Soldiers and civil power : supporting or substituting civil authorities in peace operation during the 1990s
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ONE STEP FORWARD, TWO STEPS BACK

Widening the Civil-Military Gap in Bosnia

After the embarrassment suffered by the United Nations in Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia the belief in peace operations as a successful means of intervention in civil wars plunged to an all-time low in 1995. The Western powers, although carrying much of the blame for previous failures, decided they would never again allow their soldiers to become “eunuchs at the orgy”, as UN peacekeepers had been characterized in Bosnia. They entrusted their major military operations in the Balkans to NATO, their own regional security organisation. The regionalisation of military peace operations was thus set in motion in which the Implementation Force (IFOR) in Bosnia became the archetype. The painful legacy of previous years combined with IFOR’s overwhelming military success in the early days of the operation made it the pivotal mission in the history of modern peace operations. Compared to most other peace operations, its impact on the Western military establishment was disproportional as the mission under American leadership restored the military’s thoroughly battered confidence in its ability to bring civil wars to an end. Although peacekeeping was more than often still considered “not a job for soldiers”, the military became convinced they could succeed as long as they were allowed to do peacekeeping on their own terms, which meant going in with the capacity to enforce the peace and a clearly defined objective that was strictly limited to the military sphere. While crucial experiences from previous years were incorporated into the mission, particularly those related to the possible use of force, others were consciously ignored. IFOR turned out to be a giant leap forward in strictly military terms, but it was a big step backward in terms of civil-military cooperation. Moreover, the clock was turned back on military involvement in public security-related tasks.

The Dayton Accord

The Dayton Peace Accord, officially known as the General Framework Agreement for Peace (GFAP) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, was a triumph of American statecraft after many years of U.S. aloofness and European dithering during the Balkans wars.¹ The Accord, negotiated at the Wright-Patterson Airforce Base in Dayton, Ohio in November 1995, brought Europe’s most savage war since 1945 to an end, something that the members of the European Union had been unable to do in the previous three and a half years. Between 100,000 and 150,000 people had been killed and over two million were displaced by the war.² The military side of the peace plan—putting an end to the fighting—corrected virtually all the mistakes made by the hapless, United Nations peacekeeping mission in Bosnia up to that time. The key differ-
ence between the two peace operations was the existence of a peace treaty. The UN Protection Force, UNPROFOR, had performed its “peacekeeping mission”—in fact primarily a humanitarian support mission—in the absence of a viable treaty. In a continued war environment it gradually saw its mandate expand into the Safe Area policy. This additional mission entailed elements of peace enforcement, but failed to provide the UN force with adequate military means and a proper command structure to exercise its mandate and eventually led to the tragedy that culminated in Srebrenica. IFOR was endowed with a mandate and military clout to enforce compliance while essentially limiting its role to that of a traditional peacekeeping mission—a role reversal if ever there was one.3

The conditions for peace had been brought about by a punitive NATO air-campaign against the Bosnian Serbs and a ground offensive by Croats and Muslims that reversed many of the territorial gains made in the previous years. The dramatic shift in the balance of power facilitated the October 1995 cease-fire, on which peace was built. President Tudjman of Croatia, Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and representatives of Bosnia’s three major ethnic groups signed the Dayton Accord in Paris on December 14, 1995. Nominally Bosnia became a single state for the first time in history. However, by an arrangement that became informally known as “soft partition” the agreement defined Bosnia as consisting of the two entities created during the war—Republika Srpska comprising 49 percent and the Muslim-Croat Federation consisting of 51 percent of Bosnian territory. They were joined together by a weak central government. With the exception of the central region of Bosnia, most areas were populated and controlled by a predominant ethnic group as a result of ethnic cleansing during the war. IFOR’s task was to control and monitor the inter-entity boundary line, but the hard part—putting the former province back together as a sovereign state—was not envisioned as a military task.

The peacekeeping force’s key features were its awesome military power, robust Rules of Engagement, clear command structure and executive powers under UN chapter seven. IFOR centred on the 20,000 strong U.S. Army’s First Armoured Division and eventually consisted of approximately 60,000 troops. It was equipped with tanks, artillery and air components and its troops were authorised to use their arms if challenged to perform their mission—not merely in self-defence.4 As a result, the mere threat of force was usually sufficient, as IFOR’s authority was not challenged, at least not by the former military adversaries in uniform. IFOR took no casualties as a result of enemy fire. The force would operate under authority and direction of the North Atlantic Council (NAC) and was endowed with a single chain of command under the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), the American General George Joulwan. U.S. Admiral Leighton Smith became its first force commander. The force was authorised and legitimised in retrospect under UN Security Council Resolution 1031, but did not operate in any way under the UN.5 The results for military implementation of the peace agreement were astounding. With a one-year mandate to ensure the separation of forces, their confinement to cantons and downsizing, IFOR performed its principal military mission within a mere six months.
Rapid military success, however, was partly obtained at the expense of longer-term success in overall peace implementation. The fundamental flaw of the Dayton peace process was its reliance on what the experienced UN administrator and U.S. Airforce Reserve Major General Jacques Paul Klein would later call “tempo-centric quick fixes”, which were largely dictated by internal American politics. Already, the obsession with what were called military exit strategies and exit deadlines in the wake of the prolonged and inconclusive operations in Somalia and Bosnia had caused the U.S. military to pull out of Haiti with a job at best half
done, before democratic institutions took hold. Rather than learning from this experience, Dayton fell halfway between the limited aim of ending the war and a much broader mission aimed at creating a self-sustaining peace. The choice between these two options, a conscious decision made in Washington, is captured in the title of Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke’s memoirs To End a War. Holbrooke, the Accord’s principle architect, was a proponent of the “maximalist” option, but prior to the Dayton negotiations the “minimalist” option won within the Clinton Administration while setting the limits of U.S. commitment on the drawing board.

The American exit strategy was to get in, separate the warring parties along the ten kilometre wide buffer-zone and deter them from further fighting by creating an armed balance of power between Muslims, Croats and Serbs within Bosnia. The military equilibrium within this nominally unified Bosnia was to be created by building up the Muslim forces with a so-called “equip and train” program, unilaterally pursued by the United States outside the NATO chain of command, while building down the Bosnian Serb army. Although IFOR’s one year mandate has been called “a polite fiction” in order to make the Accord more palatable in the United States, there appeared to be a genuine belief that this strategy would allow for the withdrawal of at least U.S. military forces within one year. As in previous operations it hinged on the idea of a military end-state focused on the creation of conditions in which civilian agencies could redress the causes of conflict, possibly supported by a much smaller UN peacekeeping force without U.S. participation. This attempted sequential arrangement, founded in a segregation of military and civilian spheres, had not proven successful in either Cambodia, Somalia or Haiti.

In the haste to “get the boys back home” peace in Bosnia was obtained at the cost of a series of compromises and concessions that seriously impeded effective post-conflict peace building. Those made to the former warring parties included leaving two opposing armies and two republics in one country, deals with autocrats Tudjman and Milosevic—the prime instigators of the Balkan wars—and recognition of the Republika Srpska despite its appalling record during the Bosnian war. Dayton also left Radovan Karadzic, an indicted war criminal, in de facto control of the Republika Srpska. Yet, except for the latter blunder, these concessions made to the parties were partially excusable in order to impose a peace that many had considered impossible.

Unnecessary compromises were made while creating the tools for implementation of the complex peace agreement, tools that could have mended the dysfunctional elements of the Dayton Accord. These concessions were made for internal political reasons, due to civil-military strife in the United States and as a result of trans-Atlantic quarrels. The narrow approach towards peace in Bosnia was embedded in the motives for intervention and largely dictated by the boundaries set by serious opposition within the United States to an intervention on the ground. Creating a self-sustaining peace, let alone “nation building” was not the Clinton Administration’s goal in the second half of 1995. The prime motivation for U.S. intervention in the Bosnia conflict was U.S. foreign policy credibility in the wake of the
slaughter in Srebrenica and the likeliness of continued bloodshed in the Balkans backfiring during the upcoming 1996 presidential election campaign. After all, Clinton had pushed President George Bush senior to take action to stop the massive suffering in the Balkans during the 1992 election campaign. Pushing the issue off the agenda was the fundamental goal in getting involved in Bosnia in the summer of 1995. However, with seventy percent of the American public opposed to sending troops into Bosnia there was limited room to manoeuvre. The Republican dominated Congress, the majority of whom were opposed to the operation, only allowed the Clinton Administration to go forward and fund a military ground operation in Bosnia if it stuck to a limited objective and short period of time. Apart from opposition from the U.S. Congress and public opinion, President Clinton was faced with military leaders who “in their hearts” would have preferred not to send American forces. They resisted tasking beyond the strictly military side of peacekeeping and envisaged a mission that strictly adhered to the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine.

The second mayor weakness of the Dayton Accord, closely related to the “quick fix” approach to the military side of peace implementation, was its failure to create a potent organisation for civil implementation. While the military component was fixed on ending the war, building a self-sustaining peace fell to the Office of the High Representative (OHR) that was charged with integrating the three ethnically based government and public security structures, promoting reconciliation and rebuilding and restructuring a communist economy devastated by war. For “arguably the most ambitious multidimensional peace operation ever undertaken” it was not given the appropriate mandate and means. There was a striking contrast between the clarity of the military mission in the Dayton Accord and the balance between responsibilities and authorities assigned to IFOR and the “decided lack of either clarity or definition of authority for guaranteeing agreements made in the civil spheres.”

The former Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt, the first High Representative, was not answerable to the Security Council, which Washington wanted to keep out of the loop. Instead, his political guidance came from the ad hoc Peace Implementation Council. This gave him little formal authority over any of the United Nations agencies involved, such as the UNHCR in charge of repatriation of refugees and the International Monetary Fund and World Bank tasked with economic reconstruction. He had none over the OSCE mission headed by the American Ambassador Robert Frowick, whose crucial task was to monitor or organise the election process and other institution building activities. Obviously, he had no control over the hundreds of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in humanitarian aid and reconstruction. Given these conditions and the short time that the High Commissioner had to plan it was no great surprise that he stumbled in his mission. Apart from lacking the necessary authority, a coherent plan and clear command structure, the execution and coordination of all these tasks fell to an understaffed, underfunded ad hoc organisation. When IFOR commander Leighton Smith showed impatience and a lack of understanding of the complexity of the civilian dimension of peacekeeping, Bildt said to him: “Admiral, you had a year to plan for this operation, a huge staff and the requisite infrastructure to get you into theatre, set up and
supported. I started out with a cell phone in a parking lot a few weeks before we were to begin operations.” Smith acknowledged in retrospect that the High Representative had been given an impossible task that was far more complex than his mission. At the time, however, the admiral tended to treat his mission and problems as an annoying little sideshow rather than the organisation whose eventual success would facilitate his force’s withdrawal.

Bildt blamed the shortcomings of his mandate directly on the U.S. Government, claiming in his memoirs that “the Americans initially stressed purely military aspects and did not want any cohesive civilian or political authority.” Pauline Neville-Jones, the leader of the British delegation at Dayton, called the “unprofitable power plays” between the Americans and the Europeans the root-cause of the impotence of the Office of the High Representative. The British and the French had played a leading role in Bosnia in the previous years, but saw their part in Dayton reduced to the margins. After they insisted against the American wish to have a European civilian counterpart to the American force commander the U.S. negotiating tactic appeared to Neville-Jones to be to concede to Bildt “as little authority as possible, either over the agencies engaged in civilian implementation or in relation to the military commander.” The failure to give Bildt a sufficiently strong mandate was one of the major mistakes at Dayton that Holbrooke wholeheartedly acknowledged. He admitted to several other mistakes, but Richard Swain, in what is probably the best history of military ground operations in Bosnia yet, simplified the historical verdict on Dayton arguing that “[f]or everything except stopping the war, the General Framework Agreement for Peace was a seriously flawed document.”

The third and arguably pivotal flaw of Dayton was the failure to create the right conditions for civil-military “unity of effort” for the implementation of the two sides of the Accord. Both success and failure during peace operations in Namibia, El-Salvador, Cambodia, Mozambique, Somalia and Haiti had made it sufficiently clear that any level of success in peace building was dependent on parallel, complementary and preferably integrated military and civilian components. On Dayton’s drawing board the structures were drawn out separately, imbalanced and sequential rather than parallel. Dayton’s drafters purposefully chose to segregate the military and civilian components of peace implementation, thereby consciously dismissing unity of command. The decision not to integrate civil and military implementation was primarily the result of the legacy of the “dual key” for the use of force during UNPROFOR. This mechanism had been devised to lock the UN and NATO together, but failed with dramatic consequences in cases such as the Bosnian Serb attack on Srebrenica only several months earlier. “We did not want a repeat of the UNPROFOR experience in which a diplomat could insert himself in the command chain and block military action”, said General Wesley Clark, the chief military representative within the negotiating team whose prime goal was to create a different and better mission for IFOR. Although the previous missions’ malfunctioning was embedded in the two conflicting mission concepts—peacekeeping and peace enforcing—rather than an inherent civil-military clash of interest related to the use of force in peace operations, any significant UN role thereafter came to

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signify civilian interference with the military chain of command in the eyes of political and military leaders in the United States. With the memory of UN-U.S. friction in Somalia still fresh, they basically wanted the UN or any other civilian counterpart out of their way while the military focussed on military implementation.

Years after Dayton, as its inherent weaknesses became dramatically apparent, it was argued by some that the Accord tried to segregate what was in fact inseparable. Anyone aware of the hard-learned lessons of colonial policing, counterinsurgency operations, military government and civil affairs during the Second World War, or with experience in the above mentioned peace building operations would underwrite the importance of either a unified civil-military command structure or a very strong coordinating mechanism. Although a single command structure was clearly the preferable arrangement, future peace operations in Kosovo and East-Timor would show that separated military and civilian commands were not necessarily a recipe for failure to achieve basic unity of effort. It was the lack of will that prevented a strong coordinating mechanism between IFOR and the High Representative from being established. The military and civilian structures were encouraged to cooperate, but not required to synchronise their policies, thereby leaving unity of effort on the operational level largely to chance—or rather, dependent on the will of the commanders on the ground to cooperate, on national military cultures, on national instructions to those commanders and last but not least, on personal chemistry, which was totally lacking between Smith and Bildt.

In his persuasively written memoirs Holbrooke claims to have counted on the military to assume a much larger role in overall implementation of the Dayton Accord. By the time of its writing in 1998 the Accord had become closely associated with his name, but heavily criticised. Holbrooke is probably correct in suggesting that the weakness of the key civilian players, loosely structured under the Office of the High Representative, could have been offset to a reasonable degree, had it been bolstered sufficiently by IFOR while attempting to establish its authority in that crucial initial phase. The Ambassador favoured stronger authority for the High Representative and International Police Task Force (IPTF) and suggested broader military support to several aspects of the civilian implementation, such as the return of refugees, elections and the arrest of war crimes suspects. Faced with opposition from both military and political leaders in Washington, Holbrooke did not get his way. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), General John Shalikashvili, a relatively progressive force within the U.S. military, did offer him a compromise. The commander on the ground was given the right and authority to perform additional tasks if the military mission went according to plan, but never had the obligation to do so. How the force commander would use this authority, would be up to him as the operation unfolded.

