

Direct and Indirect Leadership: The Case of the US in Bosnia □

by Fotini Bellou

Leadership has been a frequently adduced concept in the context of the wars in Former Yugoslavia and especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina -- initially reflecting a criticism of its absence while ultimately denoting the catharsis following a complex and frustrating tragedy. Although the idea of international leadership, *engineering* international action *aiming at creating and sustaining* peace, is very broad and invites questions of different kind, this article will address a particular aspect of it. Namely, the case of American leadership and the implementation of the Dayton peace agreement (hereinafter Dayton). The Dayton case-study is significant for two reasons. First, because it addresses the importance of international leadership in contemporary security challenges, i.e. in peace support operations, and second because it provides an account of what the implementation of Dayton means for the state which claims the role of global leadership. The main question to be discussed therefore is why the United States could not refrain from leading the endeavours towards a comprehensive implementation of Dayton?

This article argues that international leadership is vital for the implementation of a peace mission especially when it is underpinned by international action that involves the potential use of coercive means to attain its objectives.¹ Precisely because, in such cases, international action, aims to reinforce a regime that *inter alia* seems to question the sensitive area of the absolute sovereignty of states in their own affairs, it is essential that coherence, conformity and unity should be its sine qua non elements.² In such a context -- at the macro level of a peace support operation -- international leadership provides unity and direction.³

The significance of international leadership in peace support operations was not ignored by the United States in formulating the basic premises of its security strategy.⁴ The terms, however, under which Washington aimed to project its

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¹ This is the kind of peace missions that Dandeker and Gow define as 'strategic peacekeeping', see, Christopher Dandeker and James Gow, 'The Future of Peace Support Operations: Strategic Peacekeeping and Success', *Armed Forces & Society*, Vol. 23, No. 3, Spring 1997, pp. 327-348.

² *Ibid.*, p. 332.

³ The macro level of a peace support operation can be seen as the level at which the rules and norms that govern the conduct of action of the operation *are formed by the international community* (strategic level) whereas the micro level concerns the processes and interactions that are taking place when international action, agreed in the macro level, is implemented over particular warring parties (operational level).

⁴ Against fierce criticisms from Congress and the Pentagon, the Clinton administration always argued for the United States taking a more vigorous role in peace support operations. In the words of Warren Christopher, 'international peacekeeping helps us maintain global leadership, prevent

self-conceived role were not readily accepted by the United States' most significant allies, thus causing US inertia which in turn raised questions about the substance of US leadership. To defend its global leadership position, the United States demonstrated its will and its capabilities for global leadership before the eyes of its allies and the rest of the world when it led the international endeavours terminating the Bosnian war by orchestrating "Dayton". More importantly for this analysis, America's strategic capital expended in the delivery and implementation of Dayton was so important for the US leadership image as to lead the Clinton Administration to stay the course to the very end.

In the mid 1990s, the United States had invested its reputation in Dayton as a global leader. It was undergirding the effectiveness of NATO as well as alliance's indispensability for European security which in effect strengthened the US leadership image by being its cardinal partner. This concern touched on what is described elsewhere as the third facet of the United States leadership image, namely the American profile of stewardship in the eyes of its European allies.⁵ Precisely because the implementation of Dayton was structured upon a strategically inclusive and practically functional cooperation scheme around Washington's orbit, with implications beyond the Balkan region, it had invigorated US leadership and reinforced its image even further. Thus in this respect it tended to inhibit anything less than US continuing commitment to Bosnia. Effectively, Washington's military withdrawal from the post-Dayton Bosnia, that some American policy makers constantly demanded in the first years of peace implementation,⁶ would have been detrimental to Washington's most vital interest: namely, European confidence in US leadership in the European security setting which in turn defines Washington's global leadership role.

This analysis begins with an examination of the way in which international leadership becomes important in crisis management and most specifically in peace implementation operations. Then, the United States leadership role that orchestrated international action in Bosnia leading to Dayton will be examined.

wars or keep them contained, minimise the involvement of US troops, and get the rest of the world to pay three-quarters of the bills,' cited in *Dispatch*, 16 October 1995, Vol. 6, No. 4, p. 748.

⁵ The first dimension of the US leadership image can be seen as the US *self-image* comprising the US perceptions regarding the substance of the country's world leadership role. The second dimension can be described as the *projected* leadership image involving the particular policies and decisions with which US decision makers project US leadership globally. The third dimension of the US leadership image refers to the *alters'* leadership image reflecting the way in which others conceive of US leadership. For the introduction of the term leadership image and its role in foreign policy decision making See, Fotini Bellou, "American Leadership Image and the Yugoslav Crisis 1991-1997", *Ph.D. Thesis*, King's College London, 2000, esp. chapters 2-4.

⁶ Several US lawmakers argue for a reduction of funding the US participation in Bosnia, some by supporting the argument that the \$7,3 billion cost of the operation in Bosnia endangers US military readiness while others view it as a tool to make US' allies shoulder the task of policing the peace. As Barney Frank (D-Mass) puts it, 'This is a mission that ought to be done, but America should not be doing it'... Bosnia is in Europe. It is close to Germany, close to France. Can they do nothing by themselves? quoted in Pat Towell, 'Pentagon Backers in House Settle for Modest Budget Increase', *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Review*, 28 June 1997, p. 1533.

Finally, American commitments and strategic investments around the implementation of Dayton will be discussed.⁷

International leadership

International leadership is a concept that is theoretically underdeveloped and frequently confused with hegemony.⁸ Leadership, as Ikenberry observes, is 'really an elegant word for power. To exercise leadership is to get others do things that they would not otherwise do. It involves the ability to shape, directly or indirectly, the interests or actions of others.'⁹ It is important to stress that this convergence of interests and actions is realised not just out of 'arm twisting' by the leading actor over others but mainly because the leader gets others 'to conceive of their interests and policy goals in new ways.'¹⁰ This implies that leadership is not the exercise of blunt power -- a condition frequently observed in the context of hegemony -- but it involves the leader's ability to project a set of political ideas and analogous actions which inspire and convince third parties that there is a convergence in matters of principle and mutual interest.

This directly points to the significant assumption that international leadership is a particular kind of relationship in which a state (or other entities) activates its ability, defined not only in terms of material capabilities but also in terms of ideational appeal, to get others to behave in harmony with the leader's pre-set but subtly advanced rules and principles.¹¹

International leadership has been studied at various levels of analysis. First, the concept was examined in a systemic context where emphasis was given to the United States' world leadership role and occasionally to that of Britain. Both powers because of their hegemonic position in the world system exerted world leadership aiming at creating co-operative normative structures and/or international regimes in order to keep the system stable and functional.¹² The

⁷ Analysis will focus on events covering the period between 1995-1997.

⁸ See for example, Robert Keohane, *After Hegemony. Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1984), p. 39.

