



The role of International Organizations & intra-state conflicts: The case of BiH

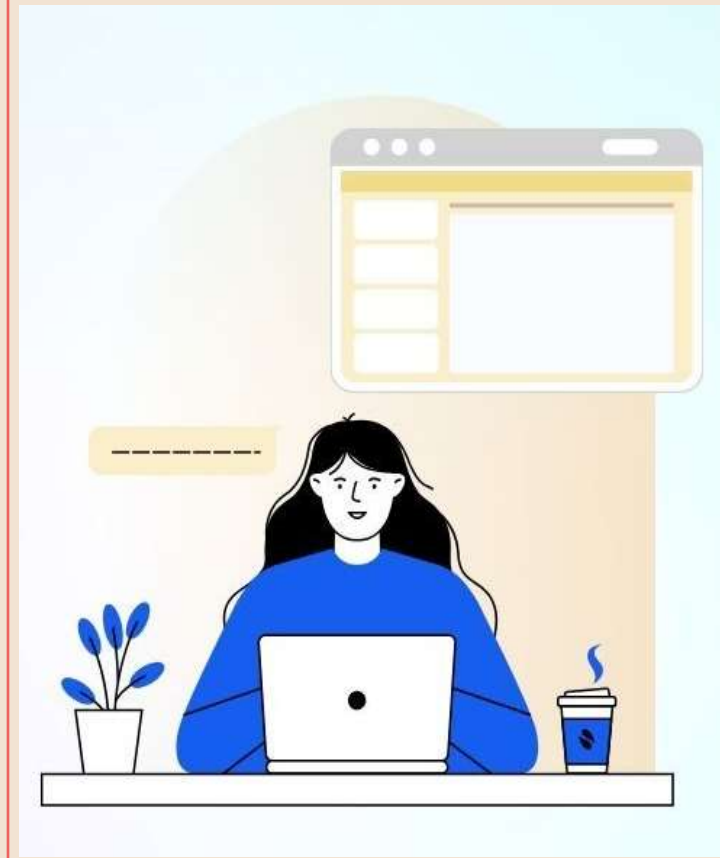
**Course: Security and Stability in
Southeast Europe**

Professor: P. Tsakonas

Maritina Maroulaki

Outline:

- **Introduction** (Judy Batt, Failing States)
- **Historical Background**
- **Institutional Structure/The Powers of the HR**
- **The role of NATO and the EU in the post-war era**
- **Bosnia's Last Best Hope** (K. Bassuener, Foreign Affairs, 2019)
- **Prospects?** (EU/other external actors)
- **Conclusion**



Introduction

Judy Batt, Failing States

Security threats now extend beyond traditional military conflicts, such as terrorism, the impact of failing states, and transnational organized crime.

- **Failing states, a contested concept: state may lack capacity to maintain sovereignty, deliver services, or protect citizens.**
- **"Weak" or "Failing" States: not completely failed**
- **Impact on local, regional, international level**



Introduction

Judy Batt, Failing States

- **How and when should the international community react to such threats, not all are equally threatening, not easy to define when they become a security risk**
- **Securitization of the issue post-9/11 events**
- **The need for a multifaceted approach – preventive action // state-building efforts, humanitarian assistance**
- **Local Ownership vs. External Assistance**
- **Fragmentation of International Efforts**
- **EU' as a major player in international development, the EU has significant tools to aid weak states**



Historical Background

- April 1992, Bosnia declared independence from Yugoslavia, beginning of the armed conflict.
- 3 main ethnic/religious groups --> Bosniaks, Bosnian-Serbs, Bosnian-Croats

"The essence of ethnic conflict is the struggle between mobilized identity groups for greater power – whether it be for equality within an existing state, or the establishment of a fully independent national state."

- -Burg, S. & Shoup P., p. 4 (1999)

Historical Background

UN

- The war as a threat to international peace and security
- Arms embargo
- UNPROFOR, creation of UN Protected Areas/Zones, 1992
- Limited success in peacekeeping

NATO/USA

- An alliance in transformation,** post- Cold war era --> a powerful player
- Clinton Administration, no policy at first, US unwillingness to put their own troops on the ground
 - Operation Deny Flight, 1993
 - Operation Deliberate Force, 1995 following genocide in Srebrenica

EEC/EU

- Limited engagement, primary response --> diplomatic
- No military capabilities
- Failed efforts to broker peace
- Humanitarian Assistance

Dayton Peace Accords, December 1995



Goals: end the fighting & rebuild a viable Bosnian state (a peace-building and a state-building project)