Subsequently Dayton’s drafters inserted what became known as the “silver bullet clause” in the military annex to Dayton. This granted the peacekeeping force the authority “without interference or permission of any Party, to do all that the Commander judges necessary and proper, including the use of military force, to protect IFOR and to carry out the responsibilities listed [...]” Holbrooke credits himself, but most of all Wesley Clark with
inserting the silver bullet clause. Clark, however, points at Undersecretary of State Peter Tarnoff and UN Ambassador Madeleine Albright for suggesting: “Why don’t you just give the commander the authority to use force whenever he feels it’s necessary to do so?” Notably, in their memoirs Holbrooke and Clark cite slightly different passages of the military annex of the Accord when referring to the clause. While the diplomat suggests that it was aimed at facilitating the disputed “additional tasks”, the General emphasised it as the ultimate tool in dealing with the warring parties.

Although the mandate provided by the Accord could be interpreted broadly, it remains somewhat unclear why Holbrooke and ostensibly others in the Clinton Administration counted on the military to assume additional responsibilities outside of what was considered the “purely military sphere” if they were not ordered to do so. The conditions in 1995 for generous military support to civil implementation were as poor as they were ever going to be. The U.S. military was performing a job it disliked in a corner of the world where they and the majority of the American public did not want to become involved on the ground. American forces finally did have the sort of narrow mandate and overwhelming force to execute their task. It was peacekeeping by the Weinberger-Powell rules and it could have been no surprise that “Snuffy” Smith, having obtained what he called a “clean military mission”, did not play along. When Holbrooke visited Bosnia in January 1996 Smith and his British land commander Lieutenant General Sir Michael Walker made it quite clear “that they intended to take a minimalist approach to all aspects of implementation other than force protection.” At the outset of the operation this attitude may have seemed justifiable. Controlling the warring parties required IFOR’s attention and there was a genuine, albeit exaggerated fear of violence and heavy casualties during this process. Moreover, IFOR was not fully deployed until February. Yet, even after the largest and best-equipped peacekeeping force in history had reached its full strength and there was no military resistance whatsoever, there was constant talk and fear of overstretching the troops. It is remarkable that IFOR was almost half the strength of the groundforce used for the much more challenging mission of occupying and stabilizing Iraq in 2003.

Holbrooke, who left public office in February, blamed Smith for not utilising the authority provided by the silver bullet clause after military implementation progressed far more rapidly than expected and IFOR encountered virtually no opposition from the former warring parties. In his defence the Admiral correctly argued that neither the Clinton Administration nor his U.S. and NATO military superiors, Shalikashvili and Joulwan, ordered him to assume additional tasks, such as the protection of refugees and the arrest of war criminals. A U.S. Army Civil Affairs colonel involved in bridging the civil-military gap argued, “Holbrooke was simply trying to blame Snuffy Smith for some of the mistakes made at Dayton.” However, Joulwan later implicitly called the Admiral unimaginative in his approach to the gap between the military and civilian components.

Much of the weakness of Dayton can be ascribed to the preoccupation of its American initiators with creating the mightiest possible military peacekeeping force with the narrowest
short-term mission, while leaving the massive long-term responsibilities to its weak civilian sidekick. The huge gap between the military mandate and capabilities and those of the civilian organisations were at the core of Bosnia’s slow recovery and the failure to re-integrate the ethnically divided former province. However, also the method of bringing about peace in Bosnia dictated many of the limits to peace implementation. Although NATO’s bombing campaign had been crucial in softening the Bosnian Serbs—the strongest and therefore most obstructionist party—at the negotiating table, peace was in the end attained through negotiation, not capitulation of any of the warring parties. The international community could therefore not impose anything like an international trusteeship and reform Bosnia to its liking, even if U.S. policymakers had felt the desire to do so—which they clearly did not. NATO and its civilian counterparts therefore had to rely primarily on the old Communist leaders, newly incarnated under the guise of ethnic nationalism and chiefly responsible for the war itself, to implement a peace that propagated multi-ethnicity, democratic reform and economic liberalism. In the fall of 1995 it was not sufficiently anticipated in Washington that, faced with close to 60,000 NATO troops on the ground, the local forces on all sides opposed to the peace plan—political, military and paramilitary—would soon move their obstructionist efforts to these often alien ideals from the military into the civilian sphere.

The Public Security Gap

Of the parties involved, the Bosnian Serbs had clearly lost most in recent months and felt they would lose more by successful implementation of Dayton. In the first harsh Balkan winter the despair from recent blows made them stand by while in awe of NATO’s military might displayed before their eyes. “At the outset”, the commander of a U.S. brigade in northern Bosnia recalled, “the factions were sufficiently war-weary that they were accommodating, but that changed as time wore on. All sides began to foment confrontation by early spring 1996.” As they raised their defence and eventually mounted an offensive against a politically integrated and multi-ethnic Bosnia, they were quick to discover the weak spots of the Accord—the gap between civil and military implementation. The Bosnian Serbs especially, “began to resist on every non-military issue, while remaining careful to avoid provoking IFOR.” The centre of gravity of their struggle in the pursuit of an ethnically divided country, which slowly started to resemble an insurgency against the implementation of the Dayton Accord, was the public security gap. As if Cambodia, Haiti, Somalia had not occurred, the international community was largely caught off guard, not prepared for the grey zone between military and police operations.

The Dayton Accord explicitly stated that the Bosnian signatories—the Federation, the Republika Srpska and the overarching Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina—were responsible for the safety and security of all Bosnian citizens. This left many elements of the Dayton Accord, such as the return of refugees, freedom of movement and the arrest of indicted war criminals to be implemented by a highly politicised local police, that saw themselves as Serbs, Croats or Muslim first, and police officers second. Moreover, during and after the war the
police forces swelled by war-hardened former combatants, clad in fatigues and armed with Kalashnikovs. The UN estimated that Bosnia's police force had grown to 44,750, three times its pre-war size and over four times the European standard of one police officer for every 330 citizens. Of the Federation's police officers over eighty percent had less than six years experience and often a paramilitary background. In the Republika Srpska, a local U.S. commander recalled, "power is invested in the police more than any other government institution. Whoever controls the police dominates the Republic Srpska."

The International Police Task Force was acting in a traditional UN Civilian Police (CivPol) role with a peacekeeping mandate. The Task Force was to oversee the envisioned transition of the war-time public security institutions to an ethnically integrated police force. To accomplish this task, it was endowed with a mandate to monitor, observe and train the existing police forces. It was not allowed to create a new police force, had no law enforcement responsibilities and was unarmed. If any of the former warring parties failed to cooperate with the international police force, it would have to seek assistance from the Office of the High Commissioner, under which it resided. Formally, the IPTF could not turn to IFOR, the only organisation mandated and able to enforce compliance of the parties. Unlike the more potent UN Transitional Authority in Eastern Slavonia (UNTAES), whose international police force was to "control and supervise" and not merely "monitor and observe", Carl Bildt's office was not paying the salaries of the local police forces. The international police force was not only short of leverage, it also lacked means and capabilities. Its headquarters was established in Sarajevo only in February and initially had no functioning command and control structure and had no logistical or operational plan in place. Apart from this "enforcement gap" and "capability gap" between the police force and the military force, the IPTF's effectiveness suffered from "the deployment gap." The ad hoc organisation had to be mustered from forty different countries and not until eight months after IFOR's entry into Bosnia was the international force of 1,721 police monitors finally fully deployed to 54 field stations adjoining policy stations across Bosnia. When the forces finally arrived in theatre, their quality showed the same discrepancy as most previous CivPol missions such as Cambodia.

The IPTF's ineptness—"a tragic mistake" according to Holbrooke—left Carl Bildt's Office with no enforcement capacity. As with the overall weakness of the Office of the High Commissioner the Americans and Europeans shared responsibility for the IPTF's inability to function. According to Holbrooke, he and Wesley Clark were fully aware of the problem while negotiating the Accord that, according to the General, left "a huge gap in the Bosnia food chain." He blamed himself for not fighting harder for an appropriate policing mandate, but points at objections to a strong police force on both sides of the Atlantic—most notably from the Pentagon, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and from the British and French. In the process of finger pointing that typified the aftermath of Dayton, Holbrooke emphasised the Europeans' insistence on a mandate limited to a monitoring role, which he scathingly called "a favorite Euro-word." He failed to explain that charging the UN with executive policing under an enforcement mandate would have been unprecedented in CivPol history and in any case, it
remains vague how he envisaged this role. Since the United States was making the rules at Dayton, a large part of the responsibility seems to reside in Washington. The Pentagon, apart from vigorously opposing a public security role for IFOR, explicitly rejected giving the IPTF the authority to arrest people. American military leaders feared being called upon to back-up the international police officers when faced with serious opposition. This would constitute "the most dangerous form of mission creep." Moreover, it was feared that such support to the international police might incite local groups to take revenge against IFOR.

The causes for the failure to coordinate military and police operations ran deeper than that. Again, the UNPROFOR legacy determined much of the shortcomings of the police force. In his treatise on the unfortunate international police mission in Bosnia Michael Dziedzic wrote:

In addition to the UN's inherent bureaucratic lethargy, IPTF faced an uphill battle for resources because of its unfortunate parentage. This CIVPOL mission was a creature of the U.S.-brokered Dayton Accord, which arose after many in the United States had heaped condemnation on the United Nations for the demise of UNPROFOR. Yet, when it came to finding a sponsor for the IPTF after the Dayton Accords had been drawn up, the United Nations was the only viable alternative. It took time for the IPTF to recover from the animus that had developed between the United States and the United Nations. Nor was the United Nations blessed with surplus funds to commit to this unanticipated contingency, a condition the United States certainly had a hand in creating.

During the Clinton Administration's budget confrontation with the new Republican Congress the President refused to ask for sufficient American funds for the police. Had the Americans footed enough of the bill, Holbrooke later argued, he could have written the rules for the police force. A weak IPTF is another one of Dayton's major flaws the Ambassador is willing to recognise.

A more potent international police force would have filled part of the gap between the military and the civilian peace implementation mission. However, for the Dayton Accord to work IFOR would have had to come the longest way in order to bridge its side of the civil-military divide. First of all, by 1996 the deployment gap proved to be an inevitable occurrence during complex peace operations. Like every previous UN CivPol mission, the IPTF suffered from long recruitment and organisational delays, thus leaving the Bosnian police virtually unimpeded to obstruct refugee returns and even pursue a continued policy of ethnic cleansing during most of that year. Subsequent UN CivPol operations in Kosovo and East Timor in 1999—post-conflict situations where no established local police force was hindering peace implementation—would prove that even for a much larger armed international police force with full enforcement capability substantial military backup continued to be inevitable. Post-conflict societies used to the law coming from the barrel of an AK-47 assault rifle tended not to be easily impressed by a hodgepodge of unarmed international police officers with whom they could hardly communicate. Yet, IFOR hardly moved to fill its side of the gap.
Any discussion was usually muted by opponents of military involvement in public security related tasks arguing “we don’t do policing” and “soldiers don’t make good policemen.” Although Dayton allowed IFOR “to observe and prevent interference with the movement of civilian populations, refugees, and displaced persons, and to respond appropriately to deliberate violence to life and person”, the force commander interpreted this authority very restrictively. After all, he could engage, yet was not required to perform these tasks. Initially his translation of the mandate into operational orders did not mention the possibility of IFOR troops acting against or exercising authority over local police forces, neither alone, nor in cooperation with the international police force. IFOR’s Rules of Engagement ignored the protection of civilians. They excluded provisions that would allow peacekeepers to prevent a crime likely to result in “serious bodily harm”, either through the use of “minimum force” or detention, as had been the case in Somalia and eventually in Haiti. A Swedish sergeant who served in both UNPROFOR and IFOR, recalled that he could do more about a serious crime in progress as a UN soldier with a mandate that left much to interpretation, than as part of the U.S. led Multinational Division North in Tuzla the summer of 1996, despite NATO’s much tougher Rules of Engagement. “In fact,” he realised, “I was allowed to do more as a civilian on the streets of Stockholm to stop a crime from taking place than I was as an IFOR soldier on patrol in the Balkans.” Only in the run-up to the first elections in September did Joulwan explicitly instruct the force commander to allow IFOR troops to use minimum force as the ultimate means to prevent a serious crime from taking place. This rule was formalised in December to include “opening fire against an individual who unlawfully commits, or is about to commit, an act which endangers life, or is likely to cause serious bodily harm, in circumstances where there is no other way to prevent the act.”

While the image raised by those opposing any form of military involvement in public security was generally that of soldiers arresting civilians, most of the military involvement in public security in previous peacekeeping operations had in fact been restricted to a relatively modest, but often very effective supporting role. Peacekeepers proved relatively effective in supporting the UN civilian police, supporting and monitoring the local police or “policing the police” in cases where it violated a peace agreement or basic human rights. Cambodia, Somalia and Haiti had demonstrated the inevitability of a military role in the establishment of a semblance of law and order, as well as its importance in a force’s credibility. Those units most creative and active in this field were most successful in accomplishing their mission and most appreciated by the local population and the international civilian organisations, while receiving most credit in the media. However, in the process of reinventing peacekeeping in the turbulent mid-1990s much of the experience and lessons were lost.

One would expect the steady parade of peace operations in the early 1990s to provide constant feedback for the military, but several factors contributed to an unbalanced learning process. First of all, the military establishment was still struggling with its new identity after the end of the Cold War. Continuously confronted with severe budget cuts, reorganisations and new missions made soldiers forcibly hold on to their warfighting tradition. Even if such a
role was increasingly unlikely for most European armies, military units generally continued to prepare solely for fighting wars with traditional training methods. Only in the run-up to deployment in peace operation did soldiers received specialised, albeit short peacekeeping training. The prevailing tendency within the U.S. military continued to be that warriors did not make good peacekeepers and that peace missions degraded their warfighting edge—resulting in a “we don’t do peacekeeping” attitude and calls for specialized units to conduct peace operations. The Western European military establishment was more accommodating to their new role and tended to follow the British in their belief that the best war fighters made the best peacekeepers. In practise, the U.S. senior Army officers grudgingly came to accept peace operations as a secondary role and both came to the similar conclusion that “escalation dominance” was essential in peace operations and that combat soldiers therefore could be “tuned down” to do peace operations, but that specialised peacekeepers could not adapt to combat. However, the process of preparing soldiers to adjust down to the different conditions of the peace environment was not pursued with equal vigour on both sides of the Atlantic. Even though the U.S. Army had started to incorporate lessons from peace operations in its doctrine, the Army’s military culture and mindset, averse to most tasks other than “to fight and win America’s wars”, tended to prevail.

Second, the lack of specialised training and education and the limited impact of new doctrine meant that the military had to rely primarily on knowledge from experienced officers or learning as operations progressed. This proved sufficiently complex since—not unlike warfare—every new campaign proved fundamentally different in character, which made it difficult to distinguish patterns of identical circumstances. Even within a national military apparatus the transfer of knowledge between different units, was minimal. The extensive and positive experiences gained by Royal Netherlands Marine Corps in Cambodia, for instance, including the murky area between military and public security, as well as the essential role of civil-military cooperation, were largely lost to the Royal Netherlands Army, because of the credo “different blood groups don’t mingle.” Even within an ongoing peace operation there tended to be little institutional memory as units rapidly replaced each other in the field.