⁹ G. John Ikenberry, 'The Future of International Leadership', *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 111, No. 3, Fall 1996, p. 388.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ The importance of the leader's abilities in terms of material capabilities is emphasized by authors who examine international leadership in the context of a hegemonic world economy. See for example, Charles Kindleberger, *The World in Depression, 1929-39*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973) and Robert Gilpin, *U.S. Power and the Multinational Corporation: The Political Economy of U.S. Foreign Direct Investment*, (New York: Basic Books, 1975). On the other hand, other scholars are also stressing the significance of the leader's ideational appeal or what Nye defines as 'soft' power. See, Joseph Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, (New York: Basic Books, 1990) and Robert Cox, 'Social Forces, States, and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory', *Millennium: Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 10, No. 2, 1983, pp. 162-175.

¹² See, Charles P. Kindleberger, *The World in Depression, 1929-39*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973); Robert Gilpin, *U.S. Power and the Multinational Corporation: The Political Economy of U.S. Foreign Direct Investment*, (New York: Basic Books, 1975); Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); David Rapkin, (ed) *World Leadership and Hegemony*, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1990); George

theory of Hegemonic Stability, as the study of hegemonic leadership became known, is primarily focused on the establishment of stable international economic regimes, some authors have also addressed its importance in the maintenance of a mutually beneficial political world order.¹³ At the systemic level, the leading state uses its preponderant material capabilities, 'natural resources, capital, technology, military force and economic size,' to direct and overall shape the world order.¹⁴

Power, as some authors have asserted, may be used by the leading state either to bear a disproportional burden in providing mutually regimes or to impose allegedly cooperational structures which are more conducive to its own interests.¹⁵ While the first instance is in conformity with the notion of leadership, the second instance involves the use of force often in the absence of legitimacy. As some authors have argued, what is important in a leadership relationship, at all levels, is the legitimating process that is taking place between leader and followers wherein the former persuades the latter for the desirability of a regime rather than imposes its will unquestionably. In sum, inspired leadership creates eager and willing "followership."

The emphasis that scholars have placed on material capabilities in the exercise of world leadership fails to take into consideration the significance of legitimacy which a world leader is accorded by its followers.¹⁶ In other words, the bond that keeps a leadership relationship vibrant is the followers' acknowledgement of the leader's resources, viewed as relevant, suitable and anticipated. In this respect, the leader's credibility and international appeal become integral to 'the dialectical mechanism of legitimation' thus becoming assets of the leader's capabilities.¹⁷ This points to the assumption therefore that in leadership it is not only military power that matters.

Modelski, *Long Cycles in World Politics* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1987); Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Capitalist World Economy* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979) and Wallerstein, 'The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 16, September 1974, pp. 387-415.

¹³ The argument for including concerns of nuclear peace and bipolarity to the theory of hegemonic stability has been made by John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the End of the Cold War. Implications, Reconsiderations, Provocations*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp.175-186. See also, Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, *op.cit.*

¹⁴ For the notion of structural leadership see, John G. Ikenberry, 'The Future of International Leadership', *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 111, No. 3, 1996, pp. 389-391.

¹⁵ This points to the distinction between beneficial and coercive hegemonic leadership wherein in the first case, the state with preponderant capabilities creates structures mutually beneficial for the leader and its followers whereas in the second case emphasis is placed on the satisfaction of the leader's own interests. See, Duncan Snidal, 'The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory', *International Organization*, Vol. 39, N.4, Autumn 1985, pp. 586-587. The claim for the need of *one leader* to stabilize the world economy (in depression) was first made by Kindleberger, *op.cit.* The capacity of the hegemonic leader to 'enforce its will on other states' is addressed in Gilpin, *War and Change*, *op.cit.*, p. 34.

¹⁶ The importance of legitimacy (even)in an hegemonic context is discussed in G.John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan, 'The legitimation of Hegemonic Power', in David Rapkin (ed) *World Leadership and Hegemony*, *op.cit.*, pp. 49-69.

¹⁷ See, Jarrod Wiener, "'Hegemonic" Leadership: Naked Emperor or the Worship of False Gods?', *Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 1, No. 2, June 1995, p. 233 and Jurgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis*, (London: Heinemann, 1976), p. 183

The importance of legitimacy is also illustrated by the fact that even if some analysts argue that the United States' erstwhile hegemonic position is being under question, in practice the US leadership capabilities,¹⁸ when activated, can still engineer mutually beneficial cooperative structures. For example, as will be discussed below, cooperative structures surrounding the new face of NATO, and perhaps more importantly for this analysis, the structures embedded in the provisions of the Dayton agreement regarding international collective action -- the role of IFOR/SFOR for that matter -- are strong cases in point. These international regimes, have been spearheaded, to a substantial degree, by United States' initiatives and commitments, thus illustrating contemporary forms of international leadership.

This brings our discussion to another facet of international leadership, which some authors have described as *institutional leadership*.¹⁹ In this instance, leadership emerges from the rules and norms provided and being safeguarded by an institution or a regime which is the result of mutual expectations and rules agreed and being legitimated by a collectivity of states.²⁰ A regime therefore can provide leadership in terms of facilitating cooperation by making its participating actors understand and accommodate their interests accordingly.²¹ Importantly, even in the process of regime formation, there may be some of the participating actors that exert a disproportional degree of leadership -- a necessary albeit not sufficient asset -- for the success of the regime.²²

This is the kind of leadership with which this analysis is primarily concerned. It is the leadership that is taking place in the process of *institutional bargaining* among states aspiring to formulate an international regime. More often than not regime formation is plagued by the differing perspectives of its formulators. States seek to pursue their own agendas and policy preferences; some may aspire to free-ride; others may entertain a different understanding over the rationale for a regime formation and thus may put emphasis on different means to achieve it.²³ Leadership is more likely to moderate or even eliminate those

¹⁸ Legitimacy is embedded in the notion of the leader's capabilities which, even in the context of hegemony, 'enhances the capacity of the hegemon to lead', See, *Ibid*, p. 49.

¹⁹ see, G. John Ikenberry, 'The Future of International Leadership', *op.cit.*, p. 391-395.

²⁰ *Ibid*. p. 391.

²¹ This collective institutionalized leadership may also take a purely abstract bureaucratic form as some aspirations of the European Commission suggest, but currently such a contingency, covering every aspect of action of its member-states, it is being seen more as an anathema than a welcome progress. Different variances of international regimes are elaborated in Stephen Haggard and Beth A. Simmons, 'Theories of International Regimes', *International Organization*, Vol. 41, No. 3, Summer 1987, pp. 491-517.

²² According to Oran Young, even non participants can exert leadership (intellectual) in this context by providing a particular theorizing that may change the participants' understanding of the rationale and rules of a regime. See Oran R. Young, 'Political Leadership and Regime Formation: on the Development of Institutions in international society', *International Organization*, Vol. 45, No. 3, Summer 1991, p. 298. For the importance of leadership at this level, see also, Wiener, "'Hegemonic" Leadership...' *op.cit.*, p. 227.

