

Indictments, Dismissals, and Obstruction – Republika Srpska: 1992 - 2011

by

Kemal Koyu

A thesis

presented to the University of Waterloo

in fulfillment of the

thesis requirement for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

History

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2021

© Kemal Koyu 2021

## Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners. I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

## Abstract

This work details the transformation of the Republika Srpska from its foundation in 1992 to the election of Milorad Dodik as the entity's president in 2011. It covers the bloody birth of the RS and the role of its founders in the within the Serb Democratic Party (SDS). It extensively discusses the postwar political divisions between members of the SDS old guard, which include Biljana Plavsic, Radovan Karadzic, Ratko Mladic, and others. This work also discusses the rise, fall, and rebirth of Milorad Dodik who transitioned from a reformist oriented toward the West, to a reactionary bent on the independence of the RS. Throughout this time, the Office of the High Representative gained tremendous power within Bosnia and Herzegovina, and subsequently lost it. This work explains how American disengagement, force reduction, and shifts in the geopolitical balance of power caused the OHR's lacklustre decline and Dodik's empowerment.

## Acknowledgements

It is with great pleasure that I have completed this work on the Republika Srpska. I would first like to thank my advisor, Dr. Alex Statiev. His patience in editing and providing thoughtful and constructive criticism has been immeasurably helpful. I must also thank my friends: Brent, Cem, James, Milan, and many others, who have counselled me throughout the writing process. I must also thank my mother, Mary, and my aunt, Bev, who have both provided me with as much love and support as was required to complete this work.

## Dedication

I dedicate this work to all those who lost their lives in the Bosnian War. I pray that such a war never again occurs in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I also hope that its peoples reject the narrow positions of ultranationalists in favour of cooperation and a genuine desire to improve their lives.

## Table of Contents

<i>Author's Declaration</i>	<i>ii</i>
<i>Abstract</i>	<i>iii</i>
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>iv</i>
<i>Dedication</i>	<i>v</i>
<i>List of Abbreviations</i>	<i>vii-viii</i>
Introduction	1-8
Chapter 1: The Bosnian War and the Road to Dayton	9-30
Chapter 2: The General Framework Agreement and the Constitution	31-40
Chapter 3: The Factions Harden	41-52
Chapter 4: New Political Forces Emerge	53-70
Chapter 5: Moderate Rags to Radical Riches	71-88
Chapter 6: Power by any Means Necessary	89-112
Conclusion	113-115
Bibliography	116-125

## **List of Abbreviations**

BiH	-	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BOSS	-	Bosnian Party
EUFOR	-	European Union Force
FRY	-	Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
GFA	-	General Framework Agreement; also known as the Dayton Agreement
ICTY	-	International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
IEBL	-	Inter-Entity Boundary Line
IFOR	-	Implementation Force
IRB	-	Republika Srpska Investment-Development Bank
JNA	-	Yugoslav People's Army
LCY	-	League of Communists of Yugoslavia
NATO	-	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OHR	-	Office of the High Representative
PDP	-	Party of Democratic Progress
RS	-	Republika Srpska
SAA	-	Stabilization and Association Agreement
SAO	-	Serb Autonomous Oblasts
SBiH	-	Bosniak Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina
SDA	-	Party of Democratic Action
SDP	-	Social Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina
SDS	-	Serb Democratic Party (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
SFOR	-	Stabilization Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina

- SIPA - State Investigation and Protection Agency
- SNS - Serbian People's Alliance
- SNSD - Alliance of Independent Social Democrats
- SRS - Serbian Radical Party of Republika Srpska
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



## **Introduction**

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) has one of the most complicated, bureaucratic, and divided governments in the world. Its division into two entities occurred because of the Dayton Peace Agreement, formally known as the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina that emerged in 1992 and eventually became the Republika Srpska (RS) was ruled at first by the iron fist of the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) and its leader Radovan Karadzic. The SDS and its functionaries made extensive preparations for war. The actions they took during the war in Bosnia made them pariahs in the eyes of the international community and the peoples persecuted under their rule.

Yugoslavia's disintegration in the 1990s unleashed socio-political forces that had long been suppressed. Throughout all the republics of the country, from Slovenia in the North to Macedonia in the South, ethno-cultural awakenings transformed Yugoslavia from a supranational entity based on a liberal conception of national community. Instead, an exclusive nationalism took hold within all of Yugoslavia's republics. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, one of the most ethnically diverse republics in Yugoslavia, this division was paramount. The Bosnian Muslims embraced the notion of an independent BiH under their majoritarian leadership. However, the Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs both rejected this notion and sought to bring BiH under their respective spheres of influence. The Bosnian Serbs undertook a reorganization of their society that was in line with preparations for war within the republic. As Yugoslavia broke down, the Bosnian Serbs sought to unite Serb-majority parts of BiH with Serbia. The lengths to which the Bosnian Serbs' political representatives went to accomplish this bloody goal were extensive.

Chapter 1 shows how the plans of the SDS and its ally in Serbia proper, the administration of Slobodan Milosevic, led to atrocious acts committed against Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats. Serbian paramilitary groups and the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) perpetrated these acts to accomplish the idea of a greater Serbia. These planned, coordinated, and violent acts led to the mass exodus of Bosnian Muslims from the territory claimed by the Republika Srpska. The VRS and their fellow combatants imprisoned Bosnian Muslims in detainment camps and subjected them to beatings, torture, and even rape. As the war progressed, the Bosnian Muslims and Bosnian Croats fought their own war against one another. However, they eventually made peace at the urging of the Clinton administration to stave off the Bosnian Serbs. The Croat-Bosniak conflict in Bosnia ended with the foundation of the Federation entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina through the Washington Agreement of 1994. With this, BiH had the formal template for a two-entity division. The Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats had an uneasy alliance, but it held for the remainder of the war.

With peace between the Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Muslims, the latter of whom realized an intensified national identity as “Bosniaks” during the war, their combined ire was focused on the Bosnian Serbs. With a united Bosniak-Croat front, the Bosnian Serbs and their allies from Serbia proper experienced military defeats. These defeats, aggravated by the indirect support of Croats and Bosniaks by NATO, led to the ethnic cleansing of Croatian Serbs from the Republika Srpska Krajina (RSK) in the summer of 1995. Many of those embittered Serbs, robbed of all their properties, landed in Republika Srpska. Around this time, the Bosnian Serb Army (VRS) committed some of its most brutal acts, which included the massacre at Srebrenica in July. After this point, the VRS was verging on collapse as Federation forces gained ground. At that time, international involvement in the Bosnian War reached its height - with the VRS being

NATO's main target. Eventually, the warring parties in BiH sat at the negotiating table at Wright Patterson Airforce Base in Dayton, Ohio, thanks to pressure from the Americans.

There they came up with a lasting peace agreement, the General Framework Agreement for Peace in BiH (GFA). It has eleven annexes that deal with a variety of peace implementation criteria. It also contains BiH's constitution, upheld by the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The GFA also called upon both Croatia and Serbia to guarantee the territorial integrity of BiH. Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic represented the Serbs during the negotiations at Dayton. Contemporary academics view him as having given up too much Bosnian Serb territory. However, I argue that Milosevic's negotiations at Dayton won more for the Bosnian Serbs than the military situation on the ground should have permitted. The Dayton Peace Agreement had many stipulations, the most important of which created BiH's legislative and judicial systems. It set BiH up as a republic with central parliamentary institutions and two entities, which had significant powers and autonomy. The Implementation Force (IFOR) enforced the peace and served as a buffer to prevent renewed fighting between the two entities. The Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL) effectively partitioned BiH into its two-entitized frontier.

Chapter 2 covers the transition from the IFOR to the Stabilization Force (SFOR), which was responsible for safeguarding the GFA's longer term objectives. The SFOR protected the international institutions operating in BiH, while the GFA outlined their mandates. The Office of the High Representative (OHR) was one such institution, but its *raison d'être* expanded. Over time, the OHR evolved as its powers grew. This evolution saw the OHR become a serious force in Bosnian politics, with its zenith being the period from 1997 to 2006. Afterward, its powers - or rather its willingness to use them - decreased as the international community also reduced its military commitment to BiH. The OHR was especially important to the conduct of BiH's

Republika Srpska entity, the political history of which is the primary focus of this work. From 1997 onward, the OHR consistently dismissed RS governmental and administrative officials, elected and unelected, for unwelcome practices. Indeed, many of these officials were tainted by their conduct during the Bosnian War, which saw them indicted by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Those indicted included the RS's wartime leadership in the form of its President Radovan Karadzic and VRS head General Ratko Mladic. However, the ICTY indicted almost all the top brass of the wartime SDS well into the 2000s. This made the postwar retention of power extremely difficult for the SDS.

Chapter 3 examines the postwar instability that blew up the SDS and empowered reformist forces. Karadzic resigned from his presidential post due to his ICTY indictment. Afterward, a tremendous rivalry amongst various political factions within the RS nearly erupted into civil war. During this power struggle, Milorad Dodik, the leader of a minor political party, the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD), became the Prime Minister of the Republika Srpska. It was the big break for someone who eventually became the main force of RS politics. Dodik's political maneuvering and his role in RS politics are symptomatic of the competing political forces at work within the entity. Dodik features prominently in this work as he has maintained tremendous authority in the RS up to the present day. The nationalistically inclined RS electorate cut Dodik's rule short at the beginning of the twenty-first century on account of his unpopularity. Later, Dodik reversed his position on several important issues to be more in-line with the revanchism of his entity's voters. However, at the beginning of his career in the 1980s, Dodik was a reformer. He began in municipal politics in the small town of Laktasi and has since become the most influential politician in the Republika Srpska, if not all BiH.

Chapter 4 describes Dodik's Prime Ministry and his attempts to retain his position despite nationalist opposition to his rule. Dodik's moderate credentials earned him the backing of the OHR and the international community. During this time, Dodik had few checks on his personal power. However, the Bosnian Serb electorate saw his government as the benefactor of foreign interference in the RS's political affairs. A clear rift emerged between the RS electorate and the international community in BiH. The OHR's preferred political candidates were often contrary to the candidates desired by the Bosnian Serb majority. It was clear that the OHR favoured Dodik, but because he made several unpopular decisions, the Bosnian Serb electorate eventually voted him out of office. In 2000, the SDS reclaimed its domination over the RS political system, much to the displeasure of the OHR. Successive SDS governments suffered from scandals, with the resultant political instability exacerbated by the OHR's ample use of its veto and dismissal powers. The OHR targeted many high and mid-level officials, thereby severely weakening the political power of the SDS. The OHR went so far as to table its own laws due to the paralysis of the Bosnian central parliament. At this point, the OHR refused to tolerate anti-Bosnian obstructionism. Such was the level of OHR involvement in Bosnian and RS politics that it ultimately crippled the SDS and provoked the collapse of its government.

Dodik reoriented both himself and his SNSD from a lukewarm Balkan liberalism toward the hardline of Bosnian Serb nationalism. Chapter 5 discusses this transition in detail. The process began after the SNSD's defeat at the hands of the SDS in 2000. However, once it took power, the SDS sought to preserve its governing power by embracing more moderate positions. The SDS's leaders thought a softer, more cooperative tone with the international community protected the SDS from increased OHR intervention. However, this was not the case. This nationalist shift saw the SDS and SNSD effectively switch their roles. The former embraced

moderate positions, while the latter appealed to the Bosnian Serbs' nationalism. Dodik became Prime Minister once more after the SDS lost the confidence of the RS electorate and was unable to form a government. Dodik retained his position thanks to his calling for an RS referendum on independence. This boosted his popularity amongst the Bosnian Serb electorate and gave him victory in the 2006 elections.

Chapter 6 discusses Dodik's second term as Prime Minister. During this time, Dodik was under investigation because of corruption allegations. To combat the negative effects of these accusations against his political popularity, he appealed to the nationalist sentiments of the Bosnian Serb electorate. He called yet again for an independence referendum and persistently denied genocide at Srebrenica. In addition, geopolitics in the Balkans, especially pertaining to Kosovo's declaration of independence from Serbia in 2008, opened new possibilities for political manoeuvring in the RS. The Russians and Serbs used the spectre of RS secession to threaten the West from pursuing independence for Kosovo. However, the RS refrained from doing anything dramatic. It was South Ossetia and Abkhazia that were the truly secessionist trouble spots at that time. Regardless, Dodik's nationalist agitation grew louder and caused a rift in the relationship between him and Serbia's pro-EU President Boris Tadic. Dodik and Tadic were once allies, but the political forces that ensured their survival were eventually at odds with one another. As such, Dodik further embraced nationalist politics while Tadic condemned this. In the end, Dodik outlasted Tadic. Dodik became RS President in 2010 while Tadic lost the Serbian elections in 2012 to his Euro-sceptic nationalist opponent Tomislav Nikolic.

The course of RS history opens the way to a discussion of many significant questions and themes. What is and should be the role of the international community in nation building and postwar governance? Have the international community's efforts in BiH been effective? What

role does the history of the RS play in determining the entity's position in BiH and the Balkans as a whole? This thesis, focused on the political affairs and machinations in an extremely complicated and fluid social environment, helps to determine both the historical and cultural milieu of the Bosnian Serbs in the post-Yugoslav era. It clarifies the awkward reality of a domestic populace that embraces political stances that threaten a multiethnic status quo. In essence, the RS is the epicentre of too many unresolved and complicated problems. Its unstable political history suggests that its future too may be unstable. Its population, swayed by nationalist elements, is unable to accept its place in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is a geopolitical 'grey-zone' ripe for manipulation.

Throughout the course of this work, any references to the international community does not refer to the entire "international community." There were particularly vocal and powerful countries that directed and influenced the trajectory of postwar Bosnia and Herzegovina. Paramount among these countries was the United States, which was especially active in the Balkans during the Clinton administration. In the 1990s, the United States was the world's sole superpower – the Soviet Union collapsed earlier in the decade and the Russian Federation was in a state of stagnation until the rise of Putin. China and India too were still developing and too economically behind to pose a threat to US hegemony. Even the Americans' European allies, while generally supportive of the role the US played in the Balkans, revealed a lukewarm commitment to the region. This was particularly the case when the US committed itself to Middle Eastern adventurism under the Bush administration and the Europeans were forced to take a greater role in BiH.

American disengagement from the Balkans was an exercise in buck passing to the English, French, and Germans, though this was of limited effectiveness. With American moves

in the Middle East, the United States ceded the initiative in the Balkans to other geopolitical rivals. Chief amongst these were the Russians, who after the rise of Putin, began cultivating an alliance network with the Serbs. As the economic situation in the Russian Federation has improved, so too has its ability to project its geopolitical influence in the Balkans. The Russo-Serbian relationship has only intensified up to the present day. Regardless of its geopolitical affiliations, the RS and its political elites have learned all too well the processes by which to maintain power and win elections. Something that has become dramatically intertwined as great power competition in the Balkans has become more evident.

The RS government tends to backtrack on promises at the highest echelons of power; while this is a common practice in politics generally, it is endemic in the RS. Apart from its political problems, the RS is an entity forged out of blood and war. Its populace is a mostly unwilling member of BiH, but international involvement and the GFA prevent this from changing. The populace supported the wartime leadership of the SDS after the war, but the GFA stopped Karadzic and his colleagues from holding power. Afterward, Dodik became the international poster boy for reform in the RS. However, his defeat by the SDS in 2000 forced him to embrace nationalism. His return in 2006 and his election to the RS Presidency in 2010 demonstrates that the most viable nationalist option is usually the one that will take power in the RS. This is uncomfortable for the international community as it wishes to see an RS leader who is moderate, liberal, and committed to Euro-Atlantic integration - something that continues to elude BiH as a whole.



## **Chapter 1: The Bosnian War and the Road to Dayton**

By 1990, Yugoslavia's disintegration was fast approaching. The country's first democratic elections after the death of Josip Broz Tito confirmed the existence of unsavoury political forces. Throughout the Yugoslav republics, the elections brought leaders to power who were ambitious to the point of unscrupulousness. These men toyed with the long-suppressed emotionality of ethnic nationalism and led independence movements that resulted in the secession of Slovenia and Croatia from Yugoslavia and the entrenchment of reactionary centralism in Serbia. Slovenia and Croatia fought wars against the rump state of Yugoslavia to defend their independence. However, Slovenia's war was quick, while Croatia's lasted until 1995 with ceasefires interspersed throughout. The course of events was slightly different in BiH. While nationalist parties stormed to the forefront of the republic's political life, they had to rely on an uneasy coalition with one another to remove the League of Communists of Bosnia and Herzegovina from power. As a result, the Croatian Democratic Union, the Serb Democratic Party, and the Bosniak-supported Party of Democratic Action ruled BiH. However, the country was wrought with division and in-fighting among these nationalist parties as each vied for as much influence over BiH's institutions as possible. Serb inhabitants of BiH ultimately wanted to remain part of a Serb-dominated Yugoslavia and planned to secede from that republic in case of its separation from Yugoslavia. The actions of the Bosnian Serbs in the leadup to and during the Bosnian War is the primary focus of this chapter.

The collapse of Yugoslavia was largely the result of long suppressed political questions that remained unanswered throughout the country's close to seventy-year existence. Though Yugoslavia was somewhat more liberal than the communist states of the eastern bloc, it was by no means a free state. The problems that plagued Yugoslavia on the eve of its dissolution

remained the same since the founding of the country after the First World War. There was no consensus on how Yugoslavia was to be constituted as a country. Its non-Serb nationalities, primarily the Croats, Slovenes, and Bosnian Muslims, all desired autonomy at the republic level and a loose federal structure. The Serbs, on the other hand favoured a centralized and Belgrade-centric Yugoslavia. Indeed, the formal structure of Yugoslavia was closer to this latter vision prior to the Second World War under the rule of the Karadjordjevic dynasty.

The German invasion of Yugoslavia in 1941 heralded the collapse of the country and unleashed ethno-political forces that were bent on genocide. The Germans and Italians set up a Croatian client state which committed terrible atrocities against Yugoslavia's Serbs. The Serbian royalist resistance, known as Chetniks, also committed atrocities against non-Serbs during the war. By contrast, the communist partisans led by Josip Broz Tito, himself a mixed Croat and Slovene, united Yugoslavia's nationalities in a broad and popular resistance against the fascists and forced out the Axis armies. The Partisans' victory enabled them to take control of Yugoslavia and negate any postwar claims to government by the previous royal administration. Tito cemented his own authority and kept a tight-knit circle of comrades from the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY).

However, like in the other communist states, Yugoslavia's communists were also subjected to purges. The most sweeping of these occurred in the late 1940s and into the early 1950s because of the Tito-Stalin split. Yugoslav supporters of Stalin were imprisoned and expelled from the LCY as Yugoslavia's relations with the Soviet Union and its satellite states worsened. Tito initiated other purges in the 1960s and 1970s against Serbs and Croats because of their supposedly nationalist sentiments. Following Tito's death in 1980, anti-Muslim sentiments also led to the persecution of the Bosniaks. These purges effectively reduced the republic-level

communist parties to mere shadows of their former selves. This severely undermined both their local effectiveness and resonance amongst the peoples of the republics. As such, the local populations within the republics, particularly in the non-Serb republics, identified less and less with the “Yugoslavian” *weltanschauung*.

With Tito’s death in 1980, the single strongest symbol of Yugoslavian unity disappeared. The Yugoslav economy was in tatters: domestic industry was inefficient; the disparity of wealth between the “northern” (Slovenia and Croatia) and “southern” (Serbia, BiH, Montenegro and Macedonia) republics was tremendous, and Yugoslavia’s sovereign debt was basically unpayable. When Tito died, the Yugoslav federal government became a presidency with republic representation and a chairmanship on an annually rotating basis. This meant that the federal government became weak while the republic-level governments assumed ever greater levels of responsibility both politically and economically. As the republics embraced their own narrow interests at the expense of a greater Yugoslav vision, their residents followed suit. This made the situation extremely complicated, as some republics were heterogeneous, with substantial ethnic minorities. This was the case in both Croatia, which had many Serbs, and BiH, which had Bosnian Muslims, Croats, and Serbs.

As Yugoslavia regressed toward bitter political rivalries among the republics, the country’s ethnic divisions became ever more apparent. The Serbs in Croatia and BiH sought to be represented politically by Serbia. All of this was compounded by a religious revival throughout Yugoslavia, which occurred because of the communists’ waning influence. While religion was not the primary motivation for the descent into ethnic warfare, it certainly played a part in rallying Yugoslavia’s peoples to their respective banners. Indeed, Bosnia’s Muslims had little that separated them from either their Croat or Serb neighbours, except for religion. For the

Serbs, the influence of the Serbian Orthodox Church and historically tilted propaganda of an “anti-Ottoman crusade” was central to their identity during the war in Bosnia. It is noteworthy that none of the warring parties in Yugoslavia fought exclusively for religion or religious reasons. Notable exceptions to this are the Wahabis and international Jihadists that volunteered to fight in Bosnia. However, the Bosnian Muslim leaders, while inclined toward political Islam, fought more for survival than for the furtherance of any religious ideology. Indeed, the divisions between the Bosniaks and the small number of Wahabis that remained in the region after the war are a controversial feature of Bosnia’s postwar politics.

A conspicuous reason for the slide toward Yugoslav disintegration lays in the overt centralization attempts by Slobodan Milosevic. His time as President of Serbia allowed him to mobilize Serb nationalist sentiments surrounding Kosovo and Serbia’s place in Yugoslavia more broadly, into a political movement. Forces loyal to him mobilized and played significant parts in bringing down the autonomous governments of Vojvodina and Kosovo, both nominally part of Serbia. So too did they play a part in the collapse of Montenegro’s government, the first non-Serb government to be dominated by Milosevic’s ruling cabal. These movements combined with Milosevic’s so-called “anti-bureaucratic revolution” and allowed him to capture the governmental and administrative forces of the Yugoslav state. He then used this power to consolidate his own authority at the expense of the non-Serb republics. It is this which ultimately led to the non-Serb republics’ secession and the Serbs minorities’ own secessionist movements in those republics.

In September 1991, the Bosnian Serbs, led by the greatest secessionist force amongst them – the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) – set up their so-called “Serb Autonomous Oblasts (SAOs).” These formed the embryo of a secessionist Bosnian Serb government in BiH known

later as the Republika Srpska.<sup>1</sup> These events included a variety of other measures that aimed to increase the authority and military potential of the ethnic Serb population. At the beginning of October, the Serb and Montenegrin members of the federal presidency of Yugoslavia overthrew that institution and took it over.<sup>2</sup> This gave near total control of the Yugoslav People's Army to the Serbs. Concurrently, Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) forces committed acts of war against Bosnia's Croat population in the south of the country. Serb and Montenegrin units of the JNA that were en route to fight in Dubrovnik, Croatia, wrought devastation on the Bosnian Croat village of Ravno.<sup>3</sup> The Bosnian legislature feared the tightening grip of the Serbs on what was left of Yugoslavia. It responded to JNA attacks against Bosnian Croats with a vote on Bosnian sovereignty on October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1991.<sup>4</sup> This initiative upheld the idea that Bosnia and Herzegovina was a single political unit and that its parliament had supremacy within its own territory. The vote passed and at that point, the Bosnian Serbs set up a parallel parliamentary institution.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, Serb separatists in Croatia were fighting against the newly independent Croatian government. This war hardened ethno-political attitudes in BiH as Bosnia's Croats sought to support Croatia. The Bosnian Serbs actively volunteered to fight for the independence of the Republika Srpska Krajina (RSK), the Croatian Serbs' secessionist entity, despite Bosnia's supposed neutrality. The Bosniaks, led by President Alija Izetbegovic, were stuck between Yugoslavia's most jingoistic political actors, Franjo Tudjman, President of Croatia, and Slobodan Milosevic, President of Serbia. As the political divisions within BiH hardened, the war in Croatia came to the forefront of political affairs. Unable to withstand the tremendous political

---

<sup>1</sup> Marko Attila Hoare, *How Bosnia Armed* (London: Saqi Books, 2004), 34-35.

<sup>2</sup> Hoare, *How Bosnia Armed*, 32.

<sup>3</sup> Edina Becirevic, *Genocide on the Drina River* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014), 54.

<sup>4</sup> Hoare, *How Bosnia Armed*, 35.

<sup>5</sup> Gerard Toal and Carl T. Dahlman, *Bosnia Remade: Ethnic Cleansing and its Reversal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 110.

pressure from both the Serbs and the Croats, Izetbegovic backed an independence referendum. However, around this time, international pressure encouraged the Croats and Serbs to enter negotiations and proclaim a truce in Croatia. With this, the Serbs were able to move many of their weapons and forces from Croatia to BiH, where they engaged in war to proclaim the independence of the Bosnian Serbs.

The Serbs planned for this course of events and used military force to wrest largely Serb-populated areas from the Bosnian government after its declaration of independence. The JNA and the Interior Ministry of Serbia armed Bosnian Serb militias at least since the spring of 1991, long before the declaration of Bosnia's independence on March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1992.<sup>6</sup> Plans for war against both BiH and Croatia existed much earlier. The RAM Plan was a series of planned military and covert operations formulated by Serbian senior officers in the JNA, with the strategic intent of unifying areas with large Serbian populations in Croatia and BiH with Serbia.<sup>7</sup> The measures to achieve this included the expulsion of non-Serbs and the use of operatives to stir up ethnic tensions.<sup>8</sup> The foundations of this plan were discussed by senior members of the JNA at least since 1990, if not earlier.

The SDS and its leadership conjured strategic plans to turn the areas of BiH with Serb majorities, and even large Serb minorities, into an entirely separate political authority. Apart from coordinating shipments of arms from the JNA and the Serbian Ministry of the Interior, the Bosnian Serb SDS leadership undertook a variety of measures that put them in a better position for war. By August 1991, the SDS already began using encoded communications to ensure that forces loyal to the Bosnian government could not interpret their manoeuvres and preparations.<sup>9</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Hoare, *How Bosnia Armed*, 32.

<sup>7</sup> Becirevic, *Genocide on the Drina River*, 62.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>9</sup> Becirevic, *Genocide on the Drina River*, 59.

This was eight months before full scale war started in late March and early April 1992. Karadzic and his advisers drew up plans for mobilization and intended to use the SAOs for the coordination of conscription drives.<sup>10</sup> In October 1991, Serb deputies from the Bosnian parliament created the Bosnian Serb National Assembly, known as the Skupstina. The territory claimed by the Skupstina held a plebiscite in November where Bosnian Serbs voted to remain part of Yugoslavia. The Skupstina planned to follow this course, regardless of any future decisions by the Bosnian parliament.<sup>11</sup> It was in this territory that the VRS and its allies perpetrated the Bosnian War's most condemnable acts.