Third, the military was very selective in the lessons it distilled and implemented. By the mid-1990s, the traumas from previous failed operations caused the majority of “lessons learned” to be focussed on avoiding previous mistakes, rather than learning from what went right in past operations. The more fruitful lessons coming from Somalia in early 1993 were all but lost as a result of that mission’s unfortunate conclusion. Not surprisingly, the Australians were the exception in this case. Moreover, the learning process within Western militaries tended to focus on the lessons soldiers felt comfortable with, experiences close to their traditional profession. The lessons that were “liked” and therefore learned were to be prepared for peace enforcement and even for war, so called “escalation dominance”, while exclusively dealing with the former military adversaries. Exercising authority outside the military sphere equalled “mission creep.” After initial hesitation following the invasion of Haiti in 1994 U.S. combat troops, Military Police units and Special Forces had fulfilled a significant policing
function, often in close cooperation with UN CivPol and local police. Even this relatively positive experience failed to convince U.S. military and policy makers of the public security role peacekeepers were fated to perform—one way or another. It failed to find its way into army doctrine and even Wesley Clark, who did not share his colleagues overall disdain of peace operations, argued while preparing for Dayton to have learned from Haiti “that we should never look at our military to do police work.”

By compartmentalising civilian and military missions instead of closely integrating operations with international civilian counterparts and by staying aloof from the undesirable part in public security, the military attempted to make their part of the equation simple and straightforward, adaptable to specific time-lines and success easily measurable.

Initially, on neither side of the Atlantic, did political leaders raise objections to the narrow interpretation given to the safe environment the military was to establish. Presumably they feared accusations of sending the military on yet another “mission impossible.” There may have been serious disagreement between the White House, the Pentagon and U.S. Congress as well as quarrels across the Atlantic over several aspect of the scope of the mandate of both military and civilian branches, but all parties agreed that IFOR troops were not to become policemen. Yet, although NATO military commanders denied all responsibility in the field of public security in Bosnia it was not outside the military scope—even if the silver bullet clause was disregarded. While the provisions in the military annex to the Dayton Accord that referred to support to civil implementation left room for interpretation, elsewhere the Accord explicitly authorised IFOR to police the most notorious of all police forces in Bosnia. Apart from regular municipal police, this Ministry of Interior Special Police (Ministarstvo Unutrasnjih Poslova or MUP) was a key element of the public security force in Former Yugoslavia. By the early 1990s the MUP was nothing less than a paramilitary unit, armed with heavy machine guns, mortars, rocket propelled grenades and anti-tank guns and in possession of armoured personnel carriers. All three factions in Bosnia used these forces extensively during the war in a range of military and policing roles, which so often became blurred in a war environment. In the Federation the IPTF eventually succeeded in restructuring the part of the MUP units to a certain extent while eliminating others. It proved impossible for the international police monitors to assert control over the MUP in the Republika Srpska, where Karadzic and his followers continued to use this loyal police force as its prime weapon against the implementation of the peace agreement. Until the summer of 1997 the special police continued to carry assault rifles, hand-grenades and was hardly obstructed while it continued ethnic cleansing in Republika Srpska, hindering freedom of movement of non-Serbs and acting as Karadzic’s local law enforcement arm.

Apart from ridding the MUP of its heavy arms, IFOR was allowed to assert control over MUP personnel, scrutinise their movement and regularly inspect their police stations. The choice by Admiral Smith not to exert the same powers over the Special Police that he was allowed to exercise over Bosnia’s military forces was an outright evasion of NATO’s responsibilities and the clearest example of the decision to avoid any military role related to the
public security at all cost. The failure to do so was soon felt throughout Bosnia and would be felt by the whole international community in the years to come.

The Bosnian Serb special police were the key executors of Karadzic’s orchestration of the partially forced abandonment of Serb suburbs of Sarajevo in March 1996. These areas, situated on the high ground that had been fiercely contested during the war, were about to be handed back to the central Bosnian government in accordance with the Dayton Peace agreement in February and March. The transfer was a defining moment in the military operation, one that the commander failed and refused to recognise despite ample warnings that radical Bosnian Serbs were not going to give up without a fight. Tens of thousand of Serbs who preferred to remain in Sarajevo were coerced into fleeing their parts of Sarajevo. In Holbrooke’s account, IFOR troops stood by less than 150 meters away, watching buildings burn. The peacekeepers and the IPTF refused to apprehend the marauding arsonists and IFOR kept its own fire-fighting equipment inside their compound. Meanwhile it coolly rejected protection of the antiquated fire-fighting equipment sent in by the Muslims, attacked by rock-throwing Serbs arsonists.52

It was the decisive opportunity for IFOR to clarify what it would and would not tolerate, but it only deployed a handful of Italian peacekeepers. “IFOR,” a NATO spokesman said, “is not a police force and will not undertake police duties.” The IPTF, tasked to monitor the transfer, was faced with its most serious challenge while it was still in the early stages of assembly and organisation. The operation had therefore been delayed, which gave the Bosnian Serb authorities the chance to exploit the situation by preparing a sweeping evacuation of the suburbs. Although an IFOR team of six Civil Affairs officers provided some essential specialist planning, management and communications support to the IPTF, with fewer than 350 civil police monitors on the ground, it was not in a position to take charge of the regular local police forces, who did next to nothing to control the situation.53 Without a substantial presence of IFOR combat troops to back-up the IPTF those Bosnian Serb residents inclined to stay were not granted the necessary sense of security that may have allowed them to defy pressure from their own radical leaders and police forces. Of the estimated population of 70,000 Serbs in Sarajevo only 10,000 remained after the transfer.54 In the process of leaving, the Serbs thoroughly ransacked housing and other property with the clear intention of leaving little more than a wasteland to the incoming Muslim and Croat citizens.

IFOR’s inaction enraged Holbrooke. As a result, he wrote, “substantial share of the vestigial hopes for a multiethnic Bosnia went up in that smoke.” Admiral Leighton Smith, Holbrooke commented scathingly, “considered the civilian aspects of the task beneath him.”55 Smith sneeringly riposted that these civilians should stop interpreting his job for him.56 Ivo Daalder, who had been involved in planning for Dayton on Clinton’s National Security Council, was less emotional, but as forceful in his reaction:

There was no requirement in Snuffy Smith to have done this. On the other hand, when Sarajevo burns, when the capital city of the country in which you’re trying to build peace is burning, and you have the capacity, which you do, and the manpower to do something about it, and
you have the right through the silver bullet paragraph to do something about it, you probably should have done something.\textsuperscript{57}

According to the Dayton Accord the IFOR commander was the final authority in theatre regarding the interpretation of the military annex, which provided ample authority to take action. The failure to recognise this defining moment had devastating long-term consequences. "When the Implementation Force (IFOR) rolled in," an analysis from the U.S. Army Peacekeeping Institute concluded, "the Bosnian public perceived that IFOR had come to clean the place up. IFOR had legitimacy in the public’s eye and could have taken a more assertive posture. However, over time the perception of IFOR/SFOR changed. The local community began to view IFOR/SFOR as a less sincere, less capable, less robust stabilization force. Many locals adopted a ‘wait and see’ attitude and lost interest in cooperating."\textsuperscript{58}

Although IFOR took an overall minimal approach towards support to civil implementation and internal security, there were signs of a slight shift away from this direction from the spring of 1996. IFOR started to make a modest contribution to the reconstruction of Bosnia, using its Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) assets. Furthermore, even though "mission creep" soon became a buzzword used throughout NATO as a result of close U.S.-European cooperation in Bosnia, not all IFOR contingents were equally reluctant to engage in the public security sphere. The British were known and praised for their assertive posture and slightly broader interpretation of the military mandate. "We're policing the police out here", British Lieutenant Dominic Roberts said sitting on top of his Challenger tank near Sipovo in western Bosnia in the early summer of 1996, "and the police are our biggest problem we've got right now." Frequently both the Croatian police and the Serb police crossed the zone of separation and the tankers "chased them off and sorted them out." His troops also moved on the local police when it mounted checkpoints—a wartime habit to intimidate, extort and block civilians from moving around freely. "A lot of police are ex-Army and when they see a main battle tank like this trundling around they just disappear the moment we turn up."\textsuperscript{59} Frequently moving around tracked artillery was another way of intimidating the former combatants. Artillery was the "weapon of choice" during the war and the Bosnians were impressed with NATO's high-tech howitzers that were otherwise fairly useless in a peacekeeping mission that failed to turn violent, despite expectations to the contrary.\textsuperscript{60}

As summer approached the force lightened up slightly and the British-led Division moved its headquarters to Banja Luka.\textsuperscript{61} After the British heavy armour was moved out of Sipovo, British Military Police Captain Joanne Mallin "seized the opportunity to let my guys do the patrolling here", since policing British troops was "pretty low on my list of priorities." They took on the role of "social patrolling", which became a euphemism for what she described as "community policing in and around the towns." The local UN police unit was desperately short of transport and communications and its police officers had to find their own housing. For many of their logistical needs they "latched onto the military." Two British MPs, carrying sidearms only, would augment two-men UN police patrols. The British were quite
willing and able to support them, "but they don't understand the military so it's a slow process."62

After the degrading UN experience in Bosnia in previous years the British and other European contingents were immensely relieved to be operating within the widened margins for peace operations set by the Americans. Having been granted the capability to enforce, however, they were generally seen to adapting more easily to a broader role than their U.S. Army colleagues. For the key to their flexible approach to different levels of violence and overall more relaxed posture the British often referred to their experience in Northern Ireland where many of them had served, although a British infantryman regarded the situation "a lot more low key than in Northern Ireland." In his new role he had to be "a bit more friendly, learning how to speak to people, to deal with their everyday needs, to look after people. Being in the infantry is definitely the best job in the Army." His platoon commander would take his men on training missions, "which is absolutely brilliant because we're living in villages, going on patrols, maintaining an IFOR presence..." As so often in previous peace operations there was even involvement by British liaison officers and police in property related disputes, since a row between Muslims and Serbs over the ownership of a cow could easily turn nasty and "we are here to stop any trouble happening."63

U.S. forces operated under a very different regime from the British, who had a very different perception of the threat they were under and had long since traded their helmets for berets and carried their rifles loosely on their backs. The Americans, obsessed with force protection measures, were generally seen as hunkering down in large bases and did not disperse as widely as some European contingents. They continued to wear "full battle rattle", heavy kevlar vest and helmets at all times and patrolled in large formations or heavily armed convoys, that were never under four vehicles. Condescendingly, the Europeans called their American colleagues "ninja-turtles." Corporal and team leader Michael Emory, one of the rare U.S. soldiers with UN peacekeeping experience under Norwegian command in Macedonia, was frustrated with the limits imposed upon him and his troops by force protection measures.

We're not supposed to have friends [...] we're not like the British, French or Swedish soldiers—we're not supposed to drink, we're not supposed to fraternize with any of the locals whatsoever. But it's nature, curiosity to do that. [...] That's what it's like. To be an American soldier in Bosnia sucks. It's a prison camp [...] They see us walking with our weapons, we're not supposed to look threatening or provocative in any way, but they say we do. Every time we do a patrol debriefing that's what we include in there, because that's what they tell us. As a patrol leader I asked the police what do the people feel, what's the general attitude towards IFOR doing patrols here, and they say, 'Well, if you people weren't pointing guns in all directions, and looking like you were ready to attack at any moment, everything would be fine.'64

For the Americans force protection became the primary mission in itself and "no body bags" the measure of success, all at the expense of the ability of its high-quality military forces to
accomplish the true essence of their mission. Over time, a U.S. Army Peacekeeping Institute report concluded, the combination of heavy protective gear and large convoys had the adverse effect of creating the impression amongst Bosnians that U.S. forces were “more afraid” of the locals and less capable of protecting the public.  

In central Bosnia, the Dutch IFOR battalion was quite comfortable operating under a British Divisional commander, whose style of operations was much closer to its own. As the mission subtly widened, the Dutch contingent dispersed to increase their visible presence. Along the British lines of operation they started to deploy in small permanent bases from which sections and platoons would conduct their social patrols. From spring the unit became increasingly involved in facilitating freedom of movement of the local population and the early attempts at returning of refugees by the UNHCR, supporting and securing the international police monitors and even in locating suspected war criminals. The second Dutch battalion’s energy was primarily geared towards facilitating and supporting the September 1996 elections organised by the OSCE, IFOR’s largest success in civil-military cooperation in that first year. In October and November the Dutch executed operations “Comet” and “Meteor”. The first involved Dutch forces gathering evidence to bring to justice arsonists who had attempted to hamper the return of refugees to Knesovo in the Republika Srpska. The second operation consisted of a series of raids on local police stations for unauthorised arms and ammunition.

In the Spring of 1996, with the primary military mission completed, the United States and NATO had another chance to expand the relatively short-term and straightforward military mission to separate the three warring factions, to a broader, longer-term combined civil and military mission aimed at the reconstruction of Bosnia as a unified state. The inevitability of broadening the interpretation of the mandate caught up with many of the tactical units on the ground, even with U.S. units, but with continued resistance from its operational commander to increased support to civil implementation IFOR as a whole continued to “lean backward.” The positive exceptions to the narrow interpretation of IFOR’s mission were not initiated by the force commander, but resulted from cautious additional North Atlantic Council directives. The primary examples were the provision of transportation and communications support to the Office of the High Representative and priority support to the election process. Fierce opposition back in the United States hampered real progress in Bosnia. Much of the political debate continued to be cast in the buzzwords “nation-building” and “mission creep”, both of which the minimalists majority wanted to avoid at all costs. Proponents of a short and narrow mission evoked images of Srebrenica or Mogadishu to make their case, thereby effectively killing all initiatives for a more creative military approach to peace operations. Ensnared in American presidential election politics, Clinton refused to take a political risk by taking a stand. After his re-election however, the President did make the critical decision in December 1996 to extend the one-year military end-date that had such a soothing effect on Bosnia’s hard-line nationalists, much like American pronouncements about exit dates in Somalia had on General Aideed three years earlier. The Implementation Force
became the Stabilisation Force (SFOR) with just over half the original strength and received an eighteen-month mandate. A NATO operational headquarters directly under the Supreme Allied Commander took over from IFOR headquarters, which had been essentially an American operation.

Reinterpreting the Military Mandate

Although Washington had made the crucial decision to stay, the United States and NATO were still faced with the fundamental problem of how to create a self-sustaining peace. By early 1997 the reconstruction and integration of Bosnia’s institutions lagged dangerously behind the military effort. The overall effort to promote ethnic reconciliation had faltered and de facto ethnic partition that critics of the Dayton Accord had feared late 1995 had all but materialised. Even though comparing the pace of the civilian effort and that of the military was like comparing the efforts to that of a sprinter and that of a marathon runner, it became common practise to do so, most of all in the United States military that tended to underestimate success and blame the civilians other for failures in Bosnia. Joulwan and Smith, but also Holbrooke and U.S. Congress were unanimous in accusing Bildt of not using his authority in throughout 1996 and most of 1997. European governments were blamed for countering Washington’s pressure on the High Representative to interpret his mission more broadly. Although the former Swede could have shown more decisiveness and audacity in confronting Bosnia’s intransigent politicians, American critics failed to clarify how he was supposed to enforce the parties’ compliance with the civil provisions of the Dayton Agreement without sufficient means or military backing. While the military had the room to interpret its mandate broadly, the High Representative did not unless it could latch on to NATO. But throughout 1996 and even in 1997 the American government continued to flirt with the idea of partition as a means of facilitating the quickest possible withdrawal of combat forces.

