Introduction

Diversity has long been at the heart of Bosnia and Herzegovina's character. Even its dual name and physical geography display a particular heterogeneity. The medieval Bosnian state never enjoyed lasting political and ideological unity. Its rifts were feudal, regional, and religious in nature, sometimes a combination of all three. Because of its location and by a quirk of history, three major world religious and cultural traditions (Catholicism, Islam, and Orthodoxy) became cohabitants in this small Balkan country. The recent rebirth of its statehood has been exceptionally bloody, and its diversity has been shaken. Even eleven years after the guns were silenced, the country is still under the "benevolent" protection of the international community, whose officials have bungled the state-building process, with no final result in sight.

Territory, Population, and Name

The country of Bosnia and Herzegovina is situated in the northwestern part of the Balkan peninsula and the southeastern end of the Alpine region. The northern parts of Bosnia are located on the southern boundaries of the Pannonian plains.

This triangle-shaped country is embraced by Croatia from two sides. The border in the north is the Sava River. The Una River, the spurs of the mountains Zrinski and Petrova Gora, the Korana River, and the mountains Plješevica and Dinara separate it from Croatia in the west and southwest. In the southeast, it is separated from Montenegro by a mountain range and the Tara River. In the east, its natural border with Serbia is the Drina River. Near the town of Neum, the country has a narrow exit to the Adriatic Sea. Presently, it includes most, but not all, of the territories consolidated in the middle ages, as well as regions in the northwest that were gained during the Ottoman conquest.

Today's confines of Bosnia and Herzegovina are approximately those of 1878, when the Habsburg Monarchy took over the land from the failing Ottoman Empire in accordance with the mandates of the Berlin Congress of 1878. The country comprises 51,129 square kilometers (19,741 square miles), of which 20.9 percent of the land is arable, 10.4 percent is pasture, and 46 percent is forest.

In 1991 Bosnia and Herzegovina had 4,364,574 inhabitants. Bosnian Muslims (Bosniacs) had a relative majority of 43.6 percent; the Serbs 31.4 percent; the Croats 17.3 percent; the "Yugoslavs" 5.5 percent, and other minorities 2.2 percent.

The word *Bosnia* as a geopolitical term is found for the first time in the middle of the eighth century. The original Bosnian territory, however, consisted only of the area around the upper flow of the Bosna River as well as the region from Ivan Mountain in the south to Zavidovići in the north, and from the Vlašić and Vranica Mountains in the west to the Drina River in the east.

The southeastern part of the country was known as Hum or Zahumlje in the Middle Ages. After the Ottoman conquest in the 15th century, the region became known as Herzegovina (Herzeg's land). It was named after a well-known local ruler, Herzeg (Duke) Stipan, who ruled on the eve of the Turkish onslaught.

In the Middle Ages, the feudal districts of the Lower Regions (Donji kraji), Usora, Soli, Hum or Zahumlje (Herzegovina), Završje or the Western Regions (Zapadni kraji), Travunja, and some other parts of neighboring lands were not part of Bosnia. These regions were incorporated into the Bosnian medieval state during the 13th and 14th centuries.

Physical Features

Bosnia and Herzegovina is mainly a mountainous land. The lowlands (Posavina), located in the

northern regions along the Sava River, make up only about 5 percent of the total territory. These northern Pannonian lowlands gradually rise to about 2,000 meters (6,560 feet) above sea level along a mountain chain that separates Bosnia from Herzegovina through the middle of the country. From that point, contours slowly decline toward the Adriatic Sea. For that reason, the gateway into Bosnia is from the northern (Pannonian) perimeter and into Herzegovina from the southern (Adriatic). Western Bosnia and almost all of Herzegovina, about 29 percent of the country, is made up of an arid limestone, known as karst. In this area, the only lands suitable for cultivation are small depressions, karst fields, between barren mountains.

The two principal regions in the country, Bosnia and Herzegovina, are separated by a chain of mountains. The two parts are connected by the pass at Ivan Mountain. This is a natural junction between the valley of the Bosna River and the canyon of the Neretva River, and the only gateway that links the northern Pannonian plains and the southern Adriatic parts of the country. The most important communication line between the north and the south has been, since ancient times, along the rivers Bosna and Neretva. Both Sarajevo, the capital, and Mostar, the main city in Herzegovina, are located on this important route.

Rivers, Lakes, and Mountains

Because of the high mountains in the middle of the country, the waters of Bosnia and Herzegovina flow either into the Sava River in the north, then via the Danube River into the Black Sea, or into the Adriatic Sea in the south. Generally speaking, the Bosnian rivers belong to the Black Sea, and the Herzegovinian to the Adriatic confluence. Exceptions are the underground rivers in southwest Bosnia and small rivers in northeast Herzegovina.

The main rivers in Bosnia are Una (213 km/132.2 mi.), Vrbas (253 km/157.1 mi.), Ukrina (129 km/80.1 mi.), Bosna (308 km/191.2 mi.), and Drina (339 km/210.5 mi.). Other less-known rivers in the region are Vrbaska, Tolisa, Tinja, and Brka. The largest river in Herzegovina is Neretva (228 km/141.5 mi.), which springs at the foot of Mount Grdelj and flows into the Adriatic Sea. A number of underground rivers flow through the karst regions in the south and southwestern parts of the country.

All of the rivers in Bosnia and Herzegovina flow through picturesque canyons and gorges. Some of them create beautiful cataracts, torrents, rapids, and waterfalls. For the most part, these rivers are not suitable for navigation, except in the Pannonian region, but they are a very important source of hydroelectric power. Moreover, most of the main roads in the country are built along the rivers, and in that way the rivers provide accessibility to all parts of the country.

While the country Bosnia and Herzegovina is blessed with rivers, the land has only a few lakes. Worth mentioning are the Boračko Lake near the town of Konjic; Jablaničko Lake (artificially accumulated for a hydroelectric power plant); Deransko Lake in Hutovo Blato; and a number of mountain lakes in the central part of the country.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has numerous mountains that are well known for their magnificence and contrasts, including features like very high snowy peaks, thick forests, gentle pastures, and sheer rocks. These mountains are rich in natural resources, especially those that are closer to the Pannonian lowlands, while those that stretch toward the sea are rugged and less friendly.

The highest mountains in the country are Maglić (2,387 m/7,830 ft.), Čvrsnica (2,228 m/7,308 ft.), Prenj (2,123 m/6,964 ft.), Vranica (2,107 m/6,911 ft.), Treskavica (2,088 m/6,849 ft.), Vran (2,074 m/6,803 ft.), Bjelašnica (2,067 m/6,780 ft.), Lelija (2,032 m/6,665 ft.), and Zelengora (2,016 m/6,613 ft).

Climate

Two main types of climate, continental and Mediterranean, meet on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The northern part of the country is on the periphery of the Pannonian continental zone and has moderately cold winters and hot summers. In contrast, the southern part is under Mediterranean climatic influences and has very hot and long summers and mild winters.

Temperatures can reach as high as 50º C/122º F in the Mostar region. The high mountain range in the middle of the land, however, has the attributes of alpine climate: very long and cold winters, a large amount of snow fall, and short cool summers. Temperature as low as –40º C/–40º F was recorded at Veliko Polje on Igman Mountain.

History

The Ancient World

The first evidence of human dwellings in today's Bosnia and Herzegovina dates from the period of the Paleolithic Age (before 7000 BC). During the Neolithic Age (7000–3000 BC), the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina had numerous settlements. The best-known Neolithic culture in the region is found at Butmir near Sarajevo. To which branch of the human family these and other dwellers in the area belonged will, in all probability, remain unknown. But they do attest to a highly developed stone culture in this part of Europe. New and higher cultural development is noticed with the introduction of copper in the area around 2500 BC and of bronze about 2000–1800 BC.

The first known state-building inhabitants in today's Bosnia and Herzegovina were the Illyrians, an Indo-European people who migrated to the Balkan region in the 11th century BC. In the fourth century BC, Celts from the Alpine zone invaded the territory of today's Croatia and western Bosnia. Their sojourn resulted in a blend of Illyrian and Celtic cultures. Illyrian tribes, especially the ones living in present-day Herzegovina, also came (after 600 BC) under Greek cultural and economic influence. It would be, however, under the Romans that the Illyrian Kingdom, culture, and people would fade away.

Roman armies began to attack Illyrian lands in the third century BC (229 BC), but it took them over two centuries to subdue the fierce Illyrian resistance. The final Illyrian rebellion was crushed (AD 9) by Emperor Augustus. The conquest was followed by the establishment of Roman cities, administrative units, and the Romanization of the indigenous people. The Illyrians entered into the higher echelons of the Roman world mainly through military service, and a number of them became Roman emperors, including Diocletian (AD 284–305) and Constantine (AD 306–337).

In the occupied Illyrian territories, the Romans established the province of Illyricum (c. 80 BC). In order to have better control over the rebellious region, Augustus divided Illyricum into two provinces (AD 10), Pannonia and Dalmatia. The lowlands of today's northern Bosnia and Herzegovina belonged to Pannonia, and the rest of the country belonged to mountainous Dalmatia in the south.

The Emperor Diocletian, in his administrative reforms (AD 297), separated the land east of the Drina River (present-day Serbia) from Dalmatia and created a new Roman province (Praevalis). In AD 395, the Roman Empire was permanently divided into eastern and western halves. The regions of today's Bosnia and Herzegovina were allotted to the Latin west, while the land east of the Drina River came under Byzantine or Eastern rule. That ancient boundary between east and west became a European political and cultural fault line with significance even today.

The Germanic Goths, Monogolo-Turkic Huns, and other invaders passed through the

Balkans during the fourth and fifth centuries. Another wave of invaders, Turkic Avars and Indo-European Slavs, appeared in Southeastern Europe in the sixth century. But while the Avars, consisting mostly of raiding hordes, were able to maintain their power in the region for a relatively short time, the Slav immigrants came to stay. The Slavic presence in the Balkans was strengthened at the beginning of the seventh century, when Croats from White Croatia in the trans-Carpathian region (as allies of Byzantium in the struggle with the Avars) settled on the eastern shores of the Adriatic. The Serbs, too, migrated from the north to the eastern Balkans soon after the Croats.

Medieval Period

Very little is known about the history of Bosnia from the time of the Slavic migrations in the sixth and seventh centuries to the beginning of Bosnian autonomy in the 12th century. Early church affiliation, spoken idiom, art form, political association, and terminology attest that during the second Slavic migration (seventh century), most of Bosnia was settled by the Croats, or at least that the newly arrived Croats imposed their rule over the previous settlers and indigenous peoples. We also know that the territory around the upper flow of the Bosna River (the original Bosnia) changed hands a number of times before it became an autonomous state. It was a part of the Croatian Kingdom until the middle of the 10th century. Bosnia's local ruler(*ban*) was one of the electors of the Croatian kings. The province came under the control of Serbia (949–960), of Croatia again (960–990), of Bulgaria (990), of Byzantium (1018–1040), of Croatia (1040–1087), and of Dioclea (Duklja) (1087–1102). Only after the decline of regional powers—Croatia in the west and Duklja in the southeast—did Bosnia begin to assert its autonomy. But even then, the country was compelled to recognize the suzerainty of the Hungarian-Croatian kings for most of its autonomous life.

Before Bosnia became a kingdom in 1377, its rulers were called *ban*, a title also held by Croatian governors. The first known autonomous *bans* in Bosnia were Borić (1154–1163) and Kulin (c. 1164–1204). For his wise, long, and noble rule, Kulin became a nearly mythical figure among the people of Bosnia. This "great *ban*," as he is called in a papal document from 1180, successfully used the conflict between the two competing regional powers, Byzantium and Hungary (the latter holding nominal sovereignty over Bosnia), and advanced his autonomy, expanding the original Bosnian territory to the north (Usora, Soli, and Donji Kraji) and to the south (Neretva region). He laid the foundations for future Bosnian statehood.