By December 1991, the Bosnian Serbs established municipal administrative governing bodies known as "crisis headquarters."<sup>12</sup> These administrative units consolidated their authority throughout the areas of BiH controlled by Serb and/or Bosnian Serb military units. Bosnian Serb reserve officers of the JNA and/or Territorial Defence units often commanded these crisis headquarters. These crisis headquarters collaborated with the Yugoslav Army in military matters.<sup>13</sup> The crisis headquarters became increasingly powerful throughout the end of 1991 into 1992. The Skupstina proclaimed the independence of the Republic of the Serb People of Bosnia and Herzegovina on January 9, 1992.<sup>14</sup> Thus, a rival to the Bosnian state emerged throughout the largely Serb-populated areas of BiH. The Skupstina eventually renamed this area the "Republika Srpska" in the summer of 1992.

On the first week of March 1992, most Bosnians voted to proclaim independence from Yugoslavia in a referendum boycotted by the Serbs. Initially, SDS supporters set up barricades in

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 61.

Sarajevo.<sup>15</sup> On March 27th, Bosanski Brod was the first Bosnian town to be attacked by the Serbs.<sup>16</sup> Bosnian Serb militias, supported by the Yugoslav Army and paramilitaries from Serbia proper, launched a full-scale assault against BiH on April 1st.<sup>17</sup> A number of border towns including Bijeljina, Kupres, Foca, Zvornik, Visegrad, and others throughout the northeastern areas of BiH in April became the targets.<sup>18</sup> The siege of Sarajevo also began as the JNA captured the city's airport, and armed SDS members gunned down anti-war protesters from windows in Sarajevo's infamous Holiday Inn.<sup>19</sup> The Serb onslaught caught the Bosnian government almost totally unprepared for war. There was little organized Bosnian resistance at these early stages, save for scattered Bosnian government and irregular forces in Sarajevo. The Bosnian Serbs and Serb paramilitaries captured vast swathes of Bosnian territory in the first month of the war.

The operational tactics employed by joint Serb forces to capture these towns and expel their Bosniak inhabitants is well-documented. Becirevic explains that there were phases to the assaults. First, the JNA set up roadblocks on the main roads leading to the area that would come under attack, while Bosnian Serb units blockaded any other minor roads.<sup>20</sup> Artillery then fired into the area with civilian residences and potential defensive points targeted. Afterward, Serb forces, which usually included paramilitary groups, assaulted the area and killed or captured men and evicted, captured, or killed women and children.<sup>21</sup> Once regular forces advanced to the next area to be assaulted, militias often stayed behind and committed atrocities such as summary executions, rape, and looting.

---

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>17</sup> Hoare, *How Bosnia Armed*, 44.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 84.



A concrete example of this is the assault on the municipality of Zvornik on April 8th. Serb paramilitary forces, including those commanded by Zeljko Raznatovic, known as “Arkan,” and Vojislav Seselj’s “White Eagles” mobilized in the days leading up to the attack.<sup>22</sup> From Serbia proper, artillery belonging to the 12th and 17th corps of the JNA rained shells upon Zvornik while the so-called “Arkanovci” and “White Eagles” sniped at Zvornik’s civilian population. Extensive preparations allowed for the evacuation of ethnic Serb civilians from the town before the attack, so artillery and sniper fire was indiscriminate.<sup>23</sup> Once the town was pummelled, Serb forces moved in and occupied it. The surrounding villages met similar fates. The case of Zvornik is particularly noteworthy as there are documented cases of local Bosnian Serb civilian volunteers that tormented their Bosniak neighbours and inflicted indignities and atrocities of all kinds. In early May, Bosnian Serbs from the nearby village of Snagovo held Bosniak villagers captive.<sup>24</sup> Becirevic describes the confinement within the village as being akin to a concentration camp. The conditions were cramped and inhumane with nearly four hundred prisoners in a couple of houses.<sup>25</sup> Torture and murder abounded.

Radio Zvornik, Radio Loznica, and even TV Beograd called the fleeing Bosniak population from Zvornik and the surrounding villages to send their men to register their property with the SDS-controlled Zvornik administration.<sup>26</sup> Thinking they would be allowed to return to their homes and gain legal title for them under the new regime, many Bosniak men complied and attended these so-called registration drives. However, upon their arrival, they were forced to sign agreements that revoked legal possession of their property and passed it over to the

---

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 89.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 91.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 93.

municipality.<sup>27</sup> These men were then transported to concentration camps where they endured torture, starvation, and murder. Much of the property ceded to the municipality would eventually be used to house Serb refugees because of Croat and Bosniak advances elsewhere.<sup>28</sup>

Zvornik is just one example of the dozens of towns and villages occupied by combined Serb forces. The atrocities committed therewith forced the mass migration of hundreds of thousands of Bosniak civilians from their homes with the aim of creating an ethnically homogeneous Bosnian Serb state. Such was the brutal extent of this campaign that US State Department Analyst Jon Western estimated that during the first months of the war, upwards of 10,000 non-Serb civilians per day abandoned their homes in search of safety in Bosnian-controlled territory.<sup>29</sup> Apart from the cost of human lives, northeastern Bosnia's cities, towns, and villages had their cultural and religious heritage erased. Islamic architecture, including some of Bosnia's oldest mosques, were simply bulldozed.<sup>30</sup> In some cases, Bosnian Serb authorities constructed Orthodox churches atop the ruins.

While the destruction of Bosniak lives, property, and traditions in what became the Republika Srpska was abominable, it was the intended plan of that statelet's ruling party - the SDS. In mid-May 1992, already more than a month after the assault on BiH, Karadzic outlined his plans to the Skupstina. Robert Donia in his analysis of the Skupstina's records and transcripts describes the six objectives that dictated SDS wartime policy. These included: the segregation and expulsion of non-Serbs; the territorial connection between all Serb areas (including RSK and RS); the increase of the RS's territory as far as the Una and Neretva rivers; the partition of

---

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 93.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 94.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>30</sup> Burg and Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 174.

Sarajevo; and coastal access for the RS.<sup>31</sup> These objectives had significant geopolitical implications as they allowed the RS to pursue an ethnically homogeneous state, much coveted access to the Adriatic Sea, and the ability to unify the RSK and RS with Serbia. The methods by which these objectives were pursued led to a bloodbath unseen in the former Yugoslavia since the Second World War.

Following Karadzic's explanation of the RS's wartime objectives, General Ratko Mladic rose to address the Skupstina. In his speech, Mladic expressed his opinion that the non-Serbs of BiH could not simply be moved around to other areas of the country - a more permanent solution was required.<sup>32</sup> This solution, murder and expulsion, had already been put into practice in the towns and villages that fell under the brutal occupation of Serb and Bosnian Serb forces. However, Mladic also highlighted the necessity of maintaining diplomatic credibility so as not to arouse the wrath of foreign powers, specifically the United States. With this, he described the necessity of making it seem as if the Bosnian government was targeting its own people to blame the Serbs and draw the United States into the war.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, Mladic was skilled in his understanding of the political ramifications of modern warfare. Becirevic states: "From the very beginning of the aggression and genocide, Mladic realized that misrepresentation of reality and avoidance of any public acceptance for the responsibility of crimes was necessary in order to prevent military intervention by the international community."<sup>34</sup> With this strategy, the VRS was able to significantly undermine the Bosnian effort to gain international support. However, once

---

<sup>31</sup> Robert Donia, "Republika Srpska Assembly, 1992-1995: Highlights and Excerpts," Report, Exhibit P537.2a, *Prosecutor v. Milosevic*, No. IT-02-54 (July 29, 2003), 3-4.

<sup>32</sup> Donia, "Republika Srpska Assembly," 5-6.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>34</sup> Becirevic, *Genocide on the Drina River*, 67.

the extent of the VRS's crimes became known and such gross violations of the laws of war were apparent, they became almost impossible to deny.

However, denial amongst the RS senior leadership was cynically persistent. As the Bosnian War raged on, the Serbs managed to capture much of the country. However, several strongholds stood steadfast in their defiance of this show of force. These included the capital Sarajevo, but also towns such as Zepa, Srebrenica, Gorazde, and others. The second year of the war proved to be the most trying for non-Serb forces as the Bosnian Croats and Bosnian central government were embroiled in conflict with one another. The origins of this conflict are typically attributed to aggression by the Bosnian Croats. They wanted to secure the territories assured to them in a partition-based peace agreement known as the Vance-Owen Plan.<sup>35</sup> However, some academics, such as historian Charles Shrader, blame the Bosnian central government for the outbreak of this fighting.<sup>36</sup> This situation would predictably lead to defeat for the non-Serbs in Bosnia if the Bosnian Croats and Bosniaks could not come to an agreement to resist the Serbs.

To complicate matters further, a Bosniak politician named Fikret Abdic, whose stronghold was in the western Bosnian town of Velika Kladusa, proclaimed independence from the Bosnian state. He then went on to collaborate with the Bosnian Serbs against both the Bosnian central government and the Bosnian Croats. With the defence of the Bosnian state in complete turmoil, it was clear that something needed to change lest the country be completely absorbed by the Serbs and Croats. Thanks to pressure from the Clinton administration on Croatian President Franjo Tudjman, the Bosnian central government and the Bosnian Croats came to a peace agreement in 1994. They then concentrated their forces against the RS. Clinton

---

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>36</sup> Charles Shrader, *The Muslim-Croat Civil War in Central Bosnia* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003), 65-73.

ultimately forced Tudjman to give up the idea that Croatia would annex the Croat-dominated Republic of Herceg-Bosna in BiH as had been agreed with Milosevic at the Karadjordjevo hunting lodge in 1991.<sup>37</sup> However, Clinton effectively looked the other way when the Croatian attacked the RSK as compensation. It was at this point that the tide of the war began to turn against the Serbs.

The Bosnian government and Bosnian Croats solidified their peace with the Washington Agreement in March of 1994. It introduced the cantonal system and turned the Bosnian Croat and Bosniak controlled areas of BiH into a joint federation with a loose governing structure. Soon after, Bosnian government and Bosnian Croat forces began cooperating on the ground. Meanwhile, Bihac in western Bosnia was seeing tremendous action. Forces under the command of Bosniak General Atif Dudakovic were harassed within the enclave by Serb forces and those of Abdic's so-called Autonomous Republic of Western Bosnia. However, Bosnian government forces reversed the tide in 1995 as the Croatian military from Croatia proper began a concerted campaign against the RSK, which was providing forces to maintain the siege of Bihac.

In the summer of 1995, the Croatian military that had received US training and support, launched Operation Storm. Serb forces in the RSK and RS statelets waged war consistently since 1991 and 1992 respectively. By 1995, their materiel, manpower, and morale were exhausted, which led to the complete collapse of the RSK.<sup>38</sup> The Serbs too claimed some victories in the summer of 1995 in other sectors of the front. These included the capture of Zepa and Srebrenica, but these victories were largely pyrrhic in nature. The atrocities committed by Serb forces after they captured these towns prompted the United States and most of its NATO allies to intervene against the Serbs. The United States and most of NATO were already predisposed to the Croats

---

<sup>37</sup> Hoare, *How Bosnia Armed*, 81.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

and Bosniaks, but the blatantness of the Serbs' atrocities in Bosnia only accentuated this. It was the VRS and Serb paramilitaries who were responsible for the conduct of the armed forces on the ground. However, it was ultimately the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) that both instilled and encouraged Serb fighters in Bosnia to carry out their violent political designs.

The SDS held absolute parliamentary authority in the Republika Srpska during the Bosnian War. Its leaders, best exemplified by RS President Radovan Karadzic, were responsible for most of the war's atrocities along with the Bosnian Serb Army (VRS). The SDS acted as an ideological party-apparatus that provided the political rationale to commit the war's most condemnable acts, while the VRS was the party's instrument of implementation. In July 1995, indictments for war crimes were levelled against Bosnian Serb notables which included Karadzic, Mladic, and others. These indictments were released shortly after the capture of Srebrenica and Zepa. By this time, the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ARBiH) and Croatian forces were scoring victory after victory against the Serbs.

The ICTY indictments proved to be perilous for the Bosnian Serb leaders as they were quickly marginalized and susceptible to political double-dealing by their associates. Throughout the war, Slobodan Milosevic, President of Serbia, attempted to solidify his political control over the defiant RSK and RS statelets. In some ways, the ICTY indictment of Karadzic and the destruction of the RSK increased Milosevic's power. Milosevic effectively sidelined Karadzic in the RS as most of the international community, including the US, refused to deal with the Bosnian Serb President. In this way, Milosevic's word was as good as law when dealing with international diplomats - even when the issues were regarding RS, over which Milosevic had no *de jure* authority. Milosevic was therefore able to negotiate directly with American diplomat Richard Holbrooke in August 1995 because Holbrooke flatly refused to negotiate with Karadzic

as a result of his ICTY indictment.<sup>39</sup> The only exception to Karadzic's status as a diplomatic *persona non grata* in Holbrooke's estimation occurred in the middle of September when Karadzic signed an agreement for a ceasefire around Sarajevo.<sup>40</sup> However, even at the negotiations for peace at Dayton, Ohio, Karadzic was not permitted to attend. He sent a delegation led by Momcilo Krajisnik in his place. However, it was Milosevic who controlled the negotiations on behalf of all Serbs.

The Dayton Accords began on November 1st, and Milosevic made ample use of his authority to secure a deal that aided Serbia in its time of troubles. He was accused by many, including Milosevic biographer Adam LeBor, of "humiliating" the Bosnian Serb delegation by conceding eastern Sarajevo and the Gorazde Corridor<sup>41</sup> to the Federation entity.<sup>42</sup> Krajisnik expected that a partitioned Sarajevo was well within the realm of possibilities for the peace settlement, as it was one of the RS's central war aims back in 1992. So, when Milosevic conceded a partitioned Sarajevo, it was a devastating blow for the governing authorities of the RS. This further undermined the credibility of the RS political leadership in the eyes of the Bosnian Serb public. Milosevic was conciliatory during negotiations with his Bosniak and Croatian opponents as he sought reductions in economic sanctions against Serbia by the international community. An example of this was presented during the first few days of the negotiations when Milosevic notified the negotiations' participants that Serbia urgently required 23,000 tons of heating oil.<sup>43</sup> Both Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic and President Alija

---

<sup>39</sup> Robert Donia, *Radovan Karadzic: Architect of the Bosnian Genocide* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 471, [https://www-fulcrum-org.proxy.lib.uwaterloo.ca/epubs/jd472z236?locale=en#/6/50\[doc24\]!/4/2/26/17:185](https://www-fulcrum-org.proxy.lib.uwaterloo.ca/epubs/jd472z236?locale=en#/6/50[doc24]!/4/2/26/17:185).

<sup>40</sup> Donia, *Radovan Karadzic*, 474.

<sup>41</sup> Gorazde was a Bosniak-controlled town in eastern Bosnia that managed to hold out against Serb forces, which surrounded it. In the peace negotiations at Dayton, Izetbegovic and his associates sought to connect Gorazde by road to the rest of Bosnian government territory and to make it an integral part of the Federation entity.

<sup>42</sup> Adam LeBor, *Milosevic: A Biography* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2004), 249-250.

<sup>43</sup> LeBor, *Milosevic*, 246.

Izetbegovic facilitated an acceptance of this request. This was not purely out of the goodness of their hearts - they understood they could use this gesture of goodwill to secure further concessions at the expense of the Bosnian Serbs.

The historiographical phrasing of some authors' interpretations of Milosevic's moves at Dayton can give way to a "stab in the back" mythology. For instance, concerning Karadzic's acceptance of Milosevic's actions at Dayton, Robert Donia states:

Milosevic negotiated for the Bosnian Serbs and forced the resulting concessions upon their leaders, who either complained bitterly to no avail or sullenly acquiesced to the terms... He (Karadzic) meekly endorsed the deal that had been negotiated in his absence, just as Milosevic had demanded...<sup>44</sup>

Donia's writing entertains the notion of a lack of agency on the part of the Bosnian Serbs during the negotiation of the Dayton Accords. This argument is pairable with LeBor's argument that Milosevic sold out the Bosnian Serbs.<sup>45</sup> Taken together, these historiographical arguments do not accurately depict the reality of the moment in question. While, to some extent, the Bosnian Serbs had effectively succumbed to the political pressures of Milosevic, this was a case of geopolitical necessity more than meekness.

The truth of this historiographical dispute lies in the geo-strategic position in which the Bosnian Serbs found themselves prior to the start of the Dayton negotiations. LeBor and Donia's characterization of Milosevic as an autocrat who assumed a sultanistic authority toward the Bosnian Serbs is credible. However, to say that Milosevic either betrayed the Bosnian Serbs or forced unfair concessions upon them is a stretch. The Bosnian Serbs were in an abysmal military position by the time of the Dayton talks. By the middle of September 1995, ARBiH and Croat forces were ready to assault Banja Luka - the administrative capital of the RS.<sup>46</sup> This was largely

---

<sup>44</sup> Donia, *Radovan Karadzic*, 477-478.

<sup>45</sup> LeBor, *Milosevic*, 249-250.

<sup>46</sup> Hoare, *How Bosnia Armed*, 122.



the result of Croat and Bosnian offensives that forced the collapse of the RSK, the relief of the besieged town of Bihac, and the devastation of the VRS's second Krajina corps.<sup>47</sup> With these events in rapid succession, the military situation on the ground shifted dramatically in favour of the Bosniaks and Croats.

It was only due to intense pressure from the Americans that the ARBiH and Croat forces halted their offensive actions. This was much to the chagrin of ARBiH commanders, such as General Atif Dudakovic, who wanted to capture Banja Luka, bring about the collapse of the RS, and achieve a total victory for the Bosniaks.<sup>48</sup> However, the humanitarian and geopolitical consequences of such an action would have been catastrophic. Holbrooke witnessed the flight of between 150,000 - 200,000 ethnic Serbs to both the RS and Serbia from the RSK during its collapse in the fall of 1995.<sup>49</sup> This sudden influx of refugees caused a tremendous economic strain for Serbia, which itself was under punitive economic sanctions. If Bosniak and Croat forces took Banja Luka, the RS too could collapse. This would result in an even greater mass migration of ethnic Serbs to Serbia proper, which would ultimately destabilize Milosevic.<sup>50</sup> In such an event, Milosevic's government would be weakened and could fall. In this case, a military dictatorship or ultranationalist government that would take over in Milosevic's stead if he fell from power. This government could then commit the entirety of Serbia's military to a renewed war in Bosnia.<sup>51</sup> To prevent any test of this exercise in hypotheticals, Holbrooke pressed all sides for a ceasefire.

---

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 123.

<sup>49</sup> Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War* (New York: Random House, 1998), 153-154.

<sup>50</sup> LeBor, *Milosevic*, 242-243.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 242-243.

Holbrooke's analysis of the military situation on the ground was likely correct. The RS probably would have collapsed under the pressure of the Bosniaks and Croats. Whether Milosevic's government would have fallen is an open question, but with the presence of ultranationalists in Serbia like Vuk Draskovic, it was not impossible. Regardless, any idea that the Bosnian Serbs were stabbed in the back by Milosevic is simply untrue. The military situation on the ground required the Bosnian Serbs to make concessions to the Bosniaks and Croats on the basis that the balance of power favoured the latter. Otherwise, the ARBiH and Croatian forces could have pressed on and any possibility of an RS entity at all would have been out of the question. Milosevic essentially forced the Bosnian Serbs to come to peace terms. To his benefit, Milosevic had the privilege of political flexibility and used RS territory as a bargaining chip during the negotiations at Dayton, Ohio.

A ceasefire was agreed in early October. However, it was quickly violated by the ARBiH, which captured Omarska, Prijedor, and Bosanski Novi.<sup>52</sup> This was done by the ARBiH to improve their chances of securing greater concessions during peace negotiations. A lasting ceasefire took place on or around the 14th of October. Milosevic was negotiating at Dayton from a position of weakness. The VRS was on the run in BiH and the RS capital was on the verge of being attacked. However, Milosevic was a wily negotiator; his relinquishment of RS claims to a partitioned Sarajevo, or to the Gorazde corridor were small prices to pay for the ultimate objective of the negotiations - the continued survival of the RS. To Milosevic's credit, his rigid adherence to a 51-49 percent territorial division of BiH meant that the RS was able to regain the territory it had lost just that October. By ceding the demand of a partitioned Sarajevo, Milosevic effectively convinced his opponents that they had "won" the negotiations. This was extremely

---

<sup>52</sup> Hoare, *How Bosnia Armed*, 124.

useful as it prevented them from pushing for even greater concessions at the expense of the Bosnian Serbs. Because Milosevic was willing to make certain accommodations to ensure a level of Federation security, he wrangled a better deal than what could have been presupposed by the military situation on the ground.

In the timeless BBC documentary, *The Death of Yugoslavia*, Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic recounts Milosevic's offer concerning Sarajevo: "He (Milosevic) said: 'You deserve Sarajevo because you fought for it and those cowards killed you from the hills.' Meaning the Bosnian Serbs".<sup>53</sup> With this, Milosevic threw Silajdzic off the track of further concessions. This simultaneous use of a major pre-emptive concession and denigration of Milosevic's Bosnian Serb allies prevented Silajdzic from pushing for more. President Izetbegovic was harder to persuade than Silajdzic. He commented during his interview in *The Death of Yugoslavia* that at the beginning of the talks "We were passed some unacceptable maps. I said they must have slept through all our victories."<sup>54</sup> Izetbegovic ultimately intended on taking a harder line against the Bosnian Serbs on account of the Bosniak-Croat successes during the summer. This was more in line with the wishes of the ARBiH's commanders. However, the pressure to come to a peace agreement, particularly from the Americans, was too strong. In the end, Izetbegovic folded and accepted the Dayton peace.

Milosevic should not be seen as having betrayed the Bosnian Serbs, but as adequately having salvaged their geopolitical interests through negotiations that were realistic and equivalent to the military situation on the ground. While the war aims of the Bosnian Serbs were more in line with the values and objectives of the last century, they had an adequate proponent in

---

<sup>53</sup> *The Death of Yugoslavia*, episode 6, "Pax Americana," produced by Norma Percy and Brian Lapping, aired June 6, 1996, in broadcast syndication. BBC, 2001, DVD.

<sup>54</sup> *The Death of Yugoslavia*, "Pax Americana," BBC, 2001.

Milosevic. The crimes used to attain the cherished prize of Serbian nationalist fervour, the RS, were abominable. Hundreds of thousands of Bosnian civilians - be them Bosniaks, Croats, or Serbs – though the majority were disproportionately Bosniak – were murdered, imprisoned, and displaced because of the war. This was all to secure the geopolitical vision of a Greater Serbia, one that included the Serb-inhabited lands of BiH. Originally, the RSK was included in this, but the strength of the Croatian military quashed this dream. Therefore, only the RS remained, and Milosevic ensured its survival.

While the crimes of the RS and its supporters are well-documented, it begs the question of why the West, particularly the US, was willing to compromise at all regarding the existence of the RS. In essence, if the Clinton administration was aware of the crimes committed in BiH by the Serbs, why then did it accept any Bosnian Serb claim to an entity? The answer to this question lies partly in Holbrooke's estimation of the political ramifications of the collapse of the RS. Ultimately, that the political situation in the former Yugoslavia would be much worse if the RS collapsed. The other part of the calculus could also be that the US simply did not have the palate to be the sole western guarantor of a centralized Bosnian state, which would have been built less on a cosmopolitan and multicultural character and more on the foundation of Bosniak nationalism. With political Islam as a fundamental component of Bosnia's ruling SDA, Clinton's hesitation to provide unabashed support to the Izetbegovic government was understandable.

The rationale is not so much the idea that a centralized BiH would have become some haven of Islamic fundamentalism, rather that it would have been isolated in diplomatic terms both from its neighbours and the greater European community. This is based on both cultural and religious concerns with a centralist BiH in 1996 as only the third Muslim-majority country in Europe, alongside Albania and Turkey. While nominally European, Albania and Turkey are

typically considered to be “others” amongst the greater European community. Would a centralized Bosnian state based on the foundation of Bosniak nationalism have been considered in the same fashion? While this is an exercise in hypotheticals, it is important to consider what could have happened and why a centralized BiH was not palatable to the West.

A Bosniak triumph against the RS would have had grave consequences. First, many Bosnian Serbs, like the Croatian Serbs, probably would have fled to Serbia. Second, the strength of an ethnic Bosniak majority could then have been pitted against the Bosnian Croats. This would have jeopardized the Washington Agreement, which was only agreed upon with the promise of significant autonomy through a decentralized cantonal system. Political disagreements between the Bosnian government, which likely would have represented the Bosniak majority, and the minority Bosnian Croats, could have been problematic. Such disputes could have drawn the attention of Croatia proper, which may have been inclined to act on behalf of its Bosnian Croat co-nationals. The same could be said for any Bosnian Serbs who decided to remain in BiH with Serbia acting as its patron. In other words, Bosnia-Herzegovina’s three nationalities balanced one another and prevented any one of them from becoming too powerful.

The war ultimately decided that the destruction of BiH through force of arms and its annexation by Serbia and Croatia was unfeasible. So too was the possibility of a centralized Bosnian state that would have been led by the Bosniaks and the SDA. Therefore, the arrangement that *was* decided was neither partition, nor unity. Dayton ultimately allowed the rejection of BiH as a “multicultural” country, with all the pluralism inherent in the word, in favour of a multiethnic and decentralized state with defined spheres of authority. In other words, it was a solution that satisfied nobody. The Dayton Agreement, known formally as the General

Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, can well be summed up as less of a peace and more of a pause in the war.

## Chapter 2: The General Framework Agreement and the Constitution

On November 21<sup>st</sup>, 1995, the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (GFA) was initialled at Dayton and formally signed in Paris on December 14th. The GFA, first and foremost, sought to end the war, and second, to lay the groundwork for a functioning BiH with two entities.<sup>55</sup> The GFA was negotiated upon the foundation provided by agreements that were discussed and agreed upon during the Bosnian War. The 1994 Washington Agreement established the predominately Bosniak and Bosnian Croat Federation and enshrined its constitutional and cantonal structure.<sup>56</sup> Other agreements, such as the failed Vance-Owen Peace Plan, established the precedent of a united BiH with a loose federal structure in which there would be ethnic majority entities. The GFA encapsulated many of these ideas, the precedents of which were established during the Bosnian War.

