. “We are here to re-establish a nation. And, for the first time in the history of the United Nations, our force has been tasked with the peacemaking role.”\textsuperscript{155} As a test case, Somalia was seen as easier than other possible candidates, particularly given the perceived weakness of the opposition.\textsuperscript{156} For Albright, U.N. actions in Somalia pushed the U.N. one step closer to “becoming the institution that its founders foresaw in
1945.”\textsuperscript{157} This was in the United States interest as it promoted multilateralism and all of its associated benefits.\textsuperscript{158}

**Goals and Actions Advocated and Taken**

*Consolidate Security Gains and Rebuild Somalia*

Given the perceived success in establishing security and stemming famine in Somalia, the administration saw an opportunity to multilaterally consolidate security gains and to restore Somalia to a viable functioning member of the community of states.\textsuperscript{159} These goals were reflected in the strong American support for the UNOSOM II mandate that U.N. Ambassador Albright referred to as “an unprecedented enterprise aimed at nothing less than restoration of an entire country.”\textsuperscript{160}

*Support Disarmament, Political Reconciliation and Scaled Back U.S. Commitment*

Given these goals, the United States supported the U.N.’s proposed efforts to disarm all factions in Somalia, using the same peace enforcement rules of engagement previously authorized under UNITAF. According to Albright, the administration viewed such efforts as “critical to the long-term restoration of a functioning government and society in Somalia.” The Clinton administration also saw the U.S. as playing a “constructive role” in U.N. efforts to promote political reconciliation and “the establishment of a viable and representative national government and economy.” And, for the first time, the U.S. supported the proposal that American troops should participate in a peacekeeping operation under U.N. command. Thus, the administration planned to scale back the U.S. military commitment from 28,000 to around 4,000 logistical support
personnel, while continuing to maintain an offshore rapid deployment force under U.S. command that, while not formally a part of UNOSOM II, would be available to intervene if circumstances warranted.\textsuperscript{161} To satisfy the military’s reluctance to place U.S. troops under the U.N. command of Turkish General Cevik Bir, the U.N arrangement included placing an American, Major General Thomas Montgomery, as second in command while the U.S. offshore Quick Reaction Force (QRF) was under the independent command of U.S. Major General William Garrison.\textsuperscript{162} To solidify the United States’ active role in the political side of the U.N. operation, retired U.S. Admiral Johnathan Howe replaced Ismat Kittani as the U.N. special envoy to Somalia, reportedly at the request of the President’s National Security Advisor, Anthony Lake.\textsuperscript{163}

**Perceived Consequences and New Lessons**

*Strengthen Peacekeeping, Ensure Somali Success, Multilateralism Test-Case*

As a result of U.S. and U.N. efforts, the transition story in Somalia ends with the perceived consequences of actions and a new lesson. First, in terms of consequences, continued U.S. support was viewed as strengthening U.N. peacekeeping, thus increasing the likelihood of success. The success of U.N. peacekeeping efforts in Somalia was deemed important as it diminished the probability of future U.S and U.N. interventions in the country.\textsuperscript{164} It was also perceived as furthering the goal of democratic promotion, one of the pillars of the administration’s new foreign policy.\textsuperscript{165}

Somalia’s success was important for another reason, which could be viewed as the new lesson of the operation: Somalia expanded the scope of determination for using force, establishing a precedent for multilateralism and armed humanitarian intervention.
It also underscored the importance of American leadership. As Secretary of State
Christopher noted, “One of the fascinations about the period we’re going through is that
the definition of what are the acceptable reasons for the use of force is expanding very
rapidly. Somalia expands the definition to include humanitarian causes.” President
Clinton saw Somalia as writing “an important chapter in the international annals of
peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance.” U.S. and U.N. efforts in Somalia also
“demonstrated that the world is ready to mobilize its resources in new ways to face the
challenges of a new age” and “proved yet again that American leadership can help to
mobilize international action to create a better world.”

The administration had defined its policy in the new era as “assertive
multilateralism.” That Somalia was perceived as a test case – not only for the United
Nations – but for future American participation was clear. In his remarks to returning
troops in May, President Clinton referred to “other missions” that lay ahead. “Some we
can foresee, and others we cannot.” Meanwhile, Secretary of Defense Aspin argued,
“We know we’re going to be doing this kind of thing like we’re doing in Somalia in the
future.” Working out the kinks with peace enforcement provided important lessons
regarding its future utility as the administration struggled with growing pressures to act,
particularly in Bosnia. In short, seeing the U.N. succeed in Somalia was still of
considerable importance for the new administration, even given its relatively diminished
priority in relation to other foreign policy problems. Its importance would increase
somewhat after the events of June 5th.
THE “GET AIDID” STORY FOLLOWING THE PEACEKEEPER MASSACRE

On June 5, 1993, U.N. troops were ambushed as they underwent a routine inspection of a weapons depository and General Aidid’s radio station in southern Mogadishu. In the ensuing and lopsided battle, 24 Pakistanis were killed, their bodies mutilated. Fifty other Pakistanis were injured, including three Americans. The U.N. response to what it saw as a heinous and unprovoked attack was swift. On June 6, the U.N. Security Council, with strong support from the United States, unanimously passed Resolution 837, authorizing “all necessary means” to arrest and detain those responsible for the attack. On June 12, in a plan approved by the entire Washington chain of command, U.S. forces led an air attack against Aidid’s headquarters, leaving an estimated 20 to 215 dead and Aidid unscathed. In retaliation, four western journalists who came to cover the raid were subsequently murdered and displayed for the television cameras by a band of enraged Somalis.

The U.N. resolution and subsequent June 12th attack set off what was widely viewed as a war against General Aidid, which included wild west style reward posters and a bounty of twenty five thousand U.S. dollars for information leading to his arrest. From June to October, the United States took a series of military actions, including the deployment of American special forces, to help in the capture of General Aidid. Although the success of these actions would later be debated, they nonetheless set the stage for the October deaths of U.S. troops.
Reaffirmation of Past Lessons

U.S. Required to Lead and Importance of Multilateralism

As illustrated in Figure 2.4, the administration’s story after the June 5th attack remained more or less consistent, albeit with some subtle but important differences.

First, as in the previous representation, the administration viewed the lessons of the past as still pertinent and even reaffirmed their significance. After the U.S.–orchestrated response on June 12, President Clinton stated:

The U.N.’s action holds an important lesson about how our Nation can accomplish our own security goals in this new era. Although the cold war is over, the world remains a dangerous place. The United States cannot be the world’s policeman, but we also cannot turn a blind eye to the world’s problems, for they affect our own security, our own interests, and our own ideals. The U.S. must continue to play its unique role of leadership in the world. But now we can increasingly express that leadership through multilateral means such as the United Nations, which spread the costs and expressed the unified will of the international community. That was one of the lessons of Desert Storm. And clearly, that was one of the lessons last night in Somalia.176

Thus, the new era was still perceived as providing the administration with an important opportunity to prove the importance of assertive multilateralism, via the United Nations, and the necessity of continued U.S. leadership. These lessons continued to influence the administration’s perception of relationships and goals pertaining to the U.N. mission in Somalia.

Nature of Situation and Key Actor Relationships

Aidid is Key Obstacle to U.N. Success

In terms of perceived relationships, the primary theme following the June 5th attack was the demonization of General Aidid on the part of both the United States and
Figure 2.4: The “Get Aidid” story following the massacre of Pakistani peacekeepers (June-July 1993).
the United Nations. A summary of the discourse reveals the general perception that Aidid was responsible for the attack, that his forces represented a continued threat to U.N. peacekeepers, and that he remained a key obstacle to the U.N. nation building efforts in the region.

Prior to the attack, U.N. nation building efforts were seen as bearing fruit. As Ambassador Albright commented following the U.S. led retaliatory response, “General Aidid…started this last week and in effect disrupted what was beginning to be, from all the reports that I’ve seen, the beginning of restoration of Somalia.” The personalization of the conflict resulted from the belief, espoused primarily by Howe and U.S. envoy, Robert Gosende, that since Aidid controlled the population where the attack took place circumstantial evidence suggested that he was behind it.

The consensus regarding Aidid was reflected in Security Council Resolution 837. Although Aidid was not named personally, his United Somali Congress (USC/SNA) was singled out as the party most likely responsible for the attack. Howe’s suggestion that Aidid should be held accountable for the attack drew strong support from the Secretary General who reportedly disliked Aidid, following a humiliating run-in with his supporters in a visit to Somalia that past January. Therefore, despite military estimates that attempts at capturing Aidid had only a one in four chance of success, the administration appeared to have accepted the U.N. and the State Department view that the removal of Aidid was key to U.N. success. According to Secretary of State Christopher, Aidid was “the principal obstacle” to U.N. efforts and he thought that “if we can somehow rein him in, that his followers will not be nearly as big as problem and that the problems of the country will be much simplified.”
General Somali Populace Supports U.N. Not Aidid

As illustrated by the quote of Secretary of State Christopher, a dominant view within the administration was that Aidid’s support within the general Somali populace was weak and that the general populace supported U.N. efforts in the country. As stated by Assistant Secretary of State, George Moose, “the vast majority of the Somali people” deeply regretted the killings and strongly supported UNOSOM actions. Meanwhile, President Clinton in public statements implied that Aidid was the only one not cooperating with U.N. efforts. As stated by the President, “we cannot have a situation where one of these warlords, while everybody else is cooperating, decides they can go out and slaughter 20 peacekeepers.”

U.S. Backed Action Required to Defend U.N. and U.S. Credibility

Another prominent theme in the discourse was the idea that the attack on U.N. peacekeepers left the United Nations and the United States little option but to respond militarily. Subsequently, after “careful consultation within all agencies of the U.S. government,” the administration agreed to take action. As stated by President Clinton in his radio address to the nation, “The United Nations and the United States refuse to tolerate this ruthless disregard for the will of the international community.” Secretary of Defense Aspin argued that the ambush “clearly required a U.N. response.” Albright later argued that “we believed it essential to make sure that U.N. forces would not be attacked with impunity.” With Howe calling Aidid a terrorist and Albright referring to him as a “thug,” inaction or diplomatic negotiation with Aidid were not options and apparently ruled out.
As revealed in the discourse, there was a perception that if the United Nations and the United States failed to respond, the credibility of current and future peacekeeping efforts would be unacceptably damaged. As stated by President Clinton, “Aideed’s forces were responsible for the worst attack on U.N. peacekeepers in three decades. We could not let it go unpunished. Our objectives were clear: The U.N. sought to preserve the credibility of peacekeeping in Somalia and around the world.” Following a series of U.S-led retaliatory responses, another official saw this objective as achieved, even if at some cost. “They don’t want us here. Nobody will ever love us. But they respect us. If the U.N. doesn’t have credibility now, it never will have.”

Goals, Consequences, and Future Lessons

*Restore Security, Uphold U.N./U.S Credibility, Preserve Gains, Punish Violence*

The goal in the aftermath of the bombing thus changed to restore security or, as Albright put it, the “restoration of law and order.” According to President Clinton, “the ultimate goal is to restore the conditions of peace…to make sure that the United Nations can fulfill its mission there and continue to work with the Somalis toward nation building.” The actions taken to achieve that objective led the United States to become deeply involved in a military campaign to capture, if not kill, Aidid. Meanwhile, the ensuing war with Aideed stalled efforts on the political front towards reconciliation and institution building, reportedly to the dismay of the principals of the Deputies Committee in charge of U.S. policymaking in Somalia.

Thus, by removing Aideed and subsequently restoring security to Somalia, the administration believed that U.N. and U.S. credibility would be preserved, which would
go towards ensuring the success of the Somali mission. In addition, the American effort and humanitarian gains of the previous intervention would be sustained. The lesson of the U.S. advocated response was simple: violence against peacekeepers would not be tolerated.

A Shift in Policy Thinking

As the war with Aidid continued through the summer and into the fall of 1993, the casualties on both sides increased. On August 8, four U.S. soldiers were killed when a remote control device exploded under their humvee. On August 22, six more U.S. soldiers were injured in a landmine explosion. Following the explosion, President Clinton ordered 400 Delta Force commandos, Army Rangers and a helicopter detachment to Mogadishu to help in the capture of Aidid. As part of the Quick Reaction Force, the contingent operated independently of the United Nations under the command of Major General Garrison. General Powell’s reluctance to expand the U.S. military commitment was apparently withdrawn at this point. “We had to do something or we are going to be nibbled to death” he reportedly told the President. As the United States was committed to fulfilling the U.N. mandate of June 6th, the administration’s choice was between dramatically increasing U.S. forces or sending in a more limited and less conspicuous, clandestine contingent. As congressional demands for U.S. withdrawal increased along with the escalation in violence, the latter option was chosen. When the British government turned down Anthony Lake’s request to deploy a contingent of British special forces to do the job, the President approved sending in Americans.
According to the discourse and a variety of other sources, the administration’s perception of the problem began to change in late September, although congressional and public pressure was sufficient that it felt it had to clarify its objectives in Somalia by late August. As casualties began to mount in the military campaign against Aidid, the administration began to publicly state its support for U.N. peacekeeping efforts, appearing unwilling to let go of past lessons and the future promise of multilateralism. However, growing criticism had clearly tempered the administration’s enthusiasm. On September 27, Clinton told that United Nations:

U.N. peacekeeping holds the promise to resolve many of this era’s conflicts. The reason we have supported such missions is not, as some critics in the United States have charged, to subcontract our foreign policy, but to strengthen our interests and to share among nations the costs and effort of pursuing peace. Peacekeeping cannot be a substitute for our own national defense efforts, but it can strongly supplement them.

Although the administration still clearly supported the concept of peacekeeping, mounting public pressure forced it to more clearly define how it related to U.S. interests. To some extent it, the administration viewed peacekeeping as a relatively low-cost, low-risk way to appease growing public demands for humanitarian action, particularly in areas not vital to national interests. Referring to public demands for action, Anthony Lake, Clinton’s National Security advisor, argued:

While there will be increasing calls on us to help stem bloodshed and suffering in ethnic conflicts…ultimately, on these and other humanitarian needs, we will have to pick and choose. Where we can make a difference, as in Somalia and Northern Iraq, we should not oppose using our military forces for humanitarian purposes simply because these missions do not resemble major wars for control of territory…In Somalia, President Bush…correctly concluded that we could create a secure military environment for humanitarian relief at a reasonable cost and risk.
Meanwhile, in a speech to the National War College, Ambassador Albright suggested that intervention into conflicts like Somalia, was in the U.S. national interest because of the danger of contagion. As stated by Albright, “chaos is an infectious disease. Although violence in a failed state such as Somalia may seem trivial to some, when combined with unrest in Sudan, Rwanda, Liberia, Bosnia, Georgia, and so on, our attention and our interests ---whether political or humanitarian – cannot help but be engaged.” But, in a recognition of the public pressure, Albright argued that “sending American military forces into dangerous situations is the most difficult decision any president can make. History teaches us that public support for such decisions is essential.”

Following a meeting with former president Jimmy Carter and a discussion with his advisors, the President decided that too much focus had fallen upon the military campaign against Aidid, drawing attention away from the mission’s humanitarian and political objectives. On September 20, Secretary of State Christopher sent U.N. Secretary General Boutros Gali a letter, stressing the administration’s desire to focus on the political process that would facilitate a U.S. withdrawal. Christopher also stressed that urgent public relations action was required “to correct the media’s current emphasis on the military aspects, and especially our efforts to detain Aidid.” To counter the perception that the shift amounted to a capitulation, the administration emphasized that the new policy would further weaken “and continue the marginalization of General Aidid” so the U.S. could withdraw. These efforts gained urgency when three more U.S. servicemen died after their helicopter was shot down while on patrol over Mogadishu. Unfortunately, although the stance in Washington had shifted, in Somalia, senior military
officials remained unaware of any official change in U.S. policy. The campaign against Aidid continued.  

THE OCTOBER 3RD AMBUSH AND U.S. WITHDRAWAL

On October 3, 1993, around 100 Rangers and top elite Delta commandos undertook what was to be a quick “snatch and grab” operation aimed at capturing several of Aidid’s top officials in the heart of the General’s territory in southern Mogadishu. The raid was a success until one of the Delta blackhawk helicopters was shot down. The siege that followed led to the death of 18 soldiers and the injury of countless others. Following the worldwide broadcast of dead American servicemen being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu, the Clinton administration wrapped up the U.S. mission in Somalia. After sending an additional 5,300 troops, heavy armor and an aircraft carrier to beef up current force levels in the region, President Clinton announced that U.S. troops would return home by March 31, 1994.

Goals and Key Actor Relationships

*Restore Security, Mounting Congressional Pressure*

As illustrated in figure 2.5, the final story begins with a familiar theme: the goal of restoring security. However, this time there is a defined end point. The United States would continue its attempts to restore security and to prevent a return to anarchy only for six more months. As stated by the Secretary of State, “I think before the United States can leave in any way that is satisfactory, we must establish a secure environment.”
Initiating Event:
October 3rd death of 18 U.S. Rangers and Delta Force Commandos

Relationship Between Actors:
2) Congressional and public pressure make a long term commitment in Somalia impossible
3) Avoiding hasty retreat necessary to preserve U.S. credibility
4) The U.S. is not the U.N.; the U.N. role is to promote nation building in Somalia; the U.S. role is and has always been the provision of security
5) Somalia is an African problem and requires an African solution

Goal(s):
1) Restore security so U.S. can withdraw forces within 6 months

Actions Advocated:
1) Continue possible threat of Aidid’s capture while pursuing a separate process of political reconciliation
2) Increase American military forces in the short run and reduce U.S. visibility
3) Withdraw U.S. forces in 6 months

Consequences:
1) Minimize risk of American casualties
2) Achieve some modicum of security and political progress so U.S. can withdraw knowing efforts were not in vain

New Lesson(s):
1) Regional organizations and indigenous population must solve their own problems
2) Military force can not solve problems requiring political solutions; it can supplement but is no substitute for diplomacy
3) U.N. is not yet an effective instrument for achieving collective security
4) The United States must be selective in its support for armed humanitarian intervention, particularly in the absence of vital interests
5) In this media-era it is increasingly important that policy objectives, dangers, and national interests are clearly articulated to both Congress and the American public whenever U.S. troops are deployed

Figure 2.5: The “Withdrawal” story following the deaths of U.S. forces (August-October 1993).
The time limit on U.S. involvement was, no doubt, due to the perceived pressure from Congress. That this pressure was substantial, even before the events of October 3, is clear from the discourse.

In early September, the administration noted that it was attempting to address congressional concerns about the mission in Somalia and that it clearly understood the desire to bring the troops home as soon as possible. On September 28, 1993, the House passed a nonbinding resolution asking the administration to clarify its goals for the Somalia operation and urging the President to seek congressional authorization by November 15 if he was intent on continuing the deployment of U.S. troops. Following the resolution, the President expressed his concerns to the U.N. Secretary General, requesting his help in abating the growing congressional pressure. The president reportedly added that if there were no progress towards political reconciliation in Somalia, he would have a hard time convincing Congress and the American public to take part in a future peacekeeping mission to Bosnia.

*Avoid Hasty Retreat*

After the October 3rd incident, pressure from Congress increased. The administration was faced with a choice: withdraw U.S. troops immediately or expand the U.S. military presence to a point sufficient to eliminate Aidid’s resistance. Although many in Congress were calling for it, the idea of an immediate withdrawal was not seen as a viable option, as it went against everything the administration had been stating publicly since August. As Colin Powell had stated in September, “I don’t think we should cut and run because things have gotten a little tough.” A hasty retreat was
perceived as inevitably leading to the withdrawal of other U.N. forces, endangering Somalia’s fragile stability and compromising U.S. credibility. Arguing against immediate withdrawal, President Clinton stated:

If we were to leave [Somalia] today, we know what would happen. Within months, Somali children would be dying in the streets. Our own credibility with friends and allies would be severely damaged. Our leadership in world affairs would be undermined at the very time when people are looking to America to help promote peace and freedom in the post-cold war world. And all around the world, aggressors, thugs, and terrorists will conclude that the best way to get us to change our policies is to kill our people. It would be open season on Americans.  

The other option, a large-scale buildup of American forces, was also eliminated as, according to Secretary of Defense Aspin, it would require “an amount of time and an amount of commitment of money which is beyond all reasonable expectation.”

Clearly, given congressional pressure, the administration perceived it lacked both. President Clinton’s instincts were reportedly to remain committed to the U.N.’s political efforts in Somalia, but to do so in a way that American troops did not become the focus of local opposition. In the end, the administration compromised, increasing force levels to ensure troop security and delaying a U.S. withdrawal to allow the chance for political reconciliation.

*The U.S. is Not the U.N.*

Another theme of the final story again dates back to the administration’s September shift in thinking and the subsequent desire to reduce U.S. visibility in Somalia. To assure critics that the U.S. commitment would not be open-ended, the administration sought to clarify the American role and downplay its connection to the United Nations
and its mission of political reconstruction. This caused an abrupt and somewhat awkward about face, leading senior administration officials to contradict and defend their earlier statements. In August, Secretary of State Christopher had commented that the U.S. was “moving to a second phase, under U.N. auspices, of trying to provide some nation building…And for that latter point, there is not a United States exit. There is a United States intention to stay and help.”

By October, Christopher was arguing that “ours is not the U.N. mission. We are not there for the long pull of nation building.” Likewise, Ambassador Albright had defended American involvement in Somalia in a New York Times editorial in August, arguing that the U.S. had to “stay the course and help lift the country and its people from the category of a failed state into that of an emerging democracy. For Somalia’s sake, and ours, we must persevere.” Two months later, Albright reversed her earlier position and argued that in Somalia “the United States is committed to leaving.”

In his letter to Congress, President Clinton sought clarify the administration’s position.

What the United States is doing there [in Somalia] is providing, for a short limited period of time, logistic support and security…the United Nations…has a longer term political, security and relief mission…The U.S. military mission is not now nor was it ever one of “nation building.”

In short, given the perceived public pressure the administration, for political reasons, could no longer support U.N. nation building efforts in Somalia. Distancing itself from the organization and focusing on what had been the original job of establishing security provided the administration a face-saving way out.
**Somalia is an African Problem**

In terms of relationships between actors, the final theme in the story’s discourse pertains to who is ultimately responsible for solving the Somalia problem. The idea that political reconciliation must first start with the Somalis themselves was not new. Robert Oakley had espoused the concept repeatedly since December 1992. According to the discourse, for the Bush administration, political reconciliation and reconstruction would be facilitated and perhaps emerge spontaneously among Somalis once a secure environment had been established. Meanwhile, for the Clinton administration, political reconciliation in Somalia would require greater external direction. Although the Clinton administration had begun the process, after October it was clear it no longer had the will to continue. As stated by President Clinton, “It is not our job to rebuild Somali society or even to create a political process that call allow Somalia’s clan to live and work in peace. The Somalis must do that for themselves.” 224

Following the administration’s announced withdrawal, it became clear that a sustained U.N. intervention in Somalia seemed unlikely without America’s presence and support. Hence, the administration began to also disavow the United Nation’s responsibilities with regards to nation building in Somalia arguing, instead, that it was the responsibility of others in the region. According to President Clinton, “It is not for the United States or for the United Nations to eliminate whole groups of people from having a role in Somalia’s future. The Somalis must decide that, with the help and guidance, I believe, primarily of the African states and leadership around them.” 225 Echoing other senior officials within the administration, Secretary of State Christopher put it more
bluntly. “We’re going to try to use the African leaders’ assistance to provide an African solution to what is really an African problem.”

**Consequences**

*Minimize American Casualties, Withdraw with Honor*

Finally, in terms of the perceived consequences of U.S. actions, there was a strong desire on the part of the administration to minimize further casualties. Increasing military forces was seen as achieving this objective. And, as in the Bush administration, increased security was hoped to provide an environment conducive to political reconciliation. The administration hoped that the over the six month time period, some progress could be made so that the U.S. could leave Somalia “on our own terms and without destroying all that two administrations have accomplished there.” To aid in the process, President Clinton removed Robert Gosende and reappointed Robert Oakley as U.S. envoy to Somalia.

**New Lessons**

*Can’t Solve Other People’s Problems*

In terms of lessons, Somalia underscored the limits of armed humanitarian intervention and American optimism. Reflecting upon Somalia’s lessons, Ambassador Albright testified before the Senate in May 1994.

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Today, we are in a period of recalibrating our expectations. There was more optimism during the final year of the Bush administration, and the first nine months of this one, than there had been previously or has been since. U.N. peacekeeping is not as expensive as war, but it is not cheap. It is not as dangerous as war, but it is very far from risk free. It is also not
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as decisive as war; you often have to settle for part of what you want, and it had been given no easy job.  

Given the perception that the United Nations, in conjunction with the United States, was incapable of mustering the resources to solve Somalia’s problem, the first lesson of Somalia was the idea that regional problems require regional solutions. Outside organizations cannot rebuild a country without the ongoing and intensive participation of the indigenous population. As Ambassador Albright would later testify, “there was no way that an international organization could build a country from up.”

Contrary to expectations, Somalia sounded the death knell for unbridled humanitarianism. As stated by a State Department official, the U.S. experience in Somalia “was a watershed. Somalia was the experience that taught us that people in these places bear much of the responsibility for things being the way they are. The hatred and the killing continues because they want it to. Or because they don’t want peace enough to stop it.”

After October, one senior U.N. official said they were telling the Somalis: “It’s their choice. If they want to continue to battle, then we’re leaving. You destroyed your country, not us…The world doesn’t owe you anything.”

**Force is No Substitute for Diplomacy**

Somalia also served to underscore the idea that force is no substitute for diplomacy. The military can not solve problems that require political solutions and can, in fact, detract from the political process. However, Somalia also illustrated the difficulties of political reconciliation in a failed state. The lack of government or consensus regarding political leadership given the strong Somali clan, subclan and family
loyalties made forging a national leadership appear intractable. As U.S. political envoy, Robert Oakley noted in February 1993, “I haven’t seen any individual here who I would think of as a national figure.” He added that although some exiles talked as if they were widely admired and revered, “I haven’t seen anyone who really is.”

Given the uncertainty revolving around a political solution, the task of providing security appeared concrete and manageable to the administration. Moreover, demonizing Aidid provided focus and clarity in what was otherwise an obscure and chaotic environment. As stated by Ambassador Albright,

> It is very hard to get support for policies with inchoate enemies. I think, one thing that we have to learn – Communism was very easy to fight. It is harder to fight chaos and disruption. And one thing that we do, all of us together, is personalize the enemy. And so, we focus in on an individual, and then when it is time to negotiate, which one has to do often at the end of these situations, it is hard to depersonalize.

President Clinton also recognized this problem. Following the events in the fall of 1993, Clinton argued that what went wrong in Somalia was that “the United States being a police officer in Somalia was turned into waging a conflict and a highly personalized battle which undermined the political process.”

**U.N. Capabilities Limited, Greater Selectivity in Peace Operations Required**

In addition to underscoring the importance of diplomacy, Somalia highlighted for the administration the limits of U.N. peacekeeping and peacemaking. In May 1994, Ambassador Albright testified before the Senate regarding the October raid. Her testimony revealed both the administration’s continued hopes for peacekeeping and its diminished optimism. Albright testified, “Over the past year, we have become acutely
conscious both of the value and the limits of U.N. peacekeeping. The U.N. has not yet shown a capacity to respond decisively when the risk of combat is high, and the level of cooperation is low. The U.N.’s impartiality can be a key to diplomatic credibility, but it is of less help when military credibility is what is required.”

Given these shortcomings, the administration felt it had to limit its objectives. Humanitarian impulses to intervene everywhere had to be curbed and peacekeeping had to become more selective, coinciding more with national interests. The administration’s changed perception was reflected in the new Presidential Decision Directive (PDD-25) issued in May 1994. Although earlier drafts of the document strongly endorsed U.N. peacekeeping and peacemaking as essential elements of U.S. security policy, events in Somalia and the breakdown of the bipartisan congressional consensus led to substantial revisions of the document. The final version downplayed peacekeeping’s centrality in foreign policy and tightened guidelines regarding when and how the United States would employ it in the future.

Need to Clearly Articulate Risks and Associated Interests

Finally, Somalia revealed to the administration that given the new media-age, whenever U.S. troops are deployed it is important to clearly articulate, both to Congress and the American public, the associated policy objectives of such missions as well as mission dangers and subsequent relevance to national interests. In the aftermath of Somalia, the president’s National Security Adviser, Tony Lake, reflected on the important lessons the administration had learned from the event. “With the speed now with which events are reported and the power of images that we in that case and in many
other cases, if we have not already, in such cases, described very clearly to the Congress and to the American public what our interests are and what our mission is in such areas, there is no way, once you get a terrible incident like this, that we can catch up and make that clear – at least right away.”

In short, whether warranted or not, Somalia led to the death of optimism regarding the possibilities of a new world order and a new pessimism regarding what could be achieved via armed humanitarian intervention. Just prior to the U.S. withdrawal March 1994, the Clinton administration was divided over the idea of leaving a small diplomatic contingent behind in Mogadishu, as the U.S. Marines argued that they could not guarantee their safety. The debate illustrated both the administration’s distrust of the United Nations’ defensive capabilities (the U.N. was slated to remain in Somalia until March 1995) as well as the fact that security had improved little after one year and two successive U.S. and U.N. interventions. In dark references to 1975 Saigon, officers and civilians at the diplomatic mission in Somalia joked nervously about arriving early for a seat on the last helicopter. Like Vietnam before it, the perceived lessons of Somalia cast a shadow over the Clinton administration, influencing future decisions of armed humanitarian intervention.

Alternative Interpretations

As previously mentioned in chapter one, public discourse maybe subject to multiple interpretations. To both demonstrate this awareness as well as the logic of my interpretations, this section will explore those elements of the Somali story or narrative as I have illustrated that I believe are potentially the most “controversial” or perhaps less
straightforward in their interpretation. First, in the story leading to the Bush administration airlift, “Operation Provide Relief” illustrated in figure 2.1, the statements of several Bush administration officials were interpreted as supporting the notion that one of the perceived or hoped for consequences of the military airlift in Somalia was that of deflecting domestic and international criticism of inaction in both Somalia and Bosnia that could tarnish the president’s image in an election year. This interpretation was highly contextual.

The statements of Natsios and the State Department official regarding the growing media coverage of the crisis could simply be interpreted as two officials frustrated with the lack of prior attention to the crisis. I interpreted such comments as: (1) evidence of the a growing media coverage and administration awareness and perhaps sensitivity to such coverage, much of it critical, and (2) the likelihood that such a sensitivity was related to the concern over the administration’s image, particularly in the eyes of the voting public. When examined in context, the statement of Andrew Natsios, President Bush’s appointed special coordinator for Somalia relief – reflects a sensitivity and awareness of public attitudes and criticism of administration policy. Prior to his statement on the growing media response, Natsios argues,

[The] one element of foreign assistance in the United State that has widespread public support by large margins is relief assistance in efforts such as the one we’re undertaking [in Somalia]. And there’s always been support for the fifty years they’ve been doing polling on the subject.239

This sensitivity to public attitudes towards humanitarian assistance and media coverage garnered particular salience when juxtaposed to Brent Scowcroft’s statement regarding concern over the administration’s image following the revelation of concentration camps
in Bosnia. Together, these statements when combined with the broader contextual factors, such as the congressional actions demanding greater UN Security Council action, continuing charges of Security Council racism from the U.N. Secretary General, the upcoming presidential elections and, most importantly, the timing of the airlift announcement on the eve of the Republican National Convention were thus interpreted as supporting the idea that the airlift was in part undertaken to deflect a growing chorus of domestic and international criticism of the administration’s foreign policy – criticism that could potentially tarnish the president’s image and cost it votes in the upcoming presidential election.

A second potentially controversial interpretation falls under the lesson that “force is no substitute for diplomacy” in third fifth and final Somalia story as illustrated in figure 2.5. Ambassador Albright’s comments on the difficulties of fighting “inchoate enemies” and the subsequent tendency to personalize the enemy along with President Clinton’s comments regarding how the U.N. operation turned into a highly personalized battle that undermined the political process were taken together to support the lesson that “force is no substitute for diplomacy.” However, in hindsight given the evidence in the Bosnian case, these statements could also be seen as supporting the Vietnam lesson of the perceived dangers of outside involvement in internal conflicts which can lead one to “take sides” in such conflicts.
Hypotheses and Factors Influencing Decisionmaking About the Use of Force

Mora and or Legal Imperative

So what factors appeared most influential in U.S. decision making about the use of force and armed humanitarian intervention in Somalia? Reflecting back on the hypotheses posited in the first chapter, it is clear that some appear validated while others do not. The hypotheses and findings are summarized in Table 2.1. Moreover, the research suggests several new hypotheses. First, out of the initial hypotheses, the idea suggested by scholars that extensive human suffering creates a moral obligation and imperative for humanitarian intervention does appear to hold in relation to the Somalia case. Based on the story or public narrative, there is evidence that decision makers’ perception of extensive human suffering influenced their representations of the Somalia problem and their subsequent decision making regarding the nature and extent of humanitarian intervention, if any. This perception appears to have been made salient by the actions of a variety of different actors. First, in the summer of 1992, media coverage, congressional actions, international NGOs, the Secretariat of the United Nations and various assessments of the problem from officials and bureaucrats within the president’s own administration factors coalesced to bring the extent of the disaster in Somalia to President Bush’s attention. Moved by the apparent gravity of the problem, Bush initiated the humanitarian airlift, “Operation Provide Relief.” This action would set the stage for subsequent decisions. Once having made the commitment to Somalia, it appears President Bush felt obligated to see it successfully completed, suggesting a new hypothesis: that a moral imperative or obligation increases once a decision or commitment of humanitarian intervention has been made. The idea of a moral imperative
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<th>Treats or Opportunities to national interests</th>
<th>Moral or Legal Imperative</th>
<th>Domestic Pressure from Media, Public Opinion, and Congress</th>
<th>Pressure/interests from IGOs and other International Actors</th>
<th>Ease and Utility of Intervention</th>
<th>Military Vested Interests</th>
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<td>Operation Provide Relief</td>
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<td>Yes moral</td>
<td>Yes media Yes Public Yes Congress</td>
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Table 2.1: Hypothesized factors favoring military intervention as reflected in key Junctures of the evolving Somalia story.
to intervention appears to garner strength if another facet is entered into the equation – the perception or belief that the actor in question, the United States in this case, is a necessary component for successful solution to the problem. From the narrative, it is apparent that decision makers in both administrations viewed the United States as uniquely capable of solving the problem in Somalia. Given this perception, President Bush argued that morally, “a failure to respond to massive human catastrophes like Somalia would scar the soul of our nation.” From the evidence, it appears the Clinton administration shared this perception and belief up until October 1993.

Finally, I hypothesized that if genocide was perceived as a factor in the conflict, then the legal and moral imperative behind armed humanitarian intervention would be greater. In Somalia, the lack of public references to genocide in relation to the conflict suggests that the legal imperative for humanitarian intervention, embodied in international conventions such as the 1948 Convention against Genocide, was missing and apparently deemed irrelevant.

Vital National Interests

Another influential factor clearly emerging from the discourse of both administrations relates to the idea of perceived threats or opportunities to vital national interests. According to my initial hypotheses and realist theory, I expected the perception of opportunity or threat to national vital interests to be a factor in promoting armed humanitarian intervention and, likewise, the absence of such a deterrent. In general, the narrative from both administrations suggests that the conflict and suffering in Somalia was not perceived as pertinent to America’s vital interests, traditionally defined as
pertaining to the economic well-being and territorial security of the United States. However, the absence of such interests did not deter U.S. intervention in that country, as suggested by the hypothesis. Despite the lack of abiding U.S. interests, Somalia was still perceived by decision makers as an unparalleled opportunity.

Contrary to traditional realism, the perception of opportunity in Somalia went beyond narrow calculations of vital national interests to include broad humanitarian aims of peace and global cooperation. From the discourse, both administrations were optimistic about the possibilities embodied in a new world order; possibilities that allowed the U.S. to actively promote global democracy and economic liberalism. Thus, with no clear vital interests at stake, Somalia was perceived as a chance for the United States to pursue second tier humanitarian objectives. While the Bush administration defined these objectives narrowly and in the short-term, the Clinton administration defined them more broadly to include the long-term goal of democratic state building.

Although U.S. objectives in Somalia were quickly diminished following events in the late summer and fall of 1993, the decision to use force and undertake armed humanitarian intervention was made by both administrations in the absence of clear threats or opportunities to traditionally defined vital national interests. Thus, a breakdown of the narrative in Somalia suggests that a purely realist understanding of national interests is inadequate; and, perhaps, that with the end of the cold war, the perception of national interests has undergone a substantial revision. Whether this perception is maintained after Somalia remains to be seen.
Domestic Pressure

As initially posited perceived pressure for action from the media (the so-called ‘CNN factor’), Congress and or the American public was viewed as a possible factor promoting armed humanitarian intervention. After analyzing the discourse on Somalia, it appears that, in general, domestic pressure did play an important role in the U.S. decision making process, although not entirely as hypothesized. Based on the analysis of the narrative, it could be argued that domestic pressure acted as a constraint rather than a determinant of U.S. policy since decision making elites paid attention to such pressure only when it went against stated U.S. policy.

In the summer of 1992, the media and congressional pressure – along with actions by international humanitarian agencies – coalesced to bring elite attention to the crisis in Somalia and Bosnia, and in part influenced elite perceptions of the problem. This increased attention was likely more salient to administration officials given that it was an election year. From the discourse it appears that all three domestic actors appear to have played a key role in building domestic pressure for action, which culminated in the Bush administration’s decision to undertake Operation Provide Relief. In reference to the so-called CNN factor and its integral connection with congressional and public opinion, former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger stated, “Clearly the television coverage over time, the impact that made on Congress, the impact that made publicly and the impact that made on all of us, including the president, finally led us to decide to do something in Somalia. It would be foolish to deny that it didn’t make a difference – of course it did.”241
After losing the election, it is likely these domestic pressures and concerns regarding media attention and congressional and public opinion were less salient to the Bush administration. The decision of large-scale intervention, “Operation Provide Hope,” was made after the presidential election in late November. As the administration had already decided to intervene back in August, the discourse suggests the November decision was driven more by the President’s desire to fulfill the previous commitment and solve the problem in Somalia (perhaps in a desire to preserve his administration’s foreign policy legacy) as opposed to any domestic pressures regarding the issue.242

As for the Clinton administration, domestic pressure was essentially nonexistent in the first two representations of the Somalia problem. In general, the perception of success following the intervention of troops in December led to a dramatic lack of interest in Somalia on the part of the media, Congress, and the American public. This lack of interest gave the Clinton administration wide latitude in pursuing an ambitious agenda in that country in the spring of 1993. However, when congressional and public interest, including media coverage, picked up during the summer and turned increasingly critical in the fall of 1993, it became the primary factor influencing the administration’s decision to withdraw. In short, although it appears domestic actors helped shape elite representations of the initial Somalia problem which led to the Bush administrations’ limited humanitarian intervention in August 1992, in general they appeared to have acted more as decisional constraints than determinants of action, influencing both the Bush and Clinton administrations’ realm of possible options for that country.
International pressure and interests

In relation to international organizations and alliances, several hypotheses were posited with regards to humanitarian intervention. First, it was posited that the United States might intervene in Somalia due to perceived alliance obligations and interests. For instance, as a former cold war ally, the United States may have perceived an obligation to come to Somalia’s aid. From the discourse, this appears not to have been a factor in elite problem representations and subsequent policy choice. However, appeasing other important Muslim allies critical of U.S. and U.N. inaction in Somalia, such as Saudi Arabia, appears to have been of some concern to the Bush administration, particularly following their cooperation with the U.S. and U.N. during the Gulf War.

In addition, it was posited that perceived interests and obligations stemming from U.S. membership in the United Nations might compel the U.S. to undertake armed humanitarian interventions to support the organization or its interests and vice versa. From the public discourse, it is apparent that President Bush, like President Clinton, supported the United Nations and U.N. peacekeeping both in general and in Somalia. From a realist perspective, such support may be the result of a simple cost-benefit analysis. Peacekeeping was perceived as a cost-effective alternative to pursue vital national interests in the post-cold war world of declining defense budgets. However, as Somalia was deemed by neither administration as relevant to vital national interests, the extensive U.S. participation in multilateral peacekeeping and peace enforcement in the country, particularly during the Bush administration, does not support the realist perspective.
From an institutional perspective, both President Bush and President Clinton perceived the post-cold war era as providing an opportunity to enhance U.N. peacekeeping; both also apparently felt compelled to greater action in Somalia given the U.N.’s inadequacies and limits minus the capabilities of the United States. Thus, the idea that membership in the United Nations created or fostered an intrinsic interest and desire to support the organization and its institutions, leading the U.S. to intervene in Somalia, may have some credibility. However, policy behavior of both administrations might simply be reflective of the perspectives of the administration elite towards the organization and its perceived compatibility or interconnectedness with the administration’s policy objectives. Both administrations perceived U.S. participation as necessary for U.N. action.

For the Clinton administration, in particular, the discourse reveals a tendency to equate U.S. interests with those of the United Nations and vice versa. U.S. participation and support of U.N. peacekeeping efforts in Somalia were viewed as promoting multilateralism, a central pillar of the Clinton administration’s stated foreign policy objectives. Likewise, the United Nation’s efforts regarding nation building in Somalia furthered another key administration objective – democratic promotion – particularly in Africa, a region the new administration promised to give greater attention. The perceived Security Council consensus and cooperation thus facilitated the U.S. support of the UNOSOM II mandate. After the June 5th attack on the Pakistani peacekeepers, the U.S. felt obligated to uphold the U.N. mandate and to protect U.N. credibility, as it was integrally connected with U.S. credibility.
The perceived ties to the United Nations on behalf of U.S. decision makers was likely a reflection of the relative success of U.N./U.S actions in the post-cold war world. From this perspective, U.S. intervention in Somalia could be seen as an attempt to maintain the successful multilateral momentum from the Gulf War and humanitarian operations in Iraq. In other words, the perception of past U.N./U.S. success increased the likelihood of a U.S.-led multilateral intervention in Somalia.\textsuperscript{243}

\textit{Ease and utility of intervention}

From an analysis of the discourse, the perceived utility of American intervention in Somalia was an important factor in the Bush administration decisionmaking calculus. It was only after international and limited U.S. efforts in Somalia were perceived as failing that the Bush administration decided to intervene with the U.S. military airlift. This assessment regarding the utility of intervention – or the perception that intervention could make a difference – appeared unwavering across the subsequent problem representations of both the Bush and Clinton administrations up to October 1993. This supports the hypothesis that the perceived ability to make a difference in solving or dealing with a given problem is an important decisional factor regarding humanitarian intervention. Once the utility of humanitarian intervention had been determined, the perceived ease of intervention influenced both administrations’ choice of options.

The ease or “doability” of intervention was also a key factor in the Bush decision to send troops into Somalia, supporting the hypothesis that such a perception is important in promoting or justifying armed humanitarian intervention. Especially when contrasted to Bosnia, armed humanitarian intervention into Somalia was viewed as relatively easy:
the opposition was almost universally seen as weak and incapable of seriously
challenging the military might of the United States; the terrain was seen as favorable to
the introduction of troops; while the conflict itself was seen as historically less explosive
and more conducive to a political settlement. From the lack of discursive debate, this
characterization appears to have been readily accepted by the Clinton administration and
likely played into subsequent decisions regarding the placement of U.S. troops under
U.N. command, the promotion of nation building, and the decision to go after Aidid.

Bureaucratic interests

Publicly, the discursive record provides some insight as to the role bureaucratic
interests played in promoting armed humanitarian intervention in Somalia. Initially, I
had posited that the military’s desire to protect and justify military budgets, particularly
given its downsizing following the end of the cold war, could serve to promote armed
humanitarian intervention. The military’s promotion of the troop option in the fall of
1992, after its prolonged and public reluctance towards armed humanitarian intervention,
does initially appear to support that hypothesis.

The military’s support of the troop option, according to officials present during
the deliberations, was crucial to the final intervention decision. In the fall of 1992, prior
to the stated change in attitudes, the military’s reluctance towards intervention had come
under increasing public criticism, leading some to question whether the public’s
investment in defense was indeed worth it. Colin Powell addressed these concerns in his
editorial to the New York Times printed in October of that year.244 The idea that public
pressure and criticism was a critical factor in changing Pentagon attitudes towards
intervention is supported by Admiral Jeremiah, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. In a later interview, Jeremiah noted that the swift change in Pentagon attitudes towards intervention in Somalia was the result of frustration that the military “was taking all the heat” to intervene in Somalia and Bosnia and that the civilian side of the administration appeared mired in indecision. According to Jeremiah, “Everyone wanted us to volunteer – to go into Bosnia and into Somalia – but nobody was making decisions about what they wanted to do.”

However, by the spring of 1993 it is clear that the uniformed military wanted to withdraw from Somalia as it sensed that longer-term involvement in the country might threaten to draw them deeper into the conflict, placing both American troops and the mission’s image of success at greater risk. This desire to maintain the mission’s image of success also perhaps explains the military’s support of the decision to send in U.S. Rangers and Delta force commandos to help in the hunt for Aidid, although there is nothing in the public discourse to support it.

**Use of analogies and historical lessons**

From an analysis of the discourse, it appears that historical analogies played an important part in the Somalia problem representations of both the Bush and Clinton administrations. However, contrary to scholars like Khong, who argue that policymakers use analogies in a strict analogue fashion, an analysis of the administrative discourse in Somalia reveals greater decision making complexity. My suggestion that historical analogies or precedents tend to act as a constraint, shaping the parameters of the story and subsequent influencing the selection of options appears to be supported by the evidence.
Although not evoked in every key juncture or problem representation, analogies appeared to have played an important part in the evolving narrative of the Somalia story.

From the public discourse it is clear that Vietnam and the ongoing Balkan conflict were used as referents for public justification and or decision making, particularly by elites within the Bush administration. However, rather than influencing the overall representation of the problem, these analogies appeared to have influenced selective, but important, parts of the administration’s story. This is evident in the discourse surrounding the second story of intervention and the Bush administration’s perception of relationships and choice of options. Within the administration, historical analogies appeared most salient to military leaders whose personal experiences in Vietnam, Lebanon and or the Gulf War enhanced their propensity to evoke these events in the process of Somalia decision making.247

In terms of key relationships, a comparison to the conflicts in Vietnam and the Balkans led decision makers to conclude, or at least publicly justify, that intervention in Somalia would be relatively simple. Given the lack of questioning or public debate, this assessment appears to have been more or less accepted by the Clinton administration, influencing its goals and perceptions regarding the utility of force in the country.248 Analogies also worked to more directly influence the Bush administration’s selection of options. For Colin Powell, the lessons from Vietnam were reinforced by his personal experience in Panama and the Gulf War. These lessons were cognitively distilled into schema, or decision making axiom, regarding the importance of matching decisive force to achieve political objectives. According to Powell, this axiom influenced his counsel to the president and other top decision makers. Likewise, Robert Oakley’s Vietnam
experiences made him wary of imposing political solutions on the indigenous populace. In short, whether as a referent for comparison or as specific lessons distilled from past experiences, analogies were not simply evoked to justify the Bush administration’s policies but appear to have influenced its selection of options and subsequent response to the Somalia problem.

Likewise, historical analogies figured prominently in the Clinton administration’s representation of the Somalia problem. As evident from the discourse during the transition, the American military’s experience in Beirut made officers wary of a prolonged engagement in Somalia, leading them to emphasize the mission’s success in the hope of an early UNITAF withdrawal and subsequent U.N. takeover. As demonstrated from the discourse, the perception of success led the administration to continue the downsizing of its troop commitment. However, given the absence of direct references to Beirut within the public discourse of the key elite, the analogy was omitted from the Clinton administration’s representations of the conflict.  

However, other historical analogies figured prominently into the administration’s discourse, apparently influencing the representation of the Somalia problem. During the Clinton administration, key foreign policy officials frequently compared their administration and the post-cold war era to that of Truman’s and the post-world war II era. Parallels of American hegemony, environmental ambiguity, prominence of the United Nations and other international organizations, and the promise of international cooperation and the U.S. responsibility were frequently highlighted.

For the Clinton administration, global cooperation in the Gulf War, Northern Iraq and Somalia underscored the opportunity and promise of multilateralism. This
perception subsequently influenced the administration’s goals, relationships and selection of options, as illustrated by its strong support of the United Nations’ ambitious agenda in Somalia. Likewise, the commitment to this agenda, and U.N. peacekeeping in general, led to the administration’s dogged pursuit of General Aidid and the subsequent ill-fated death of U.S. troops. In short, although not factoring into every story or key representation of the Somalia problem, historical analogies did appear at key junctures within the decision making process, influencing behavior and subsequent outcomes during both administrations.

In summation, an analysis of the social narrative from both the Bush and Clinton administrations reveals, as posited, that historical analogies did appear to have influenced key stories or problem representations pertaining to Somalia. It also reveals that perceived domestic and international pressures, from the media, Congress, and international humanitarian agencies helped bring the issue to the administration’s attention and were critical to the final decision of U.S. withdrawal. However, other factors appeared to have been relatively more influential in other intervention decisions. First, although there were no clear vital interests at stake, an apparent “moral imperative” was at work in the intervention decisions. Meanwhile, appeasing perceived pressures from African and Muslim allies also appeared salient, particularly to the November 1992 intervention decision. In addition, the dominant perception that intervention could make a difference in the situation and that the mission would be relatively easy in comparison to other missions, such as in Bosnia, also seemed influential to the administrations’ decisions. This assessment of “doability” appears to have been somewhat affected by the military’s desire to protect and justify its budgets. Finally, the general hypothesis that
interests and obligations stemming from U.N. membership also appear to have factored into the intervention decisions. These hypotheses, as well as others suggested by the Somalia case, will be further explored in subsequent chapters.


3 Weiss, Military-Civilian Interactions, 77.


7 USCENTCOM, USCENTCOM In Somalia, 3.


9 Weiss, Military-Civilian Interactions, 77.

10 Weiss, Military-Civilian Interactions, 81.


See Oberdorfer, “U.S. Took Slow Approach;” See also testimony by Andrew Natsios, Andrew Natsios states that Kunder’s “assessment trip coincided with the President’s reading of a cable by U.S. Ambassador to Kenya, Smith Hempstone, on the current situation along the Kenya-Somalia border. The President, deeply disturbed by what he read in the Ambassador’s report and heard from the Kunder mission, ordered an expanded U.S. initiative.” United States, Cong., House., Committee on Foreign Affairs, Excerpt of Hearing of the Subcommittee on Africa, Crisis and Chaos in Somalia, 16 Sept. 1992, Congressional Universe, Online Service, Congressional Information Service.

Quoted in Oberdorfer, “U.S. Took Slow Approach.”

Quoted in Oberdorfer, “U.S. Took Slow Approach.”


Senator Kassebaum (R) had urged Bush to act in Somalia starting back in 1991. On July 22 1992, following the Kunder trip, Kassebaum testified to the House Select Committee on Hunger that the U.S. and the U.N. should take a stronger response to the crisis in Somalia and that U.N. forces should be sent in irregardless of consent of warring factions. See Associated Press, “U.N. Urged to Send Troops to Protect Somalian Relief,” Los Angeles Times: A14.

A slightly shortened version of the cable was reprinted in the Washington Post in the form it was received at the Africa desk of the State Department. See Smith Hempstone, “Dispatch From a Place Near Hell,” Washington Post, 23 Aug. 1992, sec. Outlook: C1.