The rise of Bosnian independence, however, was constantly challenged by the Hungarian-Croatian sovereigns, who, a number of times, used religious justifications for attacking the Bosnian state. Under the pretext of combating the spread of an unorthodox and/or heretical Christian teaching, Hungarian armies marched for the first time into Bosnia in 1222, and the country came under direct Hungarian rule. However, the capable *Ban* Ninoslav (1225–c. 1253), while recognizing Hungarian suzerainty, exploited the Mongol attack on Hungary (1241) and enhanced Bosnian power and self-rule.

Other important *bans* who increased Bosnian power and self-rule were the *bans* of the Kotromanić dynasty. It seems that *Ban* Stipan Prijezda (1254–1287) was the ruler who took the name Kotroman, and thus, he is considered to be the founder of the Kotromanić lineage. The rule of his son, *Ban* Stipan I Kotromanić (1287–1302) was cut short, however, because Croatia's *Ban* Pavao I Šubić invaded Bosnia (1302) in response to the Bosnian support of Venice, Croatia's traditional enemy. Because of this invasion, the Croatian Šubić family ruled over Bosnia until 1318.

In contrast to Stipan I Kotromanić's short reign, the long reign of *Ban* Stipan II

Kotromanić (1312–1353) was exceptionally successful. In the struggle between the Hungarian king and Croatian nobility, Stipan supported the king in order to advance his expansionist aims at the expense of the neighboring Croatian nobility, mainly his Šubić cousins. Hum (later known as Herzegovina), Krajina (coastal region between Hum and the Cetina River in today's western Herzegovina and southern Croatia), and Završje or Tropolje (region around the town Livno) recognized at that time the Bosnian *ban* as their ruler. In 1350, the Serbian ruler Stevan Dušan (1331–1355) invaded Bosnian territories, but Stipan II was able to free his lands from a short Serbian incursion. This able ruler signed treaties with Dubrovnik (1334) and Venice (1335), invited Franciscans to Bosnia in 1340 when he had the support of the independent Bosnian church; coined the first Bosnian money; and extended the borders of his realm from the Sava River to the Adriatic Sea and from the Cetina River in the west to the Drina in the east. It was Stipan II who set the stage for the rise of the Bosnian Kingdom.

Religious and Cultural Orientation

Since the division of the Roman Empire into western and eastern parts (395), the present-day territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been on the periphery of the Roman Church and of Western civilization. The Drina River, the present border between Bosnia and Serbia, was traditionally the boundary between the Roman and Byzantine worlds.

The Roman form of Christianity was brought to medieval Bosnia from the cities along Croatia's sea coast. While the religion spread much earlier, the first-known reference to a local Bosnian Catholic diocese dates back to 1089, under the jurisdiction of the Archdiocese of Split. The clergy in Bosnia used the Roman rite, the Old Slavonic language, and Glagolitic script in church practices, as did the rest of southern Croatia.

For various reasons, however, Catholic institutions in Bosnia remained weak and neglected. The native bishop was replaced (1232) by a foreigner. Even the diocesan seat was moved (1252) from Bosnia to Đakovo, a town in northern Croatia, from where the bishops seldom, if ever, ventured into Bosnia. These and other factors precipitated diverse and unorthodox religious practices and beliefs, and even the appearance of a heretical Bosnian church, whose adherents were known as "Bosnian Christians" (they were also referred to as Bogomils and Patarens). The first accusations of heretical practices against Bosnian rulers date from 1199.

This Bosnian Church was similar to the neo-Manichean (dualistic) heresy that appeared in a number of European countries at the time. The best-known of such groups were the Albigensians in France, Cathars or Patarens in Italy, and Bogomils in Bulgaria. There is still much debate among scholars about the nature and strength of the Bosnian Church. It seems that the lines between the "native," and most probably deluded, Roman Catholicism, and the Bosnian Christians were very blurred. It will probably remain impossible to determine whether there was a clear demarcation line between the two.

For political and expansionist reasons, the Hungarian kings undertook "crusades" against the schismatic and/or heretical believers in Bosnia. With the coming of the Franciscans in the middle of the 14th century, the Catholic institutions were strengthened, and by the end of Bosnian independence, most of the people adhered to the Roman Catholic Church. There was exceptional religious tolerance in medieval Bosnia. Toward the end of Bosnia's independence, however, the remaining Bosnian Christians were under strong pressure to embrace Catholicism. Faced with lurking Ottoman threats, Bosnian rulers wished to have a unified country and to make a better case in their quest for help in the Catholic West.

Besides Roman Catholicism and the Bosnian Church, Greek Orthodoxy appeared in

Bosnia and Herzegovina at the beginning of the 13th century. At this time, an intrusive Serbian political authority crossed into present-day Montenegro and eastern Herzegovina, which threatened traditional political and religious boundaries. This Serbian expansion, however, was checked and rolled back by the rising power of Bosnia and by the republic of Dubrovnik (Ragusa). However, when the first Bosnian king, Tvrtko, occupied the Lim and Drina valleys in 1376, the Orthodox presence became visible in the Bosnian state again. But only after the Turkish invasions (1463) did Orthodoxy, along with Islam, significantly spread to Bosnia. It came with the major waves of migrations from the southeastern Balkans to the deserted regions of Bosnia and Croatia.

Summit and Fall

Bosnia reached the apex of its medieval power under the rule of Stipan Tvrtko I Kotromanić (1353–1391), son of Stipan II's brother Vladislav and Jelena Šubić. At the beginning of his reign, the youthful Tvrtko lost parts of his realm to the Hungarian-Croatian king, Louis I (1357). In spite of his initial military successes against Louis I, he had to recognize the king's suzerainty, and even found refuge at Louis's court in 1365. Some Bosnian nobles, supported by the adherents of the Bosnian Church, forced Tvrtko and his mother out of the country and recognized his brother Vuk as their king.

With the help of King Louis I, Tvrtko overpowered his opponents (1367), consolidated his power, and then began to expand Bosnian borders. First, capitalizing on Serbian aristocratic feuds, he occupied southwestern parts of Raša (Serbia) and in 1377 proclaimed himself king of Bosnia and the Serbs. Then he conquered the coastal regions of Zeta (Montenegro) and Croatia (from the Bay of Kotor to the region of Zadar) and in 1390 proclaimed himself also king of Dalmatia, Croatia, and the Littoral. His royal seat was at the town of Bobovac.

Along with his successful territorial expansion Tvrtko also set the stage for the political instability that emerged after his death. The newly acquired feudal principalities were never solidified into a stable state. Moreover, ominous events for the Bosnian Kingdom appeared even during his reign: The Ottoman Turks were already well established in the eastern part of the Balkans, and Tvrtko's realm came under Ottoman attack for the first time in 1386.

The new king, Stipan Dabiša (1391–1395), Tvrtko's half-brother, was an incompetent ruler. Besides the Turkish threat, the newly acquired coastal cities in Croatia and some other parts of the kingdom broke away. Feudal lords began to assert their autonomy, and the Bosnian kings were constantly caught up in a regional power struggle. Dabiša also recognized the suzerainty of the Hungarian-Croatian king and had to pledge (1393) the Bosnian crown to King Sigismund. In order to evade this agreement, however, Dabiša's wife Jelena (1395–1398), and not the oldest male member of the ruling family, became his successor.

Jelena's reign was challenged by a number of noblemen, the most powerful among them were Sandalj Hranić and Hrvoje Vukčić Hrvatinić. This noble faction recognized Ostoja (1398–1404), another illegitimate brother of Tvrtko I. But his political ambitions got him in trouble with the high nobility, and he had to flee the country. Tvrtko II (1404–1408), son of Tvrtko I, was proclaimed the new king of Bosnia. After losing a war with Hungary (1408), Tvrtko II also was removed by the aristocracy, and Ostoja came to power again (1408–1418). But Ostoja had to run for his life (1416) one more time because of his disputes with some of the magnates, who turned to the Turks for help in their struggle with Ostoja. Ostoja's son, 17-year-old Stipan Ostojić (1419–1420), succeeded his father to the throne. He received the support of most of the Bosnian nobility until the next major crisis.

Turkish forces raided eastern Bosnia (1420) under the pretext of punishing the local

Pavlović family for their disloyalty. Namely, the Pavlovićes had attempted to rebuff Turkish suzerainty, which they had acknowledged in return for Turkish help they received at the time of the family's struggle with the former King Ostoja. This Turkish assault sparked a new round of political crisis in the country that resulted in the election of Tvrtko II (1420–1443) to the royal throne for the second time. After a short period of peace, however, some of the nobility, with Turkish acquiescence, endorsed Radivoj, an illegitimate son of the late King Ostoja, and declared him king of Bosnia in 1432. Despite obvious external dangers, the Bosnian nobility was unable to unite around the royal throne, and the feudal kings lacked the competence to unify and lead the country. Meanwhile, internal political and religious disunity, Ottoman incursions, and Hungarian-Turkish regional rivalry were tearing the country apart.

The legitimate successor of Tvrtko II was another illegitimate son of the late King Ostoja, Stipan Tomaš (1444–1461). While he was recognized as ruler by most of the Bosnian nobility, Radivoj, the pretender to the throne, continued to serve (until 1447) the interests of the centrifugal feudal forces in the country and of the Turks. Moreover, King Tomaš's foremost enemy and his father-in-law, Stipan Vukčić Kosača (ruler of Hum), in order to emphasize his independence from King Tomaš, took the title of "Herceg" (from the German *Herzog* for duke) in 1448. He asserted his independence from the Bosnian king while becoming a vassal to the Turks. His lands are known today as Herzegovina, or the Herzog's land. His aggressive and expansionist policies got him in trouble with his neighbors, his own son, and the Turks.

While Bosnian rulers and the nobility were bickering among themselves, the Ottomans were laying the ground for their decisive assault on Bosnia. They continued raiding the country frequently, establishing a permanent foothold in 1448 in the vicinity of today's Sarajevo, and fostering political and religious strife inside the country. In order to prevent the Ottoman aggression, Stipan Tomaš turned to the pope for understanding and help. He also suppressed the schismatic, or as some think, heretical Bosnian Church, recognized the suzerainty of the Hungarian-Croatian king, Vladislav, and relied on his assistance. Even in such a difficult situation, the Bosnian king did intend to regain the territories that were lost after the death of Tvrtko I. His ambitions and his unsuccessful attempts to fulfill them only increased the number of Bosnian enemies.

King Tomaš was succeeded by his son, Stipan Tomašević (1461–1463). Faced with the immediate danger of an Ottoman onslaught, the new king turned entirely to the West in his political and ideological orientation. He was rewarded by being crowned king in the town of Jajce in 1461 with the crown sent to him by the pope. Even Herceg Stipan Kosača pledged his support and allegiance to the new king. Bosnia was now clearly in the West's political sphere. Moreover, the king refused to pay the imposed tribute to the Turks. These factors and the Ottoman hatred of the West set the stage for the Turk's decisive strike against Bosnia.

Realizing the immediate threat from the East, the Bosnian king asked for a 15-year truce with Istanbul. After giving a positive but deceitful answer, Mehmet II with a large Turkish army invaded Bosnia in the spring of 1463. The country fell to the Turks without much resistance. The last Bosnian king was captured in the fortress of Ključ, and, despite the grand vizier's written promise to spare his life, Stipan Tomašević was beheaded near the town of Jajce. In the same year, the original medieval Bosnia became a Turkish military district (*sancak* or *sandžak*).

The main force of the invading Turkish army withdrew from Bosnia and Herzegovina in the autumn of 1463. A counteroffensive, led by the Hungarian-Croatian king Mathias, Venice, and Herceg Stipan, began immediately after the departure of the principal Ottoman military forces. Mathias took the northern half of the country and established two banates (*banovine*)

there, Jajce and Srebrenica. He even installed one of his men, Nikola of Ilok, as the “king” of Bosnia (1471). The banates did serve for a few decades as a line of defense in the Croatian-Hungarian efforts to slow down Ottoman expansion to the West. Herceg Stipan and his sons, on the other hand, were able to reestablish their control in the southern part of the Bosnian Kingdom, at least for a short while.