²³ As Risse-Kappen advocates, in the context of institutional bargaining, which also involves power-based interactions, smaller states can indeed play an important role in constraining the preponderant in capabilities states to pursue its own policy preferences. See, Thomas Risse-

deficiencies if the preponderant in material capabilities actor is able to convert its power differential into a bargaining tool. This implies that the state which aspires to lead is more likely to assess what the expectations, interests and even guiding principles of its fellow member states are, in order to convert its power into bargaining leverage respectively.

At times, the leader may have an interest in achieving cooperation *per se* within the group as well as pursuing its own rules of action. In this instance, the bargaining leverage of the leader is activated also in the perspective of safeguarding cooperation and thus the leader becomes more receptive to the needs and expectations of the followers. Although this may engage the leader in some forms of accommodation or concessions, effectively the probability of pursuing its policy preferences increases because the followers *value* the very reciprocity in their relationship with the leader. Therefore, the leading state in reality enhances its ability to engineer a coherent programme for cooperative action. Effectively, a particular regime is formed regulating international action the norms of which are considered mutually beneficial while the leading state has activated its power in a managerial fashion, than observed at other levels of analysis, in order to achieve unity and direction. The essence of leadership therefore lies in the fact that followers subordinate their earlier reservations and collaborate according to the leader's policy prescriptions because the value they assign to the outcome of leadership exceeds the importance of earlier considerations.

International leadership and peace implementation operations

In what sense is international leadership important to peace implementation? Peace implementation is only one aspect of a wide variety of peace support operations the nature of which has become more complex and even controversial in recent years.²⁴ During the Cold War, peace support operations including the implementation of a peace agreement, pursuant to warring parties in a conflict, were mainly led by the United Nations -- the institution to which states of the international community accorded on some occasions legitimacy to pursue such ends. Because of the superpowers' deadlocked Security Council during those years, the peacekeeping role of the United Nations was marginal and restrained. In the aftermath of the Cold War, however, the need for extended peace support operations intensified warranting at times the use of coercive means of conduct by the international community. It was the responsibility of member-states, therefore, to decide and agree upon the forms and methods -- rules, norms and principles -- under which the international community would respond to different aspects of peace support operations and more importantly the level of coercion to be used not only in enforcing the

Kaplan, *Cooperation Among Democracies. The European Influence on U.S. Foreign Policy*, (Princeton. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1995), esp. pp. 12-41.

²⁴ For the concept of peace support operations and its facets, see extracts of the Army Field Manual, published by HMSO, 1995, cited in 'Wider Peacekeeping', *RUSI Journal*, February 1996, pp. 45-50.

implementation of a peace agreement but also in terminating an ongoing conflict.²⁵

There is one main reason why collective action is fundamental in the post Cold War context. More specifically, coercion is frequently underpinned by an amalgam of political and normative rationales as well as legal provisions that often function as sources of international law. Therefore the rules and norms that are to govern international action, which occasionally may be innovative -- at times justifiably challenging the basic legal principles of world politics -- become necessarily the result of collective agreement of the international community and especially of its key players. If international action is to be conducted, then *unity* among its legitimators and *direction* over its form and methods are essential. This is crucial for two reasons. First, because unity and direction become assets for the international community's (legal) self-protection and second, because the international community provides action with immense leverage (basically, credibility) against intransigent belligerents and renders a peace agreement more likely to be implemented.

It is in this regard that international leadership becomes essential in peace support operations -- providing unity and direction to collective action. Although states may feel compelled to respond collectively to contingencies threatening international peace, more often than not there is less of agreement on the scope and nature of action as well as on the accepted levels of risks and responsibilities involved. International leadership addresses these problems when one state (or even more), usually in the context of a pre-existing security organisation or an ad hoc institutional arrangement, sets forth the policy prescriptions for innovative collective behaviour and allocates the resultant responsibilities respectively. It is in this context that institutional bargaining emerges.

The need for collective contribution and allocation of responsibilities makes the state with preponderant capabilities, aspiring to pursue its own agenda for action, appear rather constrained. This means that the leading state, in order to assume effective leadership, is more likely to search for the relevant options to which its coalition partners would more easily agree, usually towards an acceptable burden sharing, while at the same time, uses its power to moderate the consequences that occasional marginal concessions may involve.²⁶ By implication, although the leading state may appear accommodating, at the same time it is able to attain its followers' acquiescence which often is translated into greater influence.²⁷ Thus, although it appears managerial rather than coercive,

²⁵ See, Dandeker and Gow, 'The future of Peace Support Operations, *op.cit.*, p. 329.

²⁶ It can be argued that at least in two respects Washington evoked its power superiority to moderate the consequences of its commitment to contribute ground troops in implementing Dayton. Firstly, before the American public, US power was adduced to signify Washington's moral responsibility to participate in creating peace in Bosnia. Secondly, in the military/operational context the US unquestionable advantage in NATO almost by definition excluded any operational action that contradicted US concerns and criteria for the use of force.

²⁷ The effectiveness of the fungibility of power in the context of a leadership relationship is not a novel argument. For example, Joseph Nye, *Bound to lead: The Changing Nature of American Power*, (New York: Basic Books, 1990), p. 189-190. Relevant arguments are offered in Rober J.

this kind of leadership becomes more relevant to an interdependent world and, in effect, more important to the state which claims to possess the chair of global leadership.

American leadership in orchestrating the Dayton Peace Agreement

The wars in former Yugoslavia, and particularly the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, set forth the question about America's global leadership role more than any other event in the 1990s. 'The war became a symbol of US foreign policy as a whole', Anthony Lake asserted in 1996,²⁸ while its ending was perceived as an acid test of post-cold war US leadership.²⁹ As a American commentator put it, 'Bosnia ... epitomized the 1990s as surely as Vietnam epitomized the 1960s'.³⁰ This was not because the Bosnian war had been an unprecedented kind of conflict. Indeed, other parts of the world had experienced similar cases of turmoil. What was unique in Bosnia was its European geographic location which from the outset touched the already emerging questions about crisis management and European security at a time when its architecture was in a process of re-evaluation and self-reflection.

For the United States, the traditional leader in European security, the issue of profound importance in its national security strategy in the new era has been to sustain this very leadership position.³¹ Leading a security partnership with the world's principal democracies provides the United States with greater influence over international events and a leverage for cooperation in fora outside Europe where its European allies are also key players.³² The United States' vision of its global leadership role is substantiated mainly through its transatlantic institutional relationship. Reflecting the world's 'oldest modern democracies' as Strobe Talbott, the Deputy Secretary of State, once put it, 'what we experience together and what we accomplish together set the tone and direction for what happens elsewhere'.³³ In a leadership relationship, however, in which followers are not so impotent as to adhere to the leader's will unquestionably, leadership becomes operational and, in turn, it engineers unity and direction when

Art, 'American Foreign Policy and the Fungibility of Force', *Security Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 4, Summer 1996, pp. 7-42.

²⁸ Cited in Elaine Sciolino, 'The Clinton Record: Foreign Policy; Bosnia Policy shaped by US Military Role', *New York Times*, 29 July 1996, p. 15.

