The Political Repercussions of Emergency Programs

A Review of USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance in the Former Yugoslavia (1991-1996)

A Report to USAID/BHR/OFDA

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"OFDA is a tiny figure dancing as fast as it can on a very large stage."
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Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance
Former Yugoslavia Review

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OFDA Former Yugoslavia Review
Road Map

The following section aims to give the reader a road map of the OFDA Former Yugoslavia Review.[1] We explain where this study came from, what its aims are, who we are and what methodologies we used. We also try to give a sense of the review's structure so that readers with limited time can find what is of most interest to them.

Rationale for the Study:

The West's humanitarian response to the conflicts that marked the dissolution of Yugoslavia, and particularly to the war in Bosnia, developed into one off the largest relief operations ever mounted. Donor governments on both sides of the Atlantic poured vast sums of aid money into former Yugoslavia. Over the 1991-1997 period, United States government funding totaled nearly $1.65 billion, with annual peaks close to $400 million in 1994 and 1996.[2]

For USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, which requested this study, former Yugoslavia was an important operation. By 1998, in sheer dollar terms, former Yugoslavia was OFDA's largest funding destination ever: between 1992 and 1997, OFDA spent over $184 million in former Yugoslavia ($160 million in 1993-1996).[3] Beyond the funding numbers, other factors made the Yugoslav operation stand out. First, on an operational level, former Yugoslavia saw the longest ever-standing deployment of a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART).[4] Bosnia provided OFDA with the opportunity to implement innovative mechanisms — such as a field-based rapid disbursement fund (the Rapid ~~Reaction~~ Response Fund) and seconding humanitarian advisors to the military (the 'humads')

[1] The Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance is the U.S. Agency for International Development's prime instrument for meeting non-food needs in emergencies. OFDA is part of USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Response (USAID/BHR). Despite its relatively small size, OFDA enjoys a wide degree of political and administrative latitude within USAID.

[2] Compiled from OFDA annual reports and situation reports (sitreps). The figures include contributions from OFDA, Food For Peace (FFP), the Office of Transition Initiatives and the Bureau for Europe and the Newly Independent States (ENI) in USAID; the Bureau for Populations, Refugees and Migration in the US State Department; and the Defense Department.

[3] This compares with OFDA outlays of $118.5 million for Angola (1991-1997), $110.5 for Somalia (1991-1997) and $99.5 million for Rwanda (1992-1997.) (OFDA annual reports, 1991-1997).

[4] OFDA fields a DART in some emergencies to expedite OFDA's support to relief operations, especially if there is no USAID presence; the DART enables OFDA to operate in the midst of overseas emergencies, channeling resources through the normal regulatory structures that support OFDA operations within USAID's overall structure.

— , and to try its hand at a major post-conflict reconstruction program (the 1996 $30-million emergency shelter repair program). Former Yugoslavia also provided a very new 'scene' for humanitarian action: a semi-industrialized, highly centralized economy in a northern climate, and a population with middle-income living standards. Second, OFDA staff and consultants were for long periods of time the only official US Government personnel on the ground in Bosnia. OFDA's reporting and expertise developed into assets that official circles in Washington drew upon heavily. Third, former Yugoslavia and especially Bosnia were pivotal issues for US foreign policy. Events in Bosnia and the Western response to them called into question European stability, intra-NATO relations, and relations with Russia and Eastern Europe. The Bosnian killing fields cast dark shadows on two US presidential elections, on America's role in the 'New World Order' and on prospects for European integration. In 1996, the deployment of 20,000 US troops finally turned Bosnia into a truly domestic matter. This made Bosnia a more important foreign policy issue than many of the far-flung stages where OFDA had so far operated, even taking into account the high-profile emergencies in northern Iraq (1991) and Somalia (1991-1993). In short, because of the political importance of the Yugoslav crises, because of the importance of humanitarian aid in the West's response to those crises and because of OFDA's front-line role in the US response, former Yugoslavia propelled OFDA into foreign policy terrain seldom visited in the past.

Scope of Work:

In order to document this unique experience, OFDA hired a Washington DC-based firm, Checchi and Company Consulting, to conduct a one-year review of its activities in the former Yugoslavia. The scope of work requested ~~that~~ the review team to conduct a case study that would:

- Identify key phases and decision points in the former Yugoslavia crisis and options faced by BHR/OFDA and other key players in mitigating the crisis.

- Elaborate on BHR/OFDA's operational approaches in responding to the dangers of the crisis and relief efforts.

- Examine the institutional role of BHR/OFDA in the overall network of providing relief to the former Yugoslavia.

- Capture lessons learned and provide recommendations of benefit to BHR/OFDA when responding to future international relief efforts.

Specifically, the case-study was to examine OFDA's internal effectiveness, review US government inter-agency cooperation and OFDA's relationship with other institutions (e.g., American embassies, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations, and so on), and situate OFDA's response within the wider framework of the international relief operation.

Both the project description and subsequent discussions with OFDA's management placed particular emphasis on the relationship between humanitarian action and foreign policy in an attempt to shed light on "how some of the DART's humanitarian responses were politicized as part of the overall USG response."[5] This led us to posit some broader questions on the political repercussions of aid. How did the international humanitarian juggernaut in Bosnia develop? Can one fight a war with humanitarian aid? What was the interplay of aid and foreign policy?

Three elements are noteworthy. One, OFDA stressed to the review team that the case-study was not to be an evaluation of OFDA's activities, but rather a reflective exercise on the Office's role in a protracted, high-profile crisis, where the humanitarian operation itself became highly politicized. Two, we must stress that our core-team was entirely external to the government: we had no long-standing institutional connections to any part of the US government or the Agency for International Development. As such, we enjoyed the analytical and editorial latitude without which such a study would be pointless. Finally, while the primary audience of our review is clearly the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, OFDA intended from the beginning that the review be public, in the expectation that some of its findings would be of interest to an audience beyond OFDA: institutions both within the US government, including the military, and outside, such as operational agencies (NGOs and UN agencies), advocacy and policy analysis groups, academics, and those populations caught up in crisis.

The Review Team:

Concerning the make-up of the team, OFDA had two strong requirements: broad field experience with conflict-related emergencies and no record working directly for the DART/Yugoslavia. The review team met both those conditions. Three people made up the full-time core of the team. Victor Tanner and John Fawcett, the head analysts, worked in the former Yugoslavia with aid agencies, UN offices, donors and advocacy groups throughout 1991-1998, and brought operational and policy expertise from war-related emergencies elsewhere (Sudan, Northern Iraq, Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire, Angola, and Liberia). Kim Stalnaker helped research, write and edit the review. The team relied on the regular advice of Denise Dauphinais (management systems), Don Krumm (US government issues) and CSIS research fellow Janusz Bugajski (overall political affairs).

We feel that our extensive field experience is the main source of value-added to the study.

History of the Project:

[5] BHR/OFDA, "Project Description, OFDA Former Yugoslavia Review:" pp. 1-2.

OFDA's senior management began considering a review of its activities in former Yugoslavia in late 1996. Identifying the terms of reference and the right individuals was a delicate task, and the final review team was only assembled in December 1997. Throughout the length of the project we were based in Washington, DC. Work began on January 15, 1998 when the team attended OFDA's after-action meetings on the former Yugoslavia DART. In February and March, the team conducted interviews in Washington and New York. April and May saw the first field trip to Geneva, Croatia and Bosnia. The team then worked on a first series of drafts, which were submitted to OFDA in July 1998. Follow-up interviews were conducted in July and August. In September, team members traveled to Bosnia to explore in greater depth issues surrounding the siege of Sarajevo and OFDA's 1996 shelter repair program, and to set up field research that was carried out in the fall. In December 1998, a second series of drafts focusing on the DART was submitted to OFDA. A final series of drafts concentrating on the broader political repercussions of the humanitarian operation was submitted at the end of February 1999. In January, we were asked to submit a reflective chapter that would cap the review's findings.

Methodology:

Key Hypothesis and Framing Questions:

Researchers need an elemental hypothesis to guide them as they chart their course through their research. Our hypothesis is that, in conflict situations, humanitarian aid has a strong, though sometimes indirect and often overlooked, political impact on both foreign policy and political developments on the ground. Humanitarian aid in times of war is not politically neutral. For those involved in conflict-related relief operations — local authorities, diplomats, military personnel, aid-workers, affected populations — this will come as a truism. Yet, somehow, by the time the analysis distances itself from events on the ground, the political effects of humanitarian aid are lost. From the onset, we anchored our research in the judgment that humanitarian aid has political repercussions. This was the star we turned to when the multitude of details overwhelmed us and the course ahead seemed confusing and unclear.

From this initial hypothesis we also derived the questions that frame this review:

- To what extent were humanitarian decisions thought out, or deliberately and carefully taken?
- To what extent did humanitarian aid influence foreign policy, and US foreign policy in particular?
- To what extent did humanitarian aid influence political and military events on the ground?
- What role did OFDA play in this war? What influence did it have on US policy? And to what extent were its own activities politicized?

Moving Through Our Research:

As we moved through our research, we purposefully adopted a flexible, iterative approach. Following readings and interviews, we would agree in discussions within the core team on certain areas of focus: specific events, episodes or issues. We established painstaking chronologies, based on several already existing chronologies and on our own material, to best determine the flow of events and detect correlations between them. In subsequent discussions, we tried to go beyond correlation and find causal chains. We debated and settled on sub-hypotheses, which we then set out to test in the course of further research. We endeavored to be ruthless in chucking out ideas that did not withstand this test. Always, we strove to maintain the intellectual honesty necessary in conducting open-ended research. We hope we succeeded in doing so. We encourage reactions if we did not.

On a more technical note, we relied essentially, as do most researchers, on two forms of information, written and oral. Our access to and treatment of both these types of sources deserves comment.

Interviews:

We interviewed approximately 175 individuals for this study, from a range of professional backgrounds. Of these, approximately thirty, mostly Bosnians, wished to remain anonymous. A list of those interviewees who agreed to make their names public is included in the annex, with their affiliation at the time of the events their interview centered on.

How we chose interviewees: Given the size and the duration of the aid operation in former Yugoslavia, the number of important players was very large. The majority of our interviewees were people of whom we either knew by reputation or through documents, or knew personally in the field in the 1991-1997 period. Here was an obvious danger of bias, which we attempted to counter by systematically asking our interviewees whether they had suggestions for further meetings. We followed up on many of these suggestions. In final analysis, we feel comfortable that we selected a representative range of actors. Obviously, the fact that many of the interviewees were personally known to us made the work easier — very few individuals were reluctant to meet with us, and only one refused outright. The team is grateful for the often generous time that the interviewees afforded us.

Interviewing ground rules:

- The interviews: Typically, we would prepare two to four themes to be discussed in the course of the meeting. Often, we communicated these themes to the interviewees in advance. During the interview, we ensured that we covered the ground we had prepared. But we also allowed the interviewee to 'run' if he or she started down a path we had not anticipated. Neither did we refrain from engaging in discussion if we felt that this would stimulate the exchange or if we required feedback on a given point. We did not tape meetings. After realizing that poor recollection of the sequence of events was often a stumbling block, we took to preparing a chronology of the period or the issue at hand, and sending it to the interviewee ahead of time.

The great majority of our meetings were individual interviews. Most lasted between one and two hours. Perhaps a fifth went over three hours. Very few lasted less than one hour.

- The interviewers: We made a point of ensuring that at least one of the core-team members (Tanner or Fawcett) was present far as many interviews as possible; in the great majority of cases, both were present. There were four exceptions to this: when one of us had a privileged contact with a given interviewee; when, for reasons of timing or geography, only one of us could make it; when we deemed it necessary to include another team member (and in most cases we tried not to be more than two interviewers); or when the interviews were part of field research carried out by the consultants.

- Interview write-ups: Mindful of the length of the project, we developed an early fear that information might become 'lost' within the project. To counter this, we religiously wrote up every interview conducted, with an effort to document thoughts in formal sentences, rather than bullet-style points. This proved invaluable in re-discovering information in interviews that were several months old, information that had either been forgotten or that was not intelligible at the time of the write-up. In the case of the interviews conducted by our consultants, the write-ups were especially important. We have retained filings of these write-ups but in keeping with our not-for-attribution ground rules (see next paragraph), they will not be handed over at the end of the project.

- Attribution and footnotes: From the onset, so as to create as relaxed an atmosphere as possible, we decided that all interviews would be on a not-for-attribution basis. No one is quoted by name unless his or her utterances were already in the public domain. Yet, we still reproduced things that people told us, in the form of either analysis or even direct quotes. In order to source these, we resorted to a system whereby interviewees were grouped into categories, and referred to as such in our footnotes, e.g., OFDA, DART member, State Department, NGO, UNHCR, Bosnian military, and so on. We did our utmost to remain rigorous, checking again and again that the alleged quote actually exists in our write-ups. This enables us to give our readers some sense of where the information comes from, and indeed offer some reassurance that we did not just make these assertions up. We realize that the absence of names requires a leap of faith on the reader's part; however, we feel that what we gained in straightforwardness — as a result of greater confidentiality — was worth it.

All in all, our interviews constituted both a rich and a deceptive source of information. They were rich in that we relied on them, not only to ferret out specific points of detail, but also to better grasp the relationship between various institutional actors, and as a cue to cast for further lines of inquiry. We also tested intermediary hypotheses and conclusions with many of our interviewees, especially towards the end of the project. But they were also often misleading inasmuch as individual recollections, always a subjective source of information, often proved unreliable or colored by hindsight. For these reasons, we tried to the extent possible to find documentary evidence to back up

assertions made during interviews.

Written Documents:

Our main sources of written documents were overwhelmingly in the public domain. There were several reasons for this. The original project description called for team members to have "USAID secret clearance and [be] eligible for DOD clearance," a condition none of us fulfilled. Subsequent attempts to secure even low-level security clearances were unsuccessful, as OFDA was reluctant to initiate a full-blown clearance procedure. This meant that we did not have access to State Department cables, other State and DOD documents and so forth. OFDA's reporting records are incomplete: to the best of our efforts, we were unable to find a systematic archival record of the reports that OFDA personnel in the field sent to Washington, or of intra-OFDA communications, whether by phone, fax, mail or email, or of OFDA's communications regarding former Yugoslavia with the outside world.

As a result, we relied on other sources that could be divided up in the following categories:

- Chronologies: We relied on three pre-existing chronologies – OFDA's 1991-1997 humanitarian chronology assembled by information specialist Joe Ponte, and overall chronologies put together by Samantha Power for the Carnegie Endowment and Janusz Bugajski for his own research purposes at the Center for Strategic International Studies.[6]

- OFDA documents, which include: OFDA situation reports (sitreps) and information for sitreps, that range from February 1993 to November 1996 (but there is often no indication if what we have is OFDA's initial report or the final cut, i.e., after Embassy Zagreb reviewed the information); information on the 1993 inter-agency assessment mission; information on the UK/US Sarajevo municipal utilities assessment (spring 1994); information on DOD excess property programs; grant files for some of the DART-funded programs; financial and program documents for the 1996 shelter program; some copies of cables from US Embassy Zagreb; and many administrative documents from the field which were repatriated when the DART shut down in 1997.

- Documents from the International Rescue Committee's archives (December 1991 through December 1993 and 1996), which include: IRC sitreps, trip reports and internal memos; correspondence between IRC in the field and IRC/New York; correspondence between IRC and OFDA both in the field and in the US, correspondence between IRC and UNHCR in the field; and local news summaries.

[6] Powers, S. *Breakdown in the Balkans: A Chronicle of Events January 1989 - May 1993*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (Washington, DC), 1993. Of the three chronologies, this is the only one that was published.

- UNHCR and other UN documents: These are almost exclusively public domain documents such as Security Council resolutions and reports, UNHCR press releases, info-notes that detail beneficiary numbers and aid deliveries. The rare exceptions were UNHCR documents that turned up in OFDA or other files.

- NGO reports: These include proposals and reports on NGO programs funded by OFDA.

- Press reports: We relied heavily on the massive press coverage of the Yugoslav crises. The *New York Times* and The *Washington Post* were our two mainstays, but we also relied on reports from other papers, including French, British, and Bosnian media.

- State Department and Defense Department briefings (see bibliography).

- Scholarly articles and books.

In terms of our written sources, two comments must me made. First, the paucity and lack of system in OFDA's documentation, including internal correspondence and the humanitarian reporting, both critical to an analysis of OFDA's role, hampered our review. OFDA is a very action-oriented office, and is moreover chronically understaffed. OFDA staff have neither the inclination nor the time to manage a documentary record of their activities. This was compounded by OFDA's move from the State Department to the Ronald Reagan Building in Washington, D.C., during which staff was required by the Federal Paperwork Reduction Act to slash many of their files. We also understand that many documents were lost in the move. As a result, in addition to internal correspondence and other documents, we were unable to locate pivotal documents, such as the report of OFDA's first assessment trip to the former Yugoslavia in December 1991, several key sitreps and so on.[7]

The second comment regards OFDA's 1996 Emergency Shelter Repair Program. One of the reasons we were able to examine the program in such detail is that we were able to access most of the relevant documentation. We found the initial assessment report, despite the fact that very few copies had been distributed; we were handed OFDA's final report and USAID's audit report; we were allowed access to the financial grant files, which included crucial information such as NGO proposals and proposal revisions, project amendments, snippets of internal OFDA correspondence, and even hand-written notes taken during the village selection process; and finally NGO end-of-project reports and correspondence. The quality of the work we were able to achieve with this documentation only reinforced our regrets at the haphazard state of OFDA's overall documentation. If we may begin with a recommendation, the growing importance of humanitarian aid in US foreign policy requires that OFDA keep a more systematic record of its activities.

[7] The OFDA documents, which we mainly relied upon, were those kept by the DART in Zagreb, boxed and sent back to Washington early in 1997. The series of information officers, both in the field and in Washington, kept, in the absence of a routine archival system, a copy of much of their work on diskette. This proved invaluable.

Structure of the Review:

The breadth of the review's purview and the length of the period under scrutiny (1991 to 1996) made it necessary to approach the study on two levels. The first constitutes the main body of the review: it is OFDA-specific, and charts the development of OFDA's involvement in the region, listing key decision points and placing in perspective OFDA's role as part of the overall US response to the Yugoslav crises. The second level is made up of two annex papers and is more general: we attempt to analyze some of the political repercussions of humanitarian aid in the former Yugoslavia and detail how it fit in with US foreign policy. To a certain extent, these dual levels also reflected the two audiences we hoped to reach: OFDA itself and the broader humanitarian community.

Level One: A Review and Analysis of OFDA Activities in the Former Yugoslavia

There are five components to the OFDA section of the review:

- *Introduction: Setting the Scene.* An introductory chapter lays out the historical backdrop, not only to OFDA's involvement in the former Yugoslavia, but also to the wider humanitarian operation. This introduction also attempts to examine the contemporary thinking in the humanitarian community at the very beginning of the Yugoslav crisis, with a particular emphasis on the impact of the 1991 intervention in northern Iraq.

- *Chapter One.* The first chapter charts OFDA's involvement in the former Yugoslavia up to the creation of the former Yugoslavia DART in December 1992. It describes how the perception of Yugoslavia as a 'humanitarian crisis' slowly emerged within official US circles, including OFDA. This chapter also analyzes the role of the International Rescue Committee in shaping OFDA's initial response. Finally, as violence washed over Bosnia, OFDA, like other agencies, was confronted with different views of the conflict: civil war, aggression, ethnic conflict, genocide, or complex emergency?

- *Chapter Two.* A second chapter follows the DART from its initial deployment in December 1992 until the Dayton Peace Agreement, at the end of 1995. It shows that the creation of the DART followed a clear inter-agency consensus. This chapter also details the DART's twin responsibilities as a donor — with an analysis of grant-making trends — and as a reporting unit. We examine the evolution of the relationship between the DART and the major operational NGOs, OFDA's long journey from the laissez-faire, 'let'em run free' days of 1991-1993 to the threshold of the post-Dayton period and the confident, directive tones of the 1996 shelter program. Finally, we review ODFA's relations with other partners both within the US Government and outside.

- *Chapter Three: The Political Repercussions of Reconstruction Aid.* The third chapter reviews OFDA's post-Dayton Emergency Shelter Repair Program (ESRP). This chapter is quite large in relation to the rest. It is the closest we come to an 'evaluation' of OFDA's work. There are several reasons for this. The ESRP's hefty $30 million budget represented approximately 15 percent of OFDA's overall funding during the life of the DART. It was the single largest program, and also among the most recent (1996). We were able to find comprehensive written documentation. Most importantly, many of the issues central to our study come to a head with the ESRP. These include both operational issues, such as OFDA's ability to implement a complex program swiftly and effectively or the nature of the DART's relations with the NGOs, and more general issues, such as the political impact of aid programs or the role of USAID in US foreign policy. For these reasons, the ESRP became a case study within the case study.

- *Concluding Chapter: What has Changed?* This chapter goes through the main themes of the review in a non-chronological manner, and explores how they changed in the course of the 1991-1997 period. We look at the changing role of the NGOs and OFDA's role in that, at OFDA's evolution both as a donor and as a field-based information gatherer, and at the change in OFDA's relations with its main US government counterparts. While keeping in mind the danger of issuing recommendation based on a single case-study, we nonetheless articulate the general directions we believe OFDA should take: encourage decentralization so that decisions are made as close as possible to where the needs are; encourage NGO creativity and innovation (if it is not too late); and always pay attention to the political impact of assistance programs, in terms of both the political situation in the area in crisis and US foreign policy.

Level Two: Broader issues

We structured Section Two, which deals with the broader interplay between humanitarian aid and foreign policy in former Yugoslavia, around two questions:

- How did the humanitarian juggernaut come into being — was it a Western 'plot' to avoid more forceful political measures that were unpalatable to leaders in the West or was it the unintended consequence of policies designed to achieve other priorities? This chapter examines the development of the massive relief operation in former Yugoslavia from the beginning of humanitarian operations in Croatia in fall 1991 up to the first war-winter in Bosnia a year later. The chapter devotes particular attention to a number of cardinal episodes in late spring, summer and early fall 1992: the five-day US military airlift to Sarajevo in April, the visit of President Mitterrand of France to Sarajevo and the establishment of the UNHCR airlift in late June, the international conferences in Geneva and London in July and August and the creation of a UN Protection Force with a mandate to protect humanitarian aid; and the strategic use of aid to assist the beleaguered Bosnian Government within certain circles of both the US Congress and the State Department.

- The question central to the second chapter of this section: Can one fight a war with humanitarian aid? We first trace the evolution in UNHCR's response to ethnic cleansing, from evacuation and resettlement to aid in-situ and preventive protection, and attempt to define whether there really is a 'dilemma' for aid agencies amidst a campaign of ethnic cleansing. The chapter then goes on to analyze the response of humanitarians to sieges, using the elemental metaphors of land, air, water, and fire. The first three are structured around case-studies: convoys to Gora)de (land), airdrops (air), and Fred Cuny's water project in Sarajevo (water). The fourth (fire) is an interrogation on what constitutes humanitarian passion, an interrogation that may at times somewhere between a plea and a rant.

Annexes:

We have included several annexes that we believe are of interest to the reader:

- Chronology: We compiled a two hundred page chronology based on pre-existing chronologies and other information we came across in press accounts and official documents. This chronology was for us a working tool; however, we decided to include it despite the fact that the entries are not referenced which limits its use as a source.

- A database of OFDA grants and other agreements

- A list of interviewees.

Note to the Reader: Getting the Chronology of Events Right

In the course of our interviews, we were startled to notice that the chain of events in the former Yugoslav crises is confusing, even to individuals who were intimately involved in these events. In a number of cases, the recollection of the chronology was off, sometimes by a year. This resulted in people establishing erroneous links between events. We see several possible reasons for this. First, the former Yugoslav crises were both protracted and rich in events. Many individuals who spent long periods of time on the ground during the crisis, including a surprising number of Bosnians, were led astray by the seemingly cyclical succession of seasons, military offensives, UN Security Council resolutions and failed peace plans. Second, the staggered onset of the wars in Croatia (began summer 1991) and Bosnia (began late spring 1992), — with nearly a year between them — was a source of confusion. Third, the fact that the humanitarian operation in Bosnia lasted well into the post-Dayton period — whereas other operations that started later ended far sooner — is also misleading: for instance, several interviewees were surprised to realize that the 'hot' crisis in Croatia began while US troops were still in northern Iraq, or that the US airlift to Somalia post-dated the US military airlift to Sarajevo (April 1992) and even the UNHCR airlift (July 1992). And finally, especially in the case of US officials, the 1992 presidential campaign and the early predictions that Governor Clinton would

carry the vote was also a source of confusion —people 'forgot' that by the time the new Administration took over in January 1993, war had already been raging in Bosnia for eight months, and the bulk of ethnic cleansing in the Drina valley and northwestern Bosnia had already taken place.

We want to warn the reader against the danger of these mis-recollections. To ease the burden — and aware of the fact that our 200-odd-page chronology is an awkward crutch to lean on while reading — we prepared a three-page chronology that is included at the beginning of section one.

The 'Philosophy' of the Study: Three Possible Sins and One Final Caveat

A one-year academic study is a long endeavor to sign up for. The personal objective of the core-team in doing so was two-fold. One, we wanted to seize the open-mindedness and willingness of a major donor, OFDA, to explore the politicization of its own activities. We felt comfortable that there would be no interference with our work, and we are grateful that this turned out to be so.[8] The result is that we have been able to take a hard, long look at the 'more is better' approach to emergency relief aid. Two, we hope that our review will help smoke out additional information and further thinking on the role of humanitarian aid in times of conflict. But before launching into our study, there are a few final comments and caveats we would like to share with the reader.

First Sin: Apprentice Historians?

Some of our work comes close to a historical analysis of certain key events, particularly in the Bosnian war. This analysis uses humanitarian aid as its main yardstick, rather than, say, diplomatic initiatives, or peacekeeping, or the story of a refugee family. Our study lays the first elements of a humanitarian history of the wars in former Yugoslavia. Having said that, we remain very aware of our shortcomings. None of us trained as historians. We did not have access to much official documentation that would have provided real insight into what various parts of different institutions were thinking. And, in many respects, the events we describe are still too recent, allowing little historical perspective. We therefore lie wide open to the criticism of playing apprentice-sorcerer historians. Nevertheless, our methodology has been painstaking and rigorous. We have first-hand knowledge of the events and the players. And we bring a field-based understanding of the political effects of humanitarian aid that most historians lack. For these reasons we trust that our contribution to the history of the Yugoslav crises is relevant, and hope that the points we argue will not only trigger further debate, but bring to light information to which we were not privy, information that will either challenge or confirm our analyses.

Second Sin: Assumptions or Biases?

[8] Polly Byers, Bill Garvelink, Roy Williams.

Our field experience from former Yugoslavia — our clearest value-added — also compels us to make the following disclaimers. One, the fact that we were participants in the relief operation — including managing important OFDA-funded programs and participating in other USAID activities that were, at times, not well viewed by OFDA — opens us up to the criticism that we did not have adequate distance from our subject-matter. At the end of the day, we can only argue that what we lost in objectivity we tried to compensate in insight.

Two, our very personal experience of the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia meant that, in the review, we worked off a set of specific ethical and political assumptions that inevitably colored our analysis. These assumptions need to be made clear. Namely, we hold that:

- Bosnian Serb and Serbian forces from Serbia proper — both paramilitary and the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) / Army of Yugoslavia (VJ, the JNA's successor) — were the primary aggressors in the wars in Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina; these forces operated under tight tactical and strategic control from the régime in Belgrade.

- Bosnian Croat nationalists, with support from Zagreb where they held unusual sway, were the primary instigators of the Muslim-Croat war in Central Bosnia and Herzegovina (1993-1994).

- International military action against the Bosnian Serb and Serbian forces was possible and feasible at many moments between late 1991 and 1995; had early forceful measures been taken, much of the bloodshed in Bosnia could have been avoided.

- Stability in the Balkans, and in Bosnia in particular, is central to European security and therefore vital to US interests.

- And an integrated, multiethnic Bosnian state is the best long-term guarantee for stability in that country.

Third Sin: Insufficient Background Information?

Our intimate familiarity with the former Yugoslav crises and especially with the war in Bosnia, coupled with the fact that we were writing for a very large audience, presented us with a difficult problem: what level of knowledge on former Yugoslavia should we expect of our readership? Our final decision was that we just could not provide a 'smart pill' for those readers unfamiliar with the issues: the danger that we lure our audience into a false sense of familiarity was simply too great. However, we realize that this will be a difficult hurdle for many readers. At the top of our bibliography, we list a set of readings on Bosnia that may offer guidance to the newcomer. To a certain extent, we came across a similar problem in regard to humanitarian aid: how much knowledge of that 'industry' should we expect? We opted for the assumption that our readers would understand not only the difference between, say, UNHCR and ICRC, or between refugees and internally

displaced, but would be aware of some of the debates taking place within the "humanitarian international."[9]

The Final Caveat: No Universality in these Pages!

Ours is a case study. We do not believe that universal recommendations can be made on the basis of one case study. While we tried to make some useful comments for OFDA, we were reluctant to go beyond that by way of recommendations. To what extent are these 'lessons learned' transferable to Colombia, Algeria, Kivu, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan or Indonesia? It is hard enough to find relevant lessons for Kosovo. It seems that in order to achieve even the slightest modicum of universality, one would have to couch recommendations on a level so general as to defeat any real usefulness: 'Humanitarian aid has political effects;' 'think of the best interests of the people you are trying to serve;' etc.

What we propose to the reader is a case study that centers on the experience of OFDA in former Yugoslavia to show some of the nuts and bolts of the politicization of humanitarian aid. Due to the extent of the subject matter, we had to make choices. Much was left out. Ours will inherently remain a work in progress. Our hope is nevertheless that this study will provide some food for thought for OFDA staff, aid workers and other individuals who at some point have to deal with humanitarian aid as they go about their duties.

[9] The term is Alex de Waal's. His recent book — *Famine Crimes, Politics and the Disaster Relief Industry in Africa*, Indiana University Press (Bloomington, IN): 1997 — is an often brilliant, if very angry, introduction to some of the issues in discussion concerning relief assistance. The fact that it concentrates on Africa should not deter those interested in humanitarian aid in general and the political issue he raises.

Introduction

Setting the Scene: America, Europe, and Yugoslavia Prior to the Outbreak of War

Few wars have been as closely associated to international relief aid as the wars in the former Yugoslavia. Humanitarian relief first arrived there in late summer 1991, when the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC) began distributing food parcels to persons displaced by the fighting in the newly declared, but not yet recognized, Republic of Croatia. Over the following year, the violence, terror, and expulsions spread to neighboring Bosnia Herzegovina. Large numbers of people were displaced throughout that country, as well as Croatia and Serbia. United Nations humanitarian agencies, led by the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and a growing number of non-governmental aid agencies (NGOs) received increasing amounts of funding, mostly from Western governments, to respond to the needs of these people. The ensuing relief effort grew into the largest humanitarian operation ever mounted in the midst of war. It also stood, for over three years, against the dismal backdrop of Western failure to stem the violence through political or military means.

The importance of the relief effort — both in absolute terms and relative to the weakness of the political solutions proposed — led to a double interaction between aid and politics. Locally, on the ground, the provision of relief helped shape the crisis through its impact on people, authorities and militaries throughout ex-Yugoslavia. Internationally, in turn, relief aid played a central role in the international community's overall response — diplomatic, political, military, economic — to the Yugoslav wars. This review of USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) in former Yugoslavia serves as a case study of the relationship between aid and politics.

But understanding this relationship and its repercussions requires a short step away from the violence that erupted in summer 1991. The following section goes back to the pre-crisis period. We try to lay out how different actors viewed one another, what they thought, what they knew, and what they should have known. We show that perceptions were colored by the realization that the time of cold war business-as-usual was over, as well as by the recent 'humanitarian intervention' experience in northern Iraq. Finally, the very notion that European populations would require relief, and indeed that war could drag on in modern-day Europe, appeared beyond belief, not least to many Yugoslavs.

I. The Cold War Hangover

The Bush Administration's 'New World Order'

The geopolitical outlook of the Bush administration revolved around the concept of a 'new world order' that sought to make sense of America's place in the post-cold war world. If the US military was to avoid becoming a planetary policeman, new mechanisms were needed to guarantee stability in the absence of the bipolar balance-of-power system. The administration settled on a regionalist approach, which would allow the US to "pick and choose" the crises to which it wished to respond.[1] This policy rested on two central tenets: realism and multilateralism.

The emphasis on realism dictated that the US should pick its overseas engagements stintingly, applying as main criteria a restrictive interpretation of US vital interests. It meant a strong regard for the concepts of national sovereignty and territorial integrity, both perceived as key to international stability. This administration was not in the business of re-drawing borders, breaking up existing states or toppling recognized régimes. It even respected the sovereignty of Iraq in the immediate wake of the Gulf War, allowing the Iraqi military to crush Shi`a and Kurdish uprisings in the South and North of the country in late spring 1991.

The Bush administration's strategic outlook also displayed a strong interest in multilateral and regional arrangements as guarantees of international stability. When US national interests were not deemed at stake, the administration believed that multilateral organizations should shoulder their part of the political responsibilities and financial costs. Entities such as the United Nations, NATO, the Council for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the Western European Union (WEU), and especially the European Community (EC), might even at times lead — with American support — the international response.

The brewing Yugoslav crisis had the potential to put this 'new regionalism' into practice. Yugoslavia was Europe's backyard. The EC was the key player. European leaders had stressed that Yugoslavia was a European problem to be addressed by European initiatives. In 1991, the Chairman of the EC Council of Foreign Ministers, Luxembourg's Jacques Poos, had claimed that "the hour of Europe" had arrived.[2] American diplomacy encouraged the Europeans to take the lead. The administration's back-seat policy was not a result of post-Gulf war leadership fatigue. To the contrary, even before the April 1990 Yugoslav republican elections — the elections that brought the nationalists to power

[1] Woodward, S.: *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War*, The Brookings Institution (Washington, D.C.) 1995: p. 396, quoting confidential interviews with NSC staff.

[2] Gow, J: *Triumph of the Lack of Will: International Diplomacy and the Yugoslav War*, Columbia University Press (New York), 1997: p. 48.

— the State Department was urging European capitals to lead in supporting Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Marković.[3] The instances when the US did become involved proved unfortunate: Washington was stung by the Slovene and Croatian declarations of independence, which had followed what the administration thought were assurances of restraint delivered personally by Slovene and Croatian leaders to Secretary Baker in Belgrade. Once bitten, twice shy: the administration was further encouraged in its inclination to stay out of the Yugoslav fray. "[The Bush administration] sulked for six months and left the Yugoslav bill to be picked up entirely by the Europeans, who had already been pushed to the fore..."[4]

The Golden Age of Yugoslavia

A second, more country-specific influence on foreign policy was also at play. Several key officials in the Bush administration had direct career experience in Yugoslavia from the 1960s through the 1980s. Deputy, then Acting Secretary of State Larry Eagleburger had served eight years in Yugoslavia, including as US ambassador. President Bush's national security advisor Brent Scowcroft had been a defense attaché in Belgrade. According to Arnold Kantor, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (1991-1993):

> In understanding U.S. policy toward Bosnia [...] one needs to give full weight to the 'lessons' learned by Brent Scowcroft and Lawrence Eagleburger from their respective tours of duty in Yugoslavia.[5]

These men served in Belgrade: Belgrade was their vantage point for the rest of Yugoslavia. As such, several key perceptions would have framed the understanding that these men had of the Yugoslav crisis: the genocidal fascism of the *Ustaša* regime in Croatia during WWII and the role of Tito's partisan army in tying down many Wehrmacht divisions; Tito's attempts to suppress national chauvinism while balancing national interests; and perhaps even a romantic view of the Yugoslavs and their National Army as benign communists — quasi-allies of the West in the cold war.[6] Such were the memories from the golden age of Yugoslavia. And such were the memories that these men brought to their analysis of the current crisis.[7]

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[3] Zimmermann, W.: *Origins of a Catastrophe: Yugoslavia and Its Destroyers: America's Last Ambassador Tells What Happened and* Why, Times Books (New York), 1996: pp. 64-65.

[4] Gow, *Triumph of the Lack of Will...*: pp. 209-210.

[5] Kantor, A.: "Intervention Decisionmaking in the Bush Administration," *U.S. and Russian Policymaking with Respect to the Use of Force*, eds. Azrael, J. and E. Payin, RAND Corporation, 1996.

[6] On Yugoslavs as 'good' Communists, see Mark Thompson's interesting analysis of the Yugoslavs in the novels of Ian Flemming (of James Bond fame) and Graham Green: Thompson, M.: *A Paper House: The Ending of Yugoslavia*, Pantheon (New York), 1994: pp. 48-51. See also Gow, *Triumph of the Lack of Will...*: p. 25-26.

[7] Interviews, State Department, US think-tanks.

