

Sumantra Bose, *Bosnia after Dayton: Nationalist Partition and International Intervention* (Hurst & Co., 2002) HBK: ISBN: 1850656452 £40.00 PBK: ISBN: 1850655855 £15.95 pp. 295 (including; maps, figure, bibliography and index)

Bosnia after Dayton deserves to be widely read. Sumantra Bose provides a balanced and insightful study of the complex internal and external relationships of Bosnian politics, something that is rare in books on the region. The book examines the dilemmas facing the international community in establishing a multinational Bosnian state in circumstances where two of the three national communities (Bosnian Serbs and Croats) would prefer partition. He highlights that the Dayton Agreement, which ended the Bosnian war in 1995, has necessitated an internationally-led state-building process involving 'political engineering on a remarkable scale' (p. 3). The book seeks to learn the lessons and limitations of this engineering process.

Bose essentially defends the Dayton settlement, which resulted in the formal recognition of ethnic division between two substantially autonomous entities, the Serb-dominated Republika Srpska and the internally-divided Muslim-Croat Federation. The domestic political framework closely mirrors the former communist practice under Tito of the 'ethnic-key' where political positions are allocated on the basis of ethnic representation institutionalising the importance of ethnicity and the bargaining power of nationalist elites. This framework of elite consociation is shaped and enforced by a broad range of international institutions overseeing the Dayton process, headed by the international High Representative, currently Lord Paddy Ashdown, who has the power to sack obstructive elected politicians and to directly impose legislation.

Bose's book is a response to the problems and lack of progress by the international community over the last six years. Essentially the Bosnian polity is as divided as before, with the vast majority of voters voting along ethnic lines and little likelihood that Bosnia's pre-war ethnic mix can ever be reconstituted. The lack of progress has led international policy to be vociferously attacked from two sides, by those who argue for greater integration and those who argue for greater ethnic separation. Bose tackles both sides with equal good sense and clarity. The partitionist argument is more of a minority concern, expressed earlier by American isolationist scholars and more recently by increasingly marginalized Bosnian Croat nationalists. Bose articulately argues that partition, population exchanges and the establishment of ethnically homogeneous statelets would neither have been a more realistic or less violent option. It was, in fact, the internationally-led partition of former Yugoslavia that resulted in the break-down of inter-ethnic consensus and led to war in Bosnia to start with.

Bose's explanation of the limits of the liberal internationalist project in Bosnia is the fascinating heart of the book and produces insights which can be generalised to other cases of international engineering in post-conflict societies. He argues that the assumption of many international community representatives that corrupt and authoritarian nationalist elites are the chief obstacle to externally-imposed progress ignores the fact that nationalist parties have mass support in Bosnian society. This mass support could be ascribed to a Bosnian 'herd-mentality' and belief that Bosnians do not understand their 'real' interests, or, argues Bose, it poses a genuine puzzle which should encourage the critical examination of international strategy.

He argues that nationalist sentiment is more than understandable in Bosnia in the aftermath of a civil war - fought over competing views of the legitimacy of a Bosnian state - and in a regional context where the international community formally sanctioned the death of the Yugoslav state and Yugoslav 'idea' in favour of ethnically-based republics. Bose argues that Bosnia cannot be studied in isolation from the region and that, in the long-term, it is only through greater regional inter-connections that inter-ethnic divisions in Bosnia can be substantially ameliorated. Meanwhile, to argue that national identities within Bosnia are artificial or even illegitimate, as many commentators do, is both ignorant and absurd. To insist that Bosnian Serbs and Bosnian Croats did not have a genuine case for opposing a centralised Bosnian state or that they do not have a case for desiring more autonomy today does not help establish a basis for co-existence and consensus. Greater autonomy is necessary in order to legitimise the Bosnian state in the eyes of its citizens.

Bose astutely notes that it is not just the 'ethnic-key' which makes the international regulatory regime in Bosnia resemble the earlier days of Tito-style communism. The lack of transparency in international decision-making and lack of accountability of international policy-makers to Bosnian people has replaced politics by paternalism where decisions are made 'behind the scenes' while

the public is assured 'that whatever was being done was in their best interests' (p. 275). He is critical of international policies which have attempted to coerce integration through sacking politicians, banning political parties and closing down radio stations and newspapers, arguing that this has done little to assuage people's genuine concerns and insecurities. The political process has also been degraded by its instrumentalist manipulation by international managers who have regularly tinkered with electoral rules in the attempt to bureaucratically 'engineer' the dominance of pliant client elites lacking in popular support.

Instead of stultifying or by-passing the political process, Bose advises that the political sphere is necessary for 'state-building' - providing a mechanism through which political differences can be mediated, rather than merely suppressed or ignored. Putting forward a much needed creative and forward looking approach he advises that the international community should see the domestic political process as a vital mechanism for mediating conflicts and integrating society.

Bose defends the Dayton framework against its partitionist and integrationist critics. His defence, however, involves a fundamental critique of international institutional assumptions and practices that have, thus far, characterised the workings of the Dayton framework.

David Chandler, Brunel University, UK