²⁹ See, Warren Christopher, 'Bosnia: An Acid Test of U.S. Leadership', Statement before the Senate Foreign Relations, Committee, cited in *Dispatch*, 1 December, 1996, Vol. 6, No.48, pp. 870-872. In the words of Richard Holbrooke, 'How NATO does in Bosnia will define America's post-cold war role in European security', quoted in Craig R. Whitney, 'With Ethnic Strife, NATO Finds the Enemy is Within', *New York Times*, 6 July 1997, p. 7.

³⁰ See, *New York Times*, 31 December, 1995, p. 32.

³¹ See, *United States Security Strategy for Europe and NATO*, Department of Defense, Office of International Security Affairs, June 1995, p. 3. For a discussion on this issue see also, Phil Williams, Paul Hammond and Michael Brenner, 'Atlantis Lost, Paradise Regained? The United States and Western Europe After the Cold War', *International Affairs*, Vol. 69, No. 1, 1993, esp. p. 5.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 35 and 38.

³³ Strobe Talbott, remarks at the Bilderberg Dinner, U.S. Department of State, Washington D.C., 5 October 1995, cited in 'The Transatlantic Partnership in the Post-Cold War Era', *Dispatch*, 23 October 1995, Vol. 6, No. 43, p. 762.

followers indeed follow because they *credit* the leader's effective capability, whatever its nature.

Hence, notions as the leader's credibility and reputation loom large in this relationship since they bestow upon the leader the legitimacy required in order to activate a mutually beneficial vision. As an analyst has put it 'Peace and order depend to a great extent on Washington's ability to convince adversaries and allies of its firmness, determination and dependability'.³⁴ In reality, credibility weights as one of the most critical foreign policy objectives of a state and defines in a profound way the state's position internationally. As an American senator has put it, 'when we arrive at the moment when less is expected from our leadership by the rest of the world, then we will have arrived at the moment of our decline.'³⁵ His thesis was referring to the United States policy in Bosnia since this war put the question of American leadership in perspective. In fact, along with the objective of sustaining its leadership role in European security, Washington has aimed to enhance this leadership relationship by promoting broader burden sharing arrangements among its European allies, albeit without sharing with a sense of enthusiasm the leader's prerogative of setting the agenda and rules for collective action.³⁶

In this context, by perceiving that no tangible national interests were at stake in the war in Bosnia, the United States had been reluctant to take the risk of contributing vital resources, namely ground troops, in a volatile terrain when rules and conduct of action were not entirely determined by Washington. However, this was by and large the commitment that its allies were expecting from the United States to tackle collectively the war in Bosnia as it was escalating.³⁷ Moreover, Washington was aspiring to an allocation of responsibilities on which the allies could not agree.³⁸ As General John Shalikashvili admits, 'We thought we could somehow let them be on the ground

³⁴ Robert J. McMahon, 'Credibility and World Power: Exploring the Psychological Dimension in Postwar American Diplomacy', *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 15, No. 4, Fall 1991, p. 455. [455-471]

³⁵ Senator John McCain (R-Az) cited in *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, 16 December 1995, Vol. 53, No. 49, p. 3818.

³⁶ For the question on U.S. burden sharing see, Stanley R. Sloan, 'Global Burden Sharing in the Post-Cold War World', *Congressional Research Service*, 93-892S, 8 October 1993. Although the Clinton administration had initially appeared enthusiastic about the idea of assertive multilateralism, pressures from Congress and the military made the administration reverse its course towards a more unilateralist stance. See, *Strategic Survey 1994-95*, The International Institute for Strategic Studies, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) esp. pp. 53-63.

³⁷ Although initially the Alliance was against using force out of the NATO area, when the UN protection force was deployed in Former Yugoslavia and especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the United States was reluctant to commit any ground troops in the collective effort. See, editorial, 'Why Generals Get Nervous', *New York Times*, 8 October 1992, p. A35. This excluded the presence of US troops in FYRMacedonia which was a less volatile terrain than that in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

³⁸ The United States was pressuring for a more robust enforcement of the UN resolutions -- aiming at providing humanitarian assistance -- including the policy of 'lift and strike' which would have involved the use of US air power against Serbian heavy weaponry. This was a policy preference that the European allies contributing peacekeepers on the ground were rejecting. Albeit, after August 1993 the strike option was no longer excluded in order to provide protection for UN troops. See, Susan Woodward, *The Balkan Tragedy. Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War*, (Washington DC: The Brookings Institution, 1995), pp. 297 and 499.

and we would be in the air and that would be enough.³⁹ Disagreements among the Alliance's key members over the means used to tackle the crisis were prolonging the war while corroding NATO's cohesion.⁴⁰ Although the United States had demonstrated strong diplomatic activism in the spring of 1994 resulting in the creation of the Bosnian Federation between Bosnian Croats and the Bosnian Government, the Clinton administration was reluctant to go any further and be more accommodating to its allies' approach.

The allies' views, particularly those of Britain and France, were closer to an even-handed response towards the belligerents while if a robust military response was to be activated towards imposing a peace settlement, they felt that it should have included strong combat-capable ground forces involving a substantive American presence. Although the world's pre-eminent power, being enormously weighted and feared by Bosnia's warring parties, it was unwilling to transform its power into bargaining leverage,⁴¹ while, some of the Clinton administration's critics could have been excused for concluding that Washington was anticipating a more favourable conjuncture in order to use its leverage with the fewest possible concessions.⁴² By mid 1995, however, Washington's insistence on its approach touched the threshold point beyond which no American president, given Washington's national security strategy, would have afforded to go -- the point in which European confidence over American leadership evaporates while European capitals start fashioning security policy options (i.e. the withdrawal of UNPROFOR) that would have proven pernicious to Washington.

In July 1995 president Clinton observed to his national security advisors that Bosnia [in reality US equivocation regarding Bosnia] '[was] *killing the US position of strength in the world*.'⁴³ Few weeks earlier, France, traditionally sceptical about American leadership, had seen its president express contempt

³⁹ Quoted in Elaine Sciolino, 'The Clinton Record: Foreign Policy; Bosnia policy shaped by U.S. Military Role', *op.cit.* Occasionally, even the use of air power was preferred more as a retaliation in the battlefield than as a means to 'impos[e] a settlement stemming from the negotiated table.' See, David Owen, *Balkan Odyssey*, (London: Victor Gollancz, 1995), p. 281.

⁴⁰ Literature on this very issue is enormous. See for example, Lawrence Freedman, 'Why the West Failed', *Foreign Policy*, No. 97, Winter 1994-1995, pp. 53-69; James Gow, *The Triumph of Lack of Will. International Diplomacy and the Yugoslav War*, (London: Hurst & Company, 1997) esp. pp. 299-329; Susan Woodward, *The Balkan Tragedy... op.cit.* esp. pp. 317-332.

⁴¹ As the US Secretary of Defense, William Perry, put it, 'Our approach has been to facilitate the parties in reaching that settlement, recognizing that we do not have enough leverage to force a settlement. To force a peace on the combatants, we would have to be willing to fight a war, and that is an unacceptable level of commitment.' Prepared remarks at the 100th Landon Lecture Series, Kansas State University, 9 March 1995, cited in 'U.S. Choices in Bosnia', *Defence Issues*, Vol. 10, No. 21, 1995, web-edition.