Many observers of Yugoslavia in the 1960s and 1970s believed that Tito had succeeded in eliminating violent nationalism from Yugoslav political life. In those years, the contacts foreign diplomats were likely to have had were mostly among the educated urban elite where ethnicity was a lesser component of a broader Yugoslav identity. No doubt, these officials, intelligent and well-informed, were aware of who the culprits were in the current Yugoslav crises. But, when these men looked at the mess Yugoslavia had become by early 1991, the ten years that had elapsed since Tito's death seemed to vanish, and what they saw were Slovene and Croat nationalists tearing Yugoslavia asunder. It was difficult for them to acknowledge that, rather than maintaining Yugoslav unity, the authorities in Belgrade were the prime agents of violence. They may have been slow to perceive — as indeed were countless Yugoslavs, including Bosnia's president, Alija Izetbegović[8] — the metamorphosis of the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) "from a guardian of Yugoslav ideals and Socialist ideology to an agent of Greater Serbian ambition..."[9] There was an unwillingness to believe that the JNA would tolerate, let alone initiate, attacks against Yugoslav civilians.

1989-1991: US Aid to Yugoslavia in a Bind

In the years prior to the war, the US had provided limited economic assistance to Yugoslavia in the years prior to the outbreak of the war. By 1990, in the face of increasing US concerns over repression in Kosovo, this aid was quickly becoming entangled in a political bind. On the one hand, the authority of the federal Yugoslav government, led by the reformist and moderate Prime Minister Ante Marković, was fast waning. On the other, Serbian President Slobodan Milošević — the real power in Belgrade — was driving the hard-line policy in Kosovo. Faced with this, Congress and the administration clashed over the same aid package to achieve two different goals: Congress wanted to block the package in order to punish Serbian repression in Kosovo; the administration wanted to go ahead with it so as to provide support for the Marković government.[10] This is how it played out.

In 1990 and 1991, the US Congress, led mainly by Senator Bob Dole (R-Ka.), first restricted, then sought to prohibit aid to Yugoslavia because of Yugoslav human rights violations in Kosovo. Dole and other senators, including Al d'Amato (R-NY) and Bob Nickles (R-Okla.), had traveled to Kosovo's provincial capital Priština in August 1990 where they had gained a first hand impression of Serbia's abusive policies. The Nickles Amendment, passed in November 1990, required that

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[8] Cigar, N.: *Genocide in Bosnia: The Policy of Ethnic Cleansing*, Texas A&M University Press (College Station, TX), 1995: pp. 108 ff.

[9] Donia, R.J. and V.A. Fine, Jr.: *Bosnia & Hercegovina: A Tradition Betrayed*, Columbia University Press (New York), 1994: p. 222. Some analysts, however, hold that international negotiators, both European and American, started viewing the JNA as a Serbian army early on; see Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy....*: p. 257.

[10] See: Zimmerman, *Origins of a Catastrophe...*: pp. 64 and 127-133; Bert, W., *The Reluctant Superpower: United States Policy in Bosnia, 1991-95*, St. Martin's Press (New York) 1997: p. 136.

economic aid be banned to Yugoslavia until human rights abuses, particularly those in Kosovo, ceased. The amendment was to come into effect in May 1991, suspending US economic assistance, a meager $5 million, to Yugoslavia.

The Bush administration, however, in a last-ditch attempt to shore up Marković's government, argued that assistance was necessary. Secretary of State Baker, pointed out that "[the Nickles Amendment] was aimed at the wrong target. To get at Serbia, it attacked Yugoslavia. Even worse, the only one hurt was Marković, the last hope for a peaceful and democratic solution. Milošević got off scott-free..."[11] The embassy in Belgrade lobbied Senators against the Nickles Amendment, even though the aid only amounted to $5 million. In the end, Secretary Baker invoked his discretionary authority to maintain the aid. Undaunted, Congress manifested its support for Slovenia and Croatia in June 1991 by amending the Direct Aid to Democracies Act so that US assistance could go directly to the two republics, bypassing the federal level — and Marković — altogether.[12]

US assistance was so paltry that it could have had no significant influence on preventing the conflict. Yet, the political locking of horns in Washington over the $5 million was the first instance of a political alignment that became a regular recurrence in later phases of the crisis. Former Yugoslavia was far from a typical party-driven political issue in Washington. In 1990 and 1991, many of the more aggressive US legislators were Republicans criticizing the Bush administration. Later, in 1992-95, first the Bush and then the Clinton administrations came under bipartisan attack in Congress for their policies toward the former Yugoslavia. Congress used its fiscal authority several times to push a tougher agenda under the guise of congressional allocations for aid. Humanitarian assistance was an arena in which Congress could play.

The Bretton Woods organizations offered far greater potential for political leverage than the modest $5 million bilateral package. In 1991, the federal government of Ante Marković had been actively seeking $4.5 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).[13] In the political, military and economic chaos that was developing in Yugoslavia, this level of resource might have significantly strengthened the hand of the reform-minded PM. The tide of economic reform at the IMF, though, was working against the notion of strengthening a central government. Moreover, the economic trend in the 1980s in Yugoslavia was the devolution of economic power to the republic and municipal levels. This was more in line with Western financial thinking. The Fund was reluctant to buck the trend. Despite a push from the US State Department, it was neither sufficiently flexible nor quick to

The EC's Economic Ties to Yugoslavia

[11] Zimmerman, *Origins of a Catastrophe...*: p. 131.

[12] Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy...*: p. 160-1.

[13] Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy...*: p. 140 and n. 35, p. 459.

The Europeans had more reason than Washington to worry about potential conflict in Yugoslavia. At a time when the European Community was moving toward greater integration, war in Yugoslavia had the potential to unleash a destabilizing maelstrom of refugees, nationalist sentiment, and regional economic collapse, not to mention the loss of an important trade route between Greece and the rest of the EC.[14] It is no surprise that Europe proved far more generous than the US. Compared to the $5 million of US 1991 aid, the EC put up £800 million (approximately $1.5 billion at 1991 exchange rates) over a five-year period. In addition, the EC absorbed 40 percent of Yugoslavia's exports, and coordinated the 3.6 ECU ($4.1 billion) aid program set up by the Group of 24 Industrial Nations.[15]

Yugoslavia established its economic relationship with the EC in the 1970s. As neither a member of the Soviet bloc (Tito broke with Stalin in 1948) nor part of the West, Yugoslavia had pursued economic ties across a wide-ranging spectrum: Western countries, the Soviet Block and Third World countries. The EC was less skittish than the US with Yugoslavia's sometimes militant ties to Third World issues, particularly within the Non-Aligned Movement. Yugoslavia was well integrated in the European trade system. Brussels engaged in Earning Association Agreements with Yugoslavia beginning in 1971. Yugoslavia also reached agreements with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in 1979. The EC hoped to use its economic influence and vision of a democratic and integrated Europe to solve the Yugoslav problem. Jacques Poos, chair of the EC Foreign Affairs Council of Foreign Ministers, stated this clearly in 1991:

> If one problem can be solved by the Europeans, it's the Yugoslav problem. This is a European country and it's not up to the Americans and not up to anybody else.[16]

Unfortunately, EC resources did not match its rhetoric. Having failed despite US support in his attempt to secure $4.5 billion in loans from the IMF, Marković turned to the Europeans. During a visit to Belgrade in May 1991, EC President Jacques Delors said that he would support the Federal government's request for a $4.5 billion loan to support Yugoslavia's efforts for political reform, provided certain conditions were met. The demands made were, however, unrealistic in that they required "the very reforms that were at the heart of [the Yugoslavs'] quarrels."[17] Moreover, many of the measures envisaged, such as rapid democratization and slashes in defense spending, only bolstered the discourse of nationalists and populist demagogues. In any event, the British Government eventually blocked the aid package.[18]

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[14] Gow, *Triumph of the Lack of Will...*: p. 49.

[15] Gow, *Triumph of the Lack of Will...*: p. 49.

[16] Gow, *Triumph of the Lack of Will...*: p. 50.

[17] Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy...*: p. 160.

[18] Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy...*: p. 160 and n.35, p. 459.

II. From Iraqi Kurdistan to Greater Serbia: Humanitarian Thinking in 1991-92

The Legacy of the Gulf War and the Kurdish Emergency

One year before fighting erupted in Sarajevo, US troops had led a multinational military intervention in the mountains and valleys of northwestern Iraq. The humanitarian component of the operation — dubbed Operation Provide Comfort (OPC) — was especially strong. By 15 July 1991, when the last US soldiers crossed the bridge over the Habur river back into Turkey, OPC had proven immensely successful, at least in the short term. On the humanitarian front, 300,000 to 400,000 Kurds had left their desperate death-camps in the high mountain areas on the border with Turkey. Many had returned to their homes in the towns of Erbil, Dohuk, Akra, Amadiyya and Zakho, or to the ancestral villages that the Iraqi army had wiped out in the course of years of genocidal counter-insurgency operations. They were no longer refugees. On the political front, OPC had been equally successful: it had succeeded in averting instability in Turkey and damage to Iraqi territorial integrity — key US policy goals. Even better, US troops were out of the country by 15 July 1991, well before the beginning of the presidential campaign. They had suffered no casualties — indeed, practically no shots were fired in anger. Crowning it all, the handover to the UN had been prompt, clear and final. Given the desperate situation in April, there was much to be satisfied with three months later. To many observers, the Kurdish emergency offered a preview of how post-cold war crises might be handled.

Humanitarianism Triumphant

Some NGOs cautioned against the precedent of letting the Turks get away with a brazen case of *refoulement*, and predicted a troubled future for Iraqi Kurdistan.[19] But in much of the humanitarian community there reigned a heady feeling. After the difficult experiences of the semi-covert cross-border operations of the 1980s, Afghanistan and Eritrea/Tigray, intervention in northern Iraq seemed to have finally broken the sovereignty taboo:

> With the humanitarian intervention in Iraq and the recent debate at the United Nations, the international community appears perched on the brink of a new era [...], moving toward codification of principles and identification of the appropriate conditions under which humanitarian intervention will override domestic jurisdiction.[20]

[19] A study commissioned by the Save the Children Fund (UK) captured these misgivings in 1993 (Keen, D.: *The Kurds in Iraq: How Safe Is Their Haven Now?*, Save the Children Publications (London), 1993). The subsequent course of events, including the retreat of the symbolic Allied Liaison Office from Northern Iraq under armed Iraqi pressure in August 1996, added relevance to the fears voiced in the SCF report.

[20] Chopra, J. and T.G. Weiss: "Sovereignty Is No Longer Sacrosanct: Codifying Humanitarian Intervention,"

Misgivings about working with the military were fading in many organizations. Relief agencies felt they were on the threshold of an exciting new era that seemed to offer boundless opportunities for their involvement. New concepts were coming to the fore. The dialogue and integration of military and civilian humanitarian personnel was growing.[21] The initial mountain airdrops had created, without foresight it would seem, a new concept: the C-130s air-dropping relief supplies in the mountains were given a fighter cover, and a démarche was delivered to the Iraqi military to withdraw behind a certain latitudinal line; this was the genesis of the northern no-fly zone and the key to the establishment of the allied safe haven and, later, the free Kurdish zone.[22] On the ground, relief expert Fred Cuny realized what had happened and coined the phrase 'humanitarian air cover.' This happens when the protection of military assets engaged in a humanitarian mission require a more aggressive military deployment, typically from the air, which in turn intimidates the forces on the ground guilty of abusing civilian populations. Other new concepts were gaining ground: the idea of 'preventive protection' — the protection offered by the mere presence of international personnel, even unarmed — seemed to hold in northern Iraq.[23] Finally, and most importantly perhaps, northern Iraq proved that the attractive concept of getting people to return home before they became long-term refugees was feasible.

For the foreign policy establishment, particularly in the US, the Kurdish experience proved equally exciting. It offered enormous potential at a time when policymakers, bereft of their cold war markers, were uncertain about how to deal with the local crises — proliferating intra-state wars, break-down of state structures, and massive civilian displacement — that seemed to be the hall-mark of these new times.[24] Relief operations offered ready, new, flexible, low-risk, and certainly cheap solutions to these new problems. Humanitarian action was an especially welcome tool of policy given the global leadership role that now seemed to be expected of the US. But there were also drawbacks: the interaction of the ground-based relief agencies with the political-military side of policy, and the way policy in Northern Iraq had been field-driven as a consequence, was frightening to control-minded officials in Washington and probably other capitals.

Ethics and International Affairs 6, 1992: p. 117.

[21] Joint Warfighting Center, *Joint Task Force Commander's Handbook for Peace Operations*, JWC Publications (Virginia), 1993: IV-7.

[22] Cuny, F.C. (with F. Brilliant, P. Reed and V. Tanner): *Humanitarian Intervention: A Study of Operation Provide Comfort*, unpublished report, INTERTECT (Dallas TX), 1995: pp. 70-71. Cuny coined the phrase 'humanitarian air cover.' He thought it so important as to justify the mountain airdrops that had been, from a relief operational point of view, disastrous. Cuny sought, unsuccessfully, to convince US policymakers to use the concept in Bosnia.

[23] Keen, *The Kurds in Iraq...*: p. 19.

[24] Interviews, US State Department. Regarding the question whether or not communal conflict is on the rise in the post-Cold war global world: see Sadowski, Y.: *The Myth of Global Chaos*, Brookings Institution Press (Washington, DC), 1998: *passim*.

UNHCR Under Attack

Northern Iraq was also a turning point for UNHCR. UNHCR was harshly criticized by both the press and donor governments for its lack of response in the early days of the emergency. Not only did the criticism revolve around the agency's operational ineptitude in northern Iraq. It also called into question tenets central to its mandate — and therefore its existence — namely its ability to provide assistance and protection to refugees. The organization came to realize that it not only had to win back its badly-battered credibility but also re-think fundamental operational policies if it was to survive in the post-cold war world.[25] In addition to the general lessons on humanitarian intervention and preventive protection, several specific conclusions could be drawn from the Kurdish emergency in Northern Iraq, conclusions that must have been unsettling as they struck at the heart of UNHCR's way of doing business. One, sovereignty could no longer be an absolute obstacle to UNHCR intervention. Two, it was clear that, in certain high-profile crises, UNHCR would end up being responsible for internally displaced persons (IDPs), regardless of its mandate. Three, the message from the donors was clear: the funding balance was in full swing from protection to assistance. Four, in certain cases, in order to avert political and financial tensions, Western nations were determined to avoid the creation of refugees, even if this meant riding roughshod over humanitarian principles such as that of non-*refoulement*. The final observation would have been of particular concern: even if Western governments mustered the political will to deal with the immediate effects of a crisis, UN field agencies would likely end up saddled with its long-term effects. The overall conclusion was that UNHCR would have to grow accustomed to a far more operational role than in the past and, unlike in the past, be prepared to work in the conflict area itself, rather than only in the relative safety of host country refugee camps.

These were all valuable lessons for the impending Yugoslav crises. It would be surprising if they were not lingering in the minds of senior UNHCR staff in Yugoslavia, some of whom had just come from northern Iraq. The crisis in former Yugoslavia offered the new high commissioner, Sadako Ogata, the opportunity to meet the needs of Western countries in a pro-active fashion. It also made it possible to build a powerful and prosperous organization. In November 1991, UNHCR accepted to lead the United Nations' effort to assist both refugees *and* IDPs in the former Yugoslavia.

Meanwhile, in Belgrade...

A striking aspect of the situation at the eve of Yugoslavia's dissolution was that authorities in Belgrade were probably far better prepared to deal with the international community than it was to deal with them.[26]

[25] Interviews, UNHCR.

[26] It must be noted that, to many people in the former Yugoslavia, including numerous local officials, the arrival of the 'international community' with its plethora of different organizations, mandates, philosophies and procedures was a

Yugoslavia had considerable experience with the United Nations. As citizens of a leading state in the Non-Aligned Movement, Yugoslavs were well represented among international organizations. Working the UN system became a Yugoslav specialty, both on the level of personal advancement and in terms of diplomatic activity.[27] But three factors, both much overlooked, would prove invaluable to Yugoslav authorities as they embarked on their cat-and-mouse game with the international community and the United Nations: their long experience of UN peace-keeping operations, their understanding of how UNHCR operated, and the lessons they drew from the Gulf war.

Yugoslav authorities — and the JNA in particular — were very familiar with the arcane world of United Nations peacekeeping. Yugoslavia had contributed troops and military observers — including ranking officers — to several UN peace-keeping missions: the UN Emergency Force in the Sinai (UNEF, 1956), the UN Operation in the Congo (ONUC, 1960), the UN Yemen Observation Mission (UNYOM, 1963-1964), the UN Iraq-Iran Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG, 1988-1990), the UN Transition Assistance Group in Namibia (UNTAG, 1989-1990), and the UN Angola Verification Missions (UNAVEM I and II, 1989-1993).[28] The JNA had a 'UN training base' where soon-to-be-deployed troops spent 45 days learning about UN peacekeeping. "Even after all participation [in UN peace-keeping] ends... a residue of experience and sensitivity remain, which probably can be of use if not too many years elapse," commented a researcher in 1971.[29] Twenty years later, in 1991, the UN mission on the Iraq-Iran border, headed up by a JNA Major General, was winding down just as full-scale war began to brew in Croatia. And in 1993, ten months into the Bosnian war, the JNA still had military observers serving under the UN in Angola: they would have witnessed first hand the inherent weakness of the UN vis-à-vis determined 'factions' such as UNITA or the Luanda government (MPLA).[30] It is fair to assume, especially after these last two experiences, that institutional knowledge would have developed in the JNA on the constraints and limits, both in terms of diplomacy and at the tactical level, of an international peace-keeping force whose mandate is predicated on consent.

The second factor was the valuable experience of UNHCR that Yugoslav authorities had accumulated over the years. UNHCR had maintained an office in Belgrade since 1976. Breaking with its own practice, UNHCR had acquiesced to a Yugoslav demand that their Head of Office in Belgrade be a

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confusing, even bewildering experience, especially outside of the large towns (interview, local Bosnian official). The authorities whom we believe were familiar with the UN were mostly high-ranking officials and officers, predominantly in Serbia.

[27] Interview, Yugoslav researcher (Paris).

[28] United Nations Department of Public Information: *The Blue Helmets: A Review of UN Peace-Keeping*, 3rd Edition, United Nations (New York), 1996.

[29] Fabian, L.: *Without Enemies: Preparing the United Nations for Peacekeeping*, The Brookings Institution (Washington, DC), 1971: p. 157.

[30] UNDPI, *The Blue Helmets*....

Yugoslav national. This remained the case through 1991 — in other words throughout the war in Croatia. Over the years, federal authorities worked closely with UNHCR on the resettlement of political refugees, mostly from Albania, but also from both sides of the cold war divide. In Yugoslavia's waning years, a marked increase in the Albanian caseload and a sudden influx of refugees fleeing the December 1989 unrest in Romania provided authorities in Belgrade with valuable insight into UNHCR's modus operandi. Yugoslav policy was to only grant entry to refugees who, with UNHCR's help, found resettlement in third countries.[31] This practice was later perverted when, in 1992, Serbian and federal authorities loaded hundreds of thousands of just-expelled Muslims from eastern Bosnia onto boxcars headed for transit camps like Palić on the Yugoslav-Hungarian border, and then herded them on towards a refugee's exile in somewhere in Europe.

Third, the Gulf war provided an opportunity for Yugoslav authorities to gauge what the international community's reaction to a war in Yugoslavia might be. Rattled by its defeat in Slovenia and unfolding events in Croatia, the JNA embarked, in summer 1991, on a reassessment of its strategic goals.[32] The JNA review focused on the international response during the Gulf War. The review reportedly came to the following conclusions. The internationalization, under UN auspices, of the Gulf conflict would likely be replicated in future crises. But internationalization requires consensus. And the review determined that it was unlikely that the West would achieve the consensus, especially the transatlantic consensus, required for intervention in a Yugoslav crisis, even if, and this was deemed probable, the current unrest degenerated into large-scale war. The study indicated specifically that US support for intervention was unlikely, and that the Europeans would not go it alone.

> The YPA's [Yugoslav People's Army] overall strategy called for the army's key allies and clients to become acutely sensitive to the responses of the international community to violence and atrocities in Yugoslavia so that international intervention on the Iraqi model would never occur. The army and most of its key allies thereafter displayed extraordinary finesse, escalating their actions when the international community was preoccupied and retreating or waiting when they found themselves in the spotlight of the international media.[33]

Operation Provide Comfort was drawing to a close in northern Iraq at the same time as the JNA began its inglorious withdrawal from Slovenia. The JNA's strategic reassessment followed shortly after. We do not know to what extent the JNA examined the northern Iraqi epilogue to the Gulf war. Had they done so, the conclusions from that humanitarian intervention would have been valuable and

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[31] U.S. Department of State, Bureau for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs: *Country Reports of Human Rights Practices for 1991* (Washington, DC), 1992: pp. 1319-1320.

[32] Gow, *Triumph of the Lack of the Will...*: p. 32-33; Donia and Fine, *Bosnia & Herzegovina...*: pp. 221-2; Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy...*, p. 257-8; all refer to an official October 1991 report on the JNA reassessment in a Yugoslav strategic issues journal, *Vojno Delo*, and to 1993 research by James Gow.

[33] Donia and Fine, *Bosnia & Hercegovina...*: pp. 221-222. These lines make fascinating reading in the light of the 1999 war over Kosovo.

could have included: that the US was initially reluctant to get involved in northern Iraq; that the decision to intervene was only made after the press had started reporting a desperate situation in the mountains; that the US was eager to avoid military clashes, even with the already defeated Iraqi military; that Western powers were determined to keep military involvement short and have their forces hand over to the UN as soon as possible; and that the UN was a weak surrogate for direct allied intervention. This final lesson would have dovetailed nicely with the JNA's own experience of peacekeeping. If indeed they were articulated, such conclusions would have been invaluable in the wars that were about to unfold in Croatia and in Bosnia.

III. Emergency Relief in Europe: A Long-Forgotten Concept

Ignorance and the Overworked

Whereas authorities in Belgrade seemed well prepared to deal with the international community, the international community's representatives in the former Yugoslavia — diplomats, soldiers and aid workers — found themselves confronted with a novel problem, or at least one not given much thought since the mid-late 1940s: emergency relief operations in Europe.

American diplomats and policymakers concerned with European affairs lacked familiarity with the concept, issues, and mechanisms of humanitarian aid. Their expertise lay in other areas, such as NATO affairs, disarmament negotiations and trade negotiations. Emergency relief and the attending issues were foreign to many of them. They were not familiar with such basic things as the mandates of UNHCR or ICRC, or even what the term NGO stood for.[34] This is in stark contrast to Africa-focused foreign policy officials for whom humanitarian workers are daily interlocutors.[35] In the critical early days of aggression and ethnic cleansing, first in Croatia and then in Bosnia, US diplomats in Belgrade relied on the advice of the resident USAID mission, which, by all accounts, was poor.[36] The embassy could not assess how much time and effort should be spent on attempting to facilitate the work of humanitarian agencies. Indeed, they could not judge whether humanitarian aid was appropriate or not. Their assumption was that war produced human misery: their conclusion, born of inexperience was that humanitarian aid was good, and that more of it was better. The official American response was limited to the following approach: humanitarian needs require a humanitarian response. One could imagine that Slobodan Milošević watched with interest the expenditure of effort that Western leaders exerted in order to accomplish relatively little.

[34] Interviews, former US State Department officials.

[35] Interviews, US State Department, USAID, OFDA.

[36] Interviews, US State Department, USAID.

The humanitarian assistance branches of the Bush administration, and particularly high-ranking officials in USAID's Bureau of Food and Humanitarian Assistance (FHA — the precursor bureau to BHR), freely admit that the former Yugoslavia just was not on their screen. From 1991 to mid-1992, their attention was diverted by other humanitarian crises, including some that carried considerable political weight for the administration: fears of food shortages and mass migration in the former Soviet Union, drought in Southern Africa, and war-induced famine in Somalia.[37] In fact, in 1992, OFDA spent more money in each of Angola, Ethiopia, Liberia, Mozambique, Somalia and Sudan, than in former Yugoslavia.[38] In terms of overall US government spending, former Yugoslavia ($91 million) ranked behind assistance to Ethiopia ($130m), Somalia ($95m, not including DoD expenditures) and drought-stricken southern African countries: Mozambique ($167m), Malawi ($112m), Zimbabwe ($111m) and only just above Zambia ($90m).[39]

Somalia was a particular focus for OFDA in early summer 1992. In June, as Serb forces were tightening the noose around Sarajevo, finishing off the cleansing eastern Bosnia and beginning to focus on northwestern Bosnia,

> ...OFDA's phone was ringing off the hook as media, congressmen, and ordinary citizens called seeking more information [about the situation in Somalia]. Staff could hardly work on anything except Somalia as demands for information escalated both inside and outside the State Department building.[40]

In Washington, the NGOs themselves, always a source of influence and advocacy when it comes to unfolding crises, were not pushing for more donor involvement in Yugoslavia. The blue chip charities were for the most part latecomers to former Yugoslavia: years of involvement in the Third World had conditioned the image of what a humanitarian emergency was, and white people fleeing in cars just did not match that perception of refugees.[41] Nothing was familiar on Yugoslavia: Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Angola, Liberia, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh — these were the traditional stomping grounds of the "humanitarian international."[42] Not the Dinaric Alps, the banks of the Danube or the Drina valley. Aid agencies were ill-prepared to work in the former Yugoslavia: they had no Balkan desk officers in 1991;[43] and there was very little institutional knowledge of the

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[37] Interviews, former BHR and OFDA officials.

[38] USAID/BHR/OFDA: *Annual Report, FY 1992*, OFDA (Washington, DC), 1993: *passim*.

[39] USAID/BHR/OFDA: *Annual Report, FY 1992*, OFDA (Washington, DC), 1993: *passim*.

[40] Refugee Policy Group: *Hope Restored? Humanitarian Aid in Somalia 1990-1994*, Somalia Humanitarian Aid Study (J.G. Sommer, Director), report to OFDA (Washington, DC), November 1994: p. 21.

[41] Interview, former OFDA official.

[42] To use Alex de Waal's vivid expression (*Famine Crimes: Politics and the Disaster Relief Industry in Africa*, Indiana University Press (Bloomington, IN) 1997: pp. 3-4 and 65 ff.)

[43] Minear, L., J. Clark, R. Cohen, D. Gallagher, I. Guest, T. Weiss: *Humanitarian Action in the Former*

country, its history, and social and economic structures. When the war did start in Bosnia, and the first reports of mass atrocities and expulsions started emerging, many aid agencies — even those who had already been on the ground for a few months — were at a loss as to how to interpret these events, let alone as to what to so about them:

> We had no real understanding as to what was happening. Ethnic cleansing: Is this real? Is this policy? Or is this local?[44]

Programmatic experience from other emergencies was often irrelevant, and sometimes even counterproductive, as demonstrated by donor plans for massive refugee camps in Croatia in 1991 and 1992. Some observers maintain that the most successful programs were often those managed by staff who had no prior relief experience to draw on and were therefore forced to innovate on the basis of the problems before them.[45]

The Bosnian War, Too, Will Blow Over

Other trends in current European history conditioned the European perception of the most brutal violence to rock Europe since the Second World War. Walls in Europe were coming down, not going up. In this context, the "Yugoslav wars of dissolution," to use James Gow's expression,[46] could appear as a Balkan aberration — petty outbreaks of violence triggered by unaccountable leaders — that could not possibly go on for any serious period of time.

And indeed, the Slovenian and Croatian wars had been relatively brief. The first was over in a matter of days, seemingly thanks to EC diplomacy. The war between Yugoslavia and Croatia, was much more violent, but was now 'frozen' under the Vance Plan with the deployment of UNPROFOR and the creation of the UN Protected Areas (UNPAs). Again, it appeared as if international mediation had been successful in taking politics off the battlefield and into the conference room. Bosnia remained calm. In the spring of 1992, UNPROFOR established its headquarters in Sarajevo, which was seen as a neutral location between Croatia and Serbia. This, added to the flurry of diplomatic initiatives and the countless warnings of potential war in Bosnia, projected a misleading appearance of vigilance: this time the West would not let itself be caught by surprise.

When the Bosnian war finally did erupt, in April 1992, there was a widespread assumption on both sides of the Atlantic that Serb forces would rapidly prevail. Most of the US foreign policy

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Yugoslavia: The U.N.'s Role 1991-1993, Brown University and Refugee Policy Group (Providence, RI), 1994: p. 2.

[44] Interview, former NGO executive.

[45] Interviews, NGOs.

[46] Gow, *Triumph of the Lack of Will...*: *passim*.

establishment — including senior officials in the Bush administration, leading figures in Congress and the management of leading American relief agencies — were convinced that this one, too, would blow over. UN negotiator Cyrus Vance was so persuasive in his view that the affair would not last six months, that his co-Chairman to be, David Owen, offered his services pro bono to the Conference.[47] In discussion with the Authors, the head of a major American NGO recalled that, in spring 1992, concerned Sarajevans were sending their kids out of the city but fully expected to bring them back for the beginning of school after the summer break.[48] Bosnians, on both sides of the conflict, thought that the fighting would quickly subside.[49] The Serb leadership itself, after extensive military preparations, felt certain that the Bosnian government would be overwhelmed and would quickly capitulate. They did not think that the urbane population of Sarajevo had the stomach for a long fight. Momčilo Krajišnik, subsequently head of the Bosnian Serb Parliament, reportedly spoke confidently to a small circle in London in March 1992, before the outbreak of war, claiming that "everything is ready. In ten days, it will all be over."[50] For their part the Bosnian government, in the early months of 1992, consciously and purposefully declined to prepare for war. A respected senior former commander in the Bosnian army told us:

> We did not want this war. We did not plan this war. We did not prepare for this war.[51]

No strategic stockpiles of munitions, food or fuel were established.[52] The Bosnian leadership felt that such activity would be 'provocative.' They could not envision the scenario that would soon unfold.

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[47] Owen, D.: *Balkan Odyssey*, Harcourt Brace & Company (New York), 1995: p. 26.

[48] Interview, former NGO executive.

[49] Interviews, Bosnia.

[50] We are grateful to Norman Cigar for this information, quoted in "Džon Vejn na Miljacki" [John Wayne on the Miljacka River], S. Čuruvija, *Borba* (Belgrade), 10-11 April 1993, p. 1.

[51] Interview, former Bosnian army commander.

[52] Interviews with former Bosnian government officials.

The Dangers of Familiarity

This brief setting of the scene yields at least three points of interest, all of which are both striking and disturbing.

The first hinges on the paradox of familiarity: The long history of interaction with Yugoslavia did not make for better foresight in the West. The crisis, when it came, was still stunning and unexpected. Likewise, specific lessons from the 1991 Kurdish emergency, or even the two crises in Romania in 1989 and Albania in 1990 — both of which OFDA responded to — should have foreshadowed events to come in Yugoslavia. But the wrong lessons were drawn: the mistaken belief that Belgrade was trying to keep Yugoslavia together; the giddy optimism that relief operations actually offered lasting solutions to political crises; the belief that war in Bosnia would be brief.

Two, a number of patterns were already in evidence before the Yugoslav crisis erupted into war, patterns that later became mainstays of that crisis: the non-partisan tension between Congress and the administration; the need, and difficulties, of achieving international consensus for intervention; UNHCR taking responsibility well beyond refugees; how Belgrade would handle — and manipulate — refugees; the fact that assurances from authorities meant little. All these lessons were there for the taking in 1991-1992, but were for the most part ignored.

The third point is more specific to the US government. It is hardly surprising that there was no humanitarian expertise among officials dealing with Europe — why should there have been any? Rather, what is troublesome is that there was relevant expertise elsewhere in the US government — namely in OFDA — but it was not brought to bear on the crisis brewing in Yugoslavia. The people who had it were too busy or not aware enough to apply it to the Yugoslav crisis. And those who had none did not know where to look for it (if indeed they were aware of their ignorance). It took time for humanitarian expertise to carry over to where it was needed.

The story of OFDA in former Yugoslavia is that of a humanitarian office becoming wise to the ways of foreign policy, and of foreign policymakers becoming wise to the ways of relief aid. The result, encouraging at first, tended over time toward a lowest common denominator that served well neither the interests of the victims nor those of the United States. It is this evolution we chart over following chapters.

Chapter One

The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance's Involvement in the Former Yugoslavia 1991-1992

From the Start of the War in Croatia to the Creation of the DART

This chapter outlines OFDA's involvement in the former Yugoslavia from the early days of armed conflict in Slovenia and Croatia in July 1991 to the creation of the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) in December 1992. Tensions had been building in Yugoslavia for a number of years; there had even been localized outbreaks of violence, mostly in Croatia. But summer 1991 was when the crisis erupted into full-blown conflict and the world — if not OFDA — took notice.

We examine a number of topics. First we explore OFDA's vision of the world in 1991 and 1992. Then we review the various sources of information — from press and aid agency reports — an OFDA person would have had access to as the crisis unfolded. The idea here is to examine what the initial perception of the Yugoslav crisis might have been. Finally we trace the initial steps in OFDA's involvement in the former Yugoslavia, including the November 1991 disaster declaration, and how these led towards the establishment of the longest DART in OFDA history.[1]

[1] The Chief of the US Mission declares a disaster declaration when the host country has requested it and the US feels the disaster warrants a response. The Chief of Mission can then allocate up to $25,000. More importantly it is the trigger for a possible much larger OFDA response.

I. A View From a Distance (July-December 1991)

OFDA in the early 1990s: Problems Don't Happen in Europe

The new decade opened with a proliferation of crises, mostly conflict-driven. OFDA, like many other humanitarian relief agencies, found itself overwhelmed and under-resourced. The Office's 1992 annual report clearly expressed these feelings of upheaval: "[T]he social, political, and ideological tumult that shook the world in 1991 — the breakup of the Soviet Union, the Gulf War, multiple crises in the Horn of Africa — swept OFDA as well."[2]

In 1990 and 1991, the largest relief activities that OFDA funded for war-affected populations were for Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somalia in the Horn; Angola and Mozambique in southern Africa; Liberia in West Africa; and in Lebanon and Iraq in the Middle East. In interviews, OFDA staff from that period recalled the main events as being the Southern African drought, the emergency food airlift to Russia, and the war-induced famine in Somalia.

But something else occurred in those two years. Two small crises that bubbled up in southeast Europe, while perhaps less dramatic than Iraq or Somalia, were for OFDA powerful harbingers of things to come. The first was the violent post-Ceaucescu transition in Romania where a civil strife disaster was declared in December 1990. OFDA responded swiftly with a four-person assessment team, which identified major intermediate and long-term medical and nutritional needs. Second, in late March 1991, a disaster was declared in Albania following widespread shortages of medical supplies and clean water. The disruptions were caused by a breakdown in governmental authority compounded by the effects of a three-year drought. Within days, the director of OFDA led an assessment team that also included a USAID press officer. The team recommended targeting assistance to the most vulnerable populations while systemic governmental and economic changes took affect.

Beyond the physical proximity of these crises to the former Yugoslavia, the events taking place in Romania and Albania should have alerted OFDA to the nature of the crisis brewing next door. Both demonstrated that transitions in Eastern Europe could be violent and, more surprising perhaps, disruptive enough to warrant the attention of the humanitarian disaster community. In other words, violence could still happen in Europe. Furthermore, they showed that in the long term the debilitating effects of communism — and the inherent political and economic mis-governance that went with it — had to be taken into account when planning and implementing an emergency response. But the Balkans remained on the fringes of OFDA's interest, and both lessons would have to be learned afresh in the former Yugoslavia over the next two years. Reasons for OFDA's inability to recognize

[2] US Agency for International Development, Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance: *OFDA Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1992.*

the crisis brewing in Yugoslavia and to prepare for dealing with the structural issues of a semi-industrial, communist country include the following:

- The time of senior decision-making executives is limited: there are only so many issues senior management can follow at once. In 1991, senior OFDA officials were coming to the conclusion that they would rather follow fewer issues, but in greater depth. Yugoslavia was not one of them.[3]

- Before conflict erupted in earnest in Yugoslavia, there was little demand for advice or humanitarian expertise, no prodding from the embassies, Department of State, USAID, or the NGOs.

- A mistaken notion prevailed — in the State Department and even in OFDA — that humanitarian disasters requiring international assistance occurred in the Third World, not in Europe. (In Russia and the 'Near Abroad,' the dire predictions of looming famine never materialized, confirming the impression that Second World countries were not emergency-prone.)

OFDA's experiences in non-Third World countries like Iraq and the Newly Independent States, not to mention the crises in Romania and Albania, could have changed these views, but they did not.[4]

OFDA in 1992

Fiscal Year 1992 was a busy one for OFDA: that year a record number of disasters were declared by OFDA. Among these was a disaster declaration issued in November 1991 by then US ambassador to Belgrade, Warren Zimmermann, for "civil strife" in the former Yugoslavia.[5] The previous year,

[3] Interview, former senior official, USAID/Bureau of Humanitarian Response. OFDA did have, at least in theory, an internal mechanism for monitoring emerging crises: the Preparation, Mitigation and Preparedness (PMP) Division, later called PMPP with the addition of "Prevention," was created in 1990. The idea was to better prepare for disasters before they struck. However, PMP's onus was clearly in natural disasters. The division determined its target areas for 1991 to be parts of Central and South America, the Caribbean Basin, the Philippines, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Fiji, Sri Lanka and parts of southern and eastern Africa. Again, the potential for a crisis in Europe was discounted (US Agency for International Development, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance: *OFDA Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1991 and 1992*, USAID (Washington, DC), 1991-92).

