

# National Security Strategy: New World Order, 1992-2000

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**Overview** We briefly study the most important conflict of the Bush I's presidency, the First Persian Gulf War. We then trace some of the foreign policies of Clinton, including the emerging doctrine of unilateral intervention. We also contrast this with the actual policies of the United States.

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Despite his protestations that the U.S. was “the undisputed leader of the age,” the leader had failed to save its closest friend Gorby and could not bring itself to topple Saddam. Moreover, the economy went into a slump. Bush called Clinton/Gore “two bozos” who knew less about foreign policy than Millie (Bushes’ dog) but the Americans didn’t seem to care about foreign policy. The Republicans, once unified by the Soviet threat, now split, unable to agree what to do in the “new world” and when Bush’s trip to Japan to force it to open its markets to U.S. car-makers failed (he even threw up on the Japanese Prime Minister although this was not meant to express disapproval of Japan’s market tactics), the Democrats gained the upper hand. The post-Cold War era had begun.

## **1 The First Gulf War**

There was one event in 1990-1991 that had little to do with the Soviets and nothing to do with the momentous changes in Europe. On August 2, 1990 Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait.

Iraq had some legitimate grievances. First, and foremost, Iraq was in deep economic trouble. The long war with Iran had left its economy in shambles, and the country was burdened with a hefty foreign debt, most of it held by Saudi Arabia (about \$26 billion), and Kuwait (about \$14 billion). To recover, Iraq needed money, and it had two ways of getting it. One was the traditional strong export of oil: revenues from that would help with recovery, but that meant OPEC had to agree to raise prices. The other was the time-honored debt forgiveness: Iraq argued that its war had been fought on behalf of the Arab world against the revolutionary Iranians, and on behalf of the Sunni Muslims against the Shi’a. Iraq claimed that it had protected the Arab regimes and the Muslim faith, and therefore the fellow Arab states were obliged to help.

They did not. In fact, they positively obstructed Iraq’s recovery. Neither Saudi Arabia nor Kuwait agreed to forgive any of the debt. Kuwait went further and increased its oil production causing a drop in oil prices that was specifically designed to hurt Iraq and force it to be more amenable in their border dispute. The dispute itself was complex since Kuwait was an artificial state that used to be a British protectorate (since 1899), that had only recently gained its independence in 1961, an act Iraq bitterly challenged. The artificial border restricted Iraq’s outlet in the Persian Gulf too. To add insult to injury, the Kuwaitis had been illegally siphoning off underground oil deposits from Iraq by drilling at an angle from their side of the border.

Iraq tried to negotiate but it could obtain no concessions. Kuwait's additional activities were further hurting Iraq's economy just as the other Arab states were refusing to help. The historically questionable legitimacy of the regime provided a useful pretext for an invasion that would solve Iraq's problem at once, if successful: Iraq would control 20% of the worldwide supply of oil, it would not have to pay a significant portion of its debt, and it would be in a far better position to influence OPEC decisions (since its holdings would match those of Saudi Arabia).

One potential problem was American reaction. Saddam Hussein seems to have had ample reason to believe that the U.S. and its allies would not act to save Kuwait. After all, they had given him \$40 billion worth of arms to fight Iran, nearly all of it on credit. At the time, Iran seemed the larger threat despite the well-known brutality of Hussein's regime. Finally, the U.S. government reassured Iraq that Bush would veto any Congressional attempt to impose sanctions on Iraq over human rights abuses.

When in July 1990 Iraq's negotiations with Kuwait ground to a halt, Saddam Hussein began a massive military buildup on the border to impress the Kuwaitis. He then outlined Iraq's grievances to American ambassador April Glaspie, and promised not to invade before a final attempt to resolve the disputes through negotiations. The Ambassador did express concern over the buildup, but her non-committal response that the U.S. had "no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait," was interpreted as giving Iraq tacit approval for the invasion.

Hussein, however, was wrong in his estimates, and he would have known that had he looked at U.S. policy in the gulf region since the Second World War. This policy has always been consistent: do not allow any one power, especially if hostile to U.S., to dominate the region. During the Cold War, the policy aimed at preventing the USSR from gaining significant leverage in the Middle East, with U.S. alliances shifting depending on which countries the Soviets befriended. At first, the USSR supported Israel, and the U.S. was not especially friendly to the new state, going so far as to clamp down on its allies in 1956 for conspiring with it. However, as the Soviets withdrew their support for Israel, the U.S. stepped in to take up the slack. By the early 1970s, the situation was almost cemented with USSR helping Syria and Egypt, and the U.S. countering with support for Israel and Saudi Arabia. Although both the USSR and the US supported Iraq, the U.S. sometimes helped Iran, although neither was pro-American. During the Iran-Iraq War, the U.S. only cared that world oil supplies continue without wild fluctuations, and neither country prevailed.