In the early spring of 1997 the strategy to create a military balance of power within one country and get out was obviously failing, but no new strategy had been decided upon. Criticism of NATO’s narrow interpretation of its role was increasing rapidly as the peacekeepers remained unchallenged. It focussed on the failure to protect Bosnians of all ethnic groups returning to their pre-war homes and its refusal to arrest war crimes suspects. Between March and May 1997 the new Clinton Administration re-evaluated its Bosnia policy and concluded that there was only one way to get American soldiers out without losing face. The maximalist view, in the end, won and the goal finally changed from ending the war to building the peace. But it happened much later than Holbrooke would have liked and the Bosnians suffered dearly, most of all since IFOR failed to capitalise on the momentum created in the winter of 1995-1996.

The sudden and dramatic policy change in Washington and its effect on the overall the international mission as a whole confirmed that Bosnia’s reconstruction was still principally an American-run show. At a NATO summit in July 1997 all the European national leaders followed suit, declaring their intention to see SFOR carry out its mandate “to its fullest.”

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The sudden changes that took place confirmed there had never been a requirement for the principal mission to change from that set out in December 1995. Instead of a “creeping mission”, circumstances changed, the overall U.S. aims changed and the people at the helm changed. Clinton had been re-elected, the exaggerated fear of casualties in the United States had somewhat diminished and there were crucial personnel changes. Madeleine Albright, a “Balkan-hawk”, took over from Warren Christopher and found a powerful new ally in Tony Blair’s new Labour government with its principled commitment to protect human rights. His Foreign Secretary Robin Cook played a key role in providing the new High Representative, former Spanish foreign minister Carlos Westendorp with the authority to “essentially rule by decree.” An important contributing factor to the actual use of these powers was the appointment as his deputy of the dynamic ambassador Jacques Klein. The ambassador had only just left his position as the UN administrator in Eastern Slavonia, where he had held both civil and military authority with enforcement powers, which made him essentially a military governor of UN-administered territory. His experience and boldness in strong-arming local leaders proved essential in reinterpreting the civilian side of peace implementation.

However, a willing military executor on the ground was essential for a new type of peacekeeping in Bosnia to actually succeed and for creating a semblance of civil-military unity of effort. After all, obstinacy from the Pentagon and the U.S. military, both on the strategic and operational level, had proved formidable in the past. One of the most crucial personnel changes therefore occurred in July 1997 when Wesley Clark, the principal author of the military annex to Dayton and expert on Bosnia, became Supreme Allied Commander. Clark was one of the prime examples of the increased influence of the U.S. military on foreign policy described by Dana Priest in her book *The Mission.* What made him very successful in this role was that he did not share many of his colleagues’ mistrust of his civilian taskmasters from the Democratic party. Clark steered a course closer to Albright’s State Department than that of the William Cohen, a Republican, at the Pentagon. He also developed excellent relations with NATO’s Secretary General Javier Solana, who told the Clark during their first meeting:

> Wes, you must make the NATO mission in Bosnia successful. It is the only operation NATO has done, and it must succeed [...] understand that NATO cannot succeed with its mission if the international mission as a whole is not successful. This is not a matter of simply protecting your forces. You must actively help the civilians succeed. You have to stay within the limits of the military mission you have been given, but within that mission, you are going to have to do more to help the overall Dayton implementation succeed.

This change, Clark wrote in his memoirs, “struck at the very heart of what some of the military leaders had been attempting to do, namely, to restrict their involvement [...] It raised all the flags of mission creep and of involving the military in police work, which we had laboured at Dayton to avoid.” Nevertheless, Clark pushed ahead vigorously, often in defiance of the preferences of the Secretary of Defence, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and another
cautious new SFOR commander, General Eric Shinseki. To achieve his goal Clark believed “he had to be the real COMSFOR.” He claimed that his source of inspiration was General Lucius Clay, the post-Second World War military governor of Germany. Other than his historical role model for this particular mission, Clark was operating within the extremely narrow margins set by the U.S.-influenced military peacekeeping paradigm of the mid 1990s. To accomplish his goals, the Supreme Allied Commander would contribute substantially to a broadening of those margins during his tenure, which lasted until the year 2000 and included NATO’s next peace operation in Kosovo.

The first demonstration of this more activist approach followed one day after the NATO summit, when British Special Air Service (SAS) troops managed to capture indicted war criminal Milan Kovačević in the hard-line Serb stronghold Prijedor. They killed Simo Drljača, the indicted former police chief of the municipality of Prijedor, who drew a gun and shot one of the British soldiers in the leg. The arrest of war crimes suspects, or Persons Indicted for War Crimes (PIFWCs) as they were officially called, had become the nexus of the debate over the extent of NATO peacekeepers’ role and “mission creep.” Dayton left the primary responsibility for their arrest to the local parties, who formally agreed to “cooperate” with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Cooperation was never defined to include the obligation to apprehend and turn over indictees. Not surprisingly, Bosnia’s wartime leadership, still largely in political control, showed little enthusiasm for handing over indictees. Large portions of their future constituencies considered them war-heroes or, like in the case of Karadžić, were themselves indicted. The Tribunal was not formally associated with the Dayton Accords, had no way to coerce or enforce the parties’ compliance and had no means or authority to perform arrests itself. Even if the IPTF had been endowed with a mandate to arrest, it lacked the means and therefore the responsibility devolved upon the NATO force that was basically mandated to do as it pleased to further Dayton.

Although there had been growing consensus about the devastating effect of leaving the war’s worst elements in positions of power, consecutive NATO commanders as well as political leaders shunned military action to apprehend them up to that time. Publicly, Smith as well as Joulwan continued to simplify the problem by repeating over and over that soldiers do not make good policemen. Shalikashvili concentrated his argument against action on the likely failure of attempts to detain Karadžić and Mladic. Although fears of a casualties and failure were real, it must have been reassuring to those indicted when Smith had gone as far as claiming he had “no right to arrest anyone” on Bosnian Serb public television in February 1996, which was not a correct representation of his mandate. Just before retiring early that July the IFOR commander acknowledged his troops would arrest, if only he received orders from political leaders to engage, but he stuck to his position that arrests would be the mission’s doom. Bill Clinton, whose relations with the U.S. military had always been strained, was not going to push the military into performing the task they dreaded most.
Earl 1996, as IFOR came under heavy criticism for its inaction, NATO presented its half-hearted interpretation of the mandate. Its troops in Bosnia were not permitted to actively search for war crime suspects in order to detain them. They were authorised to detain indictees encountered in the execution of their normally assigned duties—generally interpreted as their “purely” military duties. In an IFOR press briefing it was emphasised that NATO forces would not increase patrolling in areas where war crimes suspects were known to live and work. “Without being unduly cynical,” Louise Arbour, the ICTY’s chief prosecutor said in 1998, “there’s no question that when you have two parties who theoretically may be trying to avoid an encounter it’s extremely unlikely that it will happen.” Numerous encounters between NATO troops and indicted war criminals justified her cynicism. In February 1996 The Washington Post ran an article claiming that Karadzic was seen passing through four consecutive IFOR checkpoints—two manned by U.S. troops—on his way from Pale to Banja Luka. Smith later claimed the story was highly unlikely, but a study from the U.S. Army’s own Judge Advocate General’s School argued that the mounting number of allegations that IFOR was consciously looking the other way “may have been justified.” The study illustrated:

Several Judge Advocates related conversations with personnel conducting missions at guard posts who, after recognising PIFWCs, advised those PIFWCs to stand fast while the soldiers advised headquarters of a possible detention. The effect, intended or otherwise, was to provide the PIFWC the opportunity to leave the area with the soldier unable to use any other than minimal force to apprehend if he or she even bothered to attempt to do so.

The American military lawyers called the rule to detain indictees only when accidentally encountered “as ambiguous or flexible a statement as the U.S. makes it.” They argued:

Prior to the summer of 1997, neither IFOR nor SFOR made any effort to go hunting for them. In fact they went out of our [sic] way to avoid them. On one occasion, when IFOR forces knew that a war criminal was in a building that they were going in, they waited a half an hour to go in the building—until they knew he had left.

The reason for the failure of political leaders to explicitly give the green light for arrests was obvious. David Halberstam, in his treatise on the relation between U.S. military interventions and domestic politics, called it “the most valuable lesson for any leader of America-the-superpower in dealing with so-called teacup wars. If things worked out, if the most optimistic scenario was reasonably accurate, casualties were low (or almost non-existent), and there was no damaging media coverage, it would nonetheless be of little domestic advantage. But there was always the potential for a downside, the televised capture of American troops, a repeat of Somalia, and a political disaster.” Going after Karadzic and Mladic, it was felt, was a repetition of the hunt for Aideed. In the view of the military it was “mission creep” in its purest form. It was perceived as, what General Sir Michael Rose had called, “crossing the Mogadishu line” between neutral peacekeeping and actively taking sides by moving against
One of the parties. The conventional wisdom held that after taking this step, a doomsday scenario would unfold. However, the former British UNPROFOR commander’s ominous predictions in 1995 of IFOR’s massive casualties had failed to materialise. The General and many of his fellow officers and policymakers seemed locked in their perception of the peace operations as another UNPROFOR or UNOSOM. He failed to appreciate that “America’s way of peacekeeping” had created a much wider playing field that allowed for a more proactive approach to peace implementation.

Opinions on SFOR’s role in the apprehension of indicted war criminals differed substantially within and between the various troop contributing nations. In Washington no one but Holbrooke initially appears to have felt any enthusiasm to go after war crimes suspects. However, after the diplomat left public office, the State Department would gradually increase its backing of arrests. The British, Nordic countries and the Netherlands saw it as their obligation to hunt down indicted suspects. In the United Kingdom—the second largest troop contributor with close to 11,000 men on the ground—political and military leaders were not quite as apprehensive about involving their troops in arrests. After a discussion with British division commander Lieutenant General Mike Jackson in Bosnia, Member of Parliament Calum MacDonald encapsulated the British Labour Party stance in Parliament by asking the critical question “if 60,000 NATO troops cannot arrest them, who will?” Although he acknowledged the difficulties associated with arresting Karadzic, Mladic “and the other ethnic cleansing ringleaders,” he was irritated by the continuous claims of “mission creep.” He argued that the failure to move forward and expand the military mission meant moving backwards “into mission erosion.”

It was clearly no coincidence that the first arrests took place in the British sector and it was no accident that it happened after Blair took office. Even after the fundamental change in NATO political guidance, apart from the Nordic countries and the Netherlands, Britain was the only of the three major troop-contributors that pursued war criminals with any enthusiasm. After the arrests none of the ominous Mogadishu-style scenarios materialised. A few Bosnian Serbs reacted with minor acts of violence and threats against international observers and troops. These did not really intimidate the peacekeeping force. Instead the British actions set a precedent. In December 1997 Dutch Special Forces apprehended Vlatko Kupreskić and Anto Furundžija, two Bosnian Croats wanted by the Tribunal in connection with attacks on Bosnian Muslim civilians in the Lašva Valley. Like the British arrests the Dutch action was loudly applauded by the international media, that often connected this newly found assertiveness with the national trauma suffered after the fall of Srebrenica. The New York based chapter of the non-governmental organisation Human Rights Watch contrasted the “bold arrest action” by the Dutch with Bill Clinton’s much lamented statement in December that peace in Bosnia can be made to work without the arrest of Radovan Karadzic. His statement was daring since it had by then been widely recognized that several of the most notorious war crimes suspects continued to wield political clout and control over police, while simultaneously at the centre of the criminal power structures that were the main obstacle to peace.
implementation. Meanwhile, many local Bosnians wondered why they should respect the law when the international community did not actively enforce it.\textsuperscript{89}

As if reacting to accusations the Americans first participated actively in a multinational arrest in January 1998, apprehending a Serb from Bijeljina. This impression was false, however, since these snatch-operations often took months of intense preparation and U.S. intelligence and forces had been involved in supportive roles in the previous operations. Oddly, in their enthusiasm over SFOR’s assertiveness the international press and other commentators failed to take notice of the fact that the arrests were conducted in a manor incongruent with the force’s official policy. Although Javier Solana continued to claim that NATO policy was not to actively seek out war criminals in so-called “search and arrest” operations it was doing exactly that, albeit on a very limited scale and with extreme caution. For political purposes he told the French press in January that NATO was still limiting its role to arrest of suspects when accidentally encountered by SFOR troops.\textsuperscript{90} In fact, NATO had become involved in a highly secret new mission that involved special forces, and complex intelligence and undercover operations.

While the American’s were primarily hampered by fear of casualties, which would jeopardise U.S. participation Balkan mission as a whole, the French were often charged with ulterior motives. As the contingent responsible for patrolling Karadžič’s hometown Pale, they were severely criticised for their apparent unwillingness to apprehend suspects, which appeared to be founded in amicable historic ties between Paris and Belgrade. In December 1997, Louise Arbour went as far as suggesting that the French were sheltering war criminals.\textsuperscript{91} Even if NATO would select other Special Forces to execute the action in the French zone, full cooperation from the local French units was indispensable for making a successful raid. Not only were they needed to cordon an area, local military intelligence was crucial for success. The Germans, keen on re-establishing their position as a player in the international security arena and newcomers to SFOR in 1997, rapidly caught up with the hesitant Americans and French. Using their brand new special forces unit Kommando Special Kräfte (KSK), they arrested two suspects, in June 1998 and August 1999 respectively.\textsuperscript{92}

By December 1999, seventeen ICTY indictees had been snatched by SFOR, while two were killed during the actions. Intimidated by NATO’s more assertive arrest policy, a further sixteen suspects voluntarily surrendered to the UN tribunal, this thought still a minority of over eighty indicted suspects at the time.\textsuperscript{93} The bulk of the arrests continued to take place in the British controlled zone and in December 1998 the SAS was the first to apprehend one of the “big fish”, Major-General Radislav Krstic, commander of the Drina Corps of the Bosnian Serb Army. On August 2, 2001, the ICTY sentenced Krstic to 46 years’ imprisonment, in what was the courts first genocide conviction for crimes committed in the wake of the 1995 capture of Srebrenica by the Corps. However, Karadžič and Mladić remained at large.\textsuperscript{94}

The second manifestation of SFOR’s new assertiveness was its effort to grind down the power of the Bosnian Special Police on which the radical leaders opposed to the peace process continued to rely. For both purposes increased military cooperation with the interna-
tional police force was vital, but SFOR and the IPTF were still struggling to fill the public security gap. The debate over what also became known as the “law enforcement gap” or “public security gap” in 1997-1998 was only just gaining momentum after years in which most of the thought on peace operation had been focussed on peacekeeping versus peace enforcement. There were basically three options. The police would be granted an executive mandate and appropriate size and armaments, SFOR would engage more fully either with combat troops or with military police and paramilitary units, or closer integration of the police had to be forged with SFOR while maintaining a clear distinction in the mission mandates. Faced with opposition from various quarters, NATO and the UN tried some of all three possible solutions.