[4] Iraq was a paradox: for many relief 'practitioners,' the fact that they were programming assistance in Iraq at all was linked to the Gulf war — a unique event — and therefore few programmatic lessons were drawn. This obscured experience that might otherwise have been relevant to ex-Yugoslavia (harsh weather, middle class living standards, well-developed urban infrastructure, etc.). But it did not distract from the fact that the military-humanitarian interaction in Iraqi Kurdistan was viewed as the beginning of a trend where relief operations became more intrusive as sovereignty became less of an issue (see "Setting the Scene").

[5] November 1991 is part of Fiscal Year 1992 (FY1992).

Zimmermann had declared two disasters involving mining accidents.[6] An embassy economic official was the first to suggest the disaster declaration mechanism. No interviewee remembers the disaster declaration as having had any special significance, nor having been particularly struck by the formal acknowledgment of the conflict-induced humanitarian crisis it represented: it was merely a declaration among many others. Yet within a week an assessment team similar to the one sent to Romania and Albania was dispatched to the region. They visited Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia, including Vojvodina. This in turn seems to have sounded a wake-up call at the US embassy in Belgrade: a dimension of this crisis was more serious than they had thought. In other words — and in a strange reversal of sequential logic — if the humanitarians are arriving, then widespread death and misery must be likely to occur.[7] One OFDA report claims that the first $7 million of Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance (ERMA — State Department funding), authorized by President Bush in December 1991 while the team was still in the field, came in response to this assessment.[8] We could find no confirmation of this in press releases, press reports or interviews.

While someone in the embassy in Belgrade had been familiar enough with disaster declarations to recommend one for a mining accident, this was not true of other State Department officials dealing with the crisis. Most officials in the embassy, including the ambassador, as well as officers at State's Europe desk, had little familiarity with humanitarian aid. Unlike colleagues who had served in Third World countries — and particularly in sub-Saharan Africa — many had never even been exposed to USAID before, let alone OFDA. In the words of one former senior OFDA official, their world was a different one, one of trade negotiations and arms reduction talks.[9]

Within OFDA Washington, Yugoslavia was, in the hands of an action officer with little emergency management experience.[10] As those OFDA staff-members with more experience were working on other issues, the action officer was mostly left to his own devices, and would only "cry uncle" for really large issues.[11] It seems that Assistant Director Dayton Maxwell was the first senior OFDA official to realize the potential disaster that was brewing in the former Yugoslavia.[12]

At the same period as the disaster declaration and the initial assessment, other events occurred:

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[6] U.S. Agency for International Development, Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance: *OFDA Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1990.*

[7] Interview, State Department official.

[8] US Agency for International Development, OFDA Situation Report No. 1, "Former Yugoslavia - Civil Strife," 8 June 1992.

[9] Interview, former OFDA official.

[10] He was an administrative determination appointee, one of two in OFDA.

[11] Interview, former OFDA official.

[12] Interviews, former OFDA personnel.

UNHCR's involvement was on the increase, including a specific mandate for internally displaced persons (IDPs); UNHCR and ICRC issued their first emergency appeals; the 23 November 1991 cease-fire between Serbian and Croatian forces in Croatia was brokered by UN special envoy (and former US secretary of state) Cyrus Vance; and the UN Security Council approved a UN peacekeeping mission — the UN Protection Force or UNPROFOR — in the disputed areas of Croatia, which became the UN Protected Areas (UNPAs).

These events may not have been any more linked than that together they formed the various aspects of the West's overall response to a crisis. But given the progress made by Vance with the cease-fire and the creation of UNPROFOR, some held the view that the acute phase of the Yugoslav crisis was now over and thought it time to deal with the after-effects of the Croatian War.

Press Accounts

While the Yugoslav crisis may not have been on many minds in OFDA, it was certainly in the press. The following section aims to give a sense of what the US press was reporting on the conflict in the former Yugoslavia during 1991 and 1992. We selected articles from the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. Our objective was to identify what information OFDA officials would have been reading about in the daily press at the time.

In the spring and summer of 1991, many news articles focused on whether Western governments should recognize the independence of Croatia and Slovenia. Diplomatic recognition was alternatively presented as a tool to prevent bloodshed and as a provocation that could trigger it.[13] Reports during the fall of 1991 repeatedly pointed to the inability of the Europeans to reach any consensus on issues regarding Yugoslavia.[14] Analyses dwelt on the historical ties between European nations and one or the other of the national communities in Yugoslavia, e.g., Germany and the Croats, France and the Serbs, the UK and Titoist Yugoslavia, the Russians and their 'orthodox brethren' — the Serbs and Montenegrins, etc. Even in the US, there were reports on attempts by Serb and Croat communities in Chicago to influence administration policy in the former Yugoslavia.[15]

Generally, news analyses seemed to focus more on the diplomatic initiatives of the European Union and the US than on the details of what was actually happening on the ground. Several articles

[13] "Conflict in Yugoslavia; European Community Freezes Arms Sales and Aid," A. Riding, *New York Times*, 6 July 1991 and "Foreign Affairs: The Dark Side of Disunity," L. Gelb, *New York Times*, 10 July 1991.

[14] "The World; Europeans Hopes for a Yugoslav Peace Turn to Frustration," A. Riding, *New York Times*, 22 September 1991.

[15] "Tumult Tearing Yugoslavia is Echoed in Serbs and Croats of Chicago Area," J. Burns, *New York Times*, 17 December 1991.

pondered the question of what intra-EU disagreement over Yugoslavia meant for European unity. One article stated that "[t]he Western Europeans hope to show that the community can serve as a guarantor of stability in a fast-changing Europe."[16] The issue of recognition for the former Yugoslav republics was often paralleled to the situation in the Soviet Union, and later to Ukraine's declaration of independence. Europe's inability to contain and then resolve the conflict in Croatia did not seem to raise the question of what the potential repercussions were for the broader Balkans, but rather what this boded for the unraveling of the Soviet Union.

As the conflict intensified in the late fall of 1991, the press described Serb attacks on the Croatian city of Vukovar and the beginnings of sanctions with a UN arms embargo against Yugoslavia. Many articles gave a short history lesson on Yugoslavia and explained the existence of the different nationalities and republics. Already in late 1991, journalists understood that, while there were still divisions within the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) as to the wisdom of Belgrade's policies, factions of the JNA had allied themselves with the Serb cause in Croatia, and that Serb nationalist goals were to carve out a 'Greater Serbia.' Although some reports continued to describe a multi-ethnic JNA heir to Tito's partisans, desertions, mutinies, draft dodging and Croat defections from the JNA to the fledgling Croatian forces figured prominently.

The break-up of the Soviet bloc heightened fears of European instability, facts that were already fueled by nationalism and historic ethnic rivalries. One report explained that "with 1992 [the date of European union] only months away and much of Eastern Europe wracked by nationalist fever, the virus of revived tribalism is proving somewhat contagious, and it threatens increasingly to infect Western Europe."[17] Another article was entitled "Yugoslav Ethnic Hatreds Raise Fears of a War Without an End."[18] There was little focus on the role of either the faltering centralized economy or the communist-era apparatchik carry-overs whose communist rhetoric morphed into virulent nationalist demagoguery as they sought to cling to power.

By the time the violence erupted in Bosnia in April 1992, OFDA had funded the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to fill three information-gathering positions, and therefore had established its own flow of information. In the course of late spring and summer, the press reported aggressively on the fighting and the beginnings of the siege in Sarajevo, on the brutal Serb killing and deportation of Muslim and Croat civilians in Eastern Bosnia and later in northwestern Bosnia, and on the Serb-run concentration camps. Initially, the violence was at times depicted as inexplicable — not due to any

[16] "Europeans' Hopes for a Yugoslav Peace Turn to Frustration," A. Riding, *New York Times*, 22 September 1991.

[17] "Old Tribal Rivalries in Eastern Europe Post Threat of Infection," J. Tagliabue, *New York Times*, 13 October 1991.

[18] "Yugoslav Ethnic Hatreds Raise Fears of a War Without an End," S. Engelberg, *New York Times*, 23 December 1991.

lack of analysis on the part of the reporter, but rather mirroring the incomprehension of the victims themselves. One also finds the inevitable references to century-old smoldering ethnic hatreds breaking out, although other more thoughtful journalists also invoked history to point out Bosnian traditions of ethnic co-existence.[19] By early June 1992, the American press was routinely referring to the ethnic cleansing of eastern Bosnia as "genocide" and confronting administration spokespeople on the issue.[20]

ICRC and UNHCR: Public Reports Through the End of 1991

Another source of information for OFDA would have been the reports of the international agencies present on the ground in Yugoslavia. Both the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) had a presence in Yugoslavia before the war broke out. UNHCR had maintained an office in Belgrade since 1976 to deal with refugee asylum cases. The set-up was exceptional as far as UNHCR policy went, inasmuch as UNHCR's representative was a Yugoslav national, rather than an international staff-member, as is policy. The first international to head up the office in Belgrade only took over in January 1992, well into the crisis. The early 1990s were busy times for UNHCR Belgrade with refugee influxes from Romania and Albania. In the fall and winter of 1991, UN reports (UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO) describe a steadily escalating number of internally displaced persons. The majority was finding hospitality with host families, but economic hardship and the strains of winter stretched the ability of these families to continue to assist the refugees.

The ICRC for its part pursued its traditional activities. In the late 1980s, ICRC had started visiting Albanian Kosovars in political detention. When the war broke out in Croatia, ICRC staff acted as a neutral intermediary among the warring parties. They protested the authorities' disregard for international humanitarian law and the deliberate misuse of Red Cross symbols. ICRC also distributed relief assistance. Their assistance activities included food parcels, medical supplies, and chartering a ship to re-supply the historical city of Dubrovnik and a number of Adriatic islands that were cut off by the Serb forces. By the end of 1991, while UNHCR was still debating the deployment of eight international staff, ICRC had as many as 60 international delegates scattered throughout the former Yugoslavia. In early 1992, ICRC and UNHCR agreed upon a division of labor based on UNHCR's then lack of familiarity with conflict: ICRC took responsibility for relief in active war areas, while UNHCR took over the ICRC's family-package program for internally displaced in calmer areas of Croatia and Serbia.[21]

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[19] "Bosnian Strife Cuts Old Bridges of Trust"\, J. Burns, *NewYork Times*, 19 May 1992.

[20] See for example: US Department of State, Regular Briefing, Margaret Tutwiler, 9 June 1992 (transcript).

[21] Mercier, M.: *Crimes Without Punishment: Humanitarian Action in the Former Yugoslavia*, Pluto Press (London), 1994: p. 48-49.

There were also well-publicized accounts of other humanitarian activities. An ICRC convoy traveling in Croatia to evacuate patients from a hospital in Pakrac was attacked on 27 September 1991 and a nurse was wounded. An MSF convoy was attacked in Vukovar a month later. This incident and increased fighting in Croatia moved ICRC to bring the warring parties to conferences in the Hague and Geneva to agree to certain principles of international humanitarian law in November 1991. This set of principles, virtually a mini-Geneva convention re-written just for them, in the words of one high-ranking ICRC official, was soon violated.[22] A commission was also set up to trace missing persons. While all this was happening, Serbian forces were gutting Vukovar and shelling Dubrovnik. Vukovar fell on the 18-19 November 1991. Jean-Francois Berger of ICRC recalls what it was like in those early days:

> People were not dying of hunger, this was not Somalia. There were not yet any pictures of Vukovar, and nobody in the international community really knew what was going on. We were pretty much alone in the field.[23]

UNHCR and ICRC set the stage for the humanitarian relief effort in Yugoslavia and those who came after, including OFDA, took their cues from them. These areas included: neutrality and impartiality; the focus on agreements and conventions despite the fact that there was early evidence that whatever was signed was later callously ignored; and the focus on assistance rather than protection. The US embassy in Belgrade relied nearly exclusively on UNHCR for its humanitarian intelligence.[24] Senior OFDA personnel regularly received US embassy Belgrade cables. These often had wide distribution within OFDA and beyond. In those early days, when there were few other sources, the words, comments and analysis of UNHCR's representatives in Belgrade — albeit filtered through an American foreign service officer — were heard far and wide. This was not to be the first time that humanitarians in Bosnia influenced the tack of US foreign policy.[25]

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[22] Interview, ICRC official.

[23] Mercier, *Crimes Without Punishment...*: p.'35.

[24] Interview, former State Department official.

[25] We examine in greater detail UNHCR's role in shaping the early perception of the Bosnian crisis in the annex paper "Fighting the War With Humanitarian Aid."

II. OFDA Gets Involved (December 1991 – December 1992)

The US December Assessment

In late 1991, as fighting continued between Croats and Serbs in Croatia and before the war erupted in Bosnia Herzegovina, a US assessment team composed of representatives from the American embassy in Belgrade, USAID and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) traveled to Bosnia, Croatia, Vojvodina and Serbia proper from 5 to 21 December 1991 to assess the need for US assistance.[26] IRC produced a trip report with the conclusion that the organization could play a useful role in Bosnia Herzegovina. However, they also realized that setting up and running operations in Bosnia would not be easy considering the fluid political and military situation, the security concerns, and the likelihood that inequities in distribution among different national groups could exacerbate the conflict. The trip resulted in an IRC proposal to OFDA that called for the need to prioritize and monitor the distribution of humanitarian relief, assist local health and relief services, and facilitate the involvement of other aid agencies in the whole of Yugoslavia.

The International Rescue Committee (IRC)

The IRC, born the year Hitler came to power in Germany, began and grew as a political, militant, freedom fighting non-governmental organization whose purpose was to counter genocidal fascism and where rules, norms and standards were to be used and abused depending on what the most effective mechanism for rescue dictated. It seemed wholly appropriate that IRC was the first American NGO to recognize the re-emergence in Europe of the dark forces that had triggered its birth. Humanitarian agencies would not exist in the absence of misery. In late 1991, IRC still recalled this maxim. This review of OFDA draws heavily — as did OFDA itself — on the experiences of the IRC.[27]

Following the December 1991 assessment, OFDA decided to establish a presence in the field to assist displaced people. Rather than sending a team from OFDA, they funded IRC to do so. There seems to have been several objectives in doing this. First, as an NGO, IRC was not subject to the security regulations that existed for US government employees and was therefore freer than OFDA would have been to move around the country. Second, OFDA already had a relationship with IRC and

[26] OFDA's situation report no.1 stated that, based on the recommendation of that assessment team, President Bush announced that $7 million from ERMA would go to assist displaced people in Yugoslavia. However, when this contribution was mentioned in interviews with OFDA, RP and other State Department personnel, few thought it likely there was a connection between the assessment team and the $7 million.

[27] The Authors were closely involved with the IRC in former Yugoslavia and elsewhere, and know well both its promise and shortcomings.

trusted them to send people with the appropriate analytical skills for the task. Third, by helping IRC set up a ground presence, OFDA ensured it had a trusted partner on hand in the event it decided to launch any widespread relief operation — a lesson culled directly from Northern Iraq. Finally, given the fluidity of the situation, OFDA correctly figured that IRC's field-based information and analysis would assist it in its decision making.

IRC representatives were originally sent to Belgrade, Zagreb, and Sarajevo. During the December 1991 assessment, IRC realized how different the situation in Yugoslavia was from their experiences in Africa and Asia. Because of their inexperience in dealing with a humanitarian crisis in Europe, they also determined that a continual flow of detailed information was paramount.

While many US officials did not know that IRC was funded by OFDA, IRC's presence and reporting raised Yugoslavia's profile within the US government. In a classic case of an assessment that is correct for the wrong reasons, Ambassador Zimmermann concluded that "something really big was happening" when IRC's head of operations Roy Williams arrived in Yugoslavia.[28] IRC was in almost daily contact with OFDA's operations center when the war in Bosnia started. The reports and assessments going to OFDA from IRC included the status and needs of the displaced population throughout the republics of the former Yugoslavia, information on political parties operating in the various regions, news clippings from *Oslobodjenje*, information on the economic situation, reports on the status of the fighting and ethnic cleansing, UNHCR's activities and the general political and security situation. IRC's reporting also covered possible humanitarian aid distribution points and centers. OFDA regularly faxed the IRC reports to the State Department. There, the Refugee Program Bureau (RP) found the information invaluable.[29]

In 1992 IRC encountered some conflict with the US embassy in Belgrade and the consulate in Zagreb (soon to become embassy) over IRC's freedom of movement in the country. The USAID representative in Belgrade claimed that since IRC was being funded by OFDA, its people fell under his responsibility, and ultimately the ambassador's, especially regarding approvals for travel into conflict zones. On the other hand, the position of IRC and OFDA was that, while some of these people might have been US citizens and should have been given all warnings and advice appropriate, they were nevertheless private citizens working for an OFDA grantee — as opposed to a contractor — and were under no legal obligation to comply with US embassy directives and security procedures. This view eventually prevailed but not without further contention between Belgrade and Zagreb. A compromise was reached whereby the IRC person wishing to travel and a consular official would consult: prior to an IRC field visit, the Consulate would warn IRC of dangers in the field; after the trip, the IRC field officer would explain to the official what dangers (s)he had encountered. Zagreb

[28] Interview, State Department official.

[29] State Department officials on the East Europe desk however do not recall these early reports (interview, former State Department official). This is likely due to the aforementioned unfamiliarity with the role of humanitarian assistance in these sections of the State Department.

was pleased with this arrangement as it provided them first hand information of what was happening on the ground, both in Croatia and in Bosnia Herzegovina, whilst absolving them of security-based responsibilities. The whole episode foreshadowed problems the DART would later encounter, as it became caught in the struggle between the Zagreb and Sarajevo (Vienna) embassies.

The April 1992 US Airlift[30]

At the very beginning of the conflict in Bosnia, OFDA provided funding for the relief assistance that five US Air Force C-141s ferried to Sarajevo on 18-19 April 1992. Although the United States had already been funding relief operations through UNHCR, ICRC and IRC and had donated DOD excess supplies since the fall of 1991, the April relief flights were the first direct involvement of the US military in the conflict. Ambassador Zimmermann and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs Ralph Johnson flew into Sarajevo on one of the military flights. In addition to bringing 40 tons of food, blankets and medical supplies, which Johnson described as "a symbol of our concern for Bosnia," Johnson came to Sarajevo to establish full diplomatic relations with the newly recognized republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.[31] While the State Department was putting a relief coating on its political statement by linking the diplomatic recognition to a relief airlift, OFDA was thinking in opposite terms. Drawing on its experience of northern Iraq — and possibly along the lines of the concept of 'humanitarian air cover' articulated by Fred Cuny who was at the time very influential in OFDA[32] — the office's senior management thought that involving the US military in this delivery of humanitarian relief might intimidate the Serbs and reduce if not quell the violence. They saw the US military planes as the key component of the message to the Serbs.[33]

In practice, the aircraft were used — and therefore perceived — as just what they were: logistical assets. Thus, the airlift had no positive political impact on the conflict. It was critical, however, in cementing some of the main characteristics of the future relief effort in Bosnia. IRC's people on the ground in both Belgrade and Sarajevo felt the relief flights were successful, especially in establishing a coordination precedent between the DOD, UNPROFOR and UNHCR and in securing the cooperation of the JNA at the airport. IRC hoped to increase the momentum gained by the flights and continue relief flights into Sarajevo and any other airstrips that could be secured. They stressed

[30] The April Airlift is covered in greater detail in the annex paper "Birth of the Aid Juggernaut in Former Yugoslavia (1991-1992): Humanitarian Plot or Unintended Consequences?".

[31] "Serbian Guerrillas Pounding Sarajevo in Defiance of U.S.," C. Sudetic, *New York Times*, 19 April 1992.

[32] On the idea of 'humanitarian air cover' see our introductory chapter "Setting the Scene." Cuny had been de facto DART team leader in northern Iraq during much of Operation Provide Comfort; he was personally and professionally close to the highest officials in OFDA and FHA; Assistant Administrator Natsios had provided OFDA support for a series of after-action studies of OPC (see for example Cuny, F.C. (with F. Brilliant, P. Reed and V. Tanner): "Humanitarian Intervention: A Study of Operation Provide Comfort," Intertect (Dallas, TX), 1995).

[33] Interview, former OFDA senior management.

that the need for relief supplies was increasing dramatically throughout Bosnia.[34]

Macedonia

Although the fighting had spread to Bosnia and continued in Croatia, Macedonia was seen (with Kosovo) as the tinderbox which would ignite the entire Balkan region because of its potential to draw in Greece and Turkey on opposing sides. There were few international organizations in Macedonia at the time and little was known about the humanitarian situation there. In early June 1992, OFDA sent an assessment team to Macedonia to determine the needs of refugees and how the Skopje government could be assisted in coping with them. OFDA sent some of its own people along with IRC staff who were already working in the region, representatives from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), USAID's Office of Food for Peace (FFP), and USAID's Bureau for Europe and the Newly Independent States (USAID/ENI). The result of the assessment was an arrangement whereby UNICEF was to procure $66,000 worth of medicines and medical supplies for the IDPs in Macedonia. Two OFDA consultants were then dispatched to the region in late June 1992, one to help distribute medical supplies in Macedonia and the other to monitor the delivery and distribution of MREs arriving in Zagreb. At a G-24 meeting in Brussels on 22 June on the situation in the former Yugoslavia, OFDA shared its assessment of the situation on the ground and recommended assistance to the Government of Macedonia and the Bosnian refugees arriving in that country. Not long after this assessment, USAID opened a mission in Skopje. OFDA told the mission director to contact them if she ever needed anything "She never called."[30] There was no disaster declaration in Macedonia. The needs were never great, despite the arrival there of Bosnian refugees (28,000 in July 1992).

Bosnian War Spreads, OFDA Field Representative Sent Out

After using the International Rescue Committee as its eyes and ears in the region since January 1992, OFDA began to establish its own presence on the ground in late spring 1992. War and massive human rights abuses were spreading in Bosnia and with them an increased need for both reporting and assistance. IRC was increasingly concentrating on operational programs. OFDA's presence on the ground was essential as the US sought to increase its humanitarian involvement. Washington markedly raised its profile with Operation Provide Promise, which contributed US military relief flights to UNHCR's Sarajevo airlift, starting in early July 1992. The backdrop to OFDA's direct involvement in the region that summer were horrifying atrocities committed by the Bosnian Serbs: in July and August 1992, detention camps and massive ethnic cleansing were uncovered in northwestern Bosnia, the siege of Sarajevo was tightened and the Serbs began a major assault on Gora)de.

[34] IRC internal document, 20 April 1992.

[30] Interview, ODFA.

Also, at the same time, two things were becoming clear. One, the Bosnian war would not be short. And two, it was going to carry repercussions both in Europe and in US domestic politics in this presidential election year. The Bush administration began to pay increased attention to the Balkans. US government agencies grew more interested in OFDA's cables and situation reports. At the same time, the CIA reportedly claimed that they did not have anyone in the field, and their reports often used OFDA information.[31] The White House called in to OFDA, sometimes on a daily basis to get numbers, to find out how much aid had been flown into Sarajevo. The relief effort, and information about the effort, gradually grew to replace political action. As one OFDA official put it, recalling the daily calls from the White House on the Sarajevo airlift:

> When the President of the United States wants to know how many tons of lentils have been delivered [to Sarajevo] that day, you *know* you have no [expletive] policy.[22]

The US government stepped up its effort to show it was doing something to help the victims of the conflict. At State Department press briefings, OFDA's activities were tendered as proof of the United States' active role in the region. In June 1992, State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler responded to a reporter's question on whether the US was ready to send humanitarian assistance using military aircraft by reading verbatim from an OFDA situation report (and without attributing it):

> A United States assessment team is evaluating humanitarian and refugee assistance requirements. That team is in Macedonia. Their work will provide a basis for longer-term humanitarian assistance effort. A major concern is the lack of secure transit routes into much of Bosnia. But just like the International Committee of the Red Cross cannot operate there, nor can we.[32]

Her words implied that official administration policy was that the world's sole remaining super-power was subject, when confronted with the intransigence of Serb irregulars, to the same constraints as the ICRC.

UNHCR in Summer 1992

After the eruption of war in Bosnia, UNHCR personnel on the ground were quick to understand what was going on, not least because some were direct witnesses to the killings and expulsions of Muslims

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[31] Interview, OFDA.

[22] Interview, Bush administration political appointee (USAID).

[32] US Department of State, Regular Briefing, Margaret Tutwiler, 9 June 1992 (transcript).

by Serb forces in Eastern Bosnia.[33] UNHCR had to confront the choice head on: help people get out and facilitate ethnic cleansing, or help them stay, but with no real protection.

This choice has often been construed as an intractable dilemma. In fact, while stark, the choice was clear, and in the summer of 1992, UNHCR resolutely chose to help at-risk populations — by assisting in their evacuation from Yugoslavia — because that was clearly the only way to offer any protection. But the reporting coming out of Geneva in UNHCR situation updates and information notes was in fact misleading. These documents spoke of "refugees" — rather than expellees — who were "fleeing fighting" — rather than fleeing a campaign of organized terror in which their departure was arranged by the very authorities who instigated the terror. The crossing points on the Bosnian-Serbian border were referred to as "influx points"— rather than expulsion points. And the Serbian and Bosnian Serb Red Cross Societies were described as valuable partners to the relief operation, failing to recognize that they were an essential component of the policy of ethnic cleansing: they were the indispensable complement to the paramilitaries. The latter killed, raped and terrorized, while the former trucked people out — and both reported to the same authorities in Belgrade.[34] These is no evidence and little likelihood that the distortions in UNHCR's public information discourse were voluntary. They were far more likely the result of the common disconnect between field and head-office staffs. However, these views, sometimes most erroneously considered as better informed and more 'sober' than press reports, may have shaped the analysis of headquarters relief officials, including OFDA/W officials.

Conclusion: Genocide or 'Complex Emergency?'

Along with a general increase in the international response to disasters around the globe, aid agencies are increasingly being asked to operate in situations of entrenched political and military conflict — so-called 'complex emergencies.' These disasters often require a timely emergency response. This is the main thrust of OFDA's work. However, the problem is that the term 'complex emergency' downplays the political nature of the crises that are at the origin of the massive human suffering alluded to in the term 'emergency,' while emphasizing the humanitarian component. This in turn sets the potential response down an emergency relief path, rather than a political one. Thus, in late 1992, was Bosnia a complex emergency, a war, or genocide?

These questions came to the fore in the very midst of ODFA's operation, when a contractor, Tom Brennan, addressed the issue of genocide head-on in his final report of 7 December 1992.[36] In it, he

[33] Silber, L. and A. Little: *The Death of Yugoslavia*, Penguin/BBC Books (London), 1995: pp. 245-247.

[34] We treat this in detail in the annex paper "Fighting the War with Humanitarian Aid."

[36] Brennan, T.: "Final Report on Humanitarian Assistance in Bosnia-Herzegovina," 7 December 1992.

stated that the slaughter and displacement of Bosnia's Muslim communities at the hands of Serb forces amounted to genocide under the UN Genocide Convention. He pointed to the findings of the UN special rapporteur on human rights which he believed fulfilled three of the acts considered to be genocide in Article II of the Conventions: a) Killing members of the group; b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part. Although the US and the UN had loudly condemned war crimes in Bosnia, Brennan wrote that neither had taken steps to prevent genocide from occurring, as required by Article I of the Genocide Convention. Not only had the UN Security Council done nothing to prevent genocide but they may have been facilitating its implementation. Brennan recommended establishing safe havens and evacuating potential victims from Bosnia Herzegovina. He berated the UN and the West for ignoring Bosnian pleas for intervention while imposing an arms embargo on the Republic.

> It is not difficult to imagine, then, that the historical record will view the U.S. and other Western nations as complicitous in the genocide being inflicted upon Bosnia's Muslim population.[37]

In making the case for Western intervention, he equated Western strategies of sanctions, embargoes, and peace negotiations to chemotherapy treatment for a cancer patient who has just been struck by a train.

> Chemotherapy may certainly be an acceptable long-term treatment strategy, but the immediate requirement is to stop the bleeding — even if it may get the doctors' hands bloody.[38]

He recommended three means of intervention: a) lifting the arms embargo; b) evacuating Bosnians to safe havens within Bosnia but outside the conflict zone; and c) intervening militarily to protect civilians in their current homes. Brennan emphasized that the current system for delivering humanitarian aid ("or, more generally, prevented from being delivered") had to be changed. Only if the UN "immediately" began to use the railroad for deliveries and no longer permitted the Serbs to stop convoys for approval and inspection could UNHCR effectively meet the humanitarian needs in Bosnia.

Less than a month after the report was submitted, it was leaked to the *New York Times*, but the newspaper concentrated on the more 'technical' parts of the report that criticized UNHCR's logistical operations and its policy of consent at Sarajevo airport, rather than on the claim that anything short of bombing the Serbs would be tantamount to complicity of genocide. Tellingly, in an interview, a senior OFDA official sympathetic to the views in the report indicated that the publicity was actually counter-productive:

[37] Ibid., p. 3.

[38] Ibid, p. 6.

> Once the report became public, you couldn't work with it anymore. Everyone spent all their time trying to find out who leaked it and disassociate themselves from it. It would have been more effective to have it worked through the system.[39]

The Authors feel that a question arises that is central to the way OFDA approaches its mandate and its work: was Tom Brennan acting as a 'humanitarian' in this report? In other words, what is humanitarianism? Is it the relief war victims need to preserve their lives and livelihoods — the high energy foods, the water purification tablets, the blankets, the seeds, the roof timber? Or is it to try and address the root causes of the suffering, those that have to do with politics and powerlessness, if only by drawing the world's attention to them? These questions lie at the very heart, not only of OFDA's action, but of humanitarian action in general.

[39] Interview, OFDA.

Chapter Two

The Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) in the Former Yugoslavia 1992-1995

From the Establishment of the DART to the Dayton Agreement

Introduction

The years between 1992 and 1995 were the most active in OFDA's involvement in the former Yugoslavia. We have chosen the creation of the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) in December 1992 as the beginning point to this section. This may seem an arbitrary milestone in terms of the history of the war, as it represents no significant political or military point of cleavage. But from an OFDA perspective, the establishment of the DART is a critical turning point in that it marks OFDA's graduation from mere information gatherer to one of the major international players on the ground. The end-milestone, the Dayton Agreement, is on the other hand a clear turning point both in the history of the crisis and in OFDA's involvement in it.

This chapter is divided into three sections that cover a number of cross-cutting issues. They are not chronological; each section emphasizes different parts of the 1992-1995 period. Internally, the sections adhere to a general chronological approach. They are as following:

- The run-up to the creation of the DART (fall and winter of 1992);
- OFDA's twin roles as donor and information-gatherer (this section spans the entire period but is strongest in late 1993);
- Relations with other organizations within and outside the USG (this section also covers the entire period but plays a stronger role in the latter half).

Each section includes a review of the political, military and humanitarian context, reviews that cover 1992, 1993-1994 and 1995 respectively.

I. The Creation of the Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART)

The establishment of the DART in December 1992 can be viewed both as a product of the failure on the part of the international community to stop the war, and as a success in the overall effort of Western governments to couch the crisis in humanitarian terms: had there been an assertive international response early in the war, there would have been no need for a DART, or indeed for a massive humanitarian operation. Two factors contributed to making the creation of the DART an inevitable response. In Washington, mounting bureaucratic momentum and political positioning were leading toward a humanitarian response. And in Bosnia, continued war was creating ever-greater humanitarian needs. In this section, we look at the political, military and humanitarian situation in mid-late 1992 and the developments in Washington during the same period. We attempt to show that the specific moves and decisions made to establish a DART reflected this multi-faceted environment. The section ends with a description of the original objectives of the DART and its staffing formulation.

The Political, Military and Humanitarian Context (March – December 1992)[1]

The outbreak of war in Bosnia in late March and early April 1992 followed closely on the heels of the Croatian-Serbian war. In Croatia, a cease-fire agreement, brokered in early 1992 by United Nations special envoy Cyrus Vance, mandated the deployment of an armed UN protection force — UNPROFOR — between Serb and Croat forces. It also called for a political resolution of the disputed territories (called UN Protected Areas or UNPAs) through negotiation. In Bosnia, the lead international negotiating body was the European Community (EC), represented by Portuguese diplomat José Cutilheiro (responsible for negotiations about Bosnia Herzegovina) and a British representative, Lord Peter Carrington (chair of the EC peace conference on Yugoslavia).[2] The Bush administration was satisfied that the UN and the EC had taken the lead.

Early in the Bosnian conflict, the international community came to view Serb paramilitary and regular Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) forces as the 'bad guys' in the war. In a replay of the worst atrocities of the Croatian war, but on a far greater scale, these forces wrought terror in northeastern Bosnia and along the Drina valley, and indiscriminately shelled cities such as Sarajevo and Mostar. In June 1992, when the Serbs tightened their siege around Sarajevo, this triggered a crisis in the Western response to the conflict. No one really knew how a siege would play out. The prospect of a Leningrad-type situation in modern-day Europe was not a politically palatable one for Western leaders, and, for a

[1] For an in-depth analysis of initial Western responses to the siege in Sarajevo, the establishment of the UNHCR airlift and the London Conference, see our annex paper "Birth of the Aid Juggernaut in Former Yugoslavia (1991-1992): Humanitarian Plot or Unintended Consequences?"

[2] Portugal held the rotating EC presidency.

while, it looked like momentum was building for military intervention. Yet, among Western governments, this prospect also generated considerable reluctance. Finally, UN negotiators, with the political backing of the US and the Europeans, managed to secure an agreement for a humanitarian airlift into Sarajevo, run by UNHCR and based on the consent of the besieging Serb forces. Small amounts of supplies began entering the city. But the components of the agreement that could have dampened the conflict, at least around Sarajevo — the withdrawal of heavy weapons and a cease-fire — were never implemented. The siege went on, and was only lifted more than three years later, in late 1995.

On 1 July 1992, the British assumed the rotating EC presidency. The main priority of John Major's Government was to avoid military intervention in Bosnia, even more so than the Bush administration. But, for reasons having to do with EC politics, the British also felt they needed to be proactive in negotiating an end to the war. The Major government convened the London Conference at the end of August 1992, which brought together the main parties to the conflict, including then Serbian President Slobodan Milošević. The Conference produced a number of encouraging agreements. But in the weeks that followed, major violations to the signed declaration occurred, mostly by Serb forces.

In the run-up to the London Conference, the UN Security Council had adopted Resolution 770 that called for "all necessary measures" (UN-speak for the use of force) to be used to deliver humanitarian aid. The fact that no member government came forward to take the lead and use its troops to do so undermined this recourse to Chapter VII. Under British impetus, UN Security Council Resolution 776 transformed the "all necessary measures" into UNPROFOR II. The task of the new UNPROFOR was to escort UNHCR convoys following the UN's policy of consent — Chapter VII had morphed back into Chapter VI.[3]

The situation remained bad. The UN's policy of consent had managed to initiate the humanitarian airlift into Sarajevo, but the Serb siege of the town went on unabated: Serb guns still pummeled the city, and snipers continued to pick off residents. The authorities in the Bosnian Serb 'capital' of Pale cut off the town's utilities at will — gas, water, electricity. As winter loomed, the fears of large-scale dying caused by malnutrition, disease and exposure lingered on in aid agency reports, and hovered unpleasantly in the back of the minds of Western policymakers.[4] In August 1992, the press broke the stories of Serb-run concentration camps in northwestern Bosnia. The US government expressed outrage publicly. But behind the scenes, the administration moved frantically to dampen momentum towards a US intervention that would forcibly stop the atrocities.

On the ground, developments in the political and military situation were encouraging the

[3] Chapter VI of the UN Charter lays out the normal consensual approach, which insists on the approval of the country in which the activities are to take place. Chapter VII indicates that in presence of aggression or threat to collective peace, national sovereignty can be overruled in the wider interests of international security.

[4] "Winter May Kill 100,000 in Bosnia, the C.I.A. Warns," M. Gordon, *New York Times*, 30 September 1992.

administration in its skittishness. In Herzegovina in late summer 1992, Bosnian Croat forces had struck back at the Serbs, capturing Mostar, which they declared the capital of the 'Croatian Union of *Herceg-Bosna*.' In the early fall of 1992, the first clashes broke out between Muslims and Croats in central Bosnia. This lent credence to those claiming that the whole mess was a Balkan dogfight, and now a three-cornered one at that, in which outsiders interfered at their own peril and to no obvious benefit. Shortly after, the towns of Bosanski Brod and Jajce fell to the Serbs. Tens of thousands were displaced. Expellees poured into Croatia and Central Bosnia. The radical Bosnian Serb leadership now controlled over two-thirds of Bosnia, and the situation did not look as though it could be rolled back.