A new Turkish offensive a year later to reconquer the rest of Bosnia did not bring the desired results. For reasons of political expediency, the Ottomans also paraded a “king of Bosnia” of their own (1465). The Turkish “Bosnian kingdom” was abolished in 1476, after the “king” asked of Hungary an official recognition of his title. The Turkish struggle with Herceg Stipan (died in 1466) and his sons continued until 1482. In that year, the last of Herceg’s military holdouts, Novi, fell under the Turks. This marked the end of the medieval Bosnian Kingdom and the land was ruled by the Ottomans until 1878.

Under the Ottomans (1463–1878)

There are no indications that conversions took place en masse in Bosnia after the Turkish occupation. A considerable percentage of the native upper class, however, and a smaller proportion of the peasantry did accept Islam. By becoming Muslims, members of the Christian aristocracy in many cases saved not only their heads, but also their hereditary possessions and privileges, too. At the beginning of Turkish rule, some noblemen entered the sultan’s service as feudal cavalry (*sipahis*) while remaining Christians, but with the passing of time all of them became converts or died out. The most intense period of Islamization in Bosnia and Herzegovina took place mainly during the first hundred years of Ottoman rule, while the Empire was still exuberant and expanding, but conversion was initially inspired more by economic and social incentives than by religious zeal. The process was also linked to the beginning of urbanization, sparse as it was. The converted or Muslim-born administrative and commercial class settled around the new business centers (*čaršija*) and the Christian peasants remained in the countryside.

The Bosnian administrative and military elite, during the entire Ottoman period, came mostly from the Islamized population. Moreover, a large number of high dignitaries in the Ottoman Empire came from Christian families in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Most of these ascended through the system of boy-tribute, known as *devşirme* (collection, blood tax). About 3,000 young men were levied from the Balkans annually and, after their conversion to Islam, they were trained in military or administrative skills. Most of the enslaved young men became *Jeni Çeri* or Janissaries, regular infantry troops. The brightest ones were placed in the sultan’s administrative service. Some of these were fully Ottomanized and served in the highest offices of the government (the Sublime Porte).

The levy of Christian boys was abolished in the middle of the 17th century. The fighting zeal and discipline of the Janissaries weakened as the empire fell into decline. They were permitted to marry, and the service became hereditary. Moreover, these former elite troops became increasingly obsolete and a major obstacle to the empire’s necessary military reforms. For that reason, the Janissaries were abolished in 1826.

With the Turkish invasion, the traditional feudal relations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, officially at least, disintegrated. The land legally became the sultan’s possession; the military and bureaucratic aristocracies were directly responsible to the executive offices (the Sublime Porte) in Istanbul. In the eyes of the Ottomans, following the Middle Eastern tradition of statecraft, society was divided into two basic categories: the ruling class (the military, administrative, judicial, and educational elite), and the subjects or *raya* (flock), which consisted of all (non-Muslims and Muslims) who, by their work, sustained the state. The sultan, with his military and

bureaucratic servants, had an obligation to accumulate and protect the wealth that was his patrimony, keep law and order, ensure security and justice for his subjects, and promote Islam. In return, the sole duty of the *raya* was to provide material support for the state, the ruling class, and the sultan.

Socioeconomic relations in Ottoman Bosnia were initially founded on the ruling class and the *raya* structure of society. The native Muslims and converts, and also a number of Christian nobles who remained in the country, became the sultan's feudal cavalry (*sipahis*). Their hereditary lands were converted into fiefs (*timars*) in return for their military or other services to the state. These former Bosnian nobles became the lower military aristocracy of the Ottoman Empire.

There were three categories of land holdings: *timar*, *zeamet*, and *hass*. The smallest was *timar* and the largest *hass*. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, *timars* were given not only to the feudal cavalry (*sipahis*), but also to the defenders of the frontier fortresses. Because of constant warfare in the region, *timars* changed hands quite often. But at the end of the 16th century, the process of *timar* privatization began, and the number of small holdings multiplied while the number of larger ones decreased.

Some peasants in Bosnia and Herzegovina were freeholders and owned small plots of land. They were mainly Muslims. Others, mainly Christian peasants, were sharecroppers or customary tenants (*kmets*), similar to serfs in the West. Generally speaking, during the first hundred years of Ottoman rule, the life of the peasant, Christian and Muslim, was relatively stable and secure. However, as Ottoman power and the military fortunes of the Bosnian feudal aristocracy began to dwindle, so did the living conditions of the peasants, especially the Christians. While originally many were leaseholders, Christian peasants became overwhelmingly sharecroppers (*kmets*) to the local Muslim feudal lords, who gradually appropriated state lands and made them hereditary. While the *sipahi* was once the sultan's reliable soldier and an efficient treasury agent, his military skills became outdated. He became a liability to the state and a despotic landlord to the peasant. Tax collection was entrusted more often to tax farmers, who became hereditary owners of the sultan's land (*çifliks*), and to local nonmilitary notables. The peasants' fortunes slipped from the ostensible security of Islamic Law (*Şeriat*) into the hands of corrupt state bureaucrats who were trying to retain their economic and social position by exploiting the *raya*, as well as defrauding the state. Besides paying the land and poll tax to the sultan, the Christian peasants' assessments increased from one-tenth to one-third, even to a half, of the annual yield. Labor obligations and numerous other assessments were increased or newly imposed. The declining status of the peasant in turn resulted in revolts, banditry, and an increase in religious intolerance.

After the Turks occupied the central and southern parts of present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina, they kept the basic local administrative divisions found at the time of the conquest. Two military districts (*sandžaks*), however, were established in the former kingdom: the Bosnian in 1463 and Herzegovinian in 1470. Both *sandžaks* belonged to the Rumeli (Rumelian) province(*beylerbeylik*) which included all of the occupied Balkan lands at the time.

Those Bosnian lands that were not occupied in 1463, as well as Croatia and parts of Hungary, became a line of defense against Turkish expansion into Central Europe. Those defenses, however, began to disintegrate at the beginning of the 16th century, especially after the fall of Belgrade (1521) and the battle of Mohacz (1526).

As the Ottomans expanded their possessions to the north and west, they established more districts (*sandžaks*) in the region and, as a result, Bosnia became an Ottoman province

(*beylerbeylik*/*eyalet*, better known as *pašaluk*) in 1580. At the apex of Ottoman power, the Bosnian *pašaluk* had eight military districts(*sandžaks*): Bosnia, Herzegovina, Zvornik, Klis, Pakrac-Cernik, Krk-Lika, Bihać, and Požega. Districts were divided into judicial and administrative units (*kazas* or *kadiluks*) in which the judges (*kadis*) dispensed the holy law of Islam or the *Şeriat.*

As the power and stamina of the Ottoman Empire began to decline in the 17th century, the borders of the Bosnian province (*pašaluk*) gradually shrank. After the liberation of Ottoman Hungary and parts of occupied Croatia from the Turks in 1699, the Bosnian *pašaluk* lost large portions of its northern and western territory. Thus, at the beginning of the 18th century, its territory consisted of four districts (*sandžaks*): Bosnia, Herzegovina, Klis, and Bihać. This administrative division lasted until the time of Ottoman reforms in the middle of the 19th century.

The seats of the chief Turkish administrators (*beglerbeg*/ *beylerbey*) in Bosnia were at first in Sarajevo, then Banja Luka (1554–1638), Sarajevo again (1639–1697), Travnik (1697–1850), then back to Sarajevo (1851–1878). From that time to the present, Sarajevo has remained the center of political power in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

A peculiar local military and administrative structure evolved in Bosnia from the Ottoman *timar* (state service) system. In the border zones, mainly in and around the military forts, officials known as *kapetans* or *kapudans* (captains) performed a mix of military, administrative, and border police duties. They also went to war when the sultan called upon them. The districts they controlled were known as *kapetanije* (captainies). While at the end of the 17th century there were 12 of such districts, all of them along the borders, a hundred years later there were 39 *kapetanije* throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Because the imperial center was so formidable, the *kapetans* were successfully kept in check. During the 16th and 17th centuries, however, the *kapetans* were able to convert the land into private holdings, make their office hereditary, treat the local peasants as they pleased, diminish the power of the governor (*beglerbeg*), and make Bosnia a state within the state.

Ottoman Reforms in Bosnia

Ottoman Bosnia, from the outset to the end of its existence, was an imperial borderland. During the empire’s expansion, it served as a staging ground for continuous onslaughts into Central Europe. During the period of decline (17th and 18th centuries), Bosnia became a defensive outpost against Western powers (the Habsburgs and Venice). In the 19th century, however, during the time of Ottoman reforms, Bosnia’s fate was entangled in a number of difficulties that, instead of making it a politically viable unit, turned the province into a battlefield for a variety of combating forces. There was the imperialistic power struggle between Russia and the Habsburgs, the revolts of the neighboring Christian peoples, and the aspirations and revolts of Bosnia’s own Christian subjects. Furthermore, there was pressure from the central government to reassert its power in the province and, at the same time, Bosnia’s ruling class struggled for survival and protection of its privileges. These and similar forces proved to be detrimental in shaping the history of Bosnia in the last two centuries.

The long distance from the capital of the empire (Istanbul), its mountainous geography, its lack of communications, and the power structure that evolved during the two centuries of Ottoman decline, all helped Bosnia to become a semiautonomous country. However, the Turkish retreat from Central Europe was a great disappointment for Bosnian elites. They began to see themselves as defenders of Islam from the Christian West. The reforms of Sultan Muhamed II (1808–1839), which emulated Western models, were perceived by Bosnia’s feudal lords as a

betrayal of Islam and a grave threat to their political and economic power. Thus, resistance to change and religious conservatism prevailed in Bosnia. The central government in Istanbul had to undertake seven military campaigns to implement its reforms and break the power of the landed aristocracy.

From the first violent clash between the newly appointed governor and the Bosnian aristocracy in 1813, to the Austro-Hungarian occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1878, there were numerous uprisings and violent disturbances in the province by both Muslims and Christians. While the Christian rebellions were directed mostly against the burdensome obligations of taxes and assessments, the semi-independent landlords revolted in defense of their local autonomy and against the imposition of the central government's reforms and obligations.

Serious discontent erupted with Sultan Mahmud II's decision in 1826 to abolish the Janissaries, which by that time was more of a privileged layer of society than an army. Bosnians also refused to enlist in the sultan's new-style army. Their opposition to changes in the military and to the reforms in general escalated into an open revolt in 1831. Under the charismatic leadership of Captain Husejin Gradaščević, known as the Dragon of Bosnia, the Bosnians were initially successful in their military campaign. Their army marched as far as Kosovo, where a similar rebellion among the Albanians was taking place. Bosnian forces wanted to extort from the grand vizier guarantees of self-rule and prevent the intended modernization. It seemed that the rebels were on the verge of political victory, until the Ottomans were able to entice the landlords of Herzegovina to abandon the cause and their Bosnian brothers. Because of the split, the rebellion was crushed in 1832. Herzegovina became an independent province(*elayet*), Husejin Gradaščević went into exile, and the sultan was able to impose limited reforms in the region. The most important was the abolishment of the *kapetanije* in 1835. Many of the former *kapetans*, however, and other feudal lords, were appointed as local representatives of the governor or *musselims*.