The GFA decided not only the territorial arrangements for BiH but also the implementation schedule, constitutional system, legal structure, and much more. The agreement contains eleven articles, which detail the obligations of the signatories to the further eleven annexes contained within. The GFA is an important foundational document for BiH and underpins its relations both with the international community and its regional partners. Article I of the GFA reads: “The Parties shall fully respect the sovereign equality of one another, shall settle disputes by peaceful means, and shall refrain from any action, by threat or use of force or otherwise, against the territorial integrity or political independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina or any other State.”<sup>57</sup> The signatories of the agreement, which included presidents Izetbegovic,

---

<sup>55</sup> Elizabeth M. Cousens, “From Missed Opportunities to Overcompensation: Implementing the Dayton Agreement on Bosnia,” in *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements*, ed. Stephen John Stedman, Donald Rothchild, and Elizabeth M. Cousens (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2002), 539.

<sup>56</sup> “Washington Agreement,” Peace Agreements Digital Collection, United States Institute of Peace, February 14, 2000, [https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/resources/collections/peace\\_agreements/washagree\\_03011994.pdf](https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/resources/collections/peace_agreements/washagree_03011994.pdf).

<sup>57</sup> “General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina,” (Dayton, 1995), 2, [https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/BA\\_951121\\_DaytonAgreement.pdf](https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/BA_951121_DaytonAgreement.pdf).

Tudjman, and Milosevic thereby effectively agreed to renounce violence as a means of solving political disputes between one another and especially within BiH. The GFA also forbade any threat of force or other possible means to subvert or alter the territorial status quo in BiH.

The first three annexes of the GFA (1A, 1B, and 2) concerned the military aspects of the peace agreement including: arms control both within BiH and amongst its neighbours, the enforcement of the Inter-Entity Boundary Line (IEBL), and the withdrawal of foreign forces: mujahideen, paramilitary volunteers, etc.<sup>58</sup> The Implementation Force (IFOR), which numbered 60,000 soldiers, was responsible for the enforcement of these annexes and sought to accomplish its mission after a year - by the end of 1996.<sup>59</sup> The IFOR was successful in the implementation of the first three annexes of the GFA largely because the objectives set out in the agreement were limited and enforced on a fixed timetable. The compliance of Bosnia's opposing forces with the first three annexes also indicates that they were unwilling to grapple with the IFOR because of war weariness and a genuine understanding of IFOR's superior military capabilities. However, the implementation of the GFA's civilian provisions were more contentious, took longer, and were often obstructed.

Much of the difficulty in implementing the GFA's civilian provisions was a result of agency decentralization, a lack of coordination, and the unwillingness of the country's political players to assist. The nine civilian annexes of the agreement fell under the responsibility of nine different international and regional agencies.<sup>60</sup> These included the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the UN (and its subsidiary agencies), the Council of Europe, and others. As detailed in Annex 10, Article I, Sections 1 and 2, the Office of the High

---

<sup>58</sup> "General Framework Agreement for Peace," 7-52.

<sup>59</sup> Cousens, "From Missed Opportunities to Overcompensation," 539.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 539.



Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina (OHR) is responsible for coordinating the activities of these agencies.<sup>61</sup> The original intent of the OHR was to act as a representative on the ground that could examine the methods of the GFA's implementation, orchestrate them, and assess their effectiveness. The OHR acted (and continues to act) on behalf of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) and its executive Steering Board. The PIC is a 55-country body that is ultimately guided by the Steering Board, which includes Russia, the US, Germany, France, Canada, and other countries that participated in the UN missions to the former Yugoslavia.<sup>62</sup> The OHR reports to and is appointed by the PIC.

The OHR was required to maintain close links with the IFOR commander, establish joint civilian commissions, and act as a mediator in the event of disputes between political actors.<sup>63</sup> In this, the OHR had, and still has, weighty responsibility. However, aspects of the OHR's mandate are vague. Annex 10, Article II, Section 1b states that the OHR will: "Maintain close contact with the Parties to promote their full compliance with all civilian aspects of the peace settlement and a high level of cooperation between them and the organizations and agencies participating in those aspects."<sup>64</sup> In a similar vein, Section 1d ascribes to the OHR the responsibility to "facilitate, as the High Representative judges necessary, the resolution of any difficulties arising in connection with civilian implementation."<sup>65</sup> Within the first excerpt, the OHR can *promote* compliance; in the second, the OHR is charged with the *resolution* of any difficulties. However, back in 1995, there was no method of enforcement upon which the OHR could rely in the event of either a disagreement between the involved parties or obstruction of the GFA's civilian

---

<sup>61</sup> "General Framework Agreement for Peace," 111.

<sup>62</sup> Bose, *Bosnia After Dayton*, 275.

<sup>63</sup> "General Framework Agreement for Peace," 112-113.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

stipulations. The OHR's lack of teeth was problematic in the immediate aftermath of the Bosnian War as obstruction of the GFA's more contestable stipulations was a common occurrence.

As of the original agreement, the only tool the OHR could rely upon was the IFOR (and after December 1996, the SFOR), but this relationship was complicated. The OHR was a purely civilian body and had no authority over the IFOR per se. It could request IFOR assistance if there were issues regarding implementation, but the IFOR was not legally obligated to help as it took its orders from the North Atlantic Council - NATO's governing body. However, in the OHR's favour, it did have Annex 10's Article IV, which guaranteed full cooperation by the parties in BiH and was endorsed by all signatories, including RS and the Federation.<sup>66</sup> Because the intensity of obstruction in the RS was impeding the OHR's ability to coordinate the implementation of the GFA, the PIC voted to grant the OHR additional powers during the Bonn conference in 1997. The Bonn powers allowed the OHR the right to veto legislation within BiH and the right to dismiss elected or appointed officials. This had massive political ramifications for BiH.

The elements of the GFA that tended to be most obstructed were those related to refugee returns in Annex 7. This Annex protected the return of those displaced by the war to their property.<sup>67</sup> The implementation of this part of the GFA was bitterly partisan. With the creation of the entity system in BiH, ethnic minorities were often unwanted and seen as aliens in their formerly held lands. The multi-ethnic character of prewar BiH had largely been undone by the war, which effectively parcelled the Bosnian population into their constituent ethnic groups within relatively defined territorial borders. To reverse this, the GFA's proponents created Annex 7 which protected a right of return for refugees and internally displaced persons. However, as

---

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 114-115.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 94.

Toal and Dahlman explain, Annex 7 threatened the so-called “greatest achievement” of the VRS which constructed an “ethnocratic political order” on an “ethnoterritorial space” through violence.<sup>68</sup> As well, RS authorities had to find housing for tens of thousands of ethnic Serbs who fled the RSK after its collapse during Operation Storm. Many of these refugees took up housing in the property held formerly by Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats in the RS. With limited resources and a lack of political will to accommodate ethnically alien returnees, the implementation of Annex 7 was arduous and incomplete.

Annex 4 of the GFA is the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina and it too contains provisions pertaining to refugee returns. Article II, Section 5 of the constitution guarantees the right of return to refugees displaced by the war and the return of their property or commensurate restitution.<sup>69</sup> Toal and Dahlman explain that while the right of return indeed facilitates relocation of the displaced to their property, it is qualified by restitution instead of return.<sup>70</sup> The alternative right to compensation means that many Bosniaks that left the RS found no need to return as they received financial compensation for their losses. In this way, Annex 7 and Article II, Section 5 of the Bosnian constitution do attempt to reverse the ethnic cleansing that occurred during the Bosnian War. However, the promise of alternative restitution provided an out both for Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats who did not wish to return. Bosnian Serbs who expropriated property from their non-Serb neighbours were also relieved. The GFA guarantees the right of return to all peoples, but it also entrenches aspects of the ethnic entity system, such as through the restitution clause.

---

<sup>68</sup> Toal and Dahlman, *Bosnia Remade*, 5.

<sup>69</sup> “General Framework Agreement for Peace,” 62.

<sup>70</sup> Toal and Dahlman, *Bosnia Remade*, 7.

Though the GFA protects the existence of the entities and their authority, its provisions also constrain them. The constitutionally enshrined political superiority of the international organizations within BiH ensures that the entities do not become too powerful. All governing structures within BiH must comply with international representatives and organizations regardless of political objections. Article II, Section 8 of the Bosnian Constitution highlights the necessity of cooperation between “all competent authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina” and their international guarantors.<sup>71</sup> This includes: the ICTY, OHR, any UN bodies, the OSCE, and all others.<sup>72</sup> Bosnia’s democratically elected representatives can do little if they disagree with the actions of the country’s international benefactors. While Bosnia-Herzegovina is an independent republic, it is not a country that possesses full sovereignty. Given the horrors of the Bosnian War, it is understandable for provisions of this nature to be in place for a time. However, the persistence of this situation to the present day suggests that these provisions have lost their temporary status.

Even within some of BiH’s key domestic institutions there is a demonstrable international presence. This is evident within the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Of the nine judges on the court, the House of Representatives of the Federation selects four. The RS Skupstina selects two, and the President of the European Court of Human Rights appoints three.<sup>73</sup> Thus, the European appointees typically break any deadlock between the Federation- and RS-appointed jurists. The European appointees cannot be Bosnians and cannot be citizens of Croatia or Serbia. In addition, the constitutional court presides in the event of, “any dispute that arises under this Constitution between the Entities or between Bosnia and Herzegovina and an

---

<sup>71</sup> “General Framework Agreement for Peace,” 63.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

Entity or Entities, or between institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina.”<sup>74</sup> It does not, however, have the right to preside over disputes involving an international body or organization, such as the OHR. Therefore, the powers of dismissal and veto granted to the OHR because of the Bonn powers are without any form of legal redress within BiH itself. As such, questions of international jurisdiction or malpractice are without a suitable legal remedy. This means that Bosnian citizens have no legal means to counteract the decisions of the international community in BiH which gives way to resentment and frustration amongst the people. This is especially the case in the RS.

Apart from domestic matters, questions of foreign policy are also highly contentious. Section 2a of the Constitution enables Bosnia’s entities to establish “special parallel relationships” with Croatia and Serbia.<sup>75</sup> However, this section is predicated on the notion that the territorial integrity of BiH is unalterable. Entities may also conclude agreements with foreign countries and organizations.<sup>76</sup> However, this may only be done with permission from the Bosnian parliamentary assembly. This competes with Article III, Section 1, which outlines the responsibilities of the Bosnian central government. These include most matters of international character. For instance, foreign policy, trade, borders, and immigration are under the central government’s jurisdiction.<sup>77</sup> Given the “special parallel relationships” clause of Section 2a, there is constitutional overlap between the entities and the central government. The relationship between the RS and Serbia is an uncomfortable topic for Bosniak policymakers as elements within both territories hold high the idea of ethno-territorial unification. Even though this is

---

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 63.

expressly forbidden by the GFA and the Constitution, it is a powerful political sentiment throughout Serb and Croat majority territories.

The mid 2000s saw pressure from the OHR and Bosniak parties to force the entities to cede greater powers to the Bosnian central government. However, Section 3a of the constitution proclaims that residual powers rest with the entities, which entitles them to a considerable amount of political authority.<sup>78</sup> Therefore, this pressure from the OHR may have exceeded the limits of its mandate. With the authority of the OHR virtually unquestionable however, it was essentially rammed through. At the same time, Section 3a is counterbalanced by Section 4, which assigns the Bosnian Presidency the right to “facilitate inter-entity cooperation,” but only without the objection of the entity or entities in question.<sup>79</sup> So, the constitutionality of both the OHR’s actions and the entities’ rights are highly speculative.

On the legislative front, Article IV of the Bosnian constitution deals with the establishment of the bicameral Bosnian Parliamentary Assembly. The two houses are divided between the House of Peoples and the House of Representatives. The House of Peoples has fifteen delegates, ten of which must come from the Federation and be selected by the House of Peoples of the Federation entity.<sup>80</sup> Of these ten, five must be Bosniak and five Bosnian Croat. The remaining five delegates to the Bosnian House of Peoples are Bosnian Serbs selected by the RS Skupstina.<sup>81</sup> The House of Representatives seats 42 deputies - 28 elected by popular vote from the Federation and 14 from the RS.<sup>82</sup> The Bosnian Parliamentary Assembly presides over funding and laws of the central state, while the Federation legislature and Skupstina in the RS

---

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 65-66.

deal with laws within their respective entities. In this way, the entities' legislatures exercise considerable power as they control funding for their own respective ministries. In examining the postwar history of the RS, Article IX, Section 1, is crucial. It states:

No person who is serving a sentence imposed by the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, and no person who is under indictment by the Tribunal and who has failed to comply with an order to appear before the Tribunal, may stand as a candidate or hold any appointive, elective, or other public office in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>83</sup>

In terms of political influence, Article IX, Section I, is almost without comparison. This provision of the Bosnian Constitution effectively barred much of the RS's wartime leadership from holding office within the entity. Some political notables in the Federation entity were held responsible for war crimes, but it was disproportionate when compared to indictments in the RS. While the Bosnian Serbs and their fighters committed a much greater number of atrocities during the war, it goes without saying that the Bosnian central government and the Bosnian Croats committed them as well. However, the postwar political elite in the Federation was not as badly crippled by Article IX, Section 1, as was the case in the RS.

The likes of Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic would never again be legally capable of holding power within the peacetime RS. As such, their political days were numbered. However, both men held dedicated supporters, many of whom had fought in the Bosnian War and committed atrocities themselves. Those indicted by the ICTY evaded arrest and lived strangled lives. They fled from place to place in the care of political sympathizers and were under constant threat of being discovered. As such, their chances of political recovery were essentially quashed. This created a vacuum, which allowed new and *seemingly* more moderate political forces to take hold in the RS. However, the competing pressures of a nationalistically

---

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 73.

inclined electorate and a muscular and diplomatically involved NATO forced the RS into a state of political flux.

Postwar BiH had and continues to have a massive bureaucracy because of the complex provisions of the Dayton Agreement. The GFA and the Bosnian constitution are guaranteed by the international agencies that uphold it and the entities that unenthusiastically accept it. This is starkly apparent in the history of BiH in the immediate aftermath of the Bosnian War. Indeed, the structures put in place by political actors during the war, especially in RS, were due for a reckoning. The RS was in a state of crisis as its wartime leadership suffered political liquidation. Those indicted for war crimes were prevented from running for public office, but they still exerted influence within the entity for a time. This was until the ICTY intensified its efforts to apprehend those indicted for war crimes with the help of the SFOR. Much of the postwar situation was dictated by conflicts between the international community and the RS government, as well as disagreements between the RS and Federation entities.



### Chapter 3: The Factions Harden

Shortly after the 1995 signature of the Dayton Accords the RS was engulfed in turmoil. SDS leader and RS President Radovan Karadzic was in a precarious political position, as the ICTY wanted to try him for war crimes. As a result, Article IX of the Bosnian Constitution forbade him from holding either appointed or elected office.<sup>84</sup> Following tremendous pressure from the PIC, Karadzic resigned as President of the RS two months before the September 1996 elections. In his stead, Karadzic appointed Biljana Plavsic, who was also deeply involved in the political conduct of the wartime SDS.<sup>85</sup> The 1996 elections saw Momcilo Krajisnik elected as the Serb member of the Bosnian Presidency, while Plavsic retained her post as RS President. However, trouble brewed within the SDS as Plavsic sought to consolidate her position and purge the party of those indicted by the ICTY. She began this on November 9th by terminating General Mladic as the top commander of the VRS and removing the general staff.<sup>86</sup> A standoff began at the highest levels of the RS government as Mladic refused to give up his post. After a few weeks, he recanted on the condition that he be able to select his successor. However, Plavsic declined.

The crisis came to such a point that Mladic's supporters in the VRS officer corps engaged in armed obstruction of Plavsic's actions by erecting checkpoints around Mladic's headquarters in the town of Han Pijesak in the middle of November.<sup>87</sup> The tensions around this time were particularly potent as the VRS had the capability to resist Plavsic's moves. However, if they openly rebelled, the IFOR had the manpower and materiel to put down such an insurrection. The VRS cast its lot with the Karadzic camp and its dismissed officers took over a television

---

<sup>84</sup> "General Framework Agreement for Peace," 73.

<sup>85</sup> "Bosnia: President Biljana Plavsic," *Associated Press Archive* online [hereafter AP], July 3, 1997, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/fa0b7afaf25480ea5e95b1f5beb69233>.

<sup>86</sup> "Bosnia: General Ratko Mladic Replaced as Head of Serb Military," *AP Archive* online, November 28, 1996, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/7b5b482d6ec96ce518149022626a7699>.

<sup>87</sup> "Bosnia: Sacked Bosnian Serb Military Leaders Attack Authorities," *AP Archive* online, November 15, 1996, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/580ae390398310eeb2b5661a5544a27a>.

transmitting station located on Mount Zep, near the official capital of Pale.<sup>88</sup> However, this incident was deescalated. Plavsic's hands were bound to the extent that forcing the issue further without coming to an agreement with Mladic could have resulted in a military coup against her government or a rebellion. However, these outcomes were undesirable for Mladic too as any chance of success for a coup was slim depending on the reaction of the IFOR and the PIC. Mladic realized this on the 28th of November, conceded to Plavsic, and resigned without conditions.

As the VRS dealt with the effects of Plavsic's purge, so too did the RS administration. Plavsic refocused her ire on the RS government and sought to undermine ministers that maintained their loyalty to former RS President Karadzic. She made strides to replace the Interior Minister Dragan Kijac and the RS Prime Minister Gojko Kljickovic.<sup>89</sup> By this point, the political rivalry between Plavsic and Karadzic loyalists was out in the open. This was a classic case of a political newcomer biting off much more than could be chewed, as Plavsic sowed the seeds of discord and disunity within the SDS. This prompted a hostile response from its members. The SDS controlled the majority in the Skupstina and sought to remove President Plavsic from office. However, Plavsic pre-emptively dissolved the RS parliament on July 3rd to preserve her position.<sup>90</sup> This unprecedented political scandal demonstrated the instability of the RS and its susceptibility to dangerous political intrigues.

Plavsic's purge of the VRS served her well as her recently installed military officers came out in support of her dissolution of parliament.<sup>91</sup> On the 4th of July, Plavsic met with High

---

<sup>88</sup> "Bosnia: Sacked Army Officers Occupy TV Transmitter," *AP Archive* online, November 17, 1996, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/43771ba23bb597891fe75bf6efc7b88a>.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> "Bosnia: President Biljana Plavsic Dissolves Parliament," *AP Archive* online, July 3rd, 1997, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/52d99d7dfd0d78b2fbff4d3ae6a79427>.

<sup>91</sup> "Bosnia: President Biljana Plavsic Dissolves Parliament."

Representative Carlos Westendorp who lent his support to her so long as the foundations of the Dayton Accord were respected and implemented.<sup>92</sup> The anti-SDS opposition and international community formed an alliance at this time as Plavsic courted not only the OHR, but also opposition leader Milorad Dodik. Dodik accused the SDS of acting against the constitution when it decided to organize a technically illegal parliamentary assembly in Pale to remove Plavsic from power.<sup>93</sup> This assembly was held on July 5th where a majority of the parliament's deputies passed a law that attempted to transfer the duties and responsibilities of the RS President to the Skupstina-appointed "Supreme Defence Council."<sup>94</sup> However, Plavsic, the opposition, the OHR, and even US President Bill Clinton himself condemned this. Clinton spoke at a NATO summit in Madrid on July 9th and stated that "we support Mrs. Plavsic and what she's trying to do. We oppose the unconstitutional efforts to restrict her authority."<sup>95</sup> Just as the situation seemed to be at a head, an incident involving the SFOR, which took over from the IFOR after December 1996, forced a brief cooling-down of tensions between Plavsic and the SDS.

On July 10th, SFOR troops attempted to arrest Simo Drljaca, who had been indicted by the ICTY. Drljaca opened fire against the soldiers engaged in the arrest. They subsequently returned fire and killed him.<sup>96</sup> Drljaca had been involved in the Prijedor crisis staff during the Bosnian War and controlled police forces in the area. The ICTY charged him with one count of

---

<sup>92</sup> "Bosnia: Plavsic Dissolves Parliament," *AP Archive* online, July 4th, 1997, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/424f4fd8373a31ca09a43ecc3639b697>.

<sup>93</sup> "Bosnia: Serb President Plavsic Accuses Rivals of Threatening her Life," *AP Archive* online, July 4, 1997, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/65174b670a9cdd103ea8941af12410c4>.

<sup>94</sup> "Bosnia: Law to Strip Plavsic of Powers," *AP Archive* online, July 5, 1997, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/d18951acd44e9e046ce3a15a695bc5ab>.

<sup>95</sup> "Spain: Clinton Pledges Support for Plavsic," *AP Archive* online, July 9, 1997, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/e3ed96371468ee7474a23fab6a1562f7>.

<sup>96</sup> "Bosnia: Plavsic Condemns Shooting of War Criminal," *AP Archive* online, July 10, 1997, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/view/3f7804231e47fdc1796c0e88dda4d3c4?subClipIn=00:00:00&subClipOut=00:03:06>.

committing genocide in Prijedor between April 1992 and January 1993.<sup>97</sup> The SFOR also arrested an associate of Drljaca's, Milan Kovacevic, who served on the Prijedor crisis staff alongside him. This operation earned the ire of Plavsic and the SDS old guard alike as she condemned the operation and demanded the release of Kovacevic and others arrested by the SFOR.<sup>98</sup> The severity of the reaction from the Bosnian Serb public against the SFOR operation forced Plavsic and Serb member of the Bosnian Presidency Momcilo Krajisnik to make a show of reconciliation.

The perfect opportunity for this came on the 12th of July, which is Saint Peter's Day in the Serbian Orthodox Church. Krajisnik came to Banja Luka and attended a religious service alongside President Plavsic. However, there was no love lost between Krajisnik and Plavsic.<sup>99</sup> The uneasiness of this meeting overshadowed the supposed united resolve of Krajisnik and Plavsic against the SFOR. Regardless, to assuage the concerns of the Bosnian Serbs, Krajisnik released a statement stating that: "The Serb people and Serb state is far more important than ourselves. We just had very pleasant talks which we will continue later this afternoon in order to overcome the crisis. Besides that, today is St. Peter's Day and I hope that God will help us as well."<sup>100</sup> It is important to note the religious symbolism employed by Krajisnik, which the SDS regime also used in its propaganda during the war against the Bosnian Muslims.

Indeed, devout Bosnian Serbs interpreted this conflict between Plavsic and Krajisnik as a fight between bickering co-religionists. Orthodox Bosnian Serbs believed the RS state had been stifled during the war and forced into an awkward peace agreement by the Muslims, often

---

<sup>97</sup> Thomas Blewitt, "The Prosecutor of the Tribunal Against Simo Drljaca, Milan Kovacevic," Case No.: IT-96-24, 4, accessed July 8, 2021, [https://www.icty.org/x/cases/milan\\_kovacevic/ind/en/kov-ii970313be.pdf](https://www.icty.org/x/cases/milan_kovacevic/ind/en/kov-ii970313be.pdf).

<sup>98</sup> "Bosnia: President Biljana Plavsic's Reaction to NATO Led Attack," *AP Archive* online, July 10, 1997, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/756fc3fd6b96cc1cac8058b86adfed52>.

<sup>99</sup> "Bosnia: Feuding Serb Leaders Try to Patch Up Their Differences," *AP Archive* online, July 12, 1997, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/216324b65df1e32403eb02f9f1f5bc1c>.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*

labelled as ‘Turks’ on account of their Ottoman lineage. So too had it been suffocated by the Croats, perceived as bloodthirsty killers based on their Ustasha past in the Second World War. Lastly, the Americans used their might to bully “brave little Serbia” and prevented a natural historico-political process of uniting all Serbs within a common state. The propaganda of religio-political resistance had already been woven throughout the fabric of RS society. At the time of the Drljaca killing, the symbolism of RS unity was crucial for Plavsic and Krajisnik’s political survival.

According to Robert Donia, the death of Drljaca and arrest of Kovacevic marked a turning point in the mandate of the SFOR in BiH. Donia states that ICTY indictees, like Karadzic, moved from checkpoint to checkpoint with impunity amid IFOR forces until the end of 1996.<sup>101</sup> However, several factors encouraged the SFOR to take a more active stance to arrest the RS’s war crime suspects. Of these, Donia includes: the election of “the more aggressive” Tony Blair in the UK, the appointment of US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and the use of sealed indictments by the ICTY.<sup>102</sup> Sealed indictments prevented those suspected of war crimes from becoming aware of their impending arrest. As such, they were easier to catch and had less time to escape. With the appointment of Madeleine Albright as Secretary of State, she refused to tolerate the mystique surrounding Milosevic and wanted him out. She considered those indicted by the ICTY in much the same way and had little patience for lack of action. At the time, Bosnia’s High Representative was former Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt. He too wished to see the arrest of the ICTY’s indictees and coordinated with the SFOR to this end.<sup>103</sup>

---

<sup>101</sup> Donia, *Radovan Karadzic: Architect of the Bosnian Genocide*, 486.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 486.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 489.

With the SFOR arrests on their radar, ICTY indictees became more elusive in their movements. Karadzic and Mladic were perhaps the two best examples of this life on the run as both men eventually fled RS. As the political situation became particularly untenable for Karadzic, his lieutenants in the SDS stood in for him and communicated his will. In this respect, Momcilo Krajisnik acted as Karadzic's most trusted confidant and successor. His position as Serb member of the Bosnian presidency gave him a significant amount of authority over and insight into the government's affairs. As Karadzic retreated into hiding, Krajisnik stepped up. During the Plavsic-Krajisnik power struggle, it became clear that Krajisnik was the strongest representative of the SDS old guard and Karadzic's political heir. The Plavsic-Krajisnik detente could not last even with the threat of SFOR's encroachment into the political affairs of the RS. The hatred between the two factions within the SDS was too volatile to contain. The SDS held a party meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July to determine the future of Plavsic and whether she would retain her party membership. Fifty-five party delegates out of the total number of eighty-four attended the meeting - all fifty-five delegates in attendance voted to kick Plavsic out of the party.<sup>104</sup>

Plavsic remained defiant however and formed her own party, the Serbian People's Alliance (SNS). She looked for allies in the RS parliament, which she found in Milorad Dodik.<sup>105</sup> Prior to the outbreak of the Bosnian War, Dodik opposed the ethnic separation of Bosnia's Serbs, Muslims, and Croats. He had formerly been a member of the federal Union of Reform Forces of Yugoslavia.<sup>106</sup> When the Bosnian Serbs founded their own legislature, Dodik abandoned the Bosnian parliament in favour of the new Skupstina. He was a deputy during the war, but his time in the opposition meant that his hands were unbloodied. As a result, he had tremendous political

---

<sup>104</sup> "Bosnia: Bosnian Serb President Biljana is Expelled from Ruling Party," *AP Archive* online, July 20, 1997, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/353ea0a0ae3b364053e5f8d9409bb4af>.