U.S., Cong., House, Situation on the Horn of Africa.

U.S., Dept. of State, Special Briefing: Humanitarian Assistance Efforts.


U.S., Dept. of State, Special Briefing: Humanitarian Assistance Efforts.

U.S., Cong., House, Situation on the Horn of Africa.

USAID, Briefing on Somalia.

Hempstone, “Dispatch From a Place Near Hell.”

U.S., Dept. of State, Humanitarian Assistance Efforts.

USAID, Briefing on Somalia.
Quoted in Gordon, “With U.N. Help, U.S. will Airlift Food to Somalia”

U.S., Cong., House, Crisis and Chaos in Somalia.

United States, Cong., Senate, Armed Services Committee, Situation in Bosnia and Appropriate U.S. and Western Responses, 11 Aug. 1992, Lexis-Nexis, online service, Federal News Service.


Quoted in Oberdorfer, “U.S. took Slow Approach.”


Much of this pressure was coming from the Muslim world and key U.S. allies. See for example, Kim Murphy, “Islamic World Galvanized by Reported Killings of Bosnia’s Muslims, Deplores inaction by U.N.,” Los Angeles Times, 14 Aug., 1992, A5.


Perlez, “U.S. Encounters Snags in Airlift.”


Hirsh and Oakley, 27.


56 Oberdorfer, “The Path to Intervention.”


60 Quoted in Binder, “Bush Ready to Send Troops.”


64 Bush, “Mission to Somalia.”


67 According to Cohen, “the relief system was not working, it was broken. Someone had to fix it or tens of thousands more would die. Only we could do it.” United States, Cong., House, Foreign Affairs Committee, *Situation in Somalia*, 17 Dec. 1992, *Lexis-Nexis*, online service, Federal News Service.


69 Cheney stated in DOD briefing that “the reason we now find ourselves in a position where we feel it’s essential to deploy U.S. combat forces is because all the normal approaches for dealing with this crisis have failed…All of those efforts have been inadequate and, for that reason, we believe it is necessary to send in U.S. forces to provide leadership to get the situation stabilized and return it to a state where the normal U.N. peacekeeping forces can deal with the circumstances.” See United States, Dept. of Defense, *Special Briefing Regarding Somalia*, 4 Dec. 1992, *Lexis-Nexis*, online service, Federal News Service.


71 Bush, “Mission to Somalia.”

Oakley and Hirsch claim that the Bush administration offered to make the operation an official U.N. peacekeeping operation but that such an offer was rejected by the U.N because the operation did not fit U.N. peacekeeping or practice at that time. See Hirsch and Oakley, 45.

U.S., Senate, Armed Services Committee, *Situation in Bosnia*.


Oberdorfer, “The Path to Intervention.”

However, one account claims that the idea of forceful humanitarian intervention had been formulated back in the Pentagon some time before and had been even tested by Marines in early 1992. This preformulation reportedly made it easier for the military to quickly organize and plan for U.S. intervention in Somalia. See Hirsch and Oakley, f.n. 14, 42. This claim is supported by statements from Colin Powell, see U.S., Dept. of Defense, *Special Briefing on Somalia*, 4 Dec. 1992.


Quoted in Oberdorfer, “The Path to Intervention.”

In an interview, Mohammed Ali Mahdi, the leader of one of the two major clans at war in Mogadishu, discussed his lack of control over his troops “These are boys who come from the countryside. It will take time to train them and the understanding to accept the rule of the country. They have not been to school.” Quoted in Jane Perlez, “Chaotic Somalia Starves as Strongmen Battle,” *New York Times* 4 Oct. 1992, late ed., sec. 1: 1.


Statement from Powell. Cheney also stated that a U.S. military presence would likely remain under the U.N. operation “to come to the rescue if a more difficult circumstance develops.” See U.S., Dept. of Defense, Special Briefing on Somalia, 4 Dec. 1992.

As stated by Powell, “Because of the very fine response we have gotten from our friends around the world… I am feeling more and more comfortable that there will be adequate forces available to pick up this peacekeeping mission, and we can see our way clear of this operation in a few months.” See U.S., Dept of Defense, Special Briefing on Somalia, 4 Dec. 1992.


Weiss, Military-Civilian Interactions, 82.

U.S., Senate, Armed Services Committee, Situation in Bosnia.


According to Herman Cohen, the U.S. expected that the issue of disarmament “will be handled by the Somalis themselves in negotiations as part of the political process” within which Oakley and Kittani were currently involved. U.S., Cong., House, Foreign Affairs Committee, Situation in Bosnia.


Oberdorfer, “Oakley Called From Retirement.”


Hirsch and Oakley, 50.

Hirsch and Oakley, 50-54.


109 Hirsch and Oakley, 56.


113 Oberdorfer, “The Path to Intervention.”


Richburg, “Top Marine Calls Somalia Mission Done.”


Referring once again to the post-WWII era analogy, Clinton argued that “a prosperous America…is absolutely essential for the prosperity of the rest of the world.” See Bill Clinton, American Leadership and Global Change, Address at the Centennial Celebration, American University, Washington D.C., 26 Feb. 1993, Dispatch Magazine, Vol 4, No. 9, March 1, 1993, online access, <http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC>

According to Clinton, “I will work closely with the international community through the United Nations and other vital institutions to resolve contentious dispute and to meet the challenges of the next century. America cannot and should not bear the world’s burdens alone…The Gulf War and the humanitarian relief operations in Somalia demonstrate what is best about the United Nations and what the founders had in mind over 40 years ago: confronting aggression by outlaw natons, restoring hope to those in need as international partners. Let us act in concert today to achieve those laudable goals.” Bill Clinton, A New Ear of Peril and Promise, Address before the Diplomatic Corps, Georgetown University, Washington D.C., 18 Jan. 1993, Dispatch Magazine, Vol. 4, No. 5, Feb., 1 1993, online access, <http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC>


The Los Angeles Times quoted U.N. and other diplomats as saying “As difficult as the challenges may appear to be in Somalia, it may well be an easier test case for the U.N. than a lot of other places staring us in the face all over the world – Bosnia, for example…” Here, at least, you’re not facing a First World army. The closest thing that might be looming out there is in the central region in Somalia, but even that, there’s maybe 15 tanks, maximum, and a ragtag band of fighters. So when you look around and say, ‘Where is the U.N. going to start?’ – well it’s got to start someplace that’s relatively easy. And Somalia is even easier than, say, Angola or other trouble spots in Africa.” Quoted in Fineman, “Now it Their Turn,” 4 May 1993.


See Albright, Building a Collective Security System.


Albright, A Collective Security System.


Term was used by Madeleine Albright in statement before Congress. See Myths of Peacekeeping, Statement before the Subcommittee on International Security, International Organizations, and Human
169 According to administration spokesperson, Mike McCurry, “as the first Chapter VII U.N. peace making operation of its kind, we have felt all along that there would be things we would learn from the effort in Somalia as it applies to future peacekeeping and peacemaking operations.” U.S., Dept. of State, Daily Press Briefing, 9 Sept. 1993, 10-12.

170 Clinton, “Address to Troops,” 5 May 1993.


172 The mutilation of the Pakistani bodies, many who were disemboweled and skinned, was viewed as especially shocking and offensive as, according to Islamic belief, a body has to be whole and immediately buried to ensure its ascent to heaven. It had been originally perceived that the Somalis would be more accepting of the U.N. Pakistani troops given their commonality of Islam. See report of the fighting in Donatella Lorch, “Aidid’s Forces Still Strong,” New York Times 21 June 1993, late ed.: A6.

173 The swiftness of the U.N. response was in part due to Pakistan’s holding of the Security Council presidency at that time. For evidence of the “strong” U.S. support, see statements by Mike McCurry in U.S., Dept. of State, Daily Press Briefings, 7 June 1993.


175 Hirsch and Oakley, 121; Weiss, Military and Civilian Interactions, 89.


177 Madeleine Albright, interview with Bob Schieffer on Face the Nation, 13 June, 1993, Lexis-Nexis, online service, Burrelle’s Information Services, CBS News Transcripts.


179 Hirsch and Oakley, 118.


Clinton, Radio Address, 12 June 1993.


Howe stated outright that “We are not going to negotiate with Aidid. I’m not making any deal… the only solution is for him to answer for his crimes.” This refusal to negotiation as an option is supported by statements from White House spokesperson, Mike McCurry “we don’t have any reason at this point to suspect that a dialogue with him would prove to be fruitful.” See Howe as quoted in Keith B. Richburg, “U.N.’s Somalia Quandary,” Washington Post 8 Aug. 1993: A19; Albright as quoted in Richard Bernstein, “Against New Odds, the U.N. Insists on Helping in Somalia,” New York Times 18 July 1993, late ed., sec. 4: 4; and Michael McCurry in U.S, Dept. of State, Daily Press Briefing, 10 Sept. 1993, 7-9.


The Deputies Committee principals included chair and National Security advisor, Sandy Berger, Undersecretary of Defense, Frank Wisner, Undersecretary of State, Peter Tarnoff, Deputy Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Dave Jeremiah, See Woods, 163.


Woods, 162.

Hirsch and Oakley, 122.


See speech by Les Aspin to the Center of Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Washington D.C., 27 Aug. 1993, Lexis-Nexis, online service, Federal News Service; See also Mike McCurry’s statement that the administration was attempting to address Congressional concerns, U.S. Dept. of State, Daily Press Briefing, 9 Sept. 1993.


Sciolino, “U.N. Chief Warning Against U.S. Pullout.”


While the White House had been informed of previous Ranger operations in advance, the October 3rd mission had been mounted so quickly that the President had not been informed. See Bowden, 311;

For a first hand account from the soldiers who fought in the operation, see Mark Bowden, Blackhawk Down, (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1999).


Christopher interview with Frank Sessno, 4 Oct. 1993.


Christopher interview with Frank Sessno, 4 Oct. 1993.


Christopher interview with Tim Russert, 10 Oct. 1993.


Albright, 12 May 1994.

Albright, 12 May 1994.

Quoted in Bowden, 334-5.


Public criticism of the military and its reluctance to use force could have influenced the Pentagon’s problem representation and subsequent policy recommendations, however there is little evidence from the public narrative to suggest any direct influence on the Bush administration’s representation of the problem.

Although the analogy was invoked by President Clinton and his officials, the idea of U.S./U.N. interconnectedness and subsequent hypothesis would still hold for the Bush administration, particularly as both successful U.N./U.S. interventions occurred during the Bush presidency.

Research on cognitive decision making suggests that personal experience increases the saliency of an event which in turn makes it more “available” or easily brought to mind to bear on the decision making process. Subsequently a historical analogy, such as the Gulf War, will be more cognitively salient or readily available to bear on a person’s decision making processes if he or she was personally involved in the said event. See Steven J. Sherman and Eric Corty, “Cognitive Heuristics.”

From the statements of then President-elect Clinton, the only part of this assessment that they appeared to question was the proposed date of withdrawal of U.S. forces.

The uniformed military’s reference to Beirut, Lebanon was quite common during the period of the UNITAF transition to UNOSOM II. For many military leaders, prolonged tenure in the country was feared of increasing the likelihood of violence towards U.S. Marines, as in Lebanon in 1983. This fear led to their advocacy of a quick U.S. force withdrawal and turnover to U.N. command. Another lesson often cited from Lebanon was the idea that strict rules of engagement left U.S. troops vulnerable to attack. This fear likely influenced the advocacy of continued forceful rules of engagement under UNOSOM II as authorized in Chapter VII of the U.N. charter.
CHAPTER 3

THE NONINTERVENTION IN RWANDA

“Let us not, in studying our history, get our lessons wrong.”

_U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, March 4, 1994_

“The Holocaust is not an event to be remembered just by those who survived, or just by Jews or just by gypsies. Its memorial should continue to be part of the American experience for everyone. And there is not better place for it than Washington, to remind those who make the agonizing decisions of foreign policy of the consequences of those decisions.”

_Vice President, Al Gore, April 6, 1994_

“Life demands – that we choose either to stand aside as long as we can or to do as much as we can. Let us, in the name of the long and newly dead – and of the living and of those to come – do all we can to stop genocide and to serve life.”

_Albright, April 12, 1994, Address at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum_

On April 6, 1994 a plane carrying Rwandan President, Juvenal Habyarimana, and Burundi President, Cyprien Ntaryamira, was shot down killing all passengers on board. Within hours a premeditated and politically organized killing spree had begun, aimed primarily at the leadership of the Rwandan opposition government and ethnic Tutsis within the Rwandan capital of Kigali. In 100 days, an estimated 800,000 to one million Rwandans – mostly ethnic Tutsis – were brutally killed, primarily with machetes, knives and clubs.
Rwanda has been called the clearest example of genocide since the Holocaust.¹ The small but densely-populated country of approximately 8 million witnessed a rate of killing reportedly “five times that achieved by the Nazis.”² Still, the international community failed to act decisively to prevent the slaughter. In 1999, the results of an independent inquiry concluded that U.N. member states, and the United Nations system as a whole, “failed the people of Rwanda during the genocide in 1994.” Consequently, the international community “must assume and acknowledge their respective parts of the responsibility for the failure.”³

As a superpower, and arguably the most dominant player within the United Nations Security Council, a good portion of the blame for inaction has been leveled upon the United States. Many have considered the American response to events in Rwanda as both late and inadequate.⁴ In 1998, indirectly recognizing his administration’s culpability in the tragedy, Bill Clinton stated that the international community “did not act quickly enough…We did not immediately call these crimes by their rightful name: genocide.”⁵

Why the international community, and the Clinton administration in particular, failed to respond quickly and decisively in the face of genocidal slaughter is a puzzle. Exploring this puzzle is the focus of this chapter. From an analysis of key public statements this chapter will uncover the successive collective representations of the Rwandan crisis that served to influence and limit the response of the Clinton administration – and thus the United Nations. Secondary sources and declassified government documents made recently available will be used to check and supplement the discursive public record. From this analysis, it is clear that perceived lessons from the Somalia intervention constrained the administration’s behavior. Traumatized by the
perceived failure in Mogadishu, it appears that top decision makers within the administration had already ruled out the possibility of armed humanitarian intervention before the Rwandan crisis had even started.

The Initial Story

The Lessons of Somalia

Although the administration’s story regarding Rwanda begins after the crisis erupts in early April 1994, its roots date back to October 3, 1993 and the death of eighteen U.S. servicemen in Somalia. The public and Congressional response to the deaths was both swift and harsh and led to the equally abrupt decision by the administration to withdraw from the country. Unfortunately for Rwanda, when the United States withdrew from Somalia, it withdrew from Africa as a whole. This physical and psychological withdrawal would first have an impact on Rwanda’s neighbor, the small but ethnically similar, Burundi.

Less than three weeks after the deaths in Somalia, on October 21st, Tutsi extremists assassinated the President of Burundi. By the end of the year, violence and war unleashed in the country had claimed tens of thousands of lives and displaced hundreds of thousands. But U.S. and international action in Burundi was not to be. Freshly burned in Somalia, the United States and U.N. Security Council as a whole felt disinclined to extend any sort of peacekeeping venture to the small African nation. The lessons of Somalia would ensure that Burundi was excluded from consideration. This exclusion of Burundi would later have disastrous consequences for Rwanda.
As illustrated in Figure 3.1, the first lesson of Somalia – for both the United States and the United Nations – was that in manmade humanitarian disasters, humanitarian aid and peace enforcement do not mix. As manmade disasters usually have political-military roots, the threat of becoming politically and militarily drawn into a conflict when peacekeepers have the option to use aggressive force is high. Given this assessment, the perceived risks of peacekeeping in Africa appeared to outweigh the perceived benefits. Traditional peacekeeping (known as Chapter VI peacekeeping in reference to the U.N. charter) like humanitarian intervention requires consent of the government or parties involved in a conflict. To ensure the perception of impartiality and neutrality, peacekeepers are lightly armed and allowed to use force only in self-defense. In Somalia, traditional peacekeeping proved insufficient to quell the violence and anarchy that was preventing humanitarian aid shipments from reaching those most affected. Consequently, the U.N. authorized peace enforcement (also known as Chapter VII peacekeeping), giving the United States the right to use deadly force in their humanitarian mission to aid the starving.

However, as the Bush and Clinton administrations were soon to discover, addressing the humanitarian crisis while remaining apart from the political-military conflict became problematic. As stated by President Clinton, what went wrong in Somalia was that “the police operation – which was a legitimate one, that is, to protect the lives of the Somalis – became viewed as a way of choosing sides in the internal conflict of a country because there was no political dialog going on.” Thus, according to Clinton, one of the lessons of Somalia was that “If we’re going to go in and try to save lives, we must know that in the beginning, everyone will be glad to see the U.S. or the
Initiating Event:
Violence following April 6th deaths of presidents of Rwanda and Burundi

Lessons from Somalia:
1) Humanitarian intervention in civil war-related crises is problematic: it poses high risks to peacekeepers and does not address the political-military roots of the problem
2) U.N. peace enforcement is not yet feasible
3) The U.S. (and the U.N.) must be selective in its support for peacekeeping, particularly in the absence of vital U.S. interests
4) Casualties are unacceptable so troops must only be sent into areas where fighting has ceased and political negotiations are possible
5) Congressional and public support is necessary to sustain peacekeeping and especially peace enforcement commitments
6) In the absence of vital American interests, the U.S. and U.N. will help only those first willing to help themselves

Nature of Situation and Key Actor Relationships:
1) The current violence is neither historically unique nor unprecedented for the country or region
2) The violence is civil war related and should soon extinguish itself
3) Congress and the American public are not supportive of U.N. intervention in Rwanda
4) The United States’ and the U.N.’s financial, military and political capabilities are currently overstretched
5) Rwanda is not vital to U.S. national interests

Goal(s):
1) protect U.S. nationals
2) re-establish a cease-fire
3) resume talks and support implementation of Arusha Accords

Actions Taken and Advocated:
1) Extract US nationals
2) Verbally denounce the violence
3) Ensure that PDD-25 guidelines are followed
4) Minimize a U.S. and U.N. commitment
5) Refrain from using “genocide” as a descriptive label of the conflict

Consequences:
1) minimize risk of U.S. military involvement
2) limit further damage to U.N. credibility
3) maximize chances for current and future peacekeeping engagements of strategic interest to U.S.

Figure 3.1: The Clinton administration’s “No interests, No Involvement” story (April-July 1993)
U.N. or anybody because they’re starving and dying. But after a certain amount of time, it will be obvious that it wasn’t just a natural disaster. It was a political problem, a military problem.”

Thus, for President Clinton, “Unless human tragedy is caused by natural disaster, there is no such thing as a purely humanitarian enterprise.” Kofi Annan who, at the time, was head of peacekeeping at the United Nations echoed the President’s sentiments.

I think one of the lessons we learned in Somalia that if you are in peacekeeping it is extremely difficult to cross the line from peacekeeping into enforcement, and once you’ve crossed that line it’s extremely difficult to get back to sort of a strict peacekeeping. And I think this lesson would apply not only to Somalia but other peacekeeping operations...It also leads me to the conclusion that if one wants to mount a peace enforcement operation it has to be just that; you cannot mix it up with humanitarian action, it has to be exclusively peace enforcement.

Following from the above conclusions about humanitarian aid and peace enforcement is the second lesson from Somalia: U.N. peace enforcement was not yet feasible. Following the events in Mogadishu, a U.N. official stated, “The brief experiment with peace enforcement has resulted in the determination by most governments to stay out of that line of work.”

Reportedly, after Somalia the fifteen Security Council members informally agreed that there would be no more new peace-enforcement missions and no expansion of existing operations. The doubts about the future of peace enforcement and expansion of peacekeeping in general were reflected in the administration’s own evolving view of peace operations, most clearly laid out in the new Presidential Decision Directive (PDD-25).

Given their doubts about the capabilities of the United Nations, the third lesson the administration gleaned from the Somalia experience was that if peacekeeping was to
remain an important part of the administration’s foreign policy strategy then the United Nations had to be more selective in choosing its battles. As stated by President Clinton, “If the American people are to say yes to peacekeeping, the United Nation’s must know when to say no.” The events of Somalia led to a substantial revision of the administration’s policy towards peace operations. In early February 1993, President Clinton called for a review of the entire spectrum of peace operations, reflecting the administration’s strong interest in such operations. Initially, the Presidential Decision Directive strongly endorsed the expansion of U.N. peacekeeping operations and U.S. financial, political and military support for such missions. However, after Somalia the document – like the elite public discourse – took on a much different tone, reflecting the administration’s hard-learned lessons from the intervention. In particular, peacekeeping was downgraded from the “central” element of the administration’s national security strategy to an important “contributor.”

In order to prevent another perceived peacekeeping debacle, the administration had to ensure it supported the “right” missions. To help in that determination, the decision directive delineated a list of factors that had to be met, more or less as a whole, before the United States would vote for peace operations within the U.N. Security Council, let alone participate in an operation politically or militarily. Among other things, U.N. involvement in peace operations had to advance U.S. interests; the international community had to exhibit the political will to deal with the problem on a multilateral basis; the mission had to have a clear mandate and the means necessary to achieve that mandate; and, for peace enforcement missions, the “threat to international peace and security” had to be “significant.” Direct U.S. participation in peace
operations required even stricter standards.\textsuperscript{16} The administration’s top officials publicly and repeatedly outlined these, and other considerations, both before and after the unveiling of PDD-25 on May 4, 1994.\textsuperscript{17} In summarizing the new U.S. position on peace operations, Anthony Lake, the president’s National Security Adviser argued, “Neither we nor the international community have the mandate to, the resources for, or the possibility of resolving every conflict of this kind so we have to make distinctions. We have to ask hard questions about where and when we can intervene.”\textsuperscript{18} President Clinton stated, “America cannot solve every problem and must not become the world’s policeman.”\textsuperscript{19} Meanwhile, speaking a bit more bluntly, U.N. Ambassador Albright argued, “We can’t play Dr. Welby to the world.”\textsuperscript{20}

To ensure that the U.S. did not become the United Nations’ policeman, the administration insisted that the U.N. Security Council apply the PDD criteria in its review of current and existing peace operations. While Burundi received the axe early, never perceived as warranting U.N. intervention, Rwanda soon also came under critical review as a pre-existing peace operation, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), first authorized by the U.N. Security Council in October 1993. While more or less informal guidelines up until April 1994, after continued U.S. pressure, the administration’s criteria soon became a formal part of the Security Council’s peace operation review and approval process. As stated by ambassador Albright on May 17, two weeks after the presidential signing of PDD-25, “It is a measure of U.S. leadership that the Security Council earlier this month set out, in a Presidential statement, a list of factors to be considered in peacekeeping that is based on those proposed by the United States.”\textsuperscript{21}
Implied in the new directive was a third lesson from Somalia: casualties, American or not, were simply unacceptable. In Somalia, American servicemen had been drawn into the conflict and lost their lives in the pursuit of the killers of twenty-four Pakistani peacekeepers. Meanwhile, in America, the televised deaths of U.S. servicemen in the streets of Mogadishu unleashed a torrent of domestic criticism. Congressional and domestic support for peace operations – and the president’s foreign policy in general – crashed. In foreign policy circles, the administration’s subsequent desire to avoid casualties was known as the “Somalia Syndrome” or the “Mogadishu Line.” According to Iqbal Riza, former deputy to Kofi Annan, head of U.N. peacekeeping, “Casualties appeared on television screens…you will recall when American soldiers were killed and that was simply not acceptable, and so those risks were not to be taken again.”

Despite the public mood, the administration still considered peacekeeping as important to its overall national security strategy and was unwilling to abandon the concept. Hence, to minimize future casualties it specified that U.N. troops should only be deployed into low risk contexts – in other words, situations where a cease-fire was in place and the consent of parties had been obtained. Although this lesson was reflective of the American experience in Vietnam and Beirut in 1983, the public’s perceived intolerance for casualties was brought home by Somalia for the Clinton administration.

Along those lines, the fourth lesson of Somalia was that in order to be sustainable, peace operations had to have the support of Congress and the American public. As stated in the unclassified version of PDD-25, “the President believes U.S. support for and participation in U.N. peace operations can only succeed over the long-term with the bipartisan support of Congress and the American people.” This theme was
repeated publicly by top officials within the administration and undoubtedly shaped their perception of the Rwandan problem. In testimony before Congress in March of 1994, U.N. Ambassador Albright stated, “Congress, like the president, must play an important role [in peacekeeping decisions] because Congress, like the president, is accountable to the people.” Later, Anthony Lake publicly expounded on the importance of working with Congress on future peace operations and the problem of intervening in Africa given an uncertain public. The U.N.’s top peacekeeping official also reflected these sentiments when he argued before Congress that one “lesson we learned in Somalia is that public opinion and public education is extremely important…not only do we need to inform the public and maintain their support, but it also helps legislatures to maintain the political will and the support for these operations.”

The final lesson of Somalia stemmed from the perception of limits. The perceived failure in Africa led the administration to conclude that the United States, and thus the United Nations, could not solve all of the world’s problems. Hence, others needed to step up to shoulder the burden. Responding to a question about the administration’s inability to stop the violence in Rwanda and elsewhere, Clinton stated:

Harry Truman…said that he discovered after he became president that his job largely consisted of trying to talk other people into doing what they ought to do anyway. Sometimes I feel that way, that I don’t have as much power as I thought I would have. On the other hand, this is a place with some power…there is always the tug of the mind and the heart, of the interests and the values. And what you have to do is to decide how much you can do and do that and do it as well as you can and then try to marshal the energies and ideas and values of other people to help. So that is what I am trying to do. I am trying to construct a framework in which Italy and France and Germany and England and the South American powers and the Asian powers and the African powers can cooperate to try to deal with horrible problems in which the United States leads but does not attempt to do something it cannot do.
In short, the responsibility for solving the world’s problems lies with those most affected by those problems. In the absence of direct U.S. interests, the U.S. – and the U.N. – would only help those who were first willing to help themselves. For Africa, this translated into “African actors are primarily responsible for solving African conflicts,” as the United States had neither the resources nor the political will to tackle them. In May 1994, Albright told Congress that the lack of U.N. approval for peacekeeping operations in countries, such as Burundi, reflected “not callousness on the part of the international community, but rather a recognition of the limits of what U.N. peacekeeping operations can achieve in the absence of a demonstrated will on the part of contending factions to choose negotiations over arms.”

Likewise, the president’s National Security adviser, Anthony Lake, argued that “the reality is that we often cannot solve other people’s problems – and we can never build their nations for them…the primary responsibility for peace rests with the people and the parties to the conflict.” Lake later argued at a special White House Conference on Africa in June 1994, “Care must be translated into conceptual clarity about the nature of the problems Africa faces…with a sober appreciation of the limitations that we face and must overcome – shrinking budgets…An American people uncertain of where and when on earth they want their nation to get involved.”

Thus, Rwanda was the first test case of this new lesson of African responsibility. As stated by President Clinton, “I think the U.N. was very wise in asking African countries to take the lead because they will be there over the long run….And countries like France and the U.S. should support them. But I think this is an important test for them. And if they can do it, it will mean much more over the long run to Africa.”
Goals

Protect U.S. Nationals, Re-establish Cease-fire and Resume Peace Accords

Given the lessons of Somalia and the administration’s characterization of the situation and key actor relationships, when fighting erupted in Rwanda after April 6, 1994, the United States’ goals were limited. The desire to minimize casualties made protecting the 255 U.S. nationals in the country the top priority.34 Related to this goal was the second and soon to be primary goal of re-establishing a cease-fire.

In August of 1993, after over a year of intensive negotiations and broken cease-fires, the Hutu-based Rwandan government and its opposition, the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), signed the Arusha Accords. The Accords, which the United States had helped broker, aimed to create a broad-based transitional government, national transition assembly, and United armed forces, among other things. One month after they were signed, the U.N. Secretary General, Boutros Boutros Gali, requested that a peacekeeping force be sent to Rwanda without delay to oversee their implementation. On October 5 – two days after nineteen U.S. servicemen were killed in Somalia – the United Nations Security Council passed resolution 872, creating the U.N. Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR). U.N. peacekeepers were in place in Rwanda by December 1993.

Given the outside efforts in negotiating the Accords and the presence of U.N. peacekeepers in Kigali, after the violence erupted in Rwanda on April 6, re-establishing a cease-fire and implementing the Arusha Accords became the main goals of the administration once U.S. nationals were out of harms way.35 The administration, and the United Nations Security Council, did not alter this goal characterization – even in face of
evidence of genocide – until after the war between the RPF and government forces had ended in mid-July.

**Nature of Situation and Key Actor Relationships**

*Rwandan Conflict is Not Unique*

As previously stated, the administration’s goals in Rwanda were influenced not only by the lessons of the past but by its perception of the situation and key actor relationships. First, related to the goal of re-establishing a cease-fire was the apparent perception that the current violence in Rwanda was neither historically unique nor unprecedented for the country or region. In October 1993, violence in neighboring Burundi led to the deaths of tens of thousands and the displacement of hundreds of thousands. Even then, such levels of violence and disruption had not warranted U.N. intervention. The rhetoric of the White House and National Security Council suggests that violent conflict was not unusual for the region. Certainly, Africa had its share of peacekeeping missions. In the middle of 1994, nine of the eighteen United Nations peacekeeping missions were in Africa – seven of which, according to President Clinton, were being supported by the United States. The U.N. was still also trying to extricate itself from Somalia. As stated by Anthony Lake, the president’s National Security Adviser, “The phenomenon of societies ripping themselves apart, from Rwanda to Sudan…is neither unique nor new to Africa.”

Thus, the conflict in Rwanda did not appear to warrant special attention by the administration. Moreover, given the seemingly endemic tendency towards violence in the region, the United States and the United Nations had acquired an apparently high
tolerance or immunity to African deaths. On April 20, President Clinton told journalists that “we’re terribly troubled by Rwanda now, but it wasn’t so many months ago that in a period of months it’s estimated that as many as a quarter of a million or more people died in Burundi.”38 Two weeks later, Clinton stated that the “I think the conscience of the world grieved for the slaughter in Rwanda and just a few months ago in Burundi in almost the same proportions.” Unfortunately for those caught up in the violence, that grief did not translate into a moral obligation to intervene to prevent the slaughter.39

The Violence is Civil-War Related and Will Soon Extinguish itself

The American characterization of the conflict as not unique appeared to stem from the perception that the ethnic violence in Rwanda was civil war-related and therefore not unusual. Large-scale violence between Hutu and Tutsi groups had occurred in the region since the late 1950s. From 1990, Rwanda had been engaged in an on again/off again civil war. In February 1994, six months after the signing of the Arusha Accords and two months before the killings began, the RPF broke the cease-fire agreement after 300 civilians were killed in violent demonstrations and counter demonstrations regarding the Arusha peace process.40 Accordingly, U.N. Security Council members viewed the April outbreak of violence and ethnic killings as yet another breakdown of the negotiated cease-fire. Rwanda’s democratization efforts had simply gone astray.41

U.S. officials shared the Security Council’s assessment of the situation.42 Moreover, given the actors’ primitive and limited military capabilities, there was a common assumption that the fighting would soon extinguish itself. According to
Rwandan Ambassador, David Rawson, “Most of us thought that if a war broke out, it would be quick, that these poor people didn’t have the resources, the means, to fight a sophisticated war. I couldn’t have known what they would do each other with the most economic means.” Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, George Moose, agreed: “We were psychologically and imaginatively too limited.”

According to David Rawson, the administration was guilty of wishful thinking. Given their investment in the peace process, officials tended to view a cease-fire as imminent. As stated by Rawson “We were naïve policy optimists, I suppose. The fact that negotiations can’t work is almost not one of the options open to people who care about peace. We were looking for the hopeful signs, not the dark signs.”

U.N. ambassador Albright supports Rawson’s optimistic assessment. In explaining why the U.S. voted for UNAMIR in October 1993 only to push for a total withdrawal of U.N. forces six months later, Albright argued:

There was a deteriorating humanitarian situation, and we believed…there was a hope towards some kind of a peaceful settlement, and it did seem that there was an end point. But let me just tell you that on the Rwanda thing, it is my sense that to a great extent the Security Council and the U.N. missed the boat. We are now dealing with a situation way beyond anything that anybody expected. And as I mentioned earlier, what happened was that we were on one process where a smaller United Nations force, we felt, could deal with some of the issues in the area, and then all of a sudden with the shoot-down of this airplane with the two presidents, it created an avalanche. And so it is hard to judge whether that particular operation started out properly.

Rawson and Albright’s assessment of a cease-fire and impending endpoint to the conflict is also supported by the Department of Defense. In a secret Defense Intelligence Report dated May 9, it is predicted that both sides in the military conflict, the RPF and the government forces (Rwandan Armed Forces or FAR) “would eventually return to the
negotiating table” given the military stalemate, logistical constraints, and the RPF’s narrow political base.47

Thus, characterizing the violence as civil war-related and not unusual apparently led officials to, either consciously or subconsciously, overlook warnings and growing evidence of genocide. On January 11 1994, UNAMIR Commander, General Dallaire, sent an infamous and prophetic fax to U.N. headquarters, which was then distributed to the U.S. State Department.48 Based on information from a top-level government informant with strong ties to the president, the fax warned of arms caches, a plot to assassinate Belgian U.N. peacekeepers and Rwandan members of parliament, and the existence of lists of Tutsis to be exterminated. Considering the informant as credible, Dallaire requested U.N. approval for immediate action to seize the arms caches.49 According to Iqbal Riza, then deputy of U.N. peacekeeping, after reading the cable and seizure request his first thoughts were “Not Somalia, again.” Deeming the informant as not fully credible, Riza ordered the commander to do nothing.50 The warning was overlooked.

According to Riza, when the violence erupted three months later, “nobody” viewed it as connected to genocide but rather saw it as chaotic, random, ethnic killings resulting from “a political deadlock.” Since the term “ethnic killings” had been used to describe the violence in the region since the 1960s, Riza concluded that nothing new had emerged.51 Ethnic violence was simply part of the Rwandan political culture. This view of the Rwandan violence as somehow culturally innate appeared to extend to the U.S. State Department and the National Security Council. According to Prudence Bushnell, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, early on “people didn’t know it was a
genocide. What I was told was ‘Look Pru, these people do this from time to time.’”

Likewise, in February 1994, members of Human Rights Watch approached officials at the agency to express their concerns about Rwanda. According to Alison Des Forges, one of the group’s board members, the response they received was: “These people have always hated each other, they’ll always hate each other, we cannot have any role to play here.” In July, when asked how a tragedy of this proportion could happen in this day and age, Anthony Lake argued that “I think the short answer is that unhappily while our communications and our economies and even our politics in many ways advance, human nature does not change and this, another outburst of what is a long-standing terrible conflict within Rwanda.”

*Lack of Congressional and Public support*

The next theme pertaining to the nature of actor relationships was the perceived lack of domestic support for U.S. intervention in Rwanda and U.N. peacekeeping in general. According to James Woods, Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs at the Department of Defense, the administration was “afraid of a bad congressional reaction, which there certainly would have been. Public opinion was not prepared for another humanitarian intervention and there isn’t one American in 10,000 who’s ever heard of Rwanda, and so it went.”

From the discourse of top officials within the administration, one of their key concerns pertained to continued financing of peace operations. Since August 1993, the administration’s policy towards U.N. peace operations had come under increasing congressional attack. Early January 1994, Senate minority leader Bob Dole wrote a
scathing editorial about the Clinton administration’s policy towards peacekeeping and announced his plan to submit a “peace powers act” before Congress. Among other things, the act called for the barring of U.S. troops from serving under U.N. command and requiring congressional consultation before the U.S. voted on U.N. activities. In particular, Dole criticized the “ever-escalating costs” of such operations. As Dole argued, “When the U.N. Security Council votes, American taxpayers should grab their wallets.” 57 As for American interests and obligations in Rwanda, Dole made his position clear in April. “I don’t think we have any national interest there. I hope we don’t get involved there. I don’t think we will. The Americans are out. As far as I’m concerned in Rwanda, that ought to be the end of it.” 58

From the discourse, it appears the administration took notice. Not only was the Presidential Decision Directive revised at the last minute to include a section on “Congressional-Executive Relations,” but its top officials appeared intent on placating congressional concerns in public speeches and testimony before Congress. For example, from early March until mid-May, Madeleine Albright testified numerous times before Congress on the importance of U.N. peacekeeping to U.S. security, the necessity of continued financing, and of the administration’s efforts to raise efficiency and reduce costs of such operations. In her testimony before Congress, Albright stated, “We have informed the Secretary General of our determination – and of yours – to see that the U.S. assessment [for peacekeeping] is reduced to a more reasonable level.” 59 As for Rwanda, Albright assured Congress that the current U.N. operation there was being reassessed “in light of the tragedies that are engulfing that country.” 60
Statements of other top officials reflected the administration’s concerns regarding congressional and public opinion. On April 21, just after the United Nations Security Council cut the existing U.N. force in Rwanda from 2500 to 250, Secretary of State Christopher testified before Congress. Noting that U.S arrears to the United Nations for peacekeeping were expected to exceed $1 billion in 1994, Christopher argued, “the cost of peacekeeping, of course, is a continuing, major concern for the Congress as well as for our administration. We’re working to raise efficiency and to cut costs.”

In a White House briefing on May 5, presidential National Security Adviser Lake reiterated these statements when he outlined the goals of the new presidential decision directive. Underscoring the importance and perceived difficulty of acquiring congressional approval, Lake noted that the president had personally called on congressional leadership to pass the peacekeeping budget.

Reportedly, the administration’s concerns over financing were reflected in U.N. Security Council debates regarding Rwanda. As early as February 1994, cost concerns combined with fears of “mission creep” (i.e., transforming the existing mission in the country from that of traditional peacekeeping to peace enforcement), leading the United States to vigorously oppose any changes to the UN’s limited mandate, force levels and rules of engagement in the country. On May 17, over one month after the start of the violence, a team of State Department and Pentagon officials reportedly told U.N. officials that deploying a larger and primarily African peacekeeping contingent to Rwanda (thereby augmenting the skeletal U.N. force already in place in the country) would increase the risk of casualties and thus negatively impact the administration’s chances of
getting peacekeeping funds from Congress.\textsuperscript{64} These concerns over costs continued to impact Security Council decisions throughout the duration of the Rwandan crisis.\textsuperscript{65}

\textit{U.N. Overstretched and Rwanda not Vital to U.S. interests}

Related to the preoccupation with finances was the theme that the United States, and thereby the United Nations, was politically, financially, and militarily overstretched. On June 7, President Clinton argued that the U.S. was essentially doing “about all we can do” in Rwanda at a time when it had “troops in Korea, troops in Europe, the possibility of new commitments in Bosnia” and was working to “put the U.N. agreement in Haiti back on track.”\textsuperscript{66} Statements of other top administrative officials support the president’s sentiments.\textsuperscript{67} Clearly, Rwanda did not warrant U.S. attention. However, according to Tony Marley, Political Military adviser for the U.S. State Department from 1992-1995, the administration was not united in its perceived obligation towards Rwanda.

There was an honest disagreement within the administration as to whether or not there was a requirement to be involved. The president was elected based on a domestic policy agenda, not a foreign policy agenda. There was no interest whatever to be involved in an African conflict – again, a result of the Somalia syndrome. There are others, however, that took the position that if the administration wanted to trumpet its role as the sole remaining superpower in the world, that brought certain responsibilities with it in the international community, and additionally, for an administration that wanted to be seen as being supportive of human rights, that drives action on human rights violation of this magnitude.\textsuperscript{68}

If there was a division within the administration along these lines, then the president’s perceived obligation to the public apparently outweighed any perceived obligation to stop the Rwandan massacres.

The idea that Rwanda, and Africa in general, was not vital to U.S. interests was a clear theme emanating from the elite discourse from the Clinton administration. On April
21, in response to a Senator’s question of why the U.S. was prepared to intervene in

Bosnia and not elsewhere, Secretary of State Christopher told Congressional members,

We’re getting into Bosnia because we have a strategic interest in preventing that conflict from spreading. We are getting into Bosnia because I think maintaining NATO as a credible force in Europe is also very important. We also have a very strong interest in preventing a flood of refugees from spreading in Europe, where we have a tremendous interest…We do not have the same kind of strategic interest in Somalia or in Rwanda as we do in Bosnia.”

President Clinton apparently agreed. On May 3, the president argued that while conflicts like Bosnia “clearly affect our interests. Others, such as Rwanda, less directly affect our own security interests but still warrant our concern and assistance.” On May 25, in a commencement address before the U.S. Naval Academy, President Clinton stated:

The end of the superpower standoff lifted the lid from a cauldron of long-simmering hatreds. Now the entire global terrain is bloody with such conflicts, from Rwanda to Georgia. We cannot solve every such outburst of civil strife or militant nationalism simply by sending in our forces. We cannot turn away from them. But our interests are not sufficiently at stake in so many of them to justify a commitment of our folks.

Reflecting the administration’s “new realism,” U.N. ambassador, Madeleine Albright, argued in early June, “to be sustainable, American foreign policy must be guided by American interests.” Consequently, “regional conflicts do not affect us equally or in the same way. Some – such as Somalia or Rwanda – are of primarily humanitarian concern.” Others, such as North Korea, Haiti, the Balkans, and the new independent states, were in a different category “where our interests are especially compelling and the risks especially high.”

The lack of interest in Rwanda among the administration’s top officials was apparently well-known by low to mid-level policy makers. As James Woods, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of African Affairs at DOD recalled, shortly after the Clinton
administration came into office in the spring of 1993, “I put Rwanda on the list” of potentially serious crises the administration might face in the coming year.

I received guidance from higher authorities, ‘Look, if something happens in Rwanda-Burundi, we don’t care. Take it off the list. U.S. national interest is not involved and we can’t put all these silly humanitarian issues on lists, like important problems like the Middle East, North Korea and so on. Just make it go away.’ And it was pretty clear to me, given the fiasco of the end of our involvement in Somalia, that we probably wouldn’t react.73

While the crisis in Rwanda would eventually be perceived as serious enough to warrant daily interagency attention, the lack of high-level interest, particularly from the White House and State Department, frustrated any significant cooperative action on the issue at lower administrative levels.74 Consequently, the one agency with strong views on the issue – the Pentagon – generally dominated interagency discussions, which subsequently shaped the administration’s response to the crisis.

**Actions Taken and Advocated**

*Extract Nationals, Denounce Violence, Support Cease-fire & Enforce PDD-25*

Given these characterizations and considering the administration’s previously stated goals, U.S. actions in Rwanda, both advocated and taken, were limited. After the extraction of U.S. nationals in the country, the primary public response from the administration on the crisis in Rwanda was the verbal denouncement of the violence and calls for a cease-fire.75 Behind the scenes, the U.S. acted aggressively to ensure adherence to the new Presidential Decision Directive. The influence of the directive was evident on April 21, when the Security Council voted to downsize the U.N. force from 2100 (number following the withdrawal of the Belgian contingent in early April) to a
token force of 270. Reportedly, the only thing that prevented a total U.N. withdrawal, which was strongly advocated by the U.S. State Department, was the resistance of several African nations on the Council and the U.S. ambassador to the U.N., Madeleine Albright who felt that abandoning Rwanda could disastrously ruin the United Nation’s reputation.

The directive’s influence was also seen in later debates on expanding the UNAMIR operation. On April 30, in light of the continuing massacres, United Nation’s Secretary General, Boutros Boutros Gali, called on the Security Council to reconsider its decision to downsize the U.N. force given the “scale of human suffering in Rwanda and its implications for the stability of neighboring countries.” That same day, the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees described the twenty-four hour flow of 250,000 Rwandan refugees into neighboring Tanzania as the “largest and fastest mass exodus of people it has ever witnessed.” The Red Cross identified Rwanda as “the worst disaster it has ever seen.”

During the following two weeks, two plans emerged to deal with the Rwandan problem: one advocated by UNAMIR commander Dallaire, the other by the United States. In line with the PDD-25 guidelines, the United States felt that the Dallaire plan, which called for a robust military excursion (5500 troops) into Kigali to protect thousands of trapped Tutsi civilians, would require the consent of the warring parties and a cease-fire. In their absence the mission required a U.N. Chapter VII authorization that the United States vigorously opposed. The plan also called for the airlifting of troops and heavy equipment, actions that the U.S. argued it was not prepared to undertake. Meanwhile, the U.S. plan proposed creating “safe zones” for refugees and displaced
persons at the border, away from the fighting. The U.S. argued that a smaller deployment (around 2500 troops) was more manageable logistically. In addition, ambassador Albright made clear to U.N. Security Council members that the White House had concerns about the costs and risks of intervening into the Rwandan civil war. After much debate, the U.N. Security Council passed resolution 918 on May 17, expanding the UNAMIR operation to 5,500 troops and putting into place an embargo on arms and ammunitions. Although modeled after the Dallaire plan, the resolution did not give the troops enforcement authorization under Chapter VII of the U.N. charter. Moreover, the deployment of troops was made contingent on a number of U.S. demands, consistent with the PDD-25 guidelines.

Minimize U.S. and U.N. Commitment

Despite the growing severity of the situation, the Clinton administration continued to act in a manner that minimized its military and financial involvement to the conflict. On May 2, the White House spokesperson outlined U.S. actions in Rwanda. In terms of humanitarian aid, the State Department was going to provide $15 million dollars for refugee assistance. Meanwhile, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, John Shattuck, and Rwandan Ambassador, David Rawson, were leaving for Africa to “try to reinvigorate peace talks toward some kind of a settlement.” When questioned that $15 million seemed like a “moderate sum” given the dire nature of the Rwandan situation, the administration stressed that U.S. efforts were part of a “multinational package” and that it was working with the United Nations to deal with “growing humanitarian crisis” in the country. That same day, U.N. ambassador Albright underscored the limited nature
of U.S. actions in Rwanda. In a CNN interview, Ralph Beigleiter asked Albright if the U.S. was considering any type of military action to either “relieve the suffering of the refugees in neighboring Tanzania, or perhaps to try to stop the fighting in Rwanda?”

_Amb. Albright:_ Ralph, what we’re going to try to do there is a combination again, as I mentioned earlier tools, to work with a regional organization, the OAU, to try to get proper assistance to the refugees on the border. Also, to try to mobilize the rest of the international community to provide humanitarian assistance and to also make sure that this does not spread into the neighboring country of Burundi.

_Beigleiter:_ No consideration of U.S. troops to-

_Amb. Albright:_ No consideration of U.S. troops. 88

In other words, for the Clinton administration stopping the fighting in Rwanda required a military solution. And, since the U.S. had ruled out peace enforcement, the only options it had left were diplomacy and limited humanitarian aid. Three weeks later, on May 31, the U.S. agreed to equip Ghanian troops with 50 American armored personnel carriers (APCs). However, the APC deployment was soon stalled as arguments between the Pentagon and the U.N. arose over the price the U.N. was to pay for the equipment and the nature of the transaction itself. As a result, the APCs were not deployed to Rwanda until August, nearly one month after the violence had ceased. 89

_Avoid “Genocide” Label_

Aside from limiting its military commitment, the administration sought to limit any perceived legal or moral obligation towards intervention in Rwanda. This is most clearly illustrated in its effort to avoid labeling the violence in the country as “genocide.” Soon after the conflict erupted, the administration was faced with internal and external questions over whether the violence in Rwanda met the criteria of genocide. The
administration equivocated publicly for months over the issue, despite growing media
reports labeling the violence as “genocide.” In an exchange with reporters on June 10,
State Department spokesperson, Christine Shelly, danced around the issue.

Question: How would you describe the events taking place in Rwanda?

Ms. Shelly: Based on the evidence we have seen from observations on the
ground, we have every reason to believe that acts of genocide have
occurred in Rwanda.

Question: What’s the difference between “acts of genocide” and
“genocide?”

Ms. Shelly: As you know, there is a legal definition of this…As the
distinctions between the words, we’re trying to call. What we have seen
so far, as best as we can, and based, again, on the evidence, we have every
reason to believe that acts of genocide have occurred.

Question: How many acts of genocide does it take to make genocide?

Ms. Shelly: Alan, that’s just not a question that I’m in a position to
answer.

According to Ambassador Rawson, the government’s hesitant position on the issue was
justified. “[A]s a responsible government, you don’t just go around hollering
genocide…you say that acts of genocide may have occurred and they need to be
investigated.” Rawson’s statements are reflective of orders issued by Warren
Christopher at the State Department. On May 21, in a secret State Department memo,
Christopher authorized department officials, “in light of the stark facts in Rwanda” and
growing “press and public inquiries” to use the formulation “acts of genocide have
occurred.” He also authorized U.S. delegations at international meetings to agree to
resolutions using comparable formulations of the statement. According to the memo, the
determination that “acts of genocide” had occurred in Rwanda had no legal consequences
for the United States given that such acts fell beyond U.S. jurisdiction.
On June 10, after growing internal and external pressure Secretary of State Christopher relented, “if there is any particular magic in calling it genocide, I have no hesitancy in saying that.”95 Thereafter, the administration’s top foreign policy officials, including Christopher, National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, and President Clinton, all used the word “genocide” in describing events in Rwanda.96 Despite the change in the semantic discourse, the administration’s policy towards the country appeared unwavering.