Domestic politics in the United States also played a role. The presidential campaign was in full swing. Democratic Party candidate Bill Clinton argued for a tougher line against the Serbs, often couching his rhetoric in moral terms. He advocated lifting the arms embargo on the Bosnians and using US or NATO air strikes against key Serb positions. President George Bush, in his attempts to deflect calls for US military intervention, fell back on the argument that the war was driven by centuries of ethnic conflict, but that the US would play its part in helping address the 'humanitarian nightmare.' While the new administration came in with a strong domestic policy mandate — this was very clear to OFDA people working on the former Yugoslavia[5] — Clinton's campaign rhetoric had raised hopes, especially among State and USAID officials active on Bosnia.[6] They held their breath in the last months of 1992 as a change in policy seemed imminent. One Republican-appointed official in OFDA told us that:

> After the election, as a political appointee, I knew my job would be over in two months, but I didn't feel that bad for Bosnia because Clinton had taken such a hard line in the campaign that we all thought the problem wouldn't last much longer.[7]

He, and the others, were wrong.

The Humanitarian Response Background

By late summer 1992, UNHCR had become the operational center of gravity of the international community in Bosnia — its expanding humanitarian response was the main thrust of the West's response to the war. Two factors drove this: UNHCR's own analysis of both the situation and its own interests, and the financial and moral encouragement that international donors afforded the refugee agency. UNHCR had decided on a logistically-based material aid program, which it hoped

[5] Interview, former OFDA official.

[6] Interview, State Department official.

[7] Interview, OFDA.

would provide some protection capacity in its wake. In late 1991, the agency had expanded its mandate to include internally displaced people throughout the former Yugoslavia. This mandate remained after the breakaway republics were recognized in early 1992, and even underwent a further expansion to include the entire war-affected population of Sarajevo under siege. In other words, the whole population had now become a candidate for humanitarian assistance. Beneficiary numbers continued to grow. With their attention riveted on the dangers of a possible military quagmire, Western policymakers ignored the potential humanitarian quagmire that these developments were leading them to.

As early as January 1992, OFDA established a key relationship with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) to help it get closer to the action on the ground. IRC's original tasks were, on behalf of OFDA, to gather information and, if required, facilitate subsequent programs. In the latter half of 1992, OFDA deployed a series of three field officers of its own (never more than one at a time). These officers assumed the reporting role held by the IRC field officers, and were asked to monitor the distribution of Meals Ready to Eat (MREs) that the administration was shipping to the region. Meanwhile, IRC's initial reporting grant had shifted to a more operational focus. Much of the effort involved attempting to assist and advise UNHCR. Field-level cooperation between IRC and OFDA remained very tight, so when IRC shifted away from reporting, this did not interrupt the flow of field information to OFDA and hence to its wider USG audience. However, it did pull people away from information management as a primary function, and this at a time when the humanitarian aid juggernaut was gaining bulk, and the politics and the geography of the war were becoming more complex. The ensuing humanitarian needs were also spreading and becoming harder to assess as winter approached. With all these added complexities, OFDA found itself in the paradoxical situation of having reduced its full-time information-gatherers from the three IRC people to one field officer.

We now briefly step away from events in Yugoslavia to review the role of a Disaster Assistance Response Team within OFDA.

The Role of a DART within OFDA

The DART: OFDA's Field Projection

The ability of OFDA to react swiftly is central to its role as an emergency response outfit. The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 gives OFDA the liberty to circumvent certain USAID regulations in the interest of speeding up the response in order to save lives. OFDA's 1997 Annual Report states that:

> The first principle in disaster response accountability is to ensure that appropriate assistance gets to the neediest victims in time to minimize death and suffering. Procurement and

accounting procedures may be expedited, but must include effective systems of internal control.[8]

While OFDA rarely uses this notwithstanding clause, its existence bestows official recognition to OFDA's focus on speed and response, and has come to represent in the minds of many OFDA staff their identity as a unit somewhat separate from the rest of USAID. In many ways the notwithstanding clause had grown into a frame of mind for OFDA personnel. It is passed as a mantra from director to director, and fuels OFDA's 'can-do' attitude.[9] OFDA's traditional emphasis on a quick response triggered the devolution of authority from OFDA/Washington to the DART in the former Yugoslavia.

The creation of the DART mechanism enables OFDA to project itself into the midst of emergency situations, drawing on the normal regulatory structures that support OFDA operations within USAID's overall structure. The DART re-creates the functions of an overseas USAID operating unit, ensuring that the "effective systems of internal control" are in place, while eliminating the top-heavy bureaucratic procedures that characterize other aspects of USAID operations.[10] OFDA makes the decision to field a DART when they are faced with "especially serious emergencies, or situations where there is no on-site field presence."[11] The DART reports on the situation and determines needs; it organizes USAID's response; and it helps coordinate the disaster relief effort with other USG agencies, as well as with NGOs and other donors. The DART works closely with the embassies following the situation, whether in country or in neighboring capitals. In some conflict situations, the DART will be the only official USG presence on the ground during the acute phase of the crisis, as was the case during much of the Bosnian war.

How DARTs are perceived

The external perceptions of the DART are mixed. Within USAID, the DART's emergency mode — not to mention its high profile in the press and on Capitol Hill — seems to trigger a mix of envy and resentment. In other parts of the Government, the DART is seen as an asset: it is a way of gaining an official US presence on the ground, which would otherwise be impossible. For the US military deployed in relief operations, the DART is the main point of contact with the aid community, and often a source of valuable advice on humanitarian issues. Outside the US government, perceptions vary as well. Many response-oriented NGOs are obviously aware of the DART as a major key to

[8] U.S. Agency for International Development, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance: *OFDA Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1997*: p. 8.

[9] Interviews, OFDA.

[10] U.S. Agency for International Development, "USAID's Strategies for Sustainable Development — Providing Humanitarian Assistance and Aiding Post-Crisis Transitions," on USAID's web-site at <www.info.usaid.gov> (October 1998).

[11] Ibid.

funding. The DART's field-based and response-oriented attributes are sometimes envied among UN agencies and other donors. As one commentator recently put it: "Rapid response is greatly helped by a unique feature of the US system [DARTs] which the UN Department of Humanitarian Affairs would do well to emulate."[12] But, surprisingly, we also found that many groups are not aware of the DART, or of what the DART does, including high ranking individuals in important organizations. For instance, both field- and headquarters-based UNHCR personnel in the former Yugoslavia were unclear what the purpose and the motives of the DART were, even well into the crisis.[13]

The Great Washington Maw

Meanwhile, the war continued. If, in the halls of Congress, Bosnia was growing into a *cause célèbre*, in the corridors of the State Department, it had become a tar baby. For the holders of both perceptions, a common denominator emerged, one that provided fuel to the proponents of the former and helped harried administration officials manage the latter: information. At State, Eastern Europe desk officers poured over press accounts, embassy cables, intelligence reports, and think tank assessments. Contradiction and confusion were the norm. Often, they simply reverted to common sense and gut feeling when making their analysis and recommendations.[14] In the early days of the war, the humanitarian reporting on the ground had no great impact on policy formulators in Washington. Unlike the embassy in Yugoslavia, which had come to assume there was a humanitarian problem mainly because relief 'personalities' started turning up in Belgrade, the Washington-based officials did not see the Yugoslav crisis as a humanitarian problem, probably in part because they were not familiar with humanitarian issues.[15] They saw it as a political one. Many of the junior and mid-level officials at the State Department were in favor of more aggressive US action. The decision-makers at assistant secretary and undersecretary levels were more conservative however, and they ignored the appeals of the lower rungs.[16] For these upper echelons of the administration, information on humanitarian aid, if packaged correctly, could demonstrate firm US engagement combined with the best tradition of American generosity.

Meanwhile, as beneficiary numbers soared and international organizations became more deeply involved, State Department officials responsible for responding to humanitarian needs spent more and more time on the former Yugoslavia. Funds for these international organizations — essentially

[12] Taylor, P., "Options for the Reform of the International System for Humanitarian Assistance" in *The Politics of Humanitarian Intervention*, J. Harriss ed., Pinter (London), 1995: p. 129.

[13] Interviews, UNHCR.

[14] Interviews with current and former US State Department officials.

[15] Interview, State Department official.

[16] Interviews with current and former US State Department officials.

UNHCR and the ICRC — were still limited, as the US State Department had to juggle priorities for various crises around the world. Additional personnel were assigned to the problem. More people meant that more information was needed. With the establishment of the Humanitarian Working Group in late spring of 1992, chaired by State, the importance of humanitarian aid as a component of US foreign policy to the former Yugoslavia increased. Regular attendees of this working group came from within the State Department itself — the Eastern European Bureau (EEUR) and the Bureau of Refugee Programs (RP), from OFDA, from DoD-Global Affairs (the precursor bureau to Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Affairs) and from the National Security Council. All of these bureaus were desperate for information. The US embassy in Belgrade and the consulate in Zagreb did not have the humanitarian experience needed to sustain a quality flow of information to Washington. It was this humanitarian working group that, sometime in August, first raised the need for a DART and first discussed what roles a DART could play.

Steps to the Establishment of the DART

Two critical factors contributed to the establishment of the DART: one was the growth of US humanitarian assistance in the former Yugoslavia and the other was the inability of USG personnel on the ground to monitor this aid.

By November 1992, from $33 million in June 1992, US government commitments of assistance to the former Yugoslavia had jumped to $92 million. Much of this was driven by an October 1992 Congressional earmark of $55 million. Of these monies, $20 million were to be administered by OFDA and the remainder by RP. The impetus from the Hill was three-fold: first, to force the administration's hand into paying more attention to Bosnia and Kosovo; second, as a way for Congress and its staffers to get onto the playing field and hence into the information loop; third, to expedite assistance that would meet the growing humanitarian needs. There appears to have been no substantive contact between the congressional staff responsible for this earmark and relevant USG humanitarian advisors, either in Washington or in the field.[17]

On the ground, it was clear that the personnel necessary to monitor the aid were not available. The bulk of the US government aid money was intended to help victims of Belgrade's policies. But hand in hand with that policy, the Bush administration had manifested its displeasure with Yugoslavia by downgrading the US embassy in Belgrade to a simple diplomatic mission in May 1992. Both factors combined to make it unlikely that much US-sponsored aid would pass through Belgrade. The other US diplomatic office in the area was the consulate in Zagreb, which was in the process of being turned into an embassy. Its staff was focused on the daily political and military developments in Croatia but had very few administrative resources. Humanitarian aid, especially in this quantity and

[17] Interviews, Congressional staffer, State Department official.

under the watchful eye of Congress, was not something the Consulate wanted to take on.[18] There was a clear monitoring shortfall.

In the late fall of 1992, the State Department coordinator of the Humanitarian Working Group initiated a series of meetings in State in which it was decided that an OFDA DART was now called for. Particular emphasis was placed on the need for a self-sufficient unit that could look after its own administrative and logistical needs. The DART's stand-alone configuration made it very attractive to the State Department. The main attendees of these Humanitarian Working Group meetings were representatives of State/EEUR, OFDA (at acting director level) and the chargé of the Embassy Zagreb (an ambassador had not yet been appointed). These meetings in both Zagreb and Washington defined the role of the DART, the relationship to the embassy, and job titles and personnel.

In an Action Memorandum to the undersecretary of state for political affairs on 4 December 1992, the State Department proposed dispatching a DART. It emphasized the point that the increased funding mandated by Congress, as well as additional DOD contributions for the relief effort in the former Yugoslavia, would place a heavier burden on the new and already overextended embassy in Zagreb. With the Congressional $55 million earmark, the embassy "would not be in a position either to report actively or to provide acceptable oversight and accountability for the use of these resources."[19] The memorandum echoed the earlier meetings in insisting that the DART be a self-contained operation that would require as little administrative support from the embassy as possible. While the State Department in Washington, the Zagreb embassy-to-be and OFDA were the main contributors to this proposal; other governmental agencies also had to sign off. These were RP, IO (Bureau for International Organizations) and EEUR in the State Department, the Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Assistance (FHA)[20] — particularly the Food for Peace Office (FHA/FFP) — and ENI in USAID, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) in the Department of Defense.

Original Objectives and Staffing of the DART

Objectives:

The DART was given four clear objectives. It was to:

- Ensure increased oversight and accountability in the use of USG relief funds;

[18] US Department of State, Cable, 4 December 1992.

[19] US Department of State, Action Memorandum to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, 4 December 1992.

[20] The precursor bureau to the Bureau of Humanitarian Response (BHR).

- Offer an on-the-ground response capability as additional needs were identified;
- Provide detailed reporting on relief operations;
- Coordinate with US-EUCOM personnel in the field on civil-military affairs.[21]

Staffing:

The original staffing foresaw seven team-members. The titles included a director (team-leader), a deputy director, an information officer, a refugee coordinator, a field operations officer, a military liaison and an administration officer. State/RP was to provide the refugee officer. DOD/Global Affairs was to provide the military liaison. While the DART was by nature an OFDA creature, the original makeup mirrored the State Department's humanitarian working group, reflecting the consensus that had led to its creation.

The DART Team Leader: God or Peon?

The level of decentralization from OFDA Washington to the field varies with each DART. In the former Yugoslavia, the long duration of the DART and its strong team-leader contributed to a high level of decentralization of authority to the field. The autonomy of a DART very much revolves around the role of the team-leader, and whether (s)he ranks, in the eyes of OFDA's senior management, as a "god" or a "peon," to use the memorable characterization of an OFDA interviewee.[22] When viewed as a god, the team-leader makes the major decisions and OFDA/W provides support. If a peon, the team-leader is merely required to carry out OFDA/W directives to the field and decisions coming from higher up in USAID or other decision-making instances in the USG. Predictably, the role of a DART team-leader's role is somewhere in between with some DART leaders having more autonomy than others. Because the former Yugoslavia DART had such a long tenure (over four years) and had a fairly high profile due to US involvement in the conflict, the role of the team-leader increased in importance.

OFDA's choice for the team-leader slot was seen then as key to the success of the DART, and is still deemed so today. One OFDA official remarked that "there was a clear perception that success and failure lay in [the team-leader's] hands."[23] Tim Knight replaced the first DART leader, who was only available for a limited period. Knight was energetically recruited.

> There were two issues in choosing people for the field, their personal capacities and their availability. We really put a heavy recruitment drive on to Tim: 'do you want a red sports car?'

[21] US Department of State Action Memorandum, 4 December 1992.

[22] Interview, OFDA.

[23] Interview, OFDA.

We knew he was the right person for the job.[24]

The senior management of OFDA had great confidence in his abilities and knew him well from a previous assistant director position he had held in OFDA. Their trust in him encouraged them to give him — and the field — as much autonomy as they could. They discouraged OFDA/W's rank-and-file from questioning the DART's activities and its interpretation of administrative regulations. This was difficult for some in Washington who felt the team-leader was too much of a blue-eyed boy and that the DART team was operating without any oversight.[25]

Summary — Creation of the DART

As 1992 progressed, two things were becoming clear to Washington officials dealing with the Bosnian war. First, European-led negotiations were not succeeding in quelling the violence and the refugee flows, making stronger US involvement likely. Second, a humanitarian response was emerging as a viable option. In the eyes of many of these officials, the newly established Sarajevo airlift had avoided a humanitarian catastrophe. The UN — under the guise of UNHCR and UNPROFOR — was creating a logistical juggernaut which carried a promise of preventive protection, i.e., that the presence of international aid workers and their peace-keeper helpers would offer some protection to at-risk populations. Yet, even as official Washington paid increased attention to the provision of humanitarian aid, the US did not have the field presence that could provide intelligence and assistance to the aid effort, and this despite footing a large portion of the bill.

What is striking is the very deliberate manner in which the DART was created. While many of the individuals involved no longer remember the creation of the DART with any clarity (it sort of happened, is the common recollection), the written record showed that it was a process that was carefully planned and thought through to meet the needs of US policy regarding the Bosnian war. The many actors approached the problem in a strikingly coordinated fashion. All relevant agencies of the government were either involved in the planning process or kept abreast of the developments.

The objectives and staffing of the DART further demonstrate this point. The DART's mandate went beyond OFDA's grants or other responsibilities. While under the direction of OFDA, the DART was specifically tasked to monitor all US government relief assistance in the area. This included not only the programs of sister BHR offices such as Food for Peace, but also the humanitarian activities of the State Department (RP) and the Defense Department (Global Affairs). The original concept of a multi-agency team was intended to help prioritize US funding and alleviate bureaucratic rivalries — the DART succeeded in this. Finally, the DART aimed to foster links between field-based

[24] Interview, former OFDA senior management.

[25] Interviews, OFDA.

humanitarian intelligence and the US military that were becoming increasingly involved in the relief effort.

II. The Twin Roles of OFDA: Donor and Reporter

In exchange for its distinctive prerogatives — a separate Congressional allocation and the notwithstanding clause — OFDA performs two valuable functions for the US government. It provides funds to NGOs (mostly) and contractors (increasingly) to implement relief programs in disasters. It also gathers and processes information on these crises, and forwards it to other parts of both the executive and legislative branches of the US government. True to its role, OFDA performed both roles in former Yugoslavia. It was mostly the DART that carried out the two functions, but OFDA Washington was also involved in both activities. We start by reviewing the political, military and humanitarian context of the 1993 to mid-1994 period. We then examine the two roles in succession.

The Political, Military, and Humanitarian Context (beginning 1993 – mid-1994)

Over the winter and spring of 1993, the international community — still led on the ground by the UN-EC duo— was energetically pushing a peace plan that the two lead negotiators, former British Foreign Secretary David Owen for the EC and former US Secretary of State Cyrus Vance for the UN, had devised. The Vance-Owen peace plan, as it was known, was the only diplomatic initiative on the table. It called for the division of Bosnia into ten cantons, eight of which were to have an ethnic majority. The cantons were to be bound together, at least in name, under a weak federal structure. The Clinton administration, in the throes of assuming power in Washington, was uncomfortable with this ethnically based approach. But, while failing to support the Vance-Owen plan, and at times outright undermining it, the administration failed to project any alternative. The best it came up with was a six-point action plan, the highlights of which were an American commitment to deploy troops to implement a eventual peace settlement, and the initiation of air drops to besieged enclaves in eastern Bosnia. The Vance-Owen plan, eventually rejected by the Bosnian Serb 'parliament' in Pale in May 1993, carried an unfortunate unintended consequence. As Vance and Owen shopped their plan around the region, Bosnian Croat nationalists moved to solidify their control of the areas where the plan proposed an ethnic Croat majority. This triggered the outbreak of the Bosnian-Croat war and the ethnic cleansing of non-Croat populations from Croat-controlled areas: by late spring 1993, the war in Bosnia had become a three-way affair. Croat forces blocked the road to the coast to most commercial traffic, and the few trucks that made it through did so at the cost of expensive bribes. As summer ran into fall, people in the Bosnian government-held areas of central Bosnia, having run down their personal and communal reserves, found it increasingly hard to

meet their needs.

The international community faced the same access problem as the commercial sector — aid agencies, especially UNHCR, struggled to deliver assistance to increasing numbers of beneficiaries. With the prospect of a second winter and the increased caseload, the US stepped up its efforts to prod the Bosnian government and the Bosnian Croats — and Zagreb — toward a settlement. The result was the March 1994 Washington Agreement which established the Federation of Bosnia Herzegovina. Even if the cease-fire was never more than shaky and tensions continued to run high between the Bosnian government and the Croat authorities, the humanitarian situation nevertheless eased.

Meanwhile, the Bosnian Serb Army had settled on a mostly static strategy of besieging Bosnian government-controlled towns and territories. The strategy rested on a relentless war of attrition, the purpose of which was to exacerbate civilian misery so that people would either leave or the Bosnian leadership would sue for peace. Serb forces engaged in random shelling and continuous sniping. They restricted access for humanitarian aid convoys and disrupted public utilities, such as water, electricity and gas. Every now and then they would launch probing offensives, such as the one against Srebrenica in spring 1993, to gauge the resolve of the Bosnian defenders and that of the international community.

Faced with this situation, the West responded in late spring of 1993 with the 'safe area' concept: Sarajevo, Goražde, Žepa, Srebrenica, Tuzla and Bihać were placed under the protection of the United Nations. But the degree of international commitment to protect these safe areas remained unclear. Immediately, the Serbs began to test the resolve of the concept's implementation. Events boiled over when a shell exploded in Sarajevo's public market in February 1994, killing dozens. In rapid succession, NATO insisted on a heavy weapons exclusion zone around Sarajevo, a cease-fire was called, and the so-called Blue Routes Agreement opened the city for some travel and commerce.[26] But this was a short-lived respite. In April 1994, the Serbs launched an offensive on Goražde. The Blue Routes Agreement broke down in July amid mutual recrimination. The safe areas remained under imminent threat from the Serbs and faced their third winter under siege conditions.

A. OFDA as Donor

At key junctures, OFDA directly enabled and assisted many aid agencies to become active in the former Yugoslavia. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) both began operations in the former Yugoslavia with OFDA grants. For the NGOs — new and old, small and large, staid and militant, American and European — OFDA, at least to begin with, was a

[26] The 'blue routes' were UN-controlled roads that allowed commercial traffic to get to Sarajevo from the coast without going through Bosnian Serb checkpoints outside the city. The price of foodstuffs and other household goods in Sarajevo dropped dramatically following the arrival of the first commercial convoys.

free-spending, hands-off donor. (No grants were made directly to local NGOs; many of the agreements with foreign NGOs did, however, incorporate relationships with local NGOs.) In total, OFDA issued some 300 funding agreements totaling nearly $200 million, to nearly 50 NGOs from nine countries. The most successful organization, at least in terms of generating funds from OFDA, was IRC, which secured 70 agreements with OFDA, totaling over $40 million. Next were CRS and Mercy Corps International (MCI) with some 20 grants totaling over $20 million each.

The sectors in which OFDA-funded projects were those seen in most humanitarian disasters: food, sanitation, health, shelter. However, compared with more 'traditional' Third World emergency settings, all these sectors required radically different approaches due to the nature of the war, the climate, and the level of social and economic development. In nearly all cases, but with one large exception, the groundbreaking projects were originally funded by OFDA. Its role as a donor expanded greatly after the establishment of the DART. We review funding patterns year by year. We then examine two case studies that shed special light on the workings of the DART: the story of IRC in Bosnia (1992-1996), and that of OFDA in Kosovo (also 1992-1996).

Lack of Precedent for a Funding Strategy

Like the rest of the international aid community, neither OFDA/Washington nor the DART on the ground had any body of knowledge or personal experience in providing assistance to the victims of a European war. The most relevant precedent — the relief aid that flooded Europe in the aftermath of WWII — was nearly a half-century away. There was no operational institutional memory to speak of. The field officers that OFDA deployed individually throughout 1992 had not had the time or the resources to develop the expertise necessary for the DART to 'manage' the relief operations. The incoming DART would have to rely on other sources.

By March 1993, UNHCR was the main vehicle for assistance programs in former Yugoslavia. The refugee agency's operation had grown significantly since the early days of the war: it now comprised 22 field offices, with eight more planned, 217 international and 346 local staff, and 130 truck drivers.[27] If there was any centralized knowledge in the aid community, it should have been in UNHCR. But this was not the case. The shifting tides of the war, difficulties in communication and UNHCR's own focus on establishing a massive logistical humanitarian structure all worked against the development of an information base upon which to develop a donor strategy. Like other organizations, UNHCR did not have people with experience in this environment. They built their presence by transposing bureaucratic structures and procedures. Offices were neatly divided up into Program, Logistics and Administration sections. Outside visitors to UNHCR offices required

[27] Minear, L. et al., *Humanitarian Action in the Former Yugoslavia: The U.N.'s Role 1991-1993*, Refugee Policy Group and Brown University (Providence, RI), 1994: p. 27; U.S. Agency for International Development, OFDA Sitrep No. 9, 19 March 1993.

appointments to get past the guards at the door and, once inside, courage to move beyond the secretaries. These measures had some justification, but they inhibited interaction between UNHCR and the aid community at large, both in terms of information and analysis.

UNPROFOR proved equally unable to offer strategic markers. UNPROFOR in 1993 presented a confident mien of authority that masked an absolute ignorance of what was happening on the ground.[28] In practice, UNPROFOR's contribution to the overall relief operation was purely logistical. British sappers upgraded and maintained vital winter roads in Herzegovina and central Bosnia. French engineers worked on the utilities around Sarajevo. French air force personnel managed air traffic control and cargo movement at Sarajevo airport, where Norwegian Army movcon officers fastidiously registered passengers — mostly relief workers and journalists — who were shuttled to and from the airport in French and Egyptian armored personnel carriers (APCs). These were invaluable services. But beyond these, and aside from isolated exceptions, UNPROFOR offered little more than unreliable convoy escorts, 'passive protection' — i.e., an APC to hide in if a convoy came under fire[29] — and useless intelligence briefings.[30]

From an institutional standpoint, OFDA was knowledgeable and comfortable working with NGOs. The strategy vacuum in terms of donor options pushed OFDA's initial field officers, and subsequently the DART, to engage ever more closely with a growing and dynamic NGO community. The way the NGOs were working out their lack of experience in Yugoslavia — the innovative programming approaches they were trying — made them valuable to the DART.

The DART soon established a willingness to take programmatic risks by funding any organization that came forward with good ideas. It avoided the paternalistic stance common to many other major donors and developed close relations with the NGOs. The DART's willingness to listen was key, and was buttressed by a personal and collegial approach, which hinged greatly on the personalities of the different DART members. To the NGOs, they presented themselves as 'part of the club.' Whether they were funding an NGO or not, DART members did not establish a hierarchical separation of donor-versus-implementor. Many NGOs remember that the DART often stood up for them in dealing with OFDA/W, and even on occasion with their own head offices.[31]

OFDA's Funding Strategy

[28] One notable exception was the valuable interaction between the British civil-military Liaison Officer and the NGO-led Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Office (HACO) in Split.

[29] Cutts, M.: "The Humanitarian Operation in Bosnia, 1992-95: Dilemmas of Negotiating Humanitarian Access," Working Paper No. 8, Policy Research Unit, UNHCR (Geneva), May 1999: p. 8.

[30] Recollections of the Authors.

[31] Interviews, DART, NGO.

Over time, the DART gained in knowledge and local wisdom. While most projects were still instigated by the hundreds of NGO staff identifying needs and opportunities, DART personnel also began suggesting projects or pointing out unmet gaps. This section will attempt to describe how the original approach matured into a more directive one, giving some examples from the 1993-1994 period. For the sake of a more complete overview, we include here the years 1992 and 1996 though they are outside this chapter's timeframe.

In fiscal year 1992, OFDA funded only two NGOs in the former Yugoslavia, IRC and Médecins Sans Frontières (Holland). This number increased to 26 by 1996, but many of these were only receiving money from the Rapid Response Fund. The highest number of NGOs receiving non-RRF funding was 17 in 1995. The following is a year-by-year number-based analysis of OFDA's choice of organizations and program sectors.[32]

FY 1993: The First Congressional Earmark

In October 1992, Congress earmarked $20 million of OFDA's funds for the former Yugoslavia. Of this, $5 million was designated for Kosovo. As noted above, this was part of the impetus for the establishment of the DART. OFDA, however, did not wait for the establishment of the DART to begin obligating this money. It moved forward with NGOs in the field. IRC, already operational in Bosnia, was an obvious choice. They received $2.7 million by late November for winterization materials in central Bosnia. This was the only portion of the Congressional OFDA earmarking to be used in that first winter of the war. Another large grant of nearly $2 million dollars was made to CRS to jump-start its food distribution program in both Croatia and Bosnia. By 12 May 1993, the complete $20 million had been obligated.

Table I: Final Allocation of Congressional Earmark of Oct 1992:[33]

NGO	Date	Amount	Location	Program
IRC	20 Nov 1992	$2,739,487	Central Bosnia	Winterization
CRS	1 Jan 1993	$1,878,482	Croatia/BiH	Food
ARC	2 Feb 1993	$1,442,985	Croatia/BiH	Food/Hygiene
Brother's Brother	1 Mar 1993	$217,913	Croatia/BiH	Food/Stoves
Church World	1 Apr 1993	$2,138,397	Croatia/BiH	Food
IRC	9 Apr 1993	$2,524,069	BiH	Seeds

[32] The figures are taken from a database compiled by the Authors. The database is included in the annex.

[33] The information in the table and the accompanying paragraphs come from DART and other USAID documents. The total in the table comes to less than 20 million. The difference, $672,000, was allocated to DART administrative costs.

Feed the Children	10 Apr 1993	$250,000	Central Bosnia	Food
AICF	10 Apr 1993	$214,575	Sarajevo	Food/Hygiene
CRS	26 Apr 1993	$1,039,642	Croatia/BiH	Food
MCI	1 May 1993	$2,913,562	Kosovo	Food
IMC	3 May 1993	$706,515	Central Bosnia	Medical
Solidarités	10 May 1993	$1,146,290	Central Bosnia	Food
CRS	12 May 1993	$2,115,870	Kosovo	Food

The location breakdown was approximately (in US dollars):

Bosnia Herzegovina	7.6 million
Kosovo	5.0 million
Croatia and Bosnia	6.7 million

From a total of less than $4 million in 1992, 1993 witnessed a jump in funding to over $30 million. Food provision programs received nearly half the funding. With the inclusion of the agricultural seed programs and a large grant to ICRC, which included food parcels, food-related programs drew nearly three-quarters of the funds. Five million dollars went to CRS and Mercy Corps food programs in Kosovo — meeting the congressional earmark. The majority of the remainder went to programs in Bosnia. Croatia received smaller amounts. In Bosnia in 1993 no OFDA funds were programmed in Serb-controlled areas. This was not due to the US State Department's policy of providing no aid to Serb-held areas, but rather to the intransigence of local Serb authorities. For example, CRS had over $5 million of OFDA funds for programs in which activities for Banja Luka were a planned component, but the organization was not able to implement them because of difficulties with Bosnian Serb authorities.[34]

Aside from food-related programs, winterization and water-sanitation projects received the most funding. These were largely IRC programs for central Bosnia assisting collective centers for refugees and the local production of relief items. One innovative grant, just under a quarter of a million dollars, was made to Solidarités, a French NGO, to provide food and other relief materials in support of the Bosnian army-run horse-train over the Grbak mountain trail. This trail was the besieged Goražde pocket's only supply link for food and medicine, but also for weapons and ammunition. A DART field officer who had made an assessment visit to Goražde by crossing Serb lines on foot through the mountains, had encouraged an alliance between Solidarités, IRC, British Direct Aid (a logistics NGO) and UNHCR to pull off this highly sensitive operation.[35]

1994: Introduction of Cooperative Agreements and the Rapid Response Fund

[34] Interview, NGO official

[35] More on Bill Stuebner's remarkable and still controversial visit to Goražde in the section on "Perceptions of OFDA," below, and in our annex paper "Fighting the War with Humanitarian Aid."

In FY 1994, while total OFDA program expenditures remained in the $30 million range, the number of NGOs receiving grants declined from 14 to 11. With over 20 funding agreements, half of which were RRF, IRC received nearly 50 percent of all OFDA funds for the former Yugoslavia in that year. Unlike 1993, the funds were spread over a wider range of sectors. Food-related programs were down to about one third of the funding. Logistics and winterization became more prominent. Kosovo again received about $5 million but this now included medical and winterization components, with Doctors of the World becoming operational under an OFDA grant. Again the large majority of funds went to Bosnian government held-areas of Bosnia Herzegovina. Serb-held areas did receive some programming, as CRS began working in the Serb suburbs of Sarajevo and IRC distributed some seeds in Serb-controlled areas of Bosnia. In 1994, two new funding arrangements were introduced to the former Yugoslavia: cooperative agreements and the rapid response fund (RRF). Cooperative agreements are a contractual mechanism that requires increased involvement on the part of OFDA than would normally occur in the context of a grant. For example, in a $3.5 million multi-sectoral cooperative agreement that was issued to IRC for shelter, agriculture, food, winterization and hygiene, the DART was for more active in providing input for beneficiary targeting than had been the case with previous grants.

The rapid response fund (RRF) was designed to give the DART the ability to spend relatively small amounts of funds (up to $50,000) for "no-brainers [that] can get implemented right away" without reverting to Washington for authorization.[36] The genesis of the RRF was a visit to Sarajevo in July 1993 by two DART members when the city was without electricity, gas or potable water. They reported the urgency of the situation in a cable entitled, "Sarajevo — the end is at hand."[37] The lack of clean water was of particular concern. The DART took immediate action. They located a supply source for water purification tablets in Croatia. The DART team-leader called the OFDA deputy director in Washington at 2 am, requesting urgent authorization to purchase the water purification tablets. He got the go-ahead. This evolved into an informal agreement, which gave the DART the authority to have available funds in the field for small emergencies. The informal agreement became official in January 1994 during an OFDA action officer's visit to field. The authority to both commit funds and execute the procurement was then officially delegated to the field, allowing the DART to circumvent the usual bureaucratic procedures necessary in a grant or CA process. Because of the small amounts involved and the straightforward use of purchase orders for payment, the RRF operated pretty much without reference to OFDA Washington. It was an immediate success with 20 grants totaling nearly half a million dollars in 1994. IRC received 63 percent of the RRFs; they went mainly toward projects in Mostar and Sarajevo, for the most part urgent interventions in water and sanitation.

[36] Interview, former DART member.

[37] U.S. Agency for International Development, Embassy Zagreb Cable, 9 July 1993.

1995: Diversification

Total expenditures rose to $40 million in FY 1995. Food-related activities received about one third of the funds. The next largest component was now the multi-sectoral cooperative agreements, receiving nearly another third of the total cost. These were due to the three large agreements that OFDA drew up with IRC, CRS, and MCI. The sectors were winterization, agriculture, shelter, medical, hygiene, and water-sanitation. Kosovo's share increased to nearly $7 million, with the same sectors and implementing agencies as 1994. Geographically the NGOs had spread throughout the Federation and somewhat into *Republika Srpska*.[38] In March, OFDA provided MSF Belgium with nearly a million dollars for a multi-sector program of food, winterization, and shelter in the eastern enclaves. This was the first grant since the one to Solidarités in 1993 to focus solely on providing assistance to the besieged enclaves in eastern Bosnia. The distribution of funding was more egalitarian in 1995: IRC, while still the largest recipient, received less than 20 percent of the overall total; twelve NGOs received over $1 million each.

The RRF also increased to nearly 30 grants, for an approximate total of $600,000. The number of NGOs that received RRF grants, increased from 5 in 1994 to 13 in 1995. Feed the Children, CRS and Action Internationale Contre la Faim (AICF, now Action Contre la Faim — ACF) were the largest recipients. The largest RRF sectors were food, 43 percent, and hygiene at about 20 percent.

1996: the Emergency Repair Shelter Program

Fiscal year 1996 saw the largest yearly total to date since the beginning of the war — somewhat of a paradox as the war was now over. The Emergency Shelter Repair Program (ESRP) and the political goals that this program brought with it dominated spending in 1996.[39] This program and the related Municipal Infrastructure Program (MIS) covered over 50 percent of the $55 million spent by OFDA. Food-related programs were down to less than 10 percent in this first post-war year. Winterization and the multi-sectoral grants were the majority. Cooperative agreements were the funding mechanism used for the shelter program. This allowed the DART a high level of engagement with each NGO regarding the choice of location, the beneficiaries, and operational changes during the implementation of the programs. In FY 1996, thirteen NGOs received over $1 million each and five over $5 million.

There were 40 RRF grants for a total of over a million dollars. The number of NGOs granted RRFs jumped from 13 in 1995 to 19 in 1996. The largest RRF recipient as in 1994 was IRC receiving 24 percent of the funds, with World Vision, CARE and the German NGO SOS-Kinderdorf International

[38] Our information on quantifying the breakdown between Federation and RS funds is weak. The documentation for most grants that include Serb-held areas just indicates "Bosnia."

[39] The achievements and shortcomings of the ESRP are the detailed subject of chapter three of this report: "OFDA After Dayton: the Emergency Shelter Repair Program; The Political Repercussions of Reconstruction Aid."

receiving significant amounts as well. Winterization, sanitation-water and hygiene were the largest RRF sectors.

A Reactive Strategy

In the years 1992-95, OFDA provided very little direction to the grantee NGOs. There were no fixed criteria as to what sectors or geographical locations OFDA preferred.[40] The DART did not systematically or purposefully match up needs with NGOs willing to try and meet those needs. This reactive rather than proactive approach *was the key* to OFDA's technical and programmatic success in meeting its mandate — saving lives. There were several reasons for this.

The first lay in the fact that, through the NGOs, the DART had a far broader view of the problem. The ten to fifteen NGOs operational on the ground in 1992 represented hundreds of staff, foreign and national, who lived and worked throughout the region, and particularly in the war-zone, Bosnia. These people interacted with yet thousands more: beneficiaries, authorities, contractors, combatants, etc. This entry into the local community allowed a wide net to be cast to assess needs and devise possible courses of action in meeting them. The DART, based in Zagreb, had neither the numbers of people nor the geographical proximity to the problem areas to accomplish this. By relying on the NGOs, the DART benefited from their information networks.

Secondly, because the basic ideas for projects came from the NGOs planning to implement them, they were motivated to make every effort to complete the project. They had full ownership and a permanent incentive to try something new.