<sup>105</sup> Toal and Dahlman, *Bosnia Remade*, 210 - 211.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 89.

value in the post-war RS. He advocated for policies without the threat of OHR intervention; he could never be indicted by the ICTY; and his assistance to other parties granted them the veneer of liberality. These virtues were much cherished by the PIC and the OHR. He also lent credence to Plavsic who had formerly been closely connected to the old guard of the SDS and some of its most ardent ultranationalists.

In the leadup to the fall 1997 elections, the opposition campaigned as a viable alternative to the chaos of the SDS. Dodik entered a coalition with Plavsic and her SNS under the condition that she make him RS prime minister. The circumstances surrounding Dodik's ascension to this office are quite extraordinary. In the RS parliamentary election held on September 14th, 1997, the SDS secured 24 deputies while the Serbian Radical Party (SRS) attained 15.<sup>107</sup> With only 39 combined deputies, the SDS-SRS parliamentary alliance could not form a government in the 83-seat legislature. The SDS and SRS deputies left the chambers following an unsuccessful session to set up a government. Following their departure, the OHR put pressure on the RS branch of the Party of Democratic Action (Izetbegovic's party) and its Coalition for Bosnia and Herzegovina (16 seats) to support Plavsic in setting up a coalition government.<sup>108</sup> This was the first time in the history of the RS that the prime ministry was held by a party other than the SDS.

The creation of a parliamentary coalition required all the parties, other than the SDS and SRS, to hold the majority of the seats in the Skupstina. Plavsic got to work and cobbled together a loose, but functioning coalition. As a condition of his cooperation, Milorad Dodik and his SNSD agreed to join if he could be the prime ministerial nominee.<sup>109</sup> Plavsic's SNS and the other

---

<sup>107</sup> National Assembly of the Republika Srpska, "About National Assembly," accessed April 9th, 2021, from <https://www.narodnaskupstinars.net/?q=en/national-assembly/about-national-assembly>.

<sup>108</sup> Michael Pugh and Margaret Cobble, "Non-Nationalist Voting in Bosnian Municipal Elections: Implications for Democracy and Peacebuilding," *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 38, no. 1 (2001): 43.

<sup>109</sup> Pugh and Cobble, "Non-Nationalist Voting in Bosnian Municipal Elections," 43.

parties accepted this offer. However, one of the Bosnian Croat members of the Coalition for Bosnia and Herzegovina left the chambers early with the thought that a government would not be formed that evening.<sup>110</sup> In order to bring the deputy back to the Skupstina, troops of the NATO-led SFOR erected roadblocks and effectively detained him.<sup>111</sup> SFOR troops returned the member to the assembly, the vote occurred, and Milorad Dodik won the prime ministry with only one vote to break the deadlock.<sup>112</sup> This was a monumental triumph for Dodik whose SNSD had only two deputies, himself and one other.

Dodik's ascension to the prime ministry in January 1998 followed another shift in Bosnian politics - the empowerment of the OHR. The PIC looked back on the two-and-a-half years since the conclusion of the Dayton Accords with dismay and decided that the best way to counteract anti-Dayton obstructionism and RS political instability laid within the enhancement of the powers of the OHR. Clearly, crisis-ridden BiH needed a steady hand, as demonstrated by the Plavsic-Karadzic rivalry. However, other on-the-ground concerns contributed to the award of additional powers to the OHR. The PIC wanted to prioritize the implementation of Annex 7 of the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (GFA), which dealt with the return of those who fled their homes during the Bosnian War. Entity governments threatened this aspect of Dayton thanks to their obstructionism.

In their work dealing with the expulsion and subsequent return of refugees during the Bosnian War, Gerard Toal and Carl Dahlman discuss and analyze several cases of on-the-ground obstruction by RS authorities. For instance, in April 1996, hundreds of displaced Bosniaks attempted to return to the RS town of Doboje. However, a local Bosnian Serb mob threw bottles

---

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 43.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 43.



and stones at them while the local police, many of whom had been recruited after having been discharged from the VRS, condoned the harassment, or even participated in it.<sup>113</sup> The returnees grew agitated by this harassment and retaliated, thereby initiating a brawl that Danish peacekeepers and American helicopters broke up.<sup>114</sup> The returnees were ushered back to the Federation by IFOR troops.

In the early years of the peace, both NATO and the UNHCR were wary of using armed troops to enforce the refugee returns as they feared an outbreak of fresh hostilities.<sup>115</sup> The original IFOR, which had a mandate only until December 1996, interpreted its mission conservatively. In essence, it simply wished to enforce peace along the IEBL and to prevent any fighting. Indeed, officials in the RS did their best to convey the potentiality of war if they did not get their way. Toal and Dahlman correctly state that the SDS sought to stave off and, if possible, halt returns because, “The SDS leaders in Republika Srpska were especially concerned that returns would reverse the outcomes of the war, threatening to erode the ethnoterritorial segregation of Bosnia, especially as they prepared to evacuate territory around Sarajevo.”<sup>116</sup> The SDS and its supporters considered the division of BiH necessary to protect an exclusively Serb homeland in BiH. However, on the Federation side, the SDA began pushing the political necessity of Bosniak returns to the RS to counteract this desire for ethnic homogeneity and to alleviate the economic pressures associated with hosting so many refugees.<sup>117</sup>

At the same time, however, officials in the Federation entity were also responsible for complicating and obstructing the return of dispossessed Serbs. With the politicization of refugee

---

<sup>113</sup> Toal and Dahlman, *Bosnia Remade*, 167.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

returnees, the religious implications of the Muslim vs. Orthodox paradigm attained the same weight that it had during the Bosnian War. NATO and IFOR forces recognized this and put returns on the backburner. However, a few instances of attempted Bosniak returns just over the IEBL met with shootings in the RS. Three returnees were killed in the village of Kapetanovici by armed Serb militia members who wanted to prevent Bosniaks from coming back.<sup>118</sup> The IFOR mission that attempted to contain refugee returns to the RS was intensified, and the RS and Federation entities engaged in negotiations that fixed “visiting rules” for refugees.<sup>119</sup> These rules made it more difficult for refugees to return to their property on a long-term basis. In addition, they informally allowed for the erection of “boundary” checkpoints at the IEBL, which negated the freedom of movement provisions of the Dayton Agreement. The immediate postwar manifestation of the IEBL and the lack of enthusiasm for refugee returns effectively signified a partitioned BiH.<sup>120</sup> However, the fact remained that there were still hundreds of thousands of displaced Bosniaks in the Federation who had previously lived in what became the RS.

In both the Federation and the RS, the main political actors had little desire to give and too much desire to take. For the RS and specifically the SDS, this meant ensuring the ethnic homogeneity of “their” entity. For the Federation and specifically the SDA leadership headed by Alija Izetbegovic, it considered the Dayton Agreement unsustainable and sought to undermine RS territorial autonomy through immediate implementation of Annex 7. However, Izetbegovic and his associates lacked the same zeal in enforcing Annex 7 when it came to the return of ethnic Serbs throughout the Federation.<sup>121</sup> With this in mind, the international community had to find some way to force compromises between both the Federation and the RS regarding the extremely

---

<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 171.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 174.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., 176.

contentious issues of returnees and IEBL checkpoints. With the tumult of 1996 and 1997, the PIC realized that it needed a civilian authority that had enough teeth to force through elements of the Dayton Agreement that were unpalatable to Federation and RS authorities. Ultimately, this was the OHR.

Even though the Dayton Agreement limited the authority of the OHR to coordination, organization, and recommendation, its mandate changed significantly after 1997. It received from the PIC the extralegal authority to veto legislation and dismiss elected and unelected officials whose aims ran contrary to the spirit of the Dayton Accords.<sup>122</sup> While there were legal precedents for such actions in the form of League of Nations mandates like Danzig or Istanbul, this was a relatively new phenomenon. Indeed, the presence of the SFOR, which succeeded the IFOR after 1996, made any questions of the OHR's legality essentially moot. At nearly 65,000 soldiers, the SFOR was militarily superior to any of BiH's armed groups or its neighbours.<sup>123</sup> So long as the OHR could rely on the support of the SFOR, its veto power remained strong and relatively unchallenged.

Apart from the newly minted powers given to the OHR, the international community hoped to stimulate change in BiH and the RS through modifications on the ground. The international community saw the Plavsic-Dodik coalition as the best possible chance for liberal reform in the RS. Plavsic's expulsion from the SDS represented an opportunity that at least a segment of the RS parliament and government could be convinced to enforce the Dayton Accords. The obvious benefit would be support from the international community for Plavsic and her allies' political endeavours. At the very least, the RS could be made more compliant through the arrest and seizure of war criminals like Mladic and Karadzic. In the implementation

---

<sup>122</sup> Sumantra Bose, *Bosnia after Dayton* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 275.

<sup>123</sup> Donia, *Radovan Karadzic: Architect of the Bosnian Genocide*, 486.

of Dayton and ICTY arrests, both Dodik and Plavsic pledged to make these wishes a priority of their government. This earned them the backing of the OHR and international financial aid for their political machinery.<sup>124</sup> With the empowerment of the OHR, the victory of the Plavsic-Dodik government, and the intensification of the SFOR mission, Karadzic saw the writing on the wall. He fled his stronghold of Pale either at the end of 1997 or in the first months of 1998.

---

<sup>124</sup> Bose, *Bosnia after Dayton*, 210-211.

## Chapter 4: New Political Forces Emerge

Karadzic's flight from Pale ended his infamous, remarkable, and genocidal political career as the chief proponent of a partitioned Bosnia. The former RS President spent considerable time hiding amongst the numerous monasteries located along the Bosnian borders with Serbia and Montenegro.<sup>125</sup> There he absorbed the religious iconography that he had long used in his own propaganda. He eventually became a practitioner of alternative medicine in Serbia and assumed a fake identity. He was arrested and sent to the Hague in 2008. Regardless of Karadzic's personal status, his ideology held tremendous sway amongst the Bosnian Serb electorate long after his departure. However, it was no longer him, nor solely the SDS that stood as the political successors to the mantle of Bosnian Serb nationalism. Rather, this responsibility fell to another party, primarily the Serb Radical Party (SRS) and its reactionary and fervently ultranationalist leader Nikola Poplasen. The nationalist segment of the Bosnian Serb electorate respected Poplasen for his wartime service. However, his political inclinations were altogether unsavoury for the international community. Regardless, Poplasen enjoyed a temporary measure of success.

Despite significant support from the international community, Biljana Plavsic lost the 1998 RS presidential elections. Poplasen became President of the RS and sought to unite the RS with Serbia regardless of the restrictions of the Dayton Agreement. He wanted to dismiss Dodik from the Prime Ministry. However, with the OHR's newly granted powers of both veto and dismissal, Poplasen's designs against Dodik were not fulfilled. As Plavsic lost the RS presidency, so too did Momcilo Krajsnik lose the Serb seat of the Bosnian presidency. Plavsic, who recast herself as a political moderate, lost to an ultranationalist Poplasen and his SRS.

---

<sup>125</sup> Donia, *Radovan Karadzic: Architect of the Bosnian Genocide*, 489.

Krajisnik, who retained his nationalist credentials and was the chosen successor of Karadzic, lost his seat on the Bosnian presidency to the moderate Bosnian Serb Zivko Radisic. It is difficult to interpret the political designs of the Bosnian Serb electorate. On the one hand, they embraced a hardline nationalist and on the other supported a socialist. It is likely that Bosnian Serb voters in the RS were frustrated with the political bickering of Plavsic and Krajisnik and sought to punish both at the ballot box. Their rivalry put the political stability of an already shaky and economically depressed postwar RS in jeopardy. Different political actors were therefore given a mandate to lead. However, the view of the PIC and the OHR was different: their horse in the race was Plavsic and her loss was a disappointment.

Spanish ex-Foreign Minister Carlos Westendorp succeeded Carl Bildt as the High Representative for BiH and viewed the SDS-SRS coalition with suspicion. When Poplasen announced that he would not allow Dodik, who was the OHR's favoured candidate, to continue as Prime Minister, there was palpable tension in the RS with talk of a return to arms and secession.<sup>126</sup> On March 3rd, 1999, Poplasen issued a two-day deadline upon which Dodik would be forced to vacate the Prime Ministry.<sup>127</sup> However, upon news of Poplasen's ultimatum, Westendorp issued an order calling on Poplasen to resign.<sup>128</sup> NATO SFOR troops maintained a significant presence throughout the RS and enforced the OHR's will when necessary. With Poplasen's removal, Dodik was hated by the majority supported SDS and SRS. Westendorp's intervention coupled with Dodik's seemingly pro-Western approach heralded accusations from

---

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 275.

<sup>127</sup> Toal and Dahlman, *Bosnia Remade*, 232.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 232.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 230-231.

SDS and SRS supporters that Dodik was a “traitor” and a “foreign puppet.”<sup>129</sup> As a result, Dodik’s position as Prime Minister of Republika Srpska grew weaker.

At the same time as Poplasen’s removal from office, the Arbitral Tribunal for Bosnia decided that Brcko would have the status of a city outside of both the RS and Federation entities.<sup>130</sup> Brcko was a sticking point during the Dayton negotiations as both entities sought to include it within their own territories. The RS wanted it to link their northern and southern halves, while the Federation held it during the war and sought to maintain that control. The negotiations at Dayton did not resolve the issue as the negotiating parties elected to have the city’s status examined by an independent arbitral committee. The committee came to its decision during the height of the Poplasen-Dodik rivalry. This gave Dodik exactly the political opportunity he needed to reset his position and recalibrate his favourability amongst RS voters.

In protest over the Brcko decision, Dodik resigned as the Prime Minister of Republika Srpska.<sup>131</sup> This move gave him much flexibility for the future as his resignation demonstrated a degree of solidarity with Bosnian Serb nationalists.<sup>132</sup> It also made it difficult for Poplasen to pin the responsibility of either his removal from office or the Brcko decision on Dodik. Bosnian Serb nationalists were furious over the fate of Brcko as the decision of the Arbitral Committee caused quite a stir throughout the RS. By resigning over the issue, Dodik showed his commitment to the RS’s national and geopolitical interests above the petty rivalries between the entity’s political elites. It also showed that while he used the international community’s support, there were certain standards that he refused to compromise - Brcko was one of them.

---

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>131</sup> “Bosnian Serb Gov’t Resigns,” *CBC World*, March 5, 1999, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/bosnian-serb-gov-t-resigns-1.179467>.

<sup>132</sup> “Bosnian Serb Gov’t Resigns,” *CBC World*.

The Republika Srpska remained in a state of crisis. Its presidency and prime ministry were vacated and protests against both the OHR's intervention and the Arbitral Committee's Brcko decision were rampant. The situation devolved to such an extent that Bosnian Serb mobs engaged in brawls against SFOR troops in some areas. This was the case near the town of Zvornik on March 5th, where SFOR soldiers were enjoying local fare and drink. They were suddenly attacked by an SRS politician and his 13-member posse.<sup>133</sup> In the ensuing fight, the SRS ringleader was shot and killed, which triggered a hostile reaction against OHR activities in the area. A Bosnian Serb mob ransacked the OHR Zvornik office, which presided over the return of displaced persons to the area. This prompted its staff, led by Oliver Burch, to flee to Tuzla in the Federation.<sup>134</sup> The resulting chaos led Dodik to make a key political reconsideration.

It became increasingly likely that SFOR troops, in support of the OHR, would move to restore order in the RS entity. With the crises of 1999 taking full effect, Dodik reversed his decision to resign as prime minister.<sup>135</sup> He sought to manage a way out of the crisis in such a fashion that guaranteed him maximum political control. Considering Poplasen's barring from the presidency, Dodik would be able to rule the entity as Prime Minister with minimal constraints on his authority during this constitutional crisis. As well, Dodik secured additional funding from international actors in Bosnia to solidify his political apparatus.<sup>136</sup> Dodik's decision to reverse his resignation was risky, but it paid off as his rule had a stabilizing influence throughout the entity. This became increasingly important as other geopolitical concerns - specifically the status of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and Kosovo, came to prominence.

---

<sup>133</sup> Toal and Dahlman, *Bosnia Remade*, 230.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 230.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 232.



Concerning Dodik's political theatre, it further demonstrates his political acuity. Using the Brcko Arbitral Committee's decision to resign at essentially the same time as Poplasen's dismissal saved him considerable ire. Whether he had any real desire of resigning his post as PM of RS is highly debatable. Dodik most likely feigned resignation to dodge the bullet of Poplasen's wrath and Brcko's loss. Then, Dodik swept back in to become the hero that the RS needed to prevent its loss of autonomy to the SFOR. This gave Dodik an improved reputation amongst the Bosnian Serbs. To be clear, the entity's most radical and nationalistic adherents still detested him. However, he had a tendency of saying the right things at the right time, which endeared him to the moderate and reformist elements within the RS. As well, once the nationalist parties in the RS were weakened either through OHR intervention or ICTY arrests, Dodik became basically the only viable candidate in elections later in the 2000s. In the late 1990s, Dodik still attempted to navigate the complex RS political environment as a moderate proponent of western-style reforms in line with the wishes of the international community. This orientation enabled the RS to remain relatively calm while NATO concluded its unfinished business with the Milosevic regime.

As NATO began the bombing of FRY, SFOR contingents took control of Bosnia's border crossings with Serbia. This ensured that Serb forces - whether paramilitary or regular - could not retaliate against the bombing by launching a ground attack against SFOR troops in Bosnia.<sup>137</sup> It also meant that, if necessary, NATO ground troops could use BiH as a springboard for a ground invasion of Serbia. With this, the options of resistance available to Milosevic and his SRS and SDS allies in Bosnia were extremely limited. NATO had overwhelming air superiority combined with a virtual lock around the borders of the FRY. It could also count on a relatively friendly

---

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 232.

government under Dodik in the RS, which kept the entity's coercive elements out of the hands of Milosevic's allies. While the RS and its SDS rulers had once proven to be Milosevic's closest political ally, this relationship ended. The overwhelming strength of the SFOR coupled with the government of a seemingly more neutral political actor in Dodik, prevented serious possibilities for retribution in BiH. Milosevic was more isolated than ever and his regime was primed for collapse.

Dodik realized the extent of NATO supremacy in the region and decided to pursue conciliation in line with the foreign policy aims of the international community for Bosnia. This included the diversification of the RS's trade, which proved to be overly reliant on the FRY. The FRY purchased nearly 75% of RS exports and accounted for almost 40% of the entity's imports.<sup>138</sup> This economic overreliance on the FRY grew increasingly apparent during the NATO air campaign. This is because NATO's actions constrained the movement of goods between the RS and FRY and led to economic disruptions in the former. Prior to his removal from the presidency, Poplasen consistently advocated for the integration of the RS within the economic and political orbit of the FRY - something that the SRS and SDS continued to support.<sup>139</sup> However, Dodik realized that this would be a tremendous error and a practical impossibility so long as Slobodan Milosevic remained public enemy number one in the eyes of the NATO alliance. As a result, Dodik engaged in preliminary talks concerning further economic cooperation between the Federation and RS entities, but little came of this.<sup>140</sup>

Dodik's position in this instance demonstrated flexibility such that he could manipulate the international community into supporting his so-called "moderate" government. By engaging

---

<sup>138</sup> Ibid., 232.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 231.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 232.

in talks with the Federation, Dodik made masterful use of political signalling and confined his opponents to hardline positions on a consistent basis. All the while, Dodik likely never had any real intention of deepening economic ties between Bosnia's two entities, but the *appearance* of this strengthened him politically. While many Bosnian Serbs had "Greater Serbia" aspirations, the viability of this political project - especially in the wake of crippling economic sanctions against the FRY - became increasingly remote. Dodik demonstrated both to the international community and to the RS electorate that he could make pragmatic decisions outside the realm of nationalist discourse. This allowed him to maintain political control, but it cost him popularity amongst nationalistically inclined voters.

In May 2000, Dodik visited the so-called "hornets' nest" - the ICTY in the Hague. This was only a few weeks after Dodik called for the "political end" of the SDS.<sup>141</sup> The vast majority of Bosnian Serbs fundamentally disagreed with the arrest of RS war criminal suspects from the Bosnian War.<sup>142</sup> The arrest of Krajisnik, who was the last of the wartime Bosnian Serb leaders that held political responsibility in the postwar RS, signalled the true end of the political relevance of the SDS old guard. The friendliness that Dodik displayed toward his international backers, coupled with the blatant crackdown on the SDS, heralded accusations from SDS and SRS supporters that Dodik collaborated with the enemy.<sup>143</sup> To them, Dodik gave in to occupying forces backed by extra-judicial bodies in the forms of both the ICTY and the OHR.

During his time at the Hague, Dodik gave a speech in which he suggested that both ex-General Mladic and former RS President Karadzic should be arrested by SFOR troops.<sup>144</sup> It was

---

<sup>141</sup> Payam Akhavan, "Beyond Impunity: Can International Criminal Justice Prevent Future Atrocities?" *The American Journal of International Law* 95, no. 1 (2001): 15.

<sup>142</sup> Akhavan, "Beyond Impunity," 15.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 210-211.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

clear that Dodik's political competition was being systematically dismantled through the prosecution of the SDS old guard by Bosnia's international guarantors. Indeed, it was not just the indictees and arrests that were problematic for the SDS. The forced resignations of small-scale SDS officials by the OHR on account of anti-Dayton obstructionism also crippled the party. SDS members in municipal offices, such as housing boards, were dismissed for preventing refugee returnees from accessing their rightful property. While these dismissals gave Dodik a political advantage over the SDS and their allies, this tendency harmed him tremendously in terms of his political favourability.

While the OHR and ICTY were enforcing the Dayton Agreement as they interpreted it, it is no wonder that their moves spawned distrust amongst the Bosnian Serb electorate. The use of the OHR's veto power at this time is understandable as successive High Representatives had legitimate fears that the empowerment of nationalists in the RS government could lead to renewed fighting. By the same token, the reaction of the RS electorate to these moves is also understandable. Indeed, vetoes and edicts from unelected institutions and officeholders against democratically elected representatives of any electorate are generally met with hostility. Negation of the popular will, even when it appears to be the morally correct thing to do, is despised when the majority adhere to contrary positions. Therefore, the international institutions in BiH and the RS electorate were on a collision course from the start. The RS electorate typically supported the ethnonationalist vision of the SDS, while the Dayton Agreement, at least partially, sought to undo it. With this, it is easy to understand how Dodik suffered from a lack of popularity amongst the Bosnian Serbs in the late 1990s.

At this time, Dodik made several errors that ran contrary to the fundamental beliefs of the Bosnian Serb electorate - one of which was a violation of the societal solidarity pertaining to the

supposed innocence of Bosnian Serb forces during the Bosnian War. July 2000 marked the fifth anniversary of the massacre at Srebrenica. The events that transpired there were solemnly commemorated by the victims, their families, and others. Dodik commented on the killings at Srebrenica and other such actions perpetrated by Bosnian Serb forces during the war in the 1990s; “there were events in the nationalist euphoria that the nation in whose interests they happened cannot be proud of. The people who committed the crimes are personally responsible for them, and I think they must be held responsible for them before the court.”<sup>145</sup> Such a position is remarkable as few other Bosnian Serb politicians recognized the atrocities carried out by forces loyal to the RS state at the time. However, Dodik’s recognition of crimes committed by the Bosnian Serbs, coupled with his cooperation with international forces spelled trouble for him at the ballot box. He remembered this lesson well in the future and did not repeat this political mistake. Dodik’s genocide denialism in the later 2000s is due to the realization that recognition of the VRS’s conduct during the Bosnian War as genocide equalled political suicide.

Apart from political considerations and factionalism within the RS, the powers of the OHR were increasing. The Bosnian parliament proved unable to come to an agreement concerning the implementation of a central border service to guard the country’s frontier. The central parliament suffered from a staggering paralysis, especially considering the gravity of the issue at hand. The foundation of a state border service was crucial to BiH’s security. High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch enacted a decision concerning the “Law on State Border Service,” on January 13th, 2000.<sup>146</sup> The enactment of this new law by the OHR ultimately gave that office the power to informally put laws into practice through the use of its “decisions.” In

---

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>146</sup> Office of the High Representative, “Decision Imposing the Law on State Border Service,” January 13, 2000, <http://www.ohr.int/decision-imposing-the-law-on-state-border-service/>.

other words, these decisions were effectively decrees. Petritsch used the law that was drafted by the Bosnian presidency in 1999, which had been under review and ultimately rejected by the Bosnian parliament.<sup>147</sup> With the rejection of the law, Bosnia's border and airport security were disorganized, largely unregulated, and subject to manipulation by local entity authorities.

Petritsch wished to end the deadlock over the border service and thereby instituted his decision on the law. However, elements of the Bosnian parliament, particularly its SDS deputies, were displeased by the enhancement of the OHR's powers and challenged this decision. Eleven members of the Bosnian House of Representatives applied to the Constitutional Court on February 7th, 2000, to determine whether Petritsch's decision on the law was constitutional.<sup>148</sup> Annex 10 of the Bosnian Constitution gave the OHR certain responsibilities pertaining to governmental coordination in an advisory capacity. The 1997 Bonn powers also gave the OHR the ability to veto legislation and dismiss officials who were deemed responsible for obstructing the implementation of the Dayton Agreement. However, the members believed that the OHR "does not have the normative powers to impose a law in the absence of a vote by the Parliamentary Assembly."<sup>149</sup>

In response, the Constitutional Court devastated this attempt by the 11 members of the House of Representatives to constrain the powers of the OHR. In its November 3, 2000, decision, the court ruled against the group for several reasons. First, the court stated that it did not have the legal authority to make a ruling on the constitutional legitimacy of the actions of the OHR.<sup>150</sup> In its decision, the court described the overall legitimacy of the OHR with respect to the

---

<sup>147</sup> Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, "Case U 9/00," 1, November 3, 2000, [https://www.ustavnisud.ba/uploads/odluke/\\_en/U-9-00-12134.pdf](https://www.ustavnisud.ba/uploads/odluke/_en/U-9-00-12134.pdf).