In December 1996 the IPTF’s mandate had already been enhanced, allowing the police monitors to investigate into allegations of misconduct and human rights abuses by the local police. Some orthodox UN CivPol specialists already considered this “venturing dangerously close to executive policing.” However, for the international police officers to exert any real kind of enforcement powers they had to rely on backup from armed SFOR troops. Although there had been sporadic local joint initiatives towards the removal of illegal checkpoints, in May 1997 SFOR and international police finally formalised a policy to govern all police in Bosnia and rid the country of all police checkpoints. Once joint patrols were institutionalised in the course of 1997 the international police force’s effectiveness was greatly enhanced as it started to “borrow” SFOR’s authority to enforce compliance. “A typical joint patrol”, the Norwegian diplomat Espen Barth Eide described, “consisted of an IPTF vehicle followed by three SFOR vehicles, of which at least one is an armoured personnel carrier. It is still IPTF officers who, for instance, inspect a local police station for illegal armaments or ask for the removal of a checkpoint, but it is the SFOR people who represent the enforcement capacity if needed.” Previous patterns of behaviour repeated themselves as both the U.S. and the French divisional commanders—concerned with the risk to their forces—raised objections to some of the broad enforcement measures. These included stripping Bosnian police officers at checkpoint of their arms and identity cards, which effectively put them out of a job. Typically, the British commander had no such inhibitions.

Instead of dealing with the true nature of the public security gap and furthering structural cooperation between the military and the UN civil police force, NATO continued to search for ways of freeing combat troops from police-type operations. SFOR experimented with yet another element in the peacekeeping chain by creating the Multinational Specialised Units (MSU) in 1998. This 350 strong paramilitary force, a police force with a military status, was based in Sarajevo from where it could be dispatched to support either the military or the international police force throughout Bosnia. Initially the MSU was composed primarily of Italian Carabinieri, but the unit was later augmented by paramilitary forces from Argentina, Romania and Slovenia. For some time it was hoped that their deployment would bridge the gap, but unfortunately this was not the case. The MSU was no law enforcement agency with executive policing powers, since this was still officially only the responsibility of local
police. It could fill only certain elements of the public security gap, mainly in crowd and riot control, for which some military contingents had already created specialised crowd and riot control platoons in the course of 1997. Although its timely presence could work preventively on smouldering crises, the MSU’s small size, restrictive Rules of Engagement, and deployment on a case to case basis made it mostly reactive. As a result of its unclear public security role, relations between the IPTF and the MSU were at times strained. The first time the paramilitary peacekeepers went into action in October 1998 against a crowd blocking a main road in Mostar, they had failed to coordinate their actions with the the international police force that had pushed the local police to finally act against the demonstrators. With this type of units in short supply and with its rather vague mandate, the MSU was according to one analyst “oversold and understaffed” and in the years to come the MSU would prove unable to bridge the gap.103 Those who most enthusiastically embraced the concept were Americans who were most eager to cling to the idea of an “inner shell” of security provided by IPTF, and an “outer shell” provided by SFOR.104 True integration of military and international police operations continued to be hampered by this continued “tendency to lump tasks into two piles labelled ‘military’ and ‘police.’”105

Although this was not in their original job description, the Italian Carabinieri within the MSU nevertheless proved important in the fight against the rapid expansion of organised crime networks in Bosnia, problems that tended to spill over across the Adriatic.106 During the Bosnian war the political structures, military and police security organisations of each of the ethnic groups had forged an alliance with organised crime syndicates involved in arms smuggling and “war profiteering.” These networks were often still involved in drug trade and human trafficking and money continued to be channelled to the local political structures and their police and intelligence structures. A U.S. Army Peacekeeping study argued that these “anti-Dayton power structures”, which flourished as long as a lasting peace faltered in Bosnia, had found the international community’s weak spot and relied on insurgency like methods, or asymmetric warfare: “The enemy will use his strengths—will to resist, mass, distance and the inherent power of the defensive—directly against U.S. weaknesses: our inability to arrive quickly, and insufficient will/staying power. Their aim is not so much to win, as it is to avoid losing.” They hoped to wear down the will of NATO and wait until the military force slowly withdrew without forging a strong, multi-ethnic and democratic state.107

It was thus not until July 1997 that SFOR fully exploited its mandate and assumed responsibility for the MUP—“the bad apples who had been at the centre of the Serb ethnic cleansing efforts”—as Wesley Clark called them. “Inexplicably,” the General wrote rather diplomatically, “this had fallen through the cracks during the previous eighteen months, with the military insisting they were police (and therefore not the military’s responsibility) and the international civilians insisting it was beyond their means to monitor them.” Having written the mandate, Clark was fully aware of the root-cause of this problem. As soon as he assumed Supreme Command he ordered the SFOR commander to fully execute his mandate, including disarmament and shutting down police units. Taking such direct control of the operation he
had to “override the concerns of the force on the ground in Bosnia in order to get things done.”\textsuperscript{108} On the ground he was faced with a coalition of American military minimalists and European UNPROFOR veterans, who feared that this new policy—primarily directed at the Serbs—meant the loss of neutrality and therefore regarded such action incompatible with a peace operation. A whole generation of military officers had been brought up to the idea of strict neutrality and fears of “crossing the Mogadishu line” and failed to appreciate that impartiality had come to replace neutrality in peace operation. Impartiality could be interpreted as military action against anyone, military or civilian, who sought to frustrate the peace agreement they had vowed to implement. At this particular point in time, Clark decided, it was primarily the Bosnian Serb radical nationalist leadership which obstructed the peace.\textsuperscript{109}

Controlling and disarming the MUP was the key tactic in Clark’s overall strategy to wrest Karadzic’s hold on the Bosnian Serbs from Pale. In order to have more moderate forces gain the upper hand in Bosnian Serb politics SFOR chose sides with the elected president of the Republika Srpska, Biljana Plavsic, in her political struggle against Karadzic’s front man Momcilo Krajsnik.\textsuperscript{110} Plavsic was a rather dubious choice. Karadzic, himself barred from holding office as a result of his indictment, had handpicked Plavsic as his surrogate in the official capital Banja Luka the previous year. Many considered her anything but the moderate alternative the West liked to see in her. She was herself indicted by the ICTY in January 2001. However, the “Iron Lady of the Balkans”, as she was also known, had abruptly cut her ties with the de facto leader in June and had played and important role in firing Mladic in November 1996.\textsuperscript{111} This made her the West’s best hope for furthering Dayton. The Supreme Commander intended through the “use of forces, not force” to do anything “legally and within our authority” to “discredit the Bosnian Serb hard-liners, the most ardent opponents of the Dayton Agreement, by taking away the instruments of their power and embarrassing them in front of their own people.”\textsuperscript{112} The ultimate goal was to get Plavsic re-elected in the September 1997 elections.

In the struggle for political control in Banja Luka, SFOR scored a significant success in mid-August as British troops took control of five main police facilities and handed them over to forces aligned with Plavsic. In Clark’s account British forces surrounded the MUP station after rumours of a preparation for a coup against Plavsic. The British “surrounded the police station at dawn, with armoured vehicles’ cannons pointing at the building. A lone sergeant major reportedly walked to the door and announced grandly that the Serb police had thirty minutes to depart the premises.” The Supreme Commander was told by SFOR force commander Shinseki “they came streaming out barefoot and in pyjamas.”\textsuperscript{113}

But the true tests of U.S. resolve in furthering Dayton by adopting a pro-active peacekeeping stance came later that month in the strategically important city Brcko. The Serbs, who had made up 21 percent of its population prior to the war, now controlled the ethnically cleansed city that sat on the Sava River in the narrow Posavina Corridor. This corridor joined the Eastern and the Western half of the Bosnian Serb Republic, which had now become the territorial dividing line in the power struggle between Pale and Banja Luka. The crisis erupted
as a result of President Plavsic’s attempt to extend her authority from Banja Luka eastwards as far as Bijeljina in anticipation of the upcoming elections in September. On 28 August the IPTF, heavily backed by U.S. Military Police and combat forces attempted to seize police stations in Brcko and Bijeljina run by non-compliant police commanders and allow police forces loyal to Plavsic to take over. Alerted by the recent series of intense combined SFOR-IPTF inspections of police stations, especially the successful British action in Banja Luka only ten days earlier, Karadzic’s forces were better prepared this time. Incited by air raid sirens and the Serb Radio and Television Network broadcasts by to “repel the invaders”, a well coordinated violent mob of men armed with rocks, molotov cocktails and axe handles, yet also skilfully using women and children in their ranks, drove off U.S. troops, who had to temporarily evacuate the UN police to a nearby military base. With their unique quality to encapsulate a complicated problem in a one-liner, catchy phrase or buzzword the U.S. military dubbed the orchestrated civil disturbances “rent-a-crowd”, after they gathered proof that the crowds were being paid up to one hundred Deutschmarks. Although Pale had scored a tactical victory, U.S. forces handled the situation reasonably well, demonstrating strict discipline and the necessary restraint. Although two U.S. soldiers were seriously wounded and in spite of some ugly scenes in the international media there was no public outcry against this type of use of the military in the U.S. The American public seemed to grow accustomed to this sort of role for their military—and Brcko was of course no Mogadishu.

After what developed into a stalemate in Brcko, SFOR pressed on. In close cooperation with Jacques Klein, SFOR scored one of its key successes against Karadzic force when its troops successfully blocked an attempt to disrupt the elections in early September. In the early morning of September 8, in the run up to elections, French scouts near Pale saw large crowds of military-age young men enter what finally amounted to 250 busses and move towards the narrow Brcko corridor for an organised disruption of a pro-Plavsic rally in Banja Luka. Again, there was fear of a coup attempt, but unless the Office of the High Representative declared the rally illegal, there was no way of stopping the instigators. The only measure SFOR could take was searching the busses for arms when entering Banja Luka. U.S. forces positioned to hold up the busses, sometimes by moving armoured vehicles on the roads at a snails pace, giving the British around the Bosnian Serb capital the chance to mount their defence. The British showed ingenuity by blowing tires of busses using nails and British troops positioned themselves with riot-control gear to support Plavsic’s local police to block the roads to the city. Just in time Jacques Klein managed to declare the rally illegal and SFOR and local police managed to turn the busses around. Clark’s true moment of victory came the next morning when Slobodan Milosevic was obliged to call NATO’s Supreme Commander and ask for SFOR’s help as Krajisnik and his lieutenants were unable to leave their hotel in Banja Luka, as they were surrounded by an angry mob of Bosnian Serb protesters loyal to Plavsic. This was just the sort of embarrassing scene Clark had hoped for in order to loosen the hardliners stranglehold over the Republika Srpska. After what became known as the
“battle of the busses” Clark had asked Secretary of Defense Cohen if he was still within his intent. “Just barely”, the General recalls his boss answering.119

Restraining the hard-line media was another key element of SFOR’s effort to further compliance with Dayton in the Republika Srpska. Plavšić was seriously handicapped in her fight with her hard-line rivals by the relentless barrage of propaganda from the Serb Radio Television (SRT) that painted her as a “collaborator” with the NATO “occupation forces.” Karadžić’s media network persistently incited non-compliance and even violence against the international presence in cases such as Brčko. After the first arrest of war crimes suspects and the more recent actions against the police, British SFOR troops in Banja Luka were explicitly shown in combination with marching Croatian Ustase and Nazi soldiers in Yugoslavia during the Second World War. After manipulating an interview with ICTY prosecutor Louise Arbour the High Representative suspended Karadžić’s media network with close support from SFOR. Clark’s delicate balancing act between pushing the mission forward and the cautious U.S. military showed when Shinseki explicitly asked for written orders when the Supreme Commander told him to take down several television towers on Westendorp’s request. The mission was a success and helped erode some of Karadžić’s power. However, Cohen warned Clark he might “find himself getting committed that we can’t or don’t want to do.”120 He still wanted to keep the mission as limited and risk-free as possible. There were no complaints from European leaders and Solana was wholly in support of the more risky path taken.

While grinding away at the Special Police’s power with reasonable success, Bosnian Serbs retaliated with orchestrated mob violence against SFOR and the IPTF. Increasingly, these confrontations were related to the return of refugees. In fact, all three sides had used and continued to use mob and police violence to frustrate the UNHCR’s recently stepped up program of pilot projects for returns, with the long term strategic goal of reversing the consequences of several years of ethnic cleansing. In towns controlled by Croatians such as Dvur and Jajce, where they had been a minority before the war, angry mobs drove off returning Muslim refugees in concerted action with the local police. Meanwhile Muslims and Croats trying to return to Brčko consistently encountered stiff resistance and found their houses booby-trapped and torched in 1997. Arson was the weapon of choice of all parties in the defence of a ethnically cleansed Bosnia, but the offenders frequently resorted to assault and murder.

Progress is this field was negligible in the first years of NATO’s presence. The creation of ethnically pure geographical entities had been one of the key war aims and the parties would not give up their gains without putting up a serious fight. Of the 2.3 million people displaced by the war only 381,000 had returned home by the end of 1997, two years after the intervention. These were mostly people returning to areas where they belonged to the ethnic majority. According to the UNHCR, only some 22,500 people (13,800 Croats, 5,600 Serbs and 2,900 Muslims) had returned to areas outside military control of their own ethnic group.121 The refugee problem as a whole was exacerbated by the immense physical destruction of homes and infrastructure caused by the war and the lack of basic services, but the root
cause of the failure of the minority returns was the basic lack of security that persisted even after 1997. Contrary to the aims set forward in the Dayton Accord the UNHCR started to organise majority returns even if this meant settling refugees not in their former communities, but to any area where they would not be in a minority. Many Bosnians and international commentators argued this validated the results of ethnic cleansing and meant giving up on the fundamental aims of reintegration and reconciliation. Carlos Westendorp would later point to the reluctance of the international community to push harder for refugee return as the single largest failure in post-Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina. Critics of NATO’s restrictive interpretation of its security role claimed that if SFOR had “taken seriously its mandate to provide freedom of movement, then both minority as well as majority returns would have been possible.”

Compared to early 1996, SFOR had come a long way in broadening its approach to the creation of a safe and secure environment, but the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia was still very limited in scope. The integration of SFOR and international police operations was far from complete and after 1997 commanders remained vigilant to avoid “mission creep.” The U.S. Army Peacekeeping Institute advised to create a combined public security organisation centre and intelligence sharing apparatus, as had been done in successful counterinsurgency operations such as the Malayan campaign. However, this proved unrealistic within the limits set on military peacekeeping in 1998. Even in 1999, the SFOR commander—not used to sharing sensitive information with civilians—refused to show crucial intelligence on illegal funding for radical Bosnian-Croat politicians to international police investigators trying to indict Croatians on corruption charges and war crimes. NATO troops may have become more “forward leaning”, but the mission had not fundamentally changed. SFOR was not directly returning refugees and only gradually started to provide them with close protection by intense area patrolling, since its commanders continuously feared overstretching the 35,000-strong force as troops reductions were always near. Even in April 2000, much to Clark’s chagrin, the U.S. Army refused to open an SFOR-substation in Srebrenica where Serb settlers, refugees from elsewhere in Bosnia, were still making it impossible for Muslims to return almost five years after their expulsion. As in other cities and villages all over Bosnia, Sarajevo’s Muslim mayor, fearing for his life, refused to live in his city to which he had been elected by absentee ballot. Meanwhile, NATO continued to take a restricted approach to the arrest of war criminals. Even though every careful step taken by SFOR towards broadening its role was widely regarded a major success, serious opposition remained. With threats to the force still close to nil after several years of peace, the ghost of previous missions in Bosnia and Somalia, but also Vietnam and Beirut, hovered over every proceeding within peace operations.
CIMIC: The Fig-Leaf for the Gap

To compensate for the fundamental disjunction between the civil and military components IFOR relied on its Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC) capacity. Composed primarily of U.S. Army Reserve Civil Affairs personnel this dedicated staff grew to some 450 personnel. It was hoped to be what Joulwan called “the glue” to bring together the civilian and the military efforts. However, strategic decisions had made the so-called “GFAP-gap” between the two sides too wide for glue to fix. Moreover, CIMIC as a concept and military function was in an early stage of development.