Before someone cries "no blood for oil" or comes up with some similarly specious slogan, let me make one thing clear: who controls the world supply of oil is a matter of crucial national interest and importance. It is not the case that the U.S. (or the British or the French) simply wanted to get their hands on Middle Eastern oil in order to enrich greedy corporations whose seedy government connections provoked

such interventions in the first place. Nor was it that they wanted to ensure access to cheap oil so that their profligate imperialist societies could enrich themselves at the expense of the third world. (Notice how the two claims are usually advanced simultaneously even though they contradict each other: if corporations are to profit, then oil cannot be cheap to consumers.) The concern with the supply of oil goes way beyond crude conspiracy theories.

Oil is crucial to the functioning of modern economies. A hike in crude oil prices will not only drive up the price of gasoline, but many other end products as well because of the way markets redistribute costs. For example, all of us will have to deal with very high prices for gas. For Californians, this is a direct problem, but it goes further than that. Petroleum runs almost everything that moves: trains, ships, trucks (diesel), jet airplanes (kerosene), and cars (gasoline). This means that an increase in the price of oil would lead to a hike in transportation costs, which in turn would make everything more expensive. In addition to fuel, petroleum has a lot of other uses. Oil is used to heat houses, and provide power for electric utilities, factories, and large buildings. Products that depend directly on the oil industry include plastics (although manufacture could be switched to materials dependent on natural gas), tires, and road surfacing (bitumen). Oil price shocks can slow down the rate of growth, and lead to a recession (reduction of output). In the last thirty years, oil price shocks have either caused or contributed to all recessions both in the U.S. and worldwide. For example, some estimates suggest that a persistent 10% increase in the price of oil would reduce growth in the U.S. and the G7 countries by nearly 1% of GDP!

Because of this dependency on oil, countries (not just the West, China's growth accounted for over 40% of the increase in the demand for oil in 2004) will be especially careful to cultivate links with the oil producers, especially the most important ones in the Middle East. This gives these regimes uncommon political leverage, and they can expect a lot of support if they are threatened by anything that might destabilize the region and produce shocks in the oil prices due, for example, to falling production. The flip side is that anyone who controls large enough reserves can influence these prices and in a way have his hand on the windpipe of oil-dependent countries.

The Arab oil embargo of 1973-74 hit the U.S. economy hard because it caused a four-fold increase in the price of crude oil from 10/17/73 until 3/18/74. The NYSE shares lost \$97 billion in six weeks, factories cut production, and unemployment soared. Even though the root causes of the severity of the downturn were in economic problems caused by the Vietnam War, and the devaluations of the dollar, the oil shock did worsen and deep the energy crisis considerably. This was an example of a politically-motivated move: OPEC refused to ship oil to countries that supported Israel in the Yom Kippur War even though the American military airlift to Israel had its counterpart in the Soviet military lift to Egypt. OPEC's strategy had shown just how vulnerable industrial economies could be to disruption of oil

supplies, and correspondingly its members could exercise significant leverage over them. Western Europe in particular abandoned Israel for pro-Arab positions. When the Europeans issued a statement demanding Israel's withdrawal to pre-1967 lines on November 6, OPEC duly lifted the embargo against them.

This underscores just how important politically control of oil can be. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was unacceptable because it would concentrate too much power in Baghdad: Iraq would double its oil capacity, and become the dominant power in the region (next to Israel). It would control 20% of the world supply of oil, and if it conquered Saudi Arabia, a full 40%. There was no way that the West in general and the U.S. in particular would allow such a strategically vital region to fall under the sway of a single hostile power like Iraq.

Still, the U.S. response in the first few days after the invasion was cautious: Kuwait had been pro-Soviet and anti-Israeli for a long time. The U.S. launched a "wholly defensive mission" (as Bush called it) to prevent Iraq from invading Saudi Arabia by moving troops to the kingdom on August 7. Operation Desert Shield fulfilled a request by the Saudis who had panicked when Iraqi forces began re-grouping along the border with Saudi Arabia after their successful conquest of Kuwait. This was the first time American forces were stationed in the kingdom, in a move that would later produce many grievances among some more extremist Muslims (like Osama bin Laden) who resented infidel presence in the Holy Lands. It is worth remembering that these troops went there to protect the country from invasion.