⁴² Anticipation for a desired conjuncture always exist in the minds of every policy maker. However, it would be simplification to argue that behind every US response towards the Bosnian conflict lied a well orcherstated background strategy regarding the events leading to the favourable provisions of Dayton. Instead, as Brenner observes, 'Nimbleness and improvisation played as large a role as deliberation and design.' See, Michael Brenner, 'The United States Policy in Yugoslavia', *Ridgway Papers*, No. 6, Pittsburg University, 1996, p. 20.

⁴³ (emphasis added) quoted in Elaine Sciolino, 'The Clinton Record: Foreign Policy; Bosnia Policy Shaped by U.S. Military Role', *op.cit.*

over the fact that the US had left the position of world leadership *vacant*.⁴⁴ According to some conservative US commentators, 'The impression of American indifference and American incompetence [was] everywhere.'⁴⁵ The time had arrived when the price of leadership had to be accepted. As Talbott had put it 'The measure of American leadership is not only the strength and attraction of our values but what we bring to the table to solve the hard issues before us.'⁴⁶ Indeed, tough issues had started to accumulate before the president.

In particular, UNPROFOR was appearing not only increasingly impotent to face the intransigence of the Bosnian Serbs but also was becoming subject to hostage-taking. This prompted the British and French to fashion the deployment of a supporting combat-capable force, the Rapid Reaction Force (RRF),⁴⁷ either to assist in a evacuating operation or to reinforce UNPROFOR's capabilities to act in more robust terms. Moreover, the Bosnian Serb attacks in Srebrenica on 7-14 July, which made local people suffer atrocities of unimaginable scale, was a further embarrassment to be added to the consequences of the international community's lack of unity and resolve. Further attacks by Bosnian and Krajina Serbs on Bihac on 19 July rendered previous policies of safeguarding 'safe areas' untenable. In addition, despite the decision by Britain and France to deploy the RRF on the ground, it was clear that an UNPROFOR withdrawal was imminent if it remained subject to constant humiliations. On such an occasion the United States had pledged its contribution of about 25,000 US troops in an evacuating NATO operation – as it was envisaged in OPLAN 40104.⁴⁸

On the domestic front, the Clinton administration began facing pressures from Congress asking for a unilateral lifting of the arms embargo against Bosnia. If Congress could override a presidential veto and indeed make possible the lifting of the arms embargo, Clinton would have been required to respond to its Europeans allies' claim -- that a lifting of the embargo would lead directly to UNPROFOR's withdrawal -- by honouring his pledge.⁴⁹ In such a case, a withdrawal would have been a direct result of US policy and thus Washington would have received all the blame for the situation that would have followed. Against this background, it was obvious to the Clinton administration, as it would be for any government, that it is certainly preferable to send military forces to win a peace operation than to send them into lose a war. For president Clinton it would have meant putting the last nail in his re-election campaign

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ See, Editorial, *New Republic*, 7 August 1995, p. 7.

⁴⁶ See, Strobe Talbott, speech delivered before the National Press Club, Washington, DC, 27 April 1995, cited in 'The Price of Leadership', *Dispatch*, 8 May 1995, Vol. 6, No. 19, p.389.

⁴⁷ This possibility was discussed in the EU Council summit meeting in Cannes on 27 June 1995, See, Gow, *Triumph of the Lack of Will*, .pp. 256-266.

⁴⁸ See, Donna Cassata, 'Congress Bucks White House, Devices its Own Bosnia Plan', *Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report*, 10 June 1995, p. 1653.

⁴⁹ Although the Presidential veto had little likelihood to be overridden -- it was used for Congressional domestic reasons and was seemingly 'offered' by Congress to the president as a leverage to pressure his allies -- it was obvious that it was damaging the president's image as the commander in chief. On the 'leverage' point see, Bob Woodward, *The Choice*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), p. 265.

coffin while bequeathing to his successor an alliance in deep mistrust and erosion. Neither of the two, however, were credible options for a contemporary American president to accept.

Effectively, the United States had no alternative than taking the lead diplomatically and militarily to terminate the war. Although it is not always possible to ascertain who is leading behind the closed doors of a contemporary summit,⁵⁰ it was obvious that when the doors of the London conference on 21 July opened, the participants were determined to use military force against further Bosnian Serb aggression while, the United States appeared to have achieved its objective of freeing future military actions from militarily unacceptable dual key obligations.⁵¹ It was agreed that claims for a NATO potential military response will have to be issued from the UN military commander on the ground and not the UN Secretariat.⁵²

After an important issue for the United States was resolved, i.e. not having to wait the UN decide when NATO should respond, Washington showed a determination to convince its European allies and Russia to follow an inspired American plan which was a combination of positions hitherto held by London and Paris that Washington had not previously accepted, i.e. to accommodate Serbian preoccupations with a security corridor through the Brcko bottleneck and the cross-border Serb confederation. Also, some of the positions that London and Paris were previously very sceptical about, i.e. a package of military measures intended to intimidate the Bosnian Serbs back to the negotiating table, now became part of the international community's package.

Moreover, Croatian offensives, ostensibly assisted by NATO warplanes,⁵³ against the Krajina Serbs and various Croat operations in collaboration with the Bosnian Government forces against Bosnian Serbs in north-western Bosnia, changed the balance of power on the ground thus creating a more acceptable territorial division to be negotiated. In addition, the psychology of the warring parties also changed as to be more open to a settlement.⁵⁴ Effectively, as Brenner observes, 'the Clinton team managed to fashion a comprehensive plan suited to the circumstances that had a reasonable chance of working.'⁵⁵ Washington took advantage of the moment, to make a reality of its strategic plan, when the

⁵⁰ As Robert Jervis correctly observes, 'even if good position papers have been written, they would not tell us what people said - let alone thought - in the rooms in which the decisions were made', see, Robert Jervis, 'Images and the Gulf War', in Stanley A. Renshon (ed) *The Political Psychology of the Gulf War*, (Pittsburg: Pittsburg University Press, 1993), pp. 173-179.

⁵¹ It seems that there was an apparent exaggeration in Christopher's enthusiasm about the discharge of the dual key obligations since Britain and France (and the UN Secretary General) 'insisted on maintaining it.' See, Elizabeth Drew, *Showdown. The Struggle between the Gingrich Congress and the Clinton White House*, (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), p. 251.

⁵² The UN agreed on this premise on 1 August 1995. See, *Ibid.*, p. 252.

⁵³ For this point, see, Laura Silber and Allan Little, *The Death of Yugoslavia*, Revised Edition, (London: Penguin, BBC Books, 1996), p. 360.

⁵⁴ For a comprehensive analysis on the changed balance of power among the warring parties see, Gow, *op.cit.*, pp. 280-286.

⁵⁵ See, Michael Brenner, 'The United States Policy in Yugoslavia', *Ridgway Papers*, No. 6, Pittsburg University, 1996, p.20.