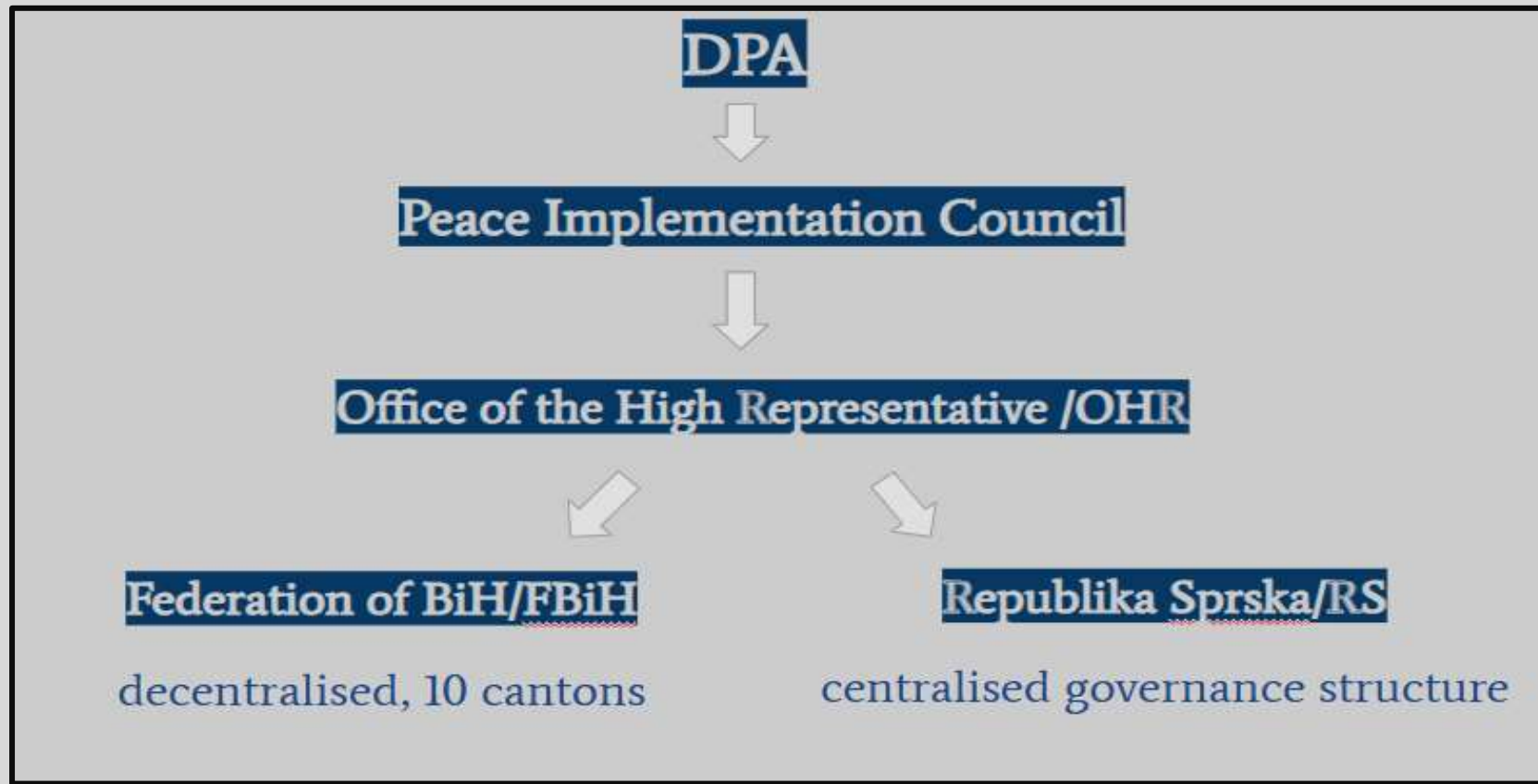
3 constituent peoples: Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats + the "Others"

2 Entities

Dayton Peace Accords, December 1995



Institutional Structure/The Powers of the HR



- HR: Responsible for consolidating the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Agreement, until BiH could fully function on its own.
- No legislative or executive prerogatives derive from the DPA.
- 1997, "Bonn Powers", entitled to make binding decisions and take more action, in regard to the legislative part, to secure the state's institutions, even if that meant to dismiss elected public officials.
- From 1998 to 2005, the 3 appointed HR *"issued 757 decisions, removed 119 people from public office and imposed 286 laws or amendments to laws"*. -M. Parish, 2007, p. 15
- **Imperial style of governance**, people have not figured out how to run their own country.