As negative critiques of IFOR’s limited role in Bosnia mounted, NATO put increasing emphasis on the role performed by its CIMIC personnel. The primary function of CIMIC staff was to liaise with those international civilian governmental organisations directly related to the Dayton Accord on all levels. On the operational level in Sarajevo this coordinating role was performed by liaison officers directly attached to the Office of the High Representative, the OSCE, the UNHCR and the other key players. In Divisional Civil-Military Operations Centres (CMOC) or CIMIC Centres, the force performed its liaison role to the large humanitarian community, which had grown to over four hundred NGOs over the previous years. However, this liaison and coordination role was not the CIMIC task particularly stressed in IFOR’s elaborate public information campaign. The liaison role was intangible for the media and with the fundamental lack of civil-military synchronisation there was hardly a success story to report here.

IFOR instead publicised its role in the reconstruction of Bosnia’s infrastructure, even though it had loudly proclaimed several months earlier that it would “not become involved in reconstruction, humanitarian relief, political reform and human rights efforts.” No military role in “nation building” remained the overall policy, but IFOR now highlighted that its engineers had repaired bridges, railroads and 2,500 kilometres of roads, had reopened the airport in Sarajevo and provided training in mine clearance. Many of these roles were essentially part of traditional NATO CIMIC activities as practised during the Cold War: a primarily logistical mission in direct support of military operations. However, the effort clearly worked both ways as the local population and civilian organisations often benefited. On the other hand, CIMIC also had elements aimed at broader mission accomplishment, such as the earlier mentioned provision of essential planning and support for the fall 1996 national elections, support to the IPTF prior to and during the transfer of the Sarajevo suburbs and some other logistical and communications support to the police force. Also the military effort to expedite the reconstruction of electrical power and water supplies in Bosnia were categorised under “support to the civil environment.”

IFOR CIMIC and Public Information staff was frustrated with the international media for initially failing to pick up on these and other CIMIC efforts. Apparently, they were “not interested in good news.” Instead, news coverage of the Bosnia operation in 1996 was overshadowed by incidents such as the ransacking and desertion of the Sarajevo suburbs, the
failure to arrest indicted war criminals and the first disappointing experiences in refugee returns. Although the media widely acknowledges IFOR’s initial success at stopping the fighting, the force’s emphasis on the purely military security aspects of Dayton by U.S. forces in particular made it hard for the media to ignore all the tasks the peacekeepers did not perform. Moreover, scepticism was fuelled by a CIMIC effort that was certainly no success-story.

Apart from the structural civil-military gap in Bosnia, many of the causes for the initially limited success of IFOR CIMIC were embedded in the conceptual framework of CIMIC and Civil Affairs in the mid-1990s. During the Cold War, NATO conceived CIMIC exclusively as a combat-oriented function. Its two key-features had been logistic support to host-nations and alleviating refugee interference with military operations in the defence of West Germany against a Soviet attack. Despite the surge in peace operations, little had changed in this respect in the first half of the nineties as neither NATO nor individual European military establishments put any serious effort or doctrinal or conceptual thought into the development of CIMIC. While peacekeepers in the field were gathering new experiences, NATO CIMIC continued to be regarded as a “rear area” activity and not a “front line asset” or an operational function essential to the accomplishment of the mission.

American Civil Affairs doctrine encompassed a far broader set of activities in military operations, but made no specific distinction between combat and peace operations. The 1993 version of Field Manual 41-10 stated that the Civil Affairs mission was “to support the commander’s relationship with civil authorities and civilian populace, promote mission legitimacy and enhance military effectiveness.” It distinguished between two broad and diverse sets of frequently overlapping issues within Civil Affairs operations: civil-military operations (CMO) and support to civil administration. The doctrinal difference was that while performing civil-military operations, Civil Affairs units directly supported the military commander—presumably in the conduct of war—even though the local population and civil organisations might benefit from such support. In support to civil administration, Civil Affairs units directly supported a local government or international organisation, although the military commander might benefit from that support. In 1994, the first U.S. Army Field Manual for peace operations suggested that Civil Affairs in peace operations “may include activities and functions normally the responsibility of a local government.” This conceptual distinction between the intended beneficiary of Civil Affairs efforts, which had always been hard to maintain, became even more murky in the 1990s as the military commander’s mission steadily drifted into the civilian sphere. It became ever more apparent that political objectives and not military objectives dominated in military operations, but this notion, retired Lieutenant Colonel John T. Fishel concluded in his study on civil-military operations in 1997, had “only been accepted grudgingly, if at all, by the American military.”

Since the 1950s, military government had slowly faded away from U.S. Civil Affairs doctrine and by the end of the century virtually all reference to the occupation of liberated or conquered territory had been dropped. Meanwhile, in the wake of Vietnam, military leaders
and policymakers had become disillusioned with "nation building." In 1994, as further U.S. military involvement in peace operations was grudgingly accepted, the military reluctantly began a search for doctrine that would be militarily effective in failed states while continuing to resist pressures to directly participate in anything resembling "nation building." However, U.S. Civil Affairs retained a vast body of some five thousand Army Reserve personnel "with specialists in every area of government, they can assist a host government meet its people's needs and maintain a stable and viable civil administration." In practice, U.S. Civil Affairs had essentially the same, albeit wider focus on combat support as traditional NATO CIMIC. Even as late as 1999, a Dutch CIMIC officer participating in a U.S. Army Civil Affairs course was struck by the exclusive focus of the lectures and scenarios on conventional warfare. Only one hour out of the six-week course he attended was spent on peace and humanitarian operations as such, or "Military Operations Other Than War" (MOOTW), the generic term then preferred by the U.S. Army.

Apart from its shaky doctrinal foundation for peace operations, the early CIMIC effort in Bosnia suffered from a combination of overlapping headquarters, national military strife within the coalition and a fundamental lack of understanding of CIMIC's role and value amongst ground commanders. The military command and control structure placed Smith's IFOR headquarters above the land component headquarters provided by the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps (ARRC) under Walker. This resulted in a duplication of CIMIC staff cells. Consequently, IFOR headquarters' Combined Joint CIMIC became embroiled in a turf battle with the ARRC headquarters' CIMIC staff. Faced with two headquarters in Sarajevo the Office of the High Representative and all other international governmental and non-governmental aid organisations were confused about with whom they were to deal. A CIMIC Task Force containing most of the personnel and assets to execute the CIMIC mission was created separately from the tactical command structure to conduct theatre level CIMIC tasks.

The organisational chaos was exacerbated when the U.S. tactical CIMIC-teams from this CIMIC Task Force started operating throughout Bosnia. They often arrived unannounced and failed to coordinate their efforts with the division and brigade CIMIC staffs and reported outside the chain of command straight back to Smith's IFOR headquarters. This was not so much a problem in the American led Multinational Division (MND) North, but French and British commanders on the tactical level had no way of controlling these CIMIC assets and subsequently rejected the presence of these U.S. teams in their areas of responsibility. The French, were clearly most ardent in their refusal of U.S. interference in their sector, which resulted in a total lack of coordination of CIMIC activities between IFOR and Multinational Division South-East. The refusal of U.S. Civil Affairs assets by the French and the British had an additional effect. The absorption of superfluous personnel by the two CIMIC headquarters, both operating in Sarajevo, contributed to a further overcrowding and additional duplication of effort. The one hundred CIMIC personnel in the capital conducted many reconstruction projects in a city that—with its high profile for the world media—was already attracting the bulk of the international reconstruction effort from civilian organisations.
In Bosnia, the Americans had principally introduced the segregated model for Civil Affairs, which had become known as the "Mediterranean model" or "AMGOT model" for Civil Affairs in Europe during the Second World War. This model, wherein the military government organisation was placed outside the tactical chain of command, gave the field commanders below the Supreme Commander hardly any control over Civil Affairs teams in their area of operations. As during the conquest of Italy fifty years earlier, this made tactical commanders in Bosnia suspicious of Civil Affairs and CIMIC, whose purpose was hardly explained. It also made the CIMIC teams beg from the sideline for resources from regular forces. During the Second World War, the model had been dropped while preparing for the invasion of Normandy. "We went wrong there", Colonel William Phillips would later admit about the SHAPE CIMIC plans for Bosnia in 1995, to which he had contributed. Although the Task Force remained in place, in March 1996 the IFOR land component commander General Walker gave his divisional commanders more leeway to determine the extent and methods of their involvement in civil tasks.\textsuperscript{137} This satisfied the tactical commanders, but infringed on the American ideal of a strategically and operationally driven Civil Affairs or CIMIC effort and a centralised process of surveys and assessments of the required civil-related tasks. It also prevented the most efficient distribution of CIMIC assets to those areas of Bosnia most in need. Divisional, brigade and battalion commanders improvised in providing different levels of security and support to Bosnians while rebuilding their lives, their methods according to one American observer, often "depending on their own imaginations and folk wisdom preserved from other peace operations."\textsuperscript{138} They made up their doctrine and tactics as the operations progressed and learned, overlooking and relearning lessons in the process.\textsuperscript{139} The presence of thirty different national contingents with fundamentally different national military cultures and mindsets made it hard to generalise about the success of the NATO CIMIC effort in Bosnia. Nevertheless, there were some behavioural patterns to be distinguished.

While U.S. Civil Affairs staff brought their expertise to the mission, its personnel was seriously hampered by the overall combat oriented military culture of the U.S. military. Despite the long Civil Affairs tradition and recent experience gained in Panama, Iraq, Somalia, and Haiti, American ground commanders were hardly better informed than their European colleagues about the role and value of Civil Affairs or CIMIC. Even though Civil Affairs seemed to be rising to some prominence, its personnel still often had to explain to U.S. soldiers in tactical units that they were not Public Affairs, the Army's public relations division. The basic lack of understanding made commanders jump to the conclusion that CIMIC activities automatically contributed to mission creep, "and resulted in unanticipated constraints being placed on CIMIC operations until the value became more apparent to commanders."\textsuperscript{140} Moreover, despite experiences in Somalia and Haiti the U.S. Army failed to alleviate the force protection regime for Civil Affairs that continued to hamper its personnel in the execution of their mission. A study by the U.S. Department of Defence criticised the functioning of the tactical CIMIC effort within the American-led Multinational Division North.
[The CIMIC Centre is doctrinally the central location for all NGOs to meet with the military. At MND(N) the CIMIC Centre was located inside the gate at Tuzla Main [military base], whereas most of the NGOs were 20 minutes away in downtown Tuzla. With access to the base by non-IFOR personnel strictly limited, the effectiveness of the CIMIC Centre as a tool for coordinating NGO and military activity was greatly reduced. Second, force protection regulations hampered CIMIC personnel's ability to perform their CIMIC mission effectively. When CIMIC personnel were able to muster the needed four vehicles to leave the base, they arrived at an NGO site with a heavier military presence than some NGOs desired. As a related issue, the appearance of the need for great security when outside the protected confines of Tuzla Main worked counter to the efforts of CIMIC personnel to create an impression among the local population that the internal situation had improved. Finally, with the inaccessibility of the Tuzla CIMIC to the NGOs and the restrictive procedures limiting the CIMIC staff's ability to visit the NGOs, the requirement to communicate indirectly had increased. Despite this requirement, MND(N) had only one phone line of 'dubious reliability', and had no fax or e-mail capability. Almost all communication between MND(N) and the NGOs had to be relayed through intermediaries, generally with a 24-hour turnaround time.\textsuperscript{141}

This was not to say that the American CIMIC effort in Bosnia was overall ineffective. Rather, it lacked fundamental conditions for real success. Several of these obstacles were cleared, some in months, others over the years to come. For instance, it would take until 1999 for the CIMIC Task Force structure within SFOR to become proficient in the eyes of chief Civil Affairs planners.\textsuperscript{142} However, it would take years for the force protection regime to be loosened for U.S. troops.

The combined U.S-European Bosnia experience had the positive effect of establishing need for a dedicated CIMIC capacity and by enhancing familiarity with CIMIC as a concept. However, the combat oriented model provided by the Americans in Bosnia, at the height of U.S. military scepticism over its involvement in peace operations, was a mixed blessing at best. Within complex peace operations as a whole, the strict limits on the use of the military enhanced the civil-military compartmentalisation. Within the military contribution to such operations it had two negative effects. First, it strengthened the military in their belief it could turn its back on what should have been recognised as the inevitable public security challenges in all forms of modern military operations. Second, the prime example provided to the Europeans was the American military reflex of pushing civil-military operations to the periphery of military operations, away from the commander and regular military units.

Geared toward keeping the military operation "clean", the U.S. led IFOR headquarters marginalised civil-military operations by relegating responsibilities with a civilian odour about them to a separate CIMIC Task Force in order to relieve the tactical units of such responsibilities. This tendency was exacerbated by the reliance of U.S. Civil Affairs on Army Reserves with a specific civilian specialisation. Although this was generally advertised as its key comparative advantage, which it often was, there was also a reverse side effect. By inserting the reserves with their highly specialised civilian skills, the military became entan-
gled in operations that drifted ever further from the mission to establish a secure environment. According to Army Reserve Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey A. Jacobs, this was caused by their eagerness “to get into the ball game” and prove their value by exercising their skills in the limited period of their deployment. These civilian proficiencies were after all still largely organised for the execution of, or support to civil administration in liberated or occupied territory. While serving in Bosnia, Jacobs was struck by the fundamental lack of generalist Civil Affairs officers with staff skills. Only four percent of the total Civil Affairs force, just over two hundred personnel, consisted of active duty generalist officers. Meanwhile specialised Civil Affairs personnel became involved in the most detailed support to civil administration by working with the former warring factions to revise property laws, assisting the World Bank, forming a working group to assess public health issues and making recommendations for improving the public health infrastructure. Some Civil Affairs officers attached to civilian organisations even performed their duties in civilian clothes. The result was a paradoxical approach to CIMIC. On the one hand, flags were continuously raised about “mission creep” when combat units became involved in public security related tasks, or “nation building” when they engaged in small development projects. In the margin of the operation, on the other hand, highly skilled Civil Affairs personnel were allowed to become involved in the details of Bosnia’s reconstruction.

What further enhanced the marginalisation of CIMIC was the widespread notion in both American and European military circles that civil support could be taken up after the completion of the primary military mission, when the military had time on their hands. While the impact and comparative advantage of civil-military operations in Bosnia was clearly largest in the early phase of operations in the virtual absence of most of the key civilian players in the Dayton process, the progressive emphasis on civil tasks in the course of 1996 and 1997 provided the opposing model. The common picture drawn out in charts was of “pure” military operations dominating the direct aftermath of military deployment, while the emphasis could slowly shift towards civil-military cooperation as the situation stabilised. There was a certain logic in these charts from a combat perspective, but it tended to be far removed from the realities faced in the power vacuum in future stabilisation operations in Kosovo and “post-war” Iraq in 2003, where internal security operations and “vacuum filling” and not the separation of warring parties turned out to be the key military task.

