

## **CHAPTER EIGHT - THE EXTERNAL DYNAMIC OF DEMOCRATISATION**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The international mandates continue to be extended despite the lack of clear objectives or quantifiable success in meeting them. The ideology of democratisation, considered in the previous Chapter, begins to explain why there is little critique of this process but does not indicate the dynamic behind it. The consensus on democratisation may well be a necessary condition for the extension of international regulation over Bosnia, but this does not make it a sufficient explanation for it. The empirical findings of this work and the contradictory assessments of the democratisation process from its leading proponents suggest that the prolongation of this process provides a flexible form through which international institutions have extended their capacity to accommodate to and to influence new East/West and West/West international relations without the framework of the Cold War.

This Chapter reconsiders the debate between conservative critics and official proponents of democratisation within the US foreign policy establishment, locating this in the broader context of US foreign policy and in particular the expansion of the US-led NATO alliance to the 'new democracies' of East Europe. It is suggested that the close linking of success in Bosnia with the development of new forms of international co-operation, through the UN, NATO and the OSCE, reflects attempts to use the international consensus on democratisation in Bosnia to overcome problems of cohering and legitimating these international institutions. It would appear that the more contradictory aspects of the democratisation process, such as the growing

restrictions on self-government at all levels, result more from the external pressures on this process than the exigencies of the situation within Bosnia itself.

## **DEMOCRATISATION AND THE INTERNATIONAL ORDER**

Support for democratisation has little to do with attitudes towards democracy. The official, liberal and conservative assessments of democratisation practice all concur that democracy is a good thing, but not in Bosnia. The debate as it is summed up by Fareed Zakaria, in *Foreign Affairs*, is between those who want ‘to make the world safe for democracy’ and those who want ‘to make democracy safe for the world’ (1997, p. 43). The difference between these perspectives has little to do with the history or reality of Bosnia, there is general agreement among international actors that Bosnia lacks the cultural prerequisites for democracy and that international regulation of some form is a necessity. The difference lies in the strategic and political importance of Bosnia and the need for concerted high-level international action.

The existence of the democratisation consensus, reconsidered in the previous Chapter, cannot explain the practice of democratisation. While the democratisation approach legitimises the extension of international regulation and problematises the capacities and institutional practices of the objects of democratisation, in this case the Bosnian people and their representatives. The content of that regulation and its application and extension would appear to depend on factors unrelated to this. To answer the question of why Dayton and democratisation in Bosnia has attracted the attention, support and resources of the international community, and to shed light on the extension of the democratisation process itself, it is necessary to begin by reconstructing the debate

between the conservative critics and the defenders of democratisation within US government circles.

It can be argued that the debate about democratisation in Bosnia has been about the priorities for US foreign policy. The heart of the conservative critique is the question of what the 'pay off' is. Predominantly from the pre-Clinton foreign policy establishment, the conservatives argue that the US has no security interest in Bosnia and that getting drawn into Balkan politics with no strategic objectives is a high risk strategy. In answering the 'pay off' question the leading US policy-makers, supported by European governments and heads of international institutions, provide a set of answers which enable us to begin to relocate the democratisation dynamic away from the situation in Bosnia itself.

Richard Holbrooke took up Henry Kissinger's September 1997 opinion-piece in the Washington Post arguing that Kissinger, above all people, should be able to see the larger issue at stake in Bosnia - US leadership:

One of the most consistent themes in Dr. Kissinger's career has been the need for America to remain engaged in Europe. At the end of the Cold War, he opposed calls to withdraw from the field of European security, argued that NATO should remain an indispensable instrument of American policy and called for its enlargement - all views with which the Clinton administration agrees. (Holbrooke, 1997)

Pulling back from democratisation would 'undermine America's commitment to European security just on the eve of the event he [Kissinger] has so eloquently

supported: the enlargement of NATO' (Holbrooke, 1997). For Holbrooke, the US partnership with its European allies in Bosnia 'has defined our post-Cold War American security commitment to Europe'. He concludes his article with a call to action, stating: 'The United States should not sacrifice its dual role as a central part of the European security system and a leading advocate of universal human values' (Holbrooke, 1997).

Charles Kupchan (1997), on the National Security Council staff at the start of the Clinton administration, believes that 'also at stake in Bosnia is the future of European integration' as the EU would be paralysed in the face of renewed conflict. According to NATO Secretary-General, Javier Solana (1997), retreating from democratisation in Bosnia would be 'highly destabilising for wider Europe ... thus it would run against the strategic interests of all NATO allies'.