Margaret Thatcher, who was visiting in Camp David at the time, exhorted Bush to a vigorous response: after all, the Kuwaitis had billions of dollars in investments and bank deposits in Britain. Bush responded to her "George, this is not the time to get wobbly" by likening Hussein to Hitler, and declaring that this was Munich 1938 all over again. Aggression had to be checked, Bush said, and then spelled out the meaning of the post Cold War era—Saddam Hussein was challenging the **new world order**, where "peace and security, freedom, and the rule of law" would reign.

Bush mobilized the U.N. with help from Gorbachev and the British. On August 6, UNSC passed Resolution 661 that initiated economic sanctions against Iraq, but this had no appreciable effect on Hussein. Instead, he began embracing pro-Islamic ideology (at least for rhetorical purposes), denounced the Saudi family as usurpers of the Holy Places of Mecca and Medina (echoing some of the Iranian propaganda), added the words "Allahu Akbar" to the Iraqi flag, and took to praying. All of this sounded as a prelude to invasion of that country, and elimination of yet another creditor to Iraq along with the acquisition of the valuable Hama oil fields.

On November 29, UNSC passed Resolution 678 which set a deadline for Iraq's withdrawal (1/15/91), and authorized the use of force to evict Hussein if he failed to comply. The military buildup in the region continued with Secretary of State James Baker assembling a formidable coalition of 34 countries deploying some

660,000 troops. There was almost no domestic dissent in the U.S. (some “no blood for oil” but not much). Unlike all post-1945 U.S. presidents, Bush also obtained, on 1/12/91, a constitutional authorization for war from Congress (although he had begun massive deployment of troops already and later spoiled the achievement by declaring, incorrectly, that he had the ‘inherent right’ to take the country to war without Congressional approval). Colin Powell, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was assured by Bush that the requirements of his doctrine would be met, and so on January 16, 1991, following the expiration of the deadline, the U.S.-led forces began the month-long bombing campaign called Desert Storm.

Iraq attempted to resist in various ways. On the 23rd, they dumped oil in the Gulf (at over 1 million tons, this is the largest spill in history). They attacked and briefly occupied the Saudi city of Khafji on the 30th, but were driven out by U.S. Marines and Saudi forces. Iraq fired missiles at Israel, hoping to draw the country into the conflict, and thereby precipitating a split in the Coalition: Arab states were expected to oppose any involvement by Israel. Under enormous pressure from the U.S., Israel desisted in responding to the provocations. Finally, the Iraqis set Kuwait’s oil fields on fire once retreat began. On February 22, Iraq attempted to use a Soviet-sponsored cease-fire agreement that would have given it three weeks to withdraw, but the U.S. rejected it and demanded that Iraq began withdrawing within 24-hours. When this ultimatum expired without any change in Iraqi behavior, the coalition began the ground offensive (Desert Sabre) on the 24th. The 100-hour campaign liberated Kuwait City, and led to a cease-fire on February 28.

The war was clean, successful, and very cheap for the U.S. In terms of casualties, there were 293 Americans lost (a number of the 148 battle deaths were due to “friendly fire”), and the total Coalition losses were about 378. On the Iraqi side, the bombing campaign killed an estimated 10-12,000 soldiers, and a further 10,000 in the ground war. It is unclear how many civilians perished in the war, but some estimates put the number at about 2,000 during the air war. As for the monetary cost, about 85% of the \$61 billion were paid for by allies, most of it by Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and some \$16 billion by Germany and Japan (which could not send troops due to international treaties in the first case and constitutional restrictions in the second). Iraq was forced to vacate Kuwait, and the emirate’s rather undemocratic regime was restored to power.

In retrospect, the most controversial issue about this war is the failure to topple Saddam Hussein. It should be emphasized that this is one of those instances in history where the decision looks bad only retrospect because we know what happened next. In 1991, there were many good reasons not to remove Hussein’s regime.

First, as the Bush administration repeatedly emphasized continuing on to Baghdad would have been grievously costly, would have necessitated an occupation, and would have turned the Arab states against the U.S. Although the war is now remembered as a cakewalk by the American forces, it was no such thing, the “ease” with which military victory was won did not come from Iraq being a pushover, but from

brilliant planning (by General Schwarzkopf and his staff), and high competence of the military. In terms of weaponry (quantity), the Iraqis matched the Coalition, it was in skill, training, morale, and quality that they were far inferior. This, however, did not mean they would not resist an invasion on Iraq much better than they had fought for Kuwait. There was good reason to believe the war would be costly, and would cause many more casualties.