The second major period of insurrections of the Muslims in Bosnia came after the promulgation of Sultan Abdülmecid's famous Noble Rescript of the Rose Chamber (*Hatt-i Şerif of Gülhane*) on 3 November 1839. The decree proclaimed liberal principles: the security of life, honor, and property; equality before the law; public trials; the abolishment of tax-farming; better methods of recruitment into the armed forces; and an end of abuses by the landlords. This edict and a similar one issued in 1856 (*Hatt-i Humayun*) is collectively known as the Reorganization or *Tanzimat* period in Ottoman history. These reforms, however, were either ignored or circumvented in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

After several antireform revolts in the 1840s, the one in 1849 was especially remembered for the man who crushed it in 1850. Omer-Pasha Latas, an Islamized former sergeant in the Austro-Hungarian army, came with a large military force from Istanbul and defeated the local Muslim forces. Some Muslim notables were executed and many others exiled to Anatolia. Bosnia and Herzegovina was divided into nine new districts under the command of governor's representatives or *kajmaks*. Latas finally crushed the political power of Bosnia's landed aristocracy.

The high hopes of the Christian peasants, however, were not fulfilled. Latas was not kind to them either. Although Muslim elites were subjugated, most of their privileges were still assured. The burdens of the peasants became even greater. This resulted in Christian revolts in 1851 and again in 1857–1858. Among other demands, they wanted equality before the law (officially guaranteed in 1839) and the abrogation of the poll tax. In 1855, the tax was eliminated and replaced with a new tax for not serving in the Ottoman armed forces. These and other

changes did not in reality alleviate the burdens on the peasantry. Still, in the 1860s the living conditions of the peasants (*kmets*) did slightly improve.

The man responsible for implementing progressive changes in Bosnia and Herzegovina was Topal Osman-Pasha, who served as governor from 1861 to 1869. Through the provincial reform law of 1864, he made administrative, judicial, and military changes in Bosnia. The two provinces, Herzegovina and Bosnia, were again joined into one, now called the Bosnian *vilayet*. The governor (*valiya*) was nominated by the central government in Istanbul. An elected 28-member council met once a year and served as an advisory body. The unified province was divided into seven districts (*sandžaks* or *lives*). In addition to the Islamic courts, civil courts were introduced in the province. With some minor changes, this legal and administrative setting remained until the end of Ottoman rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The duration of Topal Osman-Pasha's service in Bosnia was known as the "period of peace and work," but after his departure the situation deteriorated sharply. Neither the provincial nor the imperial leadership was competent enough to resolve the internal and external complexities that had evolved in Bosnia by the second half of the last century.

In the last nine years of Ottoman rule in Bosnia, 15 governors served in the province. There were new revolts caused by social and economic grievances, and ethnic aspirations. National consciousness among the Christian population steadily intensified; Serbian nationalism was growing among the Orthodox and Croatian nationalism was growing among the Catholic population. Each side desired to be unified with their conationals in Serbia or Croatia and claimed Bosnia and Herzegovina to be their land. As Serbia and Montenegro were strengthening their autonomy in the second half of the century, they were increasingly active in instigating revolts among their religious brothers in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There were also sporadic incursions from Montenegro into Herzegovina to "liberate" the land. In turn, the Muslims became increasingly suspicious of the Christians and their activities as ethnic discontent and differentiation were exacerbated.

As it became clear that the Ottoman reforms would not revive the empire, European powers, specifically Russia and Austria, were eager to fill the power vacuum that was growing in the Balkan region. Under the pretext of protecting the Christians, they were meddling in Ottoman affairs and projecting their influence among the peoples in the empire. It seemed that Russia's great project of assembling a large "sister" Orthodox state in the Balkans and getting the straits would finally be achieved. Austria, on the other hand, after losing the contest for the primacy among the Germans, turned to the Balkans to secure its interests.

The rebellion of Croatian and Serbian peasants in 1875 inaugurated a crisis that brought an end to Ottoman rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It started in Herzegovina in response to a brutal tax collection that followed a disastrously poor harvest a year earlier. The revolt spread to other regions of the province. Volunteers from various Christian countries came to assist the rebels. But the rebellion was ruthlessly quelled during the winter months of the following year by the Muslim forces. The peasants paid a heavy price in life and property. Estimates are that about 5,000 peasants were killed and over 100,000 became refugees.

The events in Bosnia and Herzegovina reflected the immense predicaments facing the Ottomans domestically and on the international scene. The Bulgarians also rose against the Turks in 1875. Serbia and Montenegro declared war on the Turks in June 1876 in the hope of acquiring Bosnia and Herzegovina, respectively. But they were badly beaten by the Ottomans, and their hopes of procuring Bosnia and Herzegovina were shattered. Only Russian intervention saved them from a complete disaster. A year later, Russia declared war on the Ottoman Empire, with

an understanding that Austria-Hungary would remain neutral and, in return, Russia would recognize the Habsburgs' right to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina. Alarmed by the Russian victory and the San Stefano Treaty that created a large Bulgarian state, the European powers at their meeting at the Congress of Berlin in July 1878 prevented Russia from projecting its power into the eastern Mediterranean and blocked the Bulgarians from fulfilling their dream of an independent Greater Bulgaria. The Berlin Congress also recognized the full independence of Serbia, Montenegro, and Romania. Bosnia and Herzegovina, while still under the sultan's suzerainty, was to be administered by Austria-Hungary. On 29 July 1878, Austro-Hungarian army units crossed Bosnia's borders, crushed a weak Muslim and partially Orthodox resistance, took Sarajevo on 19 August 1878, and subdued all of Bosnia and Herzegovina by October of that year.

Under the Habsburgs (1878–1918)

From the outset, Bosnia and Herzegovina's new rulers were faced with three major difficulties regarding the administration of the land. First, there was the question of which of the two imperial partners, Austria or Hungary, would formally acquire the occupied land. The second concern was how to govern three already quarrelsome religious groups in an underdeveloped and neglected former Ottoman province. The third and more delicate issue was how to establish a workable governing relationship between a European Christian empire, which for centuries had been a bulwark against Islam, with the ruling Muslim elites in the provinces.

After pacifying Muslim and some Orthodox armed resistance and crushing local banditry, the first problem was resolved by making Bosnia and Herzegovina neither an Austrian nor a Hungarian possession, but a crown land administered by the Joint Imperial Finance Ministry. The resolution of the second and third predicaments, to govern a land with three diverse peoples and religions with conflicting political aspirations, and to bring the Muslim community to accept the rule of a Christian power, was entrusted to a Hungarian official of noble descent, Benjamin Kállay. After seven years in Belgrade as an Austro-Hungarian diplomat, he was named Joint Imperial Finance Minister from 1882 to 1903. Kállay effectively controlled the fate of Bosnia for more than 20 years.

The Habsburgs continued the Ottoman administrative divisions of the land, only changing the terminology: *sandžak* became *Kreise* (regions) and *kadiluks* were named *Bezirke*(districts). The *Şeriat* (Muslim religious) courts were kept along with the civil justice system. The provincial administration was headed by a general, the commander-in-chief of the Fifteenth Army Corps in Sarajevo. He was aided by a deputy for civil affairs and four directors in charge of political, judicial, financial, and economic matters.

Although there were no major institutional changes in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the occupation, Kállay did aspire to bring administrative practices in the provinces up to the imperial standard. That is why the Austro-Hungarian period in the country is best remembered for its large and relatively efficient bureaucracy, which was a drastic improvement over Ottoman practices. Through the efforts of ardent public servants, Bosnia and Herzegovina became, in relation to the periods before and after Habsburg rule, a good example of an efficient government and conscientious public service. Austro-Hungarian (that is, Kállay's) policies in Bosnia and Herzegovina were centered on administrative efficiency, economic and educational improvements, the reduction of Serbian and Croatian national influences, and, in turn, the affirmation of Bosnian identity as a separate political and ethnic unit.

Along with the active building of new roads and some railroads, economic initiatives were undertaken in order to industrialize and link Bosnia and Herzegovina with the rest of the

empire. Initiatives were also made to improve agricultural production. There were, however, some major problems with the economic transformation. First, major capital investments from other parts of the empire never took place. Second, in order to gain the loyalty of the Muslim landlords, the government hesitated to carry out a meaningful land reform. Furthermore, lack of technology and peasants' resistance to new ideas prevented any significant increase in agricultural production.

As part of an effort to bring about economic and social changes, the government also encouraged settlers from other regions of the empire to move to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Economic stimuli were provided to a few thousand settlers who did come to live and work in the provinces. Furthermore, attempts were made to establish educational institutions in order to lower a very high illiteracy rate in Bosnia and Herzegovina. A few hundred primary and some secondary schools were founded, as well as a technical school, a teachers' training college, and some other cultural institutions. Although much of Austro-Hungarian efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina were motivated by geopolitical interests, the fact is that substantial advancements were made in the country's infrastructure, education, and public services. Long-range economic projects, however, produced mixed results.

The national awakenings of the 19th century caught Bosnia and Herzegovina in a crossfire between Serbian, Croatian, and Muslim identities. The European civilization fault line, which separated the Latin West and Byzantine worlds for centuries, became visible in Bosnia and Herzegovina once again. The Orthodox population, which either migrated to Bosnia and Herzegovina or was converted after the Turkish occupation, embraced Serbian nationalism. Catholics, who lived in Bosnia and Herzegovina before the Ottoman conquest, linked their revival to Bosnian medieval history and to the national movement in Croatia. The Muslim population, mostly indigenous to the region, was in a difficult situation regarding their ethnic identity. Their previous imperial Ottoman pride was becoming irrelevant. Rising Turkish nationalism was not an option because they were not of Turkish origin. Furthermore, the Muslim concept that Islam is all inclusive (*Umma Muslima*) was an ideal and not a political reality. This situation resulted in uncertainty and confusion.

By the beginning of the 20th century, a considerable number of Bosnian Muslim intellectuals identified themselves as Croats, a smaller number as Serbs, but most of the people remained ambiguous regarding their national orientations. Islam, not ethnicity, remained for them the main identity. While the Croats and the Serbs wanted to be unified with their "mother" countries, the Muslims had no desire to unify either with Serbia or Croatia, or to form a larger Slav state. Their main goal was to retain Bosnia and Herzegovina as a separate political unit in which they could preserve their Islamic tradition and hopefully maintain their privileged status.

The Serbian national ideologues claimed not only that the Orthodox were Serbs, but that all three groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina were actually Serbs. Therefore, according to them, Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as most of Croatia, should be united with Serbia. The Croatians also claimed Bosnia and Herzegovina as their land on the principle of historical rights and the argument that the Muslims were Islamized former Croats. The concept of Yugoslavism, an attempt to create a new and supranational identity with a program of unifying all of the South Slavs in a single state, complicated ethnic relations even further.

The idea of unifying Bosnia and Herzegovina with Croatia and making the two an equal partner to Hungary and Austria under the Habsburgs, known as trialism, was circulating as a possibility. This would have provided a balance among the German, Hungarian, and Slavic segments of the Empire. But it was unacceptable to the Hungarians, Serbs, and most of the

Muslims. The Hungarians did not want to strengthen Slav power in their realm. For the Serbs, it would end the dream of unifying Bosnia with Serbia. And in the eyes of the Muslims, trialism would threaten their Islamic tradition and their privileged status.

Because of such a variety of nationalist aspirations and political speculations, Minister Kállay wanted to make Bosnia and Herzegovina a separate entity (*corpus separatum*) within the monarchy and isolate it from other Balkan political and ethnic forces. His main project was to cultivate a separate Bosnian ethnicity that would melt all the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina into a new nationality.

In order to assure the cooperation of the religious leaders, especially Muslim and Orthodox ones, the new rulers fully respected the freedom of religion and subsidized Christian and Muslim schools. However, imperial authority gained ultimate control of all institutions in the province, including the power to appoint the bishops of the Catholic and Orthodox dioceses, the religious head of the Muslim community (*reis ul-ulema*), and a four-man Muslim council (*mejlis al-ulema*). As Catholic rulers, the Habsburgs were especially careful to avoid making Catholics a privileged group in the province.