Consequences

_Minimize Risk and U.S. Involvement_

Following from all of the above were various perceived consequences or preferred outcomes from stated U.S. policy towards Rwanda. Reflecting the administration’s divergent perspectives and objectives, particularly among the different departments and agencies, these consequences could also be viewed as second-order objectives stemming from U.S. stated policy and actions. Above all, as the evolving story has illustrated, the administration wanted to avoid another “Somalia.” In terms of policy consequences, this meant two things: preventing U.S. military involvement in the country and limiting further damage to the credibility of U.N. peacekeeping. The two were not necessarily mutually exclusive and both related to that of a third: maximizing chances for possible future peacekeeping engagements of strategic interest to the United States.
The first of these consequences, limiting U.S. military involvement in Rwanda, stemmed from the Pentagon. According to Tony Marley, political military adviser for the State Department and active participant in the daily interagency discussions on Rwanda,

The U.S. was very concerned, especially Defense Department officials, that no U.S. personnel or U.S. resources be siphoned off into another peacekeeping operation in Africa. This was, remember, following the Somalia debacle. The best way to ensure that this would not happen was to prevent there from being a U.N. peacekeeping operation in Africa. If there were no peacekeeping operation, U.S. support could not be required for it. If there were any type of peacekeeping operations, there was always the risk that U.S. airlift, U.S. hardware, or U.S. personnel might, over time, be dragged into it.97

Given the lack of high-level interest in Rwanda, particularly at the State Department, the Pentagon thus was able to ensure its perspectives on the problem received full consideration. At the daily interagency discussions on the crisis, top Defense officials made the case against U.S. military involvement and intervention.98 On at least one of these occasions, Undersecretary of Defense, John Deutch, made clear the Pentagon’s position. The subsequent lack of high-level support put mid-to lower level State Department officials at a disadvantage. As one intelligence official stated, “When you have George Moose debating John Deutch, guess who wins?”99

Limit Further Damage to U.N. Peacekeeping Credibility

Limiting further damage to the credibility of U.N. peacekeeping was another important consequence that officials hoped followed U.S. policy towards the country. Recalling U.S. perceptions after the deaths of ten Belgian peacekeepers in the first week of the Rwandan crisis, a senior official remembered,

When the reports of the deaths of the ten Belgians came in, it was clear that it was Somalia redux, and the sense was that there would be an
expectation everywhere that the U.S. would get involved. We thought leaving the peacekeepers in Rwanda and having them confront the violence would take us where we’d been before. It was a foregone conclusion that the United States wouldn’t intervene and that the concept of U.N. peacekeeping could not be sacrificed again.\textsuperscript{100}

Clearly, minimizing U.S. military involvement and preserving peacekeeping credibility was a goal of the Presidential Directive and reflective of U.S. policy towards Rwanda in general. As to be expected, preserving U.N. credibility was especially important to U.N. Security Council members, and reportedly framed many of the debates on the topic.\textsuperscript{101} U.N. credibility was also an important consideration of the administration, particularly when it came to peacekeeping. Before the U.N. voted to expand the UNAMIR mandate in May, the U.S. sent a team of State Department and Pentagon officials to warn the U.N. of not overreaching in Rwanda as it had in Somalia and risk further discrediting U.N. peacekeeping.\textsuperscript{102} That same day, U.N. ambassador, Madeleine Albright, stated before Congress:

\begin{quote}
Sending a U.N. force into the maelstrom in Rwanda without a sound plan of operations would be folly. It would not save Rwandan lives and it would likely cost the lives of more U.N. peacekeepers…These choices are not easy ones. Emotions can produce wonderful speeches and stirring op ed pieces. But emotions alone cannot produce policies that will achieve what they promise. If we do not keep commitments in line with capabilities, we will only further undermine U.N. credibility and support.\textsuperscript{103}
\end{quote}

According to Albright, this forced selectivity was part of the administration’s “new realism.” As far as the U.N. was concerned, it didn’t do any good to create peacekeeping missions that were “pie in the sky” as “the credibility of the U.N. is questioned when it cannot deliver on its promises.”\textsuperscript{104}
Maximize Future Peacekeeping Chances of More Strategic Interest

Finally, as previously mentioned, the last consequence of the administration’s policy in Rwanda was ensuring that future and current peacekeeping engagements – ones more pertinent to U.S. strategic interests – had the resources and support necessary for success. Thus, as Albright argued, the U.S. had to do what was necessary to strengthen and transform the U.N. so it could pursue important peacekeeping objectives in countries such as Bosnia and Haiti – objectives that might otherwise be unattainable. According to Albright, if the administration allowed impatience and the “carping of destructive critics” to dissuade it from that task, “we will have squandered an opportunity that may not come again in our lifetime.”105 This was the message from the discourse of the administration’s top officials and the goal of the Presidential Decision Directive – PDD-25.106


Starting in May, a separate problem began to emerge from the administration’s discourse. As Hutu refugees poured into neighboring Tanzania, the administration began to talk of a “growing humanitarian crisis.”107 However, given the ongoing violence and continued lack of a cease-fire in Rwanda, the basic story remained unchanged: the United States was simply doing all that it could. Aside from pressuring regional actors to do more and designating money for “humanitarian aid” and “refugee assistance,” the government’s hands were tied. The United States would not send U.S. or U.N. forces to fight other people’s battles. Until the Rwandans acted to help themselves and stop the fighting, the international community would stand aside. According to U.N. Ambassador Albright, although this might appear callous it was not because “the killers in Rwanda –
like aggressors elsewhere – could not have been stopped by sentiment or by a paper tiger peacekeeping force.”\textsuperscript{108}

This characterization of the appropriate nature of the American response to the problem remained unchanged even after July, when the narrative had shifted to now warrant greater American intervention in the country. Starting July 13, over one million refugees fled west towards Zaire. In twenty-four hours, 500,000 had settled in the border town of Goma and were continuing to enter the city at an estimated rate of 10,000 to 15,000 per hour.\textsuperscript{109} This flight of refugees into Zaire would be the start the administration’s next story of the Rwandan problem as seen in Figure 3.2. The refugees, most of them Hutu, were fleeing from the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). The RPF, led by the reportedly “brilliant” military leadership of Paul Kagame, had slowly taken control over the country in its attempt to reach beleaguered Tutsi civilians in the Rwandan capital of Kigali. Now, after three months of conflict and the deaths of over 800,000 people (primarily Tutsi), the rebel victory appeared imminent. Consequently, the refugees were fleeing for their lives. Over the past several months, government forces had bombarded the population with anti-Tutsi and anti-RPF propaganda. Radio broadcasts warned that the Tutsi were planning to kill Hutus and in a most gruesome fashion as the RPF wanted to exact revenge for the massacres of the hundreds of thousands of Tutsis in the country since April.\textsuperscript{110}
Nature of Situation, Key Actor Relationships and Past Lessons

Acute Humanitarian Crisis Demands a U.S. Response

For the administration, the situation in Rwanda had suddenly changed to warrant greater U.S. support and intervention. On July 18, the RPF defeated the last government troops within the country, ending the war between the RPF and government forces. At the same time, the administration began describing the refugee crisis in the region as acute, as seen in Figure 3.2. On July 18, the State Department spokesperson described the refugee situation along Rwanda’s border with Zaire as a “humanitarian disaster of almost unprecedented proportions.” On July 22, President Clinton called the refugee flow “the world’s worst humanitarian crisis in a generation” that was “claiming one life every minute.” By July 24, 2.1 million Rwandans were refugees while an additional 2.3 million were internally displaced. Over two-thirds of the country’s population was either dead or in danger of dying due to starvation and disease. The severity of the situation now appeared to demand a U.S. response. According to Defense Department spokesperson, Kathleen Delaski, “this is considered one of those acute humanitarian crises that you really have no choice…but not to react.”

Although the refugee problem was not new – 250,000 refugees had fled to Tanzania over a similar 24-hour period in May – after July 15, the administration suggested that the Rwandan problem was now categorically different to warrant direct U.S. intervention. Responding to criticism that the administration had not moved quickly enough in Rwanda, Brian Atwood, the AID official appointed to direct the American response, argued that the administration had moved “aggressively and immediately” to address the problem as it had only just begun. “I would remind you that
this flow of refugees started occurring on the 13th of July. What is today’s date? – the 21st. We haven’t been that many days into this crisis.”

Apparently, the State Department and the Pentagon agreed. On July 24, Secretary of State Christopher argued

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**Figure 3.2:** The story surrounding “Operation Provide Support” (July-August 1994).
that the situation in Rwanda “changed dramatically just 10 days ago when a million people began crossing that border and I think the United States’ response…has been very good.” Meanwhile, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, John Shalikashvili, stated that “this tragedy began to overwhelm all of us here within the last, I guess, 10 days or so and I think the President, very wisely now, set us in full motion to do all that we can do to really make a difference.”

In short, massacres and genocide did not warrant the same attention or policy response from the administration as did a refugee crisis.

U.S. Response has Proportionately Increased

Given the growing severity of the situation, the president announced on July 22 “an immediate and massive increase” in the U.S. response to the Rwandan problem. However, the president stressed that the U.S. response to the problem had all along been proportionate to the problem – “as the crisis has gotten worse, our response has also grown.” The president’s national security adviser, Anthony Lake, underscored this last point, “as the crisis has escalated, our efforts have escalated with them.” According to President Clinton, the administration first responded to the crisis in May, when it released $15 million dollars to help with the first refugee wave into Tanzania. From May through July, the U.S. flew over 100 relief missions and authorized an additional $135 million in relief assistance. According to the President, the U.S. also worked to arm the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR), providing fifty armed personnel carriers (APCs) for the task. The President also suggested that U.S. effort escalated with the deployment of senior administration officials to the region, such as Brian Atwood of AID in June and July.
U.S. Capabilities Unique, Lesson of Northern Iraq – Humanitarian not Peacekeeping

Given the scale of the problem, the administration argued that it had to respond given its unique capabilities. Moreover, officials stressed that the situation was most similar to Northern Iraq after the Gulf War. According to General Shalikashvili,

We all recognize that we have an enormous capability to – to bring in resources at a rate that no other agency could match. And so I think it’s only right that when something is – a tragedy of this proportion occurs that the nation would call upon us to bring those resources to bear to make a difference. We saw that in – in northern Iraq, when the Kurds left, what difference we could make. We are trying to do the same thing now in Rwanda.120

National Security Adviser Lake reiterated these statements. According to Lake, NGO representatives reportedly “burst into applause” when he told them that the U.S. military was the “only one institution in the world” that could accomplish the humanitarian aid mission in Rwanda.121 Lake also emphasized the similarities between the current intervention and U.S. aid efforts in Northern Iraq following the Gulf War. In short, the administration wanted it known that this was not Somalia. U.S. forces were being sent to Rwanda only for the short-term and were not to quell the fighting.122 Clearly wishing to distance the United States from U.N. peacekeeping, Lake emphasized, “the American personnel who are involved in this are involved in the humanitarian effort, not in the peacekeeping operation [UNAMIR], which we are supporting vigorously, but it is clearly distinct. The analogy here is to Operation Provide Comfort.”123 The president also stressed this last point. “Let me be clear about this. Any deployment of U.S. troops inside Rwanda would be for the immediate and sole purpose of humanitarian relief, not for peacekeeping.”124
U.S. Has Done All it Could for the Rwandan People

The final relational aspect of the administration’s second story refers to the question of whether the U.S. response in Rwanda was sufficient. According to the discourse, the administration believed it had done everything that it could for the Rwandan people. As President Clinton stated in late July, “We’ve been working since May, and I have done all I knew to do. When the crisis has passed and somebody thinks there is something else I should have done, there will be time to assess that.” However, the president was “confident” that in the end U.S. actions would be deemed appropriate. 125 Secretary of State Warren Christopher appeared to agree.

I am really proud of what the United States has done in Rwanda…I think what the United States has done here, over this entire situation, is something we can be proud of…As you know, when Rwanda became independent three decades ago, or so, there has been continued controversy between these two tribes, the Tutsis and Hutus. The long-standing controversy seemed to be coming to a close through what is called the Arusha Accords, which the United States had a lot do with, in 1993. Through a terrible accident...the president of Rwanda was killed. That produced a tremendous civil war within the country. The United States did all that they could to try to support the U.N. at that time to encourage the end of that civil war. But that was not a time for the United States to try to intervene in that civil war. It was a bloody, fighting war.126

Thus, the Clinton administration had done all that it could in Rwanda. Since military intervention in the conflict to stop the massacres had a priori been ruled out, the administration focused on the humanitarian problem of refugee assistance and determined its actions were sufficient. Moreover, the discourse suggests that any blame regarding the nature of the American response lay outside of the United States.127 As stated by Defense Department spokesperson, Kathleen Delaski, “Everything that we have been asked to do by the U.N. we have done.” 128
Goals and Actions

Alleviate Suffering, Undertake Massive Humanitarian Aid Effort

Given the acute characterization of the crisis, the end of the civil war and the argument that the U.S. was uniquely capable to handle the Rwandan situation, the administration’s goals with regards to Rwanda changed from that of promoting a cease-fire to alleviating the suffering “as quickly as possible” and “and to take steps to establish conditions that will enable refugees to return home.” On July 15, in anticipation of the RPF victory, President Clinton cut diplomatic ties with the interim government, arguing that the United States could not “allow representatives of a regime that supports genocidal massacre to remain on our soil.” Approximately one week later, the administration worked to relieve suffering by ordering the military undertake a massive humanitarian aid effort to move food, water and medicine to those in need along the Rwanda-Zaire border. The military also was to improve airfield services in Goma, Zaire and Kigali and to organize airhead and cargo distribution from the airport in Entebbe, Uganda. Ultimately, 3000 U.S. troops, primarily logistical, were involved in the process. Finally, in an effort to encourage the refugees to return home, the administration diplomatically sought to “support and urge and immediate deployment of a full contingent of United Nation’s peacekeepers to Rwanda.”

Consequences

Stem Deaths, Appease Public Pressure

Thus, from the discourse, one of the perceived and desired consequences of “Operation Support Hope” in Rwanda was saving lives. Ultimately, not factoring the
lives lost as the result of delayed action, after two months and over 573 million dollars, Operation Support Hope did succeed in stemming deaths. However, another desired consequence from the humanitarian “Operation Support Hope” appears to have been that of appeasing growing domestic pressure and interest from the media, public and Congress in the Rwandan problem. On June 26, a little over two weeks before the refugee crisis in Zaire began to unfold, Anthony Lake, at a special White House Conference on Africa, spoke of a “renewed interest in Africa – when the exhilaration of South Africa\(^1\) and the horrors of Rwanda…have produced more front page stories about Africa than at any time in my memory.”\(^2\) One month later, “Operation Support Hope” was underway. On July 24, Secretary of State Christopher stated on This Week with David Brinkley that the United States was intervening in Rwanda because the American people “want to have us respond.”\(^3\) Underscoring the increased media and public focus, President Clinton stated on July 23, “I think the whole world is now focused on Rwanda.”\(^4\)

**Alternative Interpretations**

Again, theoretically, as in the Somalia case it could be argued that multiple interpretations could be made of many of the of the Clinton administration’s statements regarding the Rwandan conflict. First, following Figure 3.1, under the story section heading entitled “violence is civil war related and will soon extinguish itself,” I have included Anthony Lake’s response to a reporter’s question of how a tragedy of such

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\(^1\) In late April, apartheid in South Africa officially ended when the country held its first universal suffrage elections. On May 2, 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) was declared victorious and Nelson Mandela was sworn in as president May 10.
proportion in Rwanda could occur in this day and age. Lake’s answer that, unfortunately, its simply “human nature” could be simply taken on face value. However, the rest of Lake’s response “and this, another outburst of what is a long-standing terrible conflict within Rwanda” combined with Lake’s previous statements and those of the President and other State Department officials lends growing credence to the argument that the administration’s characterization of the Rwandan violence as civil war-related and not unusual for either the country or region contributed to the administration’s belated and arguably insufficient response to the crisis.

Another example of a potential variant discursive interpretation could be seen under the “lack of congressional and public support” story element in the “No Interests, No Involvement story as illustrated in Figure 3.1. As evidence of the administration’s perceived lack of congressional and public support for U.S. intervention in Rwanda and U.N. peacekeeping in general, I have included a statement by Madeleine Albright that the U.N. mission in Rwanda was being reassessed “in light of the tragedies” currently engulfing the country. Out of context, such a statement could be seen perhaps as evidence that the administration was considering supporting a more activist U.N. role in the country. However, putting the statements within their immediate and broader context places the statement in a different light. First, the statement comes from Albright’s testimony before Congress on the importance of U.N. peacekeeping and the administration’s current efforts to raise efficiency and reduce the costs of such operations. Moreover, when placing the statement among others from the administration regarding the concerns over peacekeeping costs and congressional approval over the peacekeeping budget, it becomes clearer that the administration’s view of U.S. and U.N.
intervention in Rwanda was highly constrained by perceptions of congressional opposition to the administration’s foreign policy and, in particular, peacekeeping priorities.

Factors Influencing U.S. Decision Making

In contrast to Somalia, Rwanda is not a case of U.S. “armed humanitarian intervention.” Although the United States did eventually undertake the massive humanitarian aid effort in the country and surrounding region, “Operation Support Hope,” U.S. ground troops or military force were never used in any fashion during the crisis to either protect aid workers or civilians caught up within the broader military conflict and associated genocidal violence. As such Rwanda sheds additional light upon the factors promoting or hindering U.S. armed humanitarian intervention abroad.

Lessons of History

Of the possible factors influencing U.S. decision making, analogies and past lessons clearly impacted the administration’s decision not to intervene to stop the genocide in Rwanda. The Rwandan discourse reveals the administration’s tendency to “fight the last war” – to derive specific and general lessons from past experience to guide present foreign policy decisions. More specifically, in Rwanda the “lessons of Somalia” worked to: 1) shape the perceptions of key actor relationships and the subsequent risks/benefits associated with U.S. intervention; 2) limit the nature of U.S. goals; and 3) constrain the consideration and subsequent selection of options.137
In terms of the administration’s perception of key actors and relationships, the Somalia experience led decision makers to conclude that for the most part, the benefits of intervention in Africa were not worth the entailed risks. This conclusion influenced the administration’s goals and selection of options. For the Clinton administration, Somalia had underscored the political and military risks of intervening in civil war-related humanitarian crises – crises that appeared endemic to the African continent. Given the lack of vital American interests in Africa, the risks associated with such intervention subsequently appeared unacceptable. As one U.S. official remembers, “Anytime you mentioned peacekeeping in Africa the crucifixes and garlic would come up on every door.” Thus, in the absence of vital national interests, U.S. intervention in Rwanda was \textit{a priori} ruled out.

Moreover, Somalia underscored that the U.S had to be selective in its support of \textit{U.N.} interventions, supporting operations only if the parties (and region) involved in the conflict first exhibited a willingness to “help themselves.” In Rwanda, the RPF and the government’s willingness to stop the fighting and reach a cease-fire thus became the prerequisite for outside support. The inability to meet this benchmark allowed both the U.N. and Clinton administration to overlook mounting evidence of genocide and outside demands to intervene earlier to stop the violence.

In terms of goals, the U.S. experience in Somalia and the perceived lack of vital interests in Africa worked to limit the administration’s overall objectives in Rwanda. Somalia had underscored the dangers of becoming politically involved in a conflict. What started out as a seemingly simple and clear humanitarian intervention had evolved into “nation building” with the U.S. militarily taking sides in an ongoing and violent civil
war. Consequently, to many within the administration, avoiding “another Somalia” meant, among other things, avoiding sacrificing American lives in foreign conflicts peripheral to American interests. After the violence erupted in Rwanda, U.S. goals were therefore limited and primarily diplomatic in nature, focusing on re-establishing a ceasefire and resuming the peace process. Nation building and stopping the violence – options that were more risky and implied a stronger U.S. military commitment – were simply out of the question.

As illustrated above, Somalia also influenced the administration’s consideration and selection of options. Since U.N. peace enforcement and the intervention of U.S. troops were out of the question, the U.S. was left with two options for dealing with the conflict: support the existing U.N. peacekeeping mission in the country or push for a complete U.N. withdrawal. Of the two, the administration preferred the second, as any intervention in the country was deemed a slippery slope that could lead to greater U.S. involvement. If the U.N. mission in Rwanda got into trouble, as in Somalia, the U.S. might be required to bail it out. Thus, the administration tended to portray its options for dealing with the conflict in terms of “all or nothing.” This discourse suggests that since the U.S. was not prepared for peace enforcement then there was little left it could do in Rwanda. However, once the Security Council crossed off pulling the U.N. completely out of Rwanda, largely due to ambassador Albright’s fears of damaging U.N. credibility, the administration was apparently left with no other choice but to reduce and discourage any enhancement of the U.N. commitment.

A third option in Rwanda, humanitarian assistance, only emerged after the refugee problem had begun in May. Still, the perceived lessons of history limited the
American response. The United States acted aggressively to deal with the refugee crisis only after the fighting had ceased in mid-July. Even then, in accordance with the presidential directive (PDD-25), Secretary of Defense Perry made it clear that the U.S. mission in Rwanda would be brief, strictly humanitarian, and cease altogether if fighting were to resume.\textsuperscript{139}

\textit{Threat or Opportunity in relation to Vital National Interests}

As argued above, the administration’s discourse reveals that the conflict in Rwanda was not considered either a threat or an opportunity to vital national interests, supporting the hypothesis that U.S. armed humanitarian intervention was less likely when perceived ties to such interests were weak or absent as seen in Table 1. Aside from protecting the few American nationals in the country, the conflict was deemed inconsequential to U.S. security and economic interests. Although the conflict in Rwanda had the real potential to spread and threaten regional stability, the administration never publicly addressed that as a concern or threat to U.S. interests, quite in contrast from its public rhetoric regarding the conflict in the Balkans and Europe.\textsuperscript{140}

However, while Rwanda itself was not deemed important to U.S. interests, U.S. and even greater U.N. involvement in Rwanda did threaten one thing the administration deemed important: the credibility of the United Nations and U.N. peacekeeping. Although the United States had downgraded the importance of peacekeeping to its overall national security strategy after Somalia, the administration continued to view the United Nations, and U.N. peacekeeping more specifically, as important cost-effective tools for
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<td>No moral No legal</td>
<td>No media No public No Congress</td>
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<td>Yes moral No legal</td>
<td>Yes media Yes public Yes Congress</td>
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Table 3.1: Hypothesized factors favoring military intervention as reflected in key junctures of the evolving Rwandan story
dealing with conflicts in the post cold war era. As a result, preventing another U.N. peacekeeping debacle was perceived as necessary and worked against U.S. support of intervention in Rwanda. For the administration, avoiding further damage to U.N. credibility – and by association U.S. credibility and leadership – was more important than stopping genocide in Rwanda.

*Moral or Legal Imperative*

Despite the fact that many consider Rwanda one of the clearest examples of genocide in the 20th century – a fact that would seem to support the hypothesis that the U.S. would feel a legal obligation to intervene as a result of its ratification of the U.N. Genocide Convention – it appears that such an obligation was noticeably absent in this case. As illustrated in Table 3.1, public and private statements reveal that the administration did not perceive any *legal* obligation to intervene in Rwanda, even if the violence was determined to be genocidal in nature. To the contrary, the administration’s discourse suggests that any legal intervention to stop the violence, if it did indeed exist, lay first, with the parties involved in the fighting (the RPF and Rwandan government); second, with regional actors (particularly, those most affected by the conflict); and third with the international community in general.

On the other hand, there is some evidence that the administration did perceive some *moral*, if not legal, obligation towards intervention although this did not become manifest publicly until after the genocide. According to Brian Atwood, the President’s special coordinator for refugee assistance massive U.S. humanitarian aid operation, “Operation Support Hope,” was undertaken in part to assuage feelings of guilt for not
having acted earlier to halt the genocide. On July 19, Atwood reflected on the estimated
deaths in Rwanda and stated, “I don’t think we have seen anything quite like this since
the Holocaust. And it’s something that really is nagging at all our consciences.” The
idea that guilt drove the administration to aggressively respond to the refugee crisis in
mid to late July is also supported by Tony Marley, the U.S. State Department’s Political
Military Advisor at that time. In an interview for *Frontline*, Marley summarized the
Clinton administration’s attitude towards Rwanda.

During the period of April through June – extreme reluctance to become
involved in any way. From July onwards, a sense of guilt of having done
nothing, of perhaps having prevented the international community from
taking effective action; therefore extreme effort on the government’s part
to then try to be as helpful as possible or be seen as being as helpful as
possible from July onwards.

Despite the evidence of administration guilt for not having acted earlier to prevent the
genocide, any sense of “moral obligation” ultimately proved insufficient to overcome the
opposition and resistance against U.S. armed humanitarian intervention in Rwanda.
However, a moral imperative or sense of obligation did appear significant in the
administration’s later humanitarian aid efforts in the region.

*Media, Public and Congressional Pressure*

As for domestic pressure for intervention, the evidence suggests that the lack of
media, public, and congressional interest in the conflict contributed to the
administration’s relative inaction, supporting the hypothesis that media, public and
congressional opinion favoring action are important triggers for U.S. decisions of armed
humanitarian intervention. After Somalia, the discourse suggests that the administration
viewed public and congressional attitudes towards humanitarian intervention, and U.N.
peacekeeping in general, as reticent at best. The lessons of Somalia revealed that the U.S. could not garner or sustain domestic support for peacekeeping without the support of Congress and the American public. Another armed African intervention was out of the question, given the administration’s pre-existing belief that public and congressional support for such high-risk low-benefit interventions was absent and that congressional opposition to financing peacekeeping operations was high. Given the noted absence of public references to media reports in the months after the crisis erupted, it is assumed that the media did not factor strongly in the administration’s initial representation of the Rwandan problem. Thus, after the violence broke out in early April, the administration did not even attempt to make a case for U.S. or U.N. intervention in Rwanda.

However, as illustrated in Table 1, starting in mid-July, the administration’s more activist approach to the refugee crisis appears to correlate with growing media, public, and congressional awareness and interest in the Rwandan problem as evident from the administration’s discourse surrounding the humanitarian U.S. mission to the country, “Operation Support Hope.” When interviewed later, Tony Marley supported the idea that administration interest in the Rwandan crisis was a function of the increased media, public and congressional awareness of and interest in the refugee problem after July 13.

All of the sudden in Goma you had this enormous outpouring of hundreds of thousands of people streaming across the border, and almost immediately because of water contamination problems, you had a cholera outbreak that started killing tens of thousands of people, and all of this was being broadcast at the evening dinner hour into people’s homes throughout Europe and throughout the United States. This in turn provoked an almost immediate public outcry and people started contacting the White House and State Department demanding action. Two weeks earlier the same Congress had been more than happy to not have U.S. involvement in another African adventure because Congress, too, was leery as a function of the Somalia syndrome. But once CNN and other media began
portraying this disaster in Goma and the public started leaning on Congress, the U.S. government was forced to act.\textsuperscript{144} The administration’s perception that Congress was supportive of intervention in Rwanda after but not prior to mid-July is evident from the discourse. For instance, in testimony before Congress, AID director, Brian Atwood hotly responded to criticism of the administration’s response to the crisis stating “I did not hear any voices up here suggesting that the U.S. should insert its forces in the midst of a hot civil war, and I think that is a very serious question.”\textsuperscript{145} However, after mid-July, administration officials demonstrated a heightened sensitivity to Congressional criticism of U.S. inaction. On July 22, chairman of the Black Congressional Caucus, Donald Payne (D-NJ), scathingly criticized the administration for its lack of high-level interest in the Rwandan problem and for not responding to the caucus’ repeated calls for action.\textsuperscript{146} That same day, the administration announced its plans for “Operation Support Hope.” One week later, Congressman Payne accompanied Secretary of Defense Perry to Central Africa to review U.S. relief operations in Rwanda and surrounding countries. On his return, Payne subsequently praised the administration for its decisive action to the refugee crisis.\textsuperscript{147}

In short, prior to mid-July, the discourse suggests that the administration’s view of the absence of interest or pressure from the media, public, and Congress worked against U.S. armed intervention in Rwanda. After, growing domestic pressure and interest appeared to promote intervention, at least in its low-risk humanitarian form. Moreover, given the proximity of Congressional elections, the administration’s heightened sensitivity to public and Congressional criticism in late July – particularly criticism emanating from prominent black democrats – was likely related to concerns over a
possible political backlash if the public perceived the administration, and Congressional democrats, guilty of inaction.

*International Pressure and Perceived Obligations*

Contrary to the hypothesis that U.S. membership in international governmental organizations, like the United Nations, would work to promote U.S. support and involvement in armed humanitarian interventions abroad, an analysis of the elite discourse reveals that the opposite is true in Rwanda as seen in Table 1. If anything, perceived allied obligations and organizational interests worked against United States participation and support for armed humanitarian intervention in Rwanda. First, although absent in the discourse, there is some evidence that the U.S. advocacy of a full U.N. withdrawal in late April was in part the result of pressure from Belgium. After the death of ten of its peacekeepers in early April, Belgium was keen on withdrawing its peacekeepers from Rwanda but did not want to be seen as withdrawing alone. Consequently, the Belgian government put heavy diplomatic pressure on U.N. Security Council members to agree to a full withdrawal of UNAMIR forces from Rwanda.148

However, from the discourse it is evident that since the U.S. had ruled out peace enforcement in Rwanda, particularly after the withdrawal of the Belgian UN contingent in early April, the administration concluded that there was little the U.N. could do to stop the violence. The United Nations was militarily and financially overstretched and the Clinton administration appeared interested in preserving its scarce peacekeeping resources for areas and conflicts deemed more pertinent to U.S. interests, such as Bosnia, Iraq and Haiti. Thus, maintaining a traditional (chapter VI) U.N. peacekeeping mission in
Rwanda ran the risk of raising hopes that the U.N. could stop the violence when in reality it lacked the necessary military resources and political will to do so. U.S. support of a U.N. peacekeeping mission was subsequently viewed as futile and not worthwhile, setting the U.N. (and U.S.) up for another failure to deliver on its promise of a solution and further diminishing U.N. (and U.S.) credibility in the process.

*Ease and Utility of Intervention and Bureaucratic Interests*

Finally, decision making towards Rwanda appears to illustrate the importance of bureaucratic interests and assessments of the relative ease and utility of intervention. As Rwanda was not considered important enough to warrant high-level attention, lower level bureaucrats were influential in shaping the administration’s response to the problem. The lack of interest in the problem is evident from the fact that not once during the entire three months of the genocide did the president or his top cabinet officials formally meet to discuss the killings in Rwanda.\(^{149}\) Although the Rwandan crisis was eventually perceived as significant enough to warrant daily NSC interagency teleconferences, these meetings were generally attended by lower level (deputy level and below) bureaucratic officials.

Among these officials, representatives of the Pentagon appeared the most engaged in the Rwandan problem, likely given that they had the most at stake. However, contrary to the hypothesis that the military would more likely support U.S. intervention abroad in the desire to justify and protect its budget, Rwanda appears to support the opposite again as seen in Table 3.1. Among the many officials debating the appropriate U.S. role in the country, those from the Pentagon were among the most active in promoting U.S.
nonintervention. However, the military’s opposition to intervention does appear connected, at least in part, to budgetary concerns. Contrary to perceiving intervention as working to either protect or expand the defense budget, the Pentagon perceived peacekeeping in Rwanda as a drain on its limited resources, hindering its ability to effectively respond to greater and more conventional threats to American security and interests.¹⁵⁰

These concerns were related to the new directive on multilateral peace operations (PDD-25) which gave the responsibility of managing and funding all U.N. peace operations that were likely to involve combat and all operations in which U.S. combat units were participating to the Department of Defense. This included both traditional U.N. peacekeeping missions (Chapter VI) and peace enforcement missions (Chapter VII). The State Department, on the other hand, another agency predominantly against intervention, was responsible for managing and funding traditional peacekeeping missions (Chapter VI) where U.S. combat units were not participating. Although PDD-25 was not released until May 5, the concept of shared responsibility for peace operations had existed and was known for several months prior to the outbreak of violence in Rwanda. Thus, as the Pentagon portrayed any intervention in Rwanda as possibly leading to the deployment of combat troops, its budgetary responsibility towards peacekeeping operations likely factored into its arguments against intervention.

Given this budgetary responsibility as well as the unpleasant aftermath of Somalia, the Pentagon was keen on staying out of Rwanda. During daily interagency push their institutional interests.¹⁵¹ Consequently, when officials at State or the NSC requested military advice on military options in Rwanda short of the deployment of
troops, the Pentagon would discourage even limited actions, questioning both their feasibility and utility in achieving administration objectives, supporting the hypothesis that assessments of relative ease and utility are important requisites of armed humanitarian intervention. The military’s negative assessments of the ease and utility of intervention in Rwanda led the civilians within the administration to conclude that the U.S. was therefore doing everything it could possibly do in Rwanda.

The Pentagon’s reluctance to get involved in Rwanda apparently led it to overlook and or withhold evidence of genocide. According to James Woods, Deputy Assistant for African Affairs, at the Pentagon there was a “common understanding” that genocide was occurring within two weeks of the presidents’ plane crash. But, according to Woods, officials there were not willing to state that publicly. Instead they would “defer to the White House and particularly the State Department and to its lawyers to reach that legal conclusion.” However, the tendency of avoiding the question of genocide was apparently not limited to the Pentagon. Given the lack of high-level interest, lower level officials at NSC and State also were reportedly unwilling to push the subject in interagency discussions, approaching the problem in a business-like fashion from the perspective of bureaucratic or institutional interests.

In conclusion, multiple factors appeared to work against U.S. intervention in Rwanda as summarized in Table 3.1. Although the United States did not support armed humanitarian intervention at any time during the Rwanda crisis, a review of the factors influencing intervention in both the Rwanda and Somalia cases does reveal some interesting patterns. Although the U.S. humanitarian operation “Operation Provide Support” does not fit the definition of an armed humanitarian intervention, it is a
humanitarian intervention and does signify a greater U.S. commitment to and interest in the Rwandan problem. Thus, a comparison of the administration’s “No Interests, No Involvement” and “Operation Provide Support” stories provides insight into factors or causes accounting for the changed representation of the Rwandan situation in mid-July and the sudden increase in U.S. support and involvement. Like Somalia, three factors emerged as influential to U.S. decision making regarding greater U.S. intervention and involvement in Rwanda after mid-July: (1) an increasing “moral imperative” that accompanied the Rwandan refugee crisis, (2) the growing “media, public and congressional interest” in the Rwanda problem and (3) the relative “ease and utility of intervention” to aid the refugees. Again analogies were invoked, this time the United Nations operations in Northern Iraq following the Gulf War, to apparently distinguish the intervention from Somalia and this operation’s relatively low-level of risk to participating U.S. troops. Unlike Somalia however, pressure from international actors and or organizational interests stemming from U.S. involvement in the United Nations or other international organizations appear less influential in determining the more activist U.S. stance in the second Rwandan story.

However, probably even more than in Somalia, past lessons and historical analogies appear to have influenced the administration’s representation of the Rwandan problem. Given that the Rwandan crisis erupted so soon after the deaths of U.S. servicemen in Mogadishu, the U.S. experience in Somalia was readily available for comparison and therefore easily invoked by administration officials, coloring their representations and subsequent approaches to the Rwandan problem. The desire to avoid the Somalia experience and the administration’s preoccupation with other more pressing
foreign policy issues apparently led to the lack of high-level attention to the Rwandan crisis. As a result, low-level bureaucrats, particularly from the Pentagon, were able to shape the administration’s perception of the feasibility and utility of any U.S. military intervention in the region that in turn worked to support the administration’s predisposition towards inaction. Although perceived moral obligations and domestic political concerns eventually increased high-level interest and attention to the crisis, such awareness came to too late for the victims of genocide in the country. Even after such increased awareness, the perceived lessons of Somalia proved influential, constraining the administration’s humanitarian response to the crisis.


9 Yaroslav Trofimov, “The U.N. has found out that playing ‘globocop’ isn’t so easy” The Gazette (Montreal) 30 November, 1993, final ed.: B3.

10 Trofimov, “U.N. found Globocop not easy.”

12 For the first public signs of changed thinking on peace operations, see statements by Clinton, Lake and Albright on 27 September, 1993 in *Dispatch Magazine*, Vol. 4, No. 39.


16 Dept. of State, *Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations*.


19 Clinton, *Interview on CNN’s ‘Global Forum with President Clinton*.


23 Daalder, *The Clinton Administration and Multilateral Peace Operations*.


Annan, *U.N. Peacekeeping in Africa.*


*Clinton, Interview on CNN’s ‘Global Forum with President Clinton.*


For an account of the secret Security Council meeting on the Rwanda crisis, see Melvern, *A People Betrayed,* 152-166.


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43 David Rawson as quoted in Power, “Bystanders to Genocide,” 92.

44 George Moose, as quoted in Power, “Bystanders to Genocide,” 92.


48 Riza, interview for “Triumph of Evil.”


50 Riza, interview for “Triumph of Evil.”

51 Riza, interview for “Triumph of Evil;” see also Melvern, 153.

52 Prudence Bushnell, as quoted in Power, “Bystanders to Genocide.”


55 Woods, interview for “Triumph of Evil;” The theme of perceived public disinterest is also supported by statements of Senator Paul Simon, as quoted in Melvern, 203; See also statements by Lake, Building a Better Future in Africa.

56 Daalder, “The Clinton Administration and Multilateral Peace Operations.”


65 Melvern, A People Betrayed, 199; Burghalder, The Question of Genocide, 50.

66 Clinton, Interview with the French Media.


68 Marley, interview for “Triumph of Evil.”

69 Christopher, Fiscal Year 1995 International Affairs Budget.

70 Clinton, Interview on CNN’s ‘Global Forum.’


72 Madeleine K. Albright, Realism and Idealism in American Foreign Policy Today, Commencement address at Harvard University’s Kennedy School of Government, 8 June, 1994, reprinted in Dispatch Magazine, Vol. 5, No.26, June 27, 1994, online access, <http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC>

73 Woods, interview for “Triumph of Evil.”

74 Marley, interview for “Triumph of Evil.”


78 Boutros Boutros Gali, as quoted in Lewis, “U.N. Council Urged to Weigh Action.”


S/RES/918.

Before troops could be deployed, the US demanded that the Secretary General determine and report back to the Council his findings on a number of points, including: the exact purpose of the deployment and its estimated duration; if consent of the factions had been granted and progress made towards a cease-fire; and the number of firm troop commitments from African nations. See Lewis, “U.N. Backs Troops for Rwanda But Terms Bar Any Soon Action.”


Christine Shelly, U.S. State Department Regular Briefing, 10 June, 1994, Lexis-Nexis Online Access, Federal News Service.

David Rawson, as quoted in “Officials Told to Avoid Calling Rwanda Killings ‘Genocide.’”

See Action Memorandum from Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, George E. Moose, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, John Shattuck, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs Douglas J. Bennet, and Department of State Legal Adviser, Conrad K. Harper, through Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Peter Tarnoff and Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs, Tim Wirth, to Secretary of State Warren Christopher, “Has Genocide Occurred in Rwanda?”, May 21, 1994, Secret, available on line via the National Security Archive <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBBN/NSAEBB53/index.html>


Christopher, as quoted in Power, *Bystanders to Genocide.*

97 Marley, interview for “Triumph of Evil.”


99 Quoted in Burkhalter, 48.

100 As quoted in Power, *Bystanders to Genocide*, 98.


102 Lewis, “U.N. Backs Troops for Rwanda.”


116 Warren Christopher and John Shalikashvili, interview with Cokie Roberts and Sam Donaldson on This Week with David Brinkley, 24 July, 1994, transcript #665, Lexis-Nexis online access, ABC News.

117 Clinton, Exchange with Reporters.

118 Lake, Rwanda.


120 John Shalikashvili, interview This Week with David Brinkley.


125 Clinton, Exchange with Reporters.

126 Christopher, This Week with David Brinkley, 24 July, 1994.


129 Clinton, Exchange with Reporters.


131 Weiss, 154.

132 Clinton, Exchange with Reporters.

133 Weiss, 154-165.

134 Lake, Building a Better Future for Africa.

135 Christopher, This Week with David Brinkley, 24, July 1994.
Likewise, the Northern Iraq analogy invoked briefly around the time of Operation Support Hope also appeared to illustrate the nature of key relationships, such as the necessity of US action given America’s unique capabilities, and the limited nature of risks which in turn appeared to facilitate America’s humanitarian response.

Power, “Bystanders to Genocide,” 90.


Classified intelligence and internal memos recently made available do make references to the possibility of the conflict spreading to Burundi and the undesirable nature of this outcome but this is by no means a prominent issue or concern in the administration’s public rhetoric, particularly among its top officials.

See Moose et. al., “Has Genocide Occurred in Rwanda?”; See also statements by Warren Christopher, US Foreign Policy.


Marley, interview for “The Triumph of Evil.”

Marley, “Triumph of Evil.”


international legal conventions that complicated the jamming option as well as flight costs of “$8500 per flight hour” as reasons for his lack of support. See Memorandum from Undersecretary of Defense for Polity to Assistant to the President for National Security, National Security Council, “Rwanda: Jamming Civilian Radio Broadcasts,” May 5, 1994, Confidential, available online at the National Security Archive, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB53/index.html.

153 Woods interview for “Triumph of Evil.”

154 See statements by both Woods and Marley, “Triumph of Evil.”
“It’s always easier in large bureaucracies, to heed the counsel of inaction then to take the risks that action requires.”

Former Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Warren Zimmerman

On June 25, 1991, the republics of Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence from the multiethnic state of Yugoslavia. War soon engulfed both regions as the Yugoslav national military (JNA), whose officer corp was dominated by ethnic Serbs, acted to prevent the breakup of the Yugoslav state and the subsequent separation of the Serbian population. The war in Slovenia soon ended but the fighting in Croatia, which contained a more significant Serbian minority population, proved more difficult to extinguish. By the spring of 1992, the violence and war rampant elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia threatened to engulf the ethnically mixed republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, leaving Europe and the United States to ponder whether and how they should approach the Bosnian problem.

For both the Bush and Clinton administrations, Bosnia was a problem that defied simple solutions. Coming on the heels of the Gulf War, the conflict represented a type of problem seemingly endemic to the post Cold War era – conflicts within rather than
between states. However, unlike Somalia and Rwanda, for over three years U.S. policy towards Bosnia vacillated between limited activism and seeming indifference. Despite repeated U.S. threats and eventual limited NATO action, sustained and forceful American intervention into the conflict did not occur until the fall of 1995.

Given the lengthy and varied U.S. approach to the problem, I argue that American policy towards Bosnia is best viewed as two separate but interconnected cases. The first case, one of nonintervention, describes U.S. policy from 1992 until 1993. The second more activist story of U.S intervention begins in late 1993 and culminates with the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords in December 1995. This chapter will focus on the former. From an analysis of the Bush and Clinton discursive narrative from 1992 until 1993, the evolution of the American view of the problem and the subsequent changes in policy approach will be assessed. Although there are eight key critical junctures or changes in the elite public discourse with regards to Bosnia from 1992 until 1995, this chapter will focus on what I have identified as the first four key representations of the Bosnian “story”: (1) the Bush administration’s story and decisions of “aid and avoid” following Bosnia’s secession from the former Yugoslavia; (2) the Clinton administration’s story and decisions of “peace through diplomacy” following its takeover of the presidency; (3) the Clinton administration’s story and decisions of “lift and strike” following the Serb siege of Srebrenica in April of 1993; and (4) the Clinton administration’s story and decisions of “containment” following the rejection of its more aggressive policy by the European and Russian allies.
The Bush Administration’s Balkan Policy

Background to the Crisis

When the disintegration of the Balkans reached crisis proportions in 1991, the problem received scant high-level attention from the Bush administration. The top civilian foreign policy officials within the administration, President Bush, Secretary of State James Baker, National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, and Secretary of Defense Richard Cheney, were preoccupied with what they perceived as a more pressing issue: the collapse of the Soviet Union. Fearing that dissolution in Yugoslavia would set a dangerous precedent for the Soviet Union, the United States and its allies in Europe supported the Serbian position of keeping the Yugoslav state intact.

Constitutionally the state of Yugoslavia was a federation of six republics, Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Croatia, and Slovenia, and two autonomous republics, Vojvodina and Kosovo. Of the six, the most ethnically heterogeneous republic was Bosnia-Herzegovina, with a population that was 44% Muslim, 33% Serb, and 17% Croat. When the unrest infecting the rest of the former Yugoslavia began to spread to the region in December 1991, the Bosnian government felt particularly threatened. Bosnia’s troubles intensified when Germany, reneging on an international commitment to maintain Yugoslav territorial integrity, unilaterally recognized the breakaway republics of Slovenia and Croatia, arguing that a rump Yugoslavia could be constructed without the two republics and that recognition might deter further Serbian aggression and end the fighting in the region. The move was seemingly made without any thought to its impact on Bosnia and the other Yugoslav republics.
Encouraged by the subsequent European Community (EC) recognition of Croatia and Slovenia and fearful of a possible partitioning of Bosnia between Serbia and Croatia, the Muslim-dominated Bosnian government held a referendum on independence in February of 1992. Although boycotted by most of the minority Serb population, the referendum was approved overwhelmingly by the Muslim and Croat voters. After the referendum, the Bosnian government began power-sharing negotiations with minority Serb leaders. Unfortunately, such negotiations began to break down in late March 1992, as violent confrontations between Bosnia’s ethnic groups increased.

By early April, Serb militias backed by the Yugoslav army had seized control of a wide swath of territory across northwest and eastern Bosnia. In an effort to stem further Serbian aggression in Bosnia, the United States changed its position on the maintenance of Yugoslav territorial integrity. Utilizing Germany’s prior logic, that formal recognition might deter further Serbian aggression into Bosnia, the United States pushed for recognition of Bosnia as an independent state. On April 7, 1992, in exchange for U.S. formal recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, the U.S. and the EC formally recognized Bosnian statehood. That same day, the Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, declared the formation of a “Serbian republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.” Contrary to Western hopes and efforts, the fighting in Bosnia continued.

THE BUSH STORY OF “AID AND AVOID”

Past Lessons and Key Relationships: Problematic Intervention with No Vital Interests

The Bush administration’s Bosnia “story” dates back to the beginnings of the Yugoslav conflict itself. When the fighting erupted in Yugoslavia in 1991, the Bush
administration expressed a reluctance to become involved. This reluctance appeared related to two primary factors: perceived similarities to past intervention “failures” and the lack of connection to vital national interests.

First, as illustrated in Figure 4.1, the absence of vital interests in the conflict worked against intervention. Given the problems in Iraq and the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia seemed relatively unimportant to U.S. vital interests, a fact underscored by the attention President Bush – a foreign policy enthusiast – paid to the issue. According to Bush’s national security adviser, Brent Scowcroft, seven months into the conflict the president was still asking about once a week what it was all about.\(^4\) Within the Bush administration, the consensus was that Yugoslavia was a European problem and therefore a good test-case for Europe’s moves towards greater foreign policy unity.\(^5\) The administration made clear that it was willing to cede leadership on the issue to its European allies, a position that the Europeans, at least initially, supported.\(^6\) As Secretary of State James Baker famously stated of Yugoslavia in 1991 “we don’t have a dog in that fight.”\(^7\) These sentiments towards the region remained after the fighting erupted in Bosnia in the spring of 1992. Although the administration became relatively more active in the Bosnian conflict in the fall, the President made clear that the U.S. was still not willing to “take the lead” on the issue. The primary responsibility for dealing with the conflict remained with Europe and the United Nations. It only involved U.S. interests if it spread to Kosovo and dragged in the NATO allies. Reflecting on the administration’s attitudes at that time, former National Security Advisor, Brent Scowcroft, stated that as long as the conflict remained contained to Bosnia, “it might have been horrible, but it did not effect us.”\(^8\)
Figure 4.1: The Bush administration’s story of “Aid and Avoid” (Spring-December 1992).
The second factor that worked against intervention during the Bush administration was that the conflict in Yugoslavia, and later Bosnia, invoked historical comparisons to past policy failures, such as the Nazi invasion in the Balkans during WWII and American interventions in Vietnam and Lebanon. Distilled from these so-called “failures” was the lesson that outside military intervention into age-old internal conflicts was problematic: it was unlikely to provide solutions and instead risked deeper and more costly military-political involvement. The lesson reflected a fear of getting “bogged down” in an ultimately unsuccessful distant conflict – reportedly a prospect that had been raised by military leaders in both the United States and Europe with respect to Bosnia. As stated by Assistant Secretary of State, Thomas Niles, “Some of the historical experiences of other armies that have been involved in the Bosnia-Herzegovina does not suggest that this is a place one would want to get involved in.”

The historical example Niles was referring to was the German occupation of Yugoslavia during WWII. The analogy was repeatedly invoked by the Bush administration to illustrate the difficulty of outside military intervention and occupation in the region, limited or otherwise, given the terrain, ethnic divisions, and subsequent volatile and complicated loyalties within the Yugoslav and, in particular, the Bosnian people. In a Defense Department briefing, Secretary of Defense Cheney explained why he was not eager to get militarily involved in “that morass of Bosnia.”

If you look at history, World War II, well over one million Yugoslavs killed during that conflict. The various ethnic groups in Yugoslavia got involved on different sides. There were 30-some German divisions occupying Yugoslavia. But a majority of Yugoslavs who were killed by the Yugoslavs. It is not an area that lends itself to the traditional application of military power. So, I am a reluctant warrior in Yugoslavia.
The U.S. experience in Beirut, Lebanon was also an analogy frequently invoked to illustrate the risk of limited and ill-defined military involvement into long-running conflicts. In 1983, General Powell had the unwanted task of informing then Secretary of Defense, Casper Weinburger, that a terrorist truck bomb had struck a Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, killing 241 U.S. soldiers. Responding to criticism that the military was too reticent in its attitude towards the use of force in Bosnia, Powell opined,

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

Alongside Lebanon, Vietnam was frequently invoked in the elite discourse around Bosnia. Perhaps more than any other historical event, Vietnam loomed large over the Bush administration’s decision making in the Balkans. Many of the administration’s top officials had come of age during Vietnam and the ghosts of that era colored their view of the conflict. According to Eagleburger, “When I thought of what might happen if we intervened, what I always feared was Vietnam – the tar baby. Something that started out small but kept growing.” Although Bosnia like Somalia was deemed irrelevant to vital national interests, contrary to Somalia – which the Bush administration viewed as a relatively simple “in and out” act of intervention – Bosnia was painted as a political and military “quagmire.”

First, when discussing the possibility of military intervention in Bosnia, the administration described the terrain in the region as “extraordinarily difficult” and conducive to “guerilla warfare.” President Bush went as far to describe the terrain in
Sarajevo as “similar to Dien Bien Phu.” Consequently, the “decisive” application of American force, as in Desert Storm during the Gulf War, was simply not possible in Bosnia. In addition, the Bosnian Serbs, who were viewed more or less servants of Belgrade, were reputed to be well-armed and skilled military fighters. Moreover, like the Vietnamese, the administration argued that they might not easily back down even in the face of superior military power given the “depth of the animosity that exists there” and, compared to the United States, the greater sense of devotion to their cause. In a hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee, General Barry R. McCaffrey, Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, invoked Vietnam when testifying to the strength of the Bosnian Serb forces. In describing the difficulty of a U.S. intervention in the region, McCaffrey argued that “one exacerbating factor in this entire struggle has been the former Yugoslav military strategy to defend their nation state at the time, which borrows more from Giap and Mao than it does from classical Western military thinking.”

At least one voice within the administration, Warren Zimmerman, the ambassador to Yugoslavia from 1989-1992, disputed this characterization of the Serbs. Zimmerman, critical of Western inaction in Yugoslavia up until his last days as ambassador in May 1992, stated: “I hadn’t served in Vietnam, but I knew the Serbs. And they bore no resemblance to the Vietnamese Communists. They didn’t have the commitment to the cause of Bosnia. Theirs wasn’t a holy crusade. Theirs was a land-grab. They weren’t the same quality of soldiers. They were weekend warriors, and many of them were drunk a lot of the time. It was just very, very different.” Despite his skepticism of the Vietnam analogy’s relevance to Bosnia, Zimmerman’s perspective of
the Serbs was not dominant given Powell and Cheney’s singular weight and influence within the administration following their recent success in the Gulf War.\textsuperscript{24} Overall, like Vietnam, the administration tended to view military intervention in Bosnia as costly, leading to high casualties, a lengthy stay and, ultimately, enjoying poor chances for success.\textsuperscript{25}

**Key Relationships and Nature of Situation**

*Civil War/International Conflict with Violence and Sufficient Armaments on All Sides*

In terms of the nature of the conflict, after April 7, the United States and other Western officials viewed the escalation of fighting in Bosnia primarily as a “civil war,” a characterization that, for the most part, proved politically expedient. Contrary to conflict and aggression between sovereign states (as was the case with Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait), a civil war was an internal matter and complicated questions of outside intervention. Thus, labeling the conflict in Bosnia as “an internal civil war” helped the United States, the United Nations, and other European actors, justify their reluctance to intervene militarily.\textsuperscript{26} To complicate matters, the administration also argued that the problem “had elements” of an international conflict, since the Serbs had and were continuing to intervene in the internal affairs of a sovereign state – Bosnia – despite Serbia’s claim that the Bosnian Serbs and former JNA forces were no longer subject to Belgrade’s control.\textsuperscript{27} However, unlike Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait, this aspect of the conflict apparently did not warrant military action.