Second, toppling Hussein would not be enough. In the ensuing power vacuum, the Islamic revolution could spread from Iran, and such a development would be most unwelcome by the Arab allies both because of its inevitable Shia character, and because without a stable Iraq, there would be no buffer between them and the Iranians, and certainly nothing to counterbalance Iran's military power in the region. An occupation by a Western-led coalition would also cause several public relations problems in the Muslim world anyway. The Palestinians had already backed the wrong horse when they supported Hussein (and had to pay dearly for that when Kuwait expelled all 400,000 Palestinians who lived and worked there), but the sentiment could spread further.

Third, one has to remember that in 1991, the Soviet Union still existed, and nobody knew just how fragile it was, or how close its collapse was going to be. Even though the USSR had not vetoed the UNSC resolutions, it was by no means clear that it would sit idly by and acquiesce to the Western domination of Iraq that would have resulted from the toppling of Hussein.

In short, there were many reasons for stopping short of removing Hussein's regime, and (as we now know for a fact) many of them were quite correct. Nobody knew just how obstructionist Iraq would become, just how prolonged and costly the American and British involvement would be (in policing the no-fly zones), or that Hussein would attempt to assassinate Bush, or that he would sponsor terrorism, and encourage the Palestinian suicide bombers with direct monetary payments. Nobody had foreseen the human suffering that Hussein would cause when he drowned in blood the rebellions against his rule: the Kurds (in the North) and the Shia (in the South) attempted to throw off his yoke only to be murdered en masse. It was to prevent future massacres there that the two no-fly zones were created.

The war is a good example of a successful military coercion under the Powell Doctrine that illustrates well the enormous military advantage accruing to the U.S. if it acts with overwhelming force, but also the vulnerability to challenges by local adversaries who may underestimate its ability to generate such commitment. It is very likely that a strong deterrent posture by the United States would have prevented this particular adventure by Hussein, saving us all a lot of trouble in the process.

## 2 Clinton and Foreign Policy

Bill Clinton was the first American president whose tenure in office lay entirely after the Cold War. The initial turbulent post-“War” years saw the disintegration of more states (Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia), the eruption of new civil wars (Yugoslavia, Liberia, Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia), and all of that at a time when the U.S. was struggling to find ways to use its enormous power, both economic and military, and to redefine its global strategy now that its communist adversary had collapsed so completely. Although Clinton was not averse to using force, he much preferred wielding the economic weapon and largely concentrated on global economic issues, which was a reflection of his domestic agenda.

When pressed to enunciate his fundamental view of foreign policy, Clinton offered an interventionist human-rights stance that became known as the **Clinton Doctrine**:

We can say to the people of the world, whether you live in Africa or Central Europe, or any other place, if somebody comes after innocent civilians and tries to kill them en masse because of their race, their ethnic background, or their religion, and it is within our power to stop it, we will stop it.

The president was proposing to put the military might of the United States to humanitarian uses, having defined the national interest in terms of preventing human-rights abuses all over the globe. This was much more expansive than containment, and clearly smacked of unilateralism. Many objected to this doctrine because it could be used as a thin wrapper for any intervention the U.S. desired for other purposes. It also seemed to squander precious resources for idealistic goals that had no direct relevance to the well-being of the nation. Finally, it seemed to propose to save other people from themselves: that is, intervene in places torn by civil strife. These conflicts are notoriously difficult to resolve and would inevitably drag the U.S. into a nation-building quagmire because while military power is useful to stop the killing, it may not be that useful to create a stable state that would protect its own citizens from one another.

Despite its seemingly vast scope, the doctrine did not really generate much interventionism into the type of conflicts it was supposed to deal with. Most notably, Clinton did not act in Rwanda to prevent the genocide in 1994 that cost the lives of one million Tutsis and moderate Hutus. Clinton’s gun-shy policy also did not quite live up to the idea of using U.S. power to prevent the deaths of innocent civilians even when such an attempt was made, as it was in Somalia.



## 2.1 Withdrawal from Somalia

Somalia is a country in East Africa that both the US and the USSR had competed over because of its strategic location. When that particular rivalry ended, the country sank into a civil war between various warlords, all amply armed with the weapons the two superpowers had left behind. The war ravaged the country that was quite poor anyway. Droughts periodically caused famine, and now the fighting was further reducing the food supply. It wasn't long before people started dying *en massé*. Although the U.N. had attempted to deliver humanitarian aid, it had been unsuccessful because the warlords confiscated much of it, and obstructed its distribution. In America, CNN broadcast shocking images of starvation producing a groundswell of public pressure on the administration to do something about it. In December 1992, Bush deployed American troops as part of a multinational force under U.N. authorization. By May 1993, this force had managed to stabilize the country, controlled the distribution of food and medicine, and the number of deaths from starvation and disease had dropped dramatically. In that month, the U.S. transferred control of the operation to the United Nations command.