To advance the Bosnian or Bosniac identity, Kállay banned political and even cultural activities under national names. His efforts, however, did not bring about the desired results. Even the Muslims, who remained cool to Croatian or Serbian nationalism, did not think in terms of an all-inclusive Bosniac national identity. They saw themselves as distinct. Besides religious exclusiveness, however, one should not forget the socioeconomic differences that for centuries separated Muslim elites from the Christian peasantry. Religious and economic differences, plus the already developed national consciousness of the Serbs and the Croats, were detrimental to integration processes.

The legitimacy of a Christian monarchy to rule Bosnia and Herzegovina was constantly resisted by the Muslim community there. It was seen as a temporary setback and not as a permanent solution. A dream remained that either the Ottoman Empire would do something to alleviate their dissatisfaction or a solution would be found in which Bosnia and Herzegovina would remain an Islamic region of Europe. The sultan's sovereignty in Bosnia and Herzegovina until 1908, although on paper only, gave a ray of hope to the Muslims that better times might yet come.

Because the new rulers retained the old structures, the Muslims worked at first through traditional religious and cultural institutions. Petitions and grievances concerning religious matters were constantly raised in order to protect their interests. The question of the conversion of some Muslim members to Christianity became a mobilizing issue for all segments of Muslim society. While, in the eyes of Vienna, conversions were a private matter, this was portrayed by the Muslims as detrimental to their survival. Such issues became the means through which they put pressure on the government to achieve better political status.

In 1881, Bosnian military units from the Ottoman period were merged with the Austro-Hungarian imperial armed forces, and a general conscription was ordered in Bosnia and Herzegovina. There were strong objections by the Muslims to service in a Christian army. This, along with some other grievances, resulted in a short-lived Muslim revolt in the Mostar region.

Muslims also fought the government over control of charitable, religious land foundations (*vakufs* or *vakifs*). By the end of Ottoman rule, the use of the *vakufs* had deteriorated so much that they were little more than tax-free family possessions. The Habsburgs made major reforms in this area, but the question of *vakuf* control became a political issue. Finally, in 1909, control of these institutions was given to the Muslim leadership. This victory contributed greatly

to Muslim political and nationalist aims.

The end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, in the Balkans and in Europe, witnessed a series of political crises and shifting alliances. The demise of the Alliance of the Three Emperors (Germany, Russia, and Austria), formation of the Triple Alliance (Germany, Austria, and Italy) and of the Triple Entente (England, France, and Russia), and growing tensions among the old and the new European colonial powers greatly affected the fate of the Balkan region. Suspicions among the formerly allied Russians and Habsburgs were growing, and hostile activities in the Balkans were intensified. Events in Serbia and Croatia, and the ensuing Balkan wars, all had an impact on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In Serbia, a group of zealous Serbian nationalist officers eliminated the ruling Obrenović dynasty and installed the Austrophobe Karađorđevićs to the Serbian royal throne. They also organized and sponsored secret societies (Unification or Death, better known as the Black Hand) and paramilitary groups like the *četniks* in order to carry out the Serbian nationalist program, which was formulated in the following three sentences: "Serbia is wherever the Serbs live. All the Serbs must live in Serbia. Serbia for the Serbs." Serbian foreign policy, because of the shared culture and common expansionist interests, shifted openly to the Russian sphere of influence. Furthermore, both Bulgaria and Serbia were competing for Macedonia. And Serbia relied on Russian help.

In Croatia, a hated *ban* (viceroy), Kuen Hedervary (1883–1903), used the Serbian minority in an attempt to keep Croatia in his firm grip and to deprive it of political autonomy and cultural identity. This contributed greatly to Serbian–Croatian tensions. Serbs were seen as a minority willing to be used by Hungarians against Croatian interests. In 1903, however, a political coalition was formed in Croatia between Croatian and Serbian political forces, and among the intellectuals, the idea of Yugoslavism was fostered. But the two peoples had different, and in many ways incompatible, visions of their national futures. Developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina were also growing more complex, especially after Kállay's death in 1903. His successor, Stephen Burián (1903–1912), realized that Kállay's ethnic policies were not working, and he opened the door to organizational structures under ethnic labels. Significant religious autonomy for the Orthodox Church was secured in 1905. It officially became known as the Serbian-Orthodox Church. This greatly stimulated Serbian nationalism and provided it with an organizational instrument. From that point on, all three groups, Muslim, Serb, and Croat, established ethnic institutions that shaped and sharpened their national goals and programs.

The first crisis of significant proportions erupted when Austro-Hungary, prompted by the 1908 revolution of the Young Turks, decided to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina. Within less than a year, the matter was resolved with the Turkish government. The Turks were given monetary compensation for the provinces, the *sandžak* of Novi Pazar (also known just as Sandžak) was left in Turkish hands, and Bosnian Muslims were guaranteed freedom of religion. The tensions between Austria and Serbia, however, increased to the breaking point. If the Russians had not suffered defeat in the war with Japan in 1905, Serbia most probably would have kindled a war with the Habsburgs in 1908 over the annexation of Bosnia. The First Balkan War erupted less than four years later. The Serbs, Montenegrins, Bulgarians, and Greeks made an alliance and wanted to drive the Turks from the Balkans. They defeated the Turks in the war of 1912. The victory, however, brought about another war among the allies over the spoils. In the Second Balkan War (1913), Serbia, Montenegro, and Greece, joined by Romania, defeated Bulgaria, depriving it of sizable territories. Victory in both Balkan wars and more than doubling the size of its territory encouraged Serbia to pursue its expansionist policy. While the pro-Yugoslavs among

the Croat and Muslim intelligentsia in Bosnia and Herzegovina looked toward Serbia as the Piedmont of the South Slavs, the others saw it as an aggressor and wished to achieve their national aspirations within the Habsburg dominion.

The Serbian nationalist forces, however, were eager to provoke a conflict over Bosnia and Herzegovina and enlarge its territory. Their efforts and desires were fulfilled on 28 June 1914, when a young Serb nationalist, Gavrilo Princip, killed the Archduke Francis Ferdinand in Sarajevo. This ignited World War I, in which Bosnia and Herzegovina found itself on the side of Austria-Hungary. At the end of the war, the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire placed Bosnia and Herzegovina in a newly created South Slavic state.

From 1918 to 1992

The creation of the South Slav state in 1918 (the kingdom of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, known as Yugoslavia after 1929) was more a calculated result of the post–World War I peacemakers than a yearning of the people who became a part of it. It was stitched together from parts of Austria-Hungary (Slovenia, Croatia, Vojvodina, and Bosnia and Herzegovina) and the kingdoms of Serbia and Montenegro.

Various peoples that made up the new country had antithetical national and political visions and perceptions of what the new state should be. To the Croatians and their Slovene and Bosnian Muslim neighbors, the common state was to be a loose union of equal partners. To the Serbs, the new state was a substitution for a Greater Serbia, their paramount dream that dissipated with the fall of their champion, imperial Russia. To the Western peacemakers, the newly created state was to serve as a link in a chain of new states designated to be a buffer zone against the spread of the Bolshevik revolution. This creation of the Versailles Treaty (1918) was a quick fix to a very complex and unstable region of Europe. The forced union of various peoples with different cultures and religions was from the very outset susceptible to failure.

During World War I, the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina was envisioned by some in Vienna and by leading Muslim politicians as either an autonomous entity directly under the Hungarian crown, or indirectly under the crown through an affinity with Croatia. But as soon as some Slovene and Croatian politicians established a National Council for the unification of the South Slavs (5 October 1918), a branch of the same National Council was constituted in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The governor of the province, Baron Sarkotić, handed over power to the members of the council on 1 November 1918. Two days later, the first national government of Bosnia and Herzegovina was formed. Serbian and Montenegrin armies moved into Bosnia and Herzegovina a few days later, and violence erupted in many places.

As in the past, politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to follow along mostly ethnic lines. The Bosnian Serbs were strong supporters of the Serbian-controlled, central government in Belgrade. They voted exclusively for Serbian political parties. They were free to orient their cultural and economic activities toward Belgrade. To belong to the ruling nationality in the country definitely had its rewards, and the Serbs from the former Habsburg regions utilized that advantage to the fullest. The Croats of Bosnia and Herzegovina were of federalist political orientation and strongly opposed Serbian unitarism. Most of them were followers of the Croatian (Republican) Peasant Party. Culturally and economically they were Zagreb-oriented. The Muslim leadership, meanwhile, maneuvered between the two camps. Although there were some pro-Serb enthusiasts, the overwhelming majority of the Muslim population was in the federalist camp with the Croats and Slovenes.

The Yugoslav Muslim Organization (JMO) established in 1919 became the largest Muslim political formation. It politicized the Muslim masses and attempted to protect their

interests in the new South Slavic state. At the beginning of the new country, the JMO leadership had a pro-Serb orientation. By collaborating with the ruling Serbian party, the Muslims attempted to secure Bosnia's territorial unity, to retain Muslim unity, to have freedom in Muslim religious and educational institutions, and to diminish the impact of the impending land reforms on the Muslim landlords. In return, the JMO, with its Muslim allies from Kosovo, Sandžak, and Macedonia, voted for the unitarist constitution that was promulgated on 28 June 1921, the day of the Kosovo battle (1389) and of the Sarajevo assassination (1914).

Whereas the constitution stated that "Bosnia and Herzegovina would be divided into districts within her present [1921] borders," in actuality Bosnian administrative integrity was only an appearance. It did not have political or ethnic significance. Pan-Serbian policies also caused a split among the Bosnian Muslims. A small and older group of politicians remained faithful to Belgrade, while the majority, under the leadership of Mehmed Spaho, moved close to the federalist camp. All the Muslim deputies to the parliament in Belgrade from this faction, except Spaho, went so far as to declare themselves in 1924 to be of Croatian nationality. Spaho, who resigned from the Belgrade government in 1922, claimed to be a "Yugoslav." There was a strong pro-Croatian wing in the JMO, and in the mid-1920s, a number of Muslims voted for the Croatian Peasant Party.

After the 1923 elections, the main Croatian, Slovene, and Bosnian Muslim political parties formed a Federalist bloc. A year later, the Serbian Democratic Party joined the Federalists and together they formed an Opposition bloc. This contributed to the fall of the Serbian Radicals and to the formation of a new coalition government under the leadership of Serbian Democrats. During this short-lived government (July 1924–October 1924), the Bosnian Muslims (JMO) enjoyed considerable power. But with the increase of their power in Belgrade came Serbian anti-Muslim (and anti-Croatian) violence in the Bosnian countryside.

Regardless of Bosnia and Herzegovina's central location in the country and a strong Serbian unitarist force in it, and despite a relatively cooperative Muslim leadership, the region underwent economic and cultural stagnation in the interwar period. The Belgrade regime chose oppression and exploitation rather than magnanimity as its overall policy in the newly consolidated lands.

In 1927, Spaho joined the unitarist Serbian Radical government and remained faithful to it even after the assassination of the Croatian political leadership in the Belgrade Parliament (1928). King Aleksandar, however, outlawed all "tribal" parties in January 1929, declared a personal dictatorship, renamed the country Yugoslavia, and, under the disguise of official Yugoslavism, continued to advance the Serbian cause.

In the same year, the administrative boundaries of the country were redrawn. Instead of the existing (more than 30) districts, nine banates (*banovine*) were created. Traditional administrative districts in Bosnia and Herzegovina were divided up and consolidated with neighboring regions in such a way that a Serbian majority could be assured in all of them except one, which had a Croatian majority. Even the pretense of Bosnian integrity retained in 1921 vanished in 1929. Furthermore, the king's appointments to his personal cabinet indicated that he favored JMO renegades and pro-Serb Muslims. Genuine Muslim or Croatian political representatives were excluded from power. Such policies only contributed to the radicalization of the Croatian and Muslim politics and masses in the 1930s. Out of such despotic rule, a revolutionary (*ustaša*) movement arose among the Croatians and began to advocate the breakup of Yugoslavia by any means. This movement found sympathy among the Bosnian Muslims, and some joined it.