<sup>148</sup> "Case U 9/00," 1.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

international institutions and acts that granted the office its power. Concerning the precedent of League of Nations protectorates and its relation to Dayton BiH, it stated, “though recognized as sovereign, the States concerned were placed under international supervision, and foreign authorities acted in these States, on behalf of the international community, substituting themselves for the domestic authorities.”<sup>151</sup> Therefore, international actors had the power in League of Nations mandates to make decisions that were done in the name of the states that had the legal status of mandates. The decision continues:

Such a situation amounts to a sort of functional duality: an authority of one legal system intervenes in another legal system, thus making its functions dual... In the present case, the High Representative - as well as his exercise of those powers are not subject to review by the Constitutional Court - intervened in the legal order of Bosnia and Herzegovina substituting himself for the national authorities.<sup>152</sup>

The Constitutional Court understood its jurisdiction was strictly limited to the political and legal affairs of political actors within BiH and its entities and not the international actors that function within it.

Even though the Constitutional Court did not have the legal authority to rule on the acts and interventions of the OHR, it made clear that the Bosnian Parliamentary Assembly did have the legal authority to modify aspects of the laws imposed by the OHR. Because the OHR did itself make a decision on a law, which is technically the nearly exclusive right of the Parliamentary Assembly, the assembly had the ability to amend and alter the OHR’s decision in this instance.<sup>153</sup> However, this is only because this particular decision of the OHR was in the form of a law; the assembly did not have the right to modify or amend OHR decisions generally, unless they pertained specifically to a law. Given the state of paralysis of the Bosnian

---

<sup>151</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 2.

Parliamentary Assembly, which was the reason Petritsch implemented the decision in the first place, the likelihood of the assembly uniting to overturn or amend this law was slim. The legality of the OHR to implement laws of its own accord was questionable. However, because Petritsch had no authority superior to him within BiH, his supremacy was unquestionable.

Bearing this in mind, if the PIC, UN Security Council, European Court of Human Rights, or other institutions of international prominence decided that the actions of the OHR were illegal, then the OHR would have to relent. However, because all the aforementioned institutions were generally supportive of increasing the legal and political power of the OHR within BiH, particularly in the early 2000s, they never prevented the OHR from expanding its political authority. As for the law itself, the Constitutional Court voted seven to two that the Law on the State Border Service was indeed lawful when judged under the precepts of the constitution. However, in her dissenting opinion, Judge Snezana Savic proclaimed that the OHR did not technically submit a law, but an act. This is because, according to Savic, laws can only be legislated by the Parliamentary Assembly.<sup>154</sup> Yet because the act by the OHR was taken as a law and the Constitutional Court had the legal primacy to examine laws for their constitutionality, then the Constitutional Court must be legally capable of examining the OHR's acts when they are taken as laws.<sup>155</sup>

Regardless of the extremely complicated nature of the legal dispute concerning whether the OHR had the legal right to impose laws in BiH, the Constitutional Court ultimately determined that it did. With this ruling, the power of the OHR increased substantially. It went from being, in the words of the GFA, a party designed to “facilitate,” “mobilize,” and “coordinate” to a near head-of-state with the ability to veto laws, dismiss officials, and propose

---

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 6.



new legislation.<sup>156</sup> With this growth in authority, the stage was set for a tremendous power struggle between the international community's champion in the OHR and the elected representatives of the RS. The dismissal of elected officials, particularly of Poplasen in 1998, galvanized the Bosnian Serb population into supporting radical and conservative political elements. These forces detested the desired tenets of the OHR - Bosnian centralism, arrest of ICTY indictees, and the curbing of entity authority.

The September 2000 elections to the Skupstina demonstrated the general frustration of the Bosnian Serb electorate. The SDS saw a dramatic surge in support and won 31 deputies compared to their previous 19 in the elections of 1998.<sup>157</sup> The reason for this is the OHR's ban of the SRS, whose voters overwhelmingly supported the SDS instead. Tied for second place were Mladen Ivanic's Party of Democratic Progress (PDP) and Milorad Dodik's SNSD, both with 11 seats.<sup>158</sup> With 83 total seats in the Skupstina, a combined SDS-PDP coalition (42 seats) took majority control of the RS legislature. As part of the SDS-PDP arrangement, Ivanic became prime minister of the RS and replaced Dodik in January of 2001. Considering the SDS was unpalatable to the OHR, the SDS-PDP agreement gave Ivanic's government some respite from the intervention of the High Representative. However, this would only be temporary as the PDP too would become the target of the international community and the OHR.

The new political forces that arose in the RS came to prominence due to a variety of factors. First, the SRS gained significant traction because of its refusal to accept the interventionism of the OHR and the precepts of the Dayton Agreement. However, the power of the OHR overwhelmed and ultimately wrecked the SRS. Its supporters were forced to vote for

---

<sup>156</sup> General Framework Agreement, 111.

<sup>157</sup> National Assembly of the Republika Srpska, "About National Assembly."

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

the next-best thing, the SDS. The PDP, on the other hand, was an alternative to the right-wing nationalism of the SDS and focused more on a centre-right orientation. It, along with Dodik's SNSD, provided the wayward former supporters of Plavsic's SNS a new political home. After her defeat in the 1998 elections, the SNS became politically negligible with the PDP as the Skupstina's new kingmaker. With this change, Dodik's Prime Ministry came to an end.

With his SNSD soundly defeated and unable to form a coalition to retain his position as head of government, Dodik placed all hope in his bid for the RS presidency. For the RS presidential elections of November 2000, the PIC implemented a complex system of preferential balloting known as "alternative voting."<sup>159</sup> This system allowed RS electors to mark ordered preferences for their votes, with their first pick receiving a "1," their second receiving a "2" and so on.<sup>160</sup> If any candidates, with their vice presidential picks on the same ticket, had 50% plus one of the first preference votes, they would be the winners of the election; if not, the ticket that received the fewest votes would be disqualified, with their electors' next choice receiving the votes instead.<sup>161</sup> There were no runoffs as the preferential voting would ensure that a candidate would receive 50% plus one eventually. While the public reasoning for this alternative voting scheme was to encourage a more transparent and democratic process, the PIC, OHR, and Dodik had high hopes for tactical reasons.

Dodik and his international supporters understood that the SDS candidate, Mirko Sarovic, would likely receive many more first preference votes.<sup>162</sup> However, if enough RS Bosniak voters put Dodik as their second preference, then Dodik may have been able to win.<sup>163</sup> This idea came

---

<sup>159</sup> Bose, *Bosnia after Dayton*, 221.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

with the notion that the vast majority of Bosniak voters in the RS would rather have a moderate Serb, Dodik, in power over the SDS's Mirko Sarovic. However, with this assumption were two factors that demonstrated a lack of political awareness on the part of the proponents of alternative voting in RS. First, its designers believed the SDS would likely not be able to win enough votes to declare victory outright. Second, they presupposed that the majority of RS Bosniak voters would be willing to cross ethnic lines to support an ethnic Bosnian Serb. However, this idea was ill-conceived as there were several Bosniak parties involved in the election. As such, Bosniak voters had little reason to support anyone other than a Bosniak candidate - especially with such blatant ethnic polarization within BiH as a whole.

The election results saw SDS candidate Mirko Sarovic receive 49.8% of the total first preference votes.<sup>164</sup> This was only .2% below the necessary 50% plus one to achieve an outright victory in the first round. The Bosnian Party (BOSS) received the lowest total votes in the RS and was thus disqualified from the election, with its voters' ballots given to their second preferences. Only 3%, or 288 persons among BOSS voters had marked their second preference for non-Bosniak candidates - of this, 212 chose Dodik.<sup>165</sup> The fraction of BOSS voters that had the SDS as their second preference pushed the SDS over the 50% mark.<sup>166</sup> Milorad Dodik came in a distant second place with only 25.7% of the total vote.<sup>167</sup> This was a humiliating defeat for Dodik that left him out of the limelight of RS politics for almost five years.

President Sarovic and Vice President Cavic's cooperation with Prime Minister Mladen Ivanic was effective and politically shrewd. The SDS needed a coalition partner if it was going to remain in effective control of the RS Skupstina, so they accepted the cost of doing business that

---

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., 230.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 233.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 230-232.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 232.

came with installing Ivanic as Prime Minister. This move partially and temporarily allayed the concerns of High Representative Wolfgang Petritsch, who succeeded Carlos Westendorp in August 1999. Bose gives credit to Ivanic who balanced the competing political objectives of the SDS on the one hand and international pressure to establish common Bosnian institutions on the other.<sup>168</sup> This balance was particularly important given the liberalizing climate brought about by the international community-supported “Alliance for Change.” This political coalition held tremendous sway in the Federation entity. The two most powerful parties of this electoral alliance were the Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina (SBiH) and the Social Democratic Party of Bosnia and Herzegovina (SDP), but it included others as well.<sup>169</sup>

The liberalization of the Federation entity, coupled with the toning-down of the nationalist rhetoric of the SDS with Ivanic as RS Prime Minister, set the stage for changes to Bosnia’s domestic politics. In addition, the overthrow of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic at the beginning of October 2000 and his subsequent extradition to the Hague, presented new opportunities for the Serbian-RS relationship. That December, Serbia held new elections, which resulted in the resounding victory of the Democratic Opposition of Serbia, led by Zoran Djindjic. The liberalization of politics in the RS and Serbia advanced in lockstep. SDS deputies went so far as to support laws that enforced RS cooperation with the ICTY at the Hague.<sup>170</sup> This news came as a relief to the OHR, which found fewer reasons to maintain an activist orientation toward RS politics. This came at the cost of an inflamed nationalist SDS base, which viewed cooperation with the ICTY as a betrayal of the struggle to protect the RS. This is especially true

---

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 266.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 266.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 266.

of the former voters of the SRS who flocked to the SDS after Westendorp intervened against the former in 1998.

Other political actors capitalized on the nationalist vacuum created by the SDS's drift toward centrism. The relaxed stance of the OHR enabled Ivanic to develop the coveted "special parallel relationships with neighbouring states" permitted to the Bosnian entities in Article III, Section 2a of the General Framework Agreement.<sup>171</sup> This included the creation of a bilateral free-trade zone between the RS and Serbia with additional planned cooperation for the future.<sup>172</sup> The rapid development of ties between the RS and Serbia would not have been allowed by the OHR without the removal of Slobodan Milosevic and the softening of SDS policy in the RS. While Milorad Dodik was undoubtedly supportive of the improvement of ties between the RS and Serbia, it was he himself that wished to perform this feat. His jealousy of Ivanic's success and his tireless ambition gave him the motivation to undermine the SDS by taking up its traditional ideological tenet - nationalism.

After his defeats, Dodik transitioned to a harsher and more nationalistic form of political expression in the RS. While pandering to the PIC and the OHR did have political benefits, it did not allow Dodik to bypass the legitimate democratic expression of the electorate. Dodik's political manoeuvres in the late 1990s up to the year 2000 were characterized by an approach that took nationalism into account but was heavily tilted toward the will of the OHR. However, Dodik's defeat changed this. He witnessed the spectacular fall of the SDS old guard with delight. But the defeat of Plavsic in 1998 left him extremely vulnerable. Luckily, his placation of the

---

<sup>171</sup> "General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *General Assembly Security Council*, 64, November 30, 1995, [https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/BA\\_951121\\_DaytonAgreement.pdf](https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/BA_951121_DaytonAgreement.pdf).

<sup>172</sup> Bose, *Bosnia after Dayton*, 267.

OHR protected him from the wrath of President Poplasen. Regardless, his pandering could not save him from the ire of the Bosnian Serb electorate, which ultimately wanted him out.

## Chapter 5: Moderate Rags to Radical Riches

Dodik and his SNSD began using nationalist rhetoric to rile up the disaffected formerly SRS voters of the SDS. An SNSD press release from December 2000 stated:

The SDS promises that it will work on strengthening the joint (Bosnian) institutions and establishing regulatory agencies at BiH level, all of which will strip the RS of its sovereign rights. In their crawling collaboration, they are even ready to arrest Serbs indicted for committing war crimes.<sup>173</sup>

Judging from this press release, Dodik and his SNSD no longer attempted to appeal to the will of the international community or to the OHR. Rather, they appealed directly to the disenfranchised nationalist voters of the SRS who were searching for a new political party. This was particularly true after the SDS transformed into a more moderate party once its old guard had been arrested or relegated to hiding. The original SRS bloc of voters, which adhered to some of the most extreme and exclusivist nationalism in the country, maintained its electoral influence. Its systematic exclusion from RS politics by the OHR weakened it substantially, but its popular base was still very active. SRS voters had secured the election of Poplasen only a few years earlier - there was no reason why they could not rally around another candidate or party.

Dodik knew of this political demographic that lacked political representation. However, to the political observer at the time, Dodik's reversal must have come as quite a surprise. The latter part of the SNSD press release dealing with the arrest of Serbs indicted for war crimes is particularly rich. Shortly after Dodik became RS Prime Minister in 1998, he gave express permission to the ICTY to open an office in Banja Luka.<sup>174</sup> Dodik also encouraged those indicted

---

<sup>173</sup> SNSD, "Press Release, December 2000," cited in European Stability Initiative, *Reshaping International Priorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Part Three: The End of the Nationalist Regimes and the Future of the Bosnian State*, 9, March 22, 2001, [https://www.esiweb.org/sites/default/files/reports/pdf/esi\\_document\\_id\\_14.pdf](https://www.esiweb.org/sites/default/files/reports/pdf/esi_document_id_14.pdf).

<sup>174</sup> Payam Akhavan, "Justice in the Hague, Peace in the Former Yugoslavia? A Commentary on the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal," in *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 20, no. 4 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 812.

for war crimes to give themselves up and avoid remaining in hiding.<sup>175</sup> That he could feel comfortable making use of anti-Hague rhetoric once he was defeated is staggering. However, his pro-ICTY signalling in 1998 was mostly for political reasons as it helped subdue his rivals in the SDS like Karadzic and Krajisnik. It also ensured his protection from the powerful gaze of the OHR, which made short shrift of those who opposed its mission. Dodik up to the year 2000 was very different from the Dodik that emerged afterward. Political currents shifted substantially throughout BiH, from changes to the OHR and its occupants, to the willingness of the RS electorate to abandon the SDS.

Dodik's almost overnight transformation from moderate to Bosnian Serb nationalist is the perfect demonstration of his political flexibility. It also shows that Dodik, after his 2000 *annus horribilis*, had a fundamental understanding of the cultural, societal, and political milieu of the RS. When he returned to political prominence, he had his "fingers on the pulse" so to speak. His political survival depended on this refined capability. His lust for power was matched only by his dogged determination to reinstall himself as an arbiter of RS politics. Dodik learned well from his political lessons up to 2000 - his post-defeat repositioning eventually turned him into the Machiavelli of the Skupstina. This transformation demonstrated the political unscrupulousness necessary to carry both himself and his SNSD back into a position of power. Luckily, like himself, his SNSD was willing to go the distance in terms of changing its message. It went from a relatively moderate party to become one of the most stubborn representatives of Bosnian Serb nationalism. The SNSD reinvented itself into the home of the supporters of the decrepit SRS. Its later embrace of genocide denialism and calls for RS independence reflect this.

---

<sup>175</sup> Akhavan, "Justice in the Hague, Peace in the Former Yugoslavia," 812.



The SDS, once the stalwart standard bearer of Greater Serbia, suddenly became the party of treason. Posters plastered around Banja Luka in June 2001 mocked RS President Sarovic for his presence at a ceremony celebrating the rebuilding and reopening of the city's Ferhadija mosque.<sup>176</sup> The posters showed Sarovic (fictitiously) wearing an Islamic *kufi* (skullcap) with the subtext Islamicizing his name as "Mirsad Effendi Sarovic."<sup>177</sup> The use of these tactics by Bosnian Serb nationalists eroded the SDS's support. The parliamentary and presidential elections in the RS were held on October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2002. The SDS lost 5 seats, which left them 26 deputies in the Skupstina, while the PDP lost 2 seats, which left them with 9.<sup>178</sup> These disappointing results for Prime Minister Ivanic left the SDS-PDP coalition in need of additional partners. These were found primarily in Bosniak parties in the Skupstina.<sup>179</sup> The RS cabinet included a host of ministers from these other parties as well. Prime Minister Ivanic was replaced by PDP member Dragan Mikerevic.

Mirko Sarovic became the Serb member of the Bosnian presidency, while his VP, Dragan Cavic, became President of the RS. Cavic defeated SNSD representative and Dodik ally Milan Jelic. Sarovic had a short-lived term as the Serb member of the presidency, however. A scandal erupted in 2002, which detailed the sale of RS military aircraft parts to Saddam Hussein's Baathist government in Iraq.<sup>180</sup> Sarovic was implicated in the sale of this military hardware, which occurred during his term as RS president after the dismissal of Poplasen. Additionally, the SFOR discovered that the VRS engaged in spying activities against Bosnian institutions,

---

<sup>176</sup> Bose, *Bosnia after Dayton*, 266.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>178</sup> National Assembly of the Republika Srpska, "About National Assembly."

<sup>179</sup> Thorsten Gromes, *Den Frieden Abgewählt?: Die Friedenskonsolidierung in Bosnien und Herzegowina und die Wahlen im Oktober 2002* (Frankfurt: Peace Research Institute, 2003), 49.

<sup>180</sup> Zoltan Barany, "Building National Armies after Civil War: Lessons from Bosnia, El Salvador, and Lebanon," *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 129, no. 2 (2014), 222, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43828650>.

individuals, and even the SFOR itself.<sup>181</sup> As a result, Sarovic resigned from his post as Serb member of the Bosnian presidency.<sup>182</sup> High Representative Paddy Ashdown welcomed this as “an honourable act... (that) allows BiH to close the chapter and move forward with reform.”<sup>183</sup> SDS representative to the House of Peoples, Borislav Paravac succeeded Sarovic.

While hindsight is always 20/20, a closer examination of the rationale behind the sale of VRS munitions and weapons demonstrates a lack of political and diplomatic tact on the part of then President Sarovic. While the maxim “the enemy of my enemy is my friend” has value in geopolitical discourse for obvious reasons, it does not necessarily apply in this instance. First, the risks associated with the sale of these arms far outweighed the potential benefits. By engaging in these activities, Sarovic put not only his personal prestige on the line, but also the security and stability of both his party and his entity. This act gained minimal financial compensation and only the smug satisfaction of knowing that the RS had helped to strengthen a key American rival in the Middle East. When this embarrassing affair combined with the fallout of the allegations of spying against the VRS, the pressure was too much for Sarovic to bear. If he had not resigned of his own will, he may well have been removed by High Representative Ashdown anyway. In essence, Sarovic chose the path of least resistance and acted as a kind of sacrificial lamb. That way, he protected others within the SDS who may have been implicated in the scandals.

With the departure of Sarovic from the Bosnian presidency, negotiations for reforms concerning the development of joint Bosnian institutions became easier. One of the unrealized objectives envisioned by the Dayton Accords was the establishment of a unified Bosnian Army.

---

<sup>181</sup> Office of the High Representative, “High Representative Comments on Resignation of Mirko Sarovic from BiH Presidency,” accessed April 16th, 2021, from <http://www.ohr.int/high-representative-comments-on-resignation-of-mirko-sarovic-from-bih-presidency/?print=pdf>.

<sup>182</sup> Barany, “Building National Armies,” 222.

<sup>183</sup> Office of the High Representative, “High Representative Comments on Resignation.”

As a result, the Standing Committee on Military Matters, which got its mandate from the GFA, developed the so-called ‘Five Pledges.’<sup>184</sup> Written in January 2003, the pledges sought to extend civilian control over the military apparatus, empower the BiH presidency as the supreme body in charge of the army, and prepare the army for NATO integration.<sup>185</sup> This was the first step toward a new defence policy for BiH. The OHR created the Defence Reform Commission in May, which implemented several military reforms. This included the foundation of the first joint Bosnian Ministry of Defence and a united army staff in 2003.<sup>186</sup> For a country that a mere ten years before had been tearing itself apart as a result of an invasion and civil war, this was a tremendous step toward establishing some kind of functioning state.

These reforms had the support of most members of the SDS including the new RS President Dragan Cavic. During a debate in the RS Skupstina concerning military integration, Cavic stated, “we don’t want to stand as an obstacle on the road to Europe because otherwise someone might just push us off that road.”<sup>187</sup> Cavic’s words in the Skupstina demonstrated that he desired RS and BiH within the realm of the EU. Indeed, Serbia too had hedged its bets on the “European experiment.” With Zoran Djindjic as Prime Minister of Serbia, such integration became likelier. However, following Djindjic’s assassination in March 2003, Serbian politics became more conservative and saw the return to power of some members of Milosevic’s clique, although the current of reform remained in the country for some time. So too did it remain in the RS. As well, Cavic’s statement seemed to acknowledge a need for Euro-Atlantic integration to avoid additional dismissals by the OHR, among other considerations.

---

<sup>184</sup> Barany, “Building National Armies,” 222.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 222.

<sup>187</sup> Richard Caplan, “From Collapsing States to Neo-Trusteeship: The Limits to Solving the Problem of ‘Precarious Statehood’ in the 21st Century,” *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 2, (2007), 236, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4017697>.

With the absence of both the ultranationalist old guard in the RS's SDS and the Milosevic regime in Serbia, new opportunities opened for the Serb people. Under Milosevic and Karadzic, the door to European integration remained closed. However, new leaders meant new possibilities. One was the prospect of joining the European Union in line with the other formerly communist eastern European states. However, the European Union had criteria that needed to be met both within BiH and Serbia before serious discussions for accession could take place. The Bosnian War effectively decided that BiH would remain intact, but that its nationalities would have autonomy. In essence, this arrangement satisfied nobody. The Bosniaks were unable to have a centralized state, while the Bosnian Croats and Bosnian Serbs were bound to a country toward which they felt little loyalty. The European Union could potentially help to solve this crisis of uneasy coexistence and identitarian crises if the former Yugoslav republics could all join the EU.

Citizens of EU states may travel over the Union's land borders without restrictions. Oftentimes poorer member states receive economic help from EU economic development programs, something the Yugoslav republics would undoubtedly have received. This formula for cooperation could solve most of the tension-causing and underlying issues of the former Yugoslav states. In the early 2000s, if BiH, Croatia, and Serbia became EU member states, then many of the tensions pertaining to the Serb and Croat minorities in BiH would have been mitigated. While the EU likely would not have been able to solve all the issues that arose in the postwar Yugoslav space, it would have provided both a forum and incentives for negotiation. This would have weakened the nationalist factions within both Serbia and BiH and allowed for both countries' economic and political development along western lines. However, the EU chose

to play hardball with accession negotiations for these countries. Despite this, there was still great hope for BiH and Serbia to become full EU members.

One of the necessities for EU membership was the arrest of ICTY indictees in both BiH and Serbia. Another was the promotion of “truth and reconciliation” style programs to accept responsibility for the atrocities of the Yugoslav Wars. Finally, the EU deemed necessary the creation of several centralized domestic institutions in BiH for the country to join the bloc. The most important of these institutions were the country’s armed forces and police force. At the end of 2003, the OHR supported the creation of an RS commission to investigate the events in Srebrenica as a stepping-stone on the way to truth and reconciliation.<sup>188</sup> An earlier report issued by a minor RS governmental agency in 2002 denied that any genocide took place.<sup>189</sup> The 2003 commission aimed to clarify this matter and reject the inaccuracies of the 2002 report.

The commission finished its report in the summer of 2004 and acknowledged that Bosnian Serb forces killed at least 7,000 Bosniak men and boys at Srebrenica.<sup>190</sup> President Dragan Cavic accepted the results of the commission’s work. He apologized and stated, “the report makes it clear that enormous crimes were committed in and around Srebrenica in July 1995. The Bosnian Serb government shares the pain of the families of the Srebrenica victims, is truly sorry and apologizes for the tragedy.”<sup>191</sup> Cavic made this apology in the spirit of reconciliation and a desire for European integration. However, he could not stave off the demands of the OHR, which demanded an intensification of arrests for those charged with war crimes.

---

<sup>188</sup> Monica Hanson Green, *Srebrenica Genocide Denial Report 2020*, (2020), 26, <https://www.srebrenicamemorial.org/bs/document/40>.

<sup>189</sup> Green, *Srebrenica Genocide Denial Report*, 26.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-27.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

Throughout the summer of 2004, High Representative Paddy Ashdown dismissed 59 RS officials whom he believed were complacent in delaying or hindering the arrest of persons indicted by the ICTY.<sup>192</sup> In December 2004, the United States placed travel bans on Prime Minister Mikerevic, other high-ranking members of the PDP, and senior members of the SDS for obstructing arrests of suspected war criminals.<sup>193</sup> Outraged by the OHR's decision, Mikerevic resigned in protest. Ashdown used his powers as a means of demonstrating his political leverage and pushed the RS coalition government to the brink of collapse. While the arrest of ICTY indictees was an important obligation, it was secondary to Ashdown's relentless pursuit of centralized Bosnian military and police forces.<sup>194</sup> Ashdown strongarmed the RS government to acquiesce to institutional integration. Mikerevic thought it better to leave than to give in and passed the prime ministry onto SDS member Petar Bukejlovic.

While there was a certain degree of obstruction concerning the arrest of ICTY indictees, the SDS-PDP coalition made significant concessions regarding Bosnian centralization. However, a combination of factors led Ashdown to believe that these concessions were either disingenuous or not far enough. Much of this perception probably stemmed from the SDS's past during the Bosnian War as the primary political force responsible for the ideological and administrative persecution of non-Serbs in the territory of the RS. In addition, the SDS-PDP coalition did not make fast enough progress toward police reform or arrests of indictees to impress Ashdown who made liberal use of his powers of dismissal against the RS government's officials. By doing this, Ashdown pushed Mikerevic and Cavic against a wall from which they could not salvage a

---

<sup>192</sup> Daniel McLaughlin, "Premier of Serb Region in Bosnia Resigns Over Sackings," *The Irish Times*, December 18th, 2004, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/premier-of-serb-region-in-bosnia-resigns-over-sackings-1.1170505>.

<sup>193</sup> McLaughlin, "Premier of Serb Region in Bosnia."

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

victory. They either had to disappoint Ashdown by pandering to their nationalist-conservative base or frustrate their base by giving in to Ashdown's demands.