Paradoxically then, while the administration argued that the Bosnian Serbs were servants of Belgrade, whom they blamed for starting and continuing the conflict, they
also argued that the conflict within Bosnia was an internal matter with all sides equally to blame for the violence which justified equal treatment. Moreover, the administration argued that all sides had sufficient armaments and that proposals to lift the arms embargo or arm the Bosnian Muslims, which were increasingly advocated outside of the administration, would only compound the violence. This characterization of the conflict reduced the imperative for outside intervention by implying that there was no clear-cut aggressor and no clear-cut victim (and therefore no genocide). Further reducing any imperative for intervention was the idea that, as the historical analogies illustrated, outside military intervention – if indeed warranted at all – would do little to ultimately solve the conflict.

Age-Old and Intractable with Limited Utility for Outside Intervention

Aside from a civil war, the administration emphasized the conflict’s ancient roots and complex and intractable nature. As stated by President Bush, the war in Bosnia was “a complex, convoluted conflict that grows out of age-old animosities” where “the lines between enemies and even friends are jumbled and fragmented.” This portrayal of the conflict again worked to underscore the difficulties of outside intervention. Accordingly, Bush argued that “the violence will not end overnight, whatever pressure and means the international community brings to bear. Blood feuds are very difficult resolve.” Such sentiments regarding the limited utility of intervention were echoed by Secretary of Defense Cheney, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Colin Powell, and the acting Secretary of State, Lawrence (Larry) Eagleburger.
Defending the administration’s stance of nonintervention, Cheney emphasized Bosnia’s difference from the Gulf War. “In Bosnia we’ve got a situation in which the conflict is based on age-old, centuries-old animosity, in an area where you do not have as clearcut a situation with respect to aggression, although there’s certainly been some acts performed on both sides.” In addition, Powell referred to the conflict as having “very, very deep and complex religious and cultural and historic roots” and therefore was skeptical that a “few well-chosen bombs” would “take care of a thousand years of history.” Meanwhile, Eagleburger argued that “the tragedy is not something that can be settled from outside and it’s about damn well time that everybody understood that. Until the Bosnians, Serbs, and Croats decide to stop killing each other, there is nothing the outside world can do about it.” Thus, on the one hand while the administration was working to diplomatically isolate Serbia for its perceived part in furthering aggression against a sovereign state it was arguing on the other that the problem was an internal matter where all sides were guilty of atrocities to some extent. The end result was that any moral and or legal imperatives for intervention were diminished.

Ethnic Cleansing but Not Genocide

The administration’s stance became more difficult to defend after the existence of Serb detention camps was revealed by the media in early August 1992. As the Holocaust analogy and claims of genocide were increasingly bandied by both domestic critics and the international media, the administration responded that WWII and the situation in Bosnia were different. “Genocide,” like that which occurred during the Holocaust, was not equivalent to “ethnic cleansing,” like that occurring in Bosnia. While there was
something of a national interest in preventing the one, there was not in the other.\textsuperscript{34} As later stated by National Security Adviser, Brent Scowcroft, since the U.S. had ratified the 1948 Genocide Convention, the U.S. would have been legally obligated to act to prevent genocide in Bosnia due to the need “to appear to be upholding international law.”\textsuperscript{35} Thus, although acting Secretary of State Eagleburger admitted that atrocities had been reported these accounts were still unconfirmed and no evidence of concentration-like “death camps” had been found.\textsuperscript{36} Moreover, since there were allegations of atrocities and evidence of detention camps maintained by \textit{all} sides in the conflict, there were, again, no clear victims and therefore, no clear case to be made for genocide.\textsuperscript{37}

Still, with media and public pressure increasing, President Bush noted that “the shocking brutality of genocide in World War II, in those concentration camps, are burning memories for all of us, and can’t happen again. And we will not rest until the international community has gained access to \textit{any} and \textit{all} detention camps.”\textsuperscript{38} According to Thomas Niles, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, the administration considered it “a matter of principle to reveal the truth of what it going on those camps,” implying that once that information had been established, the administration’s moral responsibilities were finished.\textsuperscript{39}

\textbf{Goals}

\textit{Aid, Contain, Deter} and \textit{Avoid}

Given the perception of past lessons regarding the danger of limited intervention, the nature of the situation and key actor relationships, such as the lack of vital national interests and the intractable nature of the conflict, the administration’s goals with regards
to Bosnia were fourfold: 1) avoid U.S. military involvement to stop the conflict, 2) alleviate civilian suffering, 3) deter Serbian support and aggression, and 4) contain the conflict. First, with the presidential election looming, the Bush administration appeared unwilling to become involved in what many portrayed as a foreign policy nightmare. Thus, avoiding military involvement to stop the conflict in Bosnia was a top priority. Related to avoiding military involvement was the goal of containment. If the conflict spread beyond Bosnia, into Kosovo, it could eventually involve NATO allies, Greece and Turkey, and more directly threaten U.S. strategic interests. Thus, deterring Serbian aggression and continued support of the Bosnian Serbs also became a priority.

Short of military intervention, the administration appeared more willing to involve itself in the humanitarian side of the problem. As domestic and international pressures to act increased in the summer and fall of 1992, the goal of alleviating suffering and providing relief became more prominent. Despite such pressures, the president continued to resist a U.S. military engagement to stop the violence.

Past Lessons and Actions

Vietnam and the Weinburger-Powell Doctrine

Like the administration’s perception of goals and key relationships, “lessons” of the past influenced the decision makers evaluation and choice of options. The first lesson culled primarily from Vietnam was that casualties had to be avoided in order to sustain public support for military engagements not clearly pertaining to vital American interests. Therefore, to minimize casualties, the administration proffered a version of the so-called “Weinberger-Powell” doctrine, arguing that the decision to intervene militarily in Bosnia
would only be undertaken if it there was a clear political objective that could be achieved quickly and decisively.\textsuperscript{47}

In an interview with \textit{This Week with David Brinkley}, Cokie Roberts asked the president’s National Security Advisor, Brent Scowcroft, if the American military was still so affected by the “Vietnam syndrome” that they were afraid to intervene in Bosnia “unless they can be sure that they win right away and get right out.” Agreeing with Robert’s assessment, Scowcroft argued that “On this particular case, to get in and to have our troops involved, even if it’s low-level like the British troops in Northern Ireland, you have, you know, a soldier a day killed by a sniper, one a week, whatever. Sooner or later the American people will say, “What are we doing here? Why are we trying to keep the peace for people who don’t want to keep the peace themselves?”\textsuperscript{48} Eight months earlier, the president was asked, in reference to Bosnia, if “the fear of another Vietnam” still haunted the United States. Bush responded that “It’s still with me, in one sense, and that is that I don’t want to commit a soldier to battle, unless I know, one, that we’ve got the wherewithal to win and to win fast and that I can see how that soldier’s going to get out of there with his head high, his country backing him.”\textsuperscript{49}

Given the fear of casualties and the subsequent public response, the administration’s viewed its options in Bosnia in terms of “all or nothing,” a view that was highly influenced by Pentagon assessments.\textsuperscript{50} The former Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Warren Zimmerman, stated that with regards to the use of force in Bosnia, “the prevailing view was in the Bush administration was that, for the sake of credibility, we would do what was necessary to prevail, even to the point of using ground troops.
Since no senior official was prepared to wage a ground war, the line had to be drawn short of the use of force in general.\textsuperscript{51}

Convinced that limited interventions into ancient “hornets nests” were trouble and to be avoided,\textsuperscript{52} the Pentagon presented civilian officials with the options of either a major military commitment or doing nothing. Cheney and Powell were strongly against any use of force in the region, viewing it as eventually leading to ground combat.\textsuperscript{53} Therefore, when asked by the top civilians within the administration of the size of force necessary to stop the violence in the region, the military’s estimates never fell below 200,000 troops.\textsuperscript{54} Powell’s assistant, General McCaffrey, testified before Congress that it would require an army of 400,000 troops to impose a cease-fire in Bosnia.\textsuperscript{55} Aside from the high troop numbers, Powell and Cheney cited the difficulty of defining political and military objectives as well as the nature of the enemy and repeatedly questioned the utility of force in the region.\textsuperscript{56} Thus, despite evidence of some dissent from within the Pentagon and the State Department,\textsuperscript{57} the consensus was that given the ill-defined nature of the problem and the high troop requirements, force was simply not a viable option.

\textit{Aid, Diplomacy and Sanctions}

With such strict conditions on the use of force and given the administration’s goals and perceptions of the situation and key relationships, U.S. actions were limited to humanitarian aid, diplomacy and sanctions. First, to achieve all of the U.S. objectives, the administration supported European-led negotiations to end the conflict. Since the administration argued that it was a European problem, the onus for negotiating a solution laid with Europe. In addition to supporting a negotiated solution, the administration
worked to alleviate the suffering within Bosnia by supporting the extension of the U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR) mandate to protect humanitarian airlifts into Sarajevo in June 1992, airlifts which had some direct U.S. participation. After the public uproar following the revelation of detention camps in August, the administration became more active on the Bosnian issue. After publicly demanding international access to all camp sites, it pushed the U.N. to invoke Chapter VII of the charter, authorizing “all necessary measures” to help facilitate the delivery of aid to Sarajevo and other affected areas within Bosnia. The administration also pushed for a U.N. “no fly zone” over Bosnian airspace, patterned after the one imposed on Iraq after the Gulf War.

To further the objectives of both containing the conflict and deterring Serbian aggression, the U.S. supported the imposition of sanctions against the remnants of the Federal Republic of Yugoslav Republic (FRY), Serbia and Montenegro. The sanctions were designed to both punish Belgrade for its past aggression and continued support for the Bosnian Serbs and deter it from future aggression in the quest for a “Greater Serbia.” The hope was that without Belgrade’s support, the Bosnian Serbs would be compelled to accept negotiations and make peace. In November, the sanctions regime was tightened with the deployment of U.N. observer forces along Bosnia’s borders and in Kosovo. Finally, in an effort to contain the conflict and possible U.S. military involvement in the region, President Bush delivered a warning to Belgrade in late December that the United States would be prepared to use military force against Serbia if it made moves against the ethnic Albanians in the Kosovo province. It should be noted that despite the relative increased attention given to the issue in the fall of 1992, there is no clear indication, at least from the discourse, that the administration’s goals in Bosnia had changed.
Consequences

Avoid a Quagmire, Alleviate Domestic Pressure

In terms of perceived consequences, the administration appeared to hope that such actions would both alleviate domestic and international pressures demanding for greater military action while avoiding a possible costly Balkan engagement during a presidential election year.\(^6^5\) Ceding leadership was meant to push Europe to step up and resolve the problem, easing the burden off the United States. However, as the administration’s last days in office grew near, that hope appeared to fade and, having lost the elections, it began to take a greater interest in the problem.\(^6^6\) By the time the administration left office, U.S. forces were participating in the Sarajevo airlift and helping NATO enforce the 1991 U.N. arms embargo and the 1992 U.N. economic sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro. Despite these apparently stronger policy stances, Warren Zimmerman noted that “[u]nfortunately, through the waning months of the Bush administration, there was no inclination towards greater activism.” \(^6^7\)

THE CLINTON STORY OF PEACE THROUGH DIPLOMACY

Past Lessons and Key Relationships

Moral Obligation to Prevent Genocide/Ethnic Cleansing but Bosnia not Top Priority

Given Clinton’s vocal criticism of President Bush during the 1992 presidential campaign, many believed U.S. policy towards Bosnia would become more aggressive under the new administration. When the existence of detention camps was revealed in Bosnia, candidate Clinton stated that he was “outraged” and urged “immediate action to
stop this slaughter.” To this end, Clinton advocated lifting the arms embargo against the Bosnian Muslims and using air strikes against the Serbs, adding “If the horrors of the Holocaust taught us anything, it is the high cost of remaining silent and paralyzed in the face of genocide.” Once in office, however, the administration’s policy towards Bosnia was seen as less than aggressive.

One theme that remained in the administration’s discourse after the Clinton administration entered office pertained to lessons distilled from the Holocaust. As illustrated in Figure 4.2, the idea that “ethnic cleansing cannot go unpunished” is a theme emanating from the early administration discourse and one that implied a “moral imperative” to prevent and punish genocidal acts like those that occurred during the Holocaust. In his confirmation hearing before the Senate, Secretary of Defense Aspin argued that the violence in the former Yugoslavia “provokes calls for action based upon conscience.” Meanwhile, in the administration’s first foreign policy statement on Bosnia, Secretary of State Christopher stated “our conscience revolts at the idea of passively accepting such brutality” in Bosnia. Moreover, he argued that the conflict “tests what wisdom we have gathered from this bloody century, and it measures our resolve (sic) to take early concerted action against systematic ethnic persecution.”

Other lessons from the past also appeared to color the administration’s view of the Bosnian problem. More specifically, the Gulf War illustrated two things: 1) state borders cannot be altered by force and 2) multilateralism is an effective low-cost tool for achieving state objectives. In an interview on This Week With David Brinkley, George Will questioned Secretary of State Christopher on whether the “root principle of the new world order” – that “territory will not change hands as a result of a military force” – was
Figure 4.2: Clinton Administration’s story of “Peace through Diplomacy” (Jan-April 1993).
also at work in Bosnia. Agreeing, Christopher stated that it was “a very important principle.” Less than one month later in the administration’s first major policy statement on the Bosnian crisis, Christopher argued that “The continuing destruction of a new United Nations member challenges the principle that internationally recognized borders should not be altered by force.” U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Madeleine Albright, also argued that a “very important signal” the United States wanted to send in Bosnia was “that changing borders by force is not going to be the way that we deal with things in the next decade.” Second, according to Clinton the United States learned from the Gulf War that “if we operate with the support of the United Nations and with the support of Europe and with the support of our allies, we can do a lot of things, at an acceptably low cost of life, and get something done.” Thus, the administration appeared to imply that the U.S. and international community were legally obligated to respond to the violation of international principles.

Despite these lessons supporting U.S. and international action in Bosnia, the discourse made clear that Bosnia, and foreign policy in general, were not at the top of the new administration’s agenda. Unlike President Bush who had an avid interest in foreign policy, for President Clinton, the subject, at least initially, held little intrinsic interest. The economy and the President’s domestic agenda clearly took precedence. In his confirmation hearing, Christopher argued that “the State Department needs an American desk, and this administration will have one, and I’ll be sitting right behind it.” Meanwhile, Secretary of Defense Aspin argued that the Clinton election mandate meant “that the focus ought to be in this four-year period on revitalizing the American economy” and “not to solve the problems in Bosnia.” Thus, although deemed an
important foreign policy problem, the administration’s attention was not to be consumed by the conflict.

Nature of Situation and Key Relationships

Deteriorating, Difficult and Intractable Problem, Obstructionist Allies, Limited Options

Given the perceived priority of the domestic agenda, once in office officials worked to downgrade any perceived elevated commitment that the new administration had to stop the conflict in Bosnia. When questioned about candidate Clinton’s position on air strikes and lifting the arms embargo, Christopher backpedaled, arguing that the situation in Bosnia was “very fluid” and “rapidly changing.” Echoing the previous administration, the president and senior officials described the conflict as a “difficult” and “an intractable situation” deeply rooted in “ancient ethnic hatreds.” However, they stressed that it was a situation that they had inherited that, if addressed earlier, would have been more manageable. Now, Christopher argued, the conflict had “deteriorated to the point where the solution is – is almost beyond the grasp of any human instrument.”

Part of the problem, according to the administration, was that the European allies, when consulted, were opposed to aggressive military action given the presence of their peacekeepers on the ground. Consequently, the administration’s stressed that since the fall of 1992, options had diminished and were now quite limited. According to President Clinton, “I know our ability to do anything about it [Bosnia] is somewhat limited…And I am limited also not only by what I think the United States can do or should do but by what our allies are willing to do.” In reference to the administration’s
option in Bosnia, Lake later noted, “We kept looking for something – reading and rereading everything there was about the area – and it just wasn’t there.”

Important to U.S. interests but Requires Multilateral not Unilateral U.S. Intervention

Another clear theme in the Clinton administration discourse was the idea that Bosnia was important to U.S. interests to the extent that it required a “multilateral” commitment. However, what degree of interests the administration perceived as threatened by the conflict was unclear. In other words, what constituted “vital national interests” and did Bosnia meet that criteria? In his policy statement, Secretary of State Christopher argued that the United States “cannot afford to ignore” the conflict in Bosnia then listed a number of moral/humanitarian, strategic and international legal reasons, implying that potential vital American interests were at stake in the issue. In his confirmation hearing, Secretary of Defense Aspin argued that both moral and “vital” security interests were at stake in Bosnia but it was not a clear case of “either/or.” Meanwhile, President Clinton argued that the U.S had a “national interest in limiting ethnic cleansing.” Therefore the administration was going to become more aggressively committed to the Bosnian problem because if it didn’t, “the terrible principle of ethnic cleansing will be validated” and the problem “could spread to other republics and nations.”

Despite these moral and strategic imperatives, Clinton argued that “I have not thought that the United States should or could successfully take unilateral action. And I know that a lot of things that we could do to inflict pain might also entail a great deal of cost and might not change the ultimate outcome of how the Bosnian people live.”
short, although some degree of national interests were perceived to be at stake in Bosnia, they were insufficient to warrant risking American lives in a potentially costly intervention of limited utility.

*Serbs are Aggressors, Vance-Owens Peace Agreement Flawed and Shouldn’t be Imposed*

Contrary to the Bush administration, when the Clinton administration entered office, the aggressors in the Bosnian conflict had clearly been identified. According to the administration’s top officials, the “Serbs,” broadly speaking, were guilty of both continuing and starting the conflict. No distinction between the Serbs in Bosnia and those in Belgrade was made. During a presidential town meeting, Clinton argued that the U.S. was going to become directly involved in the Bosnian peace negotiations “to protect the rights of the Bosnians, the Croatians and others who have been, basically, subject to the assault of the Serbs.” The American Ambassador to the U.N, Madeleine Albright described the Serbs as the “major aggressors” in Bosnia while Christopher called the conduct of the Serbians as “outrageous” and argued that “Europe and the world community must bring real pressure – economic and military – on the Serbian leadership to halt its savage policy of murder, rape and ethnic cleansing.”

In order to stop the Serb aggression and since the United States was not prepared to deploy troops to stop the conflict, the U.S. pushed for a negotiated settlement. However, the administration was not keen about the peace plan currently on the table. The Vance-Owens (V-O) peace plan had been negotiated by two senior diplomats, former U.S. Secretary of State, Cyrus Vance, representing the United Nations, and former British foreign secretary, Lord Owen, representing the European Community. The plan,
which called for the cantonization of Bosnia into ten largely autonomous provinces under a weak central government, was not highly regarded by the incoming administration as it appeared to legitimize the Serb’s violent acquisition of territory. Consequently, the administration was unwilling to publicly endorse the agreement, arguing that if it was imposed on the parties then enforcement would be, in the long run, unviable.

Goals

*Alleviate Suffering, End the Violence, Contain and Punish*

Given the perceived lessons from the past, the Clinton administration initially appeared more willing to risk involvement in Bosnia than the previous administration. However, allied reluctance and the perceived nature of the situation tempered U.S. commitments to the region. Still, the administration’s goals in Bosnia, although not far removed from those of its predecessor, appeared more ambitious. The first goal was to alleviate the suffering and stem the violence. “Although the conflict may be far from our shores” stated Secretary Christopher, “We cannot ignore the human toll.” The second goal of “containing the conflict” stemmed from the concern over Serbian aggression. Given the complicated mix of ethnicities in the region, the conflict appeared to the administration to have “no natural borders.” Thus, Serb incursions into new regions, like Kosovo and Macedonia, opened the possibility of a widened Balkan war, “like those that preceded World War I.” Thus, containing the conflict before it threatened regional European stability became a priority.
Finally, stemming from the lessons of the Holocaust and the belief that the Serbs were the perpetrators of the majority of the violence, the administration sought to punish Serbian aggression and attempts to achieve ethnic purity. As Christopher stated:

The events in the former Yugoslavia raise the question as whether a state may address the rights of its minorities by eradicating them to achieve ethnic purity. Bold tyrants and fearful minorities are watching to see whether ethnic cleansing is a policy the world will tolerate. If we hope to promote the spread of freedom, if we hope to encourage the emergence of peaceful ethnic democracies, our answer must be a resounding “no.”

**Actions Taken and Advocated**

In short, although the Clinton administration appeared more forceful in its goals and objectives than the previous administration, arguing that ethnic cleansing in Bosnia was an “outrage” that should be prevented, it also argued that there was little that the U.S. could do. With unilateral action and the deployment of ground troops into the conflict ruled out, the administration subsequently pursued its goals via sanctions and diplomacy as in the previous administration. First, to alleviate suffering and stem the violence the administration decided it had to actively pursue peace. Given the past lesson that state borders should not be altered by force and their concerns about Vance-Owens, the administration sought to pursue a peace agreement that was “mutually acceptable” by all three parties and one that maintained the integrity of the Bosnian state.

To demonstrate America’s new commitment to the problem, Clinton appointed a new diplomatic envoy, Ambassador Reginald Bartholomew, to participate directly in the Vance-Owens peace negotiations to ensure that both Muslim interests and long-term stability for the region were not sacrificed under the duress to achieve a settlement. To increase U.S. leverage and credibility in such negotiations, the administration promised a
greater military role in the future. In his policy speech in February, Christopher stated that the U.S. military would assist U.N./NATO forces in implementing and enforcing a peace agreement in the region, including the possible deployment of U.S. troops.\textsuperscript{97} According to Anthony Lake, the President’s national security adviser, the troop commitment was made to ensure that the new administration was “taken seriously.”\textsuperscript{98}

To both alleviate suffering and deter Serbian aggression the administration chose to continue to support aid shipments to Sarajevo as well as other areas of Bosnia and sought enforcement of the U.N. imposed no-fly zone over the region.\textsuperscript{99} Meanwhile, in an effort to further the goal of deterring and punishing Serb aggression while containing the conflict, the administration undertook a number of diplomatic and economic measures. First, to contain and punish Serbia, the administration sought to tighten the enforcement of the economic sanctions against Serbia.\textsuperscript{100} The administration also saw sanctions as a tool for deterring Serbia from “widening the war.”\textsuperscript{101} To illustrate to Serbia that there was a political as well as economic price for aggression, the administration supported the creation of U.N. War Crimes Tribunal to try those accused of war crimes in the region.\textsuperscript{102} Finally, to deter further Serbian aggression that could lead to a widening of the conflict, the administration reiterated Bush’s warning to Belgrade not to interfere in Kosovo or Macedonia.\textsuperscript{103}

**Consequences and Future Lesson**

*Discourage Expectations, Increase Diplomatic Pressure, Prevent Disintegration*

The apparent consequences of U.S. actions in the region were multiple. First, the administration hoped to dampen expectations of a unilateral U.S. solution via its
emphasis on the “intractable” nature of the conflict and the importance of multilateralism. Second, while the administration wanted to discourage expectations, at the same time, the past moral imperative pushed it to assert a more direct role in the conflict, hoping that its involvement and expressed future military commitment would pressure all parties to work more concertedly towards a viable diplomatic solution.

Finally, in terms of consequences and future lessons, the administration viewed Bosnia as an important precedent. With “assertive multilateralism” as a cornerstone of the new administration’s foreign policy, Bosnia presented the administration with a critical early test for the handling of future internal conflicts; one that, according to NSC adviser Tony Lake, the administration’s foreign policy would be judged by first and foremost. Moreover, if multilateral diplomacy failed and a viable political solution was not found to end the violence, then the consequences for other multi-ethnic states around the world would be grim. Key among these states was the new and important Russian ally, a country viewed particularly “at risk” given the millions of Russian minorities living in the many new states of the former Soviet Union.

**FIRST CLINTON STORY SHIFT: “LIFT AND STRIKE”**

By the end of March, it appeared that some progress in the negotiations had been made. Both the Bosnian Croats and the Bosnian Muslims had signed on to the Vance-Owen peace agreement (following U.S. led modifications favoring the Bosnian Muslims), leaving the Bosnian Serbs alone in their refusal to agree to the new map and constitutional principles for the region. By early April, a change in the administration’s
story began to appear. With the other two parties signed on to the agreement, the administration expressed concerns that the Serbs would remain holdouts in the absence of some additional pressure, leading the administration to publicly question the possibility of lifting the arms embargo against the Bosnian Muslims. The administration’s concerns appeared confirmed when, on April 12, the Bosnian Serbs broke a fragile two-week cease-fire and attacked the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica. The attack occurred the same day that NATO was to begin enforcing the no-fly zone over Bosnia, first adopted by the United Nations Security Council in October 1992. Following the attack, a new story had clearly emerged: peace required compellence.

Past Lessons and Key Relationships

Legal and Moral Imperatives for Action

For the most part, past lessons from the initial story appeared to hold: first, that there existed a moral imperative to act against ethnic cleansing; and second, that the U.S. and international community could not tolerate the violation of internationally recognized borders, which implied a legal imperative for action. However, in contrast to the first story, after April 12, the second lesson of punishing and preventing the violent altering of state borders was a less repeated theme of the discourse. In addition, the moral imperative for action to prevent or stop ethnic cleansing appeared less clear. While the Vice President, Al Gore, made comparisons between Bosnia and the Holocaust, the President made concerted efforts to differentiate the two events. Responding to a question comparing Bosnia to the Holocaust, President Clinton argued that “I think the
Holocaust is the most extreme example the world has ever known of ethnic cleansing. And I think that even in its more limited manifestations, it’s an idea that should be opposed...That’s not to compare the two examples. They’re not identical. Everyone knows that.”

Moreover, while senior administration officials were still arguing that clearly the United States needed “to do more to stop ethnic cleansing and stop the bloodshed in Bosnia,” the exact level or type of response the administration perceived as necessary was also unclear. On April 20, President Clinton argued that “I think the United States should always seek an opportunity to stand up against – at least to speak out against inhumanity.” Three days later, he argued that “I think you have to stand up against is. I think its wrong.”

**Diplomacy Failing, Need More Pressure and U.S. Leadership**

Other key relationships or situational characteristics, as illustrated in Figure 4.3, included the observation that the current policy towards the region was failing and needed to be changed. After April 12, Secretary of State Christopher argued that the administration’s policy towards Bosnia was clearly at a “turning point” and currently undergoing a major review given the deteriorating situation in the region. Perhaps a bit more precisely, President Clinton argued that it was now clear that “a stronger policy” was needed in Bosnia, one that required greater U.S. leadership. “I think we should act. We should lead.” However the president was quick to add “I do not think we should act alone.” The idea that the United States would only act multilaterally and would not
Initiating Event:
The Bosnian Serb siege against Srebrenica

Past Lessons:
1. There exists a moral imperative to act against ethnic cleansing
2. The Gulf War proved that state borders cannot be altered by force and that multilateral efforts can achieve significant results at a relatively low cost

Nature of Situation and Key Actor Relationships:
1. Current policy is not working; the situation requires greater pressure and U.S. leadership but within a multilateral context and without U.S. ground troops
2. The president is actively engaged
3. Bosnia is the most difficult foreign policy problem
4. Bosnian Muslims militarily disadvantaged vis-à-vis Bosnian Serbs; lifting of arms embargo necessary to level playing field
5. The British and French are wary of air strikes and opposed to lifting the arms embargo but appear to be softening
6. The Bosnian Serbs, backed by the Serbs, are the principal villains and primary obstacles to peace

Goal(s):
1. Stop and punish Serb aggression and ethnic cleansing
2. get Bosnian Serbs to accept a mutually acceptable peace agreement

Past Lessons:
1. Limited involvement in civil wars without public support is unsustainable.
2. Interventions should only be undertaken when objectives are clear, the force used is decisive, an exit strategy is in place, and widespread public support is present.
3. Hitler’s WWII experience reveals the difficulty of outside intervention in Bosnia

Actions Taken and Advocated:
1. Support U.N. resolution to create safe areas around Srebrenica, Sarajevo and other Muslim enclaves
2. Pressure Belgrade via tightened sanctions to halt the conflict and move Bosnian Serbs towards peace
3. Seek to achieve a consensus among the allies for lifting the arms embargo against the Bosnian government and using limited air strikes to freeze Serb gains

Consequences:
1. Once parity is established, U.S./NATO will disengage, fighting will continue over short term followed by peace
2. Ethnic disintegration elsewhere will be prevented and principle of ethnic cleansing will be discredited

Figure 4.3: The “Lift and Strike” story (April-May 1993).
consider options using U.S. ground troops remained an important constraint on the administration’s decision making about the problem.

Administration Engaged, Considering All Options but Most Difficult Foreign Policy Problem

Along with the idea that the current policy in Bosnia was not working was the repeated mantra that the administration and, in particular, the president was “fully engaged” in this issue and considering “previously unacceptable options.” According to America’s Ambassador to the U.N., Madeleine Albright, “Since the Clinton administration has been on duty, the Bosnian crisis has occupied more attention by the President’s foreign policy team…than any other issue.” Still, despite apparent presidential interest, foreign policy clearly remained subordinate to the president’s domestic agenda. Moreover, although it appeared determined to deal with the conflict, the administration acted to diminish hopes of a facile solution to the problem by again underlining its complexity. “This is clearly the most difficult foreign policy problem we face” stated President Clinton. Meanwhile, Warren Christopher described Bosnia as “a problem from hell. It’s just about the most difficult diplomatic problem I’ve ever seen.”

Serbs Principle Villains, Lifting of Arms Embargo Necessary to Level Playing Field

Other themes of the new story centered on the continued villainous activities of the Serbs and their favored military position. However, by the second story, the administration had differentiated the Bosnian Serbs as the primary aggressors in the
conflict. As stated by Secretary of State Christopher, “The principal villain in the piece are the Bosnian Serbs.”

Still, as in previous stories, it was argued that the Bosnian Serbs and the Serbs were more or less indistinguishable since the former were, in turn, being directed and militarily backed by the latter. As stated by U.N. Ambassador, Madeleine Albright, “the vicious assault on Srebrenica and other criminal violence unleashed upon civilians in Eastern Bosnia confirm once again the aggressive character of both the Bosnian Serb and their ally in Belgrade.”

According to the State Department spokesperson, “we have long recognized that the Serbs are in a position to influence events…and we feel that they’re able to bring the fighting to a halt should they wish to do so.”

The demonization of the Serbs thus made their perceived military superiority, particularly vis-à-vis the Bosnian Muslims, more of an issue. For key officials within the administration, the favored military position of the Bosnian Serbs was viewed as an unanticipated byproduct of the 1991 United Nations Security Council arms embargo on Bosnia. According to Secretary of State Christopher, “The arms embargo operated – I’m sure it wasn’t intentionally – to the advantage of the Bosnian Serbs, because they had the advantage of basically being able to take over the heavy artillery and other heavy arms from the former Yugoslavia Army, whereas the Muslims did not have that advantage. And so the disparity in weaponry is very great.”

Given the relative imbalance, officials argued that arming the Bosnian government was necessary to “level the playing field.”
Allies Reluctant to Use Force but Softening

As for the allies, the administration continued to argue that they – in particular, the French and the British – were reluctant to either lift the arms embargo or engage in air strikes, given the presence of their peacekeeping troops on the ground. However, the new administration story indicated some belief that the allies were perhaps more open to previously “unacceptable” force options given the “gravity” of events in Srebrenica. According to Secretary of State Christopher, the allies attitudes towards force and the lifting of the arms embargo in the past had been “quite negative,” but he believed “there may well be some shifting on that subject as it becomes more apparent that there is a vast disparity in the armament that the parties have and also because of the problems of other choices.” Christopher went on to argue he believed that the allies were possibly more receptive to the use of force option due to their willingness to finally enforce the U.N. imposed no fly zone.

Goals and Past Lessons

Stop Ethnic Cleansing, Get a Peace Agreement and Powell Doctrine

Following April 12, the administration centered its focus in Bosnia on two objectives: first, to “stand up against and stop the practice of ethnic cleansing” by the Serbs and second, and somewhat in opposition to the first, to get the Serbs to agree to a mutually acceptable peace settlement that would end the violence. In contrast to the previous story, these two objectives overshadowed the prior objectives of “alleviating the suffering” and “containment,” which subsequently became more implied elements of the discourse.
Given these goals, past lessons or “lessons from history” figured into the administration’s assessment of options. As in the Bush administration, the German experience in the Balkans during World War II was repeatedly invoked by the President to illustrate the limits of outside intervention in the region. However, a more dominant historical referent was, again, Vietnam. According to White House spokesperson, George Stephanopoulos, “one of the lessons obviously of Vietnam and other conflicts is that you need the sustained support of the American people in order to have a successful venture.” This lesson, of course, was reflected in the so-called “Weinburger-Powell Doctrine” on the necessary conditions for successful armed interventions.

However, given the internal and externally imposed constraints on its decision making, the decisive application of force – one if not “the” major criteria of the Powell doctrine – was all but omitted from consideration in Bosnia. However, other criteria outlined in the so-called “Weinburger-Powell doctrine” were clearly influential in the administration’s discussion and selection of force options, particularly with regards to air strikes. According to President Clinton, “On the air strike issue, the pronouncements that General Powell has made generally about military action apply there…if the United States takes action, we must have a clearly defined objective that can be met…The United States is not and should not, become involved as a partisan in a war.”

Likewise, echoing the Weinburger-Powell doctrine, Warren Christopher argued that before the U.S. used force anywhere in the world it had to past “some very severe tests” which included clearly stated objectives, a strong likelihood of success, an exit strategy, and sustainable public support.
**Actions Advocated and Taken**

*Tighten Sanctions, Create Safe Areas, and “Lift and Strike”*

Given the above goals, lessons and constraints, the administration reportedly debated for weeks on the proper course of action.\(^{139}\) While officials repeatedly stated that “all options” were on the table, one option that the administration emphasized that it “never considered” was the introduction of American ground troops.\(^{140}\) Instead, the administration worked to tighten the economic sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro in the hope that Belgrade would halt arms shipments and use their influence to force their Serb “allies” to the peace table. The administration also supported the creation of U.N. safe areas around Srebrenica and Sarajevo (which was eventually extended to cover four other Muslim enclaves of Tuzla, Žepa, Goražde, and Bihac) and successfully pushed NATO enforcement of the U.N. no fly zone in the region.\(^{141}\) However, the real policy debate within the administration reportedly centered around two options: (1) lifting the arms embargo and bombing the Serbs; or (2) protecting Muslim enclaves and pushing for a cease-fire.\(^{142}\)

Despite a division among Clinton’s advisers, a consensus eventually emerged around the former option. However, while there was a general consensus on lifting the arms embargo, there was extensive debate on the necessity and effectiveness of using air power to bomb Serb positions. The eventual consensus on air strikes was a compromise that left few of the foreign policy principals satisfied. While Secretary of Defense Aspin and General Powell were against sending ground troops to Bosnia, as was the President, the CIA reported that without ground troop support, air strikes would likely be ineffective. Meanwhile, contrary to CIA estimates and the reservations of the other Joint
Chiefs, Chief of the Air Force, General McPeak, gave air strikes a positive evaluation – one that Powell later rebuked, viewing it as overly optimistic. Others in favor of airstrikes within the administration were the president’s National Security Adviser, Anthony Lake, and U.N. Ambassador, Madeleine Albright and Secretary of State, Warren Christopher.

Eventually, after over a month of discussions and internal debate, the President came to a decision. “Lift and strike” was to be the new administration policy. The policy called for “lifting” the arms embargo against the Bosnian Muslims in an effort to “level the playing field” at little or no cost to the United States, while the “strike” option called for NATO to contain the Serbs until the Muslims achieved relative military parity. According to one top policymaker, “The basic strategy was, this thing is no winner, it’s going to be a quagmire. Let’s not make it our quagmire. That’s what lift the arms embargo, and the limited air strikes was about.” Following the lift and strike decision, the administration set out to “consult” with the European allies then, after reaching a consensus, it planned to sell the new policy to the American public.

Consequences

*Short-term Increase in Violence, Discredit Ethnic Cleansing and Prevent Disintegration,*

Despite the administration’s support for more aggressive action, it was clear that the administration had reservations over the chosen options. While air strikes were seen as possibly not having the desired effects, lifting the arms embargo was seen as likely to end the humanitarian effort and increase the killing in the region over the short-term. Ultimately, however, “lift and strike” was the chosen way to achieve parity or a rough balance of power in the region, which the administration hoped would then lead to an
eventual ceasefire and peace agreement.\textsuperscript{147} Such actions were viewed necessary because, as President Clinton noted, “This is not just about Bosnia.”\textsuperscript{148} If the principle of ethnic cleansing was not discredited, the administration argued that the violence and disruption occurring in Bosnia could spread to other nearby countries and regions.\textsuperscript{149} With the future of NATO in doubt and a tenuous, nascent Russian democracy to the East, removing the destabilizing force of Bosnia was thus an important goal of its foreign policy.

**SECOND CLINTON STORY SHIFT: “CONTAINMENT”**

As Secretary of State Christopher left to achieve consensus with the European allies on its more aggressive proposal for military action to pressure the Bosnian Serbs to stop the fighting and return to the negotiating table, the Serbian leader, Slobodan Milosevic, took the wind out of the administration’s sails. On April 25, the leader threw his support behind the Vance-Owens peace plan and succeeded in getting the Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, to also sign on. The plan, however, was overwhelmingly rejected by the Bosnian Serb assembly. In an effort to preserve his political credibility, Karadzic proposed to put the plan to a popular referendum, but when the referendum was held on May 15-16, the Bosnian Serbs voted to soundly reject it.\textsuperscript{150}

As for the administration, selling the new proposal to the European allies was problematic both before and after the Serbs rejected the Vance-Owens peace plan. For the European allies the administration’s “lift and strike” proposal was simply never a serious option. First, given Milosevic’s nod to the Vance-Owens peace plan, a diplomatic
solution to the conflict appeared more imminent. In addition, the French and British were put off by what they saw as American arrogance and indifference to their positions. As one British diplomat put it, “We said [to the administration] that we can’t do ‘lift and strike,’ especially lift. Our troops are on the ground. We felt it might inflame the situation and could cut off relief.” Meanwhile, the French said they opposed lifting the arms embargo but would consider air strikes if the United States sent in ground troops – an option they knew the U.S. would reject.

The allies’ recalcitrance towards the American policy was enhanced by the lack of enthusiasm of its messenger, Warren Christopher. Rather than forcefully selling the new plan to the allies, Christopher approached meetings from a “consultative” perspective. The administration argued that such an approach was necessary to preserve allied unity, part of its stated commitment to multilateralism.151 To the Europeans, however, the approach indicated the administration’s lack of commitment to the new policy. According to Belgian Foreign Minister, Willy Claes, when Christopher presented the proposal, it was evident that he “felt very clearly that there was not a possibility to convince the Europeans.”152

At home in the United States, the new policy also seemed doomed. When approached by the administration, Congress had given the option a “gloomy assessment.” More importantly, the President’s enthusiasm for the policy, never passionate to begin with, had diminished. While Christopher was in Europe trying to sell the new policy to the allies, Clinton reportedly read Balkan Ghosts, by Robert Kaplan, and came away with the belief that conflict was endemic to the region and more or less inevitable. After hearing the president talk about the book, Aspin told Lake and Peter Tarnoff,
Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, that Clinton “was going south on lift and strike.” The policy was soon shelved.\textsuperscript{153} Following the failure of “lift and strike,” the administration’s discourse towards Bosnia underwent a clear shift away from activism.

\textbf{Past Lessons, Key Relationships, and Nature of Situation}

\textit{Avoid European Quagmire Not Pertinent to US Vital Interests}

During the second week of May, 1993, \textit{Time} magazine ran a picture of President Clinton and an agonized Lyndon Johnson on its cover, asking the question of whether Bosnia was going to be Clinton’s Vietnam. In response to public questions on the subject, Clinton emphasized the differences between the two events, arguing that the biggest difference between Bosnia and Vietnam was that contrary to the American experience in Vietnam, in Bosnia, the United States was “not about to act alone.” According to the president, Bosnia was “a European issue. It’s an issue for the world community to address.”\textsuperscript{154}

Clinton’s response illustrated key themes of the administration’s new story on Bosnia, as seen in Figure 4.4. Like the Bush administration, Vietnam clearly influenced the Clinton administration’s thinking on Bosnia as it was peppered in much of the administration’s statements on the subject. Like Vietnam and, again, in contrast to Somalia, Bosnia was repeatedly portrayed as a potential political-military “quagmire.” To separate itself from the conflict and thus avoid a deep and long-term political-military involvement in the region, the Clinton administration stressed the importance of “multilateralism,” arguing that, at heart, the “quagmire” of Bosnia was a “European” conflict that had little to do with American vital interests.\textsuperscript{155} If Bosnia was a
Initiating Event:
Allied Rejection of “Lift and Strike”

Past Lessons:
Limited outside military involvement into age-old internal can lead to a “quagmire” of long-term military-political involvement.

Nature of Situation and Key Actor Relationships:
1. Bosnia in not pertinent to American vital interests and is a European problem that should be dealt with multilaterally.
2. Military intervention is difficult due to the ancient hatreds between the three parties and the geography
3. The U.S. is not taking sides in a civil war with atrocities on all sides
4. There is a division within the allies on lifting the embargo while air strikes would likely be ineffective
5. The situation is tragic and difficult and cannot be solved unilaterally by the U.S.
6. No consensus exists in Congress on the right course of action and the public is not supportive of U.S. military intervention
7. The V-O peace plan is dead but the peace process is ongoing

Goal(s):
1. Contain the conflict
2. Stop the slaughter

Actions Taken and Advocated:
1. Set aside “lift and strike” option
2. Deploy U.S. troops to Macedonia to help contain the conflict and support monitors to Kosovo
3. maintain sanction regime against the Serbs and monitor border between Serbia and Bosnia
4. support European proposal to create safe areas but offer U.S. protection only of peacekeepers and not civilians
5. Continue to support the peace process

Consequences:
1. American interests and resources will be refocused on domestic problems
2. Avoid a quagmire

Figure 4.4: “Containment” (May-July 1993).
failure, the administration wanted to ensure it was an “international” or “European”
failure, and not primarily an “American” one. According to Secretary of State
Christopher, although a “human tragedy” and “grotesque humanitarian situation” Bosnia
“does not affect our vital national interests.” Since national interests were “not
sufficiently engaged,” Bosnia therefore did not warrant the use of American troops that,
if put there, would likely remain for “an indefinite period of time.”

Military Intervention Difficult due to Ancient Hatreds and Geography

In addition to the lack of vital national interests, echoing the previous
administration Clinton officials emphasized the difficulties of military intervention in
Bosnia to try to limit or stop the violence due to the “ancient hatreds” among the warring
parties and the geography. According to Christopher, the war in Bosnia was “a
quagmire of competing interests of historic ancient hatreds” that would require “hundreds
of thousands of American troops” to stop. Echoing statements of the former National
Security Adviser, Brent Scowcroft, American General and former Supreme Allied
Commander of NATO, John Galvin, invoked the ghosts of Vietnam in testimony before
Congress. Skeptical of the success of any military intervention in Bosnia, Galvin argued
that “we could take American military troops in there [Bosnia] and drive the level of
violence down to a much lower level than it is right now, but you would always have a
smoldering level of violence going on that would cost you one or two casualties a week,
over and over. This – because – while there is still a will to fight on the part of Croatians,
the Muslims and the Serbs in that tough mountainous country with very tough people
who are willing to sacrifice – that – you cannot stop that entirely.”
Another aspect of the new story was the administration’s emphasis that in Bosnia, it was not going to take sides in a “civil war” like the U.S. did in Vietnam. According to the president, “That’s what happened to us in those other places. So the American people should be reassured that we have limited the possibility of quagmire.” In another instance, Clinton argued that “Our policy is not to do what we did in Vietnam, which was to get in and fight with one side in a civil war to assure a military victory…I’m trying to proceed in a very deliberate way to try to make sure that there isn’t a Vietnam problem here.” Thus, contrary to its previous goals and demonization of the Serbs, the administration worked to distance itself from any side in the conflict.

Another way the administration sought to further this objective and reduce the moral imperative of intervention was by emphasizing the idea that there was no single aggressor or victim in the conflict. In testimony before Congress, Secretary of State Christopher described the conflict in Bosnia as “a war of all against all” with “atrocities on all sides.” This view of the conflict extended beyond the administration to the United Nations. Questioning the wisdom of declaring the Muslims the victims in the conflict and siding against the Serbs, Major General Lewis W. MacKenzie, the former Chief of Staff of UNPROFOR forces in Yugoslavia and the Commander of U.N. forces in Sarajevo stated that “Dealing with Bosnia is a little bit like dealing with three serial killers – one has killed 15, one has killed 10, and one has killed five. Do we help the one that’s only killed five?” In perhaps a more diplomatic description of the problem, President Clinton argued that “there are no innocent political parties” in Bosnia “but there are a lot of innocent people.”
Another aspect of the story following the failure of the “lift and strike” proposal was the administration’s emphasis on the division within the allies over the arms embargo, the limited utility of air strikes, and America’s inability to unilaterally solve the problem. As for the arms embargo, President Clinton argued “[t]here was a disagreement. The leaders of Britain and France and Russia honestly did not believe that lifting the arms embargo would make things better, would hasten the day of peace” whereas Germany had sided with the United States. Consequently, officials concluded that the U.S. could not do much to solve the situation in Bosnia since, according to the President, “The United Nations controls what happens in Bosnia. I cannot unilaterally lift the arms embargo.” In another response to the administration’s apparent backing away from its proposal to use force, the President argued that “the United States cannot act alone under international law in this instance.”

In addition to the problems with lifting the arms embargo, the other option, air strikes, was portrayed as ineffectual. According to Christopher, the administration’s military planners argued that Bosnia was one place “where air power has relatively little effect.” Consequently, “if you rule out ground troops, you find air power ineffective, and if you define it as a humanitarian situation [as opposed to one affecting vital national interests], then your options are really much different than they would be in a place like Somalia where militarily it was rather simple to solve that problem.” Bosnia was therefore argued to be a “tragic” and “difficult” situation where the United States was currently doing all that it could.
Aside from the other constraints on an interventionist American policy, the Clinton administration argued that domestically, both Congress and the American people were supportive of its policy of military restraint. According to the president, Congress, in particular, was undecided on the right course of action in Bosnia.\textsuperscript{173} Meanwhile, Secretary of State Christopher stated that he sensed a “strong support” from the American people for the administration’s position “not to put ground troops in Bosnia at the present time.”\textsuperscript{174} This sentiment was echoed by General John Galvin, “I think right now the people of this country are not ready to take a long-term, sustained commitment to Bosnia.”\textsuperscript{175}

The final relational aspect of the administration’s story concerned the Vance-Owens peace plan, which it viewed as an unsatisfactory and unlikely to solution to the conflict.\textsuperscript{176} After the failed referendum in mid-May, it was clear that the administration viewed the plan as all but dead, stating that negotiations were ongoing to find “some other way” for dealing with the conflict.\textsuperscript{177}

Goals

Contain Conflict and Stop the Slaughter

Following the failure of its more activist proposal, the Clinton administration surrendered the lead on Bosnia. With the lessons of Vietnam apparently in mind, the administration attempted to keep Bosnia in the periphery of American vital national interests, thus avoiding pressure for direct American military involvement. According to the President, the administration sought to do two things: first, to “contain the conflict”
because if the conflict did not spread, the pressure to act would be diminished; and second, to “try to put an end to the slaughter.” Clearly, the emphasis was on the first. As stated by President Clinton, the administration’s policy in Bosnia was “to keep this conflict from spilling over into a lot of other countries which could drag the United States into something with NATO that we don’t want.”

**Actions Advocated and Taken**

*Deploy Deterrent Troops, Maintain Sanctions and Monitor Borders*

Given the lack of allied support, the administration set aside the lift and strike option, although they noted that it “was still on the table” and “had not been rejected out of hand.” Subsequently, the administration sought to contain the conflict by deploying troops to Macedonia, maintaining the sanction regime on Serbia, and supporting the placement of U.N. monitors in Kosovo and along the border between Bosnia and Serbia. First, like the monitors in Kosovo, the 300 American troops sent to supplement the 700 Nordic troops already in Macedonia were to be a “deterrent force” that would have “both symbolic and tangible” value. According to the President, the deployment carried “minimal risk” and “maximum gain.” In short, it was to be “a very limited thing – no combat – but a chance to limit the conflict.” In addition, the administration sought to “keep the pressure” on the Serbs by maintaining the sanctions regime and supporting the placement of U.N. monitors along the Bosnian-Serbian border. According to the President, the monitors were an effort “to try to test and reinforce the resolve of the Milosevic government to cut off supplies to the Serbs.”
Protect Troops in Safe Areas, Support Peace Process

Finally, with “lift and strike” removed as a viable option, the administration argued that it was working to stop the slaughter through its support for the protection of the six U.N.-designated “safe areas.” When it was first proposed by the French the administration was opposed to the concept due to both moral and strategic concerns that it created Muslim “ethnic ghettos” and a “shooting gallery” that put peacekeepers at risk. However, once the “lift and strike” proposal was shot down, the administration acquiesced in an effort to preserve allied unity.\textsuperscript{186} Given the lessons of Vietnam and the administration’s dual principles of “no U.S. ground troops” in Bosnia and “doing it multilaterally,” officials argued that the U.S. had worked out of “division of labor” with its allies. While the allies placed peacekeepers in Bosnia to protect the civilians within the U.N. safe areas, the United States would, in turn, protect their peacekeepers.\textsuperscript{187} Although the U.N. Security Council Resolution 836 committed the United States to use air power “to protect UNPROFOR troops in the safe areas should they come under attack and request assistance,”\textsuperscript{188} the U.S. resisted allied attempts to define such protection broadly. According to U.S. officials, the administration was willing to only protect U.N. peacekeepers under attack – not civilians – in order to prevent American troops from being drawn into protecting one side in the conflict.\textsuperscript{189} Finally, in order to help stop the slaughter, the administration argued that it was “trying to promote a settlement” among the warring parties.\textsuperscript{190} However, to ensure that the peace was “enforceable” and wouldn’t run the risk of dragging peacekeepers into the midst of a conflict, the administration again stipulated that it would have to be an agreement that was mutually accepted by all parties. As stated by the Secretary of State,
“I have said repeatedly that we would not try to impose a settlement because that takes us down, mires us down in the quagmire of Bosnia.”

**Consequences**

*Avoid a Quagmire and Refocus on Domestic Problems*

The final aspects of the administration’s story related to the perceived consequences of their actions. First and foremost, by focusing on containment of the conflict it was clear that the administration hoped to avoid the “quagmire” of a military involvement in Bosnia. As long as Bosnia remained in the periphery, the administration could devote more of its attention to domestic issues and policies of more import and interest to the President. In an interview on *CBS This Morning*, Clinton expressed irritation at the idea that he had spend most of his time in office on “Bosnia and gays in the military.” To the contrary, the president stated “I just did an analysis of what I did the first 100 days. I spent 25 percent of my time on foreign policy, all foreign policy…about 55 percent of my total time working on the economy and health care…and 20 percent of my time working on other domestic policies.”