A third contributing factor to the peripheral approach to CIMIC was its emphasis on development projects. In Bosnia the Europeans and Canadians injected their specific tendencies in CIMIC. As a result of the controversy over NATO’s role in the civilian sphere and the organisational confusion within the IFOR CIMIC organisation, they focussed on traditional civic action or “hearts and minds” projects, as this was seemingly the least controversial and certainly most attractive element of civil-military cooperation. Although military support to civil implementation was officially limited strictly to extra activities “within the limits of its assigned principal tasks and available resources”, millions of funds were generated for this purpose. Within the British Division, with its subordinate Dutch and Canadian battle groups,
this effort was clearly most elaborate and successful and had started in April, much earlier than within the U.S. and French sectors. The British, Dutch and later the Canadian all channelled budgets from national development ministries towards the troops in the field and the British even attached an Overseas Development Agency (ODA) reconstruction specialist to their Divisional headquarters. The Americans also started to use USAID funds in August, but U.S. soldiers were not directly involved in project management. Instead, brigade Civil Affairs teams reduced their role to coordination and used U.S. private contractors to execute the programs, which led to slower implementation and resulted in less publicity value. The small-scale local community development projects were designed to have a “quick-impact” on local society and especially the British-led division was praised for the rapid turn around from proposal to execution. Projects were initiated by CIMIC staff within division, brigade or battalion headquarters, supported at times by regular forces, mainly engineers, but preferably executed by the local population or contractors to stimulate the devastated Bosnian economy. Projects had to be closely associated with the military force and centred on improving essential public utilities such as electrical power and water supply and public services such as schools and clinics.

The usual benefits from civic action were apparent in Bosnia. First of all, “winning the hearts and minds”, improving relations with the local population, was largely successful where civic action was undertaken. The effort was clearly directed at this aim. In the British sector for instance, more money was spent on projects in the Republic Srpska than in more benign Federation territory in the early phase to raise the level of acceptance of the force. CIMIC was often presented as a means of “force protection.” As had become apparent in other operations, not only the Bosnian hearts had to be won. By providing “good news”, projects had the much sought after effect of pleasing the taxpayer in the troop-contributing nations and therefore also parliamentarians and ministers. Apart from pleasing politicians, these images were welcomed and stimulated by Europe’s military leaders, who became more aware of their use as the new line of defence against the next round of military budget-cuts that was always near. They also helped improve troop morale, by providing the forces with a feeling of accomplishment by making a tangible contribution to the reconstruction of Bosnian society.

Not all effects of the increased emphasis on projects were equally positive. Through the use of CIMIC, the military plunged itself as yet another player into what was an already crowded humanitarian playing field. It was questionable if the overall reconstruction effort in Bosnia was really in need of yet another actor, that absorbed funds otherwise directed to Bosnia via other channels, most likely NGOs. Increasingly, the NGO community came to regard these military efforts as competition and feared that the “humanitarian sphere” was becoming increasingly politicised and militarised. Meanwhile, although all three divisions had some success, “IFOR elements pursued many projects that were unlikely to have lasting effect and did not necessarily support long-term, post-war reconstruction efforts.” What the reconstruction effort needed most of all was coordination. Kevin Mannion, a European

You have all these different actors, SFOR, IPTF, OSCE, OHR, UNHCR and all the other organisations, all playing their part. They are all pieces of a jigsaw puzzle [...], but nobody has the picture of the finished jigsaw. So we don't actually know what we are supposed to put together. So we are just trying to move the pieces around all the time. [...] What we have done is, we have given birth to a baby, which is Bosnia Herzegovina, which has probably about a hundred different parents, all with their own ideas on how to bring up the baby. So therefore you have a very confused, underdeveloped baby, called Bosnia Herzegovina, which we maybe all will walk away from and leave to fend for itself.\(^{147}\)

Civic action was a proven method of facilitating military operations, and much good work was done by the military. However, in Bosnia the largely uncoordinated "heart and minds" campaign had the pretension of providing structural solutions in military circles—even though funds spent by the military were minuscule compared to the many billions of dollars channelled through EU, World Bank and other civilian organisations over the years. Several years of peace, and a massive, but uncoordinated international effort brought only slight political advances while economic progress was negligible with unemployment still at sixty percent.

More damaging for the concept of CIMIC was that in Bosnia the acronym almost became synonymous for "projects." Voices in the development community were often raised, wondering why SFOR—ininstead of experimenting so extensively with development tasks so alien to its primary function—did not take its security role more seriously. The focus on projects diverted attention from the much more essential civil-military coordination and support relationship between soldiers and the key partners in the creation of a lasting peace. These were first and foremost the international police force and international administrators monitoring and reforming the local institutions, much as the foundation of successful counter-insurgency operations was the triangular relationship between army, police and administration.\(^{148}\)

While the practical emphasis of CIMIC in Bosnia was on project development, the emergence of a CIMIC capacity within NATO pointed in another direction. U.S. predominance in the field had prompted its European partners to fill the capability gap by creating a dedicated CIMIC-capacity within NATO, although scepticism remained amongst many military leaders over the need to take CIMIC beyond its narrow Cold War perimeters. The Americans, whose Civil Affairs reserve forces came under increased pressure from prolonged deployment, were the main driving force behind the creation of such an organisation within the Alliance.\(^{149}\) NATO's "Bosnia Lessons Learned" was firmly of the view that future large scale military operations needed a centralized, theatre level CIMIC command with a specialized CIMIC Task Force in order to deal with the civil government and coordinate and support the primary international civil organisations. However, the need was also recognised for
special staff elements at each level of command in order to better coordinate the Task Force’s efforts with the tactical commander’s wishes.  

In 1997 the NATO’s defence ministers directed SHAPE to create a plan for the development of an operational CIMIC capacity. The concept launched by SHAPE in 1999, called “CIMIC 2000”, set out to tackle the issue in the fields of training and education, the development of doctrine, and the actual creation of a specialised force-structure within NATO. In NATO’s doctrine CIMIC was defined in 1998 as “[t]he resources and arrangements which support the relationship between NATO commanders and the national authorities, civil and military, and civil populations in an area where NATO military forces are or plan to be employed.” This definition was roughly the same as that of CIMIC during the Cold War years. To update it to fit the new operational environment the doctrine added that such arrangements could include “cooperation with non-governmental or international agencies, organisations and authorities.”

It initially foresaw the creation of three CIMIC-Groups centred on the Dutch, Italians and British within ARRC, which came under General Mike Jackson’s command from January 1997. The only group that seriously got underway was the one chaired by the Dutch, eventually in close cooperation with the Germans. While Danes, Norwegians, Poles and Czechs, joined this group the other two lead nations wavered. The Italians, tasked to create a CIMIC Group in Southern Europe were slow in getting an organisation off the ground. The British, uncomfortable with the model presented by the Americans, decided on a different course than the one initiated by the Americans.

What later became known as CIMIC Group North focussed on bureaucratic concerns with regard to the composition of large, sustainable CIMIC units. In the long run, hundreds of reserves specialised to perform a wide array of civil functions, were to be deployable for longer periods of time. Although somewhat more modest in size, it was largely modelled after the elaborate U.S. Civil Affairs army reserve structure with its Civil Affairs commands, brigades and battalions. The ambitions expressed in the NATO-CIMIC model were tremendous. CIMIC Group North prepared to deploy CIMIC reserve officers to provide “functional expertise, advice and assistance in identifying and assessing” in the areas of civil administration, civil infrastructure, economy and commerce, humanitarian aid and assistance and cultural affairs. Tasks foreseen in the administrative field encompassed—amongst others—advice on economic policy, public finance, legal assistance in rewriting existing laws and legal systems, spatial and environmental policy, educational and cultural policy, social policy, movement and transport policy, public health policy, security policy, media and communications policy and agricultural policy. Meanwhile most European NATO members were hardly able to deploy fully trained CIMIC generalist staff officers in Bosnia or Kosovo in the late nineties. More time was spent on CIMIC reserve force generation and composition than on the general dilemma of how dedicated CIMIC forces were to be employed. The elaborateness of the NATO CIMIC scheme was inversely proportional to the degree of responsibility its officers were supposed to assume in future failed states. Most notably, NATO doctrine
avoided all reference to executive administrative powers for the military. In other publications even “support” to civil organisations was often supplanted by “advice and assistance.”

While the Dutch and Germans diligently began developing their elaborate CIMIC framework, the British steered a different course. Although the British Army had lost its large Civil Affairs capability in the aftermath of the Second World War, a strong civil-military component had always been an integral part of British counterinsurgency doctrine and operations. The importance of handling relations with the local population, police and administration was recognised in Palestine, Malaya, Cyprus and Northern Ireland, but had not been translated into the creation of a specific civil affairs “sub-profession” or a large specialised force structure to manage the civil-military interface. In the second half of the 1990s they continued to resist this U.S. Army model with its strong emphasis on a separate Civil Affairs organisation with large number of specialist functions. While acknowledging the need for a small pool of generalist Civil Affairs officers, a British officer involved in the creation of this Civil Affairs Group discarded the efforts by NATO’s CIMIC Group North and the existing U.S. Civil Affairs community by claiming with a hint of arrogance, that seemed to annoy the Americans, “we don’t need that, we are already used to doing it in Northern Ireland.”

The British emphasised the ease with which regular military personnel, most notably engineers and military police, but also regular staff and tactical units and the soldiers on the ground could be used to bridge the gap, if only they were employed in the right manner and trained with the right attitude. In short, the British were arguing that their military tradition, with its more flexible interpretation of the military profession, made their soldiers better adapted to the civil-military interface in peace operations than the Americans. Overall, this proved to be the case, but the British leaned heavily on the theory of police and civil supremacy its officers had grown accustomed to in Northern Ireland as well as their colonial history. This ascendant theory was based on the assumption that a military force could support a functioning police and administrative structure that was working towards a common goal—the defeat of subversion or an insurgency. While in Bosnia, local authorities were often uncooperative. In future operations in Kosovo, East-Timor and Iraq in 2003, local authorities would initially be absent altogether and only slowly emerging. Nevertheless, the British approach seemed to be well suited to the integration of civil-military operations into military operations. As the British were bound to take the lead in NATO’s next peace operation Kosovo, this would prove instrumental.

**Conclusion**

Bogdan Denitch, the writer of *Ethnic Nationalism: The Tragic Death of Yugoslavia*, called Dayton “a terrible peace to end a terrible war.” To mend some of its incongruities the authority of the initially hapless Office of the High Commissioner and its subsidiary organisations was steadily expanded, but there was little doubt that the key to redressing the mistakes made at Dayton lay in the hands of the military. NATO’s experience in Bosnia in 1996 pointed in two directions. One route was to stick to the minimalist option and prepare for a
swift retreat, much like during previous military operations in Somalia and Haiti. The other route was to except the failure of this exit strategy and swing IFOR’s full weight behind civilian implementation. In retrospect, the choice would seem obvious, especially after IFOR’s initially astounding military success. At the time, however, bogged down by fear of “mission creep” and a deep rooted aversion to military involvement in “nation building” the U.S. administration—the Europeans following suit—waivered until the spring of 1997 to make this choice. Hesitation would cost them dearly in the long run. Between March 1996 and the Summer of 1997, a substantial share of “mission erosion” occurred as NATO forces lost the initiative by failing to acknowledge that the military mission had to move forward into the civilian sphere—first and foremost into the field of public security. This was the consequence of the persistent effort to simplify what was the inherently murky dividing line between soldiering and policing in a post-conflict setting. It took until summer 1997 before NATO forces embraced a more vigorous stance by exercising—in concert with the key civilian players—authority outside the military sphere. Despite General Clark’s incentives, SFOR still did so half-heartedly and with the so-called “anti-Dayton power structures” firmly entrenched in Bosnian society, it often seemed too little, too late. Peacekeeping had been reinvented in Bosnia to fit the narrow parameters of the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine rather that to suit the peace process as a whole. Meanwhile, the ability of IFOR to flexibly respond in a pro-active rather than reactive manner was impeded by the influential term “mission creep” that had also been making headway in the European military establishment. Although not driven by the same inhibitions towards peace operations as such, European soldiers were on the whole comfortable with the leadership provided by the Americans. While no great strides were made towards lasting success in Bosnia, at least nothing went dramatically wrong. This counted for much after their previous experiences. The failure to exploit the possibilities presented by the power vested in the peacekeeping force, especially in that crucial first year, had dramatic long-term effects for the goal of recreating a multi-ethnic Bosnia. Cynics continued to wonder, however, if that goal had ever been attainable in former Yugoslavia.¹⁵⁸ The next ethnic conflict that had since long been smouldering, but was now fully erupting right next door in Kosovo, added fuel to their argument.


² The estimated figure of between 200,000 and 250,000 deadly victims during the war is commonly used in the media, but has been disputed and other unofficial UN figures that put the death toll at half that number. A report by Sarajevo’s Investigation and Documentation Centre, headed by Mirsad Tokača, scaled down previous generally accepted figures for war losses in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1992-95 war. “We can now say with almost absolute certainty that the number is going to be more than 100,000 but definitely less than 150,000,” Tokača, an ethnic Muslim, said in an interview with
in the winter of 1995-1996 the size of the deployment into Bosnia was 55,000, with an additional 5,000 support personnel in Croatia. The U.S. contributed some 20,000 U.S. troops, the British 12,000 Brits and the Dutch 2,100.


12 The Steering Board members of the Peace Implementation Council were the United States, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Russia, Canada, Italy, Japan, the Presidency of the European Union, the European Commission, and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which was represented by Turkey. (See OHR website at http://www.ohr.int/ohr-info/gen-info/#6)

13 For a critique of the lack of shared strategic vision on reintegrating Bosnia see ICG Balkans Report No. 121, Bosnia: Reshaping the International Machinery (29 November 2001).


17 Swain, Neither War Nor Not War, 17; Holbrooke, To End a War, 361-2.


20 A U.S. Civil Affairs officer involved in the process of bridging the civil-military gap recalled “Smith and Bildt just didn’t like each other.” Mentioned in conversation with author.

21 In Holbrooke’s account “all the [U.S.] civilians in the meetings” prior to Dayton expected the military to “lean forward” as the operation unfolded. Holbrooke, To End a War, 223. In an interview for the PBS Frontline documentary “Give War a Chance” Holbrooke argued that Smith “interpreted his assignment in a greatly different way than those of us who had written the Dayton Agreements envisaged. Not just me, but Secretary Christopher and our entire team.” Ivo Daalder in his interview for PBS Frontline confirms Holbrooke’s account.

22 The General Framework Agreement, Annex 1A, VI-5: Agreement on the Military Aspects of the Peace Settlement. Holbrooke points at Shalikahvilli for suggesting the silver bullit clause. Holbrooke,
To End a War, 222-223. In Wesley Clark's account the silver bullet clause was suggested by Madeleine Albright, Ambassador to the UN. Clark, Waging Modern War, 58-59.

23 Clark, Waging Modern War, 58.

24 Ibid., 59. Clarke cited the paragraph VI-3 from The General Framework Agreement, Annex 1A, as the silver bullet clause: "The Parties understand and agree that the IFOR Commander shall have the authority, without interference or permission of any Party, to do all the Commander judges necessary and proper. [...] The violating Party shall be subject to military action by the IFOR, including the use of necessary force to ensure compliance with the Annex." Clark wrote: "Under our agreement, we were seeking to limit the obligations of the military—you can’t do everything with military forces—but to give the commander unlimited authority to accomplish these limited obligations."

25 Holbrooke, To End a War, 328.

26 U.S. Army officer in conversation with author. "Snuffy Smith" was an American hillbilly-type comic-strip figure from the 1940s.