Institutional Structure/The Powers of the HR

The role of NATO and the EU in the post-war era

NATO

- **IFOR (1995-6)**: overseeing the military aspects of the agreement, 60,000 troops
- **SFOR (1996-2004)**: supporting the reconstruction of Bosnia
- NATO's mission was gradually handed over to the EU
- Continued to support Bosnia's stability through programs (PfP, NATO's Adriatic Charter) + Headquarters in Sarajevo
- **But**, political obstacles to future NATO membership
- US limited level of engagement nowadays



The role of NATO and the EU in the post-war era

EU

EUPM (2003-2012): reform Bosnia's police forces, ensure the rule of law, and fight organized crime.

EUFOR ALTHEA (2004-): to maintain peace and security, from 7000 to 600 troops

Huge financial support + Democracy-building

EU membership perspective?

- Stabilization and Association Process, the Agreement was signed in 2008
- Application for membership in 2016

Lack of progress, need for constitutional, judicial reforms + Enlargement fatigue



Bosnia's Last Best Hope

K. Bassuener, Foreign Affairs, 2019

- **EUFOR ALTHEA not able to respond a renewed conflict or to prevent**
- **Russian influence in RS + M. Dodik, in favor of Crimea's annexation**
- **Failure of deterrence, only liberal democratic powers have the ability to maintain peace in BiH**
- **Canada & Japan the answer? Deployment in Brčko District, strategic importance --> separating RS**



Prospects?

HR, C. Schmidt

- Amended the FBiH Constitution and the Election Law, on the night of the general elections (2 October 2022)
- Imposed new amendments to the FBiH Constitution in order to overcome the deadlock the government of the Entity faced since 2018.



M. Dodik:

- Rejects HR and the Constitutional Court's decisions
- Threatens to withdraw RS representatives from state institutions and declare independence
- October 2022 elections, accusations of electoral fraud
- Currently on trial

Prospects?

EU

- December 2022, BiH was granted EU candidate status, Russian invasion of Ukraine as a catalyst
- March 2024, EC to open accession negotiations with BiH when certain steps are taken
- April 2024, first introductory meeting to explain the screening process.
- The process at a standstill.



"We confirm that the future of BiH lies in the EU. This is a decision for the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Political leaders can now turn this ambition into reality through decisive reforms."

- HR/VP J. Borell, EEAS Press Team (2022)

Prospects?

Other external actors

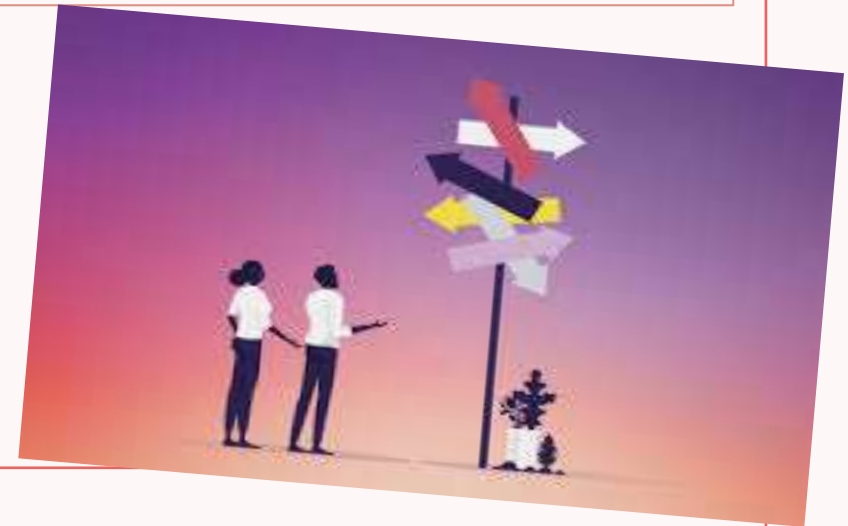
- **Russia**: opposition to Euroatlantic integration, religious/cultural and media influence, mainly on RS, energy supplier
- **Turkey/Saudi Arabia**: presence of Turkish troops, ideological approach, introduced stricter interpretations of Islam within Bosniaks
- **China**: infrastructure development, RS seeks closer relations with China
- **Croatia/Serbia**: destabilizing the situation in order to "protect" their ethnic groups.