After King Aleksander's assassination (1934) by Croat and Macedonian separatists from revolutionary groups (*ustaše* and IMRO), the JMO joined the ruling Yugoslav Radical Union under the leadership of Prince Pavle's regency, and it remained a part of the regime until 1939. Spaho died in June of that year, and in August the regent struck an agreement (*Sporazum*) with Vladko Maček, leader of the Croatian Peasant Party, by which Croatia became an autonomous banate (*banovina*). The Croatian Banovina included parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The interests of the Bosnian Muslims and their goals to safeguard the unity of Bosnia and Herzegovina were ignored by the Serb–Croat deal. The agreement was vehemently opposed by Serbian nationalist forces, and as predicted by Spaho's successor, Dr. Džafer-beg Kulenović, the banovina was only a temporary arrangement. In April 1941, the Yugoslav state disintegrated. It became a victim of its own Serbian despotism and of German and Italian aggression.

During World War II, Bosnia and Herzegovina became an integral part of the Independent State of Croatia (1941–1945), a state that was established by the *ustaša* revolutionaries under the "protection" of fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. The unification of Bosnia and Herzegovina with Croatia was justified by the claim that those were Croatian historic lands and also by an ideology that the Muslims were Croats of Islamic faith.

Persecutions of the non-Serbs in the interwar period and the Serbian struggle against the Croat state led to mutual retaliations and slaughters among the Serbs, Croats, and Muslims. Persecutions of Jews in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as in Serbia, began in 1941. Most of the Croats of Bosnia and Herzegovina welcomed the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the unification with Croatia, and many of them joined the *ustaše* forces. Numerous Bosnian Muslims supported the Independent State of Croatia, while others simply accepted the reality and adjusted to the new situation. Even many sympathizers of the state were not pleased with the policies of the *ustaše* regime and attempted to distance themselves from it. Leading Muslims complained about their underrepresentation in state offices and military ranks. There were also moves on their part to make Bosnia and Herzegovina an autonomous province within the German political configurations in the region. This proposal did not go through, but the Germans did organize a separate volunteer Muslim military division in 1943. At the end of April 1944, a group of leading Muslims in Sarajevo openly protested to the Zagreb government against the *ustaša* policies and demanded "equality for everyone, justice for all, and the rule of law above everything."

There were mainly three antagonistic local forces operating in Bosnia and Herzegovina during the war. They formed a lethal triangle that cost an enormous number of human lives in the country during World War II. The Croatian regulars and *ustaše* volunteers fought the Serbian *četniks* and the Communist-led partisans. The *četniks* stood for the restoration of Serbian-controlled royalist Yugoslavia and a homogeneous Greater Serbia and fought the Croats and Muslims. The third force, the partisans, stood for a new and socialist Yugoslavia. Their promises of freedom, federalism, and national equality attracted a considerable following from all the ethnic groups. All three turned to mass killings in order to achieve their goals. The partisans, however, due to the support of the Allies, emerged as the winners at the end of the war.

The Yugoslav Communists were not consistent in their pronouncements regarding the national question in the country. Being faithful to the Comintern, their teaching on this issue followed the interests of the Soviet Union. Thus, in the mid-1920s, they advocated the dissolution of Yugoslavia, but by the end of the 1930s, they championed a federalist cause. Furthermore, they were not sure on the question of Bosnian Muslim identity. Although there was an understanding among the Communists before and during the war that the Muslims were not a

nation, they remained vague in defining their ethnic status.

Toward the end of the war, the Communist leadership had a heated debate on the status of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the new state. Forces from Serbia demanded that Bosnia and Herzegovina be absorbed into their republic, but Bosnian forces with the help of Tito, the head of the party and Communist government, were able to prevent this, and they secured for Bosnia and Herzegovina the status of a federal republic.

The postwar period brought terror and new reprisals throughout the whole country. It was the duty of the state secret police, controlled by the Communist Party, to destroy the "enemies of the people" and force everyone to appreciate the new regime. Thousands were executed and many more jailed. Ethnic cultural institutions were banned and their property nationalized, religious activities were curtailed, and no independent activities of any kind were tolerated.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina was even worse than in the other republics. Much of the war took place on its territory, which resulted in major destruction and population losses. There was a great distrust of the Croatians and Muslims, and the Serbs were given a dominant role in the republic. It was openly admitted in the late 1960s that postwar development of some regions, like western Herzegovina, was neglected as a part of collective punishment. The Muslims were given "equal status" to the others in the country, but they were denied a chance to declare themselves as a separate national entity. It was expected that in time, Serbian identity would prevail among them. From the end of the war until the end of the 1960s, the leading Muslims declared themselves as either Serbs or Yugoslavs, and a few as Croatians, but the majority of the Muslim populace remained ethnically undeclared.

After the Serbian hardliners were subdued (1966) and Croatian nationalist voices silenced (1967 and 1971), Tito began to favor the affirmation of Bosnian Muslims as a new political base. Under Communist leadership, they finally gained full national status in 1971. On the census form of that year, they were allowed to declare themselves as "ethnic Muslims." During that decade, they also became the most influential group in the republic. Furthermore, a number of Bosnian Muslims became a part of Tito's inner circle. The best-known among them was Džemal Bijedić, the prime minister of Yugoslavia from 1971 to his death in a plane crash in 1977. Many claimed that his death was not an accident, but the work of his opponents in Belgrade. Whether an accident or not, it was a symbolic indication of a growing feeling among Serbian forces that the Muslims were getting too much power. Croatians were also not pleased with their situation in the republic or the country. They complained that their political and economic position in the republic was growing more and more negligible in relation to the Serbs and Muslims. They were underrepresented at every level of the state's infrastructure, and the primary path of their social and economic advancement was to find a job in Western Europe.

In the 1970s, the Yugoslav state system underwent two opposing processes. One was centripetal in nature—Communist Party discipline and its control of society were tightened. The other was centrifugal—the new constitution of 1974 permitted greater self-rule in the republics and in the autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. This was also the period when Yugoslavia borrowed billions of dollars from the West in order to prove to its citizens and to the world its economic and political viability. Bosnia and Herzegovina, after being neglected for a few decades, enjoyed a fresh infusion of economic growth as well as enhanced political importance.

After Tito's death in 1981, however, besides acute economic difficulties, the Yugoslav republics began to move in two opposite directions: The Serbs pushed for recentralization, and the non-Serbs, primarily Croatia and Slovenia, championed further decentralization. The

intranational relations in the country deteriorated rapidly during that decade. The cracks that had always been there began to surface. While Croatians were relatively quiet at the time, Albanian ethnic disturbances took place in Kosovo, and Slovenes began to demand greater autonomy and personal liberties. A group of Muslim intellectuals in Bosnia and Herzegovina, headed by Alija Izetbegović, undermined the position of their secular Muslim leaders by publishing an *Islamic Declaration*. In it, the group indicated its displeasure with Muslim secularism, stressed the superiority of Islam over Christianity and Communism, and called for a return to the basic teaching of the Koran in order to achieve a true Islamic society. The supporters of the *Declaration* were tried in 1983 and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. The leading members of the group once belonged to the Young Muslim organization that was condemned as an antistate organization in 1946 and 1949. This fact indicated that a quest for a Muslim religious orientation and identity was simmering under the surface, even under Communist rule.

Another blow to Bosnian Muslim influence in Yugoslav politics came in the late 1980s. A financial scandal that involved a well-known business enterprise in western Bosnia (Agrokomerc) and its boss, Fikret Abdić, was identified as a sign of Muslim misuse of power. Abdić was a member of the Bosnian Central Committee and too close to the all-powerful Pozderac family. While economic embezzlements were common practice in Yugoslavia, many believed that the Agrokomerc affair was used by the Serbian forces to push the Muslims from political prominence. As a result of this affair, Hamdija Pozderac, the vice president of Yugoslavia, in line to become the president in May 1988, was pressured to resign from his position.

The most powerful nationalist tide in the 1980s, however, came from the Serbs. While the Yugoslav constitution of 1974 promoted decentralization, Serbian political and nationalist forces began to advocate a "strong Serbia in a strong Yugoslavia." The blueprint for reviving Serbian nationalism was drawn up in the 1986 *Memorandum*, which was written by leading members of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Belgrade. It accused Tito and non-Serb Yugoslav leaders of an anti-Serbian conspiracy. It was a call for the defense of Serbian culture and national interests "wherever Serbs live," especially in Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia.

At first, the "protection" of the Kosovo province from the Albanians, who made up 90 percent of the local population, became the rallying point for the Serbs. This coincided with the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo (1389), where the Serbs and their allies were defeated by the Ottoman Turks. The leader of the Communist Party in Serbia, Slobodan Milošević, took the struggle for "Serbia and all the Serbs" to the masses in 1989. His populism was a new type of politics in a Communist country. In the atmosphere of triumphalism, militarism, and a general nationalist euphoria, Milošević crushed the provincial governments in Vojvodina and Kosovo. Through his proxies he also took control of Montenegro, and exported his movement into Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The cry was the "unification of all Serbian lands." This was the prelude to the war in Slovenia (June 1991) that quickly spread to Croatia (June–December 1991) and then to Bosnia and Herzegovina (April 1992). These were also the final moments of the Yugoslav state.

Road to Independence and War for Survival

Besides the cult of Tito, president of socialist Yugoslavia, there were two vital institutions that were holding the South Slavic state together: the Communist Party, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY); and the Yugoslav Peoples Army (JNA, Jugoslavenska Narodna Armija). The party had been cracking along national lines ever since Tito's death (1980) and the demise

of its central hub in Belgrade finally came in January of 1990. The army, on the other hand, did not disintegrate but merely transformed itself into an all-Serb military force in 1991.

Once the Communists gave up the monopoly of power (1990), new ethnocentric parties were quickly organized, and they easily defeated the "reformed Communists" in the first post-Communist elections in all of the former Yugoslav republics except in Serbia and Montenegro. In the last two, the Communists were already at the forefront of the nationalist movement.

Forty-one registered parties and associations in Bosnia and Herzegovina were formed, and 1,551 candidates from 18 different parties ran for the National Assembly in the first free elections (November 1990). The three ethnic parties, (Muslim) Party of Democratic Action (SDA), Serbian Democratic Party (SDS), and Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), became the most important political formations in Bosnia. After the November–December 1990 elections, there were 99 Muslims, 85 Serbs, 49 Croats, and seven "Yugoslavs" in the 240-seat bicameral legislature (Chamber of Citizens with 130 seats and a Chamber of Municipalities with 110 seats). The leader of the SDA, Alija Izetbegović, became the president of the nine-member, multiethnic collective presidency. A principle of ethnic parity was to be maintained in all branches of government.

Although the new government was formed from all three political and ethnic groups, it became clear from the outset that the Serb-dominated municipalities in the republic refused to recognize Sarajevo's preeminence. At the same time, Serb representatives in the assembly declined to cooperate in anything that would increase Bosnia's self-rule, claiming that a sovereign Bosnia and Herzegovina would become an Islamic state. Already in October 1990, the Serbs set up a Serbian National Council in the city of Banja Luka, soon to become a Serb nationalist stronghold. This led to the formation of a Serb Community of Municipalities of Bosnian Krajina (April 1991) and the signing of a "treaty of cooperation" (June 1991) with the self-proclaimed Serbian Autonomous Region of Krajina in Croatia. The two entities even announced a "declaration of unification." In fact, by November 1991, Bosnian Serbs proclaimed six *krajinas*, Serbian autonomous regions, in Bosnia and Herzegovina that claimed to be parts of a "Greater Serbia." It was clear that such moves were not the work of the Bosnian Serbs alone, but a component of a larger plan concocted by Serbian national leaders in Belgrade.