Ashdown's aggressive use of his power of dismissal was met with anger and frustration by RS President Dragan Cavic. Cavic stated, "Ashdown's decision will escalate into a serious political crisis, mostly because he has completely sided with the SDA and is only working to make their wishes come true regarding the disappearance of Republika Srpska."<sup>195</sup> Cavic's statement in the Skupstina in 2003 and his acceptance of the RS commission's findings pertaining to the genocide at Srebrenica vehemently contrast with his anti-Ashdown statement in 2004. The former demonstrates an optimism for the future that would eventually see the inclusion of a bi-entitized BiH within the European Union. The latter calls into question the very objectivity of the OHR and the viability of the RS's relationship with it. It demonstrates the mentality not only of Cavic, but also of the Bosnian Serb RS voter - both of whom suspected that their Bosniak compatriots and the OHR wished for the dissolution of the RS entity. Cavic felt powerless as Ashdown demonstrated his enthusiasm for using his veto powers to push for Bosnia's encroaching centralization.

The period when Cavic stood as RS President likely represented the most opportune moment for the RS to become better integrated with both the Bosnian central government and the EU. The SDS, in its attempt to maintain political power in the RS, willingly cooperated with most of the objectives of the OHR. If the EU had rewarded Cavic and accelerated BiH's EU accession under the auspices of an exceptional bi-entitized system, it would have cemented BiH within the Euro-Atlantic sphere. However, the EU's insistence on maintaining its rigid accession criteria seriously damaged the credibility of the SDS government. When coupled with the

---

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

activism of High Representative Ashdown up to 2005, the SDS had little chance of maintaining electability amongst the RS electorate. It collaborated on the path of EU integration with nothing to show for it. This empowered nouveau nationalist obstructionists like Dodik.

Significant changes to the international community's commitments in BiH were in progress while debates over Bosnian centralization were raging. Chiefly, NATO's Stabilization Force (SFOR) reached the end of its mandate. European Union forces (EUFOR) replaced it.<sup>196</sup> The EUFOR mission (Operation Althea), which began in December 2004, is ongoing. When it began, most of the soldiers in the SFOR stayed on with the EUFOR, though 20% of them were recalled, leaving approximately 7,000 behind.<sup>197</sup> BiH edged toward EU accession candidacy, however, there were still numerous criteria that needed to be met - a unified army and police force being chief among them.

The formal unification of the RS and Federation armies occurred in 2005 thanks to the intense activism of High Representative Ashdown. The PIC and Federation trumpeted this move as a great success that put BiH on the path to Euro-Atlantic integration.<sup>198</sup> Apart from the army reforms, there were a few agreements that gave additional powers to the Bosnian central government. This included the implementation in January 2006 of a BiH value added tax collected by the Bosnian government's Indirect Taxation Authority.<sup>199</sup> There were also serious discussions for a country-wide police force, but constant disagreements on both sides largely prevented this. The Federation favoured a centralized police force, while the RS wished to retain its own autonomous police. While the Bosnian state has the State Investigation and Protection

---

<sup>196</sup> Nick Hawton, "EU Troops Prepare for Bosnia Swap," *BBC News*, October 23, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3944191.stm>.

<sup>197</sup> Hawton, "EU Troops Prepare for Bosnia Swap."

<sup>198</sup> Barany, "Building National Armies," 222.

<sup>199</sup> T.K. Vogel, *2006: A Watershed Year for Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Challenge of Legitimacy*, (2007), 13, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep11069.6>.



Agency (SIPA) formed in 2002, its mandate is limited. All the cantons of the Federation entity have their own police forces, plus the RS's own police. The Europeans viewed this as too inefficient and prone to corruption. Negotiations guaranteeing the empowerment of the SIPA were crucial to Bosnia's path to EU accession. Regardless, the viability of further centralizing reforms effectively came to a halt when the RS Skupstina became increasingly unstable.

January 2006 heralded the collapse of the SDS-PDP coalition and Dodik earned the mandate to form a government from President Cavic on February 5th, with a loose coalition solidified on February 28th.<sup>200</sup> The coalition had the support of independent deputies as well as the SDP. Because 2006 was an election year, Dodik was in an enviable political position. The SDS and PDP had lost all credibility as effective governing partners and Dodik could campaign with all the resources and political capital the RS government had to offer. Perhaps most advantageous for Dodik was the replacement of Lord Ashdown with Christian Schwarz-Schilling as the High Representative at the beginning of February 2006. Schwarz-Schilling was softer than his British predecessor.

Nationalist-minded Bosnian Serbs in the RS saw the past two years as a serious reversal of their fortunes. Their army merged into a common Bosnian one; the OHR dismissed RS officials at will; and the shaky SDS-PDP coalition government lost the confidence of the Skupstina. Unpopular political measures undertaken by the SDS, such as the apology for actions at Srebrenica, undermined the confidence of the Bosnian Serb electorate in Cavic's government. Coupled with the activism of the OHR against the SDS and PDP, Cavic's prior attempts to placate Ashdown signalled weakness in the eyes of the RS electorate. This supposed weakness

---

<sup>200</sup> "The Statement of the SNSD International Department," *European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity*, March 1, 2006, [https://www.europeanforum.net/headlines/milorad\\_dodik\\_elected\\_prime\\_minister\\_republika\\_srpska](https://www.europeanforum.net/headlines/milorad_dodik_elected_prime_minister_republika_srpska).

ran contrary to the RS governing structure desired by the majority of Bosnian Serbs - one that could defend the entity's autonomous power against both the OHR and centralist Bosniaks.

A November 2005 Prism Research poll presented in a report by T.K. Vogel adequately demonstrates the political importance of the 'historical moment' leading up to the 2006 elections. The poll saw the largest percentage of Bosnian Serb respondents, 41.5%, believe that "Dayton has generally been positive and should not be altered."<sup>201</sup> This indicates a strict interpretation of the GFA as a literal constitutional document within which the entities' autonomous powers are clearly stated. This group of respondents were highly critical of the integrationist efforts of the past few years. Critically, most of the remaining 58.5% of respondents were likely displeased with the GFA not because it prevented a closer and more united BiH but because it effectively chained them to a country to which they felt no kinship. The GFA prevented the Bosnian Serbs from joining Serbia or pursuing independence for the RS. It is in this way that most Bosnian Serbs were frustrated with the peace agreement.

On the other hand, 63.2% of Bosniak respondents believed that "Dayton was necessary to end the war, but now BiH needs a new constitution to prepare for the EU."<sup>202</sup> In other words, BiH ought to be centralized as a modern, functional, and united post-war state. These attitudes were reflected in the two leading nouveau-nationalist parties that contended for power in their respective entities. In the Federation, Haris Silajdzic's Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina (SBiH) stood the best chance of defeating the SDA with a new wave of more secular Bosniak nationalism. In the RS, a resurgent SNSD with a revamped platform under the tutelage of the newly appointed Prime Minister Dodik sought victory. The fact that the PIC had announced its

---

<sup>201</sup> Vogel, 2006: *A Watershed Year*, 12.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

intention to close the OHR by June 2007 made this election especially consequential.<sup>203</sup> At the time, the PIC felt that the OHR had done its duty of stabilizing BiH as a relatively functioning country in a postwar context.

At the same time as the PIC announced it would close the OHR, it made a push to encourage Bosnia's leading political parties to negotiate a new constitutional arrangement. The arrangement would allow for more state centralization within BiH on terms that were mutually agreeable to the parties involved. However, the competing constitutional visions of these ethno-parties were serious obstacles to forming an agreement. By April 2006 a consensus formed - at least for the moment. The arrangement would see the Bosnian Council of Ministers (cabinet) with additional decision-making powers and the creation of the (Bosnian) Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Science, Technology, and Environment.<sup>204</sup> The new constitutional arrangement was slowed by political intrigue and back room haggling.<sup>205</sup> The vote on the existing 'April Package' was held and failed to attain the two-thirds majority required to be enacted into law by only two votes.<sup>206</sup> This led to a collapse in constructive discussions for Bosnian constitutional reforms. Clearly, BiH was not yet on a path to a cohesive, united, and multi-ethnic co-existence.

The failure of the constitutional amendments demonstrated that without the OHR, there were few constraining influences to mitigate competition between Bosnia's nationalities. The Bosniaks that supported Silajdzic and his SBiH favoured a centralized Bosnian state that gained its powers at the expense of the entities.<sup>207</sup> The Bosnian Serbs sought to keep and deepen the

---

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>204</sup> McMahon and Western, "The Death of Dayton," 78.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>207</sup> Vogel, 2006: *A Watershed Year*, 12.

autonomy of the RS, and most of the Bosnian Croats wanted their own entity in Bosnia.<sup>208</sup>

Without the OHR, an act of constitutional overstep on the part of any of Bosnia's peoples could easily result in renewed fighting. The 2006 Bosnian elections were key in determining the constitutional fate of BiH and the nature of its multinational and multiethnic co-existence. At stake were also the reforms made up to this point in 2006. If a government was elected in the RS that sought to entrench the entity's autonomy, then the newly granted powers to the Bosnian central government - namely the unified army and Indirect Taxation Authority - could be called into question and reversed.

Developments elsewhere in the former Yugoslavia also had a significant impact on the political situation in BiH prior to the country's elections in October. The State Union of Serbia and Montenegro, which succeeded the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia after its collapse in 2003, dissolved after the referendum of May 21, 2006 thus paving the way for Montenegro's secession.<sup>209</sup> Dodik made ample political use of this fact and highlighted the hypocrisy of Montenegro's ability to secede from the State Union when the RS had no such freedom to secede from BiH.<sup>210</sup> However, the de jure independence of the RS was a non-starter as the preamble to the Bosnian Constitution states that the signing parties are "committed to the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina in accordance with international law."<sup>211</sup>

By proposing a referendum on RS independence, Dodik posed a threat to the territorial integrity of BiH, which contravened the Bosnian constitution. That is unless the referendum was non-binding, but such a course would be fruitless political grandstanding at its finest. High

---

<sup>208</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>209</sup> "Montenegro Declares Independence," *BBC News*, June 4, 2006, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/5043462.stm>.

<sup>210</sup> Vogel, 2006: *A Watershed Year*, 21.

<sup>211</sup> "General Framework Agreement for Peace," 59.

Representative Christian Schwarz-Schilling was thoroughly unimpressed with Dodik's calls for a referendum. So, the OHR stated that the RS had no authority to call an independence referendum and that Schwarz-Schilling would use his powers of dismissal if "this were necessary to preserve peace and stability."<sup>212</sup> Schwarz-Schilling also stated his belief that the only choices available to BiH were Euro-Atlantic integration or stagnation - disintegration was not an option.<sup>213</sup> This OHR statement markedly demonstrated the contrasting interpretations of the OHR's official roles between Schwarz-Schilling and his predecessor Lord Ashdown. If Dodik had made his calls for a referendum under the tenure of the latter, it is almost assured that he would have been dismissed from office.

Aware of the resultant ire of the OHR, Dodik walked back his proposal in a thinly veiled act of political doublespeak. He described an independence referendum for the RS as a "theoretical consideration of... a theoretical possibility."<sup>214</sup> However, on September 4th, less than one month before the RS parliamentary and presidential elections, Dodik again brought up the idea of an RS independence referendum on Serbian news channel B92. He called it "unavoidable," especially if Kosovo became independent from Serbia.<sup>215</sup> Dodik stated:

Kosovo separating would spark people in the RS to think of having equal rights for us to do something like that... We politicians are trying to subdue such thoughts by people in the RS, but I am sure that 99 percent of Serbs living in the RS would vote in a referendum for the RS to leave Bosnia-Herzegovina. That is the reality.<sup>216</sup>

---

<sup>212</sup> "Need for Responsible Political Leadership," OHR Press Release, May 29, 2006, <http://www.ohr.int/need-for-responsible-political-leadership/>.

<sup>213</sup> "Need for Responsible Political Leadership."

<sup>214</sup> Vogel, 2006: *A Watershed Year*, 21.

<sup>215</sup> "Newslines, September 5, 2006: Bosnian Serb Premier Says Independence Referendum is Inevitable," *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, September 5, 2006, <https://www.rferl.org/a/1143709.html>.

<sup>216</sup> "Newslines, September 5, 2006: Bosnian Serb Premier."

With this pre-election display of separatist sentiment, Dodik emphasized that Bosnian Serbs in the RS truly did not wish to remain part of BiH, which won his SNSD nationalist support. This translated to additional votes for the party at the polls.

For the RS presidential and parliamentary elections on October 1st, the newly minted SNSD RS Minister for Economy, Energy, and Development, Milan Jelic, soundly defeated incumbent President Dragan Cavic. In the Skupstina, the SNSD scored an unprecedented victory and cemented Milorad Dodik's prime ministry with a near-majority of 41 seats.<sup>217</sup> Dodik's SNSD far outperformed their SBiH counterparts in the Federation, which came in second place to the SDA in that entity's legislature.<sup>218</sup> For the first time in the SNSD's history, it won all three executive positions available to it: the RS presidency, prime ministry, and the Serb seat of the Bosnian presidency. These elections proved to Dodik and his party that appeals to nationalist sentiments could win tremendous popular support.

Dodik was lucky that the OHR, much to Paddy Ashdown's discredit, had effectively dismantled the SDS-PDP's governing capabilities. Dodik was doubly lucky that Ashdown's successor, Christian Schwarz-Schilling, had a very different interpretation of the role of the OHR in BiH. In an interview with Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty on November 18th, 2005, Schwarz-Schilling described what he thought should happen to the OHR:

The role of the high representative to be a government above the state of Bosnia-Herzegovina should be reduced step by step, but in a strict way so that the responsibility of the state is really in the hands of the political leaders of Bosnia, and that means in the hands of the Bosnian people.<sup>219</sup>

---

<sup>217</sup> "Bosnia and Herzegovina: General Elections, 1 October, 2006; Election Observation Mission Final Report," *OSCE, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights*, 30, October 1, 2006, <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/7/23945.pdf>.

<sup>218</sup> "Bosnia and Herzegovina General Elections," 28.

<sup>219</sup> "Bosnia-Herzegovina: High Commissioner Candidate Interviewed by RFE/RL," *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, November 18, 2005, <https://www.rferl.org/a/1063074.html>.

Given this attitude, it is no wonder that Bosnian Serb political actors found Schwarz-Schilling more palatable than his predecessor. Dodik was emboldened by Schwarz-Schilling's passivity. Without the departure of Ashdown, it is unlikely Dodik would have been so audacious as to call for an RS independence referendum.

The weakness of the SDS-PDP coalition caught President Cavic in a political quagmire prior to the 2006 elections. The moves made by Cavic to placate the OHR, such as an expressed willingness to facilitate Euro-Atlantic integration and recognition of war crimes were token measures at most, but measures nonetheless. Problematically, they fell short of Ashdown's principal goals, which included the integration of the two entities' police forces. At the same time, much of the Bosnian Serb electorate in the RS saw these small steps as betrayal and the sacrifice of their political and national interests. When the OHR dismissed many high-ranking government officials in the summer of 2005 and pre-empted Prime Minister Mikerevic's resignation, it spelled doom for the SDS-PDP coalition in the coming elections. Not only had the SDS-PDP government forsaken a Bosnian Serb nationalist hard line, but they had also been thoroughly discredited and weakened by dismissals from the OHR. Cavic and his political partners had few allies amongst either the former supporters of the SRS, or international institutions like the OHR.

Therefore, Dodik's SNSD stormed to power in this exemplary political climate. The coalition government's waves of high-level resignations left the Bosnian Serb electorate in want of a steady hand. Dodik's toying with nationalist sentiments saw him gain tremendous support from voter segments that would not typically have supported him. Dodik rose from the ashes of his political ouster in 2000, to a position where his SNSD controlled the RS presidency, prime ministry, and the Serb seat of the Bosnian presidency. The victory of the SNSD was a challenge

to the proponents of Bosnian centralization as it signalled that the Bosnian Serb electorate would support parties or individuals that resisted the erosion of the RS's autonomy.



## Chapter 6: Power by any Means Necessary

The weakening of the OHR's powers by Christian Schwarz-Schilling could not have come at a strategically worse time for the proponents of a centralized BiH. Dodik used the voluntary relinquishment of the OHR's powers of dismissal to his political advantage and called for a future referendum on RS independence. All of this occurred within the political context of Montenegro's independence referendum and discussions about Kosovo's future. This highlighted a seemingly hypocritical attitude toward the Serbs from the international community. If Schwarz-Schilling had given up his OHR powers in a more measured and gradual fashion, Dodik would not have been as likely to make such provocative statements in the lead-up to the 2006 election. Worse yet, Dodik used the hesitancy of the OHR to intervene as an opportunity to oppose any police reform that would weaken the autonomy of the RS.

In early 2007, it appeared as if the OHR would still be closed, with Schwarz-Schilling as the office's last occupant, and then he would continue in his role as the EU Special Representative (EUSR) in BiH.<sup>220</sup> The EUSR opened in 2002 with the intention that the High Representative would simultaneously be the EUSR. If the OHR closed, the EUSR could continue as a separate body altogether. However, the EUSR had no coercive or legally binding powers whatsoever. The mandate of its office was largely advisory, but it also facilitated the creation of institutions that would continue Bosnia's EU accession process, such as the Bosnian foreign ministry's department for European Integration.<sup>221</sup>

These developments allowed Dodik to engage in nationalist political adventurism. With the collapse of constitutional negotiations, Bosnia's path to EU membership became an

---

<sup>220</sup> Giovanni Grevi, *Pioneering Foreign Policy: The EU Special Representatives*, European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), 2007. 82. Accessed May 23, 2021, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep06975.11>.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

increasingly remote possibility. The European Commission would not continue to formulate a Stabilization and Association Agreement with BiH because of its governments' failure to implement centralizing reforms.<sup>222</sup> The PIC decided to extend the mandate of the OHR to counter these influences. Miroslav Lajcak succeeded Christian Schwarz-Schilling as High Representative in July 2007.<sup>223</sup> Unfortunately for Dodik, his obstructionism and calls for a referendum hurt his long-term political interests. The decision to close the OHR was reversed. With Montenegrin independence and calls for Kosovo's independence in 2006, Dodik was supporting political allies in Serbia proper by noisily proclaiming the necessity of an RS referendum. This was a bargaining chip intended to dissuade the international community from pursuing an independent Kosovo at the cost of instability in BiH.<sup>224</sup>

This posturing helped to delay the West's movements toward supporting an independent Kosovo, but not by much. It also harmed Dodik's long term political interests by prolonging the OHR's presence in BiH. The continued existence of the OHR and a less pliable High Representative in the form of Miroslav Lajcak meant that Dodik's nationalistic monopoly on power in the RS was challenged. The new High Representative renewed the OHR's drive toward a unified police force by informing the Bosnian parliament's legislators that he would remove obstructionists with his powers of dismissal.<sup>225</sup> With this shift, Lajcak was swinging from a 'Schillingist' closer to an 'Ashdownian' interpretation of the role and power of the OHR. However, the OHR did not carry the same weight as it had prior to 2006.

---

<sup>222</sup> McMahon and Western, "The Death of Dayton," 78.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>224</sup> Rick Fawn, "The Kosovo and Montenegro Effect," *International Affairs*, vol. 84.2, 277, (March 2008), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25144765>.

<sup>225</sup> McMahon and Western, "The Death of Dayton," 79.

In October 2007, Dodik fervently resisted Lajcak's attempts to force through a police reform bill. The SNSD would not agree to the notion of a united police force and the Bosnian parliament could not secure the necessary two-thirds majority necessary to pass a law. Lajcak attempted a variety of measures to curb Dodik's powers short of dismissing him. This included a moratorium on vetoes made by the Council of Ministers against legislation passed by the Bosnian parliament.<sup>226</sup> However, Dodik refused to give in. The difference between Ashdown's power before 2006 and Lajcak's weakness in 2007 had little to do with their individual characters. The EUFOR cut its forces from a weighty 7,000 in 2005 to a meagre 2,000 in 2007.<sup>227</sup> This was largely because European governments did not have the will or resources to maintain a large armed force in BiH.

What was even more strategically unsound was that the EUFOR withdrew its forces, some 1,000 soldiers, from the RS capital of Banja Luka.<sup>228</sup> This reduced the EUFOR's effective capabilities to enforce the orders of the OHR. Indeed, giving up such an important strategic position within the RS capital signalled a virtual end to the supremacy of international forces and institutions within the RS. The OHR could enact whatever laws it wanted, but its lack of hard enforcement capabilities severely hampered its relevance and authority. The OHR could hardly dismiss Dodik because there was no guarantee that the EUFOR in its reduced capacity would have the forces necessary to remove him. RS police forces far outnumbered the EUFOR, so such a dismissal could have led to a costly and embarrassing defeat of the EUFOR at the hands of the Bosnian Serbs.

---

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>227</sup> McMahon and Western, "The Death of Dayton," 79.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., 79.

More importantly, if the OHR had dismissed Dodik from his post, it may have spurred instability throughout the entity and the Western Balkans as a whole. After all, the international community was still deciding the fate of Kosovo and could not afford threats of rebellion from BiH simultaneously. The Europeans were on their own in the Balkans at this juncture, while the Americans were heavily concentrated on the Iraq War. This had taken on renewed importance as President George W. Bush in January 2007 announced a troop surge.<sup>229</sup> This plan involved the deployment of an additional 20,000 US soldiers to Iraq.<sup>230</sup> The United States transitioned from a more Euro-centric foreign policy under the Clinton administration to a Middle East-focused one under the George W. Bush administration. With this reorientation, the United States and NATO were not the same powerbrokers in the Balkan region as they had been in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Lajcak was aware that with the Americans bogged down in Iraq and the Europeans unwilling to commit substantial enough numbers of soldiers to BiH, he would have to concede some ground. Negotiations between Lajcak and Dodik commenced at the beginning of December 2007. The RS gave promises for future cooperation without any concrete commitments, which ultimately appeared as a face-saving measure for the OHR. The extent of Dodik's victory is clear as BiH signed a Stabilization and Association Agreement on June 16th, 2008.<sup>231</sup> However, the SAA remained unratified for years due to disagreements with other EU members surrounding the inability to solve questions of the governance of BiH such as police reform, ownership of entity versus Bosnian state property, etc.

---

<sup>229</sup> George W. Bush, "President's Address to the Nation," *Office of the Press Secretary*, January 10, 2007, <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2007/01/20070110-7.html>.

<sup>230</sup> Bush, "President's Address to the Nation."

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

The signature of the SAA was the first time that the demands of the OHR had been so openly blunted by a Bosnian politician after the office got its 1997 Bonn powers. This episode stood as the starkest possible signifier of a shift in the balance of power in BiH and the Western Balkans. Indeed, for both American and European diplomats, global affairs at this juncture became a question of priorities. Iraq and, to a lesser extent, Afghanistan were primarily in the focus of Washington, while the Europeans were concerned with Kosovo. The lack of attention paid to BiH allowed the Bosnian Serbs, and, in turn, their Serbian and Russian sponsors, to seize the initiative from NATO. No longer was the West dealing with a drunken Boris Yeltsin in the Russian Federation or the pariah and war criminal Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia. Serious geopolitical players had once more returned to the helms of these nations with Vladimir Putin in the former, and Boris Tadic in the latter.

By 2007, Russia had come unto its own as the principal successor state of the Soviet Union with Putin seeking to increase Russian influence in key geographic spheres. One of these areas was the Balkans, where Serbia, Russia's traditional historical ally, had exponentially stagnated. Serbia went from the most influential and populous nation in the former Yugoslavia to a third-rate rump state that had to recover from expensive wars in Croatia and Bosnia, the overthrow of the Milosevic regime, and the unsettled question of Kosovo. Tadic, leader of the Democratic Party, won the presidential elections in 2004. His voters were tired of the country's diplomatic, political, and economic isolation and wished to become more integrated with Europe. Viewed as liberal and pro-western, Tadic travelled to BiH and apologized for the war crimes committed by Serb individuals during the Bosnian War, whilst simultaneously disavowing the

notion of a Serbian collective guilt for such crimes.<sup>232</sup> The international community found such a view comparatively refreshing, but Serbian nationalists found these attempts contemptible.

Throughout the beginning of Tadic's time as President of Serbia, the country made steady progress toward EU membership. Tadic initialled a Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU toward the end of 2007. However, the greatest stumbling block standing in the way of Serbia's accession was the status of Kosovo. The SAA was initialled even while negotiations about Kosovo's future persisted.<sup>233</sup> The EU may have intended the signature of the SAA as a means of subduing nationalist ire in Serbia in the event of Kosovo's independence.<sup>234</sup> A deterrent against the West's pursuit of Kosovo's independence involved political questions surrounding the RS, but also the Russian Federation. Indeed, Serbia and Russia both argued against Kosovo's independence based on the notion that such an event could open Pandora's Box in Eastern Europe. Serbia noted the RS desire to secede, which Dodik's inflammatory rhetoric helped along. Meanwhile, Russia bolstered independence movements in the breakaway entities of Transnistria, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia.<sup>235</sup>

Successful independence movements in these non-state enclaves would have caused existential crises for western-oriented countries that came about after the collapse of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union - these are BiH, Moldova, and Georgia. The discussion of Pandora's Box of independence movements was a threat. That threat came both from the Serbs (through Dodik in the RS) and Russia. The Serbs threatened tit-for-tat independence referendums that would lead to massive territorial changes and potential instability. For Putin it was more complex. The

---

<sup>232</sup> "Serb Leader apologizes in Bosnia," *BBC News*, December 6, 2004, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4072949.stm>.

<sup>233</sup> Fawn, "The Kosovo and Montenegro Effect," 278.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, 278.

<sup>235</sup> *Ibid.*, 278.

independence of Kosovo would weaken a key Russian ally in the Balkans, which in turn would reduce Russia's influence in the region. Therefore, if Kosovo gained independence, Russia too could harass and break up Western-oriented states in the Balkans and the Caucasus, thereby minimizing the West's geopolitical influence in the Balkans and Caucasus. More importantly, Kosovo's independence would provide the precedent needed by Russia to settle territorial scores unresolved since the collapse of the Soviet Union. While Dodik's threats were unsupported by action, the potential for use of force from the Russian government was real.

Serbia held elections in 2008. President Tadic came in second place during the first round of the elections while Tomislav Nikolic took first place.<sup>236</sup> However, the same thing happened in the 2004 elections where Tadic won in the second round of voting. Voter turnout for the first round in 2008 was at 61%, the highest it had been since 2000.<sup>237</sup> This election was critical for Serbia's future due to the competing visions of the candidates. Incumbent President Tadic stood by a path for Serbia to enter the EU and condemned the possibility of Kosovo independence but would not stop EU negotiations if it occurred.<sup>238</sup> Nikolic, on the other hand, vowed to withdraw Serbia from EU accession talks if Kosovo became independent and wished for a closer relationship with the Russian Federation.<sup>239</sup> The second round of the elections on February 3rd, 2008, led to a Tadic victory. He won 51% of the vote while Nikolic won 47% with turnout at an outstanding 67%.<sup>240</sup> With this result, it was clear that most Serb voters favoured EU integration.

