

BOSNIA:
faking democracy after Dayton
by **David Chandler**

London: Pluto, 1999. x + 239 pages.
£45.00, ISBN 0-7453-1408-2,
£14.99 pbk, ISBN 0-7453-1403-1.

Reviewer: **ROBERT BIDELEUX**
(University of Wales, Swansea)

This is a challenging and useful book, albeit one which hammers home its messages with degrees of stridency, hyperbole and repetitiveness that become rather wearing. The main contention is that, while ostensibly promoting 'democratization', Western powers and international agencies have actually been engaging in self-serving and paternalistic forms of liberal imperialism which have done more to prevent than to promote inter-ethnic reconciliation and

the establishment of liberal democracy in Bosnia-Hercegovina since Dayton. Having castigated the humbug, divisiveness and counter-productiveness of this supposedly 'democratizing' mission, Chandler concludes that the real role of the US-led intervention in Bosnia-Hercegovina since 1995 has not been to benefit its benighted inhabitants but to serve as a focus and a catalyst in bringing about and sustaining a co-operative international endeavour to define a new post-Cold War security order in Europe and a new *raison d'être* for NATO. The failure of the international intervention to foster democracy has resulted, not in the granting of greater autonomy to indigenous actors, but in 'mission creep' and the centralization of power in hands of the UN High Representative and his functionaries, negating the local voters' quite freely expressed preferences.