Moreover, when asked about a possible new and emerging Clinton foreign policy doctrine, Secretary of State Christopher mentioned the “interrelationship between domestic and foreign issues” and the president’s belief that “we cannot be strong abroad if we’re not strong at home…That’s why I’ve been talking about having an American desk here at the State Department, helping American business, trying to end the boycott of American companies, trying to work on trade treaties that are helpful to us. I think those will be the stamps of the Clinton foreign policy.”
Alternative Interpretations

As for alternative interpretations of the elite discourse, the most potentially controversial story elements with regards to this first Bosnia case revolve primarily around the perceived lessons of the past. First, in the Bush administration’s “Aid and avoid” story it is argued that lessons culled primarily from Vietnam regarding the importance of maintaining public support and the subsequent necessity of clear objectives and decisive rules of force influenced the Bush administration’s perception of the Bosnian problem. Out of context, the statements from Brent Scowcroft and President Bush do not appear to be necessarily addressing either the issue of Vietnam or Bosnia since neither mention explicitly either country in their response. However, in both cases, when the statements are placed within the context of their respective questions the connection becomes more clear. First, Scowcroft’s analogy to Northern Ireland reveals his belief that the conflict would not soon be resolved and that public support for U.S. military involvement would be unsustainable once the U.S. began to take on casualties. Likewise, Bush’s response, albeit more indirect, reveals the importance he placed on public support and the perceived ease and utility of any U.S. military intervention. This statement, when placed within the broader context of the model and other statements regarding from both the president and others within the administration, lends support to the idea that the Vietnam analogy influenced the Bush administration’s assessment and evaluation of options in Bosnia.

Somewhat similar interpretations of past lessons were made from statements during the Clinton administration. For instance, in the Clinton administration’s “Peace through Diplomacy” story illustrated in Figure 4.2, it is argued that Clinton officials
derived moral and legal lessons from the Holocaust and the Gulf war that created imperatives for action. First, it is argued that one of the past lessons influencing the Clinton administration’s representation of the Bosnian problem was the argument that the Holocaust created a moral imperative to act in the face of genocide as President Clinton had argued during the presidential campaign. However, once entering office, the rhetoric from the administration was somewhat less forceful. Although the statements provided by Secretary of State Christopher and Secretary of State Aspin do not explicitly mention the Holocaust or genocide, their essence taken within the context of President Clinton’s campaign rhetoric suggests that they are reflective of such origin. Likewise, although theoretically debatable, interviewer George Will’s reference to the “root principle of the new world order” that “territory will not change hands as the result of military force” was taken as a reference to former President Bush’s statement following the U.S./U.N victory in the Gulf War. Warren Christopher’s confirmation of that principle along with Ambassador Albright’s and President Clinton’s statements were thus taken as evidence that the administration viewed certain lessons from the Gulf War as applicable to the Bosnian conflict.

**Factors Influencing U.S. Decision Making**

*Threats or Opportunity to Vital National Interests*

In looking at the successive administration “stories” regarding Bosnia between 1992 and 1993, as illustrated in Table 4.1, it is apparent that few of the hypothesized factors promoting armed intervention were present during both the Bush and the Clinton administrations. First, as in the previous cases of Somalia and Rwanda, both
administration’s perceived no vital interests at stake in the conflict, supporting the hypothesis that the probability of armed humanitarian intervention would increase the more that threats or opportunities to vital national interests were regarded at stake in the issue. While each administration argued that national interests were present, those interests – with the exception of Kosovo – were defined more in moral or humanitarian terms than in terms of vital national or strategic interests. Although there is some ambiguity in the discourse over whether, at least initially, the Clinton administration perceived “vital interests” at stake in the conflict in Bosnia, the fact that the administration ruled out, a priori, the deployment of U.S. ground troops to the region suggests that such perceived interests were more than likely absent.

*Moral or Legal Imperatives and Ease and Utility of Intervention*

As illustrated in Table 4.1, the hypothesized factors promoting intervention with the most support in the Bosnian discourse are the perceived moral and legal imperatives for action evident within the Clinton stories of “Peace through diplomacy” and “Lift and Strike.” Judging by the narrative, the Bush administration, generally viewed moral and legal imperatives, if existent at all in Bosnia, as insufficient to warrant armed humanitarian intervention, supporting the null hypothesis that the absence of such imperatives would decrease the likelihood of armed humanitarian intervention. Meanwhile, the Clinton administration entered office arguing that such imperatives were both present and demanding of action. Implied within the discourse was the idea that the United States, and the international community, were obligated to stop ethnic cleansing and the forceful alteration of state borders. However, in spite of these imperatives and in a manner
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<th>Threats or Opportunities to vital national interests</th>
<th>Moral or Legal Imperative</th>
<th>Domestic Pressure from Media, Public Opinion, and Congress</th>
<th>Pressure/interests stemming from IGOs and other International Actors</th>
<th>Ease and Utility of Intervention</th>
<th>Military Vested Interests</th>
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Table 4.1: Hypothesized factors favoring military intervention as reflected within key junctures of the evolving Bosnia story.
reminiscent of the preceding administration, Clinton officials argued that the nature of the situation – its complexity, intractability, as well as the depth of animosity between the warring parties – prevented them from forcefully acting on these perceived imperatives or obligations.

In addition to the nature of the situation, another key obstacle to forceful action was the European allies. In all of the Clinton administration stories, with the exception of “lift and strike,” the allies’ reluctance to use force reportedly reduced the administration’s ability to act on its perceived moral and legal imperatives, therefore justifying its policy towards nonintervention. Out of the two Clinton narratives, the moral imperative towards intervention is arguably the strongest in the “lift and strike” story. First, compared to the other stories, the “lift and strike” narrative most clearly singled out the villains (ie. Bosnian Serbs/Serbs) and victims in the conflict (i.e. Bosnian Muslims), identified a problem (military imbalance favoring Bosnian Serbs at the expense of the Bosnian Muslims), and proffered a solution (lift arms embargo against Bosnian Muslims and use air strikes against Serbs to freeze their gains until the “playing field” is leveled).

Moreover, with the allies apparently softening, force was more of an option. However, in spite of the relatively stronger moral case to be made for intervention, the president’s commitment to “multilateralism” and “no U.S. troops” subsequently constrained the administration’s ability to act, allowing it to thus back down from its more forceful policy proposal – one that many within the administration evidently had serious reservations about in the first place.
Domestic Pressure

As evident in Table 4.1, in all four stories domestic pressure for military intervention appeared to be absent in the sense that neither administration referred to pressure from the public, media or Congress in a manner that suggests they were motivators for more aggressive military action in Bosnia. However, although there is no direct rhetorical evidence that domestic pressure encouraged the United States to promote armed military intervention in Bosnia (thus explaining the “Nos” in column three of Table 1), there is indirect evidence from the discourse that both administration’s perceived some public pressure to act on the issue.

First, during the Bush administration, although Congressional pressure appeared absent, media pressure and anticipatory pressure from the public appear to have factored into that administration’s relatively stronger policy responses in the fall of 1992. In particular, given the pending Presidential elections, the media attention surrounding the revelation of concentration camps in Bosnia likely pushed the Bush administration to make stronger policy moves in Bosnia in order to avoid the appearance of inaction. Such evidence comes from the fact that the president felt compelled to increasingly address the subject for the first time in formal public statements. Moreover, such statements contained indirect references to public interest in the Bosnia problem. For example, in his October statement announcing the U.N. resolution authorizing “all necessary measures” to get relief supplies into Bosnia, Bush indirectly referred to the public interest surrounding the events in Bosnia, stating that “All Americans, and people of compassion everywhere, remain deeply troubled by the cruel war in Bosnia.”
In spite of the media attention and growing pressure to act, the Bush administration argued that U.S. military intervention in Bosnia was not possible, emphasizing the difficult nature of such an operation and its likely limited utility, especially in contrast to other humanitarian crises, such as Somalia. Thus, in an interesting case of issue linkage, the increased media and public attention to the Bosnian issue likely pressured the Bush administration to act and “do something” to end the human suffering from around the world that was filling the air waves in the fall of 1992. In particular, the media attention and criticism of the administration’s policy towards Bosnia encouraged the Bush administration’s military intervention in Somali, given that mission’s more “doable” assessment.

As for the Clinton administration, the public narrative reveals that Congress and the American public did influence the administration’s decision making on Bosnia, but in the opposite direction than originally hypothesized. Rather than increasing the pressure to act forcefully in Bosnia, both actors appeared to have served as a brake on more forceful action. First, in the case of Congress, the lack of a Congressional consensus was a noted part of the Clinton administration’s “containment” story, justifying the administration’s stance of nonintervention in Bosnia. Likewise, the public’s reported opposition to the use of American force in the region was also noted as supporting the administration’s decision towards inaction. Meanwhile, there is nothing in the administration’s discourse to suggest that the media influenced its decision making in Bosnia. However, the Clinton’s administration’s most forceful story, “lift and strike,” does correlate with the apparent increased media coverage of the Serb attack on
Srebrenica, suggesting that media pressure may have been an factor in the administration’s decision making towards force.

*International Pressures, Interests and Obligations*

Meanwhile, the evidence supporting the hypothesis that pressures, interests and obligations stemming from membership in international organizations works to promote armed humanitarian intervention is somewhat mixed in this first Bosnian case, as illustrated in Table 4.1. First, both administrations made clear that Serbian aggression into Kosovo would bring about direct U.S. military intervention into the conflict, arguing that such aggression could widen the conflict to include NATO allies Greece and Turkey. Thus, it could be argued that, at least in the Kosovo case, the perceived interest in alliance stability worked to promote a more interventionist policy stance. However, excluding the so-called “Kosovo line,” alliance interests and perceived membership obligations did the contrary and actually worked against military intervention in Bosnia, as was the case with the Clinton administration’s “lift and strike” proposal. For the Clinton administration, in particular, preservation of “multilateralism” and allied unity appeared to weigh more heavily in its decision making than any perceived moral, humanitarian or strategic interests in or obligations to the region.

*Ease and Utility of Intervention and Bureaucratic Interests*

For both administrations, factors clearly working against intervention in Bosnia were assessments of the relative ease and utility of any forceful military intervention in the region. The rhetoric of both administrations suggests that military intervention in
Bosnia would be difficult with little expected utility, as seen in Table 4.1. The difficult nature of military intervention was reinforced by Pentagon assessments. As Powell noted in his memoirs, his own views on Bosnia did not change from one administration to another. “My constant, unwelcome message at all the meetings on Bosnia was that we should not commit military forces until we had a clear political objective.” And, according to Powell, if that objective was changing Serb behavior than the only guaranteed method was the insertion of U.S. ground troops.\textsuperscript{198} Thus, contrary to the hypothesis that vested military interests would support a more aggressive military policy, in Bosnia the military, during both the Bush and Clinton administrations was one, if not “the,” most effective damper on the use of force.

However, it should be noted that the consensus or “strength” of the story element emphasizing the “difficult” nature of military intervention and its limited utility appears more cohesive and strong during the Bush administration than in the Clinton administration. For instance, although the former U.S. ambassador to Yugoslavia, Warren Zimmerman, was skeptical of military assessments, particularly of Serb military prowess, his views were apparently not shared by others within the Bush administration and clearly were not dominant.\textsuperscript{199} Overall, the story from Bush officials is consistent and strong in its opposition to forceful intervention in Bosnia.

In comparison, within the Clinton administration there appeared greater internal dissent over the ease and utility of intervention. While the military remained opposed to intervention, other foreign policy principals, including Vice President Gore, the president’s National Security Adviser, Anthony Lake, and U.N. Ambassador Albright, were reported advocates.\textsuperscript{200} Illustrating the internal tension within the administration,
Colin Powell writes in his memoirs that Albright’s activist position on the use of force in Bosnia nearly gave him an “aneurism.” Albright also disagreed with Powell’s characterization of the Bosnian conflict, which was one shared by others within the administration. During the time the administration was deliberating about the “lift and strike” option, Albright publicly stated, “I am not one who believes that so-called ancient animosities among peoples of the Balkans made this conflict inevitable and irresolvable once ignited.” However, as in the Bush administration, the views of the military, and particular Colin Powell, appeared to carry more weight. During the debate over “lift and strike” and especially after its failure, administration officials continued to question the utility of air power and outside force, in general, in solving the Bosnian problem.

**Use of Historical Lessons and Analogies during the Bush Administration**

Finally, historical analogies and “lessons” from history played critical roles in the decision making about Bosnia during both the Bush and the Clinton administrations. Of the various analogies invoked by both administrations, the three most crucial in relation to their thinking about Bosnia appear to be Vietnam, the Holocaust, and the Gulf War. While the Holocaust and the Gulf War analogies advocated or promoted more forceful U.S. action, Vietnam, (and to a lesser extent, Lebanon and World War II), discouraged it. Of all the analogies and historical lessons, the most influential emanated from the U.S. experience in Vietnam.

Since many of the Bush administration’s top officials had come of age during Vietnam, the ghosts of that era appeared to color their view of the conflict. Reflecting upon the Bush administration’s approach to the Bosnian problem, former Ambassador
Zimmerman stated that “In the end, nothing happened, even after the American press discovered Serbian concentration camps in Bosnia in July. The Vietnam syndrome and the Powell doctrine proved to be powerful dampers on action by the Bush administration, particularly in an election year.”

For the Bush administration, the Vietnam analogy served multiple purposes. First, it was a focus of comparison, serving to illustrate the both the nature of the problem, such as the skill and tenacity of Serb soldiers, and the associated dangers of military involvement, such as the likelihood of guerilla warfare. Second, it was a source of “lessons,” that influenced both the administration’s goals and subsequent assessment of options. A key lesson for the Bush administration, embodied in the Powell Doctrine, was the use of “overwhelming force” to achieve political objectives and thus avoid the slippery slope of limited or “symbolic” military involvement. Since no one in the administration was prepared for a major military engagement in Bosnia, the administration chose inaction.

As previously mentioned, at least one official, Ambassador Zimmerman, felt that the frequent evoking of Vietnam in the Bush administration’s decision making about Bosnia was misplaced.

I believed the arguments against the use of American force in 1992 were outdated and wrong, mired as they were in the inappropriate examples of Vietnam and the Gulf. The U.S. military was far more capable of waging limited war than it professed. There were intermediate options between total involvement and no involvement. There was no Vietnam-like inevitability of escalation, since the disposition of American forces always requires specific decisions by the president. Nor did the not-so-intrepid Bosnian Serbs resemble the fanatical North Vietnamese, who had been far more determined and disciplined.
Whether Zimmerman voiced such concerns to other Bush administration officials is less clear, however. In any case, such views, whether publicly voiced or not, appeared to have little affect on the dominant representation of the Bosnian problem.

**Use of Historical Analogies and Lessons during the Clinton Administration**

In contrast to the Bush administration where the analogies invoked clearly promoted a noninterventionist policy stance towards Bosnia, the analogies and lessons cited by the Clinton administration were more contradictory, promoting – often simultaneously – stances of both an interventionist and noninterventionist nature. Prior to entering office, the Holocaust and its moral imperative of “never again” was the administration’s most frequently invoked analogy in reference to the Bosnian problem. Once in office, however, the administration’s story became more complex. In the administration’s first story, “Peace through Diplomacy,” the two historical lessons or analogies promoted a strong activist approach to the Bosnian problem. While implicit references to the Holocaust suggested that the United States and international community had a moral imperative to stop ethnic cleansing, the Gulf War suggested an additional international legal imperative to prevent the forceful alteration of state boundaries. Ironically, despite these lessons, the administration’s approach to the Bosnian problem was less than activist in nature, again largely due to the perceived constraints the administration faced in terms of more pressing domestic priorities, a worsened and more complex problem, and recalcitrant allies.

The most complex administration story in terms of historical lessons and analogies is the relatively activist story of “lift and strike.” In this story, dual and
contradictory historical lessons appear to illustrate the internal debate and divide within the administration as it struggled to assimilate opposing goals and values. In the “lift and strike” story the Holocaust and the Gulf War analogies illustrated the administration’s commitment to internationalist legal goals and moral values while apparently coloring the administration’s views of the Serbs and their actions. Meanwhile, the relatively isolationist analogies of Vietnam and World War II illustrated the administration’s fears of international military involvement. Invoked primarily during the discussion and assessment of options, the fear of a “quagmire” acted to limit the administration’s actions and temper its leanings towards activism. Given the contradictory nature of these analogies, its not surprising that the administration’s support for the lift and strike proposal appeared tepid to the European allies. When the allies rejected the proposal, the administration avoided the value trade-off by downplaying the internationalist imperatives and focusing on the relatively isolationist goal of containment.

It is not surprising then that the administration’s final story of “containment” appeared heavily influenced by the analogy and lessons of Vietnam. In the administration’s public discourse, Vietnam appeared not only to influence its perception of the situation and key actors, but also its goals and actions. As during the Bush administration, the conflict in Bosnia was again portrayed as a civil war not pertinent to U.S. vital interests, resulting from intractable ancient hatreds. Likewise force options were portrayed as difficult, having limited utility, and not clearly supported by either Congress or the American public. Consequently, to avoid the possibility of another “quagmire,” the administration emphasized containing the conflict to Bosnia, offering
military protection only to UNPROFOR peacekeepers and not to Bosnian civilians in the U.N. designated safe areas.

In summary, the discourse of both administrations suggests that the perceived absence of vital interests, domestic and international pressure, bureaucratic interests as well as assessments regarding the relative difficulty and utility of outside military intervention all worked to promote an American policy of nonintervention in Bosnia between 1992 and 1993. Moreover, if one compares the stories of Rwanda, Somalia and Bosnia then other insights into U.S. decision making on armed humanitarian interventions appear. Since I have covered two cases of nonintervention, Bosnia and Rwanda, and only one clear case of intervention, Somalia, it is somewhat difficult to make any solid generalizations about factors clearly promoting or hindering armed humanitarian intervention. However, if one looks at the stories or “key junctures” within each case based on its relative degree of activism or “interventionism” and then compare these key junctures across cases some interesting patterns begin to emerge as seen in Table 4.2. In looking at the most interventionist story “junctures” across all three cases (“lift and strike” for Bosnia; “Operation Provide Hope” and “Get Aidid” for Somalia; and “Operation Provide Support” for Rwanda), two factors appear critical to promoting an American armed humanitarian intervention: the perceived “ease and utility” of intervention and the perceived interests, pressures or obligations from other international actors or membership in international organizations. Another factor, a perceived “moral imperative” for action, also is important in terms of promoting intervention but appears
<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Threats or Opportunities to vital national interests</th>
<th>Moral or Legal Imperative</th>
<th>Domestic Pressure from Media, Public Opinion, and Congress</th>
<th>Pressure/interests stemming from IGOs and other International Actors</th>
<th>Ease and Utility of Intervention</th>
<th>Military Vested Interests</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Somalia:</strong></td>
<td>Open <strong>Operation Provide Hope</strong> (intervention)</td>
<td>Yes, moral</td>
<td>No media</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
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<td>No Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Somalia:</strong></td>
<td>Open <strong>“Get Aidid”</strong> (intervention)</td>
<td>Yes, moral</td>
<td>No media</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Unclear</td>
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<td>No Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Rwanda:</strong></td>
<td>Open <strong>Operation Provide Support</strong> (nonintervention)</td>
<td>Yes, moral</td>
<td>Yes media</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>No, legal</td>
<td>Yes public</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes Congress</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Bosnia:</strong></td>
<td>Open <strong>“Lift and Strike”</strong> (nonintervention)</td>
<td>Yes, moral</td>
<td>No media</td>
<td>No, with Kosovo exception</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes, legal</td>
<td>No public</td>
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<td>No Congress</td>
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Table 4.2: Comparison of the most “activist” stories across the four Bosnian cases.
insufficient in and of itself, suggesting a supplemental hypothesis that a perceived moral obligation is a necessary but insufficient condition for armed humanitarian intervention. In addition, although perceived “domestic” pressure is not always evident from the discourse, there is indirect evidence to suggest it might also play a factor in U.S. decision making regarding intervention.

Moreover, as was the case in Somalia and Rwanda, it appears that historical lessons and analogies clearly shaped U.S. decision making with regards to armed humanitarian intervention. In Bosnia, historical analogies influenced both administrations’ views of the nature of the situation, key actor relationships, goals and subsequent assessment and selection of options. Hopefully, an examination of another case of armed humanitarian intervention – Bosnia between 1994 and 1995 – will shed additional insight both on the use of analogies in foreign policy decision making as well as to factors promoting or hindering armed intervention abroad.


6 The Chairman of the European Commission, Jacques Delors stated that “We do not interfere in American affairs. We hope they have enough respect not to interfere in ours.” Quoted in Peter Ronayne, *Never Again: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide Since the Holocaust*, (NY: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001) 113.

7 Ronayne, 115.


19 McCaffrey, *Situation in Bosnia*.

20 Cheney, Special Department Briefing; Gordon, “Powell Delivers a Resounding No.”; Halberstam, 36.

21 General Vo Nguyen Giap, known as master of tactical warfare and military strategy, was the defense minister of the Vietnamese Communists and the commander-in-chief of their armies during the Indo-China wars. Giap led the attack at Dien Bien Phu against the French in 1954 and later led the Tet Offensive against U.S. forces in 1968.

22 McCaffrey, *Situation in Bosnia*.

23 Quoted in Power, 285.

Ronayne, 119.


McCaffrey, *Situation in Bosnia*.


Cheney, “Remarks at a Luncheon.”


Quoted in Power, 282-83.


Scowcroft as quoted in Power, 288-289.

Richard Boucher, State Department Briefing, 5 Aug. 1992


Niles, *Situation in Bosnia*.


Hadley, *Situation in Bosnia*.

Niles, *Situation in Bosnia*.

The President’s decision to commit U.S. troops to Somalia in the fall of 1992 clearly is related to the pressures he perceived from U.S. inaction in Bosnia, particularly from its moderate Islamic allies in the Middle East. See Power, 285-6; Woodward, 296; and Admiral Jeremiah Howe’s comments in Keith Richburg, “Forces Leaving Somalia see Job Well Done, Washington Post 4 May, 1993, A1.

For Powell’s summary of the doctrine, see Powell, My American Journey, 434; See also Colin L. Powell, Why Generals Get Nervous, 8 Oct. 1992, ed.: A35.

See interview on This Week with David Brinkley, 9 May 1993, ABC News.


See Powell, My American Journey, 291.


See Powell, 291; Halberstam, 36.

McCaffrey, Situation in Bosnia.


According to Halberstam, Undersecretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz objected to American participation in the arms embargo against Bosnia, arguing that it would more likely drag the U.S. militarily into the conflict as it denied the Muslims the ability to defend themselves, making them more vulnerable, and encouraged greater Serb aggression. Powell reportedly heard and agreed with Wolfowitz’s concerns but told him to “come back to me when they’re [State Dept.] on board.” 142; Likewise, Halberstam argues that out of all the JCS, only air force chief of staff, Merrill McPeak thought “the U.S. could use airpower effectively, if not decisively, to limit what the Serbs were doing in Bosnia” 39. However, McPeak’s optimistic assessment regarding the utility of air power in Bosnia was reportedly downplayed by JCS Chairman Powell, 39-42; In addition to McPeak, at the State Department, Ambassador Zimmerman also viewed force as a viable option in Bosnia, see Zimmerman, Origins of a Catastrophe.


Bush, White House Briefing, 2 Oct.

The resolution, 781 exempted U.N. and other humanitarian flights.


This approach included the controversial proposal that the U.N. Security Council exempt Bosnia from the arms embargo. According to critics and Washington insiders, Secretary of State Eagleburger had pushed the proposal halfheartedly knowing it would be defeated by the European allies, but still floated the idea in a calculated attempt to improve the administration’s public image. See Woodward, 297; Ronayne, 120; and Halberstam, 57.

Zimmerman, 218.

Ronayne, 120-1.


Clinton, “A Town Meeting.”


81 Warren Christopher, interview, MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour, 10 Feb. 1992, transcript #4561, Educational Broadcasting and GWETA.


83 Halberstam 199.

84 Warren Christopher, Confirmation Hearing; Clinton, “A Town Meeting.”

85 Aspin, Confirmation Hearing.


88 Clinton, “A Town Meeting.”

89 Albright, CNN Newsmaker Sunday; Christopher, Confirmation Hearing.


91 Clinton, “A Town Meeting;” Albright, CNN Newsmaker Sunday; Christopher, Special State Department Briefing.

92 See Christopher, Special State Department Briefing.

93 Christopher, Special State Department Briefing.

94 Christopher, Special State Department Briefing.

95 For more examples, see statements by Clinton, “Question and Answer Session.”

96 Christopher, Special State Department Briefing.


100 Christopher, Special State Department Briefing.

101 Christopher, Special State Department Briefing.

264
Christopher, Special State Department Briefing.


Christopher, Special State Department Briefing.

Halberstam, 196.

Christopher, Confirmation Hearing; Christopher, Special State Department Briefing.

See Warren Christopher, interview on MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour, 5 April 1993, transcript #4599, Educational Broadcasting and GWETA; See also Clinton, “The President’s News Conference with Hosni Mubarek.”


At a ceremony in remembrance of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, Al Gore stated “I remember the photograph of one child coming from one of these secure places in the ghetto with his hands held high and a wool cap. I remembered that photograph recently when I saw the picture of another child in Sarajevo.” Al Gore, as quoted in All Things Considered, 19 Apr. 1993, National Public Radio.


Clinton, “Exchange with Reporters Prior to Discussions with President Vaclav Havel,” emphasis added.


Despite the importance of Bosnia in the foreign policy context, it still did not come close to the relative importance of the domestic agenda. The President still clearly felt that he was elected based on his domestic mandate and estimated that he spent “two-thirds of my time or more on the economy and health care.” Bill Clinton, “Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Members of the House Ways and Means Committee and an Exchange with Reporters,” 30 April, 1993, Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, Vol. 29, No. 17, 667-723, 1993 Presidential Documents Online Via GPO Access, http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara.

Christopher, U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives; Myers, White House Press Conference; Stephanopoulos, White House Briefing, 6 May 1993.


122 Despite the importance of Bosnia in the foreign policy context, it still did not come close to the relative importance of the domestic agenda. The President still clearly felt that he was elected based on his domestic mandate and estimated that he spent “two-thirds of my time or more on the economy and health care.” Bill Clinton, “Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Members of the House Ways and Means Committee and an Exchange with Reporters,” 30 April, 1993, Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, Vol. 29, No. 17, 667-723, 1993 Presidential Documents Online Via GPO Access, http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara.


Christopher, U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives.


See Richard Boucher, State Department Briefing, 19 Apr. 1993, Federal News Service; see also Christopher, U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives.

Christopher, U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives.

See statements by Al Gore, interview with Paula Zahn on CBS This Morning, 30 Apr., 1993, Burrelle’s Information Services; see also Christopher, interview on MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour, 5 April 1993.


Christopher, U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives.

Christopher, U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives.

Clinton, “Question and Answer Session;” Al Gore, interview with Paula Zahn, CBS This Morning, 30 Apr., 1993, CBS News Transcripts; Christopher, U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives; Myers, White House Briefing; Albright, Remarks by the U.S. Ambassador.
135 Clinton, “The President’s News Conference with Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa;” Clinton, “The President’s News Conference with President Hosni Mubarak;” Clinton, “Question and Answer Session.”


138 Christopher, State Department Budget.

139 See Halberstam, 224-240; Drew, 151-155.

140 Clinton, “Exchange with Reporters.”

141 Boucher, State Department Briefing; Albright, Remarks by the U.S. Ambassador; See Clinton, “Letter to Congressional Leaders.”

142 Drew, 151.

143 Halberstam, 224-240; Drew, 151-155.

144 Quoted in Drew, 155.


146 Christopher, Christopher, interview on MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour, 5 April 1993; Colin Powell, as quoted in Wolf Blitzer, “White House Stays Course Toward Action in Bosnia,” 29 Apr. 1993, Transcript #384-1, Cable News Network, Inc.


149 Clinton, “The President’s News Conference with Hosni Mubarak;” Clinton, “Question and Answer Session.”

150 Burg and Shoup, 246-249; Woodward, 307-309.

151 Madeleine Albright, interview on MacNeil-Lehrer NewsHour, 24 May, 1993, transcript #4634, Educational Broadcasting and GWETA.

152 Ronanye, 124.

153 Drew, 156-161.


163 Clinton, “Interview with Don Imus.”


170 Clinton, “Interview with Foreign Journalists.”


268
Christopher, interview with Ralph Begleiter.


Clinton, “Interview with Don Imus.”


Quoted in Sciolino, “U.S. Says It Will Send 300 Troops.”


Mike McCurry, State Department Briefing, 7 June, 1993, Federal News Service.


Clinton, “Interview with Don Imus.”

Christopher, *Foreign Aid Budget for FY94*.

Drew, 159-163.


Warren Zimmerman appears to have been the lone voice of dissent within the Bush administration with regards to intervention in Bosnia. In his memoirs, he argues that “Bosnia was a clear case of aggression; we had a moral, perhaps even legal, obligation to deal with it.” See Zimmerman, *Origins of a Catastrophe*, 216.

For instance, the president’s first formal public statements on the subject of Bosnia, excluding communications with Congress, do not begin until August 6, 1992.

Bush, *Measures to Ease the Conflict*.


For a further discussion of Madeleine Albright, see Halberstam 197, 284-292, 376-386; For a discussion of Lake’s attitudes towards Bosnia and the use of force, see Halberstam 284-292.

Albright’s position on force did not always sit well with her colleagues, particularly Colin Powell, who argued that her activist position on the use of force in Bosnia nearly gave him an “aneurism,” see *My American Journey*, 576.


Zimmerman, 215.

Zimmerman, 215-216.
CHAPTER 5

BOSNIA II: ROAD TO INTERVENTION (1993-5)

“I would rather be a part of a government that made a few mistakes in the cause of activism than be part of one that is frozen in the ice of its own indifference.”

President Clinton, paraphrasing President Franklin Delano Roosevelt\(^1\), May 3, 1994

In the summer of 1993, it was clear that the conflict in Bosnia was no closer to a resolution than it had been nearly sixteen months earlier. The problem, for both the United States and international community, remained immutable. However, by the spring of 1994 the United States, in conjunction with NATO, responded more aggressively to the problem when NATO undertook its first military action in its 40-year history. Although such actions seemed to represent a greater external resolve and commitment to the problem, the extremely limited and episodic nature of the NATO military response failed to stop the conflict and was generally regarded as both ineffective and insufficient. As the fighting wore on, the domestic and international criticism of the United States, Europe, NATO and the United Nations increased, as did tensions between and within the organizations and individual state actors.

By the summer of 1995, when it appeared that the international community was close to abandoning Bosnia for good, the situation turned. In a change of tactics, the
United States pushed for more aggressive military and diplomatic action in Bosnia that resulted in a two-week, sustained NATO air campaign against Bosnian Serb positions. A cease-fire and a concerted American diplomatic effort to achieve a settlement followed. In November 1995, such military and diplomatic efforts proved successful when the three warring parties signed the Dayton Peace Accords. Finally, it seemed that peace – although fragile and imperfect – had come to Bosnia.

For the purpose of this research, this period of American policy and action towards Bosnia is considered a case of armed humanitarian intervention. After four years of relative inaction the United States, in conjunction with NATO and the United Nations, undertook an aggressive military response to the Bosnian problem. Although ultimately multilateral in nature, such action was both militarily and diplomatically driven by the United States. The question then is what caused this change in behavior? After four years, why was the United States now driven to undertake a sustained and forceful approach to the problem?

Since I argue that problem representations are key to understanding policy responses, this final case will explore the evolutionary changes in the American elite representation of the Bosnian problem from the summer of 1993 until the fall of 1995. During this period I have identified four critical junctures or changes in the Clinton administration discourse or “story” relating to the Bosnian problem: 1) the discourse and decisions which comprised the “Peace through Threats” story from July 1993 until January 1994; 2) the “Coercive Diplomacy” story that followed the February 1994 marketplace bombing in Sarajevo; 3) the “Muddling Through” story that lasted from November 1994 until July 1995; and finally, 4) the “Endgame” story that began in July,
culminating in the August-September air strikes and subsequent American diplomatic peace initiative. Through an examination of these various stories or representations of the Bosnian problem, I hope to shed additional insight on both the foreign policy decision making process and the variables influencing decisions of armed humanitarian intervention.

**THE CLINTON STORY OF “PEACE THROUGH THREATS “**

Following the failure of the lift and strike proposal, the Clinton administration sought to diminish American involvement in Bosnia by working to contain the conflict. In May 1993, discouragement with the peace process led the United States to propose the creation of a “Contact Group” comprised of the United States and the three main troop-contributing members of the EC: France, Great Britain and Spain. However, with the failure of the Vance-Owens peace negotiations the Europeans, like the United States, appeared unwilling to put forth any additional effort towards pushing for a resolution. By June, a partition of Bosnia seemed like a *fait accompli* when the international lead negotiators, Lord Owens and Thorvald Stoltenberg who had replaced Cyrus Vance in May, supported the Bosnian Serb-Croat proposal of partitioning Bosnia into a confederation of three ethnically-distinct republics.²

Meanwhile, the fighting continued. By early July, the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo – internationally heralded during for its peaceful, multiethnic character – was on the verge of collapse. Fighting in central Bosnia had disrupted humanitarian convoys in the city which, by July, was without electricity, fuel and water. By mid-July the city was subject to repeated Serb shelling and appeared on the brink of falling to Bosnian Serb
forces.³ During one sixteen-hour period, the U.N. reported that nearly 4,000 shells had fallen into the U.N. designated “safe area.”⁴ While Sarajevo appeared on the brink of falling, the U.N. appeared on the verge of withdrawal. In early July, international negotiators, Owen and Stoltenberg, reportedly threatened that if the Bosnian Muslims did not soon negotiate on the basis of the new Serb-Croat partition plan then they would recommend to the Secretary General that the U.N. undertake a full Bosnian withdrawal.⁵ Meanwhile, the CIA was reporting that the Bosnian Serbs were nearing a total and complete victory in the country.⁶ Given this context, the Clinton administration began discussing ways to prevent the fall of Sarajevo and to deter Serb aggression. By the end of July, France was requesting air cover and protection for embattled French peacekeepers in the city and a new story about Bosnia was emerging from the Clinton administration’s discourse.⁷

Key Relationships and Nature of Situation

Dire Situation Requires Action and Quick Imperfect Settlement

As illustrated in Figure 5.1, a clear theme emerging from the administration’s discourse by early August was the idea that the situation in Bosnia, and Sarajevo in particular, had deteriorated and was now “dire” in nature due in part to allied inaction.⁸ Given U.S. interests in the region, which were still considered important if not vital, and the strategic and symbolic significance of Sarajevo to any negotiated settlement, the administration argued that more aggressive action in Bosnia was needed.⁹
The administration’s sense of urgency was heightened by thoughts of the impending winter. Given humanitarian conditions in Sarajevo and the rest of the country, thousands were at risk of dying if an agreement was not soon reached. The desire for quick settlement thus led the administration to drop its past vocal opposition to the ethnic partitioning of Bosnia. Although arguing that such a solution was clearly “imperfect”
administration officials appeared resigned to the fact that the ethnic partitioning of Bosnia was inevitable. In a speech before the National Press Club, retiring JCS Chairman, Colin Powell noted that the acceptance of a partition agreement was “something that may well have to be done in the interest of bringing peace to that troubled land, even if it is not a perfect peace, even if it is not a peace that gives us a great deal of satisfaction.

U.S./NATO Committed to Act with U.N. Authorization

Another key aspect of the administration’s story from July 1993 to January 1994 was America’s obligation to uphold U.N. and NATO commitments pertaining to the protection of the six U.N.-designated “safe areas.” In Sarajevo, French peacekeepers had come under attack and had requested help, therefore, according to the administration, the U.S. was obligated to act. In a media interview, President Clinton argued that “the United States is bound – we are committed to come to the aid of the United Nations forces as part of NATO if they are attacked, and they have been.” In early August, NATO expanded its threat. In addition to attacks on peacekeepers, air strikes were possible against Bosnian Serb forces in the event of the continued “strangulation of Sarajevo.” In spite of these obligations, the administration argued that it could not act either unilaterally or multilaterally in Sarajevo or Bosnia without the prior assent of the United Nations. Thus, according to Clinton administration officials, institutional obligations both compelled and constrained the administration’s freedom of action in Bosnia, leading the U.S. to make threats that it in turn could not fulfill.
A fourth theme of the administration’s discourse centered around the growing congressional opposition to peacekeeping and the administration’s foreign policy in Bosnia. On September 27, as the possibility of a peace agreement in Bosnia appeared imminent, President Clinton added a new condition on American participation in enforcing any peace settlement in Bosnia: congressional approval. Following a news conference with the Japanese Prime Minister, President Clinton told reporters that “I think it is clear to everyone that the United States could not fulfill a peacekeeping role in Bosnia unless Congress supported it. And I will be consulting with all the appropriate congressional leadership in both parties to see what the best manifestation of that is.”

Although the administration’s sensitivity to bipartisan congressional criticism over its approach to peacekeeping was apparent before October, it became a much stronger theme in the discourse following the October 5 death of eighteen American soldiers in Somalia.

On the heels of Somalia, Congress tried to reassert its authority vis-à-vis the executive by proposing an amendment requiring congressional approval prior to any U.S. troop deployment to either Bosnia or Haiti. Referring to administration’s tense relations with Congress, Ambassador Albright stated on October 20: “Clearly, the bipartisan consensus that so recently guided our approach to U.N. peacekeeping has broken down.” Although the proposed amendment was reduced to requiring congressional “consultations,” as opposed to prior approval regarding use of force decisions, the administration got the point. Following the post-Somalia showdown, administration officials appeared more sensitive to congressional moods and opinions.
It also seems apparent from the discourse that the administration perceived the media – and, in particular, television – as a growing factor influencing the direction of congressional and public opinion towards humanitarian interventions. In a rare public speech on September 21, the president’s National Security Adviser, Tony Lake, spoke to the growing influence of the media. “Public pressure for our humanitarian engagement increasingly may be driven by televised images which can depend in turn on such considerations as where CNN decides to send its camera crews.”

Later, following the events in Somalia, Lake noted the media’s effect on administration decision making. In an interview on National Public Radio, Lake argued that the quick dissemination of televised images to the public limited the administration’s ability to effectively justify its policies that, in turn, constrained its ability to act.

Later, in testimony before Congress, the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., Madeleine Albright, also spoke to the media’s growing influence. “Television’s ability to bring graphic images of pain and outrage into our living rooms has heightened the pressure both for immediate engagement in areas of international crisis and immediate disengagement when events do not go according to plan.” Albright added, “Because we live in a democratic society, none of us can be oblivious to those pressures. But regular [congressional] consultations between us can nevertheless contribute to steadiness of policy and purpose.”

Goals

*Relieve Sarajevo, Get An Agreement and Contain Conflict*

Given the severity of conditions in Sarajevo and the city’s perceived political and symbolic importance, the administration’s immediate goal in the new story was to “break
the siege” of Sarajevo and prevent its “strangulation.” Once the Bosnian Serbs backed down, the administration’s second and soon to be primary goal in Bosnia was to “stop the killing and alleviate the suffering” by getting all three parties in the conflict to agree upon a “negotiated” and “viable” settlement. The administration’s insistence that any settlement be agreed upon by all three parties in the region is a critical theme of its public discourse. Since the administration had promised U.S. troops to help enforce an eventual political agreement in Bosnia, finding one that was both “enforceable” and “viable” grew in significance in order to minimize the risk of violence and American casualties. Thus, consistent with previous stated desires “not to impose a settlement” on any of the parties, the president defined the ideal settlement as one that was “fair” and “generally and freely entered into by the Bosnian government.” However, in an apparent acceptance of possible partitioning of Bosnia between Serbia and Croatia, Secretary of State Christopher stipulated that “viable” meant that at least the Muslim portion of any negotiated Bosnian state should be able to exist on its own in the future. Given the administration’s sense of urgency for finding a quick settlement to the conflict, containment, although still an important objective, was temporarily reduced in the administration’s order of priority.

**Actions Taken and Advocated**

*Threaten Strikes, Assist Negotiations, Support Conditional Troop Enforcement*

Given the administration’s goals, constraints and sense of urgency, the administration quickly pushed NATO to consider stronger military actions in Sarajevo. In an apparent attempt to underline its commitment, the State Department warned NATO
allies that the U.S. was prepared to act unilaterally, if necessary, to relieve Sarajevo although the following day the president stated that such reports “perhaps exaggerate our position a bit.”

On August 2, NATO unanimously voted to expand its mandate of protective air power over Sarajevo and other U.N.-designated safe areas by threatening “stronger measures including air strikes” in the event of the continued “strangulation of Sarajevo and other areas” and “wide-scale interference with humanitarian assistance.”

On August 3, White House Spokesperson, Dee Dee Myers, said “I think that this sends a clear statement…that the lessons of Mogadishu ought not be ignored, that attacks on peacekeepers will be responded to.”

According to the administration, the objectives of such strikes were threefold: 1) lift the strangulation of Sarajevo, 2) renew humanitarian operations, and 3) promote a viable political settlement in the negotiations ongoing at Geneva. Despite these stated objectives, the exact triggers for air strikes remained unclear. What constituted "strangulation" was one problem. While the State Department spokesperson, Mike McCurry, argued that NATO would act if the Bosnian Serbs did not soon vacate two key mountain positions outside of Sarajevo, the Secretary of State argued that such actions would be insufficient. Speaking in rather vague terms, Christopher argued that the “real test” would be whether the Serbs “let conditions improve in the city, so the city is not under the constant threat of being strangled.”

Apparently, the administration lacked any real criteria for determining what constituted “strangulation.” Rather, as suggested by Anthony Lake, they acted on the belief – like the Supreme Court said about pornography – that they would “know it when they saw it.”
Meanwhile, the administration looked for ways to get the Serbs to the negotiating table. While the administration continued to maintain economic sanctions against the Serbs it also suggested that air strikes might be used to push the Bosnian Serbs to negotiate a “viable” settlement. In a State Department briefing, Mike McCurry argued that the U.S. had warned Bosnian Serb leaders, including Slobodan Milosevic, that they would face “the very real prospects of military air strikes” if they failed to make improvements on “a variety of tests” relating both to Sarajevo, the provision of humanitarian aid and, ultimately, “to the effort to achieve a political settlement.”

Connected to the administration’s efforts at coercing the Bosnian Serbs was its twin desire to “encourage” the Bosnian Muslims to negotiate a settlement. As State Department officers continued to resign in protest of American policy in Bosnia and in particular its de facto acceptance of ethnic partitioning, the administration noted that it was not “imposing” an agreement on the Bosnian government but merely assisting in efforts to find a viable political solution. And, once an agreement was reached, the administration had promised up to 25,000 American troops to help with its enforcement. However, as the uproar over Somalia increased, this last commitment appeared increasingly problematic. As a result, the administration began placing strict conditions on such a deployment, including full command of U.S. forces, the right to withdraw, and clear congressional support.

The desire to reach a quick settlement in Bosnia presented the administration with several strategic and moral dilemmas. The first concerned the coercive use of air power. According to one senior Pentagon official, any use of force had to be strong enough to convince the Serbs to negotiate and, perhaps, cede some territorial gains while, at the
same time, avoid fostering the impression within the Bosnian government that holding out might get them a better deal.\textsuperscript{43} Therefore, as long as the Serbs made some efforts at easing the siege against Sarajevo and participating in negotiations, the U.S. appeared willing to forego air strikes.

A second problem centered on the agreement itself. As much as the administration desired an agreement and subsequent end to the fighting, it also was reticent about the proposed solution. First, as a peace agreement appeared more imminent, so did the possibility of a U.S. troop commitment to Bosnia. And, with Congress increasingly opposed to U.N. peacekeeping and U.S. participation in such operations, the determination of what denoted a “viable” and “enforceable” peace agreement garnered greater importance.\textsuperscript{44} Moreover, there were moral dilemmas surrounding any sanctioning of the agreement itself. Stating the administration’s dilemma, Secretary of State Aspin argued, “Even if this thing works perfectly, it’s still trouble. ‘Works Perfectly’ means we go in and we do what we have to do, peace is maintained, and nothing goes wrong. What have you accomplished? We’ve ratified ethnic cleansing. Nobody likes this deal, it’s really one of those thankless tasks – but I don’t know what else to do.”\textsuperscript{45}

**Consequences**

*Peace, Redefine NATO*

The final aspect of the administration’s story related to perceived consequences of its proposals and actions. First, the administration clearly hoped that the threats of air strikes would help facilitate a negotiated peace. This was most apparent from the
administration’s willingness to accept a suboptimal peace settlement. By the late summer and fall of 1993, the administration wanted to rid itself of the complex “problem from hell” and the partition negotiations appeared, at that time, as the only solution. In an interview on MacNeil-Lehrer, U.N. Ambassador, Madeleine Albright, expressed the administration’s frustration and moral dilemma with Bosnia. “I think all of us recognize that this is not a good solution for the problem. But we have all talked about what if this doesn’t happen, then is the fighting to go on? Are more people going to die? Is this going to be an eternal blood bath?”

In addition, there was the question of NATO. The demise of the Soviet threat had left NATO’s future in doubt. A strong showing in Bosnia would help redefine the alliance’s purpose, a stated goal of the administration. As the president’s National Security Adviser, Tony Lake, noted in September, “If NATO is to remain an anchor for European and Atlantic stability, as the President believes it must, its members must commit themselves to updating NATO’s role in this new era. Unless NATO is willing over time to assume a broader role, then it will lose public support, and all our nations will lose a vital bond of trans-Atlantic and European security.” For the administration, this “broader” role essentially meant that NATO had to take on “out of area” operations, like Bosnia, that potentially could impact European stability and security.

COERCIVE DIPLOMACY

Although the “strangulation” of Sarajevo receded following NATO’s August threat, peace remained illusive in Bosnia and the fighting continued through the coming of the new year. The collapse of peace was in part due to Muslim territorial gains.
November to early January, the Bosnian Muslims engaged in a number of successful offensives in Central Bosnia that seemed to increase their confidence levels and decrease their willingness to negotiate. In an exchange with reporters on January 28, Clinton noted that the Bosnian Government had benefited from smuggled arms and, consequently, appeared to be “most reluctant to sign a peace agreement at this time.” As the prospects of peace diminished in the winter of 1993, the U.S. turned its attention towards the provision of humanitarian aid and the upcoming European summit on the expansion of NATO. By early January, as the U.S. met with its NATO allies in Brussels, the discourse suggests that the administration’s representation of the Bosnian problem was changing. Clearly, the administration was less optimistic about the prospects of a negotiated peace in Bosnia. Moreover, it appeared increasingly concerned about Bosnia’s impact on NATO’s future.

As no-fly zone violations grew and Sarajevo fell under renewed shelling without a subsequent NATO response, the administration feared that the increasing violence in Bosnia was damaging both U.S. and NATO credibility. Moreover, given Sarajevo’s special status, the administration was concerned that continued inaction to protect the city threatened future possibilities for peace. Underscoring the importance of Sarajevo, President Clinton stated that he had always believed that Sarajevo was the “Humpty Dumpty of Bosnia,” meaning that if it fell then it would be impossible to ever put the country back again. Consequently, at the January NATO summit the president pushed the allies to reaffirm their commitment to use air power to protect the city. Meanwhile, it worked to tighten the definition of “strangulation” to mean “large-scale shelling” and warned the NATO allies of the broader consequences of continued inaction. According
to the President, “What is at stake is not just the safety of the people of Sarajevo and any possibility of bringing this terrible conflict to an end but the credibility of the alliance itself. And that, make no mistake about it, will have great ramifications in the future in other contexts.”

Aside from U.S. concerns over Sarajevo and NATO credibility, the war was beginning to cause a split among the allies, most notably between the United States and France. With the situation on the ground deteriorating, France was facing growing domestic pressure to pull out its troops in Bosnia or take more forceful action. The situation led France to push for renewed diplomatic efforts to end the conflict. However, French efforts were soon obstructed by American intransigence since the French and Americans disagreed on which warring party in Bosnia was the primary obstacle to peace. On January 21, in a private meeting with the U.S. Secretary of State, the French Prime Minister, Alain Juppe, criticized Warren Christopher for the administration’s refusal to press the Bosnian Muslims to make peace, pointing out that the Bosnian Army had gained territory and the Muslims had become the aggressors. In a later statement, Juppe argued, "If the Americans do not convince the Bosnian Moslems that they must stop fighting and that there is no chance that the U.S. would come to their rescue, then the United States will give them incentives to pursue the fighting on the ground." A week later, State Department spokesperson, Mike McCurry fired back, stating that the French demands required “a strange moral a calculus” given that the Muslims were simply trying to regain territory lost by Serbian ethnic cleansing.

Despite the dispute, Christopher reportedly left the January meeting with the French Prime Minister thinking that it was time for a new American initiative. According
to news reports, Ambassador Albright and National Security Adviser Lake had also arrived at that conclusion. On February 4, Secretary Christopher summarized the administration’s new thinking in a position paper which he sent to Lake and the Secretary of Defense, William Perry. In a private cover letter, Christopher wrote that he was “acutely uncomfortable” with the administration’s current passive position and that it was time to undertake a new initiative. He added “I feel that the risks to the reputation of NATO, to allied unity and to the credibility of our foreign policy are sufficient to justify a rethinking.” Christopher concluded the paper by stating, “It is increasingly clear there will likely be no solution to the conflict if the United States does not take the lead in a new diplomatic effort.” As a result, the following day when a mortar shell landed in a Sarajevo market killing 68 civilians and wounding 200, the administration and its NATO allies appeared poised for action. The discourse following the attack confirms the administration’s new thinking about the Bosnian problem.

**Past Lessons**

*Not take Sides, Clearly Articulate U.S. Risks and Interests*

Apparent in the administration’s new discourse surrounding Bosnia was the combination of several old “lessons,” primarily derivative of Vietnam, with several new lessons from the administration’s recent experience in Somalia. As seen in Figure 5.2, the previous “lesson” from Vietnam of “not taking sides in a civil war” and becoming a “combatant” became a consistent element of the administration’s discourse during and after the Serb siege of Gorazde in March-April and NATO’s subsequent first use of force. This lesson first emerged in the administration’s discourse surrounding Bosnia
Figure 5.2: “Coercive Diplomacy” (January 1994-November 1994).
during the summer of 1993, as seen in the previous chapter. The reappearance and reemphasis on this lesson appears reflective of the new lessons derived from the American experience in Somalia, detailed in greater depth in chapter three.

In Somalia, the U.N.-authorized, U.S.-led military campaign against General Aidid compromised U.S. and U.N. neutrality, reducing the effectiveness of U.N. diplomacy and causing U.S. troops to be viewed more as combatants in the conflict than as peacekeepers. As a result, when NATO finally used force against the Bosnian Serbs in April 1994, the administration sought to assure the Serbs as well as the Bosnian Government (and for that matter, the American public) that the U.S., NATO and the United Nations were not seeking to change the military balance as seen in Somalia.

Related to not taking sides was a lesson emanating from American experiences in Beirut, Somalia and other problem areas of the world, such as Rwanda: that outside actors cannot impose peace upon the unwilling. In address before the United Nations Association on January 6, 1994, Douglas Bennet Jr., Assistant Secretary for International Affairs noted that “the experience in Somalia underlines the importance…of understanding the limits of what outsiders can do in the absence of internal commitments to peace.”

Ultimately, as noted by Anthony Lake, the president’s National Security Adviser, “the responsibility for peace rests with the peoples and parties to the conflict.”

A final lesson from both Somalia and Vietnam relates to the importance of public opinion. Ultimately, the essence of the administration’s many past “lessons” boiled down to one simple schema: avoid casualties in order to sustain domestic support. In other words, public opinion does matter. However, according to the administration, public opinion is, to a large degree, a function of media coverage. The importance of avoiding
casualties is heightened by the modern media’s ability to convey the image of death and suffering to the American public, something that was brought home to the administration by Somalia. As stated by Anthony Lake in October 1994, the “outstanding lesson we learned during Vietnam” was that “the United States cannot long sustain a fight without public opinion.” Lake added:

Public opinion is formed in our era in even more perplexing ways than during Vietnam. This is especially true for humanitarian and nontraditional interventions. The quantum leap in coverage brought about by CNN and the other networks means that almost every day, every American must be beset by a painful ambivalence. Images of violence, misery, and brutality naturally call up the impulse to intervene. The TV screen transforms a particular incident into an apparent universal condition in that foreign society. The camera, unfortunately does not have peripheral vision. My country and my country alone – the viewer feels – can do something about carnage and must do something about this carnage. But when images of casualties – our casualties – appear, everything can change instantly. The costs become painfully obvious, and the question arises: can this possibly be worth even one American life? 