Muslim leadership in Sarajevo was caught in the middle between Serbian centralism and the Slovene and Croatian drive for independence. In the fall of 1991, President Izetbegović, together with the Macedonians, made a last-ditch effort to stop the Croatian and Slovene move to independence and promoted Yugoslav confederalism. But this was a dead issue. Thus, conscious of the consequences if Bosnia remained a part of truncated Yugoslavia, the Muslim leaders with the help of the Croats finally began to move toward the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On 15 October 1991, SDA and HDZ adopted a memorandum on the sovereignty and neutrality of Bosnia and Herzegovina without declaring independence. The Serb representatives rejected the move and walked out of the assembly. A referendum on independence, however, followed in February 1992. More than 64 percent of the eligible voters participated, and 99.7 percent of them answered affirmatively to the question, "Do you support a sovereign and independent Bosnia and Herzegovina?" Thus, the country was proclaimed independent, and international recognition by the European Community (EC) and the United States followed on 6 and 7 April 1992, respectively.

Serbian leadership rejected the referendum as illegal and immediately turned to military operations in order to consolidate territories already declared autonomous and to occupy other

parts of the country they claimed to be theirs. The previously local, violent "incidents" now turned into a full-fledged war of Serb rebellion-cum-aggression against Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It is often perceived that the EC recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, and then of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as independent states precipitated the outbreak of war in Bosnia. The fact is, however, that Bosnia and Herzegovina was involved in a war from the time the JNA attacked Slovenia and Croatia in June 1991. The republic became a staging post for the Yugoslav army, its factories were producing arms for the Serbian forces, a number of Bosnian Serb and Muslim officers participated in JNA units on various fronts in Croatia, and many Serb and Croat volunteers from the republic were fighting on the sides of their conationals. Also, the SDA was getting ready for a war by organizing and arming its paramilitary units, while the JNA disarmed the Bosnian Territorial Defense force by the November 1991 elections and left the Muslims and Croats helpless. Furthermore, major Serb attacks, especially against Croat villages in eastern Herzegovina, began to take place in the fall of 1991. Moreover, by creating autonomous *krajinas*, the Serbs had already divided the country, except for Sarajevo, before the end of 1991. However, the Sarajevo leadership and the media ignored these events. Nothing was done to prepare the country for war until the brutal attacks of Serbian paramilitary forces on Muslim settlements in northeastern Bosnia began on 2 April 1992, and until the mask of calm in Sarajevo was shattered by Serbian heavy artillery a few days later. The recognition of Bosnia and Herzegovina (6 April 1992) was only an excuse for the Serbs to sever ties with the rest of Bosnia and declare an independent Serb Republic of their own.

Possessing overwhelming superiority in military might, within a month the Serbs took control of more than two-thirds of Bosnia and Herzegovina. After accomplishing this, their leadership engaged in a waiting game in which, they hoped, the international community would coerce the Sarajevo government to concede capitulation and legitimize the creation of a Greater Serbia. The conquest of land, however, was not enough. By mid-summer 1992, it had become clear that the Serbs were engaged in the systematic "ethnic cleansing" of non-Serbs, namely Muslims and Croats, in the regions under their control. Besides the expulsion of people from their homes, villages, and towns, numerous concentration and detention camps were operated as a part of the warfare, which was accompanied by mass rapes. The war in Bosnia essentially was a war against civilians in order to create "pure" ethnic areas.

By the end of the summer 1992, it was obvious that the Serbs were not able to conquer the whole country. Despite a weak and improvised military organization, the Croats and Muslims were able to halt the assault. The Croats even pushed the Serb forces from the Mostar region in June 1992. Although Bosnia and Herzegovina was recognized as a sovereign and independent state, it was abandoned by the international community. Moreover, while the JNA and the Serbs inherited the entire arsenal of the former Yugoslavia, the leading world powers would not even consider lifting the United Nations (UN) arms embargo imposed (September 1991) on all former Yugoslav republics.

The response of the world, particularly of the European Community and the United Nations, to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was one of ambivalence, impotence, and, some would say, even deceitfulness. The leading European powers never admitted the true nature of the war. For them this was a "civil war" and an eruption of "ancient Balkan feuds," not an aggression on a sovereign state and its democratically elected government. Only the horrifying pictures from concentration camps and the public outcry that followed forced the EC and UN leaders to convene the London Conference at the end of August 1992 to address the crisis. The rhetoric at the conference and its framework for stopping the war were encouraging, but no one

was willing to do anything about implementing its decisions. Two mediators, Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance, on behalf of the EC and UN, respectively, as a part of the Geneva Conference (a continuation of the London meeting), attempted to find a formula that would preserve the Bosnian state, at least on paper, determine the minimum arrangement acceptable to the Serbs, and then pressure the Muslim-led government and the Croats to accept it. The two came up with a peace plan (end of 1992) that would divide Bosnia and Herzegovina into 10 semiautonomous cantons, mostly along ethnic lines, with a loose central authority. This, and three more international peace proposals that followed, indicated the apparent willingness of the West to accept "reality," abide by the law of the stronger, and dismantle Bosnia into "ethnically cleansed" areas. The EC–UN plans did not bring any beneficial results. On the contrary, they greatly helped to push the Croats and Muslims, reluctant allies, into a war over the remaining 30 percent of the land under their control. Their conflict, however, provided a strong argument for those who claimed that this was a civil war and that, therefore, the outside world should not get involved.

Already at the end of 1991, Bosnian Croats began to organize a self-defense that proved to be crucial in protecting at least some parts of the country. But as the war was evolving and the Sarajevo government proved to be impotent, the Bosnian Croats filled the power vacuum in the regions where they constituted the majority, and began to play two political cards. First, if Bosnia and Herzegovina survived, they wanted to secure their national equality with the Muslims/Bosniacs and Serbs, and possibly gain regional self-rule. Second, if the country collapsed as an independent state, they were ready to take "their part" and unite with Croatia. Among the Croats themselves, there were differences as to which option should be at the forefront. The Croats from Bosnia proper stood mostly for the first option, and those from Herzegovina for the second option. As the Herzegovinian faction dominated Croat politics, they began to push a separatist plan and proclaimed their own Croat Republic of Herceg-Bosna in August of 1993. The West's apparent willingness to divide the country was an incentive and justification for such moves.

The Muslim leadership desired a unitary state. It perceived the Muslims as the fundamental people in Bosnia, and therefore the only trustworthy guardians of the state. Furthermore, as the Croats had Croatia and the Serbs Serbia, the conclusion of the Muslims was that the Bosniacs (Bosnian Muslims) should have Bosnia as their nation-state. This sometimes explicit but more often implicit integralist message contributed to the mistrust and the growing gap between the Muslims and Croats and others who remained willing to support the independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the basis of national/ethnic equality. Realizing the (in)actions of the EC and UN and the seeming willingness of the world to accept the result of military conquest, the Muslims began to grab the land held by the Croats (1993) and were even on the verge of proclaiming a separate Bosnian Muslim Republic at the beginning of 1993. Moreover, a leading Bosnian Muslim in northwestern Bosnia, Fikret Abdić, declared his own Autonomous Region of Western Bosnia in September 1993 and began to fight the Sarajevo government. Thus, by the end of 1993, the situation looked hopeless. The world was staring at the worst human disaster in Europe since World War II and was seemingly helpless to do anything about it.

The United Nations' involvement in Bosnia focused mainly on humanitarian needs. Besides some 1,500 UN troops already in Bosnia, in September 1992, the UN Security Council approved the expansion of the existing 15,000 UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Croatia by six thousand in order to protect humanitarian aid in Bosnia, including the opening of the

Sarajevo airport. By the summer of 1995, there were approximately 23,000 “peacekeepers” from 18 nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. All the UN Security Council decisions regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, were a reaction to some major human disaster (the May 1992 breadline massacre in Sarajevo, for example) with no meaningful force or willingness to make a difference. The resolutions imposing economic sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro (May 1992), creating the no-fly zone over Bosnia (October 1992), and establishing six UN “safe areas” in Bosnia (May 1993) lacked a clear mechanism of implementation, a well-defined command, or a measure of response to provocations. These and other resolutions were passed to pressure the Serbs to accept a negotiated settlement, while being careful to avoid any direct UN involvement in the war. Even after the “discovery” of concentration and rape camps, mass executions, and blatant genocide, the UN and EC did nothing meaningful to stop the Serb onslaught. One has to recognize, on the other hand, that the UN and other humanitarian organizations did, with great sacrifices, keep most of the Bosnian population alive and helped to sustain the life of the state itself.

The fate of Bosnia and Herzegovina was also complicated by the political positions of the international power players: the UN, United States, EC, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and Russia, to name the main ones. Each had its own agenda in the Balkans. The UN secretary-general, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, wanted to be at the forefront and not to be bullied by the United States on the Bosnian question. The British and the French demanded that Europe should resolve its own problems and resented American encroachments on “their turf.” The Russians not only remained Serb advocates, but also used the Bosnian war as a stage for their international visibility. By the agreement with the UN, NATO was authorized to patrol the declared no-fly zone and use air strikes when called upon. But in order to prevent a more decisive solution to the problem and to lessen the impact of U.S. leverage, the key command to air strikes was in the hands of the UN civilian chief in the former Yugoslavia until July 1995. For such reasons, it took the international community almost three years into the war to undertake a direct action against Serb military targets. In February 1994, NATO (U.S.) jets shot down four Serb military planes over Bosnia. Yet even that was not a turning point of the war but merely a reaction to a Sarajevo market massacre two weeks earlier. It seems that the main concern of the international players was to contain the war and hopefully choke it off in Bosnia and Herzegovina, regardless of human suffering, rather than resolve the Bosnian question in a meaningful manner.

A major change came in March 1994 when Presidents Alija Izetbegović of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Franjo Tuđman of Croatia, in the presence of U.S. President Bill Clinton, signed an agreement in Washington by which Bosnian Muslims and Croats entered into a common federation, to be linked to Croatia in the future. This not only ended the one-year-long Muslim–Croat war, but most importantly, indicated direct American involvement in the region. Furthermore, a month later, a five-nation Contact Group was assembled (United States, Britain, France, Germany, and Russia) with UN and EC approval to revive the peace talks, which had temporarily collapsed. But the Contact Group did not have much success. The Bosnian Serbs were not willing to accept anything less than a victory on their own terms.

Meanwhile, some major shifts were in the making regarding the Bosnian peace initiative. Slobodan Milošević, the prime mover of the war in the former Yugoslavia, shifted his policy and became “an advocate of peace,” in order to preserve his hold on power in Serbia and to salvage for the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia through peace what he could not gain through war. At the same time, the United States began to support Croatia in order to attain a balance of power in the

region. As a result, by mid-August 1995, the Serbs lost almost all of the territory they held in Croatia and large parts of western Bosnia. Moreover, the Bosnian Serb attacks on the UN safe areas in eastern Bosnia (July 1995), which resulted in one of the worst human disasters of the war, and a Sarajevo marketplace massacre (28 August 1995) prompted massive NATO air raids, under U.S. initiative, against Serb military positions and installations. Thus a combination of NATO actions, a successful Croat and Muslim ground offensive, and active U.S. diplomatic efforts finally brought some concrete results to the people in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although the leaders of the Bosnian Serbs were not ready to make a deal, it was done for them by the president of Serbia, Slobodan Milošević. Finally the fighting was over.

Dayton Peace Accords

After some arduous negotiations and a period of shuttle diplomacy by American emissaries, the American peace proposal was initialed by the presidents of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, and rump-Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) in Dayton, Ohio, on 21 November 1995 and signed by the involved parties in Paris on 14 December 1995. The agreement confirmed the sovereignty and independence of Bosnia and Herzegovina in its internationally recognized borders. It established two autonomous political entities in the country, the Muslim–Croat Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Serb Republic. The first controls 51 percent and the second 49 percent of the total territory. The central government has responsibility over foreign policy and trade, customs, immigration, monetary policy, international law enforcement, communications, transportation, and air traffic control. The accord established a bicameral legislature consisting of a 15-person upper chamber, a 42-person lower chamber, and a three-member collective presidency. Furthermore, it provided for a common constitutional court and a central bank.