Bosnian Serbs mistakenly ignored the latest ultimatum -- that further aggression against the remaining safe areas would meet with overwhelming military power -- and launched a mortar in Sarajevo on 28 August killing thirty-seven people.⁵⁶

The 28 August killings triggered two days later a massive NATO air campaign led by the US against Bosnian Serb targets which lasted about three weeks up to the point where no military targets were left to be bombed. The air operation was supported on the ground by the NATO-controlled RRF artillery around Sarajevo.⁵⁷ Moreover, the US-led-through- NATO, military operation was augmented by an immense US diplomatic effort, carried out by the Under Secretary of State, Richard Holbrooke following the deaths of members of his previous US negotiating team.⁵⁸ Indeed, Holbrooke, out of personal frustration following the accidental loss of his colleagues coupled with his activist personality, performed successfully what some theorists have described as 'entrepreneurial leadership', where emphasis is given to the skills of the negotiator to reveal and navigate around the working subtleties of a desired contract.⁵⁹ Henceforth, the bringing around of the warring parties to the negotiating table became entirely Washington's affair.

Although at that stage the dynamic of the crisis had matured the prospects for the parties to negotiate a peace settlement,⁶⁰ it was also obvious that without a weighty and coherent mediator no agreement would have been possible.⁶¹ Partly for that reason, partly because Washington having taken the decision to 'fight for winning peace,' was set on securing the rules of the bargaining table, the negotiations that took place at Wright Patterson Air Base near Dayton, Ohio, left no room for interference from other Contact Group mediators.

The latter, as the British participant, Pauline Neville-Jones put it, '*were informed but not consulted*, and their primary role was to assist so far as needed, witness and ratify the outcome. But they were not to interfere.'⁶² This was indeed an attitude that emanated from conservative American policy makers and the military who had been criticising the hitherto Washington policy in Bosnia as being at best passive.⁶³ In this respect, when the warring parties ultimately

⁵⁶ Silber and Little, *op.cit.* p. 365.

⁵⁷ See, Gow, *The Triumph of Lack of Will...*, *op.cit.*, p. 278.

⁵⁸ This is not to deny the significance of previous diplomatic efforts by European negotiators who, to a substantial degree, facilitated the creation of a more conducive situation favouring negotiations towards a settlement. *Inter alia*, the role of Carl Bildt, at that time, the ICFY Co-Chairman of Steering Committee, is not to be ignored.

⁵⁹ As Young observes, 'Bargaining leverage in the absence of programmatic leadership or diplomatic finesse leads either to paralysis or to illegitimacy', See, Young, 'Political Leadership and Regime Formation...', *op.cit.*, esp. pp. 293-298 and 304.

⁶⁰ See, Gow, *Triumph of Lack of Will...*, *op.cit.*, esp. pp. 260-286.

⁶¹ See, Silber and Little, *op.cit.*, pp. 370-374.

⁶² (Emphasis added). See, Pauline Neville-Jones, 'Dayton, IFOR and Alliance Relations in Bosnia', *Survival*, Vol. 38, No. 4, Winter 1996-97, p. 48. [45-65]

⁶³ This is based on interviews with US conservative politicians and senior military officers conducted by the author (Feb.- May 1997). It is summarised in the point made in 1997 by an US commentator that '[the Europeans] had kept saying no to American proposals for strong military action but would have said yes if Washington had been more insistent.', Craig R. Whitney, 'With Ethnic Strife, NATO Finds That the Enemy is Within', *New York Times*, 6 July 1997, p. A7.

agreed to a peace settlement, the United States was confident that a great deal of its leadership image had been restored. Previous criticisms about an ambivalent US leadership were replaced by conclusions such as those made by leading German parliamentarians that 'Bosnia made clear that effective conflict resolution in Europe is possible at the present time only with the active involvement of the United States.'⁶⁴

Despite the euphoria regarding US leadership following the parties' acquiescence to the Dayton Accords, it was also obvious to Washington that the risks entailed in making Dayton work were not insignificant. More specifically, the 20,000 US troops that president Clinton had pledged to contribute to the implementation force would have been a serious drawback for his re-election, if the warring parties in the conflict did not fully honour their signatures and continued fighting thus threatening American lives.⁶⁵ Indeed, the American public has been always more concerned about the lives of American men and women being sent into combat -- with the Vietnam experience still alive in their minds -- than about the strategically favourable arrangements made in Dayton that safeguarded with the best possible way Washington's concerns about its leadership position.⁶⁶

US commitments and strategic investments around Dayton

Apart from the considerable humanitarian assistance, the major commitment that the United States was prepared to make regarding the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina was the deployment of about 20,000 US troops to participate either in a peacekeeping force (if a peace agreement was to be implemented) or, in an unfavourable contingency, supporting and facilitating the withdrawal of UNPROFOR. Although the latter never occurred, it proved no less instrumental for Washington. The fact that the United States was a key participant in the military planning of the (evacuating) *Operation Determined Effort* gave great impetus to the readiness of *Operation Joint Endeavour* while at the same time provided Washington the advantage, as a participant, to include its concerns in the rules under which the operation would be conducted. By participating in a NATO-led operation, as would have been the *Operation Determined Effort*, Washington would maximize its leverage, as the Alliance's pre-eminent participant militarily, to safeguard its concerns about the conditions under which US military forces should be deployed in a peace support mission -

⁶⁴ Cited in Whitney, *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ Indeed, the difference between President Clinton's obvious euphoria immediately after the Dayton negotiations, followed also by his, perhaps hyperbolic, gestures of international leadership in his trip to Northern Ireland regarding the Peace Process, and his circumspect behaviour during the signing of the Dayton agreement in Paris can be primarily attributed to the very fact that while the war had ended, fighting had not, threatening at times to jeopardise all previous US efforts.

⁶⁶ The public's willingness to see US troops contributing to the ending of a war stems from moral considerations i.e., to end genocide, atrocities, violations to human dignity, rather than from strategic concerns. See, Steven Kull, *Americans on Bosnia. A Study of US Public Attitudes*, Summary of Findings, Program on International Policy Attitudes, Washington DC, 16 May 1995, pp. 4-5. Although the majority of public opinion (43%) appears to favour a 'flexible peacemaker role' for the United States, Washington's alert to mobilise US public opinion pointed to the 37% of the public which according to Dick Morris, 'rejected any real role at all'. Dick Morris, *Behind the Oval Office. Winning the Presidency in the Nineties*, (New York: Random House, 1997), p. 247.

- even in the worst facet of it -- consistent with the relevant presidential directive that had been issued the year before.⁶⁷ It is important to note that NATO had already developed (since 1993) an elaborate co-ordination process regarding military planning with UNPROFOR and other UN military planners in New York in order to exert a vigorous peacekeeping role, in the contingency of a peace agreement. This co-ordination was further invigorated and enhanced when NATO commenced planning the (never executed) *Operation Determined Effort*. These planning efforts proved instrumental in rendering NATO competent 'to *develop rapidly* and agree to a plan for Operation Joint Endeavour...'.⁶⁸ It is important to keep in mind that 'Command-and-control arrangements, rules of engagement and other aspects of *Operation Joint Endeavour* were based on those already provisionally approved for *Operation Determined Effort*...'.⁶⁹ Thus, Washington had an advantage in setting the rules of conduct since its inclusion in both operations was greatly valued by its European allies.