The lesson, according to Lake and others within the administration, was to thus base intervention decisions on national interests. If the administration could clearly articulate to the public and Congress that “classic interests” were at stake in a given issue and prepare them ahead of time for the possible risks and consequences associated with a given action, than the administration believed public support could be sustained, even in the face of sensational media coverage and possible casualties. As Ambassador Albright argued, since public opinion was somewhat volatile and often difficult to measure, “A President must move our nation where he believes it is in our interest to go. His – or her – duty is not to follow public opinion but to lead it.”
Nature of Situation and Key Relationships

Europe in Need of U.S. Help and Assessment of U.S. Interests Warrant U.S. Action

Following from these lessons, key elements of the new story related to the expressed need for greater American leadership in Bosnia and a clearer articulation of American interests in the region. Although it was still touted as a “European problem,” the administration continued to argue that Bosnia engaged U.S. interests but deserved a multilateral, as opposed to unilateral approach to the problem. According to President Clinton and other top administration officials, the U.S. had in Bosnia: (1) a strategic interest to contain the conflict and prevent a broader conflagration in Europe; (2) a political interest to preserve NATO credibility; (3) an interest to stem refugee flows in Europe; and (4) a humanitarian interest to prevent the slaughter of innocents and ease their suffering. According to Secretary Christopher, “It was an assessment of these interests” that led the administration to exert leadership and give impetus to the peace process.

However, the administration also noted that pressure from its European allies pushed it to take a leadership position in the peace process. According to State Department spokesperson, Mike McCurry and other key administration officials, the United States decided to become more actively engaged in the peace process before the marketplace shelling due to European insistence that the problem could not be solved without U.S. leadership. As stated by McCurry, “the Europeans were asking the United States, if not in fact pleading with the United States to get more actively involved in trying to deal with Bosnia.” Moreover, according to key administration officials, the Europeans were now more willing to consider force given the consequences of continued
Unilaterally Lifting Arms Embargo is Mistake

Another aspect of the new story was that although the administration did not support the U.N. arms embargo against Bosnia, viewing at as unfairly disadvantaging the Bosnian Government, it did not support congressional moves to lift it unilaterally. However, as the fighting continued in Bosnia, the pressure to lift the arms embargo increased. In late June, a measure to lift the arms embargo passed the House of Representatives by a substantial majority while failing in the Senate by only one vote.

Judging from the public discourse, the administration was not immune to such pressure, arguing that the embargo issue was “of great concern to the administration.” In an exchange with reporters, President Clinton sympathized with congressional sentiment and blamed the unfair nature of the U.N. arms embargo for continuing the conflict in Bosnia, stating “I have always thought the arms embargo operated in an entirely one-sided fashion, and it still does. That’s the reason we’re in this fix today because of the accumulated losses of the Bosnian Government as a direct result of overwhelming superiority of heavy artillery by the Serbs.” However, in numerous public speeches, top administration officials also warned that unilaterally lifting the arms embargo on Bosnia would be a “tragic mistake” that could have a number of deleterious consequences. At various points in time, officials argued that such actions could: undermine the peace process; undermine U.S. relations with Russia; break the unity of the NATO alliance; lead to a general collapse of U.N. sanctions as an effective
instrument in international affairs; undermine U.S. sanction efforts in other countries such as Libya and Iraq and, finally, lead to greater American involvement in the conflict.\textsuperscript{78}

\textit{Allied Divisions and Dual Key Authorization Complicate Multilateral Efforts}

The divisions between the United States, its NATO allies and the U.N were also emphasized in the administration’s discourse during this period, particularly in reference to the arms embargo. Since the Europeans had peacekeeping troops in Bosnia and the United States did not, U.S. proposals to lift the arms embargo and utilize air strikes were not always well-received, creating tensions and complicating U.S. efforts to find a “multilateral” solution to the problem.\textsuperscript{79} Russia was also wary of NATO force in Bosnia, given both its past history with the alliance and its relations with the Serbs.\textsuperscript{80} Aside from the problems with maintaining allied relations and NATO unity, the United Nations was also critical of U.S. reluctance to contribute peacekeeping troops to Bosnia.

Moreover, the “dual key” nature of air strike authorization proved an obstacle to a quick NATO response. According to the NATO agreement of August 1993, air strikes in Bosnia required U.N. authorization before they could be approved by the North Atlantic Council (NAC), the leadership body of the NATO alliance. This meant that if U.N. peacekeepers came under attack, the U.N. commander on the ground in Bosnia had to approve and then send a request for air strikes to the U.N. military commander for Yugoslavia, who would then approve and forward the request to the Secretary General’s civilian representative in Yugoslavia who would approve and then forward the request to the Secretary General.
Subsequently, according to Secretary of Defense, William Perry, when air strikes were first requested by French peacekeepers in March 1994, it took three hours for the United Nation’s to process the authorization. NATO pilots who had witnessed the attack were poised to respond and remained circling over the area for the next three hours. By the time they received the approval, the attack was over and the guns were gone. After the incident, the U.S. pushed to have the “tortuous” process streamlined and the scope and nature of possible targets expanded since such decisions were made by the United Nations and not NATO under the current system. Despite some success to increase the flexibility of NATO target, the dual nature of U.N./NATO authorization remained in place. In May, President Clinton acknowledged that the process of multilateralism in Bosnia had been “more ragged and more frustrating than I wish it had been.” As stated by the President, “I underestimated the difficulty of getting broad agreement through NATO and then getting the U.N. to use the NATO force.”

*Bosnians are Victims, Serbs are Villains*

Another notable element of the discourse was the administration’s clear identification of the villains and the victims in the conflict. In an April news conference, President Clinton noted the conflict in Bosnia was “clearly a civil war.” But, he added, “I have always felt that the Serbs were the primary aggressors.” Secretary of State Christopher reaffirmed the President’s view of the conflict. In testimony before Congress, Christopher stated, “I do not feel that we’re even-handed in this situation. I feel that the Bosnians are the aggrieved party, the Serbs are the aggressors.” When visiting Sarajevo with JCS Chairman, John Shalikashvili, Ambassador Albright revealed her own
biases on the subject by evoking John F. Kennedy’s famous 1961 speech in Berlin.
Before a crowd of several hundred in front of the newly-inaugurated U.S. embassy,
Albright stated: “Ja sam Sarajevka” (I am a Sarajevan.”). As in previous stories, no
clear distinction between the Bosnian Serbs and the Serbs in Belgrade was made in the
administration’s discourse, other than noting that the first were surrogates of the latter.

Peace via Negotiation but Diplomacy Married to Force Wield Results

Despite the clear identification of victims and aggressors, the administration had
emphasized, based on past lessons that it was not going to militarily intervene against one
side or another in the conflict. Again, Somalia, like Vietnam, had shown the
administration the dangers and limited utility of outside military intervention in internal
conflicts. Reflective of these lessons, President Clinton stated at the end of January that
“the killing [in Bosnia] is a function of a political fight between three factions. Until they
agree to quit doing it, it’s going to continue. And I don’t think the international
community has the capacity to stop people within the nation from their civil war until
they decide to do it.” Although the administration soon became engaged in the
negotiation process shortly thereafter, the theme remained the same. At a news
conference on April 22, almost two weeks after the first NATO air strikes, the President
continued to argue that the “conflict must be settled by the parties themselves. They must
choose peace.” Moreover, although U.S. and NATO can influence events, they cannot
dictate them; they can not bring the war to an end. Thus, according to the
administration’s top officials, peace in Bosnia had to come at the “negotiating table” and
not “at the battlefield.”
However, in somewhat of a contradiction, the administration also noted that the marriage of force and diplomacy was an effective one. Noting Bosnian Serb actions when faced with NATO ultimatums, all of the administration’s top officials argued, in one form or the other, that “when diplomacy has been married to military power, positive movement has been the result.” However, Lake did note, “We should never delude ourselves: deploying our military often will not solve underlying problems.”

Russia Importance

Another aspect of the administration’s new story related to the perceived importance of Russia to the negotiation process. Given the administration’s advocacy on behalf of the Bosnian government, Russia’s entrance into the diplomatic process and associated history with the Serbs brought to the negotiations an element of balance. According to Secretary of State Christopher, “this is the first time that Russia has been fully involved in an effort to find a peace settlement there…and I think that they have a unique capacity to deal with Serbia and the persuade Serbia to go along with an appropriate settlement, one that will provide viable, reasonable amount of territory for Bosnia.” Consequently, starting in 1994, Russia’s part in the Bosnian peace process became a prominent theme in the administration’s discourse.

Goals

Get a Settlement, Contain the Conflict and Limit Casualties

Given the lessons from Vietnam and Somalia and the characterization of the nature of the situation and key actor relationships, the administration’s “overall goal” in the new story was to “reinvigorate” the peace process by getting the parties back to the
negotiating table to achieve a “comprehensive settlement.” According to the administration, “reinvigorating” the political process meant working with a proposal put forth, this time, by the Bosnian government while allowing the Russians to take a more active role in negotiations. In addition, the U.S. in conjunction with NATO would pressure the Bosnian Serbs militarily in order to make them “pay a higher price for continued violence so it will be in their own interests, more clearly, to return to the negotiating table.”

Finally, getting an agreement related to what Christopher referred to as the “fundamental basis” of U.S. policy: containing the conflict. In order to decrease the threats to American vital interests and subsequent chances of greater American involvement in the region, containing the conflict remained a prominent U.S. objective. In the meantime, the administration hoped to limit the violence and ensuing civilian casualties.

**Actions Taken and Advocated**

*Threats, Negotiations and Air Strikes*

The President’s ruling out of any decisive U.S. military intervention in Bosnia to end the conflict, given the desire to avoid becoming a combatant, limited the administration’s choice of options. The administration was likewise constrained by perceived pressures from Congress and the U.N. and NATO allies. Still, in an effort to limit deaths while encouraging the Bosnian Serbs to stop their military attacks and return to the peace process, the U.S. supported the creation of a 20 kilometer weapons-exclusion zone around Sarajevo which would then be enforced by NATO air strikes after a ten-day
period. Reflecting the divisions within the alliance, the NATO ultimatum also warned the Muslims to hand over their heavy weapons and not launch assaults of their own against the city.

In a reflection of the lessons from Somalia, the administration also sought to educate the public of the risks associated with American participation in the NATO military operations in Bosnia. In a radio address on February 5, the President stated that “I want to be clear about the risks we face and the objectives we seek if force is needed. American planes will likely account for about half the NATO air strikes if they proceed. General Shalikashvili has told me that our forces are well prepared for this operation. But the fact is, there is no such thing as a mission completely without risks, and losses may occur.” Aside from the participation of U.S. troops in NATO enforcement actions, the administration reaffirmed its conditional commitment to supply up to half of the needed troops for eventual peace agreement enforcement.

To demonstrate America’s new commitment to the peace process, the President asked the State Department to become more directly involved in political negotiations. Secretary of State Christopher thus sent Charles Redman, the appointed special envoy to Bosnia, and Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, Peter Tarnoff to help the Bosnian Government formulate a viable peace proposal. Shortly thereafter, U.S. negotiators brokered a truce between the Bosnian Government and the Bosnian Croats, creating the Bosnian (Muslim-Croat) Federation, which laid the framework for a constitutional agreement between the two entities. The agreement, which was achieved reportedly after intense American pressure was placed upon Croatia, covered the territories held both by parties – approximately one-third of the country. The hope was
that the Bosnian Serbs who currently controlled the rest of the territory would then take
the necessary steps to find an overall settlement to the conflict.\textsuperscript{111}

The peace following the Sarajevo ultimatum and the creation of the Muslim-Croat
federation proved short-lived. In late March, fighting erupted around Gorazde and
climaxed with the Serb shelling of the town on April 10. Angered by the Serbs refusal to
comply to U.N. demands to stop their attacks, U.N. and NATO forces undertook a series
of air strikes against selected Serb targets (one tank and two armored personnel carriers
or APCs) overlooking the town on April 10 and 11.\textsuperscript{112} When the Serb attacks continued,
NATO responded with a third strike on April 16. The strikes, however, did not deter the
Serbs as planned. In retaliation, the Serbs began taking hostages and within a few days,
had detained around 200 U.N. and civilian personnel.\textsuperscript{113} As the U.N. evacuated its
observers from the town while the U.S. and NATO contemplated broader options, the
Bosnian Serbs relented. On April 19, UNPROFOR troops were allowed back into
Gorazde as the Bosnian Serbs agreed to a ceasefire.\textsuperscript{114}

\textit{Creation of Contact Group and Lifting of Arms Embargo}

In an effort to spur the negotiation process by recognizing the informal
consultations on-going among the major powers, the co-chairs of the International
Conference on the Former Yugoslavia (ICFY), the official negotiating forum, proposed
the creation of a “Contact Group.” However, unlike the U.S.-inspired “Joint Action
Program” of 1993, Contact Group members were comprised this time of the U.S.,
Germany, France, U.K, and Russia. In late April, the group met in London to decide on a
plan for Bosnia that all could support and enforce. Utilizing the Muslim-Croat federation
as a base, the Contact Group proposed a settlement plan and later a map that divided Bosnian territory among the feuding parties, with 51 percent going to the federation and 49 percent to the Bosnian Serbs. They then worked, with little success, to agree on punitive measures that could be used to compel each of the parties to accept the proposed settlement. While the Russians and Europeans were reluctant to use force, favoring an easing of sanctions in exchange for Serb compliance, the Clinton administration was looking at options such as the tightening of economic sanctions against Serbia, stricter enforcement of exclusion zones and the lifting of the arms embargo, either multilaterally – or unilaterally by the United States – as a measure of last resort.

After the Bosnian Serbs rejected the Contact Group plan, congressional pressure to lift the arms embargo increased. As the Senate debated several measures on lifting the arms embargo on August 11, the administration promised congressional leaders that it would introduce a resolution within the U.N. Security Council to multilaterally lift the arms embargo if the Bosnian Serbs did not accept the Contact Group plan by October 15. While the Senate stopped short of lifting the embargo, it voted to stop enforcing the weapons ban on Bosnia by November 15 if the U.N. rejected the administration’s proposal. The president’s deadline for action was eased somewhat when the Bosnian Government formally notified the U.N. that they would not object to leaving the embargo in place for an additional six months. However, given the President’s commitment to Congress, the administration warned that if the U.N. failed to act on the American resolution then it would consider lifting the ban unilaterally.

On October 29, the U.S. introduced a proposal in the U.N. Security Council to ease the embargo against the Bosnian Government in six months. However, the
administration had doubts about the proposal’s success. As Secretary of State Christopher noted, “It is no secret that there are members of the Security Council who are not in favor of that motion at this time.” Such doubts were soon confirmed. Unable to get a consensus on the issue within the Security Council, the administration acted unilaterally, directing the U.S. military to stop enforcing the arms embargo starting on November 12. In an attempt to assuage the allies, the President stressed that the U.S. had acted under pressure and that the resulting measure was a compromise to appease Congress. The U.S., according to the President, had no plans to violate the arms embargo, and was, in fact, “observing” it.

*Extend Sarajevo Model, More Strikes, Augment Macedonia Force*

Following the Serb attack on Gorazde, the Clinton administration sought unsuccessfully to increase the pressure on the Bosnian Serbs as well as limiting the violence against civilians by extending the “Sarajevo model” of weapon-exclusion zones to other safe areas “where any violations would be grounds for NATO attacks.” Moreover, in its continuing efforts to contain the conflict, it acted to augment its deterrent force in Macedonia. Despite such efforts and with the restrictions on Sarajevo remaining, on August 5, NATO launched an attack in retaliation to a Bosnian Serb raid upon a U.N. weapons depot in the Sarajevo heavy weapon-exclusion zone. Later, on September 22, it hit an unmanned Serb tank in retaliation for Bosnian Serb attacks on French peacekeepers. In November, in response to Bosnian Serb attacks against the Muslim northwestern enclave of Bihac, NATO struck an airfield in Ubdina, Croatia that was a reported base for Serb attacks against the area. Two days later, NATO struck
surface-to-air missile facilities around Bihac that threatened air patrols in the area. According to Secretary of Defense Perry the NATO strikes were limited in nature given the nature of their objectives of deterring Serbs attacks and limiting civilian casualties, encouraging negotiations, and not becoming a combatant in the civil war.

**Consequences and New Lesson**

*Preserve U.S./U.N./NATO Credibility and Appease Domestic Demands*

As evident from the discourse, preserving U.S., NATO, and U.N. credibility was ultimately one if not the most desired consequence of U.S. proposals and actions in Bosnia. In testimony before the Senate Appropriations Committee, Secretary of State Christopher outlined U.S. goals and objectives in Bosnia, concluding: “I feel very strongly that this is a time when even a cautious Secretary of State, which perhaps I will always be, feels the need to vindicate United States leadership and to take a strong, robust position to ensure that this conflict does not spread and to ensure that we maintain the credibility of NATO as well as our own forces.” Meanwhile, the U.S. Ambassador to the U.N., Madeleine Albright, argued that the use of force in Bosnia was also designed to enhance the credibility of the United Nations by ensuring “that the will of the Security Council is respected.” As congressional pressure increased, another consequence the administration hoped would follow from U.S. actions, particularly the American move to stop enforcement of the arms ban, was the easing of congressional pressure to unilateral lift the arms embargo. Given the tensions between the U.S. and other members of the Contact Group, the U.S. hoped to avert such a unilateral break with NATO and Russia.
Stopping enforcement of the ban was thus seen as a way to appease domestic demands while not forcing a split with its allies.\textsuperscript{134}

\textit{Bolster Moderate Islam and Prevent Future Bosnias}

In addition to its concerns about NATO and domestic politics, the administration appeared worried that the conflict in Bosnia might negatively impact its relations with the greater Muslim world. As concerns about growing Islamic fundamentalism increased, the administration’s advocacy of the Muslim position in Bosnia appears connected, at least in part, to interests in bolstering moderate Islam worldwide and, in particular, in its crucial and vulnerable allies, Egypt and Turkey. These concerns appeared strongest at the National Security Council (NSC). In February 1994, the president’s National Security adviser, Anthony Lake, argued that one of the compelling interests at stake in Bosnia was “our relationships in the Muslim world.”\textsuperscript{135} Three months later, in a speech on the Middle East, Lake spoke of the threat that Islamic fundamentalism posed to America’s national interests and rejected the notion that the conflict in Bosnia represented a “clash of civilizations” between Islam and the West.\textsuperscript{136} Later that fall in reference to Bosnia, Jonathan Spalter, a spokesperson for the NSC, stated that “We have been pretty careful about reaching out to moderate Islam,” adding “Of course, we have never explicitly stated that there is a beachhead in Sarajevo to check Tehran. But the reason in the rhyme is there.”\textsuperscript{137}

Finally, as the conflict drew on in Bosnia, the administration sought to “prevent future Bosnias,” particularly in the emerging democracies of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.\textsuperscript{138} The administration appeared ever mindful that in this new post-cold
war era of fuzzy threats and failed states, its actions were, in the words of Tony Lake, creating “case-law” for the future. Thus, as President Clinton noted, “it’s in the American interest to see that a bad example is not set.”

“MUDDLING THROUGH”

The Siege of Bihac

Throughout 1994, as NATO engaged in limited air strikes in response to growing Serb violations of safe areas and U.N. ultimatums, tensions among the NATO allies and between U.N. and NATO increased, coming to head in the fall. In October, Bosnian government forces launched a series of successful offensives against Bosnian Serb forces, culminating in an attempt to break out of the so-called “Bihac pocket” in northwestern Bosnia in late October. The tide shifted swiftly however several weeks later when the Bosnian Serbs staged a counterattack with help from Serbs in the Krajina region of southern Croatia. As the war looked to spread and as the U.N.-designated safe area of Bihac fell under attack, differences among Contact Group members over both the identity of the aggressor in the conflict and the appropriate response to safe-area violations threatened once again to split the NATO alliance.

When the Serbs launched missiles and air strikes against Bihac in November, NATO struck back with a series of limited raids, hitting several SAM sites and an airport runway in Ubdina, Croatia. Seemingly undaunted, the Serbs began seizing and detaining U.N. personnel in the area. At a NATO meeting on November 24, the United States pushed to extend the Sarajevo exclusion-zone model, enforced by intensive NATO air strikes, to Bihac. The proposal met with defeat, revealing the issues at the heart of a
growing Europe-U.S. dispute: if the United States was unwilling to put its troops at risk by helping police the highly volatile demilitarized-zone, then neither were the French and Canadians whose ground troops were already at risk by the growing violence in the area. The American move to unilaterally stop enforcement of the arms embargo on November 12 only exacerbated tensions with Europe and reduced the administration’s effectiveness in advocating a more forceful multilateral position. In late November, as the U.N. and NATO appeared increasingly incapable of delivering an effective response to end the violence and ease the crisis around Bihac, U.S. officials began to rethink the administration’s position, returning to a policy that the media and even members of the administration referred to as “muddling through.”

Nature of Situation, Key Actor Relationships and Past Lessons

Coercive Diplomacy Not Working due to Dual-Key

The day after Thanksgiving, in a confidential memo to the President, National Security Adviser, Tony Lake concluded that the current policy was not working and advocated a change. In short, Lake argued that the NATO and U.N. mission were basically incompatible: NATO’s application of force violated the neutrality principle of U.N. peacekeeping, thus putting peacekeepers on the ground at risk. Consequently, Lake concluded that the “stick of military pressure” was “no longer viable.” Around the same time, Secretary of Defense Perry and Secretary of State Christopher also concluded that the American push for air power was achieving little and hurting the NATO alliance, whose European and Canadian members were also participating in U.N. peacekeeping efforts on the ground in Bosnia. Thus, the administration decided it was time to
abandon its policy of pushing reluctant allies to use force to deter Serb aggression and prompt a return to the negotiating table. According to the President’s National Security Adviser, Anthony Lake, NATO air strikes had now become “a solution of last resort.”

The first public indication of the new policy appeared on November 27 when Secretary of Defense Perry stated on NBC’s Meet the Press that “air strikes cannot determine the outcome of ground combat” and that he opposed more strikes for fear that they would “drive the…U.N. forces out of Bosnia.” Concurring with Perry, Secretary of State Christopher argued, that the administration was not seeking a “war strategy.” Rather, “What we want to see here is peace, not the reign of terror that would come from carpet bombing.”

When pressed about the administration’s sudden change in policy direction, National Security Adviser Lake denied the change, arguing “We had to adjust our tactics in response to the reality in wake of the setbacks in Bihac, but, our policy is the same.”

Despite Lake’s protest, the discourse suggests, as seen in Figure 5.3, that while some aspects of the administration’s problem representation remained constant, others had indeed changed. One changed aspect pertained to the administration perception of the “incompatibility” of the U.N. and NATO missions which was most apparent in their criticism of the “dual-key” authorization process. Since NATO was in Bosnia to essentially support the U.N. mission, it was decided back in August 1993, that air strikes needed to be authorized by both NATO and the U.N.. As a result, the “dual-key” process required U.N. military and civilian approval of air strikes, before any such requests could be forwarded to NATO commanders in the region. Once air strikes were approved, both
**Initiating Event:**
Siege of Bihac (Nov-Dec. 1994)

**Past Lessons:**
Militarily aiding one side in a civil war is a slippery slope that can lead to U.S. combat and casualties

**Nature of Situation and Key Actor Relationships:**
1. Coercive diplomacy is not working; the dual-key command is undermining the deterrent and coercive use of force
2. Peace prospects are dim and U.S. leverage is minimal
3. The Contact Group is divided on a solution but NATO is more important than Bosnia so U.S. is obligated to support its allies
4. U.S. will not take sides militarily and a widened conflict threatens American vital interests
5. The conflict is at a military stalemate
6. Bosnian Muslims are the victims and the Bosnian Serbs are the villains but are still influenced by Milosevic
7. Congressional proposals would have disastrous consequences for Bosnia and broader U.S. security interests
8. UNPROFOR is at a crossroads: leave or stay and strengthen; maintaining UNPROFOR in Bosnia is the best of a bad set of options

**Goal(s):**
1. Avoid becoming a combatant
2. Contain the conflict
3. Seek a negotiated settlement
4. Reduce violence and mitigate civilian suffering

**Actions Taken and Advocated:**
1. Push diplomatically for a cease-fire and encourage extension; support negotiations based on Contact Group 51-49 proposal
2. Reaffirm Muslim-Croat Federation and keep UNPROFOR in Croatia
3. Work to isolate Bosnian Serbs; offer Milosevic carrot of eased sanctions in return for pressure on Pale and Bosnia recognition
4. Discourage Congress from unilaterally lifting arms embargo
5. Support NATO air strikes (5/25-6)
6. Support and strengthen UNPROFOR via creation of Rapid Reaction Force (RRF)
7. Maintain humanitarian airlift and troops in Macedonia; encourage maintenance of UNPROFOR in Croatia
8. Offer and plan to send U.S. ground troops to support U.N. withdrawal, emergency extraction or to enforce a peace settlement but publicly note risks

**Consequences:**
1. Keep UNPROFOR in Bosnia and reduce likelihood of U.S. ground troop deployment
2. Preserve NATO unity

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Figure 5.3: “Muddling Through” (November 1994 - July 1995).
organizations had to then agree on selected targets. Consequently, the dual-key acted as a “dual-veto,” constraining U.S. attempts to push for a more aggressive NATO response.

Over the course of 1994, violations of exclusion zones and NATO ultimatums increasingly went unchallenged. When air strikes were conducted the limited nature of their targets (e.g. one or two unmanned Serb tanks), diminished their deterrent value. The problem, according to the administration, rested with the United Nations, not NATO. As Secretary of Defense Perry noted, “NATO is prepared to respond with air strikes if the United Nations asks for them” in Bosnia. But, he added, “the United Nations has not been asking for air strikes, and therefore we are really powerless to conduct air strikes to influence that situation.” Over the course of 1994, the administration had come to believe that the U.N.’s reluctance to approve NATO air strikes and a more extensive selection of targets was the result of the growing fear that more aggressive actions would precipitate a hostage crisis. Reaffirming Perry’s remarks Lake noted, “we have been constrained by the fact that U.N. forces, while in one sense they’re performing a very humanitarian mission, in another sense they are kind of hostages on the ground.” The frustration with the United Nations and the dual-key process in particular, would be a consistent theme of the administration throughout the new year.

Peace Prospects Dim and U.S. Leverage Minimal

Given the administration’s removal of force as a viable option, officials argued that subsequent U.S. leverage to push for a peace settlement in Bosnia was minimal. As for peace negotiations, no one within the administration appeared too optimistic about the chances of finding a successful diplomatic solution. Although a flicker of hope
followed former President Carter’s brokering of a cease-fire on December 31, 1994, it was soon doused. Limited fighting in key areas in the country erupted during February and March, suggesting the possibility of a wider conflict by summer. Such fears were proven when full-scale fighting erupted throughout the country in May, following the cease-fire’s expiration.\textsuperscript{158} By June, the administration seemed all but resigned to the prospects of a distant Bosnian peace. Comparing the conflict to the decades-long conflicts in Northern Ireland and the Middle East, both the President and the Vice President implied that peace in Bosnia was not likely to be found soon.\textsuperscript{159} According to the President, international efforts in Bosnia had “not been a success.” But, the president added, “remember, how long has this war been going on? Since 1991, in essence. That’s 4 years. It’s tragic; it’s terrible. But their enmities go back 500 years, some would say almost a thousand years.”\textsuperscript{160} Thus, according to administration officials although it was important to maintain hope and not be resigned to the possibility of failure, peace in Bosnia was not likely until the parties in the conflict tired of the killing.\textsuperscript{161}

\textit{Contact Group Divided but Must Support Allies as NATO More Important than Bosnia}

Along with the administration’s frustration with the United Nations and the dual-key process was a clarification of interests. In short, the administration’s new policy made it clear that in the hierarchy of priorities, NATO came before Bosnia. Officials at the State Department even argued that the preservation of NATO and American leadership in the alliance was a “vital” national interest.\textsuperscript{162} According to Richard Holbrooke, the Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, American interests in Europe and NATO still remained “as vital to us now as they’ve
been at any time since 1945.” Therefore, since differences among Contact Group members over Bosnia had, admittedly, created “self-evident strains” in the NATO alliance, the administration decided that it was “not going to allow the tragedy in Bosnia to wreck America’s long-term national security and economic interests in the rest of Europe.” According to one senior official:

We have been putting straws on the back of NATO solidarity over Bosnia for the last two years. We have been pushing them over and over to use force, to the point where we have come to threaten the destruction of the transatlantic treaty. We decided that we are not going to do it anymore. We are not going to make this a manhood test. We are not going to break NATO over this.

Given the emphasis on preserving NATO unity, the administration decided to take a back seat and let Europe – and in particular the French and British – assume the lead in Bosnia. After all, according to the administration, Bosnia was in effect a European problem since it was Europe who decided back in 1992 to place their troops there under the U.N. peacekeeping umbrella. Thus, according to President Clinton, it would be a “great thing for Europe if the Europeans can take the lead in resolving the first post-cold-war security crisis in the European continent.” Consequently, the administration defined the U.S. role in Bosnia as one of support. As stated by the State Department spokesperson, Nicholas Burns, the U.S. was in a position “of waiting for our European allies who have troops on the ground to decide on their preferred course of action and then of course the United States will support them.” And, as the administration came under growing pressure to either take greater action or support a U.N. withdrawal, reasserting America’s supportive commitment to Europe became increasingly
important. As President Clinton and other top officials argued, the United States has “obligations to our NATO allies, and I do not believe we can leave them in the lurch.”

Conflict Stalemated, Serbs Villains and Muslims Victims

Along with concerns for the NATO allies, the administration noted, starting in late 1994, that the conflict in Bosnia was at a virtual military stalemate that could not be resolved through additional fighting. As stated by President Clinton, “After 3 years of conflict, the combatants remain locked in a terrible war no one can win.” Moreover, as in previous stories, the administration continued to argue that the Serbs were the primary villains and main obstacle to peace in Bosnia while the Bosnian Muslims were the clear victims. As stated by the administration’s ambassador-designate to Bosnia-Herzegovina, John K. Menzies, “The struggle taking place in Bosnia is one in which the U.S. is not neutral…Our position remains clearly behind the principle that there is a victim and an aggressor, and we do not confuse the two.”

The administration’s disgust with the Bosnian Serbs increased as the fighting intensified in the spring of 1995. By May, the administration argued that the situation in Bosnia had “gotten completely out of hand” and expressed its frustration that the Bosnian Serbs were “being allowed to act with impunity” while the international community was, in effect, helpless to stop them. On May 25, in response to increasing Serb shelling of civilians in Sarajevo, NATO undertook limited air strikes, hitting Bosnian Serb tanks in the weapons exclusion-zone around the city. In retaliation, the Bosnian Serbs detained U.N. peacekeepers, chaining them to possible NATO targets. Outraged, administration
officials argued that the Bosnian Serb actions went “beyond the pale of civilized behavior.”

Apparent within the administration’s public condemnations was the increasing differentiation between the “Bosnian Serbs” and the Serbs in Belgrade. Although both parties remained subject to the administration’s condemnation, officials referred to the “Serbs” in less monolithic terms. Instead, the administration began to specify that the “Bosnian Serbs” were the main obstacle to peace and suggested that they now appeared less subordinate to the Serb leaders in Belgrade. In June, Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, Peter Tarnoff, noted that “the Serbs in Pale have a large measure of political independence from Belgrade, so much so that Milosevic views Karadzic [the Bosnian Serb leader] more as a rival than a partner.”

Still, despite the administration’s increasing differentiation in its public statements, other statements and actions continue to suggest U.S. officials believed the Serbs in Belgrade, and Slobodan Milosevic in particular, held influence over the Bosnian Serbs and their leader, Radovan Karadzic.

U.S. Not Take Sides Militarily and Widened Conflict Threatens Vital Interests

Despite the administration’s clear identification of villains and victims, the administration continued to argue that it would not take sides in the Bosnian conflict. Past lessons, particularly from Vietnam, again appear to have influenced the administration’s thinking. As previously mentioned, for the Clinton administration Vietnam, Beirut and later Somalia, underscored the dangers associated with deploying ground troops into ongoing “civil wars.” Civil wars were, in effect, “slippery slopes” that could easily suck U.S. troops into fighting against one side in the conflict. This, in turn,
would likely increase American casualties while diminishing public support for U.S. policy efforts and objectives. Thus, the administration continued to argue that it would not deploy troops into Bosnia to “take sides” and, in effect, become “combatants” in a civil war as the U.S. did in Vietnam.\footnote{182} As stated by President Clinton, “From the beginning of my campaign for President, I said that the one thing I did not think we should do is to send American troops into combat into Bosnia.”\footnote{183}

This position was most vociferous when confronting arguments that the U.S. had a moral obligation to get involved and seek a military solution to conflict, as argued by some members in Congress.\footnote{184} Doing so, according to administration officials, would require anywhere from 100,000 to 300,000 American troops and would likely inflict casualties “far higher than anyone could justify based on our national interests.”\footnote{185} According to the administration, such actions would also not be supported by the American public – let alone Congress – and, most likely, would not result in “any kind of permanent solution” to the conflict.\footnote{186} Thus, according to the Vice President, “Anyone who is worried about the U.S. sending ground troops there should not be. That’s not going to happen.”\footnote{187}

Starting in 1995, the administration also began to clearly specify that the conflict in Bosnia specifically threatened American “vital national interests.”\footnote{188} Such interests would be threatened if the conflict spread beyond Bosnia and into the Balkans, something that Secretary of Defense Perry noted was a “real” and not an “academic” possibility.\footnote{189} If this happened, then according to administration officials, the U.S. might not have a choice but to become more actively involved in the conflict, something the administration clearly wanted to avoid given the possibility of Vietnam-type quagmire. In testimony
before Congress, Lieutenant General Wesley Clark of the Joint Chiefs of Staff defended American military actions in Bosnia, arguing that the U.S. was following the U.N.’s limited rules of engagement in order to prevent an expansion of the conflict. As stated by Clark, “we’re not at war. It isn’t Vietnam over there yet.”

**Congressional Actions Could Have Disastrous Consequences**

One of the most consistently stressed themes in the administration’s discourse starting in late 1994, was the recurrent warning of the consequences of congressional proposals and actions. By early 1995, it was clear that the administration perceived growing and intense pressure from Congress. Following the democratic defeat in the mid-term elections, the administration faced a Republican-dominated Congress whose “Contract with America” aimed, among other things, to limit NATO expansion and the administration’s participation and support for U.N. peacekeeping.

In early January 1995, Republican leaders in both the House and Senate thus introduced several bills aimed at reasserting congressional control over the foreign policy powers of the executive. As a result, the administration began a vigorous public campaign to defeat what they saw were “dangerous” proposals from “back door isolationists.” In May, at a public news conference, the President stated “I believe these bills threaten our ability to preserve America’s global leadership and to safeguard the security and prosperity of the American people in the post-cold war world.” In a later speech, he again argued against the proposals, warning, “every time the United States walks away from problems around the world, we wind up paying 10 times the price in blood and money later on.”
The legislation that most concerned the administration was a proposal to again unilaterally lift the U.N. arms embargo on Bosnia. Although the bill was first introduced by Senate majority leader, Robert Dole, a prominent critic of the administration’s Bosnian policy and a presidential candidate for the upcoming 1996 elections, it had considerable support from members of both parties in both houses of Congress. In December, prior to the bill’s introduction, the President’s National Security Adviser, Tony Lake argued that unilaterally lifting the embargo would be a huge mistake that could, given the current state of U.S.-Europe relations, precipitate “the most profound crisis in the history of NATO.” After the bill’s introduction, top officials repeatedly warned both Congress and the American public that the bill’s passage would lead to “disastrous” consequences.

Specifically, the administration argued that it opposed the Dole-Lieberman “lift and leave” option – unilaterally lifting the arms embargo and letting the different sides fight it out – for a variety of reasons. First, it would lead to a withdrawal of the U.N. from Bosnia, triggering the deployment of 25,000 American troops to assist with the evacuation of UNPROFOR in what, most likely, would be difficult and hostile environment. Beyond that, unilaterally lifting the embargo would in all likelihood lead to an intensification of the fighting, increase the number of refugees, and make the U.S. “unilaterally responsible” for the conflict. Thus, rather than avoiding a Vietnam-type scenario that its advocates desired, it would instead “Americanize” the war and put U.S. troops on the ground in Bosnia. As stated by Secretary of State Christopher, if the Bosnian government got into trouble after the U.S. unilaterally lifted the arms embargo, then what? “Will we provide equipment? Will we train them? Will we have air strikes if
they get into difficulty, and if the air strikes don’t work, which they probably won’t, will we then send in ground troops? I don’t want to start down that very dangerous path, nor does the President.” Secretary of Defense Perry agreed, stating that if you followed the proposal to its “natural conclusion” it would have the unintended consequence of leading the U.S. down the proverbial “slippery slope” to American troops in combat.

*UNPROFOR at Crossroads but Still Best of Worst Options*

Given the undesirability of the above options, the administration argued that it had to “continue along current lines” by supporting the U.N. mission in Bosnia. The expression of U.S. support was important according to the administration because UNPROFOR was at a crossroads. Although pressure for collapsing the U.N. mission had been building for months, it climaxed after NATO air strikes in May failed to either protect the peacekeepers or stem the violence. Thus, as stated by President Clinton on June 3, the United Nations was now faced with choice in Bosnia: stay and strengthen UNPROFOR capabilities or withdraw. According to the administration, although UNPROFOR had some rather serious problems, continued American support of the U.N. presence in Bosnia was still the best of a bad set of options. In an underwhelming statement of support for the organization, President Clinton argued, “sometimes, as bad and as ragged as it is, the U.N. is better than nothing.”
Goals

Avoid Combat, Contain Conflict, Seek Settlement, Reduce Suffering

Given the perceptions of the past, key relationships and nature of the situation, the administration’s goals now in Bosnia, in the apparent order of priority, were: 1) avoid combat, 2) contain the conflict, 3) seek a settlement and 4) reduce the suffering. First among the administration’s objectives was the somewhat negative goal of avoiding combat; a goal influenced primarily by the administration’s perceptions of past lessons and the very real possibility of U.N. withdrawal. Connected to combat avoidance was the administration’s “overall objective” in Bosnia, as evident from its statement of vital interests, of continuing to prevent the outbreak of a wider war. However, as long as the war remained contained and U.S. troops appeared far removed from Balkan combat, the administration would “keep doing all we can to help the parties reach a diplomatic settlement.” Given the perceived importance of these three priorities, “mitigating the suffering” in Bosnia appeared as a fourth, lesser objective in the administration’s discourse.

Actions Taken and Advocated

Maintain Macedonia Troops, UNPROFOR in Croatia and Humanitarian Airlift

Given the above goals, the administration worked on several fronts during late 1994 and the spring of 1995 to contain the conflict and thus decrease the chances of U.S. combat troops in Bosnia. First, it continued to maintain troops in Macedonia. Second, it worked to prevent Croatian offensives into Bosnia diplomatically and by encouraging Croatian President, Franjo Tudjman, to renew the UNPROFOR mandate in his
Finally, the administration sought to reaffirm the “fraying” and somewhat fragile Muslim-Croat Federation, celebrating its one-year anniversary in March. Meanwhile, in its continuing efforts to alleviate civilian suffering, the U.S. continued its participation in the “largest humanitarian airlifts in history.”

Pursue a Settlement

In its efforts to find a settlement, the administration continued to “muddle through,” pursuing a strategy of diplomacy minus the credible threat of force. After the showdown with NATO over Bihac, the administration focused on getting a cease-fire and, following the Carter cease-fire on New Year’s Eve, an extension. With a cease-fire in place, administration officials were thus able to focus on negotiations. Dumping the Bosnian Serb-Croat proposal of 1994, the administration argued instead for a return to the May 1994 Contact Group proposal, with its 51/49 territorial divisions. Although Secretary of State Christopher acknowledged that the proposal was not “ideal” the Bosnian government considered it the “least worst plan.” Thus the Secretary argued that using it as a basis for negotiations provided at least “a possibility” of ending the fighting, “not an odds-on prospect, not a probability, but at least a possibility.”

To garner leverage over the Bosnian Serbs the administration tried to isolate them from Serbia by negotiating directly with the Serb President, Slobodan Milosevic, offering Serbia an easing of economic sanctions in exchange for recognition of the territorial boundaries of Bosnia and the other former Yugoslav republics. However, as the months dragged on without a Serb acceptance, the administration’s hopes for increased leverage over the Bosnian Serbs diminished. By mid-April, the State Department had
concluded that its diplomatic negotiations with Milosevic were “not going to go anywhere.” With that avenue of leverage eliminated, negotiations stalled.

**Support and Strengthen UNPROFOR in Bosnia**

While the cease-fire was in place all sides in the conflict prepared for offensives. By early May, full-scale fighting erupted both in Bosnia and in Croatia and once again threatened to engulf both civilians and peacekeepers in the region. On May 7, a shell exploded in central Sarajevo, prompting a request for airstrikes which was subsequently vetoed by the U.N. On May 25, a second request for air strikes was made in response to Bosnian Serb violations of the exclusion zone around Sarajevo. This time, according to Secretary of Defense Perry, U.N. and NATO commanders felt that the threat to the civilian populations was greater than the risk of Serb retaliation and hostage taking.

When asked if the U.S. had supported the strikes, President Clinton stated “I’ve been – of all our NATO allies, the United States has been the most vigorous proponent of the use of NATO air strikes in all appropriate circumstances.” Following limited NATO air strikes, the Bosnian Serbs, as feared, took nearly 400 U.N. peacekeepers and personnel hostage. Approximately two weeks later on June 9, the U.N. Special Representative in Bosnia, Yasushi Akashi, announced that the U.N was going to return to “traditional peacekeeping principles,” effectively removing – it seemed for good – the threat of NATO air strikes. With UNPROFOR both humiliated and seemingly defeated, France and Great Britain, the two main troop contributors to UNPROFOR, again reconsidered the possibility of a U.N. withdrawal.
In an effort to forestall a U.N. withdrawal from Bosnia and its perceived disastrous consequences, the administration supported the French proposal to strengthen UNPROFOR through the creation of a Rapid Reaction Force (RRF). The presidency in France had changed on May 17 and, unlike his predecessor, Jacques Chirac appeared more amenable to taking a harder line against the Serbs. According to Undersecretary of Defense, Walter Slocombe, the Rapid Reaction Force was to be a U.N. “back-up force” of about 10,000 troops, primarily from France and Great Britain, that would be able to respond to problems confronting U.N. peacekeepers and thus help increase UNPROFOR’s self-defense capabilities. Although the U.S. would not contribute troops to the force, it did offer assistance in the form of equipment, intelligence, lift capability and protective NATO air cover.

Offer U.S. Troops for U.N. Withdrawal, NATO Emergency and to Enforce a Settlement

On December 7, 1994, when a U.N. withdrawal first appeared as a real possibility, President Clinton informed its allies and Congress that it would send U.S. ground forces, if needed, to help with a U.N. withdrawal. Later, after an uproar over the president’s offer of troops to help the allies reconfigure their forces in Bosnia, the administration clarified its commitment. According to administration officials, due to America’s “unique military capabilities,” the U.S. would stand by its allies but only under three circumstances: First, to assist in the implementation and enforcement of a peace agreement; second, to assist with a U.N. withdrawal; and third, after consulting with Congress, to assist NATO in the “highly unlikely” case of emergency extraction of UNPROFOR forces.
While the offer of troops to enforce a settlement was not new, the other two conditions for possible U.S. troop deployment to Bosnia were. According to the Defense Department, Operation Plan 40-104 was the “short-term” NATO plan for assisting an emergence extraction or full withdrawal of UNPROFOR troops. The plan required up to 60,000 NATO troops, with around 25,000 from the United States. To allay critics, the administration assured the public and Congress that Americans participating in the operation would be under full NATO/U.S. command and would not be subject to the infamous “dual-key” arrangement with the United Nations. Given that any extraction of peacekeepers would be, in all likelihood, both difficult and dangerous and since Op Plan 40-104 would be triggered by a U.N. withdrawal, the administration acted with a growing sense of urgency in June and July to oppose congressional action to lift the embargo. Later, National Security Adviser Anthony Lake recalled, “We all agreed that collapse would mean that American troops would have to go into Bosnia in order to rescue UNPROFOR, which meant that we were going in the context of defeat. And nobody wanted that. It would have had huge consequences.”

According to one senior administration official, “If you were to ask the President and his senior advisers what their greatest fear in Bosnia is, they would give you the same answer: 40-104.”

**Consequences**

*Keep UNPROFOR In & U.S. Out while Preserving NATO Unity and U.S. leadership*

From late 1994 until the summer of 1995, the perceived objective of U.S. policy in Bosnia appeared simple: keep UNPROFOR in and keep U.S. ground forces out. Connected to this objective was the vital quest to “to keep the faith with our NATO allies” and preserve NATO unity.
brought with it an obligation, one that was intimately connected to American prestige and
global leadership. If the transatlantic alliance – which had helped keep peace in Europe
for over 45 years – was to be preserved, then the U.S. had to support its allies, even if it
meant deploying U.S. troops to assist a militarily and politically dangerous UNPROFOR
extraction. As stated by Lieutenant General Wesley Clark of the Joint Chiefs in
testimony before Congress, the U.S. had to help its NATO allies withdraw even though,
legally, it was not obligated: “It’s a question of leadership in the alliance…it’s a question
of how are allies perceive us.”

**THE ENDGAME**

**The Fall of Srebrenica and Zepa**

The administration’s thinking about Bosnia did not appear to undergo any
significant change until after the fall of two U.N. “safe areas” in eastern Bosnia around
mid-July. The crisis in Srebrenica began on July 6, when Dutch peacekeepers in the
embattled Muslim enclave requested NATO air support. Although the first request for
protection never materialized, on the morning of July 11, a second request for air cover
was made. Six hours later, two NATO planes flew over Srebrenica but it was too late.
Bosnian Serb forces had already overrun the weakened U.N. defenses, seizing the
enclave home to over 40,000 Muslim men, women and children. In the days following,
ominous reports began to emerge that the Bosnian Serb forces were separating the men
from the women and children, followed, weeks later, by rumors of atrocities and large-
scale massacres. In the end, it was estimated that over 7,000 Muslims were killed in
the “safe” area, the largest massacre in Europe in 50 years. Shortly after Srebrenica’s
fall, Zepa, another U.N.-designated safe area and Muslim enclave, came under attack. In an interview, Secretary of State Christopher referred to the enclave’s ability to withstand the Bosnian Serb assault as “not very good.” On July 26, two weeks after Srebrenica, Zepa fell as predicted, seemingly without notice.

Although not clearly evident at first, the fall of Srebrenica does appear as a turning point in the administration’s perspective on the Bosnian conflict. On July 11, President Clinton responded to reports of Srebrenica’s fall by stating he was “very disturbed” about what had happened. Secretary of State Christopher argued that “what the Bosnian Serbs did today” was a “serious violation” of a U.N. protected area. The administration’s condemnation of Bosnian Serb actions grew as the story of what happened in Srebrenica became clearer. One month after the fall, U.N. Ambassador, Madeleine Albright, denounced Bosnian Serb actions, stating: “We cannot allow ourselves, nor can we allow others, simply to shrug off the crimes committed in the aftermath of Srebrenica as an inevitable side effect of ethnic conflict. We cannot accept rape or beatings, or the murder of civilians as legitimate tactics of war.”

In the weeks after Srebrenica, the administration’s perspective on Bosnia appeared to change, although the new representation of the problem was not clearly evident in the discourse until mid-August. By then, the president’s National Security Adviser, Tony Lake, had put forth a new plan called the “Endgame strategy.” The Clinton administration’s “Endgame” aimed, once and for all, to put an end to the Bosnian conflict and the repeated humiliations that were haunting the U.N., NATO, and the Clinton presidency.
Initiating Event: 
Fall of Srebrenica (July 11, 1995)

Nature of Situation and Key Actor Relationships:
1. The status quo is no longer acceptable; the U.S., NATO, and U.N. have all lost credibility and prestige
2. U.S./NATO leadership is necessary to resolve the conflict before it spreads and impacts our vital interests
3. Congressional efforts to unilaterally lift the arms embargo are misguided and will Americanize the conflict
4. Strong use of air power is needed to raise the price of Serb aggression; requires suspension of dual-key authority
5. Changes in military situation provide a window of opportunity for peace
6. There will be no peace without NATO and no NATO without the U.S.

Goal(s):
1. End conflict by finding a diplomatic solution

Actions Taken and Advocated:
1. Advocate dual-key removal and support decisive NATO air strikes to protect Gorazde and remaining safe areas
2. Use combination of sticks and carrots to compel Bosnian Serbs to negotiate
3. Veto congressional lifting of arms embargo (8/11)
4. Participate in sustained NATO air campaign against Bosnian Serbs (8/30-9/14); suspend if they demonstrate willingness to negotiate
5. Support conditional U.S. participation in NATO enforcement of peace settlement

New Lesson:
1. No more Srebrenicas \(\rightarrow\) U.S. must back up commitments or lose credibility
2. Importance of directed multilateralism

Consequences:
1. Signing of Dayton Peace Accords
2. Contain the conflict
3. Preserve NATO and bolster U.S. credibility and leadership

Figure 5.4: “The Endgame” (July-November 1995).
Nature of Situation and Key Relationships

Status Quo No Longer Acceptable; Inaction led to loss of Support and Prestige

As seen in Figure 5.4, the first theme of the new discourse following the fall of Srebrenica was an apparent realization that the U.S., and the international community, had reached a turning point in the conflict. In the U.S., the Clinton administration concluded that it could no longer afford to “muddle through” with its current policy on Bosnia. On July 17, Secretary of Defense Perry stated “we are, I believe, at a defining moment in this war,” adding “the status quo is not acceptable.” According to the administration officials, the “unacceptability” of the situation pertained to the failure of the international response at Srebrenica and the accompanying loss of prestige and credibility. At a news conference on July 27, President Clinton argued that when Srebrenica fell “without a terrific response in terms of air punishment, that collapsed the support for the United Nations. And all of us, including the United States and NATO, who had supported it suffered in prestige, if you will, not because we didn’t win but because the U.N. didn’t do what it said it was going to do.” On August 7, the president reiterated these statements in Newsweek magazine, arguing “the issue is not whether to act, but how.” Given the administration’s continued belief that the U.S. had a “vital interest” in preserving both peace and NATO leadership in Europe, it made clear that a change in the status quo was now required.