In order to set in motion the peace accords, a 60,000-strong international peace Implementation Force (IFOR), including 20,000 U.S. soldiers, descended on Bosnia and Herzegovina to make sure that each side fulfilled its promises. The Dayton agreement also resulted in the UN lifting trade sanctions, with some conditions, against Serbia and Montenegro, and the arms embargo against Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Post-Dayton National Elections

Since the guns were silenced and the Dayton Peace Accords signed, Bosnia and Herzegovina has had four national elections. The first one was held in September 1996 under the supervision of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). It did not surprise anyone that the three leading nationalist parties (SDA, SDS, and HDZ) were the winners. Although there were many irregularities and manipulations, the elections were declared valid by the OSCE. For many, the success of the elections was not in numbers and percentages but in the fact that they did take place and in a relatively peaceful atmosphere.

The next national elections were held two years later (September 1998), and they did not bring about significant changes to the existing political landscape, as many, especially the international community, had hoped. The nationalist parties were again clear winners.

The November 2000 elections, however, were a sign that some political changes were beginning to take place in the country. A coalition made up of the Social Democratic Party and a few smaller parties (the Alliance for Change) was victorious and able to form a new government. The elections were interpreted by the international community as a major shift from nationalist to "reform-oriented" parties. However, the October 2002 elections proved that that was a vote against incumbents rather than a significant change in voters' attitude. Thus, the nationalist parties were the winners across the country.

The last national elections took place in October 2006. This time, the question of constitutional amendments sponsored by the international community, primarily by the U.S. and the European Union, became an issue that resulted into a new political configuration in the country, especially among the Bosniacs and Croats.

As expected, virtually all Serb political parties and institutions supported the proposed constitutional changes. In their eyes, the amendments contributed to legitimization and preservation of the Serb Republic.

On the other hand, the Bosniacs and Croats were split on the issue. This led to the victory of the Party for Bosnia and Herzegovina (SBiH), which opposed the amendments, among the Bosniacs. The SDA, which has been the leading party among the Bosniacs, supported the amendments, lost the elections, and its dominance among the Bosniacs has been shaken. The principal Croat party, the Croatian Democratic Union BiH (HDZBiH) split into two factions over the amendments issue; it is losing the dominant position among the Croats, and the crisis secured the election of the Croat member of the collective presidency from the ranks of the Social Democrats. The proposed amendments were rejected in April 2006, before the elections, but this issue contributed significantly to a new configuration on the political scene in the country, primarily among the Bosniacs and Croats.

In the last few years, significant shifts in party politics among the Bosnian Serbs have occurred. The leading nationalist party, SDP, which had an overwhelming support among the Serbs during the war and the postwar period, has lost its prominence. The biggest winner in the last elections was the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats (SNSD), led by Milorad Dodik. It won more than 40 percent of seats in the SR Assembly and its candidate for the presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina won more than 50 percent of the popular vote among the Serbs.

At the end of 1995, it seemed that the SDS had secured the ultimate possible goal for the Serbs at the time: an autonomous and ethnically pure Serb Republic, gained by war and legitimized by the Dayton Peace Accords. However, the internal factional disputes, unstable and incoherent power structures, endemic corruption, defections, loss of control over public broadcasting (1997) and over some key economic resources (1998), ideological fanaticism, indictments of its leadership by the ICTY, international isolation of the entity, and significant changes in the political landscape in the post-Milošević Serbia have led to a sharp decline of the party and its influence among the Serbs in Bosnia.

One of those who split from SDS (1997) was Milorad Dodik, who formed a political coalition and became the prime minister of the Serb Republic (RS, 1998–2001). He became an instant favorite of the international community. His political transgressions were forgiven and his (mis)deeds were not treated according to the usual standards applied to other political leaders in the country. The hope was that he would cooperate with the international community and assist it in implementing the Dayton requirements. Dodik became prime minister of the RS a second time (February 2006) and led his party to an overwhelming victory in October of 2006. In assessing Dodik's performance, however, one might conclude that he and his party have introduced a more acceptable style and rhetoric to RS's politics, but no substantial changes. The keystone of his political platform is the same as that of SDS, the preservation and supremacy of the Serb Republic over the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Dayton's Successes

The implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords was set on two main tracks, military and civilian. The military portion was successfully accomplished by the NATO-led IFOR, which was guaranteed the necessary military might and legal power to carry a well-defined mission. It

secured the end of the fighting and separated the opposing military forces along the demarcation lines between the two state entities. However, to avoid any potential long-range entanglement in Bosnia and the Balkans, and to preserve political unity among the participating peace-enforcing countries, the IFOR leadership interpreted its role in the narrowest possible sense.

The responsibility to oversee, coordinate, and facilitate the civilian aspects of the Dayton Agreement was entrusted to the Office of the High Representative (OHR). The office is under the authority of the Peace Implementation Council (PIC), an international body that solicits support, supervises, sets the goals, and reviews peace implementation policies. The High Representative is nominated by PIC's executive (Steering Board) and confirmed by the UN Security Council. Interestingly, the High Representative also serves as the chair of the Steering Board.

In order to put the peace process on a faster track, the PIC granted far-reaching controls to the OHR in December 1997, known as the "Bonn powers." By the use of such "sovereign" rights, the OHR has achieved some noteworthy results.

While at the end of the war (1995), the country had three antagonistic armies (Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatian Defense Council, and Army of the Serb Republic), today, a military force of 12,000 professional soldiers under the single Ministry of Defense and the supreme commander of the presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina is in the final phase of formation.

Besides various military intelligence services, each of the three warring sides had its own security agencies. In 2002, however, a single agency was negotiated in the Muslim/Bosniac–Croat Federation. Because of the Serb resistance to a single-state agency, the High Representative stepped in and issued a law (2004) by which the Intelligence and Security Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ISABiH) was established.

The OHR formed the Police Restructuring Commission of Bosnia and Herzegovina in mid-2004 to come up with a single police structure for the country under the supervision of the central government in Sarajevo. Although lengthy negotiation took place and an agreement on the restructuring was even signed (October 2005) by the representatives of the two entities, District of Brčko and the Federation cantons, finalization and implementation of the reconstruction plan has been stalled by the Serb Republic, in order to retain as much autonomy as possible.

By imposing the use of new license plates (1998) that did not indicate in which part of the country the car was registered, the OHR helped greatly to increase freedom of movement of people and goods throughout the country, hence preventing hardening of the borders between the two entities and/or ethnically divided communities.

With the help of international financial institutions, the Central Bank was formed (1997), and a new stable currency (Konvertibilna Marka [KM]) was introduced successfully throughout the country. The bank and the common domestic currency not only were one of the economic successes, but also have helped to curb the power of various shady financial centers and political influences.

The independence of local media has dramatically improved. It was achieved by various means, from the High Representative's legislation to reform public broadcasting and the creation of the Independent Media Commission to the use of the military force (SFOR), as in the case of removing Radovan Karadžić's loyalists from media establishments in the Serb Republic.

According to the Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees of Bosnia and Herzegovina, over a million refugees, out of the estimated two and a half million displaced persons, had

returned to their homes by November 2005. The number of returnees might be inflated, but the results are still significant.

The international community has been successful in apprehending and bringing to justice those who were accused of war crimes, except the two most wanted individuals, Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić. It is becoming obvious that there is a lack of will to pressure the Serbian officials to deliver them, although the two are most probably hiding in Serbia.

As of the beginning of 2006, Bosnia and Herzegovina had replaced its divided and incompetent tax and customs system. Now there is a state-wide value added tax of 17 percent and a single customs service.

In order to secure fair standards in Bosnia and Herzegovina's courtrooms, substantial judicial reforms have been implemented since the end of the war. These included restructuring of the courts, reappointing of judges, legislating (among others) on war crimes and human trafficking, imposing new criminal procedure codes that changed the country's principally inquisitorial to an adversary judicial system, harmonizing the justice system in the two entities and the District of Brčko, and even monitoring the courts procedures in some sensitive cases. Because of such changes, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague has enough confidence to transfer some war crimes cases for prosecution in the country itself.

During the last 10 years, Bosnia and Herzegovina has stabilized its relations with the neighboring countries, although some issues stemming from the wartime still remain to be resolved, especially with Serbia. Furthermore, the European Union enlargement commissioner opened Stabilization and Association Agreement talks with Bosnia and Herzegovina (November 2005) that might lead to full EU membership. In December 2006, Bosnia and Herzegovina was accepted into the NATO's Partnership for Peace program. Such moves on the part of the EU and NATO serve as incentive for further normalization, democratization, and full implementation of the peace process policies.

Although there is general agreement that substantial progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been made in many aspects of life since the end of the war, some crucial issues remain to be settled.

Dayton's Blunders

The key obstacle to stabilization and democratization of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the portion of the Dayton Peace Accords dealing with constitutional questions and state-building institutions that was ill founded and poorly enforced. The accords fashioned a state with three officially recognized constituent peoples, but divided it into two proportionate entities. One is the centralized and nearly "ethnically pure" Serbian Republic, while the Federation of Bosniacs/Muslims and Croats is a union of 10 cantons. The area of Brčko was made a self-contained republic of sorts, and the city of Mostar came under the direct administration of the EU. Thus, the country has 14 constitutions, 14 governments, 180 ministers, and an enormous bureaucracy with overlapping jurisdictions. Furthermore, the peacemakers handed over many burning issues to a plethora of international organizations that were not given clearly defined authority or power; such issues include the return of refugees, the missing, war criminals, the organization and holding of elections, possible constitutional reforms, human rights, minority rights, the judiciary, the school system, banking institutions, economic renewal, the formation of a new police force, the safeguarding of the nation's borders, and so forth..

Moreover, these organizations do not have the will to resolve crucial questions candidly, clearly, or justly. The Office of High Representative, along with a massive and well-paid

bureaucracy, was appointed to coordinate the implementation of the Dayton Accords, but that was turned into a rule of the sovereign, who holds all authority in his hands while not being held responsible to anyone for his (mis)deeds. The OHR has been an active player in all sorts of issues in the country, from politics, economy, education, housing, law, and privatization to dismissing politicians and picking suitable officials on all levels. While being preoccupied with such issues, the OHR has neglected the development of truly functional, lasting, and self-sustained state institutions.

The various reports issued by international administrators are usually full of self-praise. Under closer scrutiny, however, one might conclude that the Dayton-based and externally imposed processes of reconstructing Bosnia and Herzegovina and its society in the name of democracy are not as they appear in self-serving reports, as well as in many journalistic and academic analyses.

For the international players involved in Bosnia and Herzegovina and for many observers as well, the primary focus is on the "the process," which in reality keeps moving in circles, rather than on building solid, functional, and equitable constitutional foundations with well-defined main goals in mind, so that in the shortest possible way the country might be transformed from being a protectorate into a viable democratic state on the road to Euro-Atlantic integration. But no one among the key players is willing to admit that the fundamental blunder of the Dayton Agreement was the recognition of the Serb Republic, that is, the division of the country along ethnic lines, which makes it impossible to create sustainable and functional state institutions. Furthermore, the peacemakers not only rewarded the Serbs for aggression and war crimes, but also kept the dream of a Greater Serbia alive, which is still a major detriment to stability and lasting peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

It is becoming clearer, therefore, to any serious analyst that a better future for Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot be secured by a list of visible successes, such as better telephone service and new buildings or better roads and successful elections, that paper over the fundamental constitutional issues. But it seems that the internal and external power holders prefer to keep the process going rather than resolve Bosnia and Herzegovina's conundrum. While an open-ended strategy might be good for the internal and international bureaucrats, it keeps the future of the country and the lives of people in perpetual uncertainty. If Bosnia and Herzegovina is to move forward, a new constitutional system must be formulated, one that would end ethnically based divisions and, at the same time, prevent the creation of a unitary country.