The warlords, of course, resented the intervention and did everything possible to thwart it. In particular, the situation in the capital of Mogadishu deteriorated, and by October General Mohamed Farrah Aidid's forces became intolerable in their attacks and murder of troops from the U.N. mission. Clinton had decided to attempt **nation-building**, and for that this warlord had to be eliminated if the mission were to proceed as envisioned and succeed. On October 3, 1993, U.S. Rangers attempted to capture two of Aidid's top lieutenants in Mogadishu, but the operation ran into difficulties leading to the downing of two Black Hawk helicopters and an urban firefight between Somali militiamen and the Americans. The Somalis repeatedly attempted to overrun the American positions, sometimes using civilians to shield the militiamen. In the ensuing melee, 18 US soldiers were killed, and the same TV sets now showed grisly images of their bodies dragged through the streets. It is unclear how many Somalis died in the battle, but estimates range from about 300 to over 1,000. Many of these deaths were of civilian shields that the American soldiers had to fire upon in order to get through to the militiamen. The U.S. forces succeeded in their mission and captured three of Aidid's top lieutenants among over 20 other supporters.

Clinton initially responded by sending more troops and finally some armored vehicles and gunships, the lack of which had left the Rangers unprotected, and had therefore been a major contributing cause to the disaster. This could not alleviate the fact that it was the same administration that had repeatedly denied requests for these vehicles and gunships. Even worse, in September, Clinton had sent Carter to negotiate secretly with Aidid. In December, Clinton's Secretary of Defense Les Aspin was forced to resign after taking all of the blame.

While propping up the U.S. forces in the short-term with reinforcements, Clinton

declared on the 7th that American troops would be fully withdrawn from Somalia by the end of March 1994. Aidid's prestige soared and Clinton cemented the warlord's political victory by abandoning the hunt, opening overt negotiations with him, and assenting to Aidid's demand for a "Somali-based political settlement." Aidid's support within Somalia increased, and the apparent military success in challenging the U.S. encouraged terrorists throughout the world. The political concessions appeared to confirm the defeat of the United States, and Clinton's behavior was seen as a headlong retreat. Almost three months before the announced March deadline, all U.S. forces left Somalia, and in the spring of 1995, the remaining U.N. troops withdrew as well, leaving the Somalis to their fate. (Aidid himself died from wounds received in an fight in Mogadishu on August 1, 1995, the country continues to be a brutal place.)

It wasn't, however, just the public resentment of the Somalis who had dared to kill the people supposedly there to save them that drove the U.S. out of Somalia. It was the new pusillanimous Pentagon that was leading the retreat.

The U.S. military had learned the "lessons" of Vietnam all too well. The problem was, the world was not Vietnam. What the military should have learned was not too complicated: you don't fight guerillas with conventional methods. What it did learn was not to fight unless there's clear public support for its fighting and that it would be guaranteed this support until it wins military victory (Weinberger-Powell Doctrine). This sort of thing just doesn't happen that often. Most opponents are not as obliging as Saddam to be obvious targets that can be quickly defeated once they become a clear and present danger. The preoccupation with the need to maintain public and Congressional support also means over-emphasizing American casualties, that is, making their avoidance a primary planning factor. Although one must surely not squander highly proficient and dedicated soldiers, it is also true that sometimes the required action does carry risks to them, and in the long-term their sacrifice will produce much better results than "saving" them in such an ill-advised way. American soldiers are volunteers and know very well what they sign up for. The administration's primary responsibility is to deploy them competently in the nation's interest, not treat them as porcelain dolls.

Further, the Doctrine is a recipe for inaction and the problem (whatever you might have heard) is not that the US gets involved too often but that it gets involved not often enough, and when it does, it is often not with whole-hearted determination because of the perceived need to minimize American casualties. Even worse, as discussed before, although this doctrine does ensure U.S. victory if the country engages in a war, it lowers dramatically the probability that the country will actually engage in a war. The expected utility from challenging the U.S. may actually *increase* under these circumstances even if the challenger has no hope of winning the war. In other words, this policy may induce potential challengers to engage in risky policies and bet on the U.S. to stay immobilized by its own military doctrine!

## 2.2 The Breakup of Yugoslavia

Yugoslavia was an artificial state created after World War I and was a federation of states—Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, and Bosnia—dominated by Serbia. The Serbs are Orthodox Christians, the Croatians and Slovenians are Catholics, and the Bosnians are mostly Muslim. In 1991, these states had begun demanding independence, which the Serbs moved to deny. Except for Slovenia, which was granted independence early on after a short fight because the Serbs were a small minority there, the other breakaway countries had to fight serious wars.