Soon after Tadic's election, however, one event effectively derailed the Serbs' attempts to join the EU. On February 17th, Kosovo declared independence. In two interviews with BIRN

---

<sup>236</sup> "Serbia: Tadic, Nikolic Headed for Second-Round Showdown." *RadioFreeEurope / RadioLiberty*.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

<sup>240</sup> "Serbia Election Victory for Tadic," *BBC News*, February 4, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7225455.stm>.

Balkans that marked the tenth anniversary of Kosovo's independence, journalists Zijadin Gashi and Dejan Anastasijevic recalled the impact of the declaration. In 2008, Gashi was a correspondent for Radio Free Europe and stationed in Pristina, while Anastasijevic was a reporter for Vreme, a Serbian magazine, and located in Belgrade.<sup>241</sup> It is clear from the way Gashi describes Pristina and its people on the 17th that there was much jubilation and excitement in celebration of the country's newly attained independence.<sup>242</sup> The scenes in Belgrade were different. The ferocity of the response to Kosovo's independence in Belgrade surprised Anastasijevic. He proclaimed that it was, at least for a few days, an inevitability of which everyone was aware.<sup>243</sup> Nevertheless, thousands of angry rioters poured onto the streets of Belgrade as they were invited out by Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica. They went so far as to attack the US Embassy and American-headquartered businesses.<sup>244</sup>

The geopolitical consequences of Kosovo's independence were seismic. First, what Rick Fawn calls the "Kosovo Effect"<sup>245</sup> - the realization of smaller nations' aspirations for independence - was set in motion. In August 2008, sporadic fighting broke out between South Ossetian and Georgian forces.<sup>246</sup> Georgia responded with an invasion of South Ossetia, which Moscow interpreted as a violation of South Ossetian autonomy and thus pre-empted substantial Russian military involvement. The war eventually included Abkhazia as well with the two breakaway republics and Russia scoring a victory over Georgia.

---

<sup>241</sup> BIRN Balkans, "Journalists Recall Kosovo's 2008 Independence in Pristina, Belgrade," *Youtube*, February 17, 2018, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Amr9txt3rKg&list=FL5\\_wn3sHQJvcDOJ\\_Aajtugg&index=3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Amr9txt3rKg&list=FL5_wn3sHQJvcDOJ_Aajtugg&index=3).

<sup>242</sup> BIRN, Journalists Recall Kosovo's 2008 Independence."

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> Fawn, "The Kosovo and Montenegro Effect," 280.

<sup>246</sup> Marc Champion and Andrew Osborn, "Smoldering Feud, Then War," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 16, 2008, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB121884450978145997>.



The independence of Kosovo set into motion a series of events that tremendously impacted the geostrategic questions throughout southeastern Europe. Kosovo's independence gave Russia the moral justification to entrench its own geopolitical interests against countries seeking a western orientation, like Georgia. Furthermore, the independence of Kosovo indirectly boosted Russia's geopolitical strength in the Balkans. Russia stalwartly supported Serbia as Tadic protested in vain against the independence of Kosovo. The favourable image of Putin spanned the entirety of Serbia's political spectrum. Ironically, the country that benefited the most from Kosovo independence was a country that seriously opposed it - Russia. Putin won the love of the Serbian people, stoked their distrust of the EU and NATO, and settled scores with Georgia - all without having to do much at all. The 'Kosovo Effect' fell into Putin's lap.

Tadic was in an especially precarious political position following Kosovo's declaration as he had previously betted on European integration. Tadic had to play a careful game of balancing nationalist forces on one hand through the continued repudiation of Kosovo as a country, while on the other satisfying the liberal aspirations of his electoral mandate by pursuing EU membership. This balance was difficult to maintain as a few events made the political landscape in Serbia quite volatile. First, on July 21st, 2008, Serbian police arrested Radovan Karadzic in Belgrade.<sup>247</sup> The Serbian government later ordered that he be transferred to the ICTY in the Hague to stand trial for war crimes. Regarding the arrests of war criminals, Tadic demonstrated a firm desire to join the EU and made steady progress: He signed Serbia's SAA in April 2008, while in December 2009 Serbia applied to join the EU and Serbian citizens were granted visa-

---

<sup>247</sup> "Serbia Captures Fugitive Karadzic," *BBC News*, July 22, 2008, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7518543.stm>.

free travel throughout the Schengen zone.<sup>248</sup> However, Tadic's political tightrope walking became more unbalanced as Dodik became increasingly animated.

Meanwhile, on February 26th, 2008, just nine days after Kosovo's declaration of independence, the Steering Board of the PIC met in Brussels. There they created the so-called 5+2 Agenda that laid out the seven criteria needed to be fulfilled if the OHR is to close.<sup>249</sup> These criteria pertain to: the ownership of state property; ownership of military property; final determination of the status of the city of Brcko; an institution to ensure Bosnia's financial stability; and state-wide agreements pertaining to the arrest and trial of war criminals and justice reforms.<sup>250</sup> The +2 criteria are the formal signature of an SAA between BiH and the EU and the agreement of the PIC Steering Board that the situation is such that BiH is ready for the closure of the OHR.<sup>251</sup> These criteria have still not been fulfilled at the time of writing. The 5+2 Agenda was the PIC's way of demonstrating a path toward full sovereignty for BiH. However, entity level obstruction, particularly by the RS, has prevented this from occurring.

Concerning the ratification of the SAA and BiH's attempts to move along the path toward EU accession, Bosnia's most powerful parties pondered negotiations. In November 2008, Sulejman Tihic of the Party of Democratic Action (SDA), Dragan Covic of the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), and Dodik met in the RS village of Prud. There they came to some perfunctory agreements pertaining to a nationwide census, the question of state property, and other such issues that were blocking the ratification of the SAA.<sup>252</sup> Problematically, the actual substance of the agreement was minimal as the Prud negotiations merely established what

---

<sup>248</sup> European Commission, *Commission Staff Working Document: Serbia 2019 Report*, May 29, 2019, 97, <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20190529-serbia-report.pdf>.

<sup>249</sup> "Agenda 5+2," *Office of the High Representative*, accessed June 5, 2021, <http://www.ohr.int/agenda-52/>.

<sup>250</sup> "Agenda 5+2," *OHR*.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>252</sup> Florian Bieber, *EU Conditionality in the Western Balkans* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), Kindle e-book, 42.

appeared to be a framework of cooperation. Sensing this, High Representative Lajcak called on the parties involved to put forward an honest effort to resolve the discussed constitutional issues. In a statement released a week after the conclusion of the Prud Agreement, Lajcak stated that “the Prud Agreement must not be a show for the international community,” thereby revealing his own analysis of what he thought it may have been.<sup>253</sup> Indeed, Lajcak was correct in his assessment as the parties’ leaders continued to pursue narrow nationalist objectives.

Since Kosovo’s independence, Dodik continuously called for an RS referendum on independence even though it was clearly illegal. These calls coincided with the issue of Kosovo, but also served Dodik’s personal political purposes. Prying eyes, such as those belonging to UN high representative Raffi Gregorian, were beginning to take interest in suspicious infrastructure dealings throughout the RS.<sup>254</sup> Enrichment through corruption was not new in BiH, but Gregorian and foreign prosecutors opened an investigation and were asking questions that made Dodik uncomfortable. Dodik filed charges against Gregorian in November 2008 and accused him of undermining the political integrity of the RS.<sup>255</sup> However, more concrete findings against Dodik were revealed in February 2009 as the Bosnian State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA) sent a report to the State Prosecutor’s Office citing the PM’s “corruption, fraud, and misuse of funds.”<sup>256</sup> The SIPA is essentially the Bosnian equivalent of the FBI. The corruption allegations against Dodik involved small bribes through the construction of government buildings worth nearly 200 million USD.<sup>257</sup>

---

<sup>253</sup> “Lajcak: The Prud Agreement Must Not Be a Show for the International Community,” *Office of the High Representative*, November 12, 2008, <http://www.ohr.int/lajak-the-prud-agreement-must-not-be-a-show-for-the-international-community/>.

<sup>254</sup> Dan Bilefsky, “Bosnian Serb Leader Accused of Corruption,” *The New York Times*, February 24, 2009, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/24/world/europe/24iht-bosnia.4.20407214.html>.

<sup>255</sup> Bilefsky, “Bosnian Serb Leader Accused of Corruption.”

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*

In response, a representative of Dodik named Gordan Milosevic, called the accusations “politically motivated.”<sup>258</sup> Charges against Dodik had not been filed, but the political repercussions of the accusations against Dodik were considerable. Essentially, Dodik and the senior members of the SNSD threatened to withdraw from Bosnian state institutions and obstructed proceedings for constitutional reforms that were taking place in Mostar.<sup>259</sup> As per usual, this obstructionism was at a politically opportune time for Dodik. In the middle of February, High Representative Miroslav Lajcak left BiH for a post in the Slovakian government.<sup>260</sup> With Lajcak’s absence, Dodik went so far as to state that BiH was a ‘pointless’ country and that the charges against him forced him to lose ‘the little faith I had in the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina.’<sup>261</sup>

While Dodik professed a lack of faith in BiH as a state, he certainly kept the country close to his heart in matters of beak-wetting. Once Dodik became RS prime minister for the second time in 2006, he began to privatize the RS’s entity-operated industries. An example of this was the RS telecommunications service provider Telekom Srpske. The company’s majority stake was sold to Telekom Srbija, which is a state-owned telecommunications service provider in Serbia, for 485 million USD.<sup>262</sup> The obvious strategic success of having Telekom Srpske purchased by Telekom Srbija - thereby facilitating greater RS integration with Serbia - was overshadowed by what Dodik intended to do with the funds from the sale. The RS government

---

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

<sup>262</sup> Center for Investigative Reporting, “Banja Luka Bank, Controlled by PM, Hands Out Millions to Family, Allies,” *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, August 26, 2009, [https://www.rferl.org/a/Banja\\_Luka\\_Bank\\_Controlled\\_By\\_PM\\_Hands\\_Out\\_Millions\\_To\\_Family\\_Allies/1807881.html](https://www.rferl.org/a/Banja_Luka_Bank_Controlled_By_PM_Hands_Out_Millions_To_Family_Allies/1807881.html).

used much of the capital to open the Republika Srpska Investment-Development Bank (IRB), for which Dodik sits on the board.<sup>263</sup>

Having the authority to approve or deny large loans from this state bank gave Dodik a tremendous amount of political and financial power. It forced those who were reliant on the approval of their loans to be beholden to him politically and to grant him political favours or concessions. It also meant that Dodik was able to help his friends, family, and partners with quick liquid capital when needed. The IRB approved a \$2.2 million loan to a company called Fruit Ecco for “the hiring of three workers and the planting of 169,000 apple trees and 9,400 pear trees.”<sup>264</sup> Fruit Ecco is owned in part by Igor Dodik, Milorad’s son. This was done without oversight or proof that the work was completed.<sup>265</sup>

Apart from these questions of familial financial assistance using the public dime, the political ties that were strengthened using the IRB were also problematic. Dodik had an eye toward increasing both his soft and hard political power within the RS through the IRB. In terms of soft power improvement, Dodik assisted friendly news agencies within the RS by providing them with extensive capital loans. Of note is the \$3.65 million IRB loan to the Banja Luka newspaper *Nezavisne Novine*, which was particularly aggressive in its condemnation of the SIPA corruption investigations into Dodik’s construction dealings.<sup>266</sup> Concerning hard power, Dodik’s dealings were more covert. He sought to muster his own private security forces without arousing suspicions. However, Bosnian media latched onto his alleged dealings with a dairy producer called Farmaland, the headquarters of which also serves as the headquarters of a private

---

<sup>263</sup> Center for Investigative Reporting, “Banja Luka Bank.”

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*

security company in the RS called Elite Security.<sup>267</sup> Farmaland was granted a \$2.2 million loan from the IRB in January 2009 “to buy cattle and make improvements to the property.”<sup>268</sup> However, the tight security at the compound housing this agricultural producer and private security firm was not mentioned in the loan application.

Dodik resisted and denied these allegations of corruption. Meanwhile, on March 11 and 13 respectively, Austrian diplomat Valentin Inzko was appointed as EUSR and High Representative of BiH.<sup>269</sup> Inzko began his time in the OHR under difficult circumstances. In the summer of 2009, he considered the Prud Agreement to be ‘basically dead’.<sup>270</sup> When it came to discussion of further European integration, the resolution of the *Sejdic and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina* case in the European Court of Human Rights (EuCHR) was paramount. This case combined two separate cases against the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina that dealt with discrimination in the electoral system. Specifically, the allegations detail discrimination against the minorities of BiH that did not belong to either the Bosniaks, Bosnian Serbs, or Bosnian Croats. The applicants, Dervo Sejdic who was ethnically Roma, and Jakob Finci who was Jewish, alleged that the ethnically based voting system in BiH prevented Bosnia’s minorities from running for the Bosnian House of Peoples or the Bosnian Presidency.<sup>271</sup>

With the presidency, each national group votes for a candidate of their choice that is also of their national group. The same goes for the House of Peoples on a party basis. Sejdic, Finci, and their respective communities were wholly disadvantaged by this voting system as it did not

---

<sup>267</sup> Ibid.

<sup>268</sup> Ibid.

<sup>269</sup> “New High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina Welcomed by UN,” *UN News*, March 25, 2009, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2009/03/294942-new-high-representative-bosnia-and-herzegovina-welcomed-un>.

<sup>270</sup> Bieber, *EU Conditionality in the Western Balkans*, 42.

<sup>271</sup> *Sejdic and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Applications nos. 27996/06 and 34836/06 (European Court of Human Rights), pg. 3, December 22, 2009, from <https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#%7B%22dmdocnumber%22:%5B%222860268%22%2C%22itemid%22:%5B%22001-96491%22%5D%7D>.

give them any possibility of running for either the House of Peoples or the Presidency. The European Court of Human Rights agreed, and in December 2009 ruled that BiH must make lawful accommodations for the country's minority groups. However, no changes have occurred as the Bosnian Parliament has not agreed on reforms. The OHR refused to impose a decision concerning the case and basically demonstrated that it had neither the capability nor the will to enact its Bonn Powers.

In the wake of this change in the *de facto* powers of the OHR, the constitutional authority of BiH's institutions was in question. Because the OHR had supreme decision-making authority in BiH, the absence of the will to enact these decisions left a constitutional vacuum. With the paralysis of the Bosnian state parliament, it was clear that it would not be able to fill the void left by the OHR. The resultant vacuum could have been filled by the two most powerful institutions in the country - the Bosnian Constitutional Court, which had the most *de jure* authority - and the entities, particularly RS, which had the greatest *de facto* authority. In this competition, the Constitutional Court was somewhat disadvantaged because it did not typically write legislation to replace laws that were considered unconstitutional. Up until the mid 2000s, the OHR wrote laws in the event of parliamentary disagreement. The *de jure* authority of the constitutional court and the *de facto* authority of the RS came to loggerheads.

In December 2009, this conflict came to a head when High Representative Inzko made the decision to extend the terms of service for judges and prosecutors from outside of BiH to serve in the country's domestic war crimes courts.<sup>272</sup> The wily Dodik used this as an opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. First, foreign prosecutors were also investigating Dodik for the corruption allegations against him. Therefore, by lashing out at the extension of the mandate for

---

<sup>272</sup> Matthew Kang, "Bosnian Serb Region Passes Controversial Referendum Law," *Deutsche Welle*, February 11, 2010, <https://p.dw.com/p/LySW>.

foreign judges and prosecutors, he simultaneously attacked those foreign prosecutors investigating him. Second, attacking the foreign prosecutors and judges serving in the war crimes courts was good politics in the run-up to the RS presidential elections in October 2010. The presence of foreign judges in Bosnian courts was a controversial topic amongst Bosnia's Serbs, many of whom did not agree with the very foundations of the war crimes courts in the first place. Dodik proceeded with a range of actions that simultaneously undermined the investigations into his corrupt activities and improved his electoral popularity. One of these was the joint participation of RS and Federation police in a raid against a notorious Wahabi inhabited village in the Federation called Gornja Maoca.

The general theme of radical Islam in Bosnia is used as a boogeyman by all of Bosnia's constituent ethno-national communities. This has gained considerable traction in post-9/11 anti-terrorism discourse as some, like Charles Shrader, view BiH as a breeding ground for Islamic radicalism during the Bosnian War.<sup>273</sup> Islamist fighters from the Bosnian War were often given Bosnian citizenship and were allowed to remain in the country. However, they tended to isolate themselves in small fundamentalist communities. This phenomenon was noted by the Mufti of Tuzla, Husein Kavazovic, who accused the state of exacerbating the isolation of Bosnia's Wahabi communities. Kavazovic believes the state has done this by failing to provide adequate social and economic services to these communities and by refraining from integrating them into Bosnian society.<sup>274</sup>

---

<sup>273</sup> See Charles R. Shrader's *The Muslim-Croat Civil War in Central Bosnia, 1992 - 1994*, where he discusses the participation of foreign radical Muslim volunteers in paramilitary organizations in Bosnia at length.

<sup>274</sup> Sabina Niksic, "Wahhabi Village Raid Sparks Controversy in Bosnia," *Balkan Insight, BIRN*, February 11, 2010, <https://balkaninsight.com/2010/02/11/wahhabi-village-raid-sparks-controversy-in-bosnia/>.



However, the integration of Wahabi communities into broader Bosnian society would likely be undesirable to both most Bosnians of all ethnicities and to the Wahabi communities that have chosen to isolate themselves. Most Bosniaks practice a liberal Hanafi interpretation of Sunni Islam, while the Wahabis practice an interpretation of Islam that is extremely conservative. Wahhabism as a religious ideology is altogether unpalatable to Bosnia's majority. It is thus highly unlikely that the integration of the Wahabis within greater Bosniak society would be an easy process. Indeed, it could lead to a greater conservatization of Bosniak society, which would serve only to undermine whatever trace notions of Bosnian unity remain. Under such circumstances, the RS as well as the Bosnian Croat members of the Federation would have greater rationale to push for autonomy or independence. The Wahabis could also threaten the Bosniaks' traditional political systems through the reckless pursuit of Islamist-oriented reforms. Regardless, whether Wahabi integration into Bosnian society is desirable or not, the police raid against Gornja Maoca demonstrated the political nature of the Bosnian-Wahabi relationship in the wake of EU talks and Dodik's referendum.

Dodik began the push toward an independence referendum by using inflammatory rhetoric. This was quickly followed up with action as the Skupstina passed a law that removed the legal time limit for referendums in the middle of February 2010.<sup>275</sup> While this may not seem problematic at face value, the implications of the law reduced the power of the non-Serb minorities in the RS. Before the law, if a referendum was called in the RS entity, the Bosniak and Bosnian Croat opposition could essentially filibuster until the time limit for the referendum expired.<sup>276</sup> However, the new law removed this time limit altogether. Therefore, any referendums that the majority in the Skupstina wanted could not effectively be blocked unless the OHR or the

---

<sup>275</sup> Kang, "Bosnian Serb Region Passes Controversial Referendum Law."

<sup>276</sup> Ibid.

constitutional court intervened. The intended aim of the new law in the Skupstina was to hold a referendum that would lay the groundwork for RS to secede from Bosnia and Herzegovina - Dodik did not hesitate in explaining this.<sup>277</sup>

The RS Prime Minister and Serbian President had a complicated relationship as they were allied for a time. However, the latter actively sought to integrate Serbia into the Euro-Atlantic sphere while the former inflamed tensions. Tadic went so far as to discuss with the media that he would never support any political move that would dissolve Bosnia.<sup>278</sup> This was in stark contrast to the desires of nationalist supporters in Serbia and RS alike. Shortly after, he also encouraged the Serbian parliament to pass legislation condemning the massacre of Srebrenica - anathema to Serb nationalist hardliners.<sup>279</sup> By proposing a referendum that would allow for future RS secession, Dodik tried to ensure his own political survival as the idea of RS secession was extremely popular amongst Bosnian Serbs. He hoped this would translate to more votes in his bid for the RS presidency in October 2010. Dodik's embrace of nationalist objectives cost Tadic a great deal of political capital - especially when he declined to support an RS independence referendum after Kosovo's declaration of independence. Considering that Serbia had applied to join the EU on December 23rd, 2009, Tadic was in no mood to support empty nationalist blustering just to prop Dodik up in the RS. In fact, Tadic was doing his very best to reinvigorate relations with the West even after the Kosovo catastrophe.

At the beginning of their partnership, Dodik had similar goals to Tadic: Euro-Atlantic integration, economic development, and fending off the opposition. However, by the end of 2009 it became clear that Dodik and Tadic were no longer allies. Indeed, it was likely that Dodik did

---

<sup>277</sup> Sabina Niksic, "Duels Over Bosnia Unlikely to Set Balkans Aflame," *Balkan Insight*, BIRN, January 26, 2010, <https://balkaninsight.com/2010/01/26/duels-over-bosnia-unlikely-to-set-balkans-aflame/>.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid.

not want BiH in the EU at all. As Jasmin Mujanovic notes, leaders like Dodik feared the possibility of EU accession because of stringent EU corruption standards.<sup>280</sup> By keeping BiH out of the EU, Dodik would be able to continue his questionable systems of political patronage without consequences. If both Croatia and Serbia succeeded in joining the EU, there would be great momentum for Bosnia and Herzegovina to join as well. This would be catastrophic for Dodik and many other RS political actors as they would be subject to tighter laws pertaining to corruption, government transparency, and democratic processes.

Dodik had his thermometer deep within the political pool - he knew the contemporary political situation was unsustainable and began embracing the political moves and tendencies that would win him greater popularity amongst the Bosnian Serbs. This only intensified when Dodik revealed that there could essentially be two referendums, both of which would upset the stability of BiH as a whole. First, Dodik wanted a referendum that would call into question the powers of the High Representative.<sup>281</sup> He wanted a second on the status of the GFA, both of which may have been included in the same or separate referenda.<sup>282</sup> The situation was tense as these referenda, whilst not being technically legally binding, would certainly inflame the political climate throughout BiH.

The consequences of Dodik's push for a referendum on secession were felt throughout Bosnia. However, those with the most to fear were Bosniaks who had returned to their homes in RS after being expelled during the Bosnian War. Sabina Niksic interviewed Bosniak RS parliamentary deputy and Omarska concentration camp survivor Muharem Murselovic about the

---

<sup>280</sup> Jasmin Mujanovic, *Hunger and Fury: The Crisis of Democracy in the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 99.

<sup>281</sup> Mark Lowen, "Political Deadlock in Bosnia-Herzegovina Ahead of Key Vote," *Deutsche Welle*, February 24, 2010, <https://p.dw.com/p/M9UA>.

<sup>282</sup> Lowen, "Political Deadlock in Bosnia-Herzegovina Ahead of Key Vote."

referendum. Murselovic stated, “the possibility of a referendum drives them [Bosniak returnees] crazy. They worry that they might be forced out of their homes again.”<sup>283</sup> While these returnees understood the possibility that Dodik was using the referendum to score political points ahead of elections, that did nothing to temper their fears that they could relive the early 1990s. Dodik’s seemingly moderate political disposition in the late 1990s and early 2000s gave way to a hardline rejection of Bosnian statehood. The constant call for referendums on RS secession, or the phased approach to this end confirm two things. First, Dodik was and still is willing to gamble with the nationalist sentiments of the Bosnian Serb population. Second, he agrees openly with the idea that Bosnia is not a singular political unit and that the RS should have either independence or union with Serbia. Such an ideological trajectory is not altogether surprising - RS was created with the foundational intent of forcing the disintegration of Bosnia as a political unit. That Dodik is a supporter of this notion should come as no surprise, despite his past political moderation.

Two often utilized tools of Dodik’s nationalist political playbook are the RS referendum and genocide denialism. In the leadup to the elections, Dodik utilized both tools to rally the RS’s nationalist elements. July of 2010 marked the 15th anniversary of the events at Srebrenica, which were labelled by the UN war crimes tribunal and the International Court of Justice as an act of genocide.<sup>284</sup> This classification of the events of Srebrenica in July 1995 are hotly contested by many nationalist Bosnian Serbs who deny genocide happened there by disputing numbers, citing conspiracies, and other such methods. The day after commemorative events at Srebrenica in July 2010, Dodik addressed a crowd of approximately 2,000 people in Bratunac that sought to honour

---

<sup>283</sup> Sabina Niksic, “Bosnia Serb Referendum Threat Alarms Muslim Returnees,” *BIRN Balkan Insight*, February 16, 2010, <https://balkaninsight.com/2010/02/16/bosnia-serb-referendum-threat-alarms-muslim-returnees/>.

<sup>284</sup> “Bosnian Serb Leader Denies Srebrenica Was Genocide,” *BIRN Balkan Insight*, July 12, 2010, <https://balkaninsight.com/2010/07/12/bosnian-serb-leader-denies-srebrenica-was-genocide/>.

Bosnian Serb soldiers killed during the 1992-1995 war.<sup>285</sup> Bratunac itself was the sight of killings and mistreatment of Bosniaks at the beginning of the Bosnian War, though these events are often overshadowed by what happened at Srebrenica. During the Bratunac rally, Dodik stated that the RS “never denied that crimes happened in Srebrenica... but it opposes attempts to qualify that crime as genocide.”<sup>286</sup> This was a popular thing for Dodik to say and it won him support from the Bosnian Serbs.

Dodik went on to criticize world leaders that attended the commemoration at Srebrenica the day before. In particular, he singled out High Representative Valentin Inzko<sup>287</sup> for hypocrisy as he stood next to then Prime Minister of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who refused to recognize the 1915-16 killings of Armenians as genocide.<sup>288</sup> This classic case of the *tu quoque* fallacy was meant to relativize the Bosnian Serbs’ own genocide denial. Dodik used this whataboutism to draw attention to a perceived unfairness and the supposed mistreatment of the Bosnian Serbs at the hands of the international community. For Dodik’s nationalist base, this served as further ammunition in support of the referendum that would call into question to powers of the OHR.