****Croatian troops as part of EUFOR ALTHEA?**

US Administration:

Biden's era: higher expectations, no NATO accession

Trump's victory, a better geopolitical situation for RS, Russia-Ukraine war, tensions with the EU



Conclusion



- **International Organizations' contribution to BiH: peace and stability**
- **But, a fragile transition, uneven progress, ongoing challenges in governance –ethnic division**
- **Problems cannot be resolved in Brussels or in Washington, they must be addressed by BiH itself -->**

Sarajevo + Banja Luka

Thank you

References

- Bassuener, K. (July 10, 2019). Bosnia's Last Best Hope: How an Unlikely Peacekeeping Duo Can Hold the Balkans Together. *Foreign Affairs*, at: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/bosnia-herzegovina/2019-07-10/bosnias-last-best-hope>
- Batt, J. (2004). *Failing States and the EU's Security Agenda*. EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris.
- Bechev, D. and Öztürk, A.E. (January 11, 2022). Competing over Islam: Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Iran in the Balkans, *Middle East Institute*, at: <https://www.mei.edu/publications/competing-over-islam-turkey-saudi-arabia-and-iran-balkans>
- Bieber, F. (2011). Building impossible states? State-building strategies and EU membership in the Western Balkans. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 63(10), 1783-1802, at: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09668136.2011.618679>
- Burg, S. & Shoup, P. (1999). *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina: Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*. Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe.
- Cafiero, G. (January 21, 2025). What Does Trump's Return Mean for the Balkans?, *Foreign Policy*, at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2025/01/21/trump-bosnia-serbia-kosovo-albania-vucic-dodik-grenell/>
- Commission Staff Working Document (2024). Bosnia and Herzegovina 2024 Report, at: https://enlargement.ec.europa.eu/document/download/451db011-6779-40ea-b34b-a0eeda451746_en?filename=Bosnia%20and%20Herzegovina%20Report%202024.pdf
- Cousens, E. & Cater, C. (2001). *Toward Peace in Bosnia: Implementing the Dayton Accords*. Colorado/London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Cvjetićanin, T. (September 7, 2022). Chinese Influence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, *Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA)*, at: <https://cepa.org/comprehensive-reports/chinese-influence-in-bosnia-and-herzegovina/>
- EEAS Press Team (2022). EU Candidate Status for Bosnia and Herzegovina: a message to the people and a tasking for politicians, accessed at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-candidate-status-bosnia-and-herzegovina-message-people-and-tasking-politicians-0_en
- Edwards, G., & Tošić, M. (2007). Multilateralism and Security Institutions in an Era of Globalization, *Chapter 9: Persuasion and Norm Promotion, International Institutions in the Western Balkans*. Routledge, pp. 202-222.
- European Union Force in Bosnia and Herzegovina (2024). About EUFOR, at: <https://www.euforbih.org/index.php/background>

References

- General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina /DPA (1995), specifically Annex 4: Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Annex 10: Agreement on Civilian Implementation, at: <https://www.ohr.int/dayton-peace-agreement/annex-4/> & <https://www.ohr.int/dayton-peace-agreement/annex-10/>
- Ioannides, I. (2018). EU Peacebuilding Efforts in the Balkans: An Evaluation of EU Peacebuilding in the Western Balkans. European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS). PE 621.816, at: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_STU\(2018\)621816](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/document.html?reference=EPRS_STU(2018)621816)
- Karcic, H. (July 26, 2024). As Biden Bows Out, What's His Legacy in Bosnia?, *Balkan Insight*, at: <https://balkaninsight.com/2024/07/26/as-biden-bows-out-whats-his-legacy-in-bosnia/>
- Knaus, G., & Martin, F. (2003). Travails of the European Raj. *Journal of Democracy*, 14(3), pp. 60-74, at: <https://www.journalofdemocracy.org/articles/lessons-from-bosnia-and-herzegovina-travails-of-the-european-raj/>
- Kurtic, A. (November 3, 2022). UN Extends EU Peacekeeping Force's Mandate in Bosnia, *Balkan Insight*, at: <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/11/03/un-extends-eu-peacekeeping-forces-mandate-in-bosnia/>
- McBride, J. (November 21, 2023). Russia's Influence in the Balkans, *Council on Foreign Relations*, at: <https://www.cfr.org/background/russias-influence-balkans>
- NATO (2023). Peacekeeping, at: https://www.nato.int/cps/ru/natohq/topics_52122.htm?selectedLocale=en
- NATO (2024). Relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina, at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_49127.htm
- Office of the High Representative (2023). 63rd Report of the High Representative for Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, at: <https://www.ohr.int/63rd-report-of-the-high-representative-for-implementation-of-the-peace-agreement-on-bosnia-and-herzegovina-to-the-secretary-general-of-the-united-nations/>
- Office of the High Representative (2023). 64th Report of the High Representative for Implementation of the Peace Agreement on BiH to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, at: <https://www.ohr.int/64th-report-of-the-high-representative-for-implementation-of-the-peace-agreement-on-bih-to-the-secretary-general-of-the-united-nations/>
- Parish, M. (2007). The Demise of the Dayton Protectorate. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, Special Edition, pp. 11–23, at: https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3819823