The problem was especially acute in Bosnia with its large Serbian minority (40%) pitted against the Muslim Bosniaks and Croats. On October 15, Bosnia declared sovereignty, which was affirmed by a referendum on February 29. Bosnia declared independence on April 5, 1992, and two days later the U.S. and the European Union extended diplomatic recognition to the new state. This did not please the Bosnian Serbs who had boycotted the referendum. They now proclaimed their own state, Republika Srpska, comprising the territories predominantly populated by Serbs. The conflict, which had begun in the fall of 1991, presently escalated, and the Yugoslav People's Army attempted to take control in Bosnia. Croats and Bosniaks organized in various paramilitary units, and the region descended in the bloodiest fighting there since the Second World War.

Initially, the Serbian preponderance in weaponry and better organization united the Croats and the Bosniaks in their opposition, but in 1993 they started to fight each other for control of their part of Bosnia. The U.N. repeatedly attempted and failed to stop the bloodshed, and eventually resorted to half-hearted efforts to protect civilians by establishing so-called "safe havens" for them. It was in one of these safe havens, Srebrenica, that the worst massacre of the war took place under the very noses of the U.N. troops in July 1995 when Bosnian Serb forces murdered more than 7,000 civilians. There were various atrocities committed by both sides but it was the Serbs who implemented a policy of **ethnic cleansing** designed to eliminate significant portions of the opposing groups and thus destroy their claims to sovereignty.

The Europeans stood by as civilians were raped and slaughtered alternatively by Serbs, Bosniaks, and Croats. Eventually, NATO (which had never gone into battle during the Cold War) began intensive bombing campaigns on February 8, 1994. In March, the Croats and Bosniaks signed a peace agreement, and their combined forces began taking the upper hand in the war, and in 1995 recovered most of western Bosnia. These losses combined with international pressure finally coerced the Serbs to agree to talk, and on November 21, 1995, the warring parties ended hostilities with the U.S.-brokered Dayton Peace Accords. This agreement divided Bosnia into two roughly equal parts, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Republika Srpska, based on armistice lines. The fighting had stopped but not before taking the lives of about 278,000 people, and dislocating over one million. About

60,000 NATO troops policed the cease-fire, a third of them Americans. In 1996, this was succeeded by a NATO-led force whose smaller size reflected its more limited goal to deter the renewal of hostilities. In 2004, the EU took over this mission.

The precarious peace gradually stabilized and helped Clinton's foreign policy rankings that had slid after the Somali debacle. With the decisive help of a booming domestic economic, Clinton easily won a landslide victory in the 1996 elections.

The Yugoslav peace, however, went to pieces in 1998 when Slobodan Milosevic, the Serbian President (since 1989), began killing opposition forces in Kosovo. Kosovo is part of Serbia proper and is an area mostly populated by ethnic Albanians (who are also Muslim). The region had enjoyed some autonomy within the Yugoslav state but the desire for independence was rising. For the Serbs this demand was alarming to a considerable degree for it meant a separation of the province and, many thought, its eventual incorporation into a greater Albanian state. Kosovo also carried significant historical connotations for the Serbs for it was the site of their epic struggle (June 28, 1389) against the invading Ottoman Turks who ended up conquering the entire Balkan peninsula and ruling it for five centuries. The Liberation of the Balkan States from Ottoman (Muslim) rule occurred barely 100-150 years ago, depending on the area, and a considerable number of people have not forgotten it. So the Serbs were especially sensitive, and since Milosevic relied on appeals to nationalism to sustain his own grip on power, it was perhaps not too surprising that he began a crackdown in Kosovo by first abolishing its autonomy away in 1990.

This caused widespread unemployment as state-owned enterprises fired Albanian Kosovars to replace them with Serbs, with unemployment levels eventually reaching 80% with attending catastrophic poverty. The political organizations were extinguished, Albanian-language newspapers, along with TV and radio broadcasts, were banned. Pristina University was purged of both students and professors who sympathized with Albanian nationalism, and Serb police displaced the Albanian-run security apparatus. The Kosovars resisted passively, but when the Dayton Accords did not even mention their problems, they started radicalizing, and on April 22, 1996 they attacked Serbian civilians throughout Kosovo.