Finally, creativity was an essential component in this setting — a war zone in a northern, semi-industrialized, former Communist state. This was new ground for the humanitarian relief community. The best way to encourage creativity was for the DART to be ready to consider funding nearly any program from nearly any NGO.

The choice of DART personnel and the selection of funding mechanisms provided the necessary leverage for this reactive strategy. It developed into a powerful mechanism for the effective provision of relief assistance. The DART members' collegial approach towards NGOs, whether formally in meetings or grant negotiations, or informally 'after hours,' generated an atmosphere in which NGOs felt willing to venture creative proposals. The range of mechanisms — from grants to cooperative agreements to the RRF — also gave the DART flexibility in funding this creativity while limiting the ever-present risk of large-scale failure.

But it was through the cooperative agreement mechanism that OFDA began progressively exerting more direction and eventually control over the NGOs. The shelter program of 1996 saw the

[40] Aside from the earmarks — and these originated in Congress, not in OFDA.

transformation of NGOs from creative free agents into well-organized contractors bidding for as large a piece of the action as possible. To chart this transformation, we follow the path of IRC, the largest receiver of OFDA funding in the former Yugoslavia.

The International Rescue Committee

1992-1993: Innovation and Creativity

The role of the International Rescue Committee (IRC) as an information provider for OFDA carried two repercussions in the latter half of 1992. One, it gave IRC the depth and breadth of view to advise other organizations, including UNHCR and other NGOs. Two, it generated a level of trust in OFDA such that, when IRC was later to suggest innovative operational approaches (e.g., local production, seed distribution), OFDA did not second-guess the proposals.

In June 1992, OFDA broadened IRC's grant to include advising UNHCR on alternatives to the establishment of refugee camps in Croatia. IRC recommended the development of assistance programs for host families who were providing food and shelter to refugees, and the repair or upgrade existing public buildings that were being used as shelters. While OFDA did not fund refugee shelter programs immediately, the approach that IRC laid out and began implementing — known as collective centers — became the solution of choice for UNHCR and other donors. It has since become a mainstay of refugee response in the Balkans. The establishment of scores of refugee camps, as UNHCR and the Government of Croatia originally envisioned, never took place.

In mid-1992, IRC began looking into providing assistance to displaced persons within Bosnia Herzegovina. IRC initially considered focusing on sanitation and public health, its traditional sectoral strengths. But with other ongoing crises in Somalia, Sudan and Cambodia, IRC could not mobilize the required expertise fast enough. Instead of the technical specialists, out came 'generalists,' some with relief field experience (but, and this was a critical point, mostly in non-traditional emergency settings such as northern Iraq), others with a recent military background, and others with only university degrees. As an organization, IRC had by this point 8 to 10 months of former Yugoslavia experience. It had generated political and operational know-how from the public building repair program. This dramatically shortened the learning curve for the new arrivals. Largely ignorant of traditional responses to previous humanitarian crises, their thinking was not constrained by inappropriate precedents. The innovative, practical thinking that led to collective centers rather than refugee camps is a case in point. They also for the most part did not espouse the concept that foreigners must 'provide' as part of their operational philosophy. Thus, lacking in both experience and arrogance, the IRC personnel gravitated naturally towards local administrative and commercial structures to implement their programs.

One of the most constraining problems in the early part of the war in Bosnia was the lack of logistical

access to central Bosnia. Main roads were cut because of actual or threatened fighting. The alternative mountain roads were slow and mostly inaccessible to local commercial vehicles. These difficulties stimulated IRC to the use of local purchase and local production programs in late 1992. Producing materials closer to the people that needed them reduced the logistical needs for transporting these goods. The positive economic spin-off for the local community and the engagement of Bosnians in helping themselves were secondary motivations. Six months later, in the spring of 1993, local production was an accepted practice, and donors were encouraging NGOs to incorporate it in their programs.[41]

A second aspect of IRC's work carried over from its previous facilitating role: the cooperation with other NGOs as they appeared on the scene. This happened in several ways. IRC was the recipient, not only of significant funding, but also of a high volume of in-kind donations. IRC's ability to implement its funded programs in a timely manner began to suffer.[42] To lessen the load, IRC began offering some of both its locally produced goods and the in-kind donations to other NGOs for them to distribute. This encouraged communication and dialogue within the NGO community as NGOs field staff exchanged information on where they had been and what needed to be done. At the same time IRC was developing its logistical network with trucks and warehouses, and it began to make these services available to other NGOs. In some cases this helped other NGOs become established and develop credibility with local communities and authorities while their own sources of funding came on line. Showing its understanding of the situation, OFDA funded these and other attempts to co-operationalize programs. IRC staff also manned the Humanitarian Action Coordination Office (HACO) in Split, an NGO initiative that fostered some of the operational collaboration which UNHCR, as lead-agency, had failed to encourage.

IRC made its biggest impact in the Bosnian government-controlled areas of central Bosnia. With offices and warehouses in the central Bosnian towns of Zenica, Tuzla, Jablanica, and Vitez, IRC implemented over $100 million dollars of programs from 1992 to 1996. Several factors made central Bosnia a focus of IRC's operation. The combination of the influx of displaced persons from territories cleansed by Serb and, increasingly, by Croat forces, coupled with the Serb-Croat commercial blockade of the road to the coast, led to a severe deterioration in the humanitarian situation, especially in government-held areas. Yet, despite the dire conditions, the situation was more propitious to an innovative use of local resources than, say Sarajevo. Unlike the besieged

[41] Report of the US Humanitarian Assessment, March 1993.

[42] In that first winter of the war IRC received donations of clothing both new and used, medicine both in and out of date, and a variety of other items. One of these was a 15-ton consignment of Pop-Tarts, thought to have been funded by singer Michael Jackson. At first these were considered somewhat of a joke, not to mention a definite logistical liability. But they quickly became a highly valued commodity among the local population. They were well packaged and could withstand transport. They did not need to be cooked: for people without electricity or other forms of energy, camping out in dank collective centers, they were easy to use. Mothers were grateful to be able to give their children something sweet and brightly packaged. And newly arrived NGOs were grateful to have something to offer while they got their operation up and running.

capital, the areas in question were often large and included land, natural resources and machinery. What were lacking were key productive materials, such as fuel or seeds, and economic incentives, such as markets. IRC was able to help production and 'bridge' market-gaps by using large chunks of OFDA funding. Furthermore, IRC's decision-making was field-driven, with no second-guessing from headquarters: growing humanitarian needs were met with new programs.

1993-1994: Growth, Expenditures and Administrative Muddles

OFDA was not IRC's only source of funding. In 1993, UNHCR, the State Department's Bureau for Refugee Programs (RP — BPRM after 1993), USAID's Bureau for Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States (USAID/ENI), and the Soros Bosnia fund all started pouring money into IRC programs and those of other NGOs.[43] The annual worldwide budgets of some NGOs, including IRC and other long running, well-established organizations nearly doubled in one year, largely due to their Bosnia program. With the local production of relief materials as the key component of IRC's programs, the main 'relief' input from IRC in the field was the cash that IRC used to buy locally produced clothes, stoves, and household goods. IRC's field offices could simply not get cash fast enough. As grants poured into IRC's Bosnia account, everything was done to streamline procedures and accelerate the transfer of monies to the field so that relief materials could be produced faster. Staff structures reflected the priority on programming: program staff far-outnumbered accountants and grant administrators. The latter were overwhelmed with reporting and tracking the grants and the funds. The humanitarian crisis was never-ending. New needs arose constantly, sometimes on a daily basis: a refugee influx or a population evacuation here, a tightening of a blockade or an offensive there. New needs triggered new grants, often before the old ones could be tidied up and accounted for. But by the middle of 1993, IRC was headed into an organizational and administrative muddle. The great advantages of autonomy in the field — fresh eyes in a crisis, a steadfast focus on meeting the needs of war-affected Bosnians, programs and policy defined at 'the coal face,' flexibility and swiftness — had come back to bite: reports were late, budgets were mixed up, accounts were unclear. Over the next year, while remaining the largest and most programmatically diverse NGO operation in Bosnia, IRC struggled to muster and apply the resources — both human and financial — necessary to donor-required administration and grant-management.

By late 1994 several other NGOs had the size and operational infrastructure to attempt a major program in Bosnia. CRS, Mercy Corps, and UMCOR were some of those funded by OFDA. Other OFDA grantees like AICF and Solidarités attempted to avoid the growth trap and maintained targeted, effective, albeit less ambitious programs. IRC continued with its important agricultural programs (seeds) and local production programs. And in Sarajevo, spurred on by INTERTECT (the small Dallas-based consulting firm run by the innovative relief expert Fred Cuny) and with funding

[43] International financier George Soros donated $50 million to UNHCR for NGO programs in an effort to pressure UNHCR into streamlining its funding of NGOs. The trust fund was administered in part by UNHCR, but with technical advice from the experienced and well-respected relief expert Fred Cuny.

from the Soros Foundation, IRC moved forward with groundbreaking municipal gas and water programs, designed and managed by Cuny.[44] Nevertheless, the field had broadened.

1995: Fears of Donor Fatigue

By early 1995, the humanitarian activities in most of Bosnia had settled into a routine, and IRC had become part of it. Considerable difficulties still remained in Herzegovina with the HVO, in Bihać, in Sarajevo and in the eastern enclaves. But the unnerving feeling has settled in that the war could well carry on indefinitely as a low-intensity conflict — low-intensity, but high-maintenance. The only constraints to humanitarian action were nascent signs of donor fatigue. For some time, UNHCR had been talking of winding down operations. The NGOs were again stirring, as they had in the summer of 1992, but this time, the outlook was different. The NGOs felt threatened by one another. Instead of seeking out virgin territory — for instance meeting unmet needs in eastern Bosnia, banging at the door in besieged Goražde, or on the advocacy front threatening to stop fronting for Western inaction — many organizations concentrated on maintaining their position in the face of uncertain donor resources. No longer working together to overcome the odds of war, NGOs — IRC among them — were now hoarding knowledge and experience. They focused on their own institutional needs and began to coyly ask donors how they could best meet theirs.

OFDA in Kosovo

With the steady rise to power of Slobodan Milošević in Serbia in the late 1980s, the economic, political and human rights situation of Kosovo's Albanian inhabitants — who formed up to 90 percent of the province's two million people — quickly deteriorated. From the early 1990s on, Kosovo played a paradoxical role for OFDA , both at the heart of its involvement in the Balkans and peripheral to it. Kosovo was central inasmuch as the situation there fueled much of the early concern over stability in the Balkans, and drove the October 1992 Congressional allocation that was central to getting DART-funded activities in the region up and running. (Today, Kosovo's centrality also has an after-the-fact tang to it, mirroring the well-worn conventional wisdom that the Balkan wars would end where they started: in Kosovo. The international community — and OFDA with it — has come full circle in the decade that it has been trying to deal with the murderous policies of Milošević). But at the same time, Kosovo — hard of access, separated from the DART's center of operational gravity along the Zagreb-Zenica-Sarajevo-Split axis, and still part of a sovereign nation — remained peripheral to the DART's day-to-day activities.

Kosovo in the late 1980s, early 1990s

[44] We examine IRC/INTERTECT's Sarajevo water program in detail in the second annex paper "Fighting the War With Humanitarian Aid."

In keeping with the general time-line of the study, this paper reflects on OFDA's involvement in the province and the general situation in Kosovo before the outbreak of full-scale fighting in 1998. The acceleration in the oppression of the Albanians in Kosovo began in the late 1980s when Milošević, who had risen to the top of the Communist leadership in Serbia, dismissed leading Albanian politicians and forced a change in the Yugoslav constitution which greatly reduced Kosovo's autonomous status.[45] The Serbian police crushed popular demonstrations and a state of emergency was declared. Serbian authorities passed and enacted a law on labor relations that discriminated against the Albanian majority and forced 80,000 people out of their jobs. Throughout the 1990s, while all of Yugoslavia experienced economic difficulties, Kosovo, already the poorest region in Yugoslavia, suffered the worst.

Belgrade's grip on the Albanians of Kosovo pervaded all aspects of their lives. The Serbian takeover of the medical care system resulted in increased maternal and infant mortality among the Kosovo Albanians. Most Albanian doctors and nurses were dismissed or left Kosovo in 1990. Many Albanians did not have access to the state medical system because they did not have the required health card. Albanians also did not trust the Serbian-run hospitals which they believed were purposefully trying to harm and sterilize them, especially in gynecology, pediatrics and surgery. It was estimated that 85 percent of Albanian women in Kosovo were giving birth without medical attention.[46] "With some 55,000 children then being born annually in Kosovo, cases of polio, tetanus and infectious diseases were on the increase."[47] An incident in 1990 both heightened and symbolized Albanian feelings of paranoia, when thousands of Albanian children suddenly experienced stomach pains, headaches and nausea, leading Albanians to believe their children were being poisoned in the schools.[48] Whether the children had been poisoned or not, the incident increased fears that the Serbian state medical system was conspiring against the Albanian population.

General living standards were also decreasing. Various measures passed by the Serbian assembly in early 1990s were meant to bolster the Serbian community in Kosovo and further restrict Albanian lives. Houses were built for Serbs returning to Kosovo, funds were given for investment in majority-Serb areas, new municipalities were created for Serbs, Albanians were encouraged to work in other parts of Yugoslavia and family planning was introduced for Albanians.[49] By 1994, 20 percent of the

[45] Milošević's crackdown in favor of the local Serbs in Kosovo, an area in which he had heretofore never expressed any interest, was key to his ouster of Ivan Stambolić and the consolidation of his position at the head of the Serbia. This is clearly explained in Malcolm, N.: *Kosovo, A Short History*, New York University Press (New York), 1998, pp. 341ff.

[46] Vickers, M.: *Between Serb and Albanian*, Columbia University Press (New York), 1998, p. 274.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Malcolm, *Kosovo...*: p. 345.

[49] Malcolm, *Kosovo...*: p. 346.

Albanian population was dependent on humanitarian aid.[50]

The Establishment of Aid Organizations in Kosovo

From 1992 the fear grew that conflict between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo was imminent and could spread to other regions of the Balkans, creating tens of thousands of refugees. Several NGOs established a presence in or near Kosovo to deal with the current and potential crises. The Mother Teresa Society (MTS), a locally based aid organization, was the only NGO that was officially permitted by the Serbian authorities to work in Kosovo. All other humanitarian organizations worked mostly with or through the MTS to implement their programs and deliver supplies.

OFDA spent somewhere between 22 and 30 million dollars in Kosovo from 1993 through 1997 which was a little over 10 percent of its total expenditure in the region. The majority of that money was granted to Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Doctors of the World (DOW) and Mercy Corps International (MCI). CRS established an office in Macedonia in 1992 from which they ran programs in both Kosovo and Macedonia. Because Serbian authorities only officially recognized one NGO in Kosovo — MTS — and could expel or refuse access to other NGOs for failing to register with the local authorities, CRS and other NGOs had to be cautious when traveling into Kosovo. In practice they experienced few problems in crossing the Macedonian border but were careful not to keep permanent international staff in Priština. MCI's administrative offices for Kosovo were in Zagreb and Budapest until they opened an office in Priština in 1994. DOW also set up shop in Priština in 1994.

A few other international bodies had established a presence in Kosovo, but most did not last long. At the London peace conference in August 1992, Milan Panić, the short-lived Yugoslav Prime Minister, agreed to the sending of monitors from the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) to Kosovo. Milošević expelled them one year later.[51] The French NGO EquiLibre was also thrown out of the country at about that time.

UNHCR and ICRC were also active in Kosovo. ICRC had grown concerned with the oppressive situation in Kosovo in the late 1980s and pressed the Belgrade government to allow them to visit political prisoners. In 1990 they began visiting detention centers run by the Ministry of Justice.[52] Looking for local partners, UNHCR and ICRC turned to the local Red Cross, but soon learned not to trust them as an impartial source of information. When CRS began working in Kosovo they were told to steer clear of the local Red Cross.[53]

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[50] Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian*: p. 276.

[51] Little, A. and L. Silber: *The Death of Yugoslavia*, Penguin Books (London), 1995, p. 289.

[52] Mercier, *Crimes Without Punishment...*: p. 12.

[53] Interview, NGO.

OFDA 's Involvement in Kosovo

The bulk of OFDA funds to Kosovo were granted to Mercy Corps International (MCI). Mercy Corps helped develop the Mother Teresa Society as an organization, and worked with them to establish a network of locally based individuals who would act as points of contact in their communities.[54] MCI completed programs of hygiene, agricultural assistance, food distribution and winterization. In addition to a distribution network, MTS established an unofficial parallel health system for the Albanian population. The Mother Teresa Society was the main humanitarian distribution network in Kosovo: a relationship with them was key to maintaining operations in Kosovo.

With MCI receiving the majority of OFDA's Kosovo funds, CRS and Doctors of the World also had large projects in the region funded by OFDA. CRS ran food, hygiene and medical distribution programs and a sanitation project. DOW focused on tuberculosis-control efforts and improving maternal and infant care. Their programs attempted to work with both the unofficial Albanian and the official FRY ministries of health and tried with little success to foster communication between the two systems. DOW for instance, with OFDA funds, ran an anti-TB clinic in the city of Uroševac (Ferizaj), distributed food and hygiene parcels to those receiving TB treatment, donated material and gave training to the state-run Priština Medical Center, the Mother Teresa Birth Center in Priština and the Uroševac-Ferizaj birth center. Kosovo was DOW's largest program site.

With a majority of their funds going to projects in Bosnia, a country at war, the DART's attention was largely focused there. Logistical difficulties also prevented the DART from being more active in Kosovo. Serbian authorities did not want US government officials sniffing around the province, and made getting a visa a slow process. It is unclear how supportive the State Department was. OFDA made two trips to Kosovo, one in 1993 and another in the 1996. Unable to get visas to go through Serbia, two members of the DART team on the first occasion and a Centers for Disease Control epidemiologist on the second went through Macedonia to Kosovo with CRS. This move ruffled the feathers of the US embassy in Belgrade, who wanted the DART to travel through official channels, which of course meant not traveling at all.[55]

In 1995 Croatia launched its offensive to recapture the Kninska Krajina, forcing hundreds of thousands of Croatian Serbs out of their homes. In an effort to 'improve' the population balance in Kosovo, Serbian authorities announced that some of the Krajina Serbs would be resettled in Kosovo. Many of them had no desire to relocate to the poorest and most densely populated region of the former Yugoslavia where, furthermore, they would be in the minority.[56] Nevertheless, 19,000 Krajina

[54] Interview, NGO.

[55] Interview, OFDA.

[56] Malcolm, *Kosovo...*: p. 353.

Serbs refugees were brought to collective centers in Kosovo, further exacerbating the tense situation between Kosovo Serbs and Albanians.

The DART visited some of the collective centers where the Krajina Serbs were being housed during their 1996 trip. They noted in their assessment that the Serbs were not faring much better than the Albanians: they were living in crowded conditions without adequate sanitary facilities.[57] Congress earmarked six million dollars for Kosovo in 1996. These funds went to support MCI, DOW, CRS and Children's Aid Direct (CAD) programs to provide the Albanian population and Serb refugees with food, clothing, stoves, hygiene supplies, maternal and infant health equipment, obstetric/gynecological care, and basic repairs to the collective centers.

In 1996, the Kosovar Albanians' hopes that the Dayton peace conference would, if not resolve, at least address the issue of the status of Kosovo were dashed. The international negotiators did not want to risk losing Milošević's support for the Bosnian peace agreement: the final document made no mention of Kosovo and the removal of UN sanctions on Serbia and Montenegro was not made contingent on a solution to the Kosovo problem.[58] This gave support to hard-line elements in the Kosovar Albanian society who claimed that President Rugova's non-violent tactics had brought them nothing. Despite abundant dire predictions for the future of Kosovo, European and American governments paid little attention to the province until violence broke out in the winter of 1997-1998. As a result, the situation was much worse in Kosovo than when OFDA first became involved in the region in 1992.

Summary — OFDA as Donor

Both OFDA in Washington and the DART lacked prior experience in dealing with sustained, widespread violence in a European, semi-industrialized environment with a centralized economy and a northern temperate climate. Driven by the critical October 1992 earmark, the DART embarked on a policy of giving free rein to NGO creativity. The result was an extraordinary development of NGO activity out of the Adriatic port of Split to Central Bosnia and Sarajevo. Themselves confronted with a totally new situation and terrible suffering, the NGOs coordinated naturally, pooling resources, experience and ideas. The DART consistently supported innovative ventures that sought to respond to the needs on the ground. This support was key to its success. As a result, the DART was able to ride the NGO wave of successful needs-driven programs and ground-based information. This in turn was key to the DART's rise to glory as the only perceived effective element of USG policy in the Bosnian quagmire. New funding mechanisms — the quasi-contractual cooperative agreement and the field-managed rapid reaction fund — allowed the DART increased flexibility. But they also led the

[57] U.S. Agency for International Development, OFDA Situation Report #1, "Former Yugoslavia - Complex Emergency," 4 December 1996.

[58] Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian*: p. 287.

DART, which was becoming more experienced and confident, to become more directive. This trend increased through 1994 and 1995, culminating with OFDA's post-Dayton shelter program.

B. OFDA's Reporting Role

Reporting was, with grant-making, one of the DART's two main functions. This section will deal with OFDA's written reports. (The DART also advised and reported orally; this will be addressed in the section on relations with other organizations.) OFDA's written reports fall into four categories: field reports, field sitreps, Washington sitreps, and assessments.

Field Reports

During the latter half of 1992, following IRC's shift away from reporting, a series of OFDA field officers were stationed in Zagreb to cover relief activities in the former Yugoslavia. Their task was to examine the programmatic, logistical and security aspects of the international humanitarian relief operation, monitor the end use of US contributions to the relief effort, and make recommendations to the US government and UNHCR regarding relief needs, operational issues, and priorities. The field reports are by nature much stronger and more advocacy-oriented than the Washington situation reports. A pervasive sense of urgency, even frustration comes through. For example, an internal memorandum on assistance options in August 1992 states:

> The worst-case scenario for the coming winter months paints a grim picture. Even if a cease-fire were declared today, the emergency needs in the former Yugoslavia will be enormous.[59]

Today, unfortunately, few of the reports of these pre-DART field officers can be found.[60]

One surviving report is particularly noteworthy (we also discuss this report in our paper on OFDA's involvement in 1990-1992). This is a field officer's final report, written in early December 1992, at the end of his four-month stint in the region.[61] In his report, the field officer laid out his conclusion

[59] USAID/FHA Memorandum: "Options for Assistance to the Former Yugoslavia," 11 August 1992.

[60] Most reports sent to OFDA/W and any reactions or response to them appear to have been lost or destroyed when USAID moved out of the State Department building in 1997.

[61] Brennan, T.: "Final Report on Humanitarian Assistance in Bosnia-Herzegovina," USAID/Office of US Foreign Disaster Assistance, 7 December 1992.

that the Serb authorities were committing genocide on the Bosnian Muslim population.[62] He went further and claimed that the US and UN responses to the crisis actually facilitated the implementation of genocide.[63] He then pointed out that the international community had a moral and legal obligation to punish massive human rights abuse and prevent further abuses from happening. He recommended a much stronger US-led international response including the use of force to stop massacres, protect the population through safe areas, and ensure the delivery of aid. Regarding humanitarian relief operations, he found UNHCR's effort to be ineffective and hampered by its willingness to negotiate with hard-line Bosnian Serb authorities and appease them. He singled out as particularly objectionable UNHCR's practice of consigning 23 percent of all aid coming into Sarajevo (the 'allocation' for the population of so-called Serb Sarajevo (*Srpsko Sarajevo*) to the Bosnian Serb authorities. He called for UNHCR to cease negotiating access to Sarajevo and other towns, claiming that this consensual approach had failed to deliver sufficient quantities of aid and reduce levels of conflict. He also made practical recommendations, calling on UNHCR to immediately reestablish rail links as its main mode of transport. About one month after it was submitted to OFDA, the report found its way to the front page of the *New York Times*.[64] Interestingly, the *Times* chose to play up the technical — and more mundane — criticisms of the relief operation rather than the far more incendiary charge that the US was an accomplice to genocide.[65]

The archive of available documents improves as one gets into the time-period following the establishment of the DART.[66] There was extensive reporting on field trips, assessments, and coordination meetings. The documentation also records debates on specific topics, such as the efficacy of airdrops and the situation in the eastern enclaves. There is a continual and systematic attempt to look forward with predictions, and recommendations for action. The DART succeeded in pushing its analysis beyond the predictable and easily accessible international circles in Zagreb. Information sources were varied and widespread — UN and NGO field representatives, both private and official Bosnians and Croatians, foreign government sources and international and local press

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[62] Brennan, "Final Report...," *passim*.

[63] Ibid., p. 3.

[64] "U.S. Finds Serbs Skimming 23 Percent of Bosnian Aid," M. Gordon, *New York Times*, 13 January 1993: p. A1.

[65] We do not know if this was because only some of the report was leaked to the newspaper, or for some other reason. Nonetheless, the fact that Brennan's report had now become front-page news made it too hot to handle within USG circles, even by people sympathetic to Brennan's conclusions (interview, OFDA senior management).

[66] OFDA/W's documentary archive, aside from financial records, appears to have inexplicably disappeared. The team was informed that, during USAID's move from the State Department Building to the Ronald Reagan Building in late 1997, much of OFDA Washington's documentation was sent to US government archives. When the team attempted to access this documentation we were informed that Archives had destroyed them. The team is grateful, for reasons of historical record, that the DART had the foresight to maintain and then ship to Washington the records they had generated in the former Yugoslavia during the 1993-1997 period. Nonetheless, nearly all documentary evidence that originated in OFDA/W has apparently been destroyed.

accounts. For instance, in a cable reporting on a UN/NGO meeting in Split in which UNHCR announced their decision to halt convoy deliveries, the cable described the tensions between the UN, UNPROFOR and NGOs on this issue.[67] The many difficulties of organizing relief operations come through with clarity in many cables. For example, in April 1994, the DART expressed frustration with UNHCR and the HVO on new customs regulations imposed by the "so-called government of Herceg-Bosna," stating that "UNHCR acquiescence has had the effect of legitimizing HVO control of any and all crossing points from the Dalmatian coast into the sovereign territory of B-H."[68]

Just as with the field officer's report on genocide, the DART also took a broad view of what fell under the purview of 'humanitarian' reporting. In one instance, they visited the detention camps that the Bosnian Croats had set up around Mostar, and reported on them.[69] In another instance, in the summer 1993, a DART trip report to Sarajevo was titled, "Sarajevo — The End is at Hand."[70] In this report the DART outlined in detail the Serb military blockade of Sarajevo — the restricted access to food, water and electricity — as well as the security issues. According to the *Washington Post*, this cable was instrumental in stimulating a stiffer US response, including the threat of air strikes, which subsequently pressured the Serb leadership into easing their blockade.[71]

Frustration, and even at times outrage, is a recurring feature in the DART's field reporting. For instance, in describing a piece of good news related to a coordinated effort to get assistance into Goražde, one report concludes with: "Overall, this example of NGO and UNHCR cooperation was a great morale boost for an increasingly cynical DART/Zagreb field representative."[72]

In the dark days of late 1993, as Sarajevo, Bihać and the eastern enclaves entered a second winter of siege and the Croat blockade on central Bosnia tightened, another final report of a DART member presented the situation as dismal. The DART report did not mince words.

> The humanitarian relief effort has failed in central and eastern Bosnia... The social fabric in Bosnian controlled areas of central Bosnia is disintegrating... Words of support are no longer of

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[67] U.S. Department of State, "OFDA DART Situation Report No. 33," Embassy Zagreb Cable, 21 February 1993.

[68] U.S Department of State, "New Customs Regulations Imposed by the So-called Government of Herzeg-Bosnia," Embassy Zagreb Cable, 21 April 1994.

[69] U.S. Department of State, "DART report: Mostar -- Is there hope?," Embassy Zagreb Cable, 19 May 1993.

[70] U.S Department of State, "Sarajevo -- The End is at Hand," Zagreb Embassy Cable, 9 July 1993.

[71] "Grim Balkans Outlook Affected U.S. Position; Policy Based on Emotion, Not Broad Principle," D. Williams, *Washington Post*, 19 August 1993, p. A1. The cable also led to the creation of the DART's rapid reaction fund (see below).

[72] U.S. Department of State, "The Goražde Pipeline: NGOs and UNHCR Cooperate to Feed a City Under Siege," Embassy Zagreb Cable, 31 March 1993.

> any use... Actions that are initiated as a result will probably be ineffective, since they will come too late to make much of a difference... DART/Zagreb will continue to report on the situation and work to save as many lives as possible.[73]

The definition of "humanitarian" goes well beyond relief. In late 1993, while the situation in Bosnia was indeed difficult, it was clear to Bosnians and aid workers alike that there would be no massive winter mortality, no 'dead babies in the snow' — they had the experience of the 1992-1993 winter to go on. Yet the DART was dead on in its assessment of the humanitarian situation, but what its report talks about is Bosnia's "social fabric," in other words the country's long term prospects. And they were indeed dismal.

DART Situation Reports (Sitreps)

An information officer was on the original DART staff. With the start-up of the DART in December 1992, situation reports began coming in from the field. These sitreps were purposeful and regular, and provided a good counterbalance to the more ad hoc DART field reports. From the establishment of the DART through to the Dayton Agreement, they kept to a fairly consistent format. The sitreps came out nearly every day until after Dayton, at which point they were put out about three times a week. Together, they provide a relief aid history of the war. The bulk of the field sitreps was made up of numbers on the amount of relief assistance entering Bosnia. This included convoys from Metković, Zagreb or Belgrade, the Sarajevo airlift, and the airdrops. Obstacles to the provision of aid were a key component of this section, such as obstruction by military or political leaders, or fears of a breakdown in the food pipeline. Field sitreps also included narratives that were either summaries of other field reports or reports on specific issues which did not warrant a complete cable on their own.

The sitreps had a day-to-day feel to them. The reader is caught up in the daily obstacles which the humanitarian community faced in the former Yugoslavia. The DART sitreps provided a daily morning smart pill to the reader dealing with Bosnia, whether in Washington or elsewhere. This was what made their attraction: they provided the fresh layer of detail upon which key decisions were made.[74]

OFDA Washington Situation Reports

The Washington sitreps circulated widely throughout the US government. They focused on the status of fighting in the region, and levels of relief assistance provided by the US government, NGOs and the international community. They were not appeals for action. They were more a chronology of the crisis and a catalogue of the assistance undertaken. However, the sitreps also conveyed a sense of the

[73] U.S. Department of State, "Farewell to Bosnia," Embassy Zagreb Cable, 15 December 1993.

[74] Interviews with USAID, US State Department and Congressional officials.

needs. For example, in reporting on the United Nations' shelter program in 1992, a situation report stated, "The need to provide adequate shelter throughout the former Yugoslavia has become a top priority with the onset of winter not far off."[75]

The target audience appears to be USG officials who did not have extensive knowledge (or interest) in the former Yugoslavia but who required a periodic basic update. The sitreps were professionally written — the well-packaged information was intended for public disclosure. But it was also the only place where interested government officials could get an overall summary of everything the USG was doing on the humanitarian front in the former Yugoslavia. The value of these sitreps was clear from the beginning. In June 1992, in the course of a press briefing, a reporter questioned the State Department spokesperson on what options the administration was considering to relieve the siege of Sarajevo. The answer was a litany of USG-sponsored humanitarian initiatives, culled directly — and read verbatim — from OFDA's very first sitrep, issued the day before.[76] OFDA information professionals did not realize the extent of their influence.[77] One interviewee who was closely involved in the information work of the ex-Yugoslavia DART told us:

> OFDA sit-reps went out near and far. We had very little feedback as to the value or lack of this info to the recipients. It would be very useful to see what your study turns up in finding whether State, DoD, or others used OFDA sit-reps.[78]

Throughout the time of OFDA's involvement in the former Yugoslavia, there was no attempt to chart the impact or the usefulness of its reporting in terms of advocacy within the Government.[79]

Assessments

Beyond their field assessment schedule, DART members also joined in larger interagency assessments. Being operational on the ground, the DART was often asked to help organize these trips, either in part or in their entirety. Some of these assessments, and the subsequent treatment of the information the assessment teams came back with, marked key turning points in the international

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[75] U.S. Agency for International Development, OFDA Situation Report No. 6, "Former Yugoslavia - Civil Strife" (Washington, D.C.), 9 October 1992.

[76] U.S. Department of State, Regular Briefing, Margaret Tutwiler, 9 June 1992 (transcript).

[77] Interviews, OFDA.

[78] Interview, OFDA.

[79] For instance the information support unit was surprised to find out from the Authors just how far the OFDA reporting had permeated the US government. They were not aware of the example cited above of the State Department briefing. This is not necessarily bad. If OFDA were to be constantly polling the consumers of their information, it may start to tailor its information to the political needs of its consumers rather than presenting its view based upon reports from the field.

community's response to the war. This was the case of at least two major assessments in which OFDA played an important role, and which we will examine here. The first was a reappraisal of humanitarian assistance by the in-coming Clinton administration. The second was a joint UK-US mission to jump-start peace in the spring of 1994 with the restoration of critical infrastructure to Sarajevo.

The 1993 Interagency Humanitarian Assessment[80]

Early in 1993, the newly elected Clinton administration dispatched a humanitarian assessment team to Bosnia and Herzegovina as part of the six-point "series of new steps that President Clinton has decided to take with regard to the former Yugoslavia."[81] Clinton's six steps for Bosnia included tougher economic sanctions, the creation of a war crimes tribunal, the commitment that the US would field ground troops to supervise a peace agreement if one was reached, and the appointment of a US special envoy. At the end of February 1993, attempts by the EC and UN to get the Serbs to agree to the Vance-Owen plan were faltering. The administration exhibited little support for the plan, questioning the morality of the Vance-Owen plan and its practicality.

As the mission began, the US was energetically pushing to begin the airdrop of relief supplies into the eastern Bosnian enclaves. In announcing these airdrops, President Clinton said they were "strictly for humanitarian purposes" and would be carried out "without regard to ethnic or religious affiliation."[82] Thus, this first innovative move by the Clinton administration followed directly in the footsteps of all previous UN and US approaches to the Bosnia conflict: the airdrops were to be consensual. They were only initiated upon agreement with the forces on the ground, the very same forces causing the human misery which the airdrops were intended to alleviate — the Bosnian Serb military. The interagency humanitarian assessment mission deployed to the field in the wake of this decision.

The team members were largely members of the Interagency Working Group on Humanitarian Assistance in Former Yugoslavia chaired by the State Department. These included officials from the State Department, USAID (FHA and OFDA), and the Department of Defense, and were joined by staff from the embassies in Zagreb and Belgrade, as well as specialists from US European Command (USEUCOM) and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). These people were not

[80] We drew our information from interviews, as well as from two executive summaries of the report: one from 22 March 1993 and another from 19 April 1993, a 9 March 1993 draft of the report, and an article in the *New York Times* dated 11 April 1993. We were unable to locate a final report of the assessment. OFDA does not have a copy. Assessment team members no longer have copies. We are not sure one exists. The account in the *New York Times* still speaks only of an executive summary and a draft report.

[81] U.S. Department of State Dispatch: "New Steps Toward Conflict Resolution in the Former Yugoslavia" (Washington D.C.), 15 February 1993.

[82] "Clinton Announces Airdrops to Bosnia Will Begin Shortly," T. Friedman, *New York Times*, 26 February 1993: p. 1.

neophytes: most had been working on the issue of Bosnia over the previous year. Several aspects of the assessment made it significant: its emphasis on humanitarian assistance; the involvement of the Departments of State and Defense; and the size of the team, 26 people. It stated clearly that the Clinton administration was committed to pursuing a humanitarian policy in the war. As such, it showed the president's endorsement of his predecessor's determination to view the problem as a humanitarian one, a policy that he had criticized during the 1992 campaign.

The team's travel was extensive. During the two weeks, the team broke up into smaller groups and covered much of Bosnia Herzegovina, traveling into the country from Belgrade, Zagreb and Split. Extensive reports were written on Bihać, Sarajevo, central Bosnia, eastern Bosnia, and Herzegovina. The sectors covered included food, medical supplies, public health, infrastructure, agriculture, commercial activity, security, access, and management. Each section, with varying degrees of success, attempted to define the impact of the war on the local population and then described the efforts of the relief community in dealing with them. From this "commentary" were generated "findings" and then "recommendations."

The team determined that the humanitarian assistance goals should be threefold: (i) in the near term, to minimize human suffering; (ii) in the near and medium term, to prevent further population displacement; and (iii) in the longer term, to promote economic rehabilitation and ultimately reconstruction.

The report put forth a five-point strategy for accomplishing these goals: (i) stimulate economic activity; (ii) establish early warning and surveillance systems; (iii) improve humanitarian delivery systems; (iv) maintain public works; and (v) ensure security and access.