Serbian President Boris Tadic also attended the Srebrenica ceremony.<sup>289</sup> Public engagements such as the Srebrenica commemorations were valuable tools for Tadic’s diplomatic relations. They were his way of conveying to the West that Serbia had a lasting desire to reconcile with its neighbours - at least most of its neighbours. The Kosovo issue was politically untouchable, but the Srebrenica ceremony was Tadic’s way of showing the West that Serbia

---

<sup>285</sup> “Bosnian Serb Leader Denies Srebrenica was Genocide.”

<sup>286</sup> Ibid.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid.

<sup>289</sup> “Bosnian Serb Leader Denies Srebrenica was Genocide.”

wished to join the broader European community. However, moves of this nature earned Tadic the enmity of the Bosnian Serbs as well as nationalists in Serbia proper. At Dodik's Bratunac rally banners that read "Tadic is not Serbia" and "Republika Srpska is not genocidal" were unfurled by nationalists wearing t-shirts with General Mladic's portrait on them.<sup>290</sup> While Tadic maintained popularity with more liberal urban Serbs, his standing in the eyes of the Bosnian Serbs was waning. Back in March, the Serbian parliament condemned the war crimes committed by Serbs at Srebrenica.<sup>291</sup> This act was in addition to Tadic's 2004 apology for Serbian war crimes in the Bosnian War more generally.<sup>292</sup> These moves, coupled with Tadic's cooperation with the ICTY, frustrated the nationalists in the RS and Serbia proper. This frustration bolstered Dodik's popularity as he became the pro-independence, genocide denialist candidate the nationalists desired.

By the time of the Bosnian 2010 October elections, the voters' electoral choices were framed in such a way that only bolstered the most ardent ethno-nationalist candidates. In the Federation entity, the SDA advocated for resistance against both Bosnian Serb secession and the creation of a third Bosnian Croat entity.<sup>293</sup> Bosnian Croat HDZ leader Dragan Covic actively campaigned for this third entity, while Dodik continued calling for an eventual RS referendum on secession.<sup>294</sup> However, the results of the election were very different when comparing the Federation and RS entities. In the Federation, the entity's nationalist forces - both Bosniak and Bosnian Croat - did not gain as much traction. The Federation Parliament's largest party was the

---

<sup>290</sup> Ibid.

<sup>291</sup> "Serbian Lawmakers Condemn Srebrenica Massacre," *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, March 30, 2010, [https://www.rferl.org/a/Serbian\\_Parliament\\_Begins\\_Debate\\_On\\_Srebrenica\\_Apology/1997497.html](https://www.rferl.org/a/Serbian_Parliament_Begins_Debate_On_Srebrenica_Apology/1997497.html).

<sup>292</sup> "Serb Leader Apologizes in Bosnia."

<sup>293</sup> Andreas Illmer, "Ethnically Divided Bosnia Votes on its EU Future," *Deutsche Welle*, October 3, 2010, <https://p.dw.com/p/PT8Z>.

<sup>294</sup> Illmer, "Ethnically Divided Bosnia Votes on its EU Future."

Social Democratic Party; the Croat member of the Bosnian presidency too was a social democrat. Amongst the Bosnian Croats, the nationalists were unable to gain a substantial victory.

The Bosnian Serbs and RS voters made very different decisions compared to their Federation counterparts. Whereas Federation voters typically empowered centralists who believed in a united BiH, RS voters supported Dodik. His railing against the OHR, the GFA, and the notion of Bosnia as a whole, worked. RS voters remembered the ICTY prosecution of their wartime leaders like Karadzic and Mladic with contempt. So too did they recall the OHR's dismissals of political officials in the early 2000s. Ultimately, the Bosnian Serbs valued Dodik because he was untouchable - he had never committed any war crimes and he noisily proclaimed his support for popular ethno-nationalist prerogatives. These pronouncements endeared him to the RS electorate despite his record of bending to the will of the international community in the late 1990s. The international institutions in BiH operated without the popular support of the Bosnian Serbs, and Dodik's political rebirth as a nationalist reflected this.

Dodik became the President of Republika Srpska while his SNSD colleagues became the Serb member of the Bosnian presidency and Prime Minister of the entity respectively. The results clearly demonstrated that RS and Bosnian Serb voters were enthusiastic about Dodik's calls for a referendum on key aspects of statehood to pave the way to secession. With Dodik's ascendance to the Presidency, he possessed more political authority than he ever had. With this, it came time for him to make good on his promises and deliver the much-coveted referendums. However, these referendums never came. Instead, Dodik gave in to international pressure and decided the time was ultimately not right to call for referendums that questioned the Dayton Accords, the presence of foreign prosecutors, and the powers of the OHR. Instead, Dodik decided to focus on the issue of Bosnia's social insurance numbers, known as Unique Master

Citizen Numbers. He wanted them to have specific numbers that revealed the entity in which the owners lived. This would create further divisions between RS and Federation inhabitants.

It is this type of petty nationalism for which Dodik has made his name. President Tadic in Serbia took the so-called “high road,” and he lost the 2012 elections. While these petty issues are of little consequence to the grand narrative of Serbian unity, they create a wedge that further divides the peoples of BiH. It is likely correct that the majority of Bosnian Serbs do not wish to remain part of BiH. However, Dodik does not really give any relief for these people - he merely toys with their sentiments to secure his own authority. Under these circumstances, it becomes clear that Dodik knows how to maintain power but does not know how to “solve” the issues of the day. Perhaps, at least for him, they are better left unsolved. However, while they remain as such, the people of the RS will not be able to attain proper economic or societal development. This will only condemn them to relive the circumstances that brought them to ethnic conflict in the first place. What is worse is that Dodik toys with the ethno-nationalist sentiments of the people in the RS to gain their support for supposed independence. This is irresponsible as moves of this nature threaten war. In addition, they distract the RS electorate from material issues in their entity, namely, improving their lives, government, and society – all to empower a political chameleon with few firm principles and love of self-enrichment.



## **Conclusion**

The initial founding of the RS was a result of the malaise and overlap that occurred because of the collapse of the former Yugoslavia. The Bosnian Serbs, along with their Serbian sponsors, sought to extricate themselves from the possibility of living in a common state with the Bosnian Muslims. The Bosniaks, due to their greater numbers, would have had a demographic advantage in any unified state over their Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat countrymen. The rationale for the founding of the RS is not insidious, but the methods employed by the SDS, VRS, and irregular forces were. Forced deportations, killings, and wholesale brutality stained the reputation of the entity and incriminated many within the Bosnian Serb political elite.

With the end of the Bosnian War and the implementation of the GFA, the political apparatus of RS was on a collision course with the will of the international community and its appointed representatives. The GFA forbade those indicted by the ICTY from participating in the political life of BiH, as such men like Karadzic and Mladic ruled the postwar system on borrowed time. Their successors, Plavsic and Krajisnik, eventually turned on each other and brought the entity to the brink of civil war. The international community responded to this by further empowering the OHR, much to the anger and frustration of the Bosnian Serb population. The political bickering of the Plavsic-Krajisnik debacle ultimately led the Bosnian Serb electorate to rally behind the most ultranationalist of choices in Poplasen and his SRS. However, the OHR did not allow him to enact his agenda and sacked him.

During this situation, Dodik was aware of the strength of the international community and bent to their will. However, he neglected the strength of the Bosnian Serb nationalists, which led ultimately to his electoral defeats in 2000. Afterward, the SDS reclaimed the mantle of power, only to be hemmed in by the OHR. This was particularly true during the administration of

Lord Ashdown. Ashdown's continued dismissals against the SDS and PDP effectively weakened that coalition to the point of collapse. On the other hand, Dodik learned his lesson from his defeat in 2000 and began employing nationalism in his political appeals. He was careful to avoid stepping over the line while Ashdown remained in the OHR, but this changed when Ashdown was replaced.

From 2006 Dodik became a vocal proponent of RS referendums geared toward independence. The Bosnian Serb electorate liked his anti-Bosnian stance. His virulence in dealing with the question of Kosovo's independence also earned him popularity in the RS. After Dodik was accused of corruption, he used his appeals to nationalism to simultaneously draw attention away from the accusations against him and to undermine the position of international officials in BiH. Those investigating him were foreign prosecutors, so he used the OHR's extension of the mandate for foreign prosecutors in BiH's war crimes courts as fodder to weaken them politically. Going into the 2010 election season, Dodik exhausted his two-term stint as Prime Minister. However, he enjoyed the power of the RS executive branch and decided to vie for the entity's highest office, the Presidency. This was his second bid for the presidency as his first one failed in 2000. However, in 2010, he had a proven nationalist track record: he denied the Srebrenica killings were genocide; he drafted a law making it easier to hold referendums in the RS; and he paid lip service to the idea of independence for the entity. This ultimately carried him to victory against his SDS opposition.

Dodik was aware of the constraints placed upon his abilities and ambitions. While at this point the OHR was indeed weakened, it still had significant authority. If Dodik pushed for a referendum on the Dayton Accords, the OHR would have grounds to remove him from office. However, after sustained pressure from a variety of international figures, Dodik dropped the calls

for the referendum. Instead, he had a new focus of Bosnian Serb nationalist aspirations - locality based social insurance numbers.

Dodik repeats the theme of nationalism but is unwilling to pursue the issue most desired by the RS electorate - namely, secession. This is because his ultimate desire is more the preservation of his personal authority than any ideological aspirations for a "Greater Serbia." The problem with Dodik, at least for Western foreign policymakers, is that he represents a system that is difficult to change. First, any dismissal of Dodik could bring someone to power whose attitudes and practices are even more reprehensible. Second, he is without question the candidate that the majority of Bosnian Serbs have voted for time and again.

This history of the RS stops in 2011 to show the climate that gave rise to Dodik and his politics in the first place. Dodik has managed to cling to power up until today. Contemporary RS political affairs perhaps deserve a second volume beyond this work. After 2012, Dodik became much more involved in Balkan regional affairs, which has seen greater involvement from other international actors - namely Russia, China, Turkey, and the Gulf states. This thesis has provided the foundation to understand the methods used to form the RS; the postwar turbulence it underwent; and the political culture in this region. Afterward, it found a relative stability in Dodik and his SNSD, albeit a corrupt one that could spiral into violence if he follows through with his calls for an independence referendum or secession. Indeed, his threats for a referendum on independence have continued to the present day, with BiH in the midst of a crisis unknown since the 1990s.

## Bibliography

- “Agenda 5+2.” *Office of the High Representative*. Accessed June 5, 2021.  
<http://www.ohr.int/agenda-52/>.
- Akhavan, Payam. “Beyond Impunity: Can International Criminal Justice Prevent Future Atrocities?” *The American Journal of International Law* 95, no. 1 (2001): 7-31.
- Akhavan, Payam. “Justice in the Hague, Peace in the Former Yugoslavia? A Commentary on the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal” *Human Rights Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (1998): 737-816.
- Barany, Zoltan. “Building National Armies after Civil War: Lessons from Bosnia, El Salvador, and Lebanon.” *Political Science Quarterly* 129, no. 2. (2014): 211-238.
- Becirevic, Edina. *Genocide on the Drina River*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014.
- Bieber, Florian. *EU Conditionality in the Western Balkans*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2013. Kindle e-book.
- Bilefsky, Dan. “Bosnian Serb Leader Accused of Corruption.” *The New York Times*. February 24, 2009.  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/24/world/europe/24ihtbosnia.4.20407214.html>
- BIRN Balkans. “Journalists Recall Kosovo’s 2008 Independence in Pristina, Belgrade.” *Youtube*. February 17, 2018.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Amr9txt3rKg&list=FL5\\_wn3sHQJvcDOJ\\_Aajtugg&index=3](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Amr9txt3rKg&list=FL5_wn3sHQJvcDOJ_Aajtugg&index=3).
- Blewitt, Thomas. “The Prosecutor of the Tribunal Against Simo Drljaca, Milan Kovacevic.” Case No.: IT-96-24. Accessed July 8, 2021.  
[https://www.icty.org/x/cases/milan\\_kovacevic/ind/en/kov-ii970313be.pdf](https://www.icty.org/x/cases/milan_kovacevic/ind/en/kov-ii970313be.pdf).

Bose, Sumatra. *Bosnia after Dayton*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

“Bosnia and Herzegovina: General Elections, 1 October, 2006; Election Observation Mission Final Report.” OSCE, Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. October 1, 2006: 1-33. <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/c/7/23945.pdf>.

“Bosnia: Bosnian Serb President Biljana is Expelled from Ruling Party,” *AP Archive* online, July 20, 1997, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/353ea0a0ae3b364053e5f8d9409bb4af>.

“Bosnia: Explosions Hit UN and NATO Targets.” *AP Archive* online. July 19, 1997. <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/ab0cb4cd297e20823b6ff3162644b0aa>.

“Bosnia: Feuding Serb Leaders Try to Patch Up Their Differences.” *AP Archive* online. July 12, 1997. <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/216324b65df1e32403eb02f9f1f5bc1c>.

“Bosnia: General Ratko Mladic Replaced as Head of Serb Military.” *AP Archive* online. November 28, 1996. <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/7b5b482d6ec96ce518149022626a7699>.

“Bosnia: Law to Strip Plavsic of Powers,” *AP Archive* online, July 5, 1997, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/d18951acd44e9e046ce3a15a695bc5ab>.

“Bosnia: Plavsic Condemns Shooting of War Criminal,” *AP Archive* online, July 10, 1997, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/view/3f7804231e47fdc1796c0e88dda4d3c4?subClipIn=00:00:00&subClipOut=00:03:06>.

“Bosnia: Plavsic Dissolves Parliament.” *AP Archive* online. July 4th, 1997, <http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/424f4fd8373a31ca09a43ecc3639b697>.

“Bosnian PM Resigns Over Reforms.” *BBC News*. November 1, 2007.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7072908.stm>.

“Bosnia: President Biljana Plavsic Dissolves Parliament.” *AP Archive* online. July 3rd, 1997.  
<http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/52d99d7dfd0d78b2fbff4d3ae6a79427>.

“Bosnia: President Biljana Plavsic Profile.” *AP Archive* online. July 3, 1997.  
<http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/fa0b7afaf25480ea5e95b1f5beb69233>.

“Bosnia: President Plavsic Rejects Offer from Slobodan Milosevic,” *AP Archive* online. July 9, 1997.  
<http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/90e2d122796a4182bbfe96b3d9c9f847>.

“Bosnia: President Biljana Plavsic’s Reaction to NATO Led Attack.” *AP Archive* online. July 10, 1997.  
<http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/756fc3fd6b96cc1cac8058b86adfc52>.

“Bosnia: Pro-Plavsic Rally,” *AP Archive* online, July 21, 1997,  
<http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/4310acd464952e363acdaff2b34946d4>.

“Bosnia: Sacked Army Officers Occupy TV Transmitter.” *AP Archive* Online. November 17, 1996.  
<http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/43771ba23bb597891fe75bf6efc7b88a>.

“Bosnia: Sacked Bosnian Serb Military Leaders Attack Authorities.” *AP Archive* online. November 15, 1996.  
<http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/580ae390398310eeb2b5661a5544a27a>.

“Bosnia: Serb President Plavsic Accuses Rivals of Threatening her Life.” *AP Archive* online. July 4, 1997.  
<http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/65174b670a9cdd103ea8941af12410c4>.

“Bosnian Serb Gov’t Resigns.” *CBC World*. March 5, 1999.

- <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/bosnian-serb-gov-t-resigns-1.179467>.
- “Bosnian Serb Leader Denies Srebrenica Was Genocide,” BIRN Balkan Insight, July 12, 2010, <https://balkaninsight.com/2010/07/12/bosnian-serb-leader-denies-srebrenica-was-genocide/>.
- Burg, Steven L. and Paul S. Shoup. *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*. New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1999.
- Bush, George W. “President’s Address to the Nation.” *Office of the Press Secretary*. January 10, 2007. <https://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2007/01/20070110-7.html>.
- Caplan, Richard. “From Collapsing States to Neo-Trusteeship: The Limits to Solving the Problem of ‘Precarious Statehood’ in the 21st Century,” *Third World Quarterly* 28, no. 2, (2007): 231-244.
- Center for Investigative Reporting. “Banja Luka Bank, Controlled by PM, Hands Out Millions to Family, Allies.” *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*. August 26, 2009. [https://www.rferl.org/a/Banja\\_Luka\\_Bank\\_Controlled\\_By\\_PM\\_Hands\\_Out\\_Millions\\_To\\_Family\\_Allies/1807881.html](https://www.rferl.org/a/Banja_Luka_Bank_Controlled_By_PM_Hands_Out_Millions_To_Family_Allies/1807881.html).
- Champion, Marc and Andrew Osborn. “Smoldering Feud, Then War.” *The Wall Street Journal*. August 16, 2008. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB121884450978145997>.
- Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. “Case U 9/00.” November 3, 2000 [https://www.ustavisud.ba/uploads/odluke/\\_en/U-9-00-12134.pdf](https://www.ustavisud.ba/uploads/odluke/_en/U-9-00-12134.pdf).
- Council of the European Union. “Visa Liberalization for Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina.” November 8, 2010. [https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/117555.pdf](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/jha/117555.pdf).

Cousens, Elizabeth M. "From Missed Opportunities to Overcompensation: Implementing the Dayton Agreement on Bosnia." In *Ending Civil Wars: The Implementation of Peace Agreements*, edited by Stephen John Stedman, Donald Rothchild, and Elizabeth M. Cousens, 531-566. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 2002.

"Dodik Hails Tadic Triumph." *B92*. February 4, 2008.

[https://web.archive.org/web/20080405205009/http://www.b92.net/eng/news/region-article.php?yyyy=2008&mm=02&dd=04&nav\\_id=47454](https://web.archive.org/web/20080405205009/http://www.b92.net/eng/news/region-article.php?yyyy=2008&mm=02&dd=04&nav_id=47454).

Donia, Robert. *Radovan Karadzic: Architect of the Bosnian Genocide*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Donia, Robert. "Republika Srpska Assembly, 1992-1995: Highlights and Excerpts." Report. Exhibit P537.2a, *Prosecutor v. Milosevic*. No. IT-02-54. July 29, 2003.

European Commission. *Commission Staff Working Document: Serbia 2019 Report*. May 29, 2019. 1-108. <https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/20190529-serbia-report.pdf>.

Fawn, Rick. "The Kosovo And Montenegro: Effect." *International Affairs* 84, no. 2 (2008): 269-94.

"General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina." Dayton, 1995. 1-149. [https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/BA\\_951121\\_DaytonAgreement.pdf](https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/BA_951121_DaytonAgreement.pdf).

Green, Monica Hanson. *Srebrenica Genocide Denial Report 2020*. (2020): 1-60. <https://www.srebrenicamemorial.org/bs/document/40>.

Grevi, Giovanni. *Pioneering Foreign Policy: The EU Special Representatives*. Report. European



- Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), 2007. 79-90. Accessed May 23, 2021.  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep06975.11>.
- Gromes, Thorsten. *Den Frieden Abgewählt?: Die Friedenskonsolidierung in Bosnien und Herzegowina und die Wahlen im Oktober 2002*. Frankfurt: Peace Research Institute, 2003.
- Hawton, Nick. "EU Troops Prepare for Bosnia Swap." *BBC News* online. October 23, 2004.  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3944191.stm>.
- "High Representative Comments on Resignation of Mirko Sarovic from BiH Presidency"  
Accessed April 16th, 2021 from <http://www.ohr.int/high-representative-comments-on-resignation-of-mirko-sarovic-from-bih-presidency/?print=pdf>.
- Hoare, Marko Attila. *How Bosnia Armed*. London: Saqi Book, 2004.
- Holbrooke, Richard. *To End a War*. New York: Random House, 1998.
- Illmer, Andreas. "Ethnically Divided Bosnia Votes on its EU Future." *Deutsche Welle*. October 3, 2010. <https://p.dw.com/p/PT8Z>.
- Kang, Matthew. "Bosnian Serb Region Passes Controversial Referendum Law." *Deutsche Welle*. February 11, 2010. <https://p.dw.com/p/LySW>.
- "Lajcak: The Prud Agreement Must Not Be a Show for the International Community," *Office of the High Representative*, November 12, 2008,  
<http://www.ohr.int/lajak-the-prud-agreement-must-not-be-a-show-for-the-international-community/>.
- LeBor, Adam. *Milosevic: A Biography*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2004.
- Lowen, Mark. "Political Deadlock in Bosnia-Herzegovina Ahead of Key Vote." *Deutsche Welle*. February 24, 2010. <https://p.dw.com/p/M9UA>.

- McLaughlin, Daniel. "Premier of Serb Region in Bosnia Resigns Over Sackings." *The Irish Times* online. December 18th, 2004, <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/premier-of-serb-region-in-bosnia-resigns-over-sackings-1.1170505>.
- McMahon, Patrice C., and Jon Western. "The Death of Dayton: How to Stop Bosnia From Falling Apart." *Foreign Affairs* 88, no. 5 (2009): 69-83.
- "Montenegro Declares Independence." *BBC News*. June 4, 2006.  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/5043462.stm>.
- Mujanovic, Jasmin. *Hunger and Fury: The Crisis of Democracy in the Balkans*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018.
- National Assembly of the Republika Srpska. "About National Assembly." Accessed April 9th, 2021.  
<https://www.narodnaskupstinars.net/?q=en/national-assembly/about-national-assembly>.
- "Need for Responsible Political Leadership." OHR Press Release. May 29, 2006.  
<http://www.ohr.int/need-for-responsible-political-leadership/>.
- "New High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina Welcomed by UN." *UN News*. March 25, 2009.  
<https://news.un.org/en/story/2009/03/294942-new-high-representative-bosnia-and-herzegovina-welcomed-un>.
- "Newline, September 5, 2006: Bosnian Serb Premier Says Independence Referendum is Inevitable." *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*. September 5, 2006.  
<https://www.rferl.org/a/1143709.html>.
- Niksic, Sabina. "Bosnia Serb Referendum Threat Alarms Muslim Returnees," *BIRN Balkan Insight*. February 16, 2010.

<https://balkaninsight.com/2010/02/16/bosnia-serb-referendum-threat-alarms-muslim-returnees/>.

Niksic, Sabina. "Duels Over Bosnia Unlikely to Set Bosnia Aflame." *Balkan Insight*. BIRN, January 26, 2010. <https://balkaninsight.com/2010/01/26/duels-over-bosnia-unlikely-to-set-balkans-aflame/>.

Niksic, Sabina. "Wahhabi Village Raid Sparks Controversy in Bosnia," *Balkan Insight*, BIRN, February 11, 2010, <https://balkaninsight.com/2010/02/11/wahhabi-village-raid-sparks-controversy-in-bosnia/>.

Office of the High Representative. "Decision Imposing the Law on State Border Service." January 13, 2000. <http://www.ohr.int/decision-imposing-the-law-on-state-border-service/>.

Office of the High Representative. "High Representative Comments on Resignation of Mirko Sarovic from BiH Presidency." Accessed April 16th, 2021. <http://www.ohr.int/high-representative-comments-on-resignation-of-mirko-sarovic-from-bih-presidency/?print=pdf>.

"Opposition Leader Elected Premier of Bosnia's Republika Srpska." *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*. February 28, 2006. <https://www.rferl.org/a/1066246.html>.

Percy, Norma, and Brian Lapping, Producers. *The Death of Yugoslavia*. Episode 6, "Pax Americana." Aired June 6, 1996, in broadcast syndication. BBC, 2001, DVD.

Pugh, Michael, and Margaret Cobble. "Non-Nationalist Voting in Bosnian Municipal Elections: Implications for Democracy and Peacebuilding." *Journal of Peace Research* 38, no. 1 (2001): 27-47.

Sejdic and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina. Applications nos. 27996/06 and 34836/06.

- European Court of Human Rights. 1-59. December 22, 2009.  
<https://hudoc.echr.coe.int/eng#%7B%22dmdocnumber%22:%5B%22860268%22%5D,%22itemid%22:%5B%22001-96491%22%5D%7D>.
- “Serbia Captures Fugitive Karadzic.” *BBC News*. July 22, 2008.  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7518543.stm>.
- “Serbia Election Victory for Tadic,” *BBC News*, February 4, 2008,  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7225455.stm>.
- “Serbian Lawmakers Condemn Srebrenica Massacre.” *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*. March 30, 2010.  
[https://www.rferl.org/a/Serbian\\_Parliament\\_Begins\\_Debate\\_On\\_Srebrenica\\_Apology/1997497.html](https://www.rferl.org/a/Serbian_Parliament_Begins_Debate_On_Srebrenica_Apology/1997497.html).
- “Serbia: Tadic, Nikolic Headed for Second-Round Showdown.” *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*. January 21, 2008. <https://www.rferl.org/a/1079381.html>.
- “Serb Leader apologizes in Bosnia,” *BBC News*. December 6, 2004.  
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4072949.stm>.
- “Serbia Won’t Recognize Georgia Regions.” *BIRN Balkan Insight*. September 3, 2008.  
<https://balkaninsight.com/2008/09/03/serbia-won-t-recognise-georgia-regions/>.
- Shrader, Charles. *The Muslim-Croat Civil War in Central Bosnia*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2003.
- SNSD. “Press Release, December 2000.” Cited in *European Stability Initiative, Reshaping International Priorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Part Three: The End of the Nationalist Regimes and the Future of the Bosnian State*. March 22, 2001.  
[https://www.esiweb.org/sites/default/files/reports/pdf/esi\\_document\\_id\\_14.pdf](https://www.esiweb.org/sites/default/files/reports/pdf/esi_document_id_14.pdf).

“Spain: Clinton Pledges Support for Plavsic.” *AP Archive* online. July 9, 1997.

<http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/e3ed96371468ee7474a23fab6a1562f7>.

“The Statement of the SNSD International Department.” European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity. March 1, 2006.

[https://www.europeanforum.net/headlines/milorad\\_dodik\\_elected\\_prime\\_minister\\_republika\\_srpska](https://www.europeanforum.net/headlines/milorad_dodik_elected_prime_minister_republika_srpska).

Toal, Gerard and Carl Dahlman. *Bosnia Remade: Ethnic Cleansing and its Reversal*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Vogel, T.K.. 2006. *A Watershed Year for Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Challenge of Legitimacy*. (2007): 1-36. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep11069.6>.

“Washington Agreement.” Peace Agreements Digital Collection. United States Institute of Peace, February 14, 2000.

[https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/resources/collections/peace\\_agreements/wash\\_agree\\_03011994.pdf](https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/resources/collections/peace_agreements/wash_agree_03011994.pdf).