The new organization, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) was responsible for these, and continued terrorist strategy that was designed to provoke Serbian reprisals that would, in turn, increase the support for KLA, and perhaps result in a foreign intervention (most likely NATO) to halt the bloodshed. The U.S. had supported Milosevic up until 1997 (his role in getting the Dayton Accords signed was seen as especially productive), and it even declared the KLA a terrorist organization, although it did nothing to curtail its access to funds or arms. However, when Albania proper collapsed following the resignation of its president Berisha in July 1997, the KLA managed to obtain a lot of the military hardware that was looted in the ensuing chaos. This enabled it to switch to a more acceptable guerilla strategy just when the Serbian security forces were getting mired in atrocities of their own. The cycle of

KLA attacks and Serbian reprisals continued throughout 1998, and culminated in the January 15, 1999 Racak incident with the killing of 45 Albanian civilians.

There is considerable controversy about what happened at the village. The generally accepted version is that after KLA attacks in the region had caused several fatalities, Serb police and Yugoslav army units moved to Racak to track and kill the guerillas responsible. The village was surrounded and shelled. Police then went door-to-door arresting about 20 people (later found murdered in a gully outside the village), and executed some in their homes. The alternative version maintains that all the dead were KLA members who died during the fight. Based on forensic evidence, it is unlikely that the latter version is correct.

At any rate, the Racak incident was interpreted as a deliberate massacre in the West, and on the 30th, NATO issued a combined ultimatum to Yugoslavia (air strikes) and the Kosovars (abandonment to Serbs) to force them to the negotiating table. The solution envisioned by the West would restore Kosovo to its pre-1990 autonomy, and introduce democratic reforms in the region under international supervision. The resulting Rambouillet talks started on February 6, and broke up on March 19 without reaching an agreement. This was not surprising, however, since both sides negotiated in bad faith: the solution that was being imposed on them was not acceptable to either one. The Kosovars did not want to go back to being part of Serbia, and the Serbs did not want international presence in the province. In the end, the Kosovars, having discerned the anti-Serbian tilt of the West, were rewarded for their intransigence. The Rambouillet Accords they signed with the Americans and the British (and rejected by the Russians and the Serbs) called for NATO administration of an autonomous province of Kosovo, along with assorted insults to Yugoslav sovereignty (such as free passage of NATO troops, and immunity from Yugoslav law). The Serbs countered with their own unacceptable proposal, and the talks ended in mutual recriminations for their failure.

On March 24, NATO began its bombing campaign that would last until June 10. The ostensible goal was to force the Serbs back to the negotiating table and compel them to agree to the Rambouillet Accords. The campaign did not go well at first because of bad weather, and because it caused a widespread exodus of Albanians from Kosovo (the number would eventually reach 850,000 people) who fled to Albania and Macedonia, greatly destabilizing the latter. NATO attacked military targets, as well as bridges, factories, roads, and communications across Serbia. As the aerial bombardment continued, NATO began seriously contemplating a ground invasion. However, the campaign finally persuaded Milosevic that NATO would not abandon its goals. When he realized that despite their brave talk the Russians would not help Yugoslavia, he agreed to U.N. military presence in Kosovo (that would include NATO troops). The war resulted in about 5,000 military dead in Kosovo and perhaps about 1,500 civilians in Yugoslavia and another 1,500 in Kosovo on the Serbian side; along with about 5,000 dead Albanians. The largest mass grave uncovered thus far contains Serbs and anti-KLA Albanians, who were probably still

alive when NATO forces moved into the province. The aftermath was also somewhat embarrassing for NATO because even though the Albanians returned, close to 250,000 Serbs fled or were expelled from the province. The status of Kosovo itself is still unresolved: even though it is a part of Yugoslavia, it is a U.N. protectorate. If the Kosovo Albanians press for independence, they will probably meet a determined international resistance because of the potentially deleterious consequences in the region, especially in Macedonia. Milosevic did not survive the debacle for long: when he rejected the opposition's victory in the elections in September 2000, mass demonstrations in Belgrade led to the collapse of his regime, and the installation of the opposition's leader Kostunica as President of Yugoslavia on October 6. Milosevic was arrested on April 1, 2001 and handed over to the U.N. International Criminal Tribunal to be prosecuted on charges of genocide in Bosnia and war crimes in Croatia and Kosovo. The trial still goes on.

Clinton's refusal to commit ground troops for the Kosovo campaign has been roundly criticized but it was a good decision. Kosovo was no Iraq, the difficult mountainous terrain would prevent the easy deployment of armor and its use with overwhelming power like in the desert. In practical terms this would mean serious fighting and body bags coming home, which in turn would raise the possibility of another Somalia, giving Milosevic bargaining power to exploit. As it was, the NATO strikes compelled him to withdraw his forces from Kosovo and NATO troops moved in to keep the peace. When done properly, judicious intervention could be successful.