Kupchan argues that retreating from Bosnia makes a mockery of US plans for enlarging NATO. He argues that the Senate cannot ratify treaty-based defence guarantees to Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic and withdraw from Bosnia, 'peace in Europe's centre is either worth American lives or it is not' (Kupchan, 1997). Warren Zimmerman, former US ambassador to Yugoslavia, also argues NATO's credibility is at stake in Bosnia and that if it fails 'not only will NATO's expansion look ludicrous, but serious roles for NATO anywhere will be hard to imagine' (cited in Wilson, 1998, p. 148). Anthony Lewis (1997) makes the same point, in the *New York Times*, that the message US withdrawal from Bosnia would send out to NATO, when it is expanding its membership and enlarging its promise of security and freedom, is 'Don't believe us'. Lewis (1997) insists that America must not abandon

‘our leadership role in carrying out Dayton’. In order to demonstrate US leadership, Kupchan (1997) is not worried about a little blood being spilt and argues that, instead of a fear of US casualties holding back intervention, Clinton should ‘prepare the public for the prospect of US casualties’ and ‘up the ante’ by arresting war criminals and shutting down more broadcasts and, in the case of retaliation, use ‘overwhelming force’.

The view that international intervention in Bosnia is essential for the coherence of US relations with Europe and also for European Union cohesion has been widely voiced across the international community prior and during the Dayton process. In Britain, Will Hutton argued that failure in Bosnia could lead to a repeat of the inter-war period when US withdrawal from the League of Nations led to the breakdown of the international diplomatic order: ‘[Withdrawal] will be the clearest signal yet that there is no will or capacity to resist aggression motivated by territorial aggrandisement and ethnic tribalism. The spell will have been broken; international law will have been flouted; and we will live in a lawless, orderless world’ (Hutton, 1995). Tom Gallagher, a leading British democratisation proponent, sees European Union involvement in Bosnia as an expression of European identity and purpose which, as he notes, seems to have been lost in the late 1990s:

Perhaps one of the most useful functions of the Balkans in the 1990s is to be a mirror to the face of a West European nearly-union which has lost belief in the federalist idea and the policies of a economic and social consensus that fuelled its progress. If Europe was now a vital political concept rather than a geographical expression, then the problems of South-Eastern Europe, far from being a nightmare from hell, might instead be viewed as a marvellous preparatory ground for diplomats, administrators,

politicians and NGOs imbued with the need to promote a post-nationalist agenda across the continent. (Gallagher, 1997, p. 34)

The question then follows of why Bosnia should be so crucial to international security, to NATO's existence and to European unity? Surely this says more about NATO and European unity than about Bosnia itself. If there was a rationale for the existence of NATO after the Cold War, or a greater consensus on what Europe stood for in the late 1990s, it is doubtful that Bosnia would have assumed the international importance that it has.

Many commentators have emphasised the importance of Bosnia for international relations after the Cold War. Susan Woodward, for example, argues that Dayton was 'a turning point ... in American leadership in the post-Cold War era' and argues that, through intervention in Bosnia, NATO and European security mechanisms have been transformed (1996a, p. 1). As she describes elsewhere, Bosnia has been the focus through which the international institutional framework of international relations has been reconstituted after the Cold War: political restrictions on German military actions were removed, allowing involvement outside NATO frontiers for the first time since the defeat of Nazism; NATO's strike against the Bosnian Serbs was the first NATO combat action since its founding; the WEU also took its first military and policing actions; the UN sent troops to Europe for the first time and mounted the largest, most complex and most expensive operation in its history; and Russia became reintegrated into the international community through the five-power Contact Group (Woodward, 1995, p. 2; 1996b, p. 173).

Despite the column-space given to the importance of Bosnia to post-Cold War international institutional arrangements, there has been little clarification of this relationship. For example, Woodward argues that the importance of the democratisation process is that a failure to secure a democratic and stable solution in Bosnia will then discredit American leadership in the world and question the new institutional arrangements. Along similar lines, the *Guardian's* Martin Woollacott argues: '[The arrest of war criminals] could turn out to be a turning point for Bosnia and for NATO. All the agonising over whether or not the expansion of NATO is a good thing has tended to obscure the fact that if the NATO intervention in Bosnia ends in failure ... it could break the alliance' (Woollacott, 1997a).