A telling struggle seems to have gone on regarding the purview of the assessment, and whether it was to be narrowly focused on relief or more broadly defined. The elements of the strategy outlined above and many of the ensuing recommendations fell well within the parameters of a narrow definition of a relief assessment. Examples of this were the calls for improved coordination amongst agencies and for a larger focus on public health and infrastructure-related issues. However, much stronger points were also made, as in the description of the besieged eastern enclaves, where a team member cautioned that the international community had little information due to Serb obstruction of the relief effort: "USG policy is being made on how to deal with the ethnic enclaves based on inadequate and we suspect on outright inaccurate information." The report then went on to recommend that the UN immediately conduct in-depth assessments. The recommendation did not stop there, insisting that the idea of deferring to the consent of the warring parties be done away with:

> The USG should simultaneously announce its intention of conducting an assessment of these areas [the besieged enclaves] without Serbian approval should the UN be denied access and that the USG will go in by air with heavy security on a specific date and time, warning all indigenous

> military units that any interference with the team will be dealt with appropriately.[83]

In the "commentary" on Sarajevo the report says; "One is struck by the fact that stark pre-visit impressions created by 'exaggerated' media reports are more representative of daily routines in Sarajevo than expected."

The team also debunks some common cynical wisdom prevalent at the time.

> The team was often told that there are no 'good guys,' but to imply equal culpability is a distortion of reality and a travesty of the enormous suffering inflicted on the Bosnian Muslims. Wherever the team went, it saw clear evidence that the Muslims are the overwhelming victims of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.[84]

In the opening paragraph of its conclusion the team lays out with surprising lucidity and candor the overall prospect of what they could hope to accomplish.

> At best, international assistance is a band-aid that keeps people alive in a manner that limits their ability to move to other countries, yet alive to continue facing open-ended warfare, ethnic cleansing, and a steady deterioration of their condition. We must not delude ourselves into believing that by improving the delivery of humanitarian assistance, we are solving the fundamental issue at stake in Bosnia, namely the destruction of a people in a manner all of us had thought Europe would never witness again.[85]

In the executive summary, which found its way into the *New York Times*, they declared:

> Even the best humanitarian assistance program [...] will be of limited utility as long as more direct and forceful means are not applied to end the conflict itself or, at least, to shift its focus away from the civilian population. In such an environment, there are no magic formulas to perfect the international relief effort in Bosnia Herzegovina.[86]

But, these forceful conclusions were a source of controversy and discomfort within the team. The *New York Times* reported that the strongest portions of the recommendations had been withheld from Congress during closed-door briefings — and that "senior administration officials" had admitted as much.[87] The paper compared this move to quash the assessment's findings to the Bush

[83] Assessments of the enclaves, recommendation 1, Humanitarian Assessment Team, internal OFDA documents.

[84] "Understanding Bosnia's Tragedy," Humanitarian Assessment Team, internal OFDA documents.

[85] Humanitarian Assessment Team, internal OFDA documents.

[86] Executive Summary, Humanitarian Assessment Team, internal OFDA documents.

[87] "President is Urged to Consider Force to Help Bosnians," S. Engelberg and M. Gordon, *New York Times*, 11 April 1993, p. A1.

administration's original denial of the existence of Serb-run concentration camps in northeastern Bosnia the previous August. It furthered its analysis:

> The Clinton administration's handling of the assessment is in some ways a case study of the inner workings of Washington, illustrating how the executive branch can use its control over the machinery of government to shape public debate.[88]

The assessment had yielded a strange outcome. Sent out to solidify the humanitarian view of the war, the team — or at least part of the team — had come back saying that it was a mistake to think that there were humanitarian solutions to the problem. This was remarkable on two counts. First, the humanitarian assessment was in fact pointing out that there was no humanitarian solution. And second, it was the 'humanitarians' on the team — FHA and OFDA — who were most vocal in that belief.[89] Indeed, in the course of the assessment, FHA personnel consistently voiced a militant line, advocating that the report endorse strong recommendations for political action. In the end, the 'humanitarian solution' argument prevailed, much to the chagrin of the FHA and OFDA members of the assessment. In the bitter words of one senior FHA team-member:

> This was a war, not a famine... And yet [in the end] the report was boiled down to seeds and blankets and all that humanitarian crap.[90]

The restrictive interpretation of humanitarianism — relief assistance — carried the day.

The UK-US Civil Planning Mission for Sarajevo: March 1994

The February 1994 NATO ultimatum had succeeded in creating a cease-fire agreement, as well as a heavy weapons exclusion zone around Sarajevo. The international community at large, galvanized by the arrival of UNPROFOR's new commander for Bosnia, General Sir Michael Rose, wanted to take advantage of the momentum to achieve two things. One, they wanted to solidify the cease-fire into peace in Sarajevo. Two, they wanted to trigger a dynamic for peace that could spread to the rest of the country. On 1 March 1994, Prime Minister John Major of Britain, on a trip to Washington, agreed with President Clinton to launch a joint initiative. The objective was to restore essential services to Sarajevo. On 4 March, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 900. One week later a joint British and American 22-member assessment team was on the ground in Sarajevo. In the following two weeks they put together a 120-page report covering twelve critical sectors, from electrical power to education. The DART was tasked with the organization of the assessment. A former OFDA deputy director, now under contract with USAID/ENI, led the US side of the team.

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[88] Ibid., p. A8.

[89] Interviews, FHA and OFDA members of the assessment team.

[90] Interview, former senior FHA official. Nevertheless the sanitized version was disseminated by the DART as part of its August 1993 Briefing Book.

One principle that the joint team adhered to was the insistence that the city not be divided.[91] While, de facto, the city was clearly already divided by the front lines that ran through it, the UK and the US did not want donor money to go to programs that would solidify this. The politically correct insistence against division by force of arms was backed up with the technical argument that a divided infrastructure, whether it was water treatment plants or school systems, requires continual subsidies to remain economically viable in the long term. Faced with adamant intransigence on the part of the radical Serb leadership, the team still insisted on this point. Finally, when presented with a take it or leave it ultimatum, hard-line Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadžić backed down and agreed — at least verbally in the meetings— to re-unify all infrastructure systems except for telecommunications.[92]

A second principle was the determination to restore essential services. Senior Western policymakers thought that the quick re-establishment of water, gas, electricity and schools would improve the physical and mental state of the people and could lead them away from war. This was cutting edge thinking at the time: take advantage of a lull in the violence (in this case, the February 1994 cease-fire) to try to generate a sense of normal life with programs that went well beyond mere emergency relief, and then build on the emerging normalcy to draw people away from conflict.[93] Thus, the assessment mission was tasked to come up with quick-fix, quick-impact ideas that stopped short of full-blown reconstruction activities. It turned out to be a shortsighted strategy. In coming to grips with the realities on the ground, the assessment team began to see things differently: from local government officials, team members heard that the utilities systems required complete overhauling. They realized the difficulties and shortcomings of dealing only with the problems of the war: what was needed was assistance in the overall transition from a communist mode of organization to a market-based system. Nevertheless, the American and British political masters insisted on the quick fix. In an internal team memo in a section titled "Subsequent Actions," i.e., the action that would follow the immediate restoration of services:

> At this point, [these next steps] should be [couched] in the most skeletal terms. Our leaders won't be interested in this. This section is meant for us, as technical people interested in projecting actions beyond the immediate and knowing that a connection exists, to be able to begin the longer-term thought process. This will likely also be popular with our hosts and serve

[91] This was a component of UNSC Resolution 900 which reiterated that Sarajevo was to remain " a united city and a multicultural, multi-ethnic and pluri-religious centre."

[92] Joint UK/US Civil Planning Mission for Sarajevo, Final Report, Executive Summary, Sarajevo, 1994: p. 3. Interview with UK-US Mission team member.

[93] This thinking was articulated in a paper by relief expert Fred Cuny and based on experience in Sri Lanka, Sudan, and Somalia, a paper that was circulating widely at the time (Cuny, F.C.: "Working With Local Communities to Reduce Conflict: Spot Reconstruction," Unpublished Manuscript, Intertect (Dallas, TX), 1993, published in the *British Disaster Prevention and Management Journal* in 1995). Cuny's observation was that donors were often reluctant to take advantage of pockets of stability in the midst of conflict and that valuable opportunities to build normalcy by improving living conditions and generating employment were passed over.

> as a palliative to them to list a large number of rehab items that can't be considered immediate priority.[94]

The report divided the programs into immediate, transitional, and subsequent phases. While it paid lip service to the "continuum from relief to development" it provided no practical proposals.[95] The emphasis on speed and the short assessment period left these as activities "to be designed." It was hoped that team members could identify projects that donors could fund which would encourage cooperation between Bosnian Government and Bosnian Serb authorities.

> Examples of recommendations which can be included here are: donors should establish a centralized office to coordinate inputs, a mechanism to facilitate private rehab efforts should be given high priority, the mayor's request to rehab the computer center might be important to help provide services to several technical ministries/companies, importance of opening free commercial traffic, anything which might facilitate BH-Serb coordination, technical assistance and training, and in general anything which will contribute to sustaining the momentum and the peace process.[96]

The UK-US Mission is revealing in several ways. It shows the benefits of on-the-ground presence and experience: because the DART was there and was operational, it was entrusted with the organization of an initiative born of a conversation between the President of the United States and the British Prime Minister. It clearly showed, not only the importance of political backing, but also how political objectives came to the forefront of programming decisions. Finally, by focusing on technical issues that went far beyond mere relief programs, the UK-US Mission, like the interagency assessment before it, confirmed the OFDA's willingness to go beyond a narrow interpretation of relief assistance.

Summary — OFDA as Reporter

The DART team gathered and both it and OFDA Washington processed a staggering amount of information throughout the 1992-1995 period. Several aspects are striking. The information was dispersed widely through the US government: senior administration spokespeople read verbatim from OFDA reports when queried on US policy, and officials at the State Department relied on them for ground-based information, as did congressional and White House staff. The usefulness of OFDA's

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[94] Joint UK/US Civil Planning Mission for Sarajevo, Internal team memo "Suggested Technical Report Format," internal OFDA documents.

[95] Joint UK/US Civil Planning Mission for Sarajevo, Executive Summary, OFDA internal documents, pp. 2-5 (the much-invoked but ever-elusive relief-to-development continuum).

[96] Joint UK/US Civil Planning Mission for Sarajevo, Internal team memo "Suggested Technical Report Format" underline in the original, OFDA internal documents.

reporting allegedly out-stripped that of the intelligence agencies in terms of offering an understanding of what was really happening on the ground. There were two reasons for this. First, the DART, through its connections with the NGOs, managed to tap the insights of a wide array of contacts. Second, OFDA consistently maintained a wide interpretation of its reporting mandate: the information went beyond mere relief (MREs and blankets) and focused on broad humanitarian issues, which included political and military analyses, social and economic considerations, and violations of human rights. Especially in 1992-1994, OFDA was an unrelenting advocate for the victims of violence in Bosnia. This lent the DART's reporting its rich and unique texture. Yet, in real time, OFDA did not seem to understand the extent of its influence. The large assessments, the 1993 US interagency assessment and the 1994 UK-US mission, showed to what extent information meant power. These assessments were political tools for policymakers, both in the messages they sent and in the reports they generated. Within these assessments, FHA (soon to become BHR), OFDA and the DART sided with the victims and pushed for solutions that addressed the root causes of the suffering.

III. Relations with Other Organizations, Both In and Out of the USG

In the run-up to Dayton, the main US power players — the National Security Council, the State Department, the Department of Defense, the Central Intelligence Agency and Congress — were at times conspicuous by their absence in the Yugoslav crisis. But, the original intent of 'leaving it to the Europeans,' though attractive to senior officials, was never a viable option in the long term. This had a direct effect on OFDA. In periods of low US involvement, OFDA's role took on a higher profile. On the other hand, as the US began to play a more active role, its various agencies at times used OFDA's expertise and at others failed to take advantage of them.

While the DART's reputation as a valuable on-the-ground facilitator shone in US foreign policy circles, it is our opinion that OFDA's influence on the establishment is and remains underestimated, including by OFDA itself. Even within USAID, OFDA is often considered as being of marginal importance. OFDA finds itself in the role of being a small organization with little overt power, but also with less bureaucracy and more independence than others — and, important detail, with a budgetary allocation directly mandated by Congress. This institutional independence both made its front-line position in Bosnia possible and was compounded by it. It colored the Office's interaction with other USG organizations.

The Political, Military and Humanitarian Background

Spring 1994 was a season of peace initiatives, both on the ground and outside Bosnia. The Washington Agreement brought an end, if not to tension, at least to the fighting between Muslims and Croats in central Bosnia. In Sarajevo, the NATO ultimatum around Sarajevo delivered solid results in reducing military activity and aggression on civilians. By increasing access to the besieged capital, not only for aid agencies, but far more importantly for commercial activity, these events also made for a dramatic improvement in people's lives. But the international community's plan to quickly inject reconstruction aid into Sarajevo in order to solidify the cease-fire into peace proved easier in theory than in practice (see UK/US assessment). Elsewhere, unfinished business lingered — Goražde and the eastern enclaves stuck like a bone in the throat of the radical Serb leadership. The peace proved to be short-lived; a Serb offensive on Goražde, fresh fighting around Sarajevo, shelling in Bihać — by mid-summer 1994, war had returned to Bosnia. The uneasy cease-fire between Croats and Muslims held in the US-sponsored Federation, although Croat nationalists successfully resisted international efforts to dismantle the Croat para-state of *Herceg-Bosna* in western Herzegovina and integrate the dual system of power that prevailed throughout central Bosnia.[97]

[97] See: Morrison, J.S., "Bosnia's Muslim-Croat Federation: Unsteady Bridge into the Future," *Mediterranean Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (New York), 1997: passim. See also: USAID/BHR/Office of Transition Initiatives, "Donor Options for Strengthening the Bosniac/Croat Federation," USAID (Washington, DC), April 1994.

At the end of 1994, in another successful burst of diplomacy, former US President Jimmy Carter picked up on months of UN negotiations to push the Bosnian Government and the Pale Serbs to a four-month cease-fire. This ran from late December 1994 to March 1995. By spring of 1995, the Bosnian army was gaining in strength. This frightened the Serbs. They shifted from a strategy of partially strangling Sarajevo and other besieged areas — but never to the point of provoking international military intervention — toward an end-game strategy. This new hard line required an absolute cut-off of aid going into these areas. All convoys through the 'sierras' (the Serb checkpoints on the road into Sarajevo) were blocked. The airlift was virtually shut down. The Bosnian Serb Army then initiated a series of military offensives, the most notable being the attack on the UN safe area of Srebrenica in July 1995, which culminated in the fall of the pocket, the expulsion of the entire civilian population and the murder of at least 8,000 Muslim men and young boys. With both UNPROFOR and UNHCR incapable of providing any response — political, military or humanitarian — the international community was out of commission on both the peacekeeping and the relief fronts. The former was nothing new, but the latter — on a countrywide basis — was a first. The West could no longer claim to be having any substantive role in Bosnia. The UN mission in Bosnia Herzegovina was on the brink of collapse. The situation was only unblocked by the use of force. Led by French calls for a rapid reaction force and then by aggressive US diplomatic initiatives, and against the backdrop of the Croatian military offensives in the UNPAs (May and August 1995), the use of force from ground and air played a central role in bringing the parties to serious negotiations in Dayton.

We now review OFDA's relations with USAID, the State Department, the Department of Defense and others.

USAID

Institutional cultures, differences in objectives and unclear mandates all affected OFDA's relations with the rest of USAID. 1992 left a legacy of difficult relations with USAID Belgrade. From 1993 through mid-1996, the DART's field presence made OFDA the leading component of USAID in the former Yugoslavia. This section will first detail a chronological narrative of OFDA's interaction with other parts of USAID in the former Yugoslavia 1993-1996; then we will use this history to examine OFDA's corporate culture and its role within USAID.

1993: OFDA and USAID/ENI

In mid-1993, USAID's Bureau for Europe and the Newly Independent States (ENI) sent out a representative to focus on Croatia and Bosnia. As the individual was a former OFDA official, there were no major institutional problems or program overlap with OFDA, and the problems did not re-surface. This made him a felicitous choice for ENI to begin exploring how their involvement could dovetail with that of OFDA. He picked up on some of the main themes which OFDA and the NGOs

had been working on and tried to fund programs with a longer term view, all the while recognizing that raging war was the daily reality of people's lives. Along these lines, USAID funded a psycho-social umbrella grant and energy projects in Sarajevo. The umbrella grant helped local professionals develop grassroots counseling activities for a section of the population traumatized by war and for whom the governing authorities were able to do little in the short term. The energy projects were intended to help people survive the war by repairing gas installations. These repairs were also essential to maintain the viability of the system in preparation for post-war reconstruction activities. Both projects, started during the war, opened up promising perspectives for post-war activities, but, as we shall see in chapter three, after Dayton USAID chose to go down another, very different, path.

1994-1995: OFDA and BHR/OTI and new programming in Central Bosnia

Following the March 1994 Washington agreement which established the Federation of Bosnia Herzegovina, another part of USAID became involved in Bosnia: the newly constituted Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI). Situated within USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, OTI is a manifestation of the Clinton administration's stated policy to promote free market economics and export democracy. This places OTI in a unique position in the USAID firmament: while OFDA aims to help individuals to survive at the household level, and ENI and other regional and global bureaus deal at the national level, OTI intervenes at the community level. OTI holds the middle ground.[98] In terms of timing, OTI is to play a bridging role, plugging the gap between short-term emergency relief and long-term development activities.

At first glance, there would seem to be great scope for a resounding clash of mandates between OFDA and OTI in a crisis zone. OFDA claims to assist people most in need regardless of their political affiliation or that of their government. Many OFDA disaster response staff take pride in their practical, solution-oriented approach to problems, and openly display their discomfort — even their lack of time and patience — with politically-driven programming. OTI's mandate, on the other hand, is clearly political. OTI's role is to "bring fast, direct, and overt political development assistance to countries emerging from disaster."[99] This fundamental difference in outlook, while in theory allowing the two offices to complement each other, has created friction between OTI and OFDA in several places where they have worked side by side.[100]

Two issues in particular generated tension, both which struck at the core of OFDA's sense of self: the IDA allocation and the notwithstanding clause. Then, as now, OTI's funds came out of OFDA's IDA account (OFDA's congressional allocation). This has at times generated resentment in OFDA as they watched their resources go to programs that they did not see as solid and considered fluffy, over-

[98] Interview, USAID.

[99] Center for Democracy and Governance: "Democracy Report," Vol. 4, No. 16, June 1998.

[100] Interviews, BHR, OFDA, OTI.

political and not life-saving.[101] The other concern to OFDA was the potential misuse of the notwithstanding clause by an inexperienced OTI, with portentous consequences: a former senior OFDA person told us that "if Congress got mad, it could revoke notwithstanding in a heartbeat."[102]

In Bosnia, however, a different set of factors seemed to provide a basis for solid cooperation. The main area of OTI's focus was the Federation. With the end of Bosniac-Croat fighting in Central Bosnia, humanitarian needs were expected to decrease, and with them the need for OFDA funding. But there were still other areas that were in bad need of humanitarian assistance, which meant there were opportunities for emergency programs. Furthermore, OTI began a co-project with IRC aimed at fostering community reintegration and reconciliation. IRC and OFDA knew each other well and this should have been enough to smooth ruffled feathers. Finally, it was clear that of the two BHR sister offices, OFDA was by far dominant, in terms of both funding and influence, as well as more experienced. There should have been no barrier to cooperation.

But it did not turn out that way. Bosnia was the first chapter in the long story of tension between OFDA and OTI. Problems started to occur as OTI moved forward on its Federation-strengthening program in Bosnia, with several reasons contributing to the tension. Bosnia was one of OTI's very first forays into the field. The DART felt that OTI, in the course of field assessments conducted in 1994-1995, and especially during a large six-week assessment that traveled throughout central Bosnia in the beginning of 1995, was promising far more than it could deliver to both local authorities and NGOs, and that the DART would be left to pick up the pieces. In the course of the 1995 assessment, OTI made a Bosnia beginner's blunder by telling local officials how much money they had to spend and then asking them for advice on how to spend it. Local officials took this 'openness' as irrevocable pledges of US support. By the time the next USG official hit town, more likely than not a DART member, he or she was immediately in the hot seat.[103]

Furthermore, OTI was dependent, both in the field and in Washington, on OFDA's administrative support: from grant-writing to contacts, to the provision of such scarce resources as vehicles, OTI was in the early days at the mercy of OFDA's good will. Then there was OFDA's zero-sum reasoning on the IDA allocation: whatever OTI spent were, in OFDA's judgment, funds not available to OFDA. OFDA also feared that, should OTI blunder either technically or politically, the privileged relationship that it enjoyed with several key players — Congress, the embassies, partner organizations in the field — might be placed in jeopardy. These problems, which could be considered the normal teething problems of a new and ambitious office, were never resolved.

[101] Interview, former senior OFDA official. Many in OFDA see OTI programs as funded with money that is rightfully theirs.

[102] Interview, former senior OFDA official, corroborated by personal memories of one of the Authors.

[103] Interview, OFDA and former DART members.

For all its problems, OTI introduced new views on assistance in Bosnia. Its Federation-building pilot project, with IRC as implementor, aimed to support the Federation of Bosnia Herzegovina's fledgling institutions. OTI/IRC tried to bring together Croat and Bosniac communities by funding initiatives that built on joint design or common inputs. They hoped to encourage the reintegration of common municipal services and the return of refugees, particularly cross-ethnic refugees[104]. With only $5 million, the OTI/IRC project had the blessing of USAID's senior management to risk relatively small amounts of 'venture capital' in an attempt to find promising municipalities or programmatic techniques.[105] OTI's effort represented a new approach to assistance in Bosnia, one that sought to address the political and social effects of the violence, and one that responded to two distinct spurs: on the one hand was a resolve to assist more than just emergency relief to help communities recover; on the other, was a clear commitment to forwarding US policy goals — the Muslim-Croat alliance — and buttress specific administrations achievements — the 1994 Washington Agreement. From the onset it was clear that neither of these endeavors would be easy, and subsequent experience showed them to be ever harder that was initially thought. Nevertheless, in responding to the changing environment on the ground, OTI had begun to innovate OFDA remained set in its emergency relief ways. Even after Dayton, OFDA chose not to consider OTI's experience useful in terms of its own post-conflict planning.

The NGOs were also struggling with the changes on the ground. By summer 1994, the frustrations caused by the HVO blockade had begun to ease. NGOs found it easier to implement their emergency assistance programs while, simultaneously, emergency needs were decreasing. Local community needs were shifting towards post-conflict transition — and with them donor priorities. But local nationalist leaders were keen to solidify their power base and maintain the existing ethnic divisions. They felt threatened by reconciliation projects. For the implementing NGOs, frustration took on a new form — the intransigence of the local structure had shifted from physical roadblocks and checkpoints to city halls and municipal offices. The lack of harmony between OFDA and OTI did not help. Many aid agencies were grantees of both, and got conflicting messages: they grew confused as to the funding relationships and mandates of OFDA/DART, OTI, and ENI.

USAID and OFDA Institutional Cultures

The people who work at OFDA are proud of their Office's anti-bureaucratic approach. As one

[104] Cross-ethnic returns (also referred to, misleadingly, as 'minority' returns) refer to the return of refugees of one national group to an area under the control of another national group. In the case of the OTI Federation-building project, it mostly meant Croat returns to Bosnian army-held areas and Bosniac returns to HVO-controlled areas.

[105] In late 1994, ENI joined US efforts to build the Federation by implementing its Municipal Rehabilitation Program, which adopted an OTI-like approach and attempted to get local leaders of the two opposing sides to jointly propose local repair projects that would benefit both sides of their community. A large 'reconciliation' program — Project 0016, "Trauma and Humanitarian Assistance"— also began in Croatia and Bosnia.

interviewee put it, "What's wrong with [being] a cowboy anyway?"[106] Many people within BHR share this view. On the other hand, beyond (and sometimes within) BHR, the view of OFDA in USAID is a mirror caricature: "They act before they think."[107] While these are obvious generalizations, and of course dissenting views exist on both sides, it was surprising to the Authors how many interviewees voiced these types of judgments.

Still, the analysis of OFDA's response in the former Yugoslavia shows a deliberate approach. As described earlier, OFDA's 1991-1992 decisions to task IRC to deploy field officers and later to send field officers of its own were strategic and thought through. Once OFDA took notice of the scale of what was happening in Yugoslavia, it reacted purposefully and decisively: the creation of the DART was neither catch-up action nor a knee-jerk reaction. OFDA was also very deliberate in decentralizing authority to its field staff. The trust in the field-based units was what made possible the operational flexibility necessary for success in a fluid environment. In more control-oriented parts of USAID high levels of field autonomy raise the fear of a 'rogue element' that will end up wreaking havoc. Ponderous procedures make it difficult for USAID to configure its response in a manner that is sufficiently flexible and responsive to be efficient in a fast-changing, confusing and unanticipated crises. The agency's institutional culture just does not allow for it.

OFDA's 'corporate culture' is defined by its unique mission — saving lives, which means responding to disasters, fast. As a result, over the years, OFDA has come to see itself almost as a separate entity from USAID. This is true in the other direction, as well. From the perspective of the rest of USAID,

> Career officers have treated OFDA as a stepchild, refusing to acknowledge the connections between disasters and development. Indeed, it has long been difficult for many officers to admit that the office has a central role in US foreign policy. As the name implies, development is what US Agency for International Development is about, not humanitarian relief or foreign policy.[108]

This attitude means that it is often difficult for career OFDA staff to be promoted within USAID. Conversely, 'regular' AID types view a passage through OFDA — or other offices in BHR — as, in the words of one ENI person, "an aberration in [their] career [s]."[109] On the other hand, OFDA's lesser political profile within the agency, coupled with the dynamic field environment in which OFDA usually operates, allows OFDA personnel to have a greater chance to influence events.[110]

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[106] Interview, OFDA official.

[107] Interview, USAID.

[108] Natsios, A.: *U.S. Foreign Policy and the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, The Center for Strategic and International Studies, The Washington Papers/170 (Westport, CN), 1997: p. 44.

[109] Interview, USAID/ENI.

[110] Interview, OFDA.

OFDA's self-perception as the 'odd man out' also has its roots in the shared belief that disaster response requires a unique set of skills and experience that its staff has, and that regular mission staff does not.[111] OFDA people often have a good deal more in common with the informal, loose-knit, decentralized, operations-focused relief groups which they fund and alongside which they work in the field, than with their fellow USAID colleagues. Indeed, many OFDA staff have previous field experience with relief NGOs.

As noted earlier, the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, which created USAID, gave OFDA its special status within the agency. Section 491 of the act granted OFDA a notwithstanding clause that states that

> [n]o statutory or regulatory requirements shall restrict BHR/OFDA's ability to respond to the needs of disaster victims in a timely fashion.[112]

The notwithstanding clause allows OFDA the leeway to do such things as: avoid gathering several quotes when purchasing supplies; avoid the need for a waiver when procuring goods or services from a source not usually authorized; and provide emergency assistance to countries where other types of assistance might be prohibited. While the notwithstanding clause is rarely invoked, the knowledge of its existence gives OFDA a sense of freedom from the surrounding bureaucracy. One OFDA official explained that "notwithstanding" (as it is known) is critical to OFDA's sense of confidence and identity.[113] OFDA officials believe that their programs can only be successful if they are able to circumvent USAID rules and regulations when they need to. Thus, part of the essence of OFDA's identity is the ability to avoid USAID procedures, and this places it in direct conflict with USAID's culture.

Since the early 1980s, as humanitarian aid has gained a primary role in the US response to long-term conflicts, OFDA's role within the US government has grown in importance. Until the late 1990s, long-term disasters — drought and food shortages, war and civil strife, population displacement — absorbed nearly 80 percent of OFDA's resources. (The remaining 20 percent went toward quick-onset disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and floods.[114]) The long-term responses, some of which have kept OFDA engaged for years on end, have called into question OFDA's anti-bureaucratic culture, critical to providing a quick response in an acute disaster. The line that

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[111] General Accounting Office Report: "Foreign Disaster Assistance - AID Has Been Responsive but Improvements Can Be Made," NSIAD-93-21, October 1992.

[112] U.S. Agency for International Development, OFDA *Annual Report, Fiscal Year 1997.*

[113] Interview, OFDA.

[114] OFDA *Annual Reports*, 1991-1997. However, since 1998, the emphasis seems to have started shifting back again to natural disasters with the robust responses to, among others, Hurricane Mitch, the fires in Mexico, the earthquakes in Turkey and Taiwan, and the floods in Venezuela and Mozambique.

separates disaster relief and development work becomes more subtle, and determining when OFDA's role ends and USAID's rehabilitation and development sections take over has sparked animosity and turf battles. With the cultures of OFDA and the rest of USAID differing so greatly, the transition from conflict to post-conflict in Bosnia was marked neither by collaboration nor a transfer of experience from OFDA to other parts of the agency.[115]

The fact that there are numerous non-career staff in OFDA contributes to the clash of cultures with mainstream USAID. With a limited budgetary allocation for direct-hire slots, OFDA makes a heavy use of personal service contracts — PSCs. These people hold term-specific contracts with the government: they are technically employees, but have few of the benefits of regular public service personnel. They are, by and large, beholden to the bureaucracy by neither training, nor background, nor career prospects, nor indeed often inclination. They tend to feel guided in their actions and judgment by the needs of the day rather than by respect for a set of regulations of which they may not even be fully aware. Foreign and civil service officers bring different perspectives. They know how to get things done within the bureaucracy. They have a stronger sense for what is possible and realistic, and what is not. And their approach to problem solving often remains closer to rules and regulations. OFDA's strength resides in its mix of career and non-career types, which enables it to draw on the best of both worlds. But it can also create internal tensions, especially when non-career staff takes over a given operation, which was the case with the former Yugoslavia DART. But, these differences notwithstanding, there remains a strong sense of mission among most OFDA staff.

> [A]ny staff person can repeat the OFDA mission statement without prompting; most keep house well beyond the required work week, and some willingly put their own lives in jeopardy when they travel to emergencies, especially civil conflicts, in order to carry out the OFDA mission. There is a deeply held sense among OFDA staff members that, in any given day, their work will save lives.[116]

This last sentence may overstate how OFDA people feel on a day-to-day basis, particularly those in Washington, but, across the board, the commitment of OFDA staff to the office's mandate is intense. Many members of the Former Yugoslavia DART certainly took a very serious view of their role in helping victims of aggression, even and perhaps especially in the darker, less hopeful moments of the war.[117]

The US Department of State

[115] As OTI gains in experience, it is facing some of the same problems of 'adaptation' to the arrival of the USAID Mission in countries where it was already present and well established.

[116] Natsios, *U.S. Foreign Policy...*: p. 43.

[117] See the dark words of a DART field officer in U.S. Department of State, "Farewell to Bosnia," Embassy Zagreb Cable, 15 December 1993 (quoted above, in "OFDA as Reporter: DART sitreps").

The State Department is a constant interlocutor for OFDA, both in Washington and in the field. The institutional cultures of OFDA and the State Department remain however very different. This has an impact on their relationship, at many levels of interaction. These cultures could be broadly defined as the 'politically sensitive hierarchy' for the State Department versus the 'independent rogue element' for OFDA.

State and OFDA 1993-1995

Throughout the pre-Dayton years, the relationship between OFDA and the State Department revolved to a large extent around the DART's reporting. As noted earlier, the deployment of the DART had been carefully coordinated with the State Department (RP, EEUR, embassies, and at undersecretary level). The DART's field reports went to those and other sections of the State Department, but only RP and the most affected embassies paid any attention on a regular basis.[118] While humanitarian aid was taken seriously enough to warrant a special interagency working group chaired by the State Department, desk officers in EEUR and senior political and military policymakers paid little attention to humanitarian reports from the field through most of 1992.[119] By late 1992, with the premium that senior administration officials had placed on a visible and effective humanitarian response, and given the absence of State Department people on the ground in Bosnia, the situation had changed and reports from the field began to be widely sought.

In the field, the DART ran into initial problems with the embassy in Zagreb in January of 1993. Breaking their promise of a self-contained unit, the DART moved into the embassy for a period of time. As predicted, this caused havoc with the embassy's meager administrative resources, initiating a relationship that remained poor until new personalities took over. Lack of administrative backup from OFDA Washington seemed to contribute to the problem.[120]

> The first DART in January '93 was a bad start for all concerned. The whole thing was soft. The team-leader was not used to these things and hence [was] a weak leader. He had poor administrative support from Washington. He had no direction. 'Go out and do something' he was told, 'we'll let you know if you are reporting wrong.' It's a swim-or-sink approach. He sank. After a couple of months Washington decided it was not getting what it wanted. The first team-leader was happy to get out of here. OFDA had no means of supporting someone who 'didn't get it.'[121]

With the appointment of Ambassador Galbraith in early 1993, the embassy in Zagreb finally realized

[118] Interviews with former and present OFDA and US State Department officials.

[119] Interviews with former and present US State Department officials.

[120] In the absence of documentation, the Authors realize that such judgments are based on memory of interviewees only.

[121] Interview with former OFDA official.

what a resource the DART could be. Indeed, here was a group of six to seven people, with hundreds of UN, NGO and local authority contacts throughout the region, devoted to what many in Washington considered the key to a successful US policy: the provision of relief aid. Their reporting colored many of Washington's views on a subject dear to Embassy Zagreb: the war in central Bosnia (see below). And their primary channel of reporting was through the embassy.

The DART was based in Zagreb even though most of their work revolved around Bosnia. This became increasingly problematic as the fledgling embassy to Bosnia Herzegovina sought to assert its authority. The premises of the Sarajevo 'embassy' were actually a hotel room in the battered front-line Holiday Inn, where reporters, aid workers and the occasional diplomat hung out in a post-nuclear Bladerunner-like atmosphere. Most Embassy Sarajevo staff remained in Vienna, where the embassy's temporary quarters were finally set up. Due to security restrictions, the ambassador traveled only episodically to Sarajevo. Overruling his recommendation, the State Department continued to block the establishment of a permanent presence in Bosnia. Yet, it was clear that if ever an ambassador needed ground-based intelligence, it was the US ambassador in Bosnia. Despite repeated pleas for clarification on the part of OFDA, the State Department never determined which of the two ambassadors was responsible for 'minding' the DART, a situation that has reoccurred elsewhere.[122] Without clear instructions from the State Department or from OFDA Washington, the DART was left to maneuver through this political minefield alone.

The Zagreb and Sarajevo (Vienna) embassies clashed over two specific DART-related issues: report routing and country clearances. As noted above, by the time an ambassador had been accredited to the Bosnian government, the DART had already established a working relationship with the embassy in Zagreb. As a result, all reporting cables had to be cleared by either the ambassador there or his DCM.[123] The information collected by the DART was often of some urgency, making good breakfast reading for Bosnia-focused officials from Geneva to Washington. There was little time for approvals or revisions. Barring a change of location for the DART or proactive cooperation between the two embassies, changing the routing of reporting was unlikely given the immediacy of the information and the hunger for it in Washington. The wishes of Embassy Sarajevo (Vienna) were overridden. Embassy Zagreb maintained its position as information clearing-house and fount of all knowledge. Proof of this power was an August 1993 front-page *New York Times* article quoting a DART cable under the name of the ambassador accredited to Zagreb, which focused on the dire situation in Sarajevo and generated an increase in pressure on Washington to react against the Serb stranglehold

[122] Interviews with former and present OFDA officials. In the course of its work in eastern Zaire / D.R.Congo, BHR (OFDA and OTI) has reportedly run into similar tensions between the embassies in Kinshasa and Kigali. By summer 1998, neither State nor USAID had offered any guidance to OFDA as to what tack to follow (interview, OFDA senior management).

[123] In fact, there had been earlier tension between the DART and the embassy over the issue of clearances. The arrival of the new team-leader in 1993 resulted in the DART deferring all clearance to the Zagreb embassy and, subsequently, in improved relations (see below).

on the city.[124]

Embassy Sarajevo (Vienna) responded to the report routing by demanding that all country clearances for Bosnia Herzegovina, including those of the DART, go through them. Again it would seem that Embassy Sarajevo was correct, but by now this was perceived as a spiteful attempt to hold up humanitarian intelligence gathering and the monitoring of USG humanitarian assistance. Again direction from State or personal cooperation between the embassies could have solved the problem. Neither was forthcoming. The DART cobbled together a working arrangement that never really solved the problem but left it with enough independence to function: Zagreb cleared, while Sarajevo (Vienna) was notified. The tension only subsided with the opening of an actual embassy in Sarajevo and the appointment of a new Ambassador. The DART finally moved to Sarajevo in January 1996, although the team-leader had secured office space and stationed a local staff member there as early as spring 1994.