27 After his retirement Jouwlan wrote in 1998: "But SFOR – without a more imaginative approach to civilian-military interaction – will be no more successful in achieving international objectives by itself in Bosnia than was IFOR." George Jouwlan and Christopher Shoemaker, Civil-Military Cooperation in the Prevention of Deadly Conflict: Implementing Agreements in Bosnia and Beyond (New York: Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, 1998) 25. There is a passage in Clark’s book that suggests that also Jouwlan before him tried, but failed to take more direct control of operations in Bosnia in order to move the operation forward. Clark, Waging Modern War, 86.


30 Holbrooke, To End a War, 338. Holbrooke wrote: "It was almost as if they had an implicit understanding with the IFOR command: we will not attack you forces if you leave us alone to pursue an ethnically divided country."

31 The so-called “grey zone” of operation included maintaining civil law and order, discovering and prevent crimes (serious crimes such as murder and rape, arson, or property related crime such as theft and plundering), riot control and large scale civil disturbances, intervening against armed “gangs”, either criminally or politically motivated but often mixed, maintaining order and security during an election process, monitoring and assisting in disarming civilians, escorting civilians in violence-prone areas, and protecting refugees in refugee camps from armed elements.

32 Of the total figure of 44,750 policemen provided by the UN IPTF advance mission, 29,750 were working in Muslim controlled areas, 3,000 in Croat areas and 12,000 in the Republika Srpska. The Muslim-Croat Federation agreed to to reduce their forces to 11,500. The Republika Srpska, however, refused to participate in process. An IFOR study conducted in 1996 concluded that eighty percent Federation police forces had under six years of policing experience. The figures from the UN advance mission are mentioned in Michael J. Dziedzic and Andrew Bair, “Bosnia and the International Police Task Force”, in: Robert B. Oakley, Michael J. Dziedzic, Eliot M. Goldberg eds., Policing the New World Disorder: Peace Operations and Public Security (National Defence University, The Institute for National Strategic Studies 1998) 50. These numbers differ substantially from those provided by Human Rights Watch, which wrote in a report that “[w]ith some 20,000 members in the Bosniak-Croat Federation, and between 10,000 and 50,000 in Republika Srpska at the time of the IPTF’s deployment in early 1996, the police force needed to be reduced by at least half.” Human Rights Watch, Bosnia and Herzegovina: Beyond Restraint, Politics and the Policing Agenda of the United Nations International Police Task Force, HRW Publications, Vol. 10, No. 5 (D) June 1998.

In Haiti early revisions of the Rules of Engagement did authorize members of the Multinational Force to intercede to halt Haitian-on-Haitian violence after the U.S. forces there received much negative publicity for looking on as someone was beaten to death in the streets by an angry mob.

Stefan Ekecrantz in e-mail correspondence with author, 7 January 2004.

In Haiti the IFTF was established by UN Security Council resolution 1035 (1995) and was designated as part of the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (UNMIBH). The IFTF was the one of the three UNMIBH components. Its mandate was to (1) monitor, observe, and inspect the parties’ law enforcement activities and facilities; (2) advise governmental authorities on how to organize effective civilian law enforcement agencies; (3) advise and train law enforcement personnel; and (4) investigate and report on any human rights abuses by Bosnia’s police. IFTF’s mandate does not include the power of arrest. The name UN CIVPOL was a term consciously avoided.

The General Framework Agreement, Annex 1A, VI-3d stated that IFTF, within the limits of its capabilities, shall have right “to observe and prevent interference with the movement of civilian populations, refugees, and displaced persons, and to respond appropriately to deliberate violence to life and person.”

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Center for Law and Military Operations (CLAMO), Rules of Engagement Handbook for Judge Advocates (1 May 2000) 3-20. In 1999 the U.S. Army 10th Mountain Division included the following language on their ROE card as part of SFOR: “You may use the minimum force necessary, including deadly force, to stop and detain persons committing, or about to commit, in your presence, serious criminal acts upon other persons (for example murder, rape, and serious assault).”

Paul Johnston, “Doctrines Is Not Enough: The Effect of Doctrine on the Behaviour of Armies”, Parameters (Autumn 2000) 30-39. As far as warfighting is concerned, Johnston argues that the way armies have fought is more a function of their culture than of their doctrine.

Clark, Waging Modern War, 55

Pauline Neville-Jones wrote that “[n]o one wanted IFOR soldiers to get involved in these [policing tasks].” Neville-Jones, “Dayton, IFOR and Alliance Relations in Bosnia”, 52.

General Framework Agreement for Peace, Annex 1A, II-1: “Each Party shall ensure that all personnel and organizations with military capability under its control or within territory under its control, including armed civilian groups, national guards, army reserves, military police, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs Special Police (MUP) (hereinafter "Forces") comply with this Annex.”

Richard Holbrooke, To End a War, 336. Holbrooke’s account is based the eye-witness account of U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Robert Gelbhard and Deputy High Representative Michael Steiner.
Zoufal, both Civil Affairs officers, explain how essential this CA support was to making the IPTF operational and supporting the transition as a whole, but fail to place this tactical success in the larger context of the dramatic developments in the Sarajevo suburbs in March 1996.

Ifor, but most of all Americans, tended to blame the IPTF. Boutros Boutros Ghali maart 1996: "It is unrealistic to envisage a civilian police operation continuing its work without the framework of security provided by the presence of a credible international military force." Boutros Boutros-Ghali in his report to the Security Council, S/1996/210 of 29 March 1996, para. 42-43; For a poignant journalist's account of the events in Sarajevo in March 1996 see Greg Campbell, The Road to Kosovo, 1-23. For the number of 70,000 he refers to a UNHCR Press Briefing, 16 March 1996, Sarajevo. Other sources mentions a total of 100,000 Serbs leaving Sarajevo between from Jan to March.

Richard Hobrooke, To End a War, 335-339.

Admiral Smith in interview for PBS News (1 Feb 1996): “Unfortunately”, the Admiral complained, “a lot of people read our peace agreement and they interpret my job for me. And they are very happy to tell whoever might want to listen what my job is.”

Ivo Daalder in PBS Frontline interview.

U.S. Army Peacekeeping Institute, SFOR Lessons Learned in Creating a Secure Environment with Respect for the Rule of Law (Based on a Study of Bosnia, May 2000) 12.

Murray and Gordon, IFOR on IFOR, 83

Fontenot, “The Urban Area During Stability Missions”, 50.

On 30 April 1996 the British divisional headquarters moved from Gornji Vakuf to Banja Luka to enhance cooperation with the civilian organisations who were established in the regions biggest city. Christ Klep and Richard van Gils, Van Korea tot Kosovo: De Nederlandse Militaire Bijdrage aan Vredesoperaties (Den Haag 2000) 326.

Murray and Gordon, IFOR on IFOR, 89.

Ibid, 105.

Ibid, 41. “....While in Macedonia it was almost a weakly occurrence to have a Serb sniper point a rifle at him, in Brcko he never saw anybody point a weapon in his direction. "Nobody had ever been the least bit threatening towards us—they offer us beer."

U.S. Army Peacekeeping Institute, SFOR Lessons Learned in Creating a Secure Environment with Respect for the Rule of Law (Based on a Study of Bosnia, May 2000) 12. Colonel Fontenot, a U.S. brigade commander in IFOR agreed: "Hunkering down in base camps in not only an ineffective way to advance the cause, but increases the risk to the troops." Fontenot, "The Urban Area During Stability Missions", 213.

Chris Klep en Richard van Gils, Van Korea tot Kosovo, 332

U.S. Army Peacekeeping Institute, SFOR Lessons Learned in Creating a Secure Environment with Respect for the Rule of Law, 37.

Richard M. Swain called it naive to say, as some do, “civil implementation did not keep pace with military implementation.” Compared it to a marathon runner not keeping up with a sprinter. Swain, Neither War Nor Not War, 50.

This argument was put forward by Generals Smith and Joulwan. Smith: “Throughout most of 1997, the High Representative did not use his authority to enforce the parties’ compliance with the civil provisions of the Dayton Agreement. George Joulwan and Christopher Shoemaker, Civil-Military Cooperation in the Prevention of Deadly Conflict: Implementing Agreements in Bosnia and Beyond (New York: Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, 1998).

PBS Frontline interview with Daalder.


The prerogatives of the High Representative, Carlos Westendorp, were increased when the raising of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC) in Sintra in May and Bonn in December 1997.
Respect for the Rule of Law
Criminal Must Take Seriously, most active in funding ICTY and the most generous in sharing intelligence. At Last a Court that War
According to The Economist The Netherlands, together with Britain and the Americans were the most active in funding ICTY and the most generous in sharing intelligence. “At Last a Court that War Criminals Must Take Seriously”, The Economist, 31 January 1998, 43.
U.S. Army Peacekeeping Institute, SFOR Lessons Learned in Creating a Secure Environment with Respect for the Rule of Law (Based on a Study of Bosnia, May 2000) 27.


Der Spiegel, 24 September 2001, 42. (For German contributions to arrests of war crimes suspects see also the German military website http://www.military-page.de/einheit/ksk/ksk_01.htm.)


Annika S. Hansen, although not “orthodox” in her analysis of UN CIVPOL, writes that the IPTF was “venturing dangerously close to executive policing.” However, this judgement only concerned executive power as far as policing the police was concerned. Annika S. Hansen, From Congo to Kosovo: Civilian Police in Peace Operations (IISS Adelphi Paper 343, 2002) 30.

Hansen, From Congo to Kosovo, 66.

Swain, Neither War Nor Not War, 122-123. Only in 1997 all illegal police checkpoints were cleared. French and U.S. Division commanders had initially opposed this new policy on checkpoints because of “risk” involved. The British were far less concerned.


Swain, Neither War Nor Not War, 50.


Hansen, From Congo to Kosovo, 71. The International Crisis Group was very critical about the use and performance of the MSU. ICG, “Policing The Police In Bosnia: A Further Reform Agenda Balkans” Report No.130 (10 May 2002) 58, f405: “The suggestion that MSUs might be attached to the follow-on mission is akin to taking a bad idea and making it worse. Analysts have always lamented the disjunction between the ‘inner shell’ of security provided by the police and the ‘outer shell’ provided by SFOR. This is the so-called enforcement gap. Yet contrary to prevailing hopes in NATO circles in late 2000 and early 2001, MSUs have not been able to plug this gap, owing to their restrictive Rules of Engagement and the reluctance of their contributing countries to see these loosened. The impotence of the MSUs during the events surrounding the seizure of Hercegovacka Banka confirmed this.”

The proposal for an international gendermerie was first made early on by General Shalishkashvili and the U.S. military seems have remained more enthusiastic about the third force option that Europeans. One of the American propagators of the MSU was Susan Woodward from the Brookings Institution in Sophia Clément, “The issues raised by Bosnia, and the transatlantic debate”, Chaillot
General Clark’s predecessor Joulwan had also tried to gain more direct control of the operation, but failed. Clark, Waging Modern War, 83-85.

For the most complete account of this event see Swain, Neither War Nor Not War, 148.

It is likely that the IPTF was not aware of the direct political motives of the United States and NATO behind the series of raids on police stations. Swain, Neither War Nor Not War, 149:

Neither War Nor Not War, paper No. 32 (Institute for Security Studies of WEU, May 1998); Holbrooke, World Report 2000—Bosnia, p 1-2. Both papers are available online at WW: http://www.un.org/icty/cases/indictindex-e.htm. See also the IHTY website “Indictments and Proceedings.”

Claire, Waging Modern War, 100

Ibid, 50.


For this argument see Sophia Clément (ed.), “The issues raised by Bosnia, and the transatlantic debate”, Chaillot Paper, No. 32 (Institute for Security Studies of WEU, May 1998); Holbrooke, To End a War, 336. Holbrooke called SFOR support to refugee returns “whimsical.” It took years of hard work before some belief returned in repatriation schemes by UNHCR, whimsically supported by NATO.” According to Human Rights Watch [o]nly in 2000 a breakthrough occurred in the return of refugees and displaced persons: “For the first time since the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords ... refugees and displaced persons returned in relatively large numbers to areas where they would be part of the ethnic minority.” Human Rights Watch, World Report 2000—Bosnia, p 1-2.

Dana Priest, The Mission, 259.

Priest, The Mission, 261-262. Priest wrote that the U.S. Army regarded a substation in Srebrenica too a big a drain on manpower, as “[i]t would take as many soldiers to guard it as to staff it. No wonder the Muslim mayor wouldn’t move back. [...] This was one of the thousand small examples that cemented the status quo and prevented real change in Bosnia.”

General George Joulwan in Department of Defence News Briefing, “Subject: Role Of IFOR In Bringing Safety And Security To Bosnia” (27 March 1996). The U.S. Army deployed 352 CIMIC personnel to Bosnia, compared to approximately 40 French and some 50 from other nations. Larry


IFOR AF'SOUTH Fact Sheet, “Combined Joint Civil Military Cooperation,” 20 August 1996

The 1998 draft of NATO AJP-09 made the following distinction. CIMIC activity: “A military activity intended to support the achievement of a military mission by persuading an objective with the responsibility of a civilian authority, international or non-governmental organization, or civilian activity intended to support the achievement of a civil aim by assisting in the pursuit of a military objective.” CIMIC operation: “A military operation the primary intention and effect of which is to support a civilian authority, population, international or non-governmental organization, the effect of which is to assist in the pursuit of a military objective.” This doctrinal distinction was dropped in 2001.


“The future success in military operations for the United States, however, rests on a clear understanding that the purely military does not exist. All operations are civil military in their basic character.” However, the notion that political rather than military objectives dominate, “had only been accepted grudgingly, if at all, by the American military.” John T. Fishel, Civil Military Operations in the New World, 235.


27, 7 Walters analysed the following doctrine publications: FM 27-5 , FM 41-15 (1954), FM 27-5, FM 41-5 (1958), FM 41-10 (1962, 1969, 1998, 2000) and JP 3-57 (2001). He wrote: “By 2000, FM 41-10 evolution dropped all reference to military government, except for two pages on “Civil Administration in Occupied Territories” that identify the goal as creating effective civil government that does not threaten future peace and stability. The pages only provide definitions.” In the field manuals there was no content for field use, no techniques, methods or how Civil Affairs units should be employed to execute this task. The 2001 version of JP-3-57 CMO hardly made any reference to Military Government and Civil Administration.

The capabilities of U.S. Army Civil Affairs were described in these words at the Special Operations website (http://www.specialoperations.com/Army/Civil_Affairs/default.html; the site was visited between 2000 and 2004)


Wentz, Lessons from IFOR, 131. The IFOR CJCIMIC became Combined Joint Civil-Military Taskforce, also CIMIC Taskforce, after 1996.

Wentz, Lessons from IFOR, 126n23.

Swain, Neither War Nor Not War, 50.

Wentz, Lessons from IFOR, 135.

Wentz, Lessons from IFOR, Executive Summary. This notion of constraints being placed on Civil Affairs staff and the lack of understanding of the its role was confirmed during various conversations between author and U.S. Civil Affairs personell during the World Wide Civil Affairs Conference in New York, June 2001.

Wentz, Lessons from FOR, 135.
All of creating an integrated, multiethnic state in Bosnia is a chimera, and that the sooner the Clinton administration recognizes that Bosnia has been partitioned, the sooner Americans will be able to leave." Sophia Clément, "The Issues Raised by Bosnia, and the Transatlantic Debate", Chaillot Paper, No. 32 (Institute for Security Studies of WEU, May 1998).