It is the suggestion of this book that it is not failure in Bosnia which might then question the new international security arrangements but the weakness of the new security arrangements that has necessitated a continued high-level involvement in Bosnia. NATO is a high profile example of the problem that confronts the international institution-builders today. Simon Jenkins (1997) unintentionally pinpoints the problem when he argues that withdrawal from Bosnia would not risk British security or that of the alliance and in the same article describes NATO as 'an alliance whose obscurity of purpose is now complete'. If it was not for Bosnia as a vital post-Cold War focus of organisation it is doubtful that NATO's existence, which otherwise involves international conferences around self-established targets of expansion, would appear relevant. NATO plays a new role today, that of a political forum for managing the integration of the former Communist Bloc, but without the focus on Bosnia there would have been little coherence to this process (Burgess,

1997, pp. 19-20). As Woollacott notes, it has been through co-ordinated international action in Bosnia that NATO's new relationship with the East has been formalised:

NATO deployment, enlargement, and the relationship with Russia intertwine in Bosnia. Poland and the Czech Republic, as an earnest of their seriousness about membership, sent peace-keeping contingents. Hungary became, effectively, a forward NATO base ... the Hungarians and Romanians moved into a new better relationship. Russia joined the NATO force on special terms of its own, which prefigured the NATO-Russia charter. (Woollacott, 1997a)

As Carl Bildt noted, in May 1997, Bosnia has been at the cutting edge of a transition in European security and stability. In 1991 there had been no foreign troops in South-East Europe, now there were deployments in southern Hungary, Croatia, Montenegro, Macedonia and Albania, apart from Bosnia. A new regional security arrangement was being established on this basis and 'Bosnia and the region might be as important for the overall effort to create stability in Europe in the future as Berlin was in the past' (OHRB, 1997m). Later that month he expanded on the need to develop the military capacity of the WEU and co-operation with the US for a new long-term framework in the region, stating that short-term military exit strategies were not possible without risking a political collapse:

What we must do is shape a coherent security structure for the region as a whole, which includes the stationing of outside forces at key positions in order to be able to deter any attempt - by anyone in the region - to resort to aggression, war or large-scale violence ... Politically the European Union would need to be ready to act and to

assume responsibility, possibly through the active political presence of Special or High Representatives who would be the face and voice of Europe in specific areas and on specific issues. (OHRB, 1997q)

The importance of Bosnia has been that in a period of international transition after the Cold War it became a focus for international institutions that could enable them to redefine their political and strategic objectives and transform themselves organisationally in the new post-Cold War environment. Democratisation has been central to this process of transition from anti-communism to human rights promotion, enabling a level of constancy whilst redefining the role of the international community and reorganising international co-operation. As Robin Cook stated in his first public statement on Bosnia: ‘The basic political rights of democratic pluralism are now needed in Eastern Europe to combat totalitarian nationalism as much as they ever were to challenge communism’ (Cook, 1994).

The fact that it is not Bosnia that is important but the international co-operation symbolised by the democratisation process is starkly revealed by the later actions of the British Foreign Secretary. Cook has not been slow to make political capital out of strident demands for the Bosnian parties and regional leaders to accede to international priorities, taking the lead on issues such as political corruption, war criminals and a free media (Black, 1997). However, despite the priority Bosnia has in terms of British foreign policy, there is no possibility of unilateral British action in Bosnia as he made clear on his first official visit to Washington: ‘I do not want anyone in the US to be under any misapprehension: the principle is one out, all out.

We were there before US troops arrived, and it was an uncomfortable and lonely place to be.’ (Maddox, 1997)

For the British establishment, as Cook explained, the highest priority is ‘to signal that we want to have a strong working relationship with one of our oldest allies’ (Maddox, 1997). The importance of Bosnia for Britain is primarily that of cementing a relationship with the US and the fact that political capital can be made is a welcome bonus. Central to the international support for democratisation is that it provides a focus for ‘strong working relationships’ at a time when there appears to be few other examples of untainted political goals.

International democratisation policy practice and the vast sums invested in the democratisation process in Bosnia, may not make sense in terms of Bosnia, but they are understandable in relation to these broader policy needs. To fill in the final piece of the puzzle we must retrace our steps and reanalyse democratisation practice in Bosnia to understand that the importance of democratisation is in its form, as a process of relationship management, rather than its end goals.

## **THE EXTERNAL DRIVE TO DEMOCRATISE**

Once the dynamic behind democratisation is grasped, as the desire to unify an international agenda and set a new framework of integration into the international community, then democratisation policy in Bosnia becomes explainable. Democratisation is a process that involves the main international powers around a

common agenda under US leadership and sets new standards of legitimacy for international institutions.