Since the assumption of American leadership commenced, it became essential for Washington to make practice, through *Operation Joint Endeavour*, its vision in creating a strong cooperative security legacy East and West of NATO, involving an acceptable formula for Russia's inclusion. Thus, ending the war while orchestrating Dayton, revolving around perhaps the most inclusive collective endeavour ever, was taken as the best example of the usefulness of US leadership in European security.⁷⁰ In other words, Dayton became the very stake of a US leadership role in the world. In substance, US commitment in brokering Dayton and participating in its implementation can be seen as the transformation of the leader's power into a bargaining chip in order to get the European followers to do what they would not otherwise have done. In particular, the United States' allies would have been extremely reluctant to follow the suggestions made by Washington regarding the termination of the Bosnian war, and for that matter in other occasions as well, if the leadership relationship, had not based on reciprocity in burden sharing. The restoration of American leadership image in the eyes of its allies and its importance are captured in president Clinton's following statement.

⁶⁷ See, the much criticised unclassified executive summary, *The Clinton Administration's Policy on Reforming Multilateral Peace Operations*, cited as Appendix in Mark M. Lowenthal, 'Peacekeeping in Future U.S. Foreign Policy, *Congressional Research Service*, The Library of Congress, 94-260S.

⁶⁸ (Italics added) See, Gregory L. Schulte, 'Former Yugoslavia and the New NATO', *Survival*, Vol. 39, No. 1, Spring 1997, p. 24. [19-42]

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* p. 25.

⁷⁰ This thesis has been explicitly advocated by the Clinton Administration. See the compilation of statements by President Clinton, Secretary of State, Warren Christopher and Deputy-Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, cited in 'The Last Best Chance for Peace in Bosnia-Herzegovina', *Dispatch*, Vol. 6, No. 45, 6 November 1995, pp. 807-813; President Clinton, Remarks at the Harry S Truman Library Institute, Washington, DC, 25 October 1995, cited in 'Sustaining American Leadership Through NATO', *Dispatch*, Vol. 6, No. 45, 6 November 1995, pp. 813-815. On the other hand, US analysts have argued that US leadership in Bosnia was necessary because leaving leadership to others does not solve security instabilities but rather creates further inertia and injustices that only the US can ultimately tackle. As Muravchik asserts, 'If the United States does not accept that role, no one can substitute it. See, Joshua Muravchik, *The Imperative of American Leadership. A Challenge to Neo-Isolationism*, (Washington, DC, The American Enterprise Institute, 1996), p. 131.

I have to tell you that I knew how the European leaders felt, and I thought I knew how the people in the street felt. But the *personal expression of support* [by European leaders] for America's willingness to help broker this peace agreement in Dayton and then to participate in the peace mission in Bosnia was more intense, more persistent, and more urgent than I had imagined... This is a very, very, very important thing in terms of our relationships with Europe and what we expect in terms of a partnership with Europe in the years to come.⁷¹

The American president was acknowledging, more than his critics and the misguided public, that the United States leadership in NATO, the cornerstone of Washington's predominant role in European security, was in danger. In this respect, what was at stake was not only the fate of NATO but more importantly the future of NATO upon which its traditional leader was building a vision of adaptation, innovation, inclusion and co-operation of unprecedented scale.

Indeed, the implementation of the Dayton accords has been an innovative experiment the effective function of which tended to set important precedents. Although an overall assessment of this experiment is yet to come, the perceptions that the Dayton experience has created thus far have structured a reality the substance of which is difficult to question. Importantly, this reality by and large is extremely favourable to Washington since it reflects America's leadership role in NATO.⁷²

In particular, one should stress the fact that NATO has gained a much more decisive role in implementing Dayton without disrupting interference from the UN bureaucracy. With the benefit of hindsight, although the whole operation enjoyed the authorisation and blessing of the United Nations, an apparent sidelining of the latter became apparent in the implementation phases of the historic agreement. This pointed to arguments long supported by Washington that once the use of force had been decided, its exertion should have lacked time-consuming interference from civilian bureaucrats.

Another positive development for US leadership, has been the successful participation of PfP countries in IFOR/SFOR. Expressing their desire to be considered useful in providing for European security and to be part of the European family, these countries, the majority of which are post-communist states in transition, have indicated a strong willingness to materialize what Washington had envisioned in theory when it suggested and launched through NATO, the PfP programme in 1994; an inclusive European security framework (tending towards Pan-European dimensions) with NATO at its centre. This co-operation and indeed inclusion in experiencing NATO's military culture is being

⁷¹ President Clinton's remarks to the Committee for American Leadership in Bosnia, Washington, DC, 6 December 1995, cited in *Dispatch*, Supplement, Vol. 6, No. 5, December 1995, p. 22.

⁷² Perhaps, the only undesirable reality in Dayton concerns the US ground troop commitment which is the constant theme of debate in the Congress.

highly valued by PfP participants who indicate in practice the credit they assign to the United States' resolve.

The IFOR/SFOR experience has created a widely accepted assumption that Europe and the US do not wish to deny Russia the role of an influential power in European security and its crisis management frameworks. The fact that Russian troops were operating in a theatre in close collaboration with US troops and under US command has been a development that a decade ago would have been unimaginable. Russia's role in implementing Dayton has created the perception, which is highly valid (domestically) for Moscow, that the latter is competent enough to influence events regarding European security and for that matter affect issues of international security. At the same time, Moscow appears to be aware of the centrality of NATO in international crisis management and it sees its role as a partner to it. The signing of the NATO-Russia Founding Act, on 27 May 1997, defining the goals and mechanisms of this collaboration, illustrates this very desire for partnership in the future.⁷³ Arguably, it would have been rather unlikely for Moscow to agree to such a pact, if it had not have felt a degree of empowerment after Dayton. Indeed, this pact enhanced the prospects for a less troubled NATO expansion eastwards -- an issue of strategic significance to Washington.⁷⁴

Finally, but no less importantly, in the transatlantic context, the strong cooperative model that has been activated through IFOR and its successor SFOR has reinforced the assumption of the effectiveness of an alliance that is based on reciprocal burden-sharing involving also an active role by Bonn. The strong position of the Alliance was also reflected in the U.S./EU Action Plan, signed in Madrid on 3 December 1995, involving the key alliance partners of the two shores of the ocean in a strong co-operational policy prescription with an explicit global orientation.⁷⁵ The vigorous transatlantic ties have been further enhanced after the NATO summit in Madrid on 8 July 1997. The vision of inclusion was reaffirmed in the argument that 'the security of NATO members is inseparably linked to that of the whole of Europe' while at the same time the Alliance's flexibility was confirmed in its support for a 'ESDI within NATO' reflecting the concerns for WEU inclusion while functioning under the NATO umbrella.⁷⁶

The significance of this favourable conjuncture for US strategic interests and of the balance that was achieved regarding collective action led by the United

⁷³See, *Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security Between the Russian Federation and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization*, Paris, 27 May 1997, <http://www.embusa.es/nato/foundin2.html>

⁷⁴ One should stress the importance of the cooperation model that developed between NATO and Russia through the latter's participation in NATO's peacekeeping operations in the Balkans. It proved an essential learning tool for both NATO and Russia which in the post September 11th setting was fully exploited by both as to encourage the establishment of the NATO-Russia Council (28 May 2002), thus bringing Russia, institutionally, one giant step closer to NATO.