U.S./NATO Leadership has New Resolve; Decisive Air Power Needed

On July 21, the U.S. met with its European allies in London to discuss the Bosnian situation. The London Conference proved to be another turning point in the
Bosnia conflict as it strengthened the allies’ commitment for action. Following the conference, the administration argued that the U.S. and its NATO allies had a new “sense of resolve to come together in common purpose.” The London Conference led to a stronger commitment among the NATO allies to protect the remaining safe areas in Bosnia. In particular, a line was drawn at Gorazde, the last remaining safe area in eastern Bosnia. According to the administration, if Gorazde was to be defended then NATO had to “raise the price for aggression.” Since the administration and the allies were unwilling to deploy the additional troops needed to deter aggression on the ground, the solution, according to President Clinton, was “substantial” and “decisive” air strikes, unlike the NATO “pin pricks” of the past. Over the last two and a half years, the only thing that had worked against the Bosnian Serbs, as stated by President Clinton, was NATO airpower. And, although “air strikes cannot win a war” Clinton argued that “they can raise the price of aggression.” Consequently, the allies agreed at London that if the Bosnian Serbs attacked Gorazde, NATO would launch a “major air campaign” that would be “disproportionate” in nature, meaning it “could extend over a much wider area.”

This change, according to the administration, was significant. In a discussion of events in Bosnia on September 25, President Clinton stated: “we were unable to persuade our allies to take action through the air until after Srebrenica and Zepa fell. Then the London Conference occurred. There was a renewed commitment, and I was convinced at the time that our allies really meant it.” The one problem to the agreed-upon solution according to the administration was the “dual-key” U.N./NATO authorization process. Calling it “one of the worst ideas ever invented,” the administration appeared to have
reached the “unanimous” conclusion that any future military missions in Bosnia required a removal of the infamous arrangement.262

Congressional Efforts to Lift Embargo Misguided and Dangerous

While the administration sought ways to strengthen the U.N. mission in Bosnia and forestall a withdrawal, congressional pressure to unilaterally lift the arms embargo continued, as did the administration’s opposition.263 On June 8, the House voted overwhelmingly to unilaterally lift the U.N.-imposed arms embargo on Bosnia.264 On July 25, the Senate followed suit, approving the Dole-Lieberman bill by a vote of 69-29, two votes over the two-thirds needed to override a presidential veto.265 Following the Senate’s actions, President Clinton denied that the vote signaled a vote of no confidence for the administration’s Bosnia policy, stating: “I think Congress wants something done. I do too.” However, the president argued, “I do not believe the strong course for the United States and the strong course for the people of Bosnia is to unilaterally lift the arms embargo, collapse the U.N. mission, and increase the chances of injecting American troops there.”266 Meanwhile, Assistant Secretary of State Holbrooke argued, “This is an easy vote for members of Congress. They don’t have to live with the consequences. They just want to make a political gesture.” He added, “We agree with them that the arms embargo is morally wrong, but we don’t think that this is the right solution.”267

Changes in Military Situation Provide Window of Opportunity

Another theme in the administration’s discourse pertained to perceived changes in the war’s context. In early August, Croatia undertook a successful campaign to reclaim
Serb-held Krajina, forcing the exodus of close to 200,000 Serbs. According to statements by President Clinton, the administration didn’t exactly discourage the Croatian offensive. Stressing that the attack on Krajina was “animated by the Serbian attack on Bihac,” the president argued that the administration had warned the Croats “to exercise real constraint because we are very concerned about a wider war.” The success of the Croatian offensive encouraged the Bosnian government to take similar aggressive actions. Days later, the Bosnian army’s V Corp furthered the Serb set-backs when it broke out both south and east of the “Bihac” pocket.

The Croatian-Bosnian successes appeared to buoy the administration’s spirits. For the first time in the war, the Bosnian Serbs appeared “clearly on the defensive” leading the administration to conclude that the tides of the war had “turned against them.” Given the changed context, the administration began to argue that “a window of opportunity” had been created for seeking a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Reflecting the administration’s change in attitude, President Clinton argued this “could be a moment of real promise.” The window, however, was portrayed as temporary. According to administration officials, if the allies were going to withdraw, they would withdraw soon, given the approaching winter months and the increased level of fighting. That possibility, and congressional actions to unilaterally lift the embargo which the administration argued most definitely would trigger a U.N. withdrawal and put NATO’s OpPlan 40-104 into action, combined to enhance the administration’s “sense of urgency.”
No Peace Without NATO and No NATO Without U.S.

The final relational aspect of the administration’s new story pertained to the necessity of NATO troops to enforce a peace settlement and subsequent U.S. leadership obligations in NATO. As the London Conference, the creation of the RRF, and the Croatian-Bosnian offensives began to change the diplomatic context of peace negotiations, the possibility of finally achieving a settlement in Bosnia appeared to increase. Consequently, the U.S. promise to help enforce a peace settlement came under increasing scrutiny. In response, administration officials began to stress that the U.S. had to keep its commitments since NATO was the only organization capable of enforcing a peace in Bosnia. Moreover, as NATO’s leader, if the U.S. chose not to send troops to support the peace process in Bosnia then neither would our NATO allies. As stated by President Clinton: “If we are not there, NATO will not be there.”

Goal(s)

End the Conflict

Given the “window of opportunity,” the administration’s primary goal in Bosnia was simple: end the conflict. If the administration could find a diplomatic solution to take advantage of this moment “where people are reassessing their various positions,” then all of its other stated objectives, primarily containing the conflict and preventing it from threatening American vital interests, would be met. As stated by President Clinton, “we have to do our best to try to minimize the carnage, to try to keep it from spreading, and try to demonstrate a consistent and determined long-lasting
commitment by our allies through the United Nations and through NATO to resolve this.”

Actions Taken and Advocated

Ending the conflict and finding a settlement meant getting the Bosnian Serbs to the negotiating table. At first, the administration’s plans for accomplishing this were not exactly clear. On August 10, when asked about the new plans, President Clinton demurred, stating “We have some ideas that the new events may make possible” and noted that Tony Lake was currently discussing them with the allies. In short the plans, which later became more public, involved the utilization of “sticks” and “carrots” to compel the Bosnian Serbs to the negotiating table.

The “carrots” the administration planned to use to entice the Bosnian Serbs to negotiate a “comprehensive peace settlement” included: 1) a suspension, followed by a full-lifting of economic sanctions against the FRY once an agreement was signed then implemented; 2) a post-settlement “mini-Marshall” plan for regional economic reconstruction; and 3) some negotiating flexibility with regards to both territorial and constitutional provisions of any agreement. As in the previous story, the Contact Group plan was to remain the basis for negotiations. To ensure that the diplomatic process was not interrupted by a U.N. withdrawal, President Clinton vetoed the congressional measure to unilaterally lift the U.N. arms embargo on August 11, calling it “the wrong step at the wrong time.” The administration also continued to publicly support the conditional deployment of American troops to help enforce any peace settlement agreed to for the region.
In contrast to the carrots, the Clinton administration had been working for some time on strengthening the “sticks” that were to back up its new diplomatic approach. As previously mentioned, at the London Conference on July 21, the allies agreed to draw a line in the sand at Gorazde and later extended that same protection to the remaining safe areas on July 25 on August 1.\textsuperscript{287} Also at London, the administration succeeded in getting that allies to alter the dual-key system in order to facilitate “a clearer chain of command” and “a stronger, broader” use of NATO authority.\textsuperscript{288} With approval from the U.N., the altering of the dual-key system meant that the two U.N. civilians, Secretary General Boutros Boutros Gali and his Special Representative in Zagreb, Yasushi Akashi, were effectively removed from the approval process, leaving air strike decisions solely in the hands of the U.N. and NATO military commanders in the region.\textsuperscript{289} Thus, in the words of Richard Holbrooke, the lead negotiator and spokesperson for the administration’s new policy, “the decks were now cleared” for decisive NATO air action.\textsuperscript{290}

It didn’t take long to test the new NATO/U.N. system. On August 28, another mortar shell hit the Markala market in Sarajevo, killing 37 and wounding over 100. State Department spokesperson, Nicholas Burns, called the action “another crime against humanity” and resolutely stated that the administration was “absolutely certain that the Bosnian Serbs were the source of the attack,” even though the U.N. was still conducting its own fact finding mission into the incident.\textsuperscript{291} Two days later, NATO initiated air strikes against Bosnian Serb forces in the region in conjunction with “simultaneous artillery attacks” by the RRF.\textsuperscript{292} Although NATO temporarily suspended operations on September 1 in response to apparent Bosnian Serb moves towards conciliation, bombing resumed four days later. By September 13, the Bosnian Serbs appeared ready to
negotiate and the next day NATO halted the bombing. Around one month later, the three parties to the negotiations agreed to a Bosnia-wide ceasefire. Peace talks began in Dayton, Ohio on October 31 and in a few weeks, the three parties had finally agreed to a comprehensive peace settlement. The administration had achieved its goal of a diplomatic solution. The conflict effectively ended with the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords on November 21.

Consequences and New Lessons

Bolster NATO and U.S. Credibility, Keep Commitments, Directed Multilateralism

Although less apparent from the public discourse, key objectives of the administration’s new policy were clearly the preservation of NATO and the bolstering of U.S. leadership, two things that had come under increased public questioning and criticism. In July, Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, noted that the administration was on the defensive because of Bosnia. “the headlines in the newspapers and the film clips on the evening news make it hard to feel immensely confident or self-congratulatory about the post-cold war millennium.” On July 13, Secretary of Defense Perry addressed the issue in an interview on MacNeil-Lehrer, noting, “There is a public problem. There has been for some time, as a matter of fact…And it has to do with people feeling that somehow we or NATO, the United Nations, have lost and keep losing sight of our objective.” The end of the cold war meant that NATO needed to find a new role. The peace agreement in Bosnia helped define one. Meanwhile, the Dayton Accords worked to diminish the critical fodder over the administration’s foreign policy that could be used against the President during the upcoming election year.
From the public discourse, the lesson of the administration’s final story on Bosnia appears to be “No more Srebrenicas.” In essence, Srebrenica was Bosnia writ large, symbolizing U.S., U.N. and NATO incompetence and failure. As Richard Holbrooke repeatedly stated, “Bosnia is clearly the greatest collective failure in the West since the late 1930s.” According to the administration, the failure and apparent loss of credibility following Srebrenica was the result of the failure to keep commitments.

As stated by President Clinton:

If you say you are going to do something, you simply have to do it. And if you don’t do it, you suffer. And that’s what happened to the United States and NATO. And, because the United States is a part of those organizations and has a leading role in NATO, it hurt us as well. And that’s why I told our allies I would try one more time…the United States could not be part of any endeavor that made commitments which were not kept.

Relating to the keeping of commitments was the lesson of the importance of allied support and cooperation coupled with American leadership. For the Clinton administration, Bosnia revealed the weakness of multilateralism in the absence of strong leadership. When the administration surrendered leadership in an effort to promote “consensus,” the result was inertia and chaos: the allies began to doubt American resolve and leadership in both the U.N. and the NATO alliance, the public began to question the administration’s foreign policy directions, and the warring parties in Bosnia lost both their fear and hope of an aggressive Western intervention which encouraged the cycle of suffering and violence in the region. The administration’s “endgame” sought to change this by inserting multilateralism with a new and more aggressive American leadership. The relative success of this new strategy thus appeared to validate this lesson. In November, after the signing of the Dayton Peace agreement, President Clinton spoke to the importance of what I call “guided” or “directed” multilateralism when he stated:
When America’s partnerships are weak and our leadership is in doubt, it undermines our ability to secure our interests and to convince others to work with us. If we do maintain our partnerships and our leadership, we need not act alone. As we saw in the Gulf War and in Haiti, many other nations who share our goals will also share our burdens. But when America does not lead, the consequences can be very grave, not only for others but eventually for us as well.\footnote{302}

**Alternative Interpretations**

In this final case, the two most potentially debatable discursive interpretations relate to the importance of past lessons and ranking of goals. First, in the “Coercive Diplomacy” story illustrated in Figure 5.2, it is argued that the U.S. experience in Somalia made more salient previous lessons from Vietnam and Beirut, such as the danger of taking sides, the limited ability to impose peace upon the unwilling and the importance of clearly articulating U.S. interests in relation to intervention decisions. On their own, such statements might not seem significant, particularly since none of the “taking sides” statements and the public opinion statements make explicit reference to Somalia. The re-emergence of all three lessons was interpreted as stemming in part from the U.S. experience in Somalia given their timing and their strong correlation to statements and “future lessons” made by administration officials following the deaths of the U.S. servicemen in Mogadishu.

A second potentially variant interpretation that is illustrative of the method used in other stories in this study is found with regards to the “Muddling Through” story in Figure 5.3. While the identification of administration goals is generally clear from the discourse, the ranking of such goals is usually more difficult to determine. While administration officials often stated goals or objective in a rank order in reference to a conflict or crisis, these rankings were not always consistent either across the
administration or across the individual’s other body of statements. For instance, a clear hierarchy of rankings was most common in formal administration statements, however, such clarity was often missing in more informal responses and interviews. Consequently, overall goal rankings took into account such factors as their explicit and implicit ranking by individuals, the forum in which the statement was made (i.e., formal contexts were generally given greater weight than informal) their stated frequency, the individual stating them (i.e., the president’s statements are given greater weight), as well as their consistency with the broader story or problem representation. For instance, “avoid becoming a combatant” was ranked as the dominant goal in Figure 5.3 due to the frequency in which the President and the Secretary of Defense referred to such an objective in their discussions of other conflict-related goals, its clear connection to the formally and informally most frequently stated goal of containment, as well as for its consistency with the overall changed story representation.

Factors Influencing U.S. Decision Making

Finally, understanding the factors influencing American decision making in Bosnia from the administration’s discourse is difficult given the complex nature of the problem itself and the number of causal variables pulling in multidudinal directions. Still, a careful and detailed analysis of the discourse on Bosnia yields some intriguing insights pertaining to the foreign policy decision making process.
Threats and or Opportunities to Vital National Interests

First, as in all of the previous cases, with the exception of Somalia, the perception or at least the portrayal of threats or opportunities to the “vital national interest” appears linked to the administration’s stated willingness to use force and, in particular, ground forces, to assist in either deterring or stopping the violence in the region. In this second Bosnian case, although the substance of the perceived American interests in the conflict remained fairly constant throughout all four stories, the framing of those interests clearly changes. Within the administration’s final two stories, “Muddling Through” and the “Endgame,” officials begin to change their phrasing of U.S. interests in a manner suggesting that the conflict in Bosnia posed a greater threat to American “vital” national interests.

Prior to the winter of 1994, the administration argued rather vaguely that the U.S. had a “strategic” interest in containing the conflict. After, it clearly argued that U.S. had to be involved in Bosnia because the widening of the conflict posed a clear threat to American “vital national interests” in both Europe and NATO. The change in the framing of national interests could be the result of a variety of factors. First, it could simply reflect the increase in the perceived likelihood of a U.S. troop deployment to the region to either assist with a UNPROFOR withdrawal or to enforce a political settlement. As the possibility of U.S. troops to Bosnia increased, so did the administration’s perceived need to justify the troop commitment to the American public and Congress. This interpretation would be consistent with the administration’s representation of the problem while also supporting the Somalia lesson regarding the need to clearly articulate the risks and interests pertaining to force commitments in order to sustain congressional
and public support. Another interpretation also relates to the administration’s relations with Congress and the possibility of a U.S. troop commitment. As Congress appeared increasingly bent on unilaterally lifting the U.N. arms embargo, a move that the administration argued would lead to a U.N. withdrawal and an “Americanization” of the conflict, so did the administration’s determination to prevent such an occurrence. Therefore, a reframing of national interests helped “raise the stakes” regarding the consequences of such unilateral action in an effort to deter it.

However, a final interpretation of the change that is also consistent with the administration’s overall “story” of Bosnia pertains to U.S.-European relations. As relations between the U.S. and its European allies deteriorated over the course of the Bosnian conflict, the possibility of a severe rupture in U.S.-Europe relations and U.S.-NATO relations increased the perceived importance of the transatlantic alliance and the subsequent need to justify before Congress and the American public the administration’s continued support of the U.N. mission in Bosnia. These various interpretations of the change are of course not mutually exclusive and all likely contributed to the different framing of U.S. interests in late 1994 through 1995. Therefore, although threats to “vital national interests” were not strong factors promoting American intervention in Bosnia in the first two stories, they appeared more so in the final two, as seen in Table 5.1.

Moral and Legal Imperatives

In this final Bosnian case, the absence of moral and legal arguments for promoting an activist approach in Bosnia is intriguing. As illustrated in Table 5.1, moral and legal imperatives promoting intervention in Bosnia were noticeably absent from the
administration’s discourse on Bosnia throughout this period. Legal imperatives or constraints, when mentioned, generally referred to American obligations as a NATO or U.N. member. Absent from the discourse was any discussion of a legal imperative towards intervention to uphold state sovereignty or prevent genocide. More prominent were discussions of American moral imperatives or obligations towards the region.

On June 5, 1995, prior to the fall of Srebrenica, Larry King asked both the President and the Vice President if the U.S. had a moral as opposed to strategic obligation to intervene to help the people in Bosnia. Vice President Gore argued that any moral obligation to do what was “reasonable and necessary to stop an ethnically based conquering by one country of another” lay more with the “world” as opposed to the U.S and, in particular, it lay with “Europe” given the location of the conflict. Meanwhile, President Clinton argued that America’s moral obligations to Bosnia were being fulfilled by American humanitarian efforts in the region.\(^{304}\) In short, the administration appeared to argue that if a conflict or problem did not directly threaten vital American interests, then the determination of “moral obligation” was not up to the U.S. but the world community and or relevant regional actors. This characterization of America’s moral obligation remained even after Srebrenica’s fall in mid-July.\(^{305}\) Therefore, as seen in Table 1, the discourse in this final Bosnia case suggests that moral and legal imperatives, although important in promoting humanitarian aid and action, appear insufficient in justifying or promoting the dramatic use of force for humanitarian ends, a conclusion consistent with two of the three cases in this research.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Threats or Opportunities to vital national interests</th>
<th>Moral or Legal Imperative</th>
<th>Domestic Pressure from Media, Public Opinion, and Congress</th>
<th>Pressure/interests stemming from IGOs and other International Actors</th>
<th>Ease and Utility of Intervention</th>
<th>Military Vested Interests</th>
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<td>No Moral No legal</td>
<td>Media Unclear Public Unclear No Congress</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No media No public Yes Congress</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Muddling Through”</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td>“The Endgame”</td>
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<td>No moral No legal</td>
<td>Yes media Yes public Yes Congress</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1: Hypothesized factors favoring military intervention as reflected in key junctures of the Clinton administration’s representation of the Bosnian conflict (July 1993-November 1995).
Domestic Pressure

In contrast to moral and legal imperatives, pressure from Congress, media and the public appears to have factored into the administration’s decision of a more forceful Bosnian intervention in the fall of 1995. However, it also is evident that all three of these factors worked against more forceful action. Throughout the conflict, it seems clear that the president’s refusal to send ground troops to end the conflict in Bosnia was connected to the perceived lack of support for such an option among Congress and the American public. This constraint against more forceful intervention was most apparent in the administration’s first story, “Peace through Threats,” from July 1993 to January 1994. Events in Somalia during the summer and fall of 1993 clearly heightened the administration’s sensitivity to Congressional criticism and public opinion. The deaths of American servicemen caused Congress to increasingly question U.N. peacekeeping and American military commitments both in general and in Bosnia, placing the administration on the defensive as Congress attempted to curb presidential power to use force both in Bosnia and in Haiti. Thus, as seen in Table 5.1, from July 1993 until January 1994, the administration’s perceptions of congressional opinion worked against armed intervention in Bosnia.

Following the “Peace through Threats” story, congressional pressure worked to promote, as opposed to curb, the administration’s policy towards forceful intervention, as evident in the “Coercive Diplomacy” story. After the failure of “lift and strike” in May of 1993, pressure from Congress to unilaterally lift the U.N-imposed arms embargo on Bosnia increased. Although Congress proposed such measures in an effort to both aid the Bosnian Muslims and reduce – rather than increase – American military involvement in
the conflict, the action appeared to have the opposite desired effect. Given allied opposition to lifting the arms embargo and the administration’s aversion to deploying ground troops to the region, an effort to “do something” to aid the Bosnian government while avoiding a U.S. ground troop deployment (thereby appeasing congressional demands) led the administration to aggressively push for NATO air strikes. Meanwhile, the advocacy of such strikes in the absence of an accompanying willingness to risk U.S. ground forces increased U.S.-allied tensions and led to growing calls for a U.N. withdrawal. However, during the “Muddling Through” story phase, the administration dropped its advocacy of air strikes while congressional demands to lift the arms embargo actually intensified, suggesting that the administration’s perceived pressure to “do something” to aid the Muslims and appease Congress was outweighed by other concerns, constraints and or interests. However, by summer 1995, passage of congressional legislation unilaterally lifting the Bosnian arms embargo increased pressure on the administration to act to resolve the conflict prior to the anticipated U.N. withdrawal.

Throughout the administration’s discourse, there is evidence suggest that the media and public opinion influenced the administration’s decision making on Bosnia, particularly after the events in Somalia in October 1993. The discourse following Somalia suggests that the administration saw the relationship between the media, public opinion – and even Congress to some extent – as integrally connected. According to administration statements, public opinion was an important consideration and real constraint on U.S. foreign policy, which lead the administration to repeatedly clarify its national interests in Bosnia starting in 1994 and to publicly warn of the risks to U.S. forces engaged in NATO action in the region. However, after Somalia, the administration
also repeated that although public support was critical for sustained military action in a region, public opinion in and of itself was an improper guide for action since it was fickle and easily manipulated by selective media coverage of crises and emotional televised images. In short, prior to 1995, there is no direct evidence from the discourse that the media or public opinion promoted military intervention in Bosnia. This seemed to change somewhat in the summer of 1995.

The importance of all three of the “domestic” pressures is most apparent in the administration’s final “Endgame” story. By the summer of 1995, it appears that all three – the media, public opinion, and clearly Congress – worked to promote the relatively forceful administration action in Bosnia, albeit indirectly. As criticism of the administration grew over the summer of 1995, the administration seemed to view media coverage, public opinion, and congressional actions as anticipatory pressures, pushing it to take greater action to end the conflict by the end of 1995. As mentioned by the President’s National Security Adviser, Anthony Lake, the possibility of sending American troops to Bosnia to assist in the extraction of a failed U.N. mission would likely have had “disastrous” consequences. Such an event would likely get extensive and quite negative media coverage that, among other things, could impact the public’s perception of the administration’s foreign policy performance, a factor of heightened significance given the upcoming election year.

Therefore, even though public opinion polls showed that a majority of Americans were against a U.S. troop deployment to the region throughout 1995 for either peacekeeping or peacemaking purposes, the discourse suggests that by late July the administration felt it could be hurt more in the court of public opinion by continued
inaction than action. In short, Bosnia was hurting the administration’s foreign policy image. In a “town meeting” in late July, Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, argued that one reason “why American foreign policy is on the defensive these days – in Congress and elsewhere…can be summed up in one word: Bosnia.”\textsuperscript{307} The discourse suggests that the administration’s concerns over the loss of U.S, NATO and even U.N. credibility in the eyes of the American public pushed it to take a more aggressive stance to resolve the conflict. By late summer 1995, it seems that the hope of preventing the deployment of U.S. troops to Bosnia in the context of a failure outweighed the very real political and military risks associated with the aggressive use of force and American leadership. In other words, the domestic consensus was that the administration’s Bosnia policy already was a failure. That consensus could only strengthen with a U.N. withdrawal from Bosnia and its possible associated military complications. In this context, the administration had nothing to lose from more forceful action.

\textit{International Pressures, Interests and Obligations}

From an analysis of all four stories in this last Bosnian case, it is clear that perceived pressures, interests and obligations relating to U.S. membership in both NATO and the U.N. worked to promote a more activist administration policy in Bosnia in three different ways. First, in the fall of 1993, it was the administration’s stated obligation to help protect U.N. peacekeepers in the region evident in the “Peace through Threats” story, as seen in Table 5.1, that led it push aggressively for air strikes. However, given the presence of their peacekeepers on the ground, the European allies were reticent of using aggressive air power for protection and instead pressed the U.S. to deploy ground
troops to the region, something that the administration repeatedly emphasized “was not
going to happen.” Ironically, in an attempt to avoid deploying U.S. ground troops in
Bosnia the administration made increasing commitments that brought such an outcome
closer to a reality.

Early in 1993, the perceived need to demonstrate its commitment to the peace
process, given its unwillingness to supply peacekeepers, led the administration to promise
troops to assist with the enforcement of an eventual peace settlement – a commitment that
would come to limit the administration’s ability to distance itself from the conflict. Later,
in December of 1994, as divisions threatened to split the NATO alliance and collapse the
U.N. mission in Bosnia, the president broadened his previous troop commitment to
include American assistance with a U.N. withdrawal and or emergency extraction.
Thereafter, it seemed as the possibility of an American troop deployment to Bosnia
loomed nearer either from the perceived imminence of a peace agreement or a U.N.
withdrawal, so did the administration’s resolve to use force, if necessary, to end the
conflict.

A second way that alliance interests and obligations worked to promote a more
activist and aggressive administration policy in Bosnia was the administration’s
perceived need to bolster U.N, NATO and by association, U.S. credibility and leadership.
When the U.S. first began advocating the use of NATO force to back U.N. diplomacy in
1993, Bosnia appeared as an opportunity to both redefine the transatlantic alliance in the
new post-cold war era and promote U.N. peacekeeping, as seen in the “Coercive
Diplomacy” story. However, by December, U.S. efforts to push NATO force were
recognized as threatening alliance unity and subsequently dropped. Therefore as seen in
Table 5.1. U.S. interests in preserving NATO unity during the “Muddling Through” story worked against a more forceful policy stance towards the conflict.

However, by 1995, the conflict in Bosnia had taken a toll on the United Nations, NATO and by association the United States, particularly given the U.S. position of leadership within each organization. Therefore, while the violence continued to grow in Bosnia year after year, so did the perception of U.S., U.N. and NATO incompetence. Forceful intervention in Bosnia in the late summer/early fall of 1995 was thus an effort to end the destructive cycle that was impeding the administration’s policy of multilateralism while draining U.S., U.N. and NATO credibility.

Finally, one other international pressure pushing to the United States to take a more activist stance in Bosnia is evident in the administration’s second story on Bosnia “Coercive Diplomacy.” Perceived pressure from the Muslim world and, more specifically, the administration’s desire to bolster moderate Islam and counter the seemingly growing threat of Islamic fundamentalism, appears to have been, in part, behind the administration’s advocacy of the Bosnian government position and its willingness to take a strong stance against Bosnian Serb aggression.

In short, while organizational pressure and interests worked to promote a more activist administration stance in three of the four administration stories as seen in Table 5.1, the pressures from external actors and interests promoting intervention appear the strongest in the two more activist administration stories, “Coercive Diplomacy” during which the U.S and NATO undertook limited air strikes against Bosnian Serb positions, and the “Endgame,” which led to the first aggressive and sustained military action in NATO’s history.
Although there is no evidence from the discourse to suggest that vested interests of the military pushed the administration towards more forceful action in Bosnia (as illustrated in the final column of Table 5.1), there is evidence that the changes in the perceived ease and utility of forceful military intervention contributed to the administration’s activism in the fall of 1995. Over the course of 1994 up until July 1995, perceptions of a military stalemate and allied differences over the aggressor in the conflict and the utility of air strikes all worked to diminish the administration’s advocacy of force against the Bosnian Serbs. After 1995, all of those factors began to change.

First, the change in the French presidency combined with the disaster of Srebrenica to firm up allied resolve for more aggressive military action against the Bosnian Serbs. Second, changes in the military situation on the ground in the late summer and early fall in Bosnia increased the administration’s perception that force and air power, in particular, now had greater utility. The administration now hoped the military setbacks would make the Bosnian Serbs more amenable to negotiate an “enforceable” and “viable” diplomatic solution to the problem. Finally, the alteration of the dual-key structure in combination with the “new resolve” of the European allies, and the creation of the RRF all worked to enhance the perceived “ease” of a more forceful military approach to the problem. In short, by August 1995, the administration argued that there was a “window of opportunity” for coercive diplomacy that theretofore did not exist. Thus, perceptions of “ease” and “utility,” as seen in the “Endgame” story in Table
5.1, appear as important facilitating factors for armed humanitarian intervention as suggested by the previous case studies.

**Historical Analogies**

Finally, as in the previous cases, it is clear that historical analogies influenced perceptions of the problem and subsequent U.S. decision making regarding Bosnia. And, as in the previous cases, the administration’s perceptions of other actors and relationships, goals and options all appear influenced by “lessons” distilled from past foreign policy “failures.” Conspicuously absent in this second set of Bosnian stories is any notable evoking of the Holocaust, World War II and the subsequent associated moral imperative towards armed intervention in Bosnia. Rather, as events and perceived obligations compelled the administration towards a more activist stance in Bosnia, the prominent past lessons invoked by the administration pertained again more to the relatively anti-interventionist analogies of Vietnam and, later, Somalia. In short, as the possibility of deploying U.S. forces on the ground in Bosnia increased, the Vietnam and Somalia analogies acted to constrain and limit the administration’s goals and options.

First, the administration’s perception of the feasibility of force as an option, particularly as it relates to the possible deployment of ground troops into combat, was clearly connected to the American experience in both Vietnam and Somalia and the subsequent fear of casualties. This is most clearly seen in the administration’s second story of “Coercive Diplomacy” during 1994. As the administration aggressively advocated and as NATO began utilizing air strikes against Bosnian Serb positions, the administration appeared increasingly concerned about appearing to “take sides” militarily
in the conflict. Consequently, officials repeatedly emphasized that the U.S. would not be
sending combat troops to Bosnia and that NATO and the U.S., in particular, were not
acting to change the military balance in the region as the U.S. had in Vietnam and had
perceived to have done in Somalia.

The administration’s adherence to the “lesson” of not taking sides had unforeseen
political and military consequences in Bosnia. Although this lesson was most often
invoked in defense of the administration’s decision not to send troops into Bosnia until
the achievement of an “enforceable” settlement, it also was reiterated in an apparent
attempt to underscore the neutrality of U.N. peacekeepers in the face of NATO military
action. The frequent evoking of this lesson by administration officials revealed the
inherent incompatibility of combining U.N. peacekeeping with NATO defense: the
neutrality of one was compromised by the application of military force by the other. This
contradiction lay at the heart of U.S.-Europe tensions. While the U.S. would not deploy
its troops into the conflict given the risk of their becoming militarily involved, it appeared
more than willing to risk the neutrality and lives of U.N. peacekeepers through its
advocacy of aggressive air strikes. Consequently, in an effort to preserve the “neutrality”
of peacekeepers and avoid the appearance of “taking sides” in the conflict, the U.N.
worked to limit the scope of NATO air strikes, rendering them ineffectual. The
administration’s continued advocacy of air strikes only worked to reveal the apparent
hypocrisy of the American position that, in turn, increased U.S.-NATO tensions.
Administration officials seemed to finally realize the consequences of their continued
advocacy after the siege of Bihac in late 1994, when they dropped the aggressive push of
NATO air strikes in an effort to preserve NATO unity.
Likewise, the lesson of “not taking sides” militarily in a conflict revealed another inherent contradiction in the administration’s policy towards Bosnia, one that reduced its effectiveness in pushing the goal of a diplomatic solution. In short, while the U.S. stressed its military neutrality, it had clearly taken sides politically. According to administration officials, the Bosnian Serbs were clearly the villains and the Bosnian government was clearly the victim. In Defense Briefings, military spokespersons went as far as to describe the Bosnian Serbs as the “enemy.” The two stories where the villain-victim theme is the strongest, “Coercive Diplomacy” and “Muddling Through” are also the two cases where the “not taking sides” lesson is most frequently invoked. The contradiction in these two statements reveals the contradictory pressures the administration was facing both internally and externally. While Congress was asking the administration to “militarily” take sides by unilaterally lifting the Bosnian arms embargo and, either directly or indirectly, arming the victimized Bosnian Muslims, a position that the administration stated that it agreed with “morally” and politically; the allies were stressing the dangers associated with aggressive one-sided air strikes, dangers that were reinforced by American military “lessons” from Vietnam and Somalia.

The administration’s doubts about the effectiveness of air power in promoting a solution to the conflict appear reflected in another lesson from Somalia, evident in the administration’s discourse in the “Coercive Diplomacy” story of 1994. While the administration continued to advocate a more aggressive use of NATO air power in Bosnia, it also emphasized the “limits” of outside military action “in the absence of internal commitments to peace” as it did in the aftermath of Somalia. Whether the administration sincerely believed this or whether this was merely rhetoric to downplay
public expectations is not possible to discern without access to the private record.

Irregardless, it is clear that by August 1995, the administration’s perceptions of the utility of outside force had improved to the extent that it appeared more willing to risk taking sides militarily to push for a diplomatic solution to the conflict.

In summary, it appears that, as in the previous cases, the use of historical analogies and “past lessons” played a prominent role in administration’s decision making in Bosnia, clearly influencing the administration’s perceptions of goals, relationships and policy options. Most intriguing from the analysis is that the anti-interventionist Vietnam and Somalia analogies appear to have pushed the Clinton administration towards aggressive military intervention in Bosnia in the fall of 1995. Ironically, in an effort to avoid the deployment of U.S. combat troops and another “Vietnam” or “Somalia” scenario, the Clinton administration, starting in 1993, pushed for the aggressive use of air power in Bosnia and subsequently promised American military assistance for a U.N. withdrawal or emergency extraction. This, in turn, pushed the administration to more actively intervene to resolve the conflict in order to avoid the possible deployment of U.S. combat troops to Bosnia for military assistance. In short, to avoid another “Vietnam” the administration pursued policies in Bosnia which, ironically, seemed to increase the possibility of another “Vietnam.” Thus, the administration was left with aggressively intervening in Bosnia militarily by the air in order to avoid aggressively intervening in Bosnia militarily by the ground.

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1 The actual quote by FDR was also frequently quoted by JFK and is complete as follows: “Governments can err, presidents do make mistakes, but the immortal Dante tells us that Divine justices weighs the sins of the coldblooded and the sins of the warmhearted in different scales. Better the occasional faults of a
government that lives in a spirit of charity than the consistent omissions of a government frozen in the ice of its own indifference.”


4 Burg and Shoup, 142.

5 Sciolino, “Bosnia Threatened with U.N. Pullout.”

6 Burg and Shoup, 142.


12 Colin Powell, speech before the National Press Club, 28 Sept., 1993, Federal News Service


15 NATO, Press Statement by the Secretary General Following the Special Meeting of the North Atlantic Council, Brussels, 2 Aug. 1993.

17 Bill Clinton, “The President’s News Conference with Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa of Japan in 
New York City,” 27 Sept., 1993, Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, Vol. 29, No. 31, 1507-

18 Clinton, “Letter to Senate Leaders”; Bill Clinton, News Conference with Radio Network Correspondents, 

19 Helen Dewar, “Senators Approve Troop Compromise; Clinton Authority Is Left Unrestricted,” 21 Oct., 

20 Madeleine Albright, Building a Consensus on International Peacekeeping, testimony before the Senate 

21 Anthony Lake, Address to the School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), 21 Sept., 1993, Federal 
News Service.

22 Anthony Lake, as quoted on All Things Considered, 22 Oct., 1993, transcript #1278-10, National Public 
Radio.

23 Albright, Building a Consensus.


25 See Oxman, Europe and the Middle East; Stephen Oxman, Bosnian Peace Negotiations, testimony 

26 Bill Clinton, “The President’s News Conference with Prime Minister Ciampi of Italy,” 17 Sept., 1993, 
Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents, Vol. 29, No. 37, 1727-1809, 1993 Presidential Documents 
via GPO Online Access, http://www.access.gpo.gov/nara; See also Bill Clinton, “Remarks and an 
Exchange With Reporters Following Discussions with Caribbean Leaders,” 30 Aug., 1993, Weekly 


28 Oxman, Europe and the Middle East; Oxman, Bosnian Peace Negotiations.

29 Warren Christopher, interview with Judy Woodruff, 12 Aug. 1993, transcript #493-4, CNN News; 

30 Statements by Mike McCurry and Warren Christopher as reported by Ralph Beigleter on CNN News, 1 
Aug., 1993, Transcript # 456-1, Cable News Network, Inc; See also Michael R. Gordon, “Conflict in the 
Balkans: Leading NATO on Bosnia; Rebuffed Once, U.S. Takes a Forceful Tack Towards Allies on 
Reporters Prior to a Meeting With the Progressive Caucus,” 2 Aug., 1993, Weekly Compilation of 
Presidential Documents, Vol. 29, No. 31, 1507-1588, 1993 Presidential Documents via GPO Online 


33 Christopher, 10 Aug., 1993.

35 Drew, 276.


39 See comments by Marshall Harris, former Bosnian Desk officer in the State Department, during a News Conference with Representative Frank McCloskey (D-IN), 5 Aug., 1993, Federal News Service.


45 Quoted in Drew, 282.


Clinton, “Remarks to the North Atlantic Council.”


Quoted in Sciolino, “Who Can Make Peace in Bosnia?”


Sciolino, “From Indecision to Ultimatum.”


Lake, “American Power and American Diplomacy.”


Christopher, 23 Feb., 1994.


See Clinton, “Remarks at the United States Naval Academy.”


Mike McCurry, State Department Briefing, 10 May, 1994, Federal News Service.


80 William Perry, United States Relationship with Russia, Address at George Washington University, 14 Mar., 1994, Federal News Service.

81 For a discussion of the incident, see Perry, United States Relationship with Russia.

82 Perry, United States Relationship with Russia; See also John Shalikashvili, Defense Department Briefing, 5 Apr., 1994, Federal News Service; Christopher, Fiscal Year 1995 International Affairs Budget.

83 Clinton, “Interview on CNN’s ‘Global Forum.”

84 For example, see Tarnoff, 11 Feb., 1994.


Lake, “American Power and American Diplomacy.”

Clinton, “Interview on CNN’s ‘Global Forum’”; Christopher, Fiscal Year 1995 International Affairs Budget.

Christopher, U.S. Foreign Policy, 30 June, 1994; See also Christopher, Photo Opportunity with Bosnian Prime Minister, Haris Silajdziec, 21 Feb., 1994, Federal News Service.

For example, see Clinton, “Interview with Gavin Elser”; Christopher, Foreign Policy Overview; John Shalikashvili, testimony before the House Appropriations Committee, Defense Subcommittee Hearing, 24 Feb., 1994, Federal News Service; Madeleine Albright, interview with Larry King, Larry King Live, 26 Apr., 1994, transcript #1104, Cable News Network, Inc.


Clinton, “The President’s News Conference,” 20 Apr., 1994; See also Christopher, Fiscal Year 1995 International Affairs Budget.

Christopher, interview with James Lehrer.


William Perry, statement before the American Jewish Committee Conference, 6 May, 1994, Federal News Service.

Burg and Shoup, 287.

There were increasing accusations among the allies that the Bosnian Government was launching attacks against its own civilians in order to place the blame and increase international condemnations against the Bosnian Serbs. See, for example, “The Nato Summit: Bosnia’s Legacy,” New York Times, 12 Jan., 1994, late ed.: A8.; Sciolino, “From Indecision to Ultimatum.”


Christopher, Fiscal Year 1995 International Affairs Budget.


Burg and Shoup, 147.

Burg and Shoup, 148.


See Burg and Shoup, 301-306.


Warren Christopher, address to students and faculty at Georgetown University, 24 Oct., 1994, Federal News Service.


131 William Perry, Remarks at the American Jewish Committee Conference, 6 May, 1994, Federal News Service; Perry, Project Sapphire.

132 Christopher, Fiscal Year 1995 International Affairs Budget.

133 Albright, Funding of the United Nations Programs.


135 Anthony Lake, Inside Politics, 18 Feb., 1994, transcript #523-1, Cable News Network, Inc;


140 Clinton, “Interview on CNN’s Global Forum.”

The debate was enhanced by accounts that the Bosnian Muslims had shelled their own civilians in an attempt to encourage Western retaliation against the Bosnian Serbs. For one account of such actions, see Charles G. Boyd, “Making Peace with the Guilty: The Truth About Bosnia,” Foreign Affairs, 74, No. 5, (Sept-Oct., 1995), pp. 22-38.


146 Gordon, “Colliding Missions.”


152 William Perry, as quoted in Meiser and Williams, “U.S. See No Hope of Stopping Serbs.”


156 Perry, Remarks to the Baltimore Council.


160 Clinton, “Interview with Larry King, 5 June, 1995; See also, Talbott, “American Leadership and the New Europe;” Richard Holbrooke, “Europe Must Avoid Being Held Prisoner By its History,” Remarks


162 See for example, Peter Tarnoff, Clinton Administration Policies in Bosnia, Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 8 June, 1995, Federal News Service.

163 Holbrooke, U.S. Policy in Europe.


165 Holbrooke, U.S. Policy in Europe.


170 Nicholas Burns, State Department Briefing, 12 July, 1995, Federal News Service; See also Christopher, interview with Diane Rehm.

171 See for example, Peter Tarnoff, U.S. Policy on Bosnia and Assistance to UNPROFOR, testimony before the House International Relations Committee, 8 June, 1995, Federal Document Clearing House, Inc.;


174 Clinton, “Remarks to the CSCE.”


177 Burns, 24 May, 1995; Burns, 29 June, 1995.


180 Tarnoff, *U.S. Policy on Bosnia and Assistance to UNPROFOR*.


184 This policy option was, in particular, advocated by Indiana Senator Richard Lugar (R).


186 Christopher, interview with Diane Rehm; Burns, 12 July, 1995; Nicholas Burns, State Department Briefing, 18 July, 1995.


189 Federal News Service; Perry, U.S. Policy in Bosnia, 7 June, 1995.

190 Wesley Clark, Clinton Administration’s Policy in Bosnia, Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 8 June, 1995, Federal News Service.


199 Christopher, Interview with Daine Rehm.

200 Perry, Remarks to the Baltimore Council; McCurry, 19 July, 1995.


Burns, 26 May, 1995; Tarnoff, *U.S. Policy on Bosnia and Assistance to UNPROFOR*; Talbott, “American Leadership and the New Europe.”


Holbrooke, *U.S. Policy in Europe*; See also Clinton, “Interview with Jim Gransbery.”

Richard Holbrooke, State Department Briefing, 3 Feb., 1995, Federal News Service; Christopher, *FY96 State Department Budget Request*.


Christopher, *FY96 State Department Budget Request*.


Christopher, *1996 International Affairs Budget Proposal*.

Christopher, *FY96 Foreign Operations Appropriations*.

Perry, U.S. Policy in Bosnia, 7 June, 1995.


Daalder, Getting to Dayton, 43.


Halberstam, 293-308.

Walter Slocombe, Clinton Administration’s Policy in Bosnia, Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 8 June, 1995, Federal News Service.

Daalder, Getting to Dayton, 47.

Clinton, “Interview with Jim Gransbery.”

Tarnoff, Clinton Administration’s Policy in Bosnia; See also Clinton, “The President’s Radio Address,” 3 June, 1995.


General Wesley Clark, Clinton Administration’s Policy in Bosnia, Hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, 8 June, 1995, Federal News Service.


Perry, U.S. Policy in Bosnia, 7 June, 1995; Slocombe, Clinton Administration’s Policy on Bosnia.

Clinton, “Remarks at the United States Air Force Academy.”

Clark, see also statements by Tarnoff in, Clinton Administration’s Policy in Bosnia; Perry, U.S. Policy in Bosnia, 7 June, 1995.


Rhode, Endgame, 349.

Christopher, Interview with Diane Rehm.


245 Halberstam, 313.

246 For a description of Lake’s development of the plan, see Halberstam, 293-318.


249 Clinton, “The President’s News Conference with President Kim.”


257 Clinton, “Remarks on Presenting the Congressional Space Medal;” Clinton, “The President’s News Conference with President Kim.”

258 Clinton, “Interview with Bob Edwards and Mara Liasson.”


263 Clinton, “The President’s News Conference with President Kim.”


268 Daalder, Getting to Dayton, 122-123.


270 Daalder, Getting to Dayton, 123.


275 See comments by Burns, 18 July, 1995.

276 Bill Clinton, Bosnia Peace Agreement, Address to the Nation, 27 Nov., 1995, Federal News Service; See also Warren Christopher, Breakfast Meeting with Los Angeles Times Reporters and Editors, 3 Oct.,

Clinton, “The President’s News Conference, 10 Aug., 1995.”


Clinton, “Interview with Bob Edwards and Mara Liasson.”


Daalder, *Getting to Dayton*, 112-113; See also Holbrooke, *To End a War*, 74.


Clinton, “Statement on Vetoing Legislation to Lift the Arms Embargo.”

However, as the prospects for peace appeared nearer, the President tightened the conditions, agreeing to limit any deployment to around one year in addition to previous stipulations that the decision must meet with congressional approval, and that U.S. troops would remain under American command and have a limited and well-defined mission with aggressive rules of engagement and the means to defend themselves. See Anthony Lake, *Morning Edition*, 22 Sept., 1995, transcript #1700-11, National Public Radio; Christopher, *U.S. Forces in Bosnia*; Christopher, *MacNeil-Lehrer*, 7 Sept., 1995.


Holbrooke, *U.S. Policy in Europe*.


Daalder, *Getting to Dayton*, 132-133.


Holbrooke, U.S. Policy in Europe.


Clinton, “Interview with Bob Edwards and Mara Liasson.”

Clinton, Bosnia Peace Agreement.


See comments by both Al Gore and Bill Clinton in “Interview with Larry King,” 5 June, 1995.

Burns, 12 July, 1995; Christopher, interview with Diane Rehm; Perry, Remarks at the Armed Forces Communication Exposition; Perry, U.S. Policy in Bosnia, 7 June, 1995.

See for example, Richard Sobel, “To Intervene or Not to Intervene in Bosnia,” in Brigitte Nacos et.al., Decisionmaking in a Glass House, (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 111-131.

Talbott, “American Engagement in the Post Cold War World.”

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

As the story model has illustrated, U.S. decisions of armed humanitarian intervention and nonintervention after the cold war stemmed from complex and varied collective understandings or “representations” of the Somali, Rwandan and Bosnian problems. From the public discourse, it appears that historical “lessons” and other factors interacted in often intricate and counterintuitive ways, leading the Bush and Clinton administrations to take relatively activist or inactivist policy approaches to these varied and humanitarian crises that erupted in the early to mid-nineteen nineties.

Summary of Research Findings

*Importance of International Institutional Pressures, Interests and Obligations*

One of the strongest findings from an analysis of the stories across the Somalia, Rwandan and Bosnian cases is that, at least with regards to decisions of armed humanitarian intervention, international institutions do appear to matter. The research suggests that pressure from international actors and or U.S. interests in international organizations proved a deciding factor in armed humanitarian intervention decisions, as seen in Table 6.1, supporting the hypothesis that “decision makers will wither favor or oppose armed intervention to the extent that it is seen consistent with promoting or
### Table 6.1: Factors favoring military intervention as reflected in the stories of armed humanitarian intervention in Somalia and Bosnia cases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Somalia: Operation Provide Hope (UNITAF)</th>
<th>Threats or Opportunities to vital national interests</th>
<th>Moral or Legal Imperative</th>
<th>Domestic Pressure from Media, Public Opinion, and Congress</th>
<th>Pressure/interests stemming from IGOs and other International Actors</th>
<th>Ease and Utility of Intervention</th>
<th>Military Vested Interests</th>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes moral</td>
<td>No media</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Possible</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Somalia: “Get Aidid”

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bosnia: “The Endgame”</th>
<th>Threats or Opportunities to vital national interests</th>
<th>Moral or Legal Imperative</th>
<th>Domestic Pressure from Media, Public Opinion, and Congress</th>
<th>Pressure/interests stemming from IGOs and other International Actors</th>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No moral</td>
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<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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</table>
hindering institutional interests and objectives of key multilateral organizations in which the U.S. is a member.”

According to the Bush administration’s discourse, the decision to undertake the massive Somalia armed humanitarian intervention, “Operation Provide Hope,” appears to be based, in part, on the administration’s hopes for cooperative multilateralism. Coming on the heels of the successful collective security Gulf War effort, the discourse suggests that the Bush administration, and President Bush in particular, sought to bolster the U.N.’s credibility as a peacekeeping organization and, likewise, a vehicle to globally promote U.S. interests.

Institutional interests appear even stronger in the other two armed intervention decisions in Table 6.1. The Clinton administration’s story of “Get Aidid” reveals that the desire to uphold U.N. credibility and protect the institution of peacekeeping played a critical part in the decision to undertake the military campaign against the Somali General. As arguably the key player within the U.N. Security Council, the Clinton administration appeared to view U.S. and U.N. credibility and interests as interconnected. If peacekeeping and peacemaking were allowed to be discredited in Somalia, the utility of the U.N. as global problem solving instrument would be undermined, reducing the administration’s hopes for “multilateralism” – the catchphrase for the administration’s approach to foreign policy in this new era.

In particular, it appears that organizational membership proved influential in armed humanitarian decisions because they allowed the U.S. to pursue an activist policy while reducing the associated risks and costs, an idea that appears consistent with neoliberal theory.¹ First, multilateralism was viewed as beneficial to U.S. interests in
that it spread the burden of action (in terms of economic costs and manpower) among multiple actors while in turn enhancing its political legitimacy. This then diminished the risk of retaliation by reducing the appearance of any one actor taking sides in the conflict. Another benefit not publicly recognized by U.S. officials in the discourse but consistent with recent academic literature was that multilateralism reduced the political costs of U.S. foreign policy activism or inaction.² In several of the cases analyzed, U.S. organizational membership or related organizational interests were cited as either constraints or imperatives for policy inaction. For example, Clinton administration officials cited the U.N.’s limited financial and military resources as justification for the American and U.N. policy of nonintervention in Rwanda.³ Likewise, the Clinton administration often pointed to U.N. resolutions, division among the NATO allies and Russia and the complicated U.N./NATO dual-key command structure to explain its inability to pursue a more aggressive stance towards the crisis in Bosnia.⁴

However, as previously mentioned, organizational interests and constraints were also utilized to justify U.S. policy activism and intervention. According to President Bush, the U.N.’s inability to solve the famine-induced crisis in Somalia spurred U.S. intervention in the region, given the necessity of U.S. leadership in prompting a greater multilateral response and the military’s “unique” capabilities for handling the crisis.⁵ Likewise, the Clinton administration’s support of U.N. nation-building in Somalia and the subsequent man-hunt for the clan leader, General Mohamad Farah Aidid, was predicated on the notion of the continued necessity of U.S. leadership in supporting and strengthening the credibility of U.N. peacekeeping and its policy of democratic promotion.⁶ In short, the discourse clearly suggests that international institutions
mattered. Irregardless of elite motives, the fact that IGOs and other institutional interests were invoked at all in the public discourse in an effort to justify or explain U.S. policy of action or inaction speaks to a broader normative context where institutional constraints appear socially and politically salient. Thus, while the public invocation of institutions and multilateralism appears consistent with neoliberal arguments, the research also appears to lend support to a constructivist interpretation of why institutions matter.

Aside from purely organizational constraints and interests, allied interests and concerns also factored into both the Bush and Clinton representations of humanitarian problems. First, in the fall of 1992, the accusation from Muslim allies and African states that the U.S. was insensitive to African, and in particular, Muslim needs in times of crisis appeared to factor into the Bush administration’s Somali intervention decision. The discourse suggests that the Bush administration hoped that intervention in Somalia in December 1992 would help invalidate criticism of bias, which in turn would bolster moderate Islamic allies such as Saudi Arabia, a desire that also factored into the Clinton administration’s relatively activist “Coercive Diplomacy” story during 1994 in Bosnia. This supports the hypothesis that that decision makers are more likely to favor armed intervention if such action is seen as advocated or supported by key allies or other states pertinent to U.S. foreign policy interests.