Woodward and others have correctly indicated that it has been through Bosnia that international relations of the post-Cold War order have been worked out. However, the analysis of this process has generally been restricted to that of great power relations, especially the new relations between America, Europe and Russia. James Petras and Steve Vieux, in the *New Left Review*, exemplify this approach in their article 'Bosnia and the Revival of US Hegemony' (1996). The problem is that, in Carl Bildt's words, 'there is no quick fix' - not for Bosnian rivalries, but for the new mechanisms of international regulation. The experience of Bosnia would indicate the perceived instability of that process. Bosnia may have given new life to NATO, the WEU and other international forms of co-operation, but the forced nature of international calls for their perpetual extension in Bosnia indicates that the question of legitimacy needs more than a new language of democracy and human rights but also an active and interventionist role.

Bosnia is one of the few international policy interventions that has drawn universal support from all the major international powers. As soon as other international issues appear on the agenda it is clear that the unity over Bosnia is a superficial or at least transient one. The unique aspect about democratisation in Bosnia has been the ability to match a moral high-ground over democracy, human rights and civil society with concerted international organisation. Raising the same issues of democracy in other parts of the world is much more difficult, and conflicting domestic and international interests come into play. In relation to China and South-East Asia, for example, US

and British attempts to play the democracy card have only opened up divisions between major Western powers and revealed the fact that economic interests can easily blunt new 'ethical' foreign policies (Cumming-Bruce, 1997).

The unique nature of the Bosnian involvement has had such a cohesive impact on the international institutions involved that there is a great reluctance to stop the co-operative project. Democratisation is the key to extending this co-operative relationship, not merely because the language of democratisation allows involvement to be seen as taking the high moral ground, nor because it provides a flexible framework for self-flattery while denigrating the 'ethnic rivalries' of the less civilised Bosnians. These aspects are important for legitimising a relationship of domination but the same could be said for other issues high on the international agenda, such as the rights of children, women or minorities. What distinguishes democratisation from other themes of concern is the fact that it is a process. A cohering co-operative project with no fixed definitions and time-limits, a cohering mechanism that can last as long as its practitioners require. As Javier Solana, NATO's Secretary-General, stated in July 1998 on the occasion of NATO's first seminar about democracy, held in Sarajevo, the significance of international community activity in Bosnia goes beyond Bosnia itself because 'the reconstruction of Bosnia shows perhaps the most powerful co-operative momentum in Europe's recent history' (AP, 1998b).

The international consensus around democratisation in Bosnia, has little to do with either democracy or Bosnia itself. The key to understanding the dynamic of democratisation is that the process is the most important aspect. Already in July 1996, the High Representative noted the pressure put on his office by the 'continuous

widening of the scope of OHR activities' (OHRR, 1996b, par. 6). The pressure to widen the remit has not come from popular Bosnian demand, but from the institutions themselves (RFE/RL Newswire, 1997g; Boyd, 1998, p. 51).

This is why, according to the democratising institutions, Bosnia is always on a knife-edge and the progress could be undermined by one lapse of control, or one sign of weakness from the international community. To withdraw or to bring in an international protectorate, Kenney's suggestions cited in the previous chapter, would end the dynamic of democratisation. The nature of Bosnia as an ongoing process of international co-operation explains why even though the powers of Carlos Westendorp amount to an international protectorate this can never be openly admitted. This may not be purely because there is some reluctance to appear colonial or, more importantly, a reluctance to take responsibility for what happens in Bosnia. Installing a formal protectorate would remove the relationship process whereby mechanisms of international community co-operation continually have to be re-energised as new issues arise that generate opportunities for united action.

Although democratisation has necessitated increased international powers over Bosnia and set new standards of intervention, this may well be a by-product of Bosnia being a focus for international co-operation and the necessity of 'upping the ante'. This does not necessarily indicate that international protectorates are going to be established in such a direct form over other states in the region. In fact, this analysis would suggest that the opposite is the case, if Bosnia is the fulcrum for international co-operation, there is less necessity to talk-up the problems of other states such as Macedonia and Albania, or to intervene more directly in the question of Kosovo.

It would appear that Bosnia has been an experiment, not primarily in new forms of international protectorate, but in new frameworks of international co-operation. It has been difficult for Bosnia to bear the brunt of this responsibility, it has not been easy to keep the democratisation process going with very little opposition to international community policy proposals. This is why democratisation has been forced to problematise aspects of political life that could have been resolved between the parties, and why there has been a growing tendency to problematise the Muslim leadership as well as the Croats and Serbs.