Routing information through Zagreb also came at a cost in terms of independence. The Croatian government was deeply involved in the Bosnian war, at times openly advocating the partition of the country. The Croatian army (HV) provided weaponry, personnel, and logistical and financial support to the Bosnian Croat paramilitary (HVO). Yet, the Croat-Muslim war raised many of the same humanitarian concerns as did the war with the Serbs. For example, radical Croat nationalists picked up on the tactics of their Serb colleagues, using force to prevent humanitarian access to civilian populations, especially in East Mostar, and establishing concentration camps.[125] The DART reported these facts with its usual bluntness, but saw its material dispatches edited, sometimes heavily, by the embassy in Zagreb. All but the most egregious Bosnian Croat misdeeds were softened or passed over. For example, charges that the HVO were interdicting the free flow of relief supplies through their territory would be changed to read that all sides were blocking relief.[126] Gradually, under pressure to produce situation reports and other information, the DART would only submit material they thought was not likely to be blocked by the embassy.[127]

Relations with RP/PRM

The DART's initial deployment included a refugee coordinator from the State Department's Bureau of Refugee Programs (later Bureau for Refugees, Population and Migration). His main task related to

[124] "Grim Balkans Outlook Affected U.S. Position; Policy Based on Emotion, Not Broad Principle," D. Williams, *Washington Post*, 19 August 1993.

[125] For the Croat-run concentration camps, see: U.S. Department of State, Embassy Zagreb Cable, 19 May 1993.

[126] Interviews, DART.

[127] Interview, DART.

refugees in Croatia and the maintenance of a steady food pipeline. This quickly broadened to 'pipeline advocacy' for the whole of the former Yugoslavia. Like many others, he found it difficult and ultimately meaningless to differentiate among the needs of refugees, internally displaced persons and the population at large. The DART retained its original mandate: it continued to monitor all USG assistance, including that of RP/PRM to UNHCR, ICRC, and other international organizations and NGOs. This situation would seem propitious for a bureaucratic cat-fight, yet it is to the credit of all offices and bureaus involved that the set-up remained remarkably non-contentious. Problems between OFDA and RP/PRM did not seem to stem from the DART's field mandate or its activities. DART field sitreps and other cables were avidly read by PRM personnel and used as checks, counterweights or back-ups for the information they were being fed by UNHCR through the US permanent mission in Geneva and by other grantees.[128] The DART also organized periodic PRM visits to the former Yugoslavia. A second refugee officer was sent out in early 1995. This person was not part of the DART, but was directly attached as refugee coordinator to the embassy in Zagreb and given a regional mandate. The 'refcoord' set-up was a customary one, and it made sense for it to be in Zagreb as Croatia was where many of the refugees were. The DART and the refugee coordinator discussed areas of interest and reporting. They struck a mutually acceptable decision to go down the traditional OFDA/PRM line of division: refugee needs (PRM) versus needs of internally displaced and other vulnerable groups (OFDA).

This *entente cordiale* fell apart during the course of one of the more horrifying episodes of the war: the fall of the eastern Bosnian enclave of Srebrenica to the Bosnian Serb Army in July 1995. The traumatized expellees who streamed into Tuzla fell clearly, according to the lines of division, under the DART's responsibility: they were Bosnians in Bosnia, clearly internally displaced persons (IDPs). The DART, drawing on its long field experience and numerous contacts, began reporting back to Washington two to three times daily. But the message quickly came back from the embassy in Zagreb that their reporting was superfluous since the PRM's refugee coordinator was also reporting. As in the reporting spat between the two competing embassies, proximity to the cable cipher ultimately carried the day, triumphing over both mandates and common sense: the refugee coordinator continued to report on an IDP crisis occurring several hundred kilometers away in another country.[129]

Relations and Cultures: Advocacy for the Victims or Foreign Policy Imperatives?

Several experienced interviewees indicated that the State Department's institutional culture works in such a way that, even if a given unit's expertise covers certain areas such as humanitarian or environmental or even military affairs, once the issue at hand achieves a certain political profile — in other words, becomes important to the administration — it gets kicked up to the 'seventh floor' (where senior State Department officials including the Secretary have their offices). The input of the

[128] Interviews, PRM.

[129] Interviews, OFDA.

specialists is at that point no longer required. This was very clear when a DART field officer returned from a rare assessment of the Goražde pocket in December 1992: Bill Stuebner, an experienced former military officer, had suggested airdrops and made detailed technical recommendations on how to make them most effective, namely that they be carried out at low altitude. The State Department took up the suggestion of the airdrops, but dismissed the technical recommendations — the airdrops were made at high altitude.[130] The DART's field reporting became invaluable to the State Department, but beyond OFDA's insider view of the situation was not always welcomed, especially when reporting turned to advocacy. Micro-management of humanitarian policies, and the potential for getting them wrong, increased.

Thus, a central question lies at the heart of the relationship between OFDA and the State Department: Does humanitarian aid aim to assist those in need or merely meet the foreign policy goals of the USG? If it is to do both, which is paramount? Where and how should the balancing take place? By mid-1993, the DART's reporting, as noted, had become a vital component in humanitarian decision-making. But the DART maintained a rather wide view of what constituted humanitarian issues. A case in point is the reporting on the concentration camps run by nationalist Croat forces in Mostar.[131] The DART field officers thought, and OFDA Washington's senior management concurred, that this was a legitimate humanitarian topic on which to report. OFDA brought the issue to the attention of the State Department-chaired humanitarian working group. The OFDA participant energetically pushed for a stronger response from State, i.e., requesting that it put pressure on the Croatian government in Zagreb, but was told in equally energetic terms to put a check on his "emotionalism" and stick to "humanitarian" issues.[132] The two views of what 'humanitarian' is were difficult to reconcile: the OFDA official took a broad and militant view of humanitarianism, one that naturally led to demands for action on US foreign policy; the State Department official took a narrow view, where humanitarian action was boiled down to relief and was a tool of foreign policy action, or lack thereof.

The Department of Defense

In mid to late 1992, OFDA had extensive contacts with DoD's Bureau of Global Affairs, much of which took place at the regular Humanitarian Working Group meetings at the State Department. According to OFDA participants in this group, DoD was eager to assist the humanitarian effort with excess property and transport capacity. Funding for these activities would often be a subject of dispute but there seemed to be a tacit understanding that, after run-of-the-mill jockeying back and

[130] For more on the airdrops, see the section on airdrops in the annex paper "Fighting the War with Humanitarian Aid."

[131] US Department of State, Embassy Zagreb Cable, 19 May 1993.

[132] Interview, former senior OFDA official.

forth, DoD would come up with the necessary funding.[133] Two DOD/Global Affairs representatives to the Working Group went on to become DART members. Early in the DART deployment, both DoD and State agreed that the DART would have the delegation of authority to run the US military excess property program. This may not be surprising considering that the DART military liaison officer and the field officer were both ex-Global Affairs. However, there was also a defense attaché at the embassy in Zagreb. The DoD - OFDA agreement over the excess property gave significant resources to non-military personnel who also enjoyed a large amount of autonomy from the embassy. This created tension with the office of the defense attaché.[134]

Excess Property: Tires and Pyres

The excess property of the US military went far beyond MREs. Pickup-trucks, deuce-and-a-half (2.5 ton) dump trucks, forklifts, front-end loaders, clothing, camouflage gear, chemical suits, army boots, ammunition belts, medical kits, and even a mobile hospital were among the equipment sent to the former Yugoslavia for use in the relief operation. Not all of it was appropriate as humanitarian assistance in a highly polarized war-zone. UNHCR and IRC were the main users and distributors of this equipment. On several occasions the DART organized trips for IRC personnel to visit DoD warehouses in Europe for excess property shopping trips. Global Affairs went into direct negotiations with IRC on some materials. There were obvious problems in handling military clothing or chemical suits. One local army or the other needed them; and if it did not, its enemy did. The unfortunate word soon got out that IRC had 'valuable' military gear in its warehouse. This triggered several incidents where armed elements entered NGO warehouses or blocked movement and deliveries. It also fed the rumor mill of IRC partisanship: if there were military boots and canvas belts, what else was there that was not visible? The paranoia concerned not only local people, military or authorities. This type of whisper became accepted common knowledge in the foreign aid community. More disturbing, to this day even former DART members wink and nudge at IRC's 'humanitarian assistance.'[135] And finally, this equipment could not be distributed speedily and hence took up valuable storage space. The problems of access into central Bosnia further backed up the pipeline and other crucial materials that were vulnerable to theft or bad weather had to compete for space. The result was that OFDA had to arrange and pay for storage for much of these materials until they could be returned to the sender, DoD. IRC also had to hire staff whose sole job was to burn ton after ton of excess property.[136]

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[133] Interview, OFDA.

[134] Interviews, OFDA, DART.

[135] Interview, DART.

[136] IRC also tried dying the uniforms and other military garments it had received; the result was an unbecoming — and still rather military-looking — purple. These, too, were burned (fond personal reminiscences of one of the Authors).

In 1992 and 1993, DoD excess vehicles could have been a timely commodity. At that time, NGOs were developing heavy, logistics-based programs from scratch, an expensive and time-consuming affair — vehicles were in desperate need. Unfortunately the excess vehicles were for the most part useless: old, unreliable, and heavy consumers of fuel, oil, and spare-parts. Few of them made it much beyond the wharf where they were unloaded. Experience taught the users a key lesson: keep the few vehicles that managed to stay running away from situations where the occupants' well-being depended upon a reliable vehicle. Some of the pick-ups did end up being useful for warehouse use, especially for shuffling innumerable pallet-loads of US military excess property to the burn pile.[137]

The only consistent bright spot were the deuce-and-a-half (2.5 ton) dump trucks that DoD supplied. They were a different story altogether. While the original 48 units were whittled down to less than 15 in a matter of weeks due to mechanical failure and cannibalization, the remaining happy few became the most powerful and versatile trucks in the entire international relief fleet. Forced to use the mountain tracks that British UNPROFOR engineers attempted to maintain, most convoys succumbed to mud, snow, or traffic jams caused by inappropriate vehicles using these back roads. The deuce-and-a-halves, even if they only carried a limited payload, nearly always pushed through. They were loud and well respected on the road, often being used to clear sundry obstacles such as broken down vehicles or the occasional HVO checkpoint.

Airdrops

A second issue over which OFDA interacted with DoD was airdrops. The airdrops of humanitarian supplies proved absolutely crucial to the survival of several of the enclaves. The airdrop option had lingered since the summer of 1992 when the Bosnian government first requested them. But it was OFDA field officer William Stuebner's walk to Goražde in December 1992 that triggered a decisive push in their favor within the US government. By the time the airdrops began in late February 1993, the DART had begun to develop extensive contacts within the targeted enclaves: with international agencies attempting to deliver aid, with UN military observers (UNMOs) and UNPROFOR, and with those Bosnians (military and civilian) active in resupply operations. Surprisingly, the US military relied very little on DART advice and assessments, despite their expertise.[138] One reason may have been that the DART was critical of the high-altitude, low-efficiency approach that was retained for the drops. Had the military heeded the ground-based analysis, they would have had to re-assess the whole policy of force protection having priority over humanitarian needs and protection. The US military liaised with UNHCR, who did have credible information; with the Bosnian government, but through a channel that was not likely to give much credible information; and with their own political

[137] Other relief groups made similarly unspectacular use of their excess property vehicles: UNHCR kept a clapped out US military pick-up truck at its Ancona airfield office, dutifully painted white, for any visitor fool-hardy enough to venture beyond the airport grounds with it. (One of the Authors did, and nearly regretted it.)

[138] Interviews, OFDA.

advisors who derived their intelligence from State back in Washington.[139]

Humanitarian Advisors (Humads)

An innovative approach of OFDA was the creation of humanitarian advisors or humads. The humads answered a long-felt need for a better integration of the concerns and perspective of the international relief community in the planning of US military humanitarian operations.[140]

The humad concept was put to useful application in early 1995, as NATO planned for a potential UNPROFOR extraction mission. Plan 40104, also known as Operation *Determined Effort*, called for 60,000 NATO troops (of which 25,000 were to be American) to extract some 20,000 UNPROFOR blue helmets from Bosnia.[141] An OFDA-sponsored humad arrived at NATO Southern Command headquarters in Naples in June 1995 to assist in the planning should NATO deploy in the Balkans. At first he was treated with benign neglect by the military. This allowed him the leisure to familiarize himself with NATO's planning documents. He worked in the Contingency Initiatives Branch where the various components of the plan were brought together. While the logistics of the plan were intricate and detailed, the effects of a six-month deployment on the civilian population had not been taken into account. In an interview, the humad in question remembered thinking:

> What about the civilians, the aid convoys, the beer truck? Granny and Grandpa going to visit the kids in their old crapped out Yugo? What are you [NATO] going to do with them in the six months it is taking you to deploy your tanks to Tuzla? Life cannot just shut down for six months...[142]

The truth of the matter was that NATO had not put a lot of thought into the civilian side of the question. The humad's task was to progressively integrate this type of thinking into the plan. He brought forward the idea of cohabitation and cooperation with civilians and aid agencies. In September 1995, the planning shifted from UNPROFOR extraction to a consensus-based peacekeeping intervention.[143] This was a gradual shift albeit an uneven one. Planning continued to oscillate between these two poles, sometimes on a daily basis.[144] The humanitarian component in the

[139] Interviews, former OFDA

[140] The humad concept is separate from that of a DART military liaison officer. The military liaison seeks to facilitate the implementation of OFDA-funded programs while the humad purports to represent the concerns of the whole international relief community. OFDA is also aware that it has taken on a self-appointed role and the humads will be perceived as Americans first.

[141] Gow, J.: *Triumph of the Lack of Will: International Diplomacy and the Yugoslav War*, Columbia University Press (New York), 1997: p. 274.

[142] Interview, OFDA.

[143] Interview, OFDA.

[144] Interview, OFDA.

two missions was radically different. In the extraction mission the civilian organizations were viewed as an inevitable complication, a distraction. In the peacekeeping/peacemaking operation, however, they became a fundamental component of the overall mission. The late start in taking into account civilian issues was now further complicated by the tug between the two plans. Nevertheless a heightened need for civil-military coordination quickly emerged. The US Army's Civil Affairs units would clearly play an important role. OFDA felt that they could contribute to NATO's peacekeeping effort by deploying humads with the troops on the ground. When NATO's Implementation Force (IFOR) was deployed after Dayton, OFDA humads were attached to US forces, one in Sarajevo and one in Tuzla.

In Sarajevo, Zagreb and Tuzla, during the first few months of 1996, the humads energetically attempted to establish the links between NATO and the international aid community. They encouraged NATO to recognize that UN agencies and NGOs had been operating on the ground in Bosnia for years. A lot of work had been done. The militaries did not have to carry out assessments that had been done time and time again in the past. The humads tried to avoid becoming the sole interface between the military and the relief organizations. As one humad put it: "A humad's role is to do their job and get out. If you have done your job in linking up the players then you have completed it. The end-goal of the humad is to leave."[145]

OFDA and UNHCR

The division of labor between OFDA and State/PRM entails that OFDA deals with internally displaced populations and State/PRM with refugees. UNHCR's mandate is similar to that of PRM. As a result there was little history of interaction between UNHCR and OFDA.[146] This changed in the former Yugoslavia. As the lead UN agency for the former Yugoslavia and the key provider of relief assistance, UNHCR played a central role in OFDA's work. This ranged from the important and at times unfortunate precedents that UNHCR set in its negotiations with local forces to issuing the only license plates and identification cards recognized by the local forces (the famous 'blue cards').

As noted earlier, one of OFDA's early field officers was particularly critical of UNHCR's method of negotiating with the warring parties for safe-passage of relief convoys. In a report to OFDA which was subsequently quoted on page one of the *New York Times*, he wrote that UNHCR had had little success in delivering relief supplies to Sarajevo, "and almost no success to date in reaching groups of people critically at risk in a number of other centers in central and eastern Bosnia."[147] This report

[145] Interview, OFDA.

[146] UNHCR and OFDA had experience with one another in northern Iraq in 1991 and then enjoyed extensive interaction in the Great Lakes region, particularly during the 1994 Rwanda crisis, both in Rwanda and in the host countries, Tanzania and Zaire, and then in Burundi and Rwanda in 1996-1997.

[147] "U.S. Finds Serbs Skimming 23 Percent of Bosnian Aid," M. Gordon, *New York Times*, 13 January 1993:

frayed the field relationship between OFDA and UNHCR. Once the DART was established and a resident team-leader was in place, relations improved. This can be seen from the two aspects of DART's task: reporting and funding. The DART relied on UNHCR as a key source of information. As far as international players in Bosnia were concerned, UNHCR had the most extensive network of field offices and information gatherers. It was imperative that the DART maintain good relations with UNHCR to ensure vital information on the relief effort. Because DART information trickled throughout US government channels, UNHCR played a central role in informing the US government. Nevertheless, the DART's information officers were specifically instructed to check facts: "The Daily Press Summary from UNHCR can provide a beginning but always call whoever they list as the source of the information. I have found it to be wrong on many occasions, or just misleading."[148]

In general DART coordinated program funding very well with UNHCR.[149] The coordination was not limited to existing funding only, but began at the conception and planning stage.[150] There was some inevitable sense of rivalry as the DART provided an alternative source of funding to NGOs. Nevertheless, UNHCR field staff recognized that OFDA funding was providential in areas where they were overstretched. For instance in early 1993, at the beginning of the war in central Bosnia, according to its own staff, UNHCR was not providing the required operational leadership. The gap was plugged by IRC, whose strength was in part derived from prompt and flexible OFDA support. UNHCR field staff recognized the effect of OFDA's support and were grateful for its outcome.[151]

We have seen how, in 1992-1993, the DART saw NGO creativity as crucial to the success of the relief operation. UNHCR on the other hand, prompted by their public role as lead agency and the coordination expectations that followed, adopted a more traditional donor stance, and were more intent on controlling the NGOs.[152] This was also due to the fact that UNHCR was implementing the largest assistance programs, and felt — rightly so — responsible for their success or shortcomings. The result was that UNHCR came to fear the repercussions of an uncontrolled NGO presence. Two instances among many show the perverse reversal of logic that saw UNHCR officials blaming NGOs for some of the problems of the war. The first example occurred in summer 1993, when members of a French NGO were arrested by the Serbs as they were trying to run an 'unauthorized' convoy (i.e.,

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p. A1.

[148] DART internal document with instructions on writing a situation report, 5 August 1993. The Authors do not mean to claim that UNHCR was deliberately misleading, just that in their haste to provide information they would often use local government press coverage that was largely biased, particularly in Zagreb where these summaries were issued.

[149] Interview, DART, UNHCR.

[150] Interviews, DART, UNHCR.

[151] Interview, former UNHCR field officer, central Bosnia.

[152] This is the subjective impression of the Authors, based on interviews with OFDA, UNHCR and NGO staff, as well as on our own field experience in Bosnia (1992-1996).

not cleared by UNHCR and Serb authorities) through to Sarajevo — not an unreasonable thing to do for a humanitarian organization. UNHCR, rather than denouncing the Serb move against a genuine humanitarian initiative or taking public note of the failure of the West's policy of access-through-consent, was critical of the NGO, claiming with indignation that its actions had endangered the whole relief operation.[153] What really happened was that the NGO's action undermined UNHCR's policy of consent, and this was unacceptable to them. The other example was UNHCR / Sarajevo's long reluctance in 1993-1994 to endorse or even facilitate innovative NGO programs that were trying to alleviate the Serb stranglehold on the city's utilities, particularly gas and water. For instance, UNHCR consistently refused to push the envelope on bringing into Sarajevo, via its airlift or convoys, supplies it deemed controversial, i.e., supplies other than basic assistance (and more luxurious goods for aid agency personnel). They would not even go so far as to file the necessary request with the Serbs.[154] The rationale offered was that the NGOs' 'messing about' on the utility front risked provoking the wrath of the Serbs, who might shut down the airlift or close their checkpoints. In the end of course, consent bought only failure. In 1995, Serb forces effectively shut off all negotiated humanitarian access to Sarajevo. And it was only NATO's planes and the big guns of the Franco-British Rapid Reaction Force that finally unblocked the situation. It is to OFDA's credit that it never bought into the status quo that other donors and often the administration itself promoted.

Despite the occasional tensions, it was also interesting to hear that some people in UNHCR felt that they provided a transparent bridge between the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and the DART.[155] According to one interviewee, neither the DART nor ECHO would openly share funding strategies or information with each other. Both however gave all the information to UNHCR. True to the UN's commitment to transparency, UNHCR then shared the information with both.[156]

Perceptions of OFDA

External perceptions of OFDA varied, depending on which aspect of OFDA/W or the DART a given institution dealt with. NGO and UNHCR field staff saw the DART chiefly as a donor. The comments were nearly universally positive. They were "results oriented," they "understood the

[153] Personal memories of the Authors; interview, UNHCR.

[154] An important exception to this was UNHCR's agreement to task Royal Canadian Air Force C-130s to fly in large water treatment units for Fred Cuny's Sarajevo water-supply project in 1993 (see our annex paper "Fighting the War with Humanitarian Aid"). But this decision was made in Zagreb — not Sarajevo — and given the high profile of the project, UNHCR really had little choice.

[155] The European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) created in early 1993 and headquartered in Brussels, is the European Union's main donor agency for emergency assistance.

[156] Interview, UNHCR

complexities" of the situation; "the DART stood up for us."[157] Senior personnel at ICRC who were aware of OFDA stressed their respect and appreciation for OFDA as an organization that was on the ground and responsive.

The DART's reporting role presented a more difficult aspect. There were many misgivings in the aid community about OFDA's motives or even its alleged ties to the intelligence community, mostly along the lines of 'what were these people really up to?'[158] The suspicion was that the US government was using the DART to collect information under a humanitarian façade. This skepticism was not limited to UNHCR. Many international staff in Bosnia, particularly non-Americans, were also skeptical of the DART's real tasks. The make-up of the DART's staff, with PSCs from diverse backgrounds, including several former military, furthered the suspicion, a suspicion which often transcended the respect and camaraderie felt for individual DART members. The feelings of distrust were understandable as the DART was reporting on highly charged political issues, e.g., the war between Muslims and Croats in central Bosnia, Croat-run concentration camps, the military situation within the Goražde enclave. To the traditional aid worker or official, mindful of his or her neutrality, these things lay beyond the purview of pure 'humanitarianism.' The motives of anybody reporting on such issues could only be impure. For many, belief in a Western plot in the Balkans — a plot that would give meaning to the otherwise inexplicable vagaries of policy — was too strong a temptation to resist. Even people who had worked alongside OFDA and DARTs in the past — officials in other USG agencies, diplomats, the press, and foreign government officials — thought the DART was an on-the-ground element in some grand American plot in the Balkans.

And even within ODFA, misgivings existed over certain aspects of the DART's work. An oft-cited story is that of the December 1992 Goražde assessment, when a DART field officer trekked through hostile Serb lines, at night, across the snow-bound mountains, to the besieged enclave, at great personal risk. The purpose of the trip was to ascertain humanitarian conditions on the ground. In the eyes of one NGO worker later involved in supporting the Bosnian mule-trains into Goražde, this was perhaps OFDA's finest moment in Bosnia: on the ground, proactive, and assessing needs where no one else would go.[159] For many in Washington, the view was very different. "That was weird shit," was one of the comments we heard at OFDA, the disapproving tone of which echoed widespread feelings of malaise regarding the Goražde episode, even many years later.[160] The discomfort seemed to flow from three sources. First was the tired stance that humanitarian neutrality precludes doing anything that is not in the open — in this case trekking across Serb lines — and that somehow aid agencies should play by the rules in an environment where no one else does and where people are dying because of it. By going to Goražde in spite of the siege, and without permission from the

[157] Interviews, NGOs and UNHCR.

[158] Interviews, UNHCR. Such misgivings also existed vis-à-vis other US organizations, in particular IRC.

[159] Interview, NGO.

[160] Interview, OFDA.

besiegers, the DART had broken the cardinal rule of humanitarianism in Bosnia: consent. And in doing so, it had ventured beyond the humanitarian pale. Second was the feeling that the DART was out of line with US government ground-rules: bona fide USG personnel just should not be doing things like that. Finally, and interestingly from OFDA's internal perspective, was the vague perception that the DART was a field unit run amok. Thus, the Goražde trek challenged OFDA staff in their sense of identity as humanitarians, as US government workers and as OFDAers. In the end, the episode did nothing to tarnish the reputation of the DART — its 'weirdness' was ascribed to the personality of the field officer involved. This occulted the fact that the DART had done what any humanitarian agency should do: it had investigated on the ground the needs of war-victims. Also lost was the reality that the assessment was in full keeping with ODFA's mandate and that the DART had acted under direct instructions from the Bureau's senior management.[161] The visit succeeded in its assessment intent — it confirmed the desperate conditions in Goražde while dispelling rumors of cannibalism and other horror-stories. It proposed a solution (airdrops) and offered valuable information to implement the solution.[162] These positive points are also forgotten.

There is also a fairly predictable difference in perception between the DART and OFDA/W. In both its donor and reporting roles, the DART is seen to have been more responsive and knowledgeable than OFDA/W, which is understandable given that those people who covered former Yugoslavia in Washington were also responsible for other areas and were often over-stretched. Practically, the DART did things like 'protecting' NGOs from unnecessary bureaucratic questions or responding to congressional phone calls with an immediate answer. A DART that is not performing these functions should be a source of alarm for OFDA/W.

A lack of knowledge of USG structures undergirded the perception that the DART was a nest of spies. Many of the same senior people who were suspicious of the DART's activities were not quite sure and sometimes downright confused as to the relationship between the DART and OFDA; State; USAID; OTI; and the embassies.[163] The outsider can be forgiven for being confused. History and mandate contribute to the confusion. UNHCR and OFDA did not have many overlapping situations prior to this decade. Conversely, WFP staff had a far better grasp of what OFDA is about as the two organizations had worked hand in hand in many previous crisis settings, including IDP crises — OFDA does not often fund WFP, but the two organizations often share the same implementing partners.

Several interviewees told us that the DART's USG status, tempered by a certain amount of

[161] Interview, former senior official, USAID. The fact that the change in administrations brought a turnover in FHA's senior management may also have contributed to the Goražde trip's unsavory reputation.

[162] The airdrops were implemented, but the field officer's practical recommendations (low-flying, targeted drops) were either overruled or ignored.

[163] Interviews, WFP, UNHCR, ICRC.

"mystery," was not necessarily a bad thing. It may actually have opened doors. It also served as a conduit for people who wanted to relay a message directly to Washington, and make sure that it was read within the USG.

Summary — OFDA Relations with Other Agencies:

The one factor that colors all perceptions of OFDA relating to the former Yugoslavia was that its information, analysis, and funding capacities were based on a consistent field presence. From Congress to the State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency, Department of Defense, and the White House — particularly in the period prior to the Dayton Agreement — OFDA information was a must for any USG people working on the former Yugoslavia. A number of officials from these agencies established direct links to both the DART and OFDA/W. Similarly, the DART was a fixture on the schedule of any visiting USG dignitary in the region. As a result, OFDA developed strong relationships with many branches of the US government outside of USAID. People within government were generally impressed with the DART, and grateful for the information that their reports provided.

Within USAID there is a drastically different perception. Based on the authors' interviews, the perception in USAID is that OFDA sees itself as independent and it does not encourage team playing, it is paranoid of outsiders, it uses the notwithstanding clause as a badge of difference, and that in OFDA, regulations are to be systematically ignored and treated as a hindrance. According to USAID people, this attitude within OFDA is based on ignorance and lack of training. OFDA people, they argue, especially staff in the field, just do not have the basic knowledge of notwithstanding, contracting procedures and authorities. If only they knew how these procedures worked, and used them properly, the bureaucracy would no longer be a hindrance to them. In fact, they maintain, OFDA may be able to respond quicker by avoiding delays due to ignorance or in having to fix problems that should never have occurred.[164] This impatience with the field's rough-riding attitude to procedure is sometimes echoed in OFDA/W, particularly in the Program Support (PS) Division.[165]

Concluding Thoughts: The Outlook after Dayton (December 1995)

There was a curious paradox to the DART's situation in the wake of the Dayton peace accords. Since 1993, the DART had steadily grown in experience and confidence, both as a funder of NGO

[164] Interviews, current and former USAID staff.

[165] Interview, OFDA.

programs and as a reporter for the US government. Now that the US had finally decided on full-fledged involvement in Bosnia — America led the air campaign, ran the peace negotiations and contributed the largest contingent to the soon-to-be deployed NATO peace-keeping force — the DART was at its heyday. It was well-established, well-connected and well thought of. Yet, and here lies the paradox, at the end of 1995 the DART had run its course in Bosnia. As a donor, it no longer had the humility to harness NGO creativity, or even the ability to do so: indeed, the DART had done much to stifle whatever creativity was left in the NGO community with large amounts of money and increasing directiveness. As a reporter, the DART seemed unable to take stock of the changes in the political situation that came first with the end of the Bosnian-Croat fighting in 1994, and then with Dayton. After Dayton, as war was about to give way to uneasy peace, the DART was set to lose many of the features that had made it so distinctive: with the arrival of the troops and a bigger embassy, it would no longer be the main US player on the scene; other far more powerful donors were going to move in, both US and other; and the material-based relief-oriented approach the DART had successfully stuck to — even when improving conditions in Sarajevo (1994) and central Bosnia (1994-1995) might have suggested more innovative courses of action — no longer seemed as relevant as in the early days of the war. The DART was no longer at the cutting edge.

But there is a second paradox. USAID's senior management did not realize the limitations of the DART in the new environment. Conscious that post-Dayton Bosnia represented a critical test of its ability to be relevant to US foreign policy, USAID handed OFDA and the DART the responsibility with leading its first large post-war program in Bosnia, the Emergency Shelter Repair Program (ESRP). For OFDA, this was an opportunity to leverage its field-based experience and its reputation in Washington in order to influence US policy, especially on the issue of refugee returns. Unfortunately, if OFDA did have an impact on US policy in post-Dayton Bosnia, and we believe it did, the impact was negative.

The next chapter of our review of OFDA in ex-Yugoslavia is a detailed analysis of the DART's 1996 Emergency Shelter Repair Program and its political repercussions in Bosnia.

Chapter Three

The DART after Dayton: The Emergency Shelter Repair Program

The Political Repercussions of Reconstruction Aid

Introduction

Following the Dayton Peace Agreement and the deployment of NATO troops, OFDA recast its role in Bosnia by leading USAID's first and most visible post-conflict project — the Emergency Shelter Repair Program (ESRP). Between March and December 1996, in a bid to jump-start the return of displaced families, OFDA funded and closely monitored the renovation of over 2,500 badly destroyed housing units in 48 front-line villages, at a cost of about $23.7 million. A further $4 million was allocated for small-scale village infrastructure repair.

There are several reasons why a detailed analysis of this program is relevant to a study of the political impact of humanitarian assistance in Bosnia. One, it was an important milestone in the DART time-line in former Yugoslavia. The ESRP was OFDA's last major project in Bosnia and, in dollar terms, one of the DART's larger integrated programs. In terms of OFDA's relationship with NGOs, the ESRP embodied the final stage in the DART's long journey in former Yugoslavia — from the laissez-faire, 'let'em run free' days of 1992-1993 to the effective, confident, directive tones of the post-Dayton period. Two, it is an interesting example of the use of OFDA in a post-conflict transition setting. Three, the program shows how a focus on immediate, tangible results can sometimes obscure, even in hindsight, the analysis of subsequent repercussions. This was enhanced by the widespread perception of the ESRP as the cherry on the DART's cake. Finally, as one of the most visible US endeavors to follow Dayton, the ESRP lies at the heart of the debate of whether humanitarian programs can drive foreign policy.

This paper first describes the program's striking success in achieving its programmatic goals, and then seeks to offer a critical review. It draws on extensive interviews of many of the players involved, on an analysis of ESRP documents and reports (both NGO and USAID), on analytical reports on the return of displaced populations in Bosnia, and on field visits to several ESRP villages.

I. The ESRP: Review

The Initial Assessment Team

The genesis of the ESRP was an October 1995 decision by USAID administrator Brian Atwood to send two external consultants to Bosnia to assess what role USAID could play in the post-conflict period.[1] With peace likely to break out, the agency needed a plan for 1996. One of the two consultants, Robert Gersony, was known for his in-depth, bottom-up analyses of refugee situations. Since the mid-eighties, a series of influential reports had established his reputation for intellectual independence, rigorous research and compelling debriefings. Drawing on a technique of extensive interviews with refugees, Gersony linked specific refugee crises on the ground to the wider realm of American foreign policy. He enjoyed a reputation for bipartisan support in the US foreign policy community, and some credited him for contributing to major shifts in US policy, for instance in Somalia and Mozambique in the late 1980s and early 1990s.[2] Portions of his work had not been exempt from controversy, such as a 1994-95 report on refugee return in Rwanda.[3] Several interviewees indicated that USAID's leadership had carefully selected Gersony for the task in Bosnia. The consultant team also enjoyed the trust of the agency's Bureau of Humanitarian Response (BHR), which had been responsible for the lion's share of USAID's activity in Bosnia during the war. These facts are important because they shaped the assessment team's unique reputation in foreign policy circles in Washington: if a smart pill existed for post-war Bosnia, this team would find it and bring it back.

During the latter half of 1995, according to sources close to USAID's senior management, Atwood was seized with the situation in Bosnia. On the horizon was an election year in the US, and the agency was coming under strong attack from the right-wing of the Republican Party, as well as from some quarters in the State Department. Demands that USAID be rolled into State were on the increase. Among the main criticisms the agency faced were its alleged ineffectiveness and irrelevance to US foreign policy.

The latter half of 1992 also marked a dramatic development in Bosnia: fearing a collapse of UNPROFOR and a potentially dangerous extraction operation, President Clinton had decided to enter

[1] Henceforth referred to as the assessment team. The Dayton Peace Accords were signed a month later, on 21 November 1995.

[2] Interview, State Department.

[3] Interviews, UNHCR; on Gersony's Rwanda report see: "'Explosive' Leak in Rwanda Genocide," S. Edwards, *National Post* (Toronto), 01 March 2000 (the "explosive leak" referred to is not the Gersony document).

the Bosnian fray.[4] After leading the short NATO air campaign, America led the peace negotiations. The Dayton Agreement, initialed at Wright-Paterson air force base in November 1995, led to the deployment of 20,000 US troops, in difficult terrain. After three years of deferring to European sensitivities and shirking its own responsibilities, America was for the first time fully engaged in ex-Yugoslavia. Post-Dayton Bosnia would be a US show.

USAID's leadership felt it was critical for the agency to prove itself relevant to that effort.[5] As a participant in the Principals Committee meetings at the White House, the administrator knew that heads would turn his way when questions arose pertaining to US support for the civilian aspects of the peace. The perception at the State Department was that USAID's record to date had shown it to be ponderous and unresponsive.[6] The only exception was the DART, which had received consistently high marks, but was seen as divorced from mainstream USAID, i.e., the regional bureau for eastern Europe, ENI. Now that peace was at hand, ENI could no longer "abdicate its role" as it had during the war.[7] The new effort had to be "useful, visible, high impact, stabilizing" and, in keeping with recent USAID management reforms, it had to be quantifiable.[8] Dayton was also the first major test since the 'reinventing government' (REGO) initiative. In the words of one senior official, Atwood had embarked USAID on a "struggle for relevance."[9] Hiring the assessment team was a key step in that struggle.

Specifically, Atwood asked the assessment team to focus on three issues.[10] First, what were the prospects for return? The idea was to conduct a bottom-up assessment based on extensive interviews with refugees, and to figure out what was on their minds and what weight they gave various factors. Second, the team was to explore the prospects for "programs involving locally-applied conditionality aimed at facilitating inter-ethnic reconciliation, the strengthening of the Croat-Muslim Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and, ultimately, cross-ethnic return."[11] At the time, USAID efforts other than OFDA and FFP (Food for Peace) were focused on local conditionality, specifically an OTI (Office of Transition Initiatives) Federation-building program and other ENI reconciliation-based

[4] Daalder, I.: *Getting to Dayton: The Making of America's Bosnia Policy*, The Brookings Institution (Washington, DC), 2000: Chapter 3, *passim*.

[5] Interviews, State Department.

[6] Interviews, State Department and BHR.

[7] Interview, USAID.

[8] Interviews, State Department and USAID.

[9] Interview, USAID.

[10] Gersony and Gersony: "Summary of Findings and Recommendations, Bosnia Reconstruction Assessment," submitted to D. Stafford, Assistant Administrator, Bureau of Humanitarian Response , USAID (Washington, D.C.), April 1996.

[11] Ibid.: p. 1.

projects (grants to NGOs were required to have a so-called 'reconciliation' component). But there was widespread skepticism in Washington on whether such programs were really effective or whether "we were just kidding ourselves."[12] Third, the assessment team was asked to develop a "quick-impact, high visibility program" that would address the employment needs of demobilized soldiers.

Two elements emerge here. One, the unusual level of detail of the administrator's instructions bears witness to the high political stakes in play. The agency's senior management was engaged on this. Two, the very nature of the instructions imposed a clear general direction on the assessment: a focus on return and employment-generating programs, growing misgivings for reconciliation-focused activities, and a determination to move fast and visibly.[13]

In keeping with the main thrust of US humanitarian policy Bosnia since 1992, the assessment was confined to Federation areas — no work was done in Serb-held areas. The team was to submit its report to BHR's assistant administrator, Doug Stafford.