Ease and Utility of Intervention

Aside from institutional and allied interests, one of the other clear findings from the research is that assessments of ease and utility were critical to armed humanitarian intervention decisions again as seen in Table 6.1. The evidence in the four cases supports
the hypothesis that armed humanitarian interventions are more likely to be undertaken the lower the perceived risk (i.e., low to no casualties) and the higher the perceived utility or the “ability to make a difference.” In the three clear instances of “armed humanitarian intervention” in this study – the Bush administration’s 1992 decision to intervene in Somalia as part of “Operation Support Hope,” the Clinton administration decision to pursue General Aidid following the death of U.N. peacekeepers in Somalia, and the Clinton administration’s “Endgame” decision to promote and support NATO intervention in Bosnia in the fall of 1995 – assessments of ease and utility appeared critical to the final intervention decisions.

In the first Somalia case, “Operation Restore Hope,” assessments of ease and utility of intervention stemmed from estimates of the ability to achieve a secure environment: if the U.S. could establish security in Mogadishu, then the utility of armed humanitarian intervention would be high as the U.N. and other aid agencies could then freely distribute food and stem the problem of mass starvation. As for the ease of intervention, comparisons to Vietnam and Bosnia made intervention in Mogadishu appear relatively simple and “doable.” This, along with the recent U.S experience in the Gulf War, appeared to bolster the belief among Bush administration officials that creating a secure environment would not be difficult: when the rag-tag forces in Somali were faced with a decisive and superior military force, any resistance to the U.S./U.N. presence would simply collapse. Later, the Clinton administration’s decision to support the U.N.’s pursuit of Aidid stemmed from the acceptance of the representation of the Somali forces as inferior and the belief that General Aidid’s support in the general populace was weak. Consequently, in terms of the utility of U.S. action, if the U.S. could get rid of Aidid, then
U.S. officials argued that the U.N. would be able to return to its goal of building a
democratic Somali state.

Likewise in Bosnia, according to Clinton administration officials by late summer
1995, changes in the military situation on the ground and in the NATO/UN dual-key
command structure combined with a new-found allied consensus to make intervention in
that country appear more feasible. Although officials argued that such an operation was
not risk-free, the risks associated with a NATO air campaign against Bosnian Serb forces
were clearly viewed as smaller than the alternative: a U.S. troop intervention to assist and
support a U.N. withdrawal from the country.

Meanwhile, the nonintervention in Rwanda in the spring of 1994 and in Bosnia
from 1992 and 1993 also appear linked to assessments of the relative difficulty and lack
of utility of outside intervention. In Rwanda, the representation of the violence in the
country as civil war-related and endemic to the region reduced any assessments regarding
the utility of outside intervention. Moreover, given the deaths of U.N. peacekeepers and
U.S. soldiers in Mogadishu, assessments of the relative ease of intervention to stop the
violence were reduced. Likewise, in Bosnia up until 1995, assessments of the relative utility of armed intervention were downgraded by representations of the conflict as an
“age-old civil war.” Meanwhile, assessments concerning the relative ease of intervention
to stop the conflict were countered by high troop estimates from the Pentagon,
comparisons of the conflict to the “quagmire” of Vietnam, noted divisions among the
NATO allies and Russia as to the appropriate outside response, and or arguments
regarding the obstructionist nature of the U.N./NATO command structure.
Overall, an analysis of the four cases seems to illustrate that in the absence of perceived vital national interests, the assessed ease and utility of any humanitarian intervention increases in relative importance. According to the collective elite narrative in each of the four cases, the humanitarian problems and crises in Europe and Africa did not pertain to vital U.S. national interests (with the exception of the Bosnian crisis spreading to Kosovo), consequently relative assessments of ease and utility of armed intervention became critical, constraining or facilitating U.S. intervention decisions. In other words, the relative ease and utility of intervention served as a benchmark: if no vital interests were present with regards to a given problem, then the U.S. would only intervene if it could achieve results at relatively low costs (in terms of risks). This clear risk/benefit calculation thus facilitated intervention in Somalia and Bosnia in 1995, and prevented intervention in Rwanda and Bosnia from 1992-1994.

Moreover, in the cases studied, administration assessments regarding the ease and utility of humanitarian operations appeared heavily influenced by the Pentagon. Since humanitarian interventions require military planning, the elites in both the Bush and Clinton administrations appeared to base their assessments of ease and utility on Pentagon estimates and representations of the problem. In Somalia, the Joint Chiefs’ conclusion in late November 1992 that U.S. objectives could be achieved with sufficient military force proved decisive in facilitating the intervention decision, Operation Provide Hope. Around nine months later, General Colon Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, reversed his long-standing aversion to limited action in an effort to avoid being “nibbled to death” by clan-led terrorism, a move that appeared to facilitate the administration’s ill-fated decision to deploy U.S. elite forces to Mogadishu. Likewise, in the spring of 1994,
Pentagon conclusions that any military intervention in Rwanda would end up dragging U.S. forces into the fray worked to bolster the administration’s tendency towards inaction. Finally, in Bosnia, Pentagon estimates of the massive troop numbers required to stop the violence in the country worked to eliminate the option of ground troops in favor of air strikes.

The Pentagon’s influence over intervention decisions appeared to increase proportionately to the foreign policy principals’ relative lack of interest in a given region or problem. When vital interests were not at stake, civilian officials appeared more likely to take Pentagon assessments of the relative ease and utility of military intervention on face value given their inability to counter the military’s area of expertise. This makes intuitive sense as top civilian officials are less likely to be fully engaged in a problem if it is seen as irrelevant to vital national interests. Conversely, since the military is almost always affected by decisions of intervention, they would more likely be attuned to all conflicts and problems that might trigger military intervention. In short, since military expertise is concentrated in the Pentagon, and since the Pentagon is always likely to have more at stake in issues of armed intervention, they are more likely to have disproportionate influence over decisions when compared to their civilian counterparts, particularly in the perceived absence of vital national interests.

*Domestic Pressures*

From the evidence, it clearly appears that assessments of “ease and utility” and institutional/allied pressures and interests played critical roles in armed humanitarian decisions. However, as first illustrated in chapter four, sorting the story junctures within
each of the four cases according to their degree of “activism” sheds additional insight into
the complex interplay of factors that influenced U.S. decisions of armed humanitarian
intervention and nonintervention in the early to mid-nineteen nineties. For this research,
“activist” stories (Table 6.1 and Table 6.2) are defined as stories where administration
official’s either advocated or supported U.S.-led armed humanitarian intervention or
some other limited form of U.S. intervention (i.e., periodic air strikes or military-
provided humanitarian aid) whereas “nonactivist” stories (Table 6.3) are defined as those
stories where advocacy of U.S. armed intervention was either flatly opposed, discouraged
or withdrawn.

In chapter one it was hypothesized that decision makers were more likely to favor
armed humanitarian intervention if such action was seen as strongly supported by
Congress, the media and or the mass public. An analysis of the story junctures across the
four cases reveals some support for this hypothesis but also reveals that the relationship
between these actors and intervention decisions is more complex than the original
hypothesis suggests. First, the tables reveal that pressure from the media, the public and
Congress is a facilitative but not required variable for intervention, as it factored clearly
into only three of the ten most “activist” foreign policy story junctures in Tables 6.1 and
6.2 (including the Clinton administration’s “Endgame” intervention decision) and was
noticeably absent in all of the “least activist” story junctures as seen in Table 6.3, with the
exception of congressional pressure to lift the arms embargo in the “Muddling Through”
story from November 1994 through July 1995. The relative absence of a noted public,
<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th>Threats or Opportunities to vital national interests</th>
<th>Moral or Legal Imperative</th>
<th>Domestic Pressure from Media, Public Opinion, and Congress</th>
<th>Pressure/interests stemming from IGOs and other International Actors</th>
<th>Ease and Utility of Intervention</th>
<th>Military Vested Interests</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Somalia: Operation Provide Relief (July-Aug. 1992)</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes moral</td>
<td>Yes media Public Yes Congress</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Somalia: UNOSOM II (Dec. 1992-Mar. 1993)</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes moral</td>
<td>No media Public No Congress</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rwanda: Operation Provide Support (July – Aug. 1994)</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes moral</td>
<td>Yes media Public Yes Congress</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No, with Kosovo exception</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bosnia: “Peace through Diplomacy” (Jan.-April 1993)</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes moral</td>
<td>No media Public No Congress</td>
<td>No, with Kosovo exception</td>
<td>No, with Kosovo exception</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bosnia: “Lift and Strike” (April-May 1993)</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes moral</td>
<td>No media Public No Congress</td>
<td>No, with Kosovo exception</td>
<td>No, with Kosovo exception</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bosnia: “Peace through Threats” (July 1993-Jan. 1994)</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No moral</td>
<td>Media unclear Public unclear No Congress</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bosnia: “Coercive Diplomacy” (Jan.-Nov. 1994)</strong></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No moral</td>
<td>No media Public Yes Congress</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2: Factors favoring military intervention as reflected in the most “activist” story junctures (excluding those defined as “armed humanitarian intervention” in Table 1) of the Somali, Rwandan, and Bosnian conflicts.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Threats or Opportunities to vital national interests</th>
<th>Moral or Legal Imperative</th>
<th>Domestic Pressure from Media, Public Opinion, and Congress</th>
<th>Pressure/interests stemming from IGOs and other International Actors</th>
<th>Ease and Utility of Intervention</th>
<th>Military Vested Interests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Somalia:</strong> “Withdrawal” (Oct. 1993)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes moral No legal</td>
<td>No media</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rwanda:</strong> “No interests, No involvement” (April -July 1993)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No moral No legal</td>
<td>No media</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bosnia:</strong> “Aid and Avoid” (1991-1992)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No moral No legal</td>
<td>No media</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No, with Kosovo exception</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bosnia:</strong> “Containment” (May-July 1993)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No moral No legal</td>
<td>No media</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No, with Kosovo exception</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bosnia:</strong> “Muddling Through (Nov. 1994-July 1995)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No moral No legal</td>
<td>No media</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.3: Factors favoring military intervention as reflected in the least “activist” story junctures during the Somali, Rwandan, and Bosnian conflicts.
media or congressional pressure to act does not mean that such domestic pressure was entirely absent. For instance, starting in 1994, the Clinton administration fell under intense congressional pressure to lift the arms embargo against the Bosnian Muslims, as evident in the administration’s “Coercive Diplomacy,” “Muddling Through,” and “Endgame” stories. In two of these cases (“Coercive Diplomacy” and “Endgame”) such pressure appeared to support an activist U.S. policy in Bosnia. In the “Muddling Through” story, congressional pressure was countered by the administration’s growing fears of splitting the NATO alliance and instigating a U.N. withdrawal from the region. Moreover, in several cases (“No interests, No involvement” in Rwanda, “Withdrawal” in Somalia, “Containment” in Bosnia), the perceived lack of public and congressional support for action were noted reasons supporting the Clinton administration’s relatively inactivist policy towards these problems. In several other cases, the noted absence of domestic pressure appeared to facilitate the Bush and Clinton administrations relatively activist policies, particularly in Somalia (“Operation Provide Hope,” UNOSOM II, and “Get Aidid”) suggesting that such pressure serves more as a constraint than determinant of policy action. Focusing on the three stories where domestic pressure appeared the strongest (Bosnia’s “Endgame,” Somalia’s “Operation Provide Relief,” and Rwanda’s “Operation Provide Support”) reveals an intriguing pattern. In all three of these stories, intervention decisions were tied to some degree to electoral concerns regarding upcoming mid-term congressional or presidential elections. In these three cases, it appears that the anticipatory as opposed to actual or current pressure from the media, public opinion and even Congress is what most mattered, a conclusion that is consistent with other literature
on the subject. In other words, decisions to undertake humanitarian interventions abroad appear connected to the administration-in-power’s beliefs regarding the positive or negative impact that such action or inaction may have on domestic opinion and electoral outcomes.

First, the Bush administration’s decision to undertake the humanitarian airlift, “Operation Provide Relief” in Somalia, announced on the eve of the Republican National Convention, appears tied to decision maker concerns that administration inaction to humanitarian crises in both Somalia and the Balkans could cost votes in the upcoming presidential elections, particularly given candidate Clinton’s relatively activist rhetoric on both issues. Likewise, the Clinton administration’s decision to undertake the humanitarian aid mission in Rwanda two years later appears again connected to concerns that administration inaction could hurt congressional Democrats in the upcoming mid-term elections. In both cases, relatively low-risk humanitarian relief missions provided the benefit of appearing to “do something” in response to a growing humanitarian crisis thereby deflecting criticism and a possible voter backlash in the upcoming elections.

Meanwhile, although the presidential elections were over a year away, the Clinton administration’s “Endgame” story to support and promote the dramatic NATO military intervention in Bosnia also appears linked in part to electoral considerations. By summer 1995, the administration’s failure to resolve the ongoing Bosnia conflict was increasingly overshadowing the president’s domestic agenda and other foreign policy accomplishments. Moreover, the possibility of a high-risk U.S. troop deployment to Bosnia to assist a U.N. withdrawal and failed relief effort helped to change the administration’s representation of the problem in favor of aggressive action. In this case,
anticipated media coverage and domestic and congressional opinion to such an event became more salient, particularly given Republican presidential candidate and congressional Majority Leader Robert Dole’s long-term and vocal criticism of U.S. policy in the region. In short, electoral considerations appear to have influenced several key foreign policy decisions in three of the four cases. It thus appears that the anticipated reaction on behalf of the media, public opinion and Congress to the administration’s foreign policy action or inaction mattered, particularly to the extent that the administration felt it could boost/diminish electoral success.

The elite discourse across the four cases also suggests that notions such as an overriding “CNN” factor as driving U.S. foreign policy is overly simplistic and misleading as it ignores the media’s interrelationship with other domestic actors. Rather, the administration officials appear to view the media (and in particular, televised images), public opinion and congressional opinion as intimately and integrally connected, supporting research that suggests that the media’s “push” and “pull” effects serve to bolster current levels or trends in public and congressional opinion. In addition, there does appear to be some correlation with domestic actor influence and policy uncertainty, which supports the work of other scholars who have focused on the role of media and intervention decisions. In short, while none of these actors (which I have labeled as “domestic” actors for this research) in and of themselves appear as determinants of U.S. foreign policy actions and content, their perceived interaction and interrelation do appear to constrain foreign policy options available to decision-makers and in times of policy uncertainty, may be able to exert relatively more influence by bolstering administration proclivities towards policy change.
In chapter one, it was hypothesized that the likelihood of armed intervention increased the greater the perceived moral and or legal imperative for action. From an analysis of the story junctures across the four cases, it seems that like domestic pressure, support for this hypothesis is somewhat mixed. Appearing in seven out of ten of the most “activist” administration stories (Tables 6.1 and 6.2), a “moral” imperative appears as a facilitative but insufficient factor for promoting armed humanitarian intervention.

However, a comparison of an implied or stated moral imperative in the discourse across the African and European cases reveals a difference in framing or representation. First, in the African cases, the moral imperative to act pertained to the provision of humanitarian aid (in Somalia, Operation Provide Relief and Operation Provide Hope; in Rwanda, Operation Provide Support) and aid plus political/military assistance (in Somalia, UNOSOM II and “Get Aidid”). In each case, the moral imperative to act appeared tied to the United States’ “unique” military and leadership capabilities. Thus, unlike Bosnia, the Rwandan and Somalia crises were never represented in the collective elite discourse as problems of “ethnic cleansing” or systematic persecution by one party against another in the conflict. This is particularly striking with regards to Rwanda, where the systematic and one-sided massacre of Tutsi civilians was occurring on a scale and rate that far surpassed that which was occurring in Bosnia.

In contrast to the African cases (with the exception of the “No interest, No involvement” story in Rwanda), a moral imperative for action appeared in only two of the eight administration stories on Bosnia (the Clinton administration’s “Peace through Diplomacy” and “Lift and Strike”). As the U.S. was already engaged in multilateral
efforts to provide Bosnia with humanitarian assistance, there apparently was no need to invoke a moral imperative for humanitarian action. Thus, the argument surrounding a “moral imperative” to intervene in Bosnia was framed more in terms of stopping the violence or, as stated by the Clinton administration, “acting” in the face of ethnic cleansing and persecution.

According to public and private statements, officials in both the Bush and Clinton administration’s appeared to perceive that the moral imperative pushing the U.S. to intervene to stop ethnic cleansing – and in particular genocide – was greater than that of “providing humanitarian assistance,” supporting the notion of a rhetorical “threshold” favoring or hindering action. Consequently, both administrations carefully avoided invoking such an imperative in the discourse based apparently on the belief that it might spur public outrage and limit the U.S. flexibility of action. The perceived consequences of such a representation of the conflict helps explain both the Bush and Clinton administrations avoidance of clearly determining that “genocide” was or had taken place in either Bosnia or Rwanda, instead relying on lesser rhetorical determinations that “ethnic cleansing” or “acts of genocide” had or were occurring. This thinking is most clearly illustrated in a private memorandum signed by Secretary of State Christopher, where it is concluded that while a determination of genocide in Rwanda (or Bosnia) had no particular legal consequences in terms of obligating the U.S. to take unilateral action (despite the U.S. ratification of the 1948 Genocide Convention), “a clear statement that the USG [U.S. government] believes that acts of genocide have occurred could increase pressure for USG activism in response to the crisis in Rwanda.” Despite such risks, the memo concludes that the government should acknowledge that “acts of genocide” have
occurred in Rwanda because in order to preserve credibility “with human rights groups and the general public, who may question how much evidence we can legitimately require before coming to a policy conclusion.” The memo helps explain the Clinton administration’s dropping of statements and implications of a moral imperative to act in Bosnia five months after entering office. When the obstacles to such a policy soon became apparent, most specifically after the allies failed to endorse the “Lift and Strike” option, the administration distanced itself from such an imperative altogether.

Interestingly, the only “legal” imperative for action appeared in the two Bosnian stories with the strongest moral imperative for action, the Clinton administration’s “Peace through Diplomacy” and the “Lift and Strike” Bosnian stories. In both cases, officials implied that the Gulf War solidified the international legal principle that state boundaries could not be altered by force. And, since Serbian forces had violated that principle in Bosnia, the U.S. and international community were justified in taking forceful action. Like its associated moral imperative, the dropping of such a legal precedent for intervention from the discourse after May 1993 suggests that the perceived constraints to an activist U.S. policy made the invoking of moral/legal imperatives for action problematic.

**Vital National Interests**

It is perhaps surprising that the one variable traditionally associated with intervention decisions, the determination that the conflict represents a threat or an opportunity to vital national interests, is noticeably absent in two of the three armed humanitarian intervention stories as seen in Table 6.1 and none of the relatively “activist”
stories illustrated in Table 6.2. In fact, perceived threats or opportunities to “vital national interests” appeared in only two of the fifteen stories across the four cases: “The Endgame” and “Muddling Through.” Both pertained to the Clinton administration’s representation of the conflict in Bosnia and both pertained to the growing realization that the conflict in the region could spread and thereby involve NATO allies, Greece and Turkey. Of the two stories, the strongest perceived threat to vital national interests occurred in the “Endgame” story that led to the two-week NATO air campaign against Bosnian Serb forces.

By spring 1995, the discourse suggests that the administration perceived the threat of the conflict in Bosnia spreading beyond its current boundaries to areas such as Kosovo – a possibility that both the Bush and Clinton administrations had argued would affect vital national interests as it could draw in other NATO allies and heighten regional instability – as more real. By late summer, the possibility combined with the growing realization that failure to resolve the Bosnian crisis was threatening U.S., NATO, and U.N. prestige and credibility. Given that the administration viewed internal conflicts like Bosnia as being prevalent in the future, this damage to U.S. and NATO credibility and prestige appeared critical as it severely hindered both actors’ ability to deal successfully with future conflicts and subsequently bolstered the administration’s growing case for intervention.

The absence of a perceived threat or opportunity to vital U.S. interests in the two Somalia intervention stories as seen in Table 6.1 is noteworthy. While both administrations recognized that vital interests were not at stake in the conflict, both also appeared to view the conflict as an opportunity – one brought about by the collapse of the
cold war and the successful multilateral collaboration in Iraq and the Persian Gulf. For
the first time it seemed that the U.S. could multilaterally pursue traditionally second or
even third-tier objectives, such as humanitarian aid, peacemaking and democratic
statebuilding. The 1993 deaths of U.N. peacekeepers and U.S. soldiers in Somalia,
however, effectively doused this sense of opportunity. Thereafter, the Clinton
administration went out of its way to ensure that U.S. decisions of humanitarian
intervention in places such as Bosnia or Rwanda were clearly seen as pertaining or not
pertaining to U.S. national interests.

Bureaucratic Interests

The hypothesis with the least support over the four cases is the idea that military
elites will favor armed intervention in an effort to promote and or justify defense
budgetary priorities within government. Rather, in the cases analyzed the military
appeared notably reluctant to pursue relatively activist policies or policies promoting
armed humanitarian intervention.19 Possible vested military interests promoting action
appeared in only one story, the Bush administration’s decision to militarily intervene in
Somalia (Operation Provide Hope). By the fall of 1992, the military’s noted resistance to
intervention in Bosnia and Somalia had garnered increasing criticism, particularly from
the press, which had some impact on top military officials as evidenced by the Chairman
of the Joint Chiefs editorial to the New York Times in October. The Pentagon’s abrupt
about-face on the Somalia intervention in the November 1992 could be seen as a reaction
to such criticism and an effort to justify its mission, role and budgetary priority in the
post-cold war era of obscure threats. However, the relative absence of rhetorical
evidence makes the determination of the validity of this hypothesis somewhat problematic.

Aside from Somalia, the other administration stories in Rwanda and Bosnia suggest that the relatively austere post-cold war budgetary era made the Pentagon less likely to support armed humanitarian interventions which were viewed as siphoning away troop and material resources that might be needed for more “high profile” conflicts, such as those in the former Soviet Union, Iraq or North Korea. In particular, an analysis of the Bosnian and Rwanda stories reveals that the Pentagon actively discouraged armed humanitarian intervention in Bosnia and Rwanda. In Bosnia, the Pentagon’s relatively high troop estimates to civilian advisors worked to eliminate the feasibility of deploying ground troops to stop the conflict. Meanwhile, costs concerns and fears of being dragged into the conflict led Pentagon officials in interagency discussions to consistently veto any interventionist action in Rwanda.

*Historical Analogies*

Finally, an analysis of the four cases reveals that, as expected, historical analogies were frequently invoked by elites in their representations of post cold war humanitarian crises in Africa and Europe. In particular, the story model as a method of analysis helped uncover the often overlooked and rather complex ways that analogies colored and interacted with other variables that appeared influential in the elite decision making process.

First, as hypothesized, analogies appeared to act as a constraint, shaping select aspects of the collective problem representations, including perceptions of U.S. goals, the
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CASE AND STORIES</th>
<th>ANALOGIES INVOKED</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Somalia (1992-1993)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operation Provide Relief</td>
<td>Ethiopian famine (1984-85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operation Provide Hope (UNITAF)</td>
<td>Vietnam, Gulf War, Beirut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNOSOM II</td>
<td>Gulf War, Post-WWII (Truman Era)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Get Aidid”</td>
<td>Gulf War, Post-WWII (Truman Era)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Withdrawal”</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bosnia I (1992-1993)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Aid and Avoid”</td>
<td>Vietnam, WWII (Nazi invasion of Yugoslavia)</td>
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<td>“Peace through Diplomacy”</td>
<td>Gulf War, Holocaust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Lift and Strike”</td>
<td>Gulf War, Holocaust, Vietnam, WWII (Nazi)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Containment”</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bosnia II (1993-1995)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Peace through Threats”</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Coercive Diplomacy”</td>
<td>Vietnam, Somalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Muddling Through”</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“The Endgame”</td>
<td>Vietnam†</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rwanda</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“No interests, No involvement”</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Operation Provide Relief”</td>
<td>N. Iraq</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.4: Analogies invoked in the key story junctures across the four cases.

† While direct references to Vietnam were absent during this discourse period, the administration continued to argue that congressional moves to lift the arms embargo against Bosnia risked “Americanizing” the war, an indirect reference to Vietnam.
situation, relationships, the assessment of options and subsequent actions taken and advocated. However, while analogies did appear to exert considerable influence over problem representations, they were not monolithically or universally applied. In other words, decision makers rarely invoked a single analogy or a single immutable “lesson” from the past in a reference to a given problem that in turn shaped all aspects of a single collective representation of that problem. In some stories, analogies or past “lessons” from history appeared to play little to no role in the collective representation of the problem (at least as represented in the public discourse). For instance, analogies appeared to factor little into the Clinton administration’s “Withdrawal” representation of the Somalia problem in October 1993 or in the “Peace through Threats” story regarding Bosnia later that same year, as seen in Table 6.4. Meanwhile, other stories contained multiple analogies invoked by decision makers that were then the source of multiple and sometimes contradictory “lessons.”

This multiple use of analogies and lessons was most striking in the Clinton Administration’s “Lift and “Strike” story of the Bosnian problem in May 1993, where the relatively activist lessons from the Gulf War and Holocaust created a legal imperative to uphold international law (“state boundaries cannot be altered by force”) and a moral imperative to “act against ethnic cleansing.” Together, these lessons appeared to promote the relatively activist goals of stopping and punishing Serb aggression and ethnic cleansing in the region and the aggressive U.S. policy proposal of lifting the Bosnian arms embargo and using limited air strikes to contain the Serbs until the Bosnian Muslims became better armed.
However, such imperatives for action were countered by other historical “lessons.” First, other lessons from the Gulf War and Vietnam regarding the benefits of multilateralism, the necessity of decisive force, clear objectives, an exit strategy and sustained public support, all worked to both limit a U.S. unilateral response to the problem and temper the administration’s enthusiasm for the force option. The invocation of the Nazi’s difficult occupation of Yugoslavia during WWII also illustrated the limits and obstacles of outside intervention in the region. In short, multiple and contradictory lessons appeared to work against one another, pushing the administration to take an aggressive stance on Bosnia while simultaneously weakening the depth of support for such a policy. Consequently, when the European allies expressed reservations about the administration’s “Lift and Strike” policy option, it was quickly abandoned.

Overall, the fact that decision-makers’ invoked multiple analogies and multiple lessons of history with respect to given problems appears consistent with the notion of a “partial” analogical fit, suggestive of interplay between both top-down and bottom-up information processing.\(^{21}\) In other words, decision makers often appeared cognizant of differences in the analogies invoked and the current problem, leading them to use one or multiple analogies more in a piecemeal as opposed to holistic fashion.\(^ {22}\) For instance, while lessons of Vietnam and Somalia led the Clinton administration to rule out the unilateral deployment of ground troops into Bosnia to stop the violence or assist in peacekeeping activities they also didn’t rule out the limited use of force as an option. Instead, beliefs in the importance of U.S. leadership and the benefits and promise of multilateralism distilled from the success of the Gulf War and U.S. global institution building after WWII promoted the continuance of U.S. support for U.N. and NATO
intervention in the region. Therefore decisionmakers’ approach to the problems studied is not entirely consistent with complete “top down” information processing generally attributed with strict analogue or case-based reasoning.\(^{23}\)

However, at the same time, there were instances in the discourse where such “top down” reasoning appeared to occur, leading decision makers to seemingly accept representations of actors and situations as similar without going through relatively more complex inductive investigatory processes. Of the cases studied, the decision not to intervene or support multilateral intervention in Rwanda in the spring of 1994 (“No interests, No involvement”) and the Bush administration’s decision to avoid armed humanitarian intervention in Bosnia in 1992 (“Aid and Avoid”) appear most consistent with this type of reasoning. However, even in these two instances the case for strict top down or analogue-based reasoning appears relatively weak, as the problem representations included story elements that did not appear intuitively consistent with the invoked analogies.

Irregardless of whether they are examples of one or another method of foreign policy reasoning, the Clinton administration’s representation of the Rwandan problem and the Bush administration’s representation of the crisis in Bosnia are clear examples of the seemingly strong influence of analogies or “past lessons” in foreign policy decision making. In Rwanda, U.S. and U.N. decision makers appeared to write-off armed intervention of any kind to stop the massacres and genocide in the country largely based on perceptions that Rwanda was “Somalia all over again.” First, and rather superficially, Rwanda was viewed as another conflict in Africa, a region irrelevant to U.S. vital national interests with a seemingly endemic predilection towards violence. Moreover,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVIST STORIES</th>
<th>ANALOGIES INVOKED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operation Provide Relief</td>
<td>Operation Provide Hope (UNITAF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNOSOM II</td>
<td>Gulf War, Post-WWII (Truman Era)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Get Aidid”</td>
<td>Gulf War, Post-WWII (Truman Era)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia I (1992-1993)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Peace through Diplomacy”</td>
<td>Gulf War, Holocaust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Lift and Strike”</td>
<td>Gulf War, Holocaust, Vietnam, WWII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia II (1993-1995)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Peace through Threats”</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Coercive Diplomacy”</td>
<td>Vietnam, Somalia</td>
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<td>“The Endgame”</td>
<td>Vietnam†</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Operation Provide Relief”</td>
<td>N. Iraq</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.5: Analogies invoked in most “activist” stories across the four cases.

like Somalia, the conflict in Rwanda was defined as a civil war (i.e., an internal political war for control of a county) as opposed to an organized systematic slaughter of an entire

† While direct references to Vietnam were absent during this discourse period, the administration continued to argue that congressional moves to lift the arms embargo against Bosnia risked “Americanizing” the war, an indirect reference to Vietnam.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEAST ACTIVIST STORIES</th>
<th>ANALOGIES INVOKED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Somalia (1992-1993)</strong></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Withdrawal”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bosnia I (1992-1993)</strong></td>
<td>Vietnam, WWII (Nazi invasion of Yugoslavia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Aid and Avoid”</td>
<td>Vietnam, WWII (Nazi invasion of Yugoslavia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Containment”</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bosnia II (1993-1995)</strong></td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Muddling Through”</td>
<td>Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rwanda</strong></td>
<td>Somalia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“No interests, No involvement”</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.6: Analogies invoked in the least “activist” stories across the four cases.

ethnic group. This definition allowed U.S. officials to ignore the genocidal nature of the violence while emphasizing the difficulties of outside actors intervening or being seen as “taking sides” in an internal political conflict, particularly in the absence of a durable cease-fire or the consent of the warring parties. Likewise in Bosnia, the Bush administration’s invocation of the Vietnam analogy served to illustrate the nature of the problem such as the relative skill, sophistication and tenacity of the Serb military, and the likelihood of guerilla warfare particularly given the rugged mountainous terrain. This representation thus served to promote an administration policy of inaction.
A second major finding with regards to analogies was that contrary to my hypothesis, stories advocating intervention did not necessarily contain different substantive historical precedents than stories advocating inaction. Contrary to expectations, a comparison of the most and least “activist” stories across the four cases (Tables 6.5 and 6.6) does not appear to support the hypothesis that stories advocating intervention or at least a relatively more “activist” foreign policy are more likely to contain references to past foreign policy “successes” than stories advocating relative inaction. The two tables reveal that two so-called foreign policy “failures,” Vietnam and Somalia, were both invoked in the relatively most and the relatively least activist stories across the four cases. There was, however, a stronger correlation between the “least” activist stories (Table 6.6), and reference to past policy “failures.” In each of the stories, with the exception of the “Withdrawal” story in Somalia, lessons from past policy “failures” (Somalia in the Rwandan case and Vietnam and the Nazi occupation of Yugoslavia in the Bosnian cases) influenced the representation of the problem in favor of nonintervention. For instance, in the “No interests, No involvement” story, “lessons” from the Somalia experience were culled into general axioms that were then incorporated into the Presidential Decisional Directive (PDD-25) which essentially ruled out U.S. intervention in Rwanda. Likewise, lessons from Vietnam about the dangers of becoming embroiled in civil wars, and from WWII regarding the difficulty of intervention in Yugoslavia, worked to limit U.S. goals and assessment of options in Bosnia across both the Bush and Clinton administrations.

A somewhat counterintuitive finding is the degree that past policy “failures” were invoked in the relatively most “activist” stories across the four cases. However, an
analysis of the individual stories across the four cases shed some light on this intriguing pattern. In the cases studied, it appears that decision makers invoked analogies, and particular perceived policy “failures,” to do one of three things: (1) highlight dangers and difficulties associated with various options; (2) highlight differences between the past “failure” and the current advocated “activist” policy or policy option; (3) spell out the necessary requirements for success of a given activist policy or policy option.24

First, it appears “failure” analogies are most commonly invoked in activist stories to highlight the dangers and difficulties associated with various options. For instance, in the “Operation Provide Hope” story in Somalia, Bush officials invoked Beirut to illustrate the dangers of taking sides in an internal conflict. Likewise, in the Bosnian story “Lift and Strike,” President Clinton invoked the Nazi’s failed occupation of Yugoslavia during World War II to illustrate the difficulties of outside intervention in an apparent effort to temper public expectations of an outside solution to the conflict. Finally, in the “Coercive Diplomacy” and “Endgame” stories in Bosnia, Clinton officials invoked both Vietnam and Somalia to warn of the dangers of taking sides in a civil war (an “Americanizing the conflict) while Somalia, in particular, was invoked to war of the difficulties of imposing an outside solution to a conflict in the absence of internal commitments to peace.

Second, the “Lift and Strike” and the “Coercive Diplomacy” stories in Bosnia illustrate how decision makers invoke “lessons” from past policy failures in an effort to spell out the requirements for success of a given policy or policy option. For instance, in the spring of 1993, Clinton administration officials invoked “lessons” of Vietnam, embodied in statements such as the so-called “Weinburger-Powell” doctrine, to illustrate
the necessity of sustained public support, clearly stated objectives, an exit strategy and other such factors required for successful military interventions. Likewise, in 1994, Clinton officials invoked similar lessons from Somalia regarding the necessity of clearly articulating relevant U.S. interests and associated risks in order sustain public support for force commitments.

Finally, in December 1992, Bush administration officials invoked Vietnam in the “Operation Provide Hope” intervention story to highlight the differences between that conflict and Somalia. Contrary to Vietnam or even Bosnia (which the administration had represented as another Vietnam), Bush officials argued that intervention in Somalia was “doable” given the untrained, undisciplined, militarily inferior nature of the opposition groups in the country along with a desert-like terrain that made guerrilla warfare less likely.

A final observation with regards to the Bush and Clinton administrations’ invocation of analogies is the relative primacy of the Vietnam analogy, as decision makers invoked Vietnam more than any other analogy in the stories analyzed. Moreover, many of the axiomatic lessons distilled from the Beirut, the Gulf War, and Somalia, such as the importance of “not taking sides” in an internal conflict, avoiding casualties, using decisive force and having clear objectives, an exit strategy, and sustainable public support also appear to bolster lessons previously derived from the American experience in Southeast Asia.

The primacy of Vietnam in the analogical discourse of both administrations appears in part reflective of the personal and generational impact that conflict had on the decision makers in both administrations. Top civilian and military decisionmakers in both
administrations, such as JCS Chairman Colon Powell, Former Somali Ambassador and Special Envoy, Robert B. Oakley, Vice President Al Gore, National Security Advisor Anthony Lake and Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke had either served or been stationed in Vietnam during the war. Others, such as President Clinton, had not served but were of the same generation and undoubtedly shaped by the conflict. This supports the idea in cognitive psychology that all analogies are not equal; certain analogies are more readily available or easily accessible than others, particularly if the decision maker or decision makers have had personal experience with regards to a specific event; it also support the idea by Khong that events occurring during an individual’s “coming of political age” are likely to be more salient.25 Given the number of individuals with direct personal or indirect experience with the war in Vietnam in both administrations, it does not appear surprising that lessons derived from the experience were frequently invoked in the collective representations of the selected foreign policy problems.

Thus the “availability” heuristic helps explain the frequent invocation of the Vietnam analogy in the cases studied. However, this frequent invocation could also be explained by the “representative” heuristic.26 The problems in Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia were all defined in the collective discourse as “civil wars.” Likewise, the collective societal discourse appears to have since defined Vietnam more as a “civil war” then an example of external communist aggression and influence, making it the only major American war (aside from the civil war) that is not dominantly viewed as war against external aggression. Consequently, it makes sense that Vietnam is the most frequent analogy invoked by decision-makers when confronted with internal conflicts and
problems, while the availability and representative heuristics also explain the prevalence of the Somalia analogy in reference to Rwanda, given the recency of the former and its superficial similarities (i.e., internal African conflict) to the latter.

**Validation of the Story Model**

An analysis of the influence that analogies and other factors had on the elite decisionmaking process after the cold war reveals several strengths of the story model, both as a means to systematically analyze the public discourse as well as a mode of problem representation. First, a clear strength of the story model is that it reveals the complexity of the decision makers’ collective representation of problems. Studies that focus simply on the role of analogies in decisionmaking may overlook other key aspects of collective problem representations that influenced policy actions. For instance, as previously stated, an analysis of the collective discourse reveals that the Vietnam analogy played an important role in the Bush and the Clinton representations of the Bosnian problem. During both administrations, the fear of becoming embroiled in a “quagmire” led policymakers to downgrade policy objectives in Bosnia and rule out certain options given relatively high estimations of the degree of risk and difficulty of any outside intervention and relatively low estimations of its subsequent utility. However, such a focus might lead one to overlook another key aspect of the problem representation that led to a downgrading of policy objectives and ruling out of policy options: resistance and division from and among NATO allies as well as strategic U.S. interests in preserving NATO unity and credibility.
Likewise, studies that focus on a single variable (i.e., “CNN Factor”) or set of variables such as those outlined as alternative explanations in this study, may underestimate or overlook the role that history, or more specifically, perceived “lessons” from history, played in promoting or reducing the relative influence of a given variable or set of variables in the final decision making process. For instance, this research has found that the perceived “ease and utility” of intervention was a critical factor in determining armed humanitarian intervention decisions. However, the story model reveals that analogies played a key role in the assessment of the feasibility and utility of options. In Somalia, lessons from the Gulf War and comparisons to Vietnam worked to promote the perception that intervention in Somalia would be relatively simple and worthwhile. In contrast, comparisons to Vietnam worked to downgrade Bush and later Clinton administration assessments regarding the ease and utility of intervention in Bosnia while Somalia reinforced the Clinton administration’s perception of the difficulty and futility of intervention in Rwanda.

Another strength of the story model as a method of analysis is that it allows one to get clear “snapshots” of the decision making process over time, facilitating systematic comparison and analysis of problem representation change. In particular, with respect to problem representation change, an analysis of the stories across the four cases reveals that the primary cause of such change appears to be the growing perception of failure of the previous policy which is often bolstered or facilitated by a dramatic event or crisis in the decision maker’s external environment. For example, a process tracing of the administration’s discourse reveals that its collective representation of the Bosnian problem was changing in January 1994. Moreover, by late January and early February
1994 the policy principals had concluded that the administration’s policy of “Peace through Threats” or trying to get the three parties to the negotiating table via the threat of air strikes was not working. From this perspective, the mortar attack of the Sarajevo market on February 5 and the subsequent international public outcry that followed it could be seen more as catalysts as opposed to direct causes for rapid change, confirming the administration’s belief in the failure of its current approach to the problem. Likewise, an analysis of the Somalia stories reveals that the Clinton administration’s perception of the problem in Somalia and its dissatisfaction with its current approach was apparent at least one month prior to the October death of eighteen U.S. servicemen in Mogadishu. In both the Bosnian and the Somalia cases, an external crisis or disaster appeared to bolster policy proclivities already apparent in the administration’s discourse.

Finally, tracking changes in administration stories helps unearth the consequences of decisions following from earlier representations of a given problem. This is most clearly revealed, as previously discussed in Chapter 5, in the intriguing and counterintuitive finding of how the Clinton administration’s efforts to avoid deploying ground troops into the Bosnian conflict (which stemmed from the Vietnam/Somalia lesson of “not taking sides” in a conflict) instead led it to both push aggressively for air strikes and promise military assistance for a U.N. withdrawal or emergency extraction from the region which, in turn, pushed the administration to aggressively push an intense air campaign against the Bosnian Serbs in the fall of 1995 in order to avoid the fulfillment of its commitment of military assistance and ground troops. In other words, in an effort to avoid another “Vietnam” the administration pursued policies in Bosnia that seemed to increase the possibility of another “Vietnam,” explaining how the invocation
of the relatively anti-interventionist Vietnam and Somalia analogies during the 1993-1995 period appeared to push the administration towards aggressive action in Bosnia in the fall of 1995.

Conversely, the major weakness of the story model as a method of discourse analysis as used in this research is its heavy data requirements. In order to get at an administration’s dominant collective representation of a problem one must analyze and code hundreds (if not thousands) of documents. Aside from the obvious burden this places on the researcher, this may also restrict the range of cases suitable for analysis. While some problems and or crises are simply not publicly discussed to a degree necessary for analysis, some administrations may be less willing to publicly voice and discuss administration policy. For instance, while the Clinton administration was perhaps unusual in its willingness to discuss issues and problems with Congress, the press and the general public (e.g., Clinton’s “Town Meetings”), other administrations might be much less inclined. Therefore, in the absence of access to private decision making documents, this method of analysis may be limited to: (1) issues that generate a high deal of controversy, media coverage, and or public attention, and (2) administrations that are more open to public discussion and analysis.

Another problem with the model as illustrated in my chapter discussions of alternative interpretations, is the difficulty of determining the collective elites perceived “consequences” of a proposed or chosen policy. In many cases, perceived consequences could be viewed as second order goals or objectives. Therefore, distinguishing between what sometimes appeared as first and second order goals or objectives required an evaluation of which goal(s) appeared most consistent with the overall story or
representation. For example, in the story leading to the U.S. military airlift in Somalia (Operation Provide Relief), deflecting criticism of administration inaction, both in Bosnia and in Somalia, could have been seen as an administration goal. However, since it was inconsistent with the rest of the administration story (i.e., domestic and or international criticism did not appear as an important theme in the relationship part of the model) but still appeared as an important element of the administration’s overall story, it was subsequently coded as a consequence. Another problem with determining the perceived “consequences” of U.S. policy was finding sufficient public discussion in the elite discourse of the possible or desired consequences of U.S. policy, which often limited that part of the model.

**Implications for Further Research**

In conclusion, this research supports constructivist and neoliberal arguments that institutions matter and cognitive research that suggests analogies play an important role in foreign policy decision making processes, particularly given the strong role analogies played in the assessment of the utility and feasibility of options, one of the other major findings of this research. However, this research has also revealed other findings and suggested other avenues of inquiry that demand further exploration.

First, in terms of normative constraints or decision making imperatives, although an analysis of the discourse reveals that a perceived moral imperative is not a necessary factor for armed humanitarian intervention, the evidence does suggest that it is still important to intervention decisions. Just as with institutions, the fact that such an imperative is invoked at all in the public discourse speaks to the idea of a normative
context: that decision makers perceive some pressure or obligation to act or, at a minimum, speak to preventing or alleviating human suffering. However, an even stronger normative imperative and decision making constraint that emerged from the discourse was the U.S. commitment to multilateralism, and perhaps underscores why institutions such as the U.N. and NATO appeared to matter in the final analysis. For example, although the U.S. and its NATO and U.N. allies could not agree on the identity of the victim and aggressor in the Bosnian conflict – a necessary requirement for an effective multilateral response – that did not detract from the U.S. commitment to achieve consensus. Likewise, even in the least “activist” stories across the four cases, U.S. inaction was justified on the basis of maintaining and preserving the credibility of multilateral peacekeeping and or allied unity. Institutional embeddedness (ie. overlapping NATO and U.N. membership) appeared to enhance the saliency of the multilateral commitment in the Bosnian cases.

Second, the studies appear to support the importance of perceived domestic pressure – most notably public opinion – to intervention decisions. However, as previously stated, the possible or anticipated public response to administration policy actions or inactions appeared to matter more than the current perceived state of public opinion, leading decision makers to favor or oppose certain policy options or responses. In Bosnia and Rwanda, fears over the possible public outcry of a clear determination of “genocide” constrained elite descriptions of the conflicts. In all three cases, the apparent belief that American casualties would lead to a loss of public support for U.S. policy led officials to rule out the deployment of U.S. ground troops in Rwanda and Bosnia and favor the use of overwhelming military force in Somalia. Finally, administration concerns
over a possible voter backlash in upcoming congressional and presidential elections appear to have promoted relatively activist policy stances and interventions across both administrations with regards to the conflicts and humanitarian problems in Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia. However, the research also suggests that public opinion is integrally tied in the minds of decision makers to the media and Congress. Vietnam, the Gulf War and Somalia illustrated the media’s power and speed in mobilizing and transforming public and congressional opinion. Decision makers appear cognizant of this connection that then influences to some extent their assessment of options and policy response.

However, one of the biggest problems with my findings is the potential underestimation of these domestic factors in elite problem representations and the decision making process. Since decision makers are not likely to publicly admit that the media, public opinion and or Congress were key to their policy decisions or reversal of policy, there is a good possibility that my research has underestimated the importance of this variable. Therefore, this research suggests that: (1) the proposed media exposure → public opinion → congressional pressure → government policy causal connection requires further exploration; and (2) that my findings might be strengthened by exploring any correlations between the stories and more tangible measures of media, public opinion, and congressional attitudes.

Finally, an analysis of the stories across the four cases reveals a tendency on behalf of decision-makers to “demonize” one actor or group of actors in a conflict, suggesting that when dealing with complex or ill-defined problems there is a tendency for decision makers to focus upon a clear “villain” to serve as a foundation and justification
for policy action and intervention. This was most clearly seen in Somalia with the
General Aidid and in Bosnia with the Serbs. The lack of identification of a “villain” in
Rwanda does not necessarily nullify this idea but instead suggests that since the U.S. had
ruled out intervention in the country there was no need to identify a “villain” to justify an
activist policy. Moreover, the cases suggest that “demonization” is more likely to occur
the longer the U.S. is engaged in a particular problem. However, the research also
suggests that demonization can be counterproductive, leading decision makers to pursue
policies and rhetoric at odds with stated policy objectives.

In short, the analysis of selected U.S. decisions of intervention and
nonintervention sheds some insight on U.S. decision maker’s representation and response
to the “complex humanitarian emergencies” arising at the Cold War’s end. Moreover, I
believe the cases reveal that in order to clearly understand the present policy, one must
better understand the past.

1 In particular, neoliberal theory stresses that one of the key advantages of membership in multilateral
institutions is the reduction of transactions costs. See for example Keohane, After Hegemony.

2 In this sense, institutional membership acted as a strategically-imposed constraint, which facilitated the
administration’s objectives or proclivities towards action or inaction. See Donald A. Sylvan, “Planning
Foreign Policy Systematically,” Journal of Conflict Resolution, Vol. 23, No. 1, 1979: 139-145. For recent
research on the role that international organizations or agreements play in promoting state objectives, see
for example Jon C. Pevehouse, “Democracy form the Outside-in? International Organizations and
Democratization,” International Organization, Vol. 56, No. 3 (Summer 2002), 515-549; See also Edward
D. Mansfield, Helen V. Milner, and B. Peter Rosendorff, Why Democracies Cooperate More: Electoral
Control and International Trade Agreements, International Organization, Vol. 56, No. 3, (Summer 2002),
477-513.

3 See for example, Bill Clinton, Interview with the French Media, 7 June, 1994, Weekly Compilation of
Documents Online via GPO Access, http://www.access.gpo.gov; See Anthony Lake, Opening Statements
Dispatch Magazine, Vol. 5, No. 20, May 16, 1994, online access, http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC; Madeleine
K. Albright, House Appropriations Committee, The Clinton Administration’s Policy on Reforming
Multilateral Peace Operations, Statement before the Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export


9 As stated in chapter one, “armed humanitarian intervention” was defined as the use of military force (i.e., the deployment of ground troops and or the use of sustained and intensive air strikes) to: 1) protect aid workers and or deliver humanitarian supplies; (2) assist/protect refugees or noncombatants embroiled within a humanitarian crisis or emergency.

10 While this pressure appeared to intensify after the democratic defeat in the mid-term congressional elections, the bipartisan consensus behind the administration’s peacekeeping policy had begun to erode due to the increasing casualties in Somalia, even before the October deaths of the U.S. servicemen.


14 Although the term “ethnic killings” was common parlance in reference to the conflict in Rwanda, such killings were represented as occurring on all sides in the conflict and were not clearly associated with one side or another. Likewise, although the administration later admitted that “acts of genocide” had occurred in Rwanda the dominant representation of the conflict was that of civil war, therefore this finding was insufficient to force U.S. action.

15 This supports the notion that there exists in the minds of decisionmakers a certain “threshold” which, if passed, increases the likelihood of an intervention recommendation. See Donald A. Sylvan and Jon C. Pevehouse, “Deciding whether to Intervene,” in Michael Keren and Donald A. Sylvan, eds., *International Intervention: Sovereignty vs. Responsibility*, (Portland: Frank Cass, 2002), 56-74.

16 This is also consistent with Sylvan and Pevehouse’s research on Rwanda, see Sylvan and Pevehouse, “Deciding whether to Intervene.”

17 For an example of the Bush administration’s perception of the distinction between “ethnic cleansing” and genocide” and their subsequent legal implications, see Samantha Power, *A Problem From Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, (NY: Basic Books, 2002), 288-289.

18 See Action Memorandum from Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, George E. Moose, Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, John Shattuck, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs Douglas J. Bennet, and Department of State Legal Adviser, Conrad K. Harper, through Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Peter Tarnoff and Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs, Tim Wirth, to Secretary of State Warren Christopher, “Has Genocide Occurred in Rwanda?”, May 21, 1994, Secret, available on line via the National Security Archive http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB53/index.html.

19 For another view on the military’s reluctance to advocate force in Somalia, Bosnia and Haiti is also explored by Deborah Avant. See “Are the Reluctant Warriors Out of Control? Why the U.S. Military is averse to Responding to Post-Cold War Low Level Threats,” *Security Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Winter 1996/7: 51-90.


22 According to Pennington and Hastie (1986), the incorporation of specific “lessons from history” or analogical references in the interpretation of information is consistent with explanation-based reasoning, as individuals interact to “socially construct meaning” of diverse and often complex information. See also Sylvan and Haddad (1998), “Reasoning and Problem Representation in Foreign Policy.”

23 This conclusion is therefore consistent with that of Sylvan et. al., “Case-Based, Model-Based and Explanation-Based Styles of Reasoning” and Sylvan and Haddad, “Reasoning and Problem Representation in Foreign Policy.”

24 Therefore, the elite use of analogies in this research appears consistent with, but not entirely the same as that argued by other scholars. See Khong, Analogies at War and Vertzberger, The World in Their Minds.

25 Khong argues that if individuals experienced an event during a particular time period during their life, then that event is more likely to be readily accessible for comparison and analysis. Khong defines this generation concept or “coming of political age” as “the age band between twenty and thirty-five years, the former coinciding roughly with early adulthood and voting eligibility, and the latter approximating the time when one’s political career responsibilities are likely to increase.” See Khong, Analogies at War, 214.


27 For instance, studies that simply focus on the analogies invoked in order to determine the dominance of one analogy over the other in the decision making process may underestimate or overlook other contextual factors at work. See Khong, Analogies at War.

28 See Strobel, Late-Breaking Foreign Policy; and Robinson, The CNN Effect.

29 For instance, analyzing the public discourse of the administration of George W. Bush might be particularly problematic, given its apparent unwillingness to divulge public information to Congress, engage in Presidential press conferences and other media events.

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