The problem faced by the Bosnian people is one that is not of their own making. The democratisation process, through linking democratisation to international institutional mechanisms, has ensured that the international administration will be prolonged for as long as it is in the interests of the major international powers to use Bosnia as a focus for international co-operation. There are always new problems and new institutional involvements. Corruption, for example, became an issue in July 1997 when Robin Cook accused leaders on all sides of a failure to tackle customs irregularities and the black market (Binyon, 1997). This new level of interference in relation to problems hardly unique to Bosnia was justified by Cook in the terminology of democratisation and defending 'the ordinary peoples of Bosnia[‘s] ... right to accountability' (OHRB, 1997w). Within a month, the international approach to the issue was transformed, the Contact Group found that corruption was pervasive throughout Bosnia and instructed the High Representative to formulate action to be taken in this hitherto neglected area (OHRB, 1997y).

Every international institution, NGO, and policy analyst, involved in Bosnia, appears to have their own list of additional demands they would like to see fulfilled before international withdrawal. In July 1998, for example, additional demands raised by Hrair Balian, the Balkan Director of the ICG, included, amongst others, the establishment of a South African-style Truth and Reconciliation Commission, to be established after the Hague Tribunal had finished its work.(1) The prior completion of these two lengthy processes would take Bosnian self-government off the agenda for the foreseeable future. With so many organisations arguing for support for the extension within Bosnia of their pet projects and concerns, unaccountable international bodies are then free to choose which demands, if any, they pursue. This enables US government representatives to force the pace, with leading actors, such as US Special Adviser Robert Gelbard, emphasising the need for European powers to support the US over new demands for action which range from concerns that the Bosnian police be community-based to the ethnic constitution of Bosnian political parties.(2)

The by-product of continually raising new needs for international community co-operation in Bosnia has been to make the small state, as Simon Jenkins (1997) states, 'the world capital of interventionism'. As George Kenney (1997c) points out, the amount of resources going into reconstruction in Bosnia, a third of the total US foreign policy budget, in per capita terms about US \$1,200 a head, compared to US \$3 a head in Africa, is symptomatic of the lack of relationship between resources invested in the state and relative need of the Bosnian people. As some commentators have observed the powers and authority taken on by the international institutions have

been breath-taking. Ted Galen Carpenter, of the Cato Institute, writing in the *Washington Times*, notes:

US and NATO meddling ... [has] taken the form of actions that make a mockery of any meaningful concept of democracy. Those actions reflect the vision of democracy that advocates of speech codes and other forms of political correctness would love to impose in the United States - if only they had unchallenged power. The Bosnian Serb republic has become a laboratory for their experiments in Frankensteinian democracy. (Carpenter, 1997)

This work suggests that the dynamic for democratisation does not stem from a desire to foist a 'politically correct' policy nightmare on the Bosnian people, but that this has, in effect, been the unintended consequence of attempting to build international co-operation around democratisation. Inevitably more and more barriers to international withdrawal have been flagged-up and in the process Bosnian people and politicians portrayed in an increasingly unflattering light. The extension of democratisation has necessitated the continual postponement of self-government. The postponements of the municipal elections, the extension of EU control in Mostar, the two-year 'consolidation period' and its indefinite extension, and extensions to direct international administration over Brcko, have all been legitimated on the basis that international management is the best method of democratisation. The expansion of the democratic preconditions necessary before Bosnian institutions can be democratically accountable to the citizens of Bosnia has developed with a speed and confidence that has left little room for discussion.

## CONCLUSION

Bosnia has become a parody of democratisation because international action in Bosnia appears to be geared towards the democratisation process as opposed to democracy. The process would seem to be the primary concern of international actors and the outcome largely secondary. As one leading democratisation theorist expressed: 'Paradoxically enough, the case for democracy assistance, and in fact for foreign assistance generally, may at times depend less on the specific impact of the assistance on others than on what the assistance says and means about ourselves' (Carothers, 1996, p. 132).

It would appear that democratisation strategy has been determined less by Bosnian problems than by the developing process of international co-operation. The international community has created a new cohering framework whereby states operating through the UN, NATO and OSCE, can develop their democratic credentials and moral standing through pledging their allegiance to international US-led policy in Bosnia. The Dayton process has been one of international target-setting in which the coherence and legitimacy of international institutions have had to be constantly affirmed. As soon as the original targets are met new ones have been constantly placed on the agenda as new mission statements for these institutions. This is why the UN High Representative's office has constantly expanded its powers at the expense of Bosnian self-government, NATO have been compelled to play a civilian role and the OSCE have acquired unique powers to ratify elections on the basis of post-election policy-making.