### **2.3 Iraq and Terrorism**

Recall that when the Persian Gulf War ended, the Kurds in the north of Iraq, and the Shi'ites in the south rose in rebellion against Saddam Hussein, but were crushed by the regime. In April, the Americans (along with the British, the French, and the Turks) began enforcing no-fly zones (NFZ) north of the 36th parallel and south of the 32nd in order to prevent future atrocities by Hussein against the Kurds and the Shi'ites. The overall goal was to prevent Iraq from renewing its aggression against neighbors, and to force Hussein to honor the various international agreements pertaining to Iraq's development of weapons of mass destruction. The warplanes enforcing the NFZs were periodically challenged by the Iraqis with artillery and SAMs, and there was a major operation against Iraq during Clinton's tenure in office every other year.

In September 1994, just as the U.S. was withdrawing from the region, Hussein moved a large number of forces toward Kuwait. The UNSC adopted Resolution 949 condemning the resulting build-up on the border, and demanding the immediate and complete withdrawal of these troops. To implement the resolution, Clinton ordered U.S. reinforcements to the area (Operation Vigilant Warrior), and caused Hussein to withdraw his army units north of the 32nd parallel. The U.S. forces returned to

America.

In August 1996, Hussein attempted a similar gamble to the north of the 36th parallel, this time wanting to regain political control of the Kurdish area. Iraqi forces attacked the Kurds and captured Irbil, the seat of their regional government. Clinton's response was mystifying. Instead of protecting the Kurds by attacking the Iraqi military in the north, he ordered strikes against anti-aircraft sites in the south, to be accompanied by an extension of the southern NFZ up to the 33rd parallel (Operation Desert Strike in September). It is unknown why Clinton chose such a response, but in the north Hussein did not hesitate to use the opportunity and brutally repress the Kurds.

Given the wobbly American response, Saddam Hussein became further emboldened and initiated a series of challenges to the other post-war provisions, including the sanctions and inspections regimes. On November 13, 1997, he expelled the remaining American members of the U.N. weapons inspections team accusing them (accurately) of spying. The U.N. recalled the remaining members in protest. The resulting Anglo-American military buildup in the region forced Hussein to readmit the inspectors, but in January 1998 he again expelled the American members. The U.N. negotiated a return of the inspectors in exchange for lifting the sanctions regime conditional on continued cooperation. However, in August Iraq began obstructing their work because the UNSC had done nothing to end the sanctions. The Security Council decided not do anything about the sanctions.

On September 29, 1998, Congress passed the Iraq Liberation Act, stating that "it should be the policy of the United States to support efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein from power in Iraq and to promote the emergence of a democratic government to replace that regime."<sup>1</sup> When Clinton signed it on October 31, Hussein expelled the inspectors yet again. The Anglo-American buildup resumed, and the U.N. recalled its personnel on November 11, clearing the way for air strikes against Iraq. Saddam Hussein recanted again, and three days later allowed the inspectors back in. However, cooperation was not forthcoming, and on December 15, the U.N. formally accused the Iraqi government of obstructing inspections. This time, Clinton ordered immediate action (Operation Desert Fox, December 15-18, 1998) that consisted of three days of joint Anglo-American air strikes against military and command targets. The dual goal was to reduce Iraq's capability for aggression (by degrading its ability to produce WMDs), and to impress on Hussein the consequences of flouting international demands. The aftermath was not impressive: Russia, France, and China all called for lifting the oil-embargo on Iraq but the U.S. threatened to veto any attempt to implement that. The cat-and-mouse game with the inspectors continued.

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<sup>1</sup>The Act explicitly stated that "nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize or otherwise speak to the use of United States Armed Forces (except as provided in section 4(a)(2)) in carrying out this Act." The section in question refers to using the use up to \$97 million for military education and training of opposition organizations.

With regard to terrorism, Clinton's tenure saw an escalation of Islamic attacks, most somehow connected to al Qaeda, on U.S. interests both here and abroad. There were bombings of the World Trade Center in New York (February 26, 1993, Islamic terrorists, possibly linked to al Qaeda), the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia (June 25, 1996, Hezbollah, possibly assisted by Iran and al Qaeda), the U.S. embassies in Tanzania and Kenya (August 7, 1998, al Qaeda), and the USS Cole in Yemen (October 12, 2000, al Qaeda). On August 20, 1998, the administration responded to the embassy bombings by launching missile strikes against al Qaeda training camps in Afghanistan and a suspected chemical plant in Sudan.