⁷⁵See, *Joint U.S./EU Action Plan*, Madrid, 3 December 1995, http://www.state.gov/www/regions/eur/european_union_agenda.html

⁷⁶ See, *Madrid Declaration on Euro-Atlantic Security and Cooperation*, Issued by the Heads of State and Government, Press Release, M-1 (97)81, Madrid, 8 July 1997, esp. par. 4 and 15.

States did not seem to have received the proper credit by Clinton's domestic critics. Hence, when the mandate for IFOR was about to be terminated in December 1996, the US Congress was pressing for a withdrawal of the US troops while favouring that civilian implementation should have been undertaken by Europe. Although the implementation of the military facet of Dayton was carried out with unexpected success, the most sensitive and complex issue that remained involved the status of its civilian prescriptions.⁷⁷

Since the peace dividends were frequently disrupted by the parties' ingrained bad faith, for deterrence reasons, as Neville-Jones rightly argues 'the [implementation] force must itself possess some rapid-reaction capability.'⁷⁸ In this respect, since international action in Bosnia has been based on a reciprocal burden sharing relationship involving agreed objectives and principles, US participation was necessary. Indeed, the Clinton administration despite some initial silence, out of electoral concerns, in November 1996, retained US troops on the ground, albeit in lesser numbers.⁷⁹ For Washington, what was of immense importance was not so much that the war might resume and more lives of the local people would be at risk in an ultimately divided country, as was the concern that all strategic investment around Dayton would be jeopardised if the complex agreement collapsed. It was not only the \$7,7 billion that Washington has invested in Dayton (by 1997) that was at risk, but something much more important.⁸⁰ As Holbrooke explained:

We cannot afford to fail [in implementing the Dayton Accords]. NATO's future, the relationship to Central Europe and of Russia to the West, Germany's willingness to take on a more active role in European security, the future of American people's support for peacekeeping and for international engagement -- all of these things are at stake in Bosnia.⁸¹

In reality, the stakes that made Dayton work were still relevant in 1997 and beyond since threats to the implementation process still existed. Although considerable co-operative channels have been institutionalised among the warring parties, suspicion and bad faith have not been eliminated.

In 1997, the implementation force (SFOR) was expected to collapse short of reaching mutually acceptable formula about a follow-on force. This was the

⁷⁷ See, Carl Bildt, 'The prospects for Bosnia', *RUSI Journal*, December 1996, p. 3.

⁷⁸ See, Neville-Jones, *op.cit.*, p. 60.

⁷⁹ During the first year of the implementation of the Dayton agreement the United States participated with 16,175 military personnel in Bosnia, 1,354 in Croatia and 4,611 in Hungary and Italy while after December 1996 this force was reduced to 7,900 in Bosnia, 500 in Croatia and 2,100 in Hungary and Italy. See, *BOSNIA Cost Estimating Has Improved, but Operational Changes Will Affect Current Estimates*, United States General Accounting Office, GAO/NSIAD-97-183, July 1997, p.2.

⁸⁰ Although in Congress the figure that is publicly discussed is \$7,7 billion, GAO estimates the figure around \$6,5 billion. See, 'Bosnia. Cost Estimating Has Improved, but Operational Changes Will Affect Current Estimates', Report to Congressional Committees, *United States General Accounting Office, July 1997*, GAO/NSIAD-97-183, passim.

⁸¹ Quoted in *International Herald Tribune*, 24-25 February 1996.

case, because European capitals had explicitly asserted that if Washington had failed to renew its commitment in manpower they would have done exactly the same. As had been the case at that time, President Jacques Chirac was echoing his European partners in the argument that 'If the United States leaves, we all leave'.⁸²

Thus pressures from Congress that discouraged further US-troop commitments in Bosnia, by refusing to cover their expenses beyond July 1998, seemed to threaten vital US interests at a time when the vital question of NATO expansion was to be debated. As Holbrooke had put it at the time, 'If a withdrawal next June resulted in the resumption of fighting, NATO would have failed in its most important post-cold war mission, and what then would NATO enlargement be worth?'⁸³ It was indeed a very difficult case to argue before a cautious American public. At that stage the United States had committed itself to an expensive operation while its progress was not guaranteed a success.⁸⁴

Against this background, the division of labour that was advocated in mid 1997 by Congress would have only ignited a debate which ultimately would have to be adjusted to policy commitments that had to be acceptable to Washington's allies as well. Suggestions that European troops should have taken the lead as a follow-on force on the ground while the US would station some of its troops in neighbouring countries just for an emergency contingency providing only combat and cargo aircraft as well as communications, supply, and intelligence units, seemed to ignore the value that Europe has assigned to a US commitment in their burden-sharing relationship. Precisely because at that time (1997) it was inconceivable for Washington to jeopardise its credibility (its leadership image in European eyes), it would have been almost impossible for the Clinton administration to conform with congressional dictates and withdraw its military presence from the Bosnian ground.

Conclusion

International leadership provides collective action with unity and direction. Precisely because collective action is highly desirable for the US to tackle contemporary international security challenges, this means that Washington will refrain from initiatives threatening others' perceptions about its leadership role in crisis management; namely the legitimating bond between leader and followers.

Amidst all the operations that have been undertaken by the international community, and the United States in particular, with regard to the wars in Former Yugoslavia, this analysis has argued that there was also another operation that warranted US undertaking: This operation could have been

⁸² Quoted in Whitney, *op.cit.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Besides, it is note worthy that in the post-Dayton period the US has demonstrated a far more desisive posture than before in its pressures against the warring parties' insistence to pursue their individual aims. See, Edward Cody, 'U.S. Tries to Jump-Start Balkan Peacemaking Amid Breaches in Accord', *The Washington Post*, 7 July 1997, p. A25.

codenamed *Operation Restore US Leadership Image*. It is was an operation that had to reflect the premises defining the leadership relationship that existed between Washington and its European allies with regard to coordinated international action in tackling the war in Bosnia. The importance of international leadership in peace support operations has been highlighted in this analysis while its has been elaborated that for Washington its image as a world leader in the eyes of its key followers, in this case its NATO allies, was an important factor affecting foreign policy decision making. At times, it proved to be the paramount strategic concern of Washington when its leadership image in the eyes of its followers was jeopardised by its inability to ascertain that US leadership in the context of European security means sharing risks and responsibilities with its European followers, especially at times when the latter follow the American path more out of respect for principle and conviction rather than intimidation.