After initial meetings in Washington, Geneva and Brussels, the assessment team arrived in Bosnia in November 1995. The team had little first-hand knowledge of the situation, but swiftly put its interviewing experience to work. According to its summary report, in the course of the next eleven weeks, the team visited Zagreb and Sarajevo, covered about half of the Federation's municipalities, and traveled to the Dalmatian coast to meet with refugees there. All told, they met about 150 Bosniac and Croat refugee and displaced families. Most interviews were with individual families and lasted about an hour. The team also met with about 250 local and international officials involved in assistance and protection activities during the war — typically one or two officials at a time. These meetings were on average several hours long.[14] Anyone who has traveled and worked in wintertime Bosnia, even in the relative security of 1995-1996, will appreciate this record as a singular feat. The breadth and thoroughness of the consultants' methodology, as well as its 'listening to the people' approach, were to lend the subsequent debriefings uncontested credibility.[15]

The success of the assessment owed much to the DART. The DART's philosophy of pro-active, on-the-ground assessments dovetailed with the assessment team's methodology. The two consultants benefited from the DART's knowledge on the ground. They were able to tap into the contacts, both Bosnian and international, developed by the DART in the previous three years, and were often well received by interlocutors who held the DART in high esteem. The assessment team also relied to a

[12] Interview, USAID/BHR.

[13] This passage is drawn from extensive interviews of officials close to the ESRP. Administrator Atwood did answer written requests to be interviewed for this study.

[14] Gersony and Gersony, "Summary of Findings and Recommendations....:" p. 2.

[15] See: USAID: *The Participation Forum*, Nr. 20, "Bosnia: When Customers Tell Us What We Don't Want to Hear," January 1997.

considerable extent on DART logistics.

Assessment Team Findings

By the end of January, the assessment team was reaching its conclusions. Surprisingly, they left Bosnia without giving out-briefings, arguing that they reported directly to Administrator Atwood. On February 10, they debriefed the administrator. Their conclusions were written up in a summary of findings dated April 1996. No complete document was ever released. The summary of findings makes an unrelenting case for same-ethnic return. In fact, all three of the document's sections, which reflect the three issues the team had been asked to explore, underline the need to promote same-ethnic return and postpone cross-ethnic return.[16]

Refugee Return

On the issue of return, the assessment team came to two main conclusions. The first was that the majority of the refugees whose homes were located in areas under the control of 'their' military — the Bosnian army (ARBiH) for Bosniacs and the Bosnian Croat paramilitary for Croats (HVO) wanted to return home.[17] This became known as 'same-ethnic' or so-called 'majority' return.[18] In the absence of security concerns, the main obstacle to same-ethnic return was the lack of funds to rehabilitate housing that had been destroyed. Shelter appeared an obvious priority. The second conclusion concerning return was that Bosnia was not ready for 'minority' return, also known as 'cross-ethnic' return, i.e., the return of refugees to areas controlled by forces of the other ethnic group: in the Federation, Bosniac to HVO-held and Croat to Bosnian army-held. The reasoning was that the war was too recent, and feelings too raw, for reconciliation to be possible. In support of its claim, the report explains that cross-ethnic return was discouraged by authorities on both sides; that

[16] See Gersony and Gersony: "Summary of Findings and Recommendations...." This document is dated April 1996 and also covers the activities undertaken during the assessment team's second visit to Bosnia. The document refers to grants that had already been awarded, and outlines recommended 'next steps' in the implementation of the project. As such, it is both a summary of findings and a progress report on the ESRP. To the best of our knowledge, BHR or the assessment team released no other documents.

[17] *Armija Republike Bosne i Hercegovine* (Army of the Republic of Bosnia Herzegovina) and *Hrvatsko Vijeće Obrane* (Croat Defense Council).

[18] 'So-called,' because majorities and minorities changed during the war. Thus, the return of a Croat refugee to his or her home in Jajce is now considered a majority return (because Jajce is under HVO control), despite the fact that before the war the majority in Jajce was Muslim. Conversely, the return of a Croat to a formerly-Croat dominated area, now under the control of the ARBiH, is considered a minority return. This holds both within the Federation (as in the above examples), and between the Federation and Republika Srpska (RS): a Bosniac returning to Ilid)a (prewar majority Serb, currently in the Federation) and a Serb returning to Višegrad (pre-war majority Muslim, currently in the RS) are considered majority returns. Conversely, a Serb returning to Drvar, and a Bosniac returning to Prijedor are now minority returns.

local security realities inhibited cross-ethnic return; that economic prospects for minorities were dim; that issues such as the presence of refugees in their homes and schooling discouraged cross-ethnic return; and finally that lingering ethnic hatred could erupt at any moment.[19] Cross-ethnic return was even presented as potentially counterproductive as "premature [cross ethnic] returns, and population movements which are not properly planned and coordinated, may provoke [...] incidents of cross-ethnic violence which undermine the peace process."[20]

The view that the time was not ready to push cross-ethnic return was more controversial in that it struck at a fundamental, philosophical difference between two schools of thought on the Balkan wars. The first held that these wars, and their attending litany of horrors and atrocities, were the result of active policies by evil leaders and of Yugoslavia's lack of political and economic freedom. The latter tended to blame historical animosities between ethnic groups, ascribing a quasi-inevitable character to the conflicts. The assessment team report seemed to clearly side with the latter.

Reconciliation[21]

Based on an analysis of the EUAM (the European Union Administration in Mostar) and OTI's Federation-building program, the assessment team concluded that most reconciliation efforts were ineffective and premature. Local conditionality policies — i.e., making the delivery of aid conditional on local political movement toward reintegration — seemed to be failing across the board. Moreover, they were seen as placing the implementing NGOs in an uncomfortable, even dangerous position of political negotiation, which the NGOs did not relish. The fact that these programs made up the bulk of USG's non-emergency funding may have been a source of worry, even if unvoiced in the assessment report, for the agency's senior management. In dollar terms, the emergency relief programs funded by OFDA, FFP and the State Department's Bureau for Population, Refugee and Migration (BPRM) still dwarfed OTI's and ENI's reintegration programs.[22] But, as the emergency moved into its post-conflict phase, ENI and OTI were bound to play an increasing role. Their pro-reconciliation programming bias was increasingly viewed as ineffective and even counter-productive — how can one change people's ideologies through a joint soccer field and locker-room project?[23]

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[19] Paraphrased from Gersony and Gersony: "Summary on Findings and Recommendations....:" pp. 5-8.

[20] Ibid.: p. 10.

[21] The term 'reconciliation' is both awkward and unsatisfactory. It applies an exogenous notion — the outsiders' perception of a pre-existing state of ethnic harmony, which may or may not have existed, and which is not relevant. Ethnic groups lived together, not because they loved one another, but because they did not fear for their security. 'Reintegration,' which refers both to the reintegration of displaced populations and the wider re-establishment of Bosnia's multi-ethnic social fabric, is more practical and tangible.

[22] In 1995, OFDA spent $40,163,994, FFP $57,964,200 and PRM $52,713,627, for a total of $150,841,821; this is just under five times as much as ENI's $30,770,053 (sources: <www.reliefweb.int> and OFDA sitreps).

[23] Interview, USAID/BHR; the interviewee was referring to an ill-fated OTI-funded IRC project in Vitez, in central Bosnia.

Shelter and Short-Term Employment

In light of the need to repair homes and create jobs, especially for demobilized soldiers, the assessment team recommended an emergency shelter program, for which it laid out the framework. The need for shelter had come up as an issue in most of their interviews. Same-ethnic refugees needed outside support to go home. Entire villages, emptied by the war, were only waiting for a spark to come to life again. The shelter program was to target 2,500 houses in 50 rural, former front-line villages all across the Federation. Target-houses had to be privately owned — proof of ownership prior to 1991 was required to avoid any eventuality that the program might unintentionally sanction ethnic cleansing. The homes had to be badly damaged (i.e., without roofs, doors or windows) but with sound structures. A core of international NGOs, who had the necessary technical and country experience and were already operational, were to administer the program. They would in turn contract Bosnian contractors to provide each home with two weatherized rooms and a wood-insulated floor. A $4 million fund was developed for village level infrastructure (minor utility repair, school and health center repair, etc.). The Bosnian contractors would generate employment for young men. Tripartite agreements between the participating family, the municipality and the implementing NGO were to ensure that the beneficiaries would actually return home. Finally, the assessment team made a strong case that the overall management of the $25 million project be entrusted to the DART. The ESRP was born.

ESRP Rationale

Opening Political Space

Under attack as it was at the time, USAID needed a project that was visible, measurable, reliable and quick. The rationale for the emergency shelter program hinged on several key points. The first was of course to move out of the conditionality logjam and focus on same-ethnic return. The ESRP's aim was to bolster the Dayton accords by promoting rapid return. But, as donors were to find out repeatedly in the wake of successive Bosnian peace agreements, first in the Federation in 1994-95 following the Washington Agreements and later after Dayton, "returns always take longer than we think."[24] Arguing against the moral high ground hogged by proponents of cross-ethnic return, the assessment team stressed that it would be wrong to hold the return of tens of thousands of same-ethnic refugees hostage to the unlikely prospects of cross-ethnic return.[25] These people were victims, too, burned out of their houses, living in poor conditions in Bosnian cities. Dayton was also about

[24] Interview, State Department/PRM.

[25] Cross-ethnic refugees were by definition far more likely than same-ethnic to have been victims of ethnic cleansing. As such they were often the target of return programs, especially in the Federation in 1994-1995 — or at least they were perceived as such. Whether or not more cross-ethnic refugees received more

their return. There was widespread consensus around the importance of shelter needs.

The project posited that the return of a core group of about 50 'pioneer' families could give a badly damaged and abandoned village the spark without which it might not survive. The ESRP would achieve visibility by revitalizing otherwise deserted rural areas. It would send the message that the war was over and that the focus was now on reconstruction. The building season (April-November) and the need to show progress before the winter ostensibly drove the program's accelerated time-line.

The ESRP rationale hinged on an expected domino effect: by allowing rural refugees to return to their refurbished homes, the program would free up physical space in the towns. This would ease social tensions, and might, further down the line, create conditions for minority returns and Bosnia's reintegration. The idea was that the creation of physical space would in turn free up political space where negotiators would enjoy more room to maneuver.[26] Thus, moving forward on same-ethnic return was presented as a necessary condition for cross-ethnic return. (The assessment team was careful to state, however, that same-ethnic return was no guarantee for cross-ethnic return.[27])

Showing Movement

It was critical to show movement early. "The point of diplomacy is to make it appear that you are moving forward," said an experienced OFDA field official.[28] It was important to show the Europeans that the US was serious about the peace process. In terms of US domestic consumption, the ESRP also had to show that Dayton was working, that people displaced by the fighting were returning home — the ESRP had to demonstrate clean, clear progress that all could understand. With it, USAID could help the administration provide active, on-the-ground support for the peace accords.[29] In the process, it could project the image of an efficient agency, and one that was relevant to US foreign policy goals.[30]

The Easy Bite

With such high political stakes in play, the shelter program was a clear attempt — and ultimately a very successful one — to go for what several officials described as "the easy bite of the apple."[31]

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[26] Interview, USAID/BHR.

[27] Interviews; Gersony and Gersony: "Summary of Findings and Recommendations...:" pp. 9 and 12.

[28] Interview, OFDA.

[29] Interview, USAID/BHR.

[30] At least three current and former senior BHR officials volunteered — with matter-of-fact candor — the linkage between the ESRP and USAID's struggle for relevance.

[31] Interviews, USAID/BHR.

Same-ethnic return would lessen the potential for political problems on the ground. Numerous villages would fit the bill, beneficiaries would be relatively easy to find, and local authorities would approve them. Most importantly perhaps, a same-ethnic focus minimized chances of post-program violence against the repaired houses, as had been the case with other shelter projects that had targeted cross-ethnic returns. Pictures of houses, newly repaired with US tax dollars, gutted in arson attacks could raise painful questions on the Hill and in US public opinion as to what the administration was seeking to achieve in Bosnia.

Other factors contributed to making the project as politically safe as possible. The ESRP focused on private property, rather than on the thorny issue of social property such as public company-owned apartments.[32] It addressed rural areas, where returnees were bound to be more self-sufficient. Finally, the decision to enlist the experience of the DART and its field-tested NGOs was key. In fact, it was the presence of the DART and the NGOs — and the symbiotic relationship between them — that enabled USAID to have first pickings after Dayton.

Other Factors

Various interviewees mentioned other factors in the ESRP rationale. The program was highly quantifiable: houses repaired, living space created, and refugees returned home, all outcomes that can be measured. This hard edge made it much more attractive than the 'soft' reconciliation work, especially in light of the 'managing for results' reforms.[33] The ESRP was also expected to buy some time for the in-coming USAID mission. A new Mission Director had been named in late 1995, and his emphasis was on economic reform, an effort that could not be expected to pick up immediately. Finally, there was a measure of competition between USAID and UNHCR — the ESRP would make it possible, in the words of a former senior USAID official, "to beat UNHCR to it."[34]

NATO

It is interesting to note that the assessment team's summary of findings underplays the NATO factor. This is a conspicuous absence, on three counts. One, the assessment team surprisingly does not use, in defense of same-ethnic return, the predictable reluctance of a US-led IFOR to provide security for

[32] Interview, OFDA. In pre-war Yugoslavia, many homes, mostly flats, were 'socially-owned.' This meant that people had occupancy rights to property that was in fact owned by public firms, cooperatives, local communities and so on. There were an estimated 60,000 to 100,000 socially-owned flats before the war in Bosnia. Sorting out property rights in the post-war period is complicated by displacement, nationality changes and the fact that some of the 'holding' institutions were no longer in Bosnia (International Crisis Group: "Going Nowhere Fast: Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in Bosnia," April 1997, <www. intl-crisis-group.org>).

[33] USAID had recently implemented wide-ranging reforms in a bid to better track its impact. As a result, measurable outcomes became more desirable than intangible outcomes.

[34] Interview, former USAID official.

cross-ethnic return. This would have been an obvious, and powerful, argument.[35] Two, the report does not mention troop withdrawal in its case for a one-year program that would help create the conditions for the pullout. Three, as far as we understand, the ESRP was not considered as an asset in providing additional security for US troops. It is not hard to picture the ESRP as part of a US military 'hearts and minds' operation. It should be noted that the assessment team report states that the jobs created through the ESRP would help promote stability. The DART's end-of-project report for the ESRP even states that the third objective of the ESRP was to create jobs, "thereby enhancing the security of IFOR personnel."[36] However, one authoritative former DART-member even dismissed the idea that the ESRP could provide security to IFOR as "incredibly naive."[37] But this was probably an after-the-fact sales-pitch to Congress rather than a serious argument.[38]

The OTI Preview to the ESRP

Some of the assessment team's programmatic recommendations appear to tread old ground: another USAID document had already laid out the outline of a program remarkably similar to the ESRP. This was an in-depth 1995 OTI report that explored donor options for supporting the Federation.[39] It examined different opportunities for shelter programs. One of the two main options was "parallel rehabilitation" (the other was "repopulation of buffer zones"). In two pages, one year before the assessment team, the OTI report outlined a very similar rationale for same-ethnic return. Parallel rehabilitation, it was argued, would create a psychological boost, might open space for cross-ethnic return, would relieve housing pressure and would benefit local industries. The needs were real and the main obstacle to such returns was that families did not have money to rehabilitate their homes. The OTI report suggested that

> this type of reconstruction for more than 2,000 houses could be done in a number of municipalities in Central Bosnia, Maglaj finger, and the Tuzla region for both Croat and Bosniac communities; [...] Assurances would have to be provided by local authorities of returnee ownership. Such a program would provide for approximately 10,000 people.[40]

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[35] The only allusion to IFOR is when the report explains that refugees do not expect NATO troops to provide security at the local level (Gersony and Gersony: "Summary of Findings and Recommendations, ...": p. 6).

[36] Ibid.: p. 14; also, USAID/DART: "Emergency Shelter Repair Program, Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1996, Final Report:" p. 6.

[37] Interview, DART.

[38] Interview, OFDA.

[39] This large OTI report was based on a six-week assessment by several multi-disciplinary teams that travelled throughout the Federation in January-February 1995. It led the basis for OTI's Federation-strengthening program.

[40] USAID (BHR/Office of Transition Initiatives): "Donor Options for Strengthening the Bosniac/Croat Federation," April 1996: pp. 131-132.

The only differences of substance were the number of people in an average household (OTI estimated 5, the ESRP 3.7) and the cost per house (OTI estimated $6,000, while the ESRP came in at $10,000, factoring in needs for heavily destroyed homes and NGO overhead rates). However, the OTI report also pointed out that "parallel rehabilitation" (i.e., repairing houses on both sides for same-ethnic return) would not directly benefit reconciliation. [41] The overall thrust of the OTI report was that assistance that was politically aware and militant could fight the intransigence of local hard-liners and help reestablish a multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Selling the ESRP in Washington

The assessment team briefed the administrator on February 10, 1996. Then they hit Washington: "During the following month, at the administrator's request, approximately 18 additional briefings were provided to 80 persons" at USAID and State.[42] The assessment team had returned with an answer and the agency's senior management was anxious to share it. These briefings were thorough affairs in which the assessment team laid out its rationale for same-ethnic return and the shelter program. To the best of our knowledge, no written report was provided before April (and even then it was only a summary of findings and recommendations).[43] In other words, the briefings *were* the report.

Several interviewees commented on the very effective briefing techniques employed by the assessment team consultants. They were articulate and forward moving. A workable solution — the shelter program — was proffered. And, the absence of a written product enabled them to tailor each presentation to the interlocutor at hand, preventing "people from chipping away at their message."[44] The views presented were said to represent what was going on in the minds of ordinary Bosnian displaced families. The assessment team consultants established themselves as the link between refugees on the ground and US foreign policy.

Department of State

The reception of the assessment team's findings was mostly favorable. Still today, their analysis is described as "compelling," "clear-eyed" and "very thorough."[45] Since the Washington Accords that sealed the Bosniac-Croat Federation in March 1994, State and USAID officials had spent a frustrating eighteen months trying to promote reintegration and cross-ethnic return. People were

[41] Ibid.: pp. 131-132.

[42] Gersony and Gersony: "Summary of Findings and Recommendations...:" p. 2.

[43] We are not aware that any full report was ever released subsequently.

[44] Interview, USAID/BHR official.

[45] Interviews, State Department, USAID, OFDA.

ready to hear something new. And now that the US was actively involved on the ground, attitudes in official Washington seemed to have taken a tilt towards *realpolitik*. There was still some talk of minority return, but it was increasingly speculative.[46] The assessment team's take on Bosnia fell on fertile ground.

But there was also some opposition within certain circles in State. Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor Affairs, John Shattuck, was opposed to the idea of same-ethnic return, arguing it was a surrender to ethnic cleansing and a first step in the partition of Bosnia Herzegovina. In time, intense lobbying by BHR managed to bring him around.[47] The State Department's special envoy to the Federation, Daniel Serwer, was also unhappy with the proposed program. He predicted that a focus on same-ethnic return would undermine the Federation, and echoed Croat complaints that the project was heavily concentrated in Bosniac areas. He voiced these concerns both to State and to USAID, unsuccessfully. One high-ranking USAID official told the authors that Serwer was the only one to hold out against the same-ethnic focus.[48] The reaction of the BPRM was favorable at the Bosnia desk level, but the fact that BPRM decided not to get involved in the ESRP may have betrayed misgivings at the management level.

The Hill

On the Hill, the assessment team's recommendations met some strong misgivings. Housing was an easy target for anti-foreign assistance rhetoric in Congress. The 1993 Russian Officer Resettlement Program had left little stomach for shelter programs in Eastern Europe. ENI was even prohibited from spending money on housing.[49] The senior management of BHR and OFDA was very aware of this.[50] They lobbied hard and in the end were able to argue that allowing the program to go through would "help our boys." The 'barnacles' were lifted.[51]

USAID

Planning for the ESRP triggered acrimonious debate within USAID. Opposition to the ESRP registered on two separate levels, the field and ENI/Washington (OFDA had practical reservations regarding its involvement, see below). In the field there was strong opposition from USAID Zagreb

[46] Interview, senior OFDA official.

[47] Interview, USAID/BHR.

[48] Interviews, State Department, USAID.

[49] Interview, USAID/ENI.

[50] The "shelter" in the ESRP's title is an understated euphemism for housing (see below, "choosing the NGOs").

[51] Interview, USAID/ENI and OFDA. 'Barnacles' refer to language attached to a congressional appropriation that prohibits the use of the funds in question for a given use.

and from OTI's Federation-building program staff who had so far championed the idea of reintegration-focused grants. The latter especially felt that, after initial failures, they were beginning to make slow headway on local conditionality, for example in a buffer-zone shelter project near Kiseljak in central Bosnia. Their fear was threefold. First, the shelter program would undermine their efforts in the field by offering free, unconditional resources and therefore an alternative for local hard-line leaders. Second, by showing an 'easy' way to spend money, it would undermine the idea of local conditionality in Washington. Last, having dealt with refugee return issues for the past 18 months, they were wary of the issue of double occupancy.[52] They doubted that repairing homes in rural areas would automatically free up space in urban areas.[53] In the end, these field-based concerns were overridden: "There was no debate" within BHR/Washington.[54] The stock of OTI's reconciliation programs was waning, even among supporters in Washington. And the assessment team came with a very powerful mandate.

In Washington, opposition from USAID's Bureau for Eastern Europe, ENI, presented more of a challenge. They were concerned that it had been proposed that BHR manage a massive shelter program, traditionally a non-emergency activity. They disagreed, not so much with the issue of same-ethnic return, but with the more programmatic aspects of the ESRP approach. By early 1996, ENI had its own assessment team in the field. It boiled down to a battle of models. ENI favored a more traditional approach using American contractors and focused on the rehabilitation of urban dwellings, including socially-owned property. BHR argued that progress had to be made fast, which meant staying away from the property rights maze and relying on field-tested implementers — the NGOs. A bruising battle soon developed between ENI and BHR: several interviewees separately recalled the "blood on the walls." An early agreement between the two assistant administrators that the DART would manage the program failed to overcome ENI opposition. The administrator himself was repeatedly called upon to arbitrate, and repeatedly did so in BHR's favor. The ENI design team in Bosnia was told to plan accordingly.[55] Finally, it was agreed that the DART would manage the program, and that ENI and BHR would contribute $12.5 million each. BHR's share consisted of $10 million from OFDA and $2.5 from OTI.

The NGOs

Another key constituency that needed to be sold on the idea of the ESRP was the NGOs. Several NGOs had expressed unhappiness at their non-neutral, 'political' role in OTI's focus on local

[52] 'Double occupancy' has bedeviled (and still does) many return programs in Bosnia Herzegovina, especially those involving house repair. It refers to the instances when a return family reclaims its old home, but fails to vacate its home of asylum, exacerbating housing shortages.

[53] Interview, former NGO field officer for the OTI project.

[54] Interview, USAID/BHR.

[55] Interview, USAID/ENI.

conditionality, saying it was frustrating and even dangerous. But they were also unhappy that a $10 million USAID Request For Applications (RFA) that focused on reconciliation was canceled.[56] In the end it came down to funding prospects.

> We explained to [the NGOs] that if they really wanted to do the right thing and money was a concern, there will be a lot more of it in the ESRP.[57]

The announcement to withdraw the reconciliation RFA was made in Sarajevo on 7 March 1996, a day before the initial meeting on the ESRP. The main NGOs quickly realized that chasing down the ESRP's $25 million would be far easier than the $10 million in the RFA. A March 1996 letter from the CEO of a major American NGO to USAID's administrator captures rather well the evolution in NGO thinking:

> I just got back from a couple of weeks in Bosnia, and wanted to get back to you following my earlier expressions of disappointment at the withdrawal of the RFA that would have combined reconciliation and rehabilitation... [We] now have a better sense of why AID came out as it did for the short term... We support AID's efforts at achieving rapid, tangible impact... Most importantly, however, I wanted to let you know that, based on these talks [with the DART], I'm optimistic that there will be a significant role for [the NGO] in the emergency housing activity... You have an outstanding team.[58]

The money was there, the NGOs were on board. And as this letter shows, the strong relationship and sense of trust that had developed between the DART and the NGOs was integral to the latter signing up for the project.

Rationale for using the DART

The ESRP was a big risk on the part of the agency's senior management. Its visibility and measurability made it attractive. But, as a result, any failure would also have been plain to see and easy to quantify. Thus the decision to entrust the management of the program to the DART was a key decision, and a natural one.

Everything pointed in the DART's direction. At the beginning of 1996, they were the only operational US government unit on the ground. The USAID mission in Bosnia Herzegovina was just

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[56] This RFA had been issued by USAID Zagreb in late 1995, and was pulled by the in-coming Bosnia Mission Director.

[57] Interview, senior USAID official.

[58] Letter from the CEO of a major US NGO in Bosnia to Brian Atwood, USAID Administrator, 25 March 1996.

getting up to speed and did not have the resources to handle the project. More importantly, the DART was now well seasoned: the team-leader was one of the longer serving international field staff in Bosnia. The DART had established excellent relations with various other players, and in particular with the NGOs. The trust that the NGOs had in the DART was key to getting them on board. Finally, the DART was already thinking along the lines of the ESRP philosophy. According to the assessment team report:

> BHR, OFDA and the DART team had already recognized that activities which offered sound, high-impact, rapid and visible assistance [...] were needed. They were quick to perceive the relationship between these needs and the achievement of United States Government and USAID goals in the region.[59]

Yet, it was not necessarily a foregone conclusion. OFDA remains ever mindful of its mandate and is known for husbanding its IDA resources. A post-conflict program, no matter how 'emergency,' is at best on the periphery of OFDA's mandate. OFDA feared that the ESRP could set a precedent from which it would be hard to retreat. There were other misgivings. According to one interviewee, OFDA/W, with its strong Africa focus, was concerned about indulging in Eurocentric favoritism. And finally there were fears that in the highly politicized environment of post-Dayton Bosnia, OFDA would come under political pressure to engage in areas where they knew they would not succeed. "We really had to be convinced by the rest of AID that we had to do this," a senior OFDA official who was close to the decision told the Authors.[60]

According to this same official, OFDA's reluctance led it to set two clear conditions for managing the ESRP: first, the program would be confined to a year (1996), and second, it would not consider cross-ethnic return because that was too difficult.[61] These conditions sum up the very essence of the ESRP. The question arises: to what extent did OFDA's misgivings influence the assessment team's findings and its recommendation for a one-year, same-ethnic program? This remains unclear.

But in the end, the DART's involvement was a foregone conclusion. The program had to happen, and only OFDA could manage it. OFDA decided that the level of emergency shelter needs in Bosnia warranted their involvement, and that they would be able to control the process and avoid coming under undue political pressure. One interviewee volunteered that the fact that the program was "given to [DART team-leader] Tim Knight and the NGOs" was what carried the day. Funds were not a big worry. Money that had been earmarked for Burundi but not spent could be re-directed. "We had known there would be an expensive little push" after Dayton, said one interviewee who was a

[59] Gersony and Gersony: "Summary of Findings and Recommendations...:" p. 16. In an interesting perspective that has a slight ring of hindsight analysis to it, one interviewee told the authors that USAID decided to go with the DART so as to deflect future criticism that would have come its way had it not used its best 'asset.'

[60] Interview, former OFDA senior management.

[61] Interview, former OFDA senior management.

senior OFDA official at the time.[62] The only question was whether overall ENI management would cap the DART. As described earlier, this was a source of acrimonious disagreement — in the end, ENI lost out and OFDA exercised full programmatic responsibility over the entire $25 million shelter budget and the $4 million mini-infrastructure scheme.

OFDA's senior management pledged to the administrator that they would complete the program by the end of the 1996 building season. In other words, the 2,500 houses had to be ready before Bosnia's harsh winter set in at the end of 1996. Time became the program's main priority.

Implementation

The assessment team's detailed legwork was critical to the ESRP's success. In Washington, they helped build support for the project. In Bosnia, they directed the selection of implementing NGOs, of villages to be targeted, even of houses that qualified for repair. The DART followed in this vein, applying a very hands-on approach to the implementation of the ESRP.

ESRP Objectives

Quoting from OFDA's final report, the ESRP's objectives were:

> To support the overall objective of the Dayton agreements of peace and national reconciliation by initiating and accelerating the return of displaced families from temporary places of refuge in towns and municipalities to their own homes in badly destroyed villages and other sites where they could resume or undertake agricultural and other activities;
>
> Demonstrate the start of post-Dayton return to normalcy with a high-impact, visible U.S. operational effort in the field, addressed to the priority need for shelter in war-affected areas, and which would provide hope for the continuing dividends of peace and reconciliation;
>
> Focus attention and energy of returnees and demobilized combatants on short-term employment and re-establishment of normal lives, thereby enhancing the security of IFOR personnel and helping to ensure stability after 1996.[63]

There are several points of interest here. One, the project's symbolic value in support of Dayton is clearly expressed. But the objectives, as stated, do not let on that the return considered was (almost) exclusively same-ethnic. Two, the reconciliation concept is ushered back in through the back door. But OFDA fails to explain how a project that only helped so-called majority returns could give hope

[62] Interview, OFDA official.

[63] USAID/DART: "Emergency Shelter Repair Program...:" p. 2.

of furthering reconciliation: a claim that borders on the misleading.[64] Finally, enhancing IFOR's security seems to have been added in hindsight as key actors in the program do not recall that objective.

Choosing the NGOs

Following the assessment team's debriefings in February 1996, implementation of the ESRP proceeded swiftly. An initial meeting was held in Sarajevo on 8 March 1996, for which a selected group of NGOs who had worked on shelter were asked to prepare a one-page summary of experience. Other NGOs were also welcome. Senior OFDA staff, including its director, and the former assessment team consultants (again in Bosnia as BHR 'reconstruction advisers') distributed the program criteria and answered questions.[65] Twenty-six proposals were received. Administrator Atwood had cleared the criteria. The NGOs had been asked to "be careful not to refer to the project as 'housing' but rather as 'emergency shelter repair,'" presumably to increase the program's palatability in Washington.[66]

Selecting the NGOs was a tightly managed affair. The selection criteria required were very directive, starting with the emphasis on same-ethnic return. The contracting mechanism that was retained, cooperative agreements, allowed USAID more oversight than would have been the case with regular grants. This structured the relationship with the NGOs. The criteria were clear, and so was the DART's attitude: this is a take-it-or-leave-it deal.

> [The attitude was:] 'If the NGOs don't like the criteria, they needn't bother bidding.' They were contractors, the DART knew it and so did they.[67]

A selection committee, comprising DART staff and the reconstruction advisers (the former assessment team), reviewed the proposals. Selection criteria included (but not necessarily in this order): adherence to the terms of reference; geographic and technical expertise; impact through village clustering; and a certain threshold of 'pioneer' households per village. Eight NGOs were selected and met individually with the committee to further discuss their proposal, including their choice of villages, after which they were invited to submit final technical proposals. The cooperative agreements were awarded on 24 April 1996, only four weeks after the initial selection, for a total of $23.6 million.[68]

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[64] 'Reconciliation' appears to be used in the assessment team report as a 'feel-good' term for its Washington audience.

[65] USAID: "USAID/DART Shelter Program: Announcement and Selection Process:" p. 1; for the criteria, see USAID: "Emergency Shelter Repair Program...:" Appendix E.

[66] IRC internal memo, 18 March 1996.

[67] Interview, DART staff.

[68] USAID: "USAID/DART Shelter Program: Announcement and Selection Process:" p. 1; USAID/DART:

OFDA selected eight NGOs, six American and two French. The NGOs selected were Action Internationale Contre la Faim (AICF), CARE, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), EquiLibre, the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Mercy Corps International - Scottish European Aid (MC-SEA), the United Methodist Committee On Relief (UMCOR), and World Vision (WV). These were most of the main NGOs working in the field of reconstruction, with the exception of EquiLibre. EquiLibre was chosen because of its trucking capability (EquiLibre had run convoys throughout the war): the DART was concerned that high prices for materials locally or transport costs could drive up the unitary cost of each home.[69] The management of the NGOs was by and large in strong agreement with USAID's new-found focus on same-ethnic return. Aside from the IRC staff working on the OTI project, the Authors heard of no other resolute voices of dissidence in the NGO community. In fact, we have come across no evidence that the NGOs ever raised any issue of substance whatsoever.

OFDA Measures

The ESRP was clearly going to be a management-intensive affair. The DART assigned two full-time people to the program: a manager and a field-monitor. Integral to the swift and smooth award procedure was OFDA's initiative of requesting a field-based contracting officer, who remained in Bosnia from March through May. According to one USAID staffer, this decision, made early on, proceeded from recognition that the ESRP's size and time-compressed nature was more than the DART could handle. A dedicated contracting officer meant that any contractual hitch could be addressed immediately, without toing and froing with Washington.[70] The DART also went ahead with an assessment of the procurement situation: an experienced OFDA logistics officer was dispatched to surrounding countries (Italy, Croatia, Hungary, Slovenia, Austria) to document the availability and price of building materials. Priority would obviously be given to purchases within the Federation, but if materials were unavailable or too expensive, the DART was ready to run a monopoly-busting operation with EquiLibre trucks.[71]

Selecting the Villages

This, too, was a carefully managed process. The selection committee held extensive preparatory meetings with NGO field staff during which they carefully reviewed municipalities and villages. These meetings were very directive, both in terms of the program's overall objectives and its nuts-and-bolts details. Several NGO interviewees recalled the emphasis placed on visibility ("it had to be quick, visible, a photo op" in the words of one) and reliability. According to the selection committee, "there

"Emergency Shelter Repair Program...:" p. 1.

[69] Interview, OFDA.

[70] Interviews, USAID, OFDA.

[71] Interviews, OFDA.

are important projects that can be done outside the [American IFOR] sector, but it is vital that these projects be 'safe' ones, with little or 'no' risk."[72] Building on the 'verifiable' return rationale, the selection committee indicated that it would be prepared to include only very limited attempts at cross-ethnic return (e.g., IRC's encouraging experience in the Brestovsko buffer-zone near Kiseljak).[73] Written approval for the villages was requested from all municipal authorities.

In most instances, the selection committee either slashed or vetoed proposed activities in "at-risk" areas, i.e., areas where there could be political obstacles to prompt return. These included suggestions for (see below, "Discussion," for further analysis of these examples):

- Zone of Separation (ZoS) locations[74]: MC-SEA suggested villages in the ZoS around Brčko, Gradačac and Doboj East, (both Bosniac and Croat) — not included in the final proposal.

- Localized cross-ethnic return: UMCOR suggested Croat villages in Travnik municipality — dropped when the NGO failed to obtain written permission from the municipal authorities;

- Other politically sensitive areas: CRS suggested helping Croats who had remained in Sarajevo throughout the war return to their homes in the war-ravaged suburb of Stup — even this was deemed too risky.[75]

The selection committee also rejected same-ethnic proposals, such as an EquiLibre proposal to repair Bosniac houses in Podvelez, 10 km East of Mostar. Several experienced NGO staffers expressed some frustration that the selection committee's strong directions overrode their field-based appreciation of what the needs were and sense of where there were real opportunities to achieve political movement.[76] But it does not appear that any of the NGOs put much of a fight in resisting the revisions.

There are other points of significance. In terms of ethnic balance, the ESRP focused on both sides of the Federation, but numbers pointed clearly toward Bosnian government areas (according to OFDA, 81.3 percent of the houses repaired were Bosniac, 18.5 Croat and .2 percent Serb[77]). The DART

[72] IRC internal memo, 18 March 1996.

[73] Ibid.; 'verifiable' return is a notion that recurs often in ESRP documentation — in fact it seems to mean 'return that can be expected soon' (USAID: "Emergency Shelter Repair Program....:" p. 3).

[74] The Zone of Separation is a demilitarized strip of land, four kilometers wide, that divides the two entities, Republika Srpska and the Federation.

[75] Interviews; NGO initial and final proposals for the ESRP.

[76] Interviews, ESRP NGO field staff.

[77] USAID/OFDA/DART: Emergency Shelter Repair Program, Bosnia-Herzegovina, 1996, Fact Sheet.

argued convincingly that Bosniac areas were where the great majority of the needs were.[78] But there is also evidence to suggest that the ethnic make-up was not solely needs-driven and was carefully managed by the ESRP management in order to fine-tune the program's ethnic balance. The wording in the cooperative agreements is unambiguous:

> The ethnic composition of the houses in the villages to be supported under this ward, as detailed in attachments 2 and 3, is *a sensitive and essential element on which USAID support is contingent*. If for any reason there is a shift in the planned ethnic composition, the Recipient must notify USAID immediately and request prior approval [emphasis added].[79]

Another issue was that of targeting IFOR's US sector. Initially, the bulk of US assistance was slated for MND(N) — the US sector — presumably to make the project more attractive in terms of support to US foreign policy. Field staff from the IRC/OTI program, perhaps with others, had argued to the assessment team that needs were Federation-wide. (It was accepted that Serb areas would get no assistance.) The DART took the point, but offered little support. In the end, however, because of heavy mining and uncertainty over the final status of Brčko and surrounding areas, only 60 percent of the 2,400 houses allocated in April 1996 were "principally in or in areas contiguous to the U.S. IFOR zone."[80]

It appears that NATO planners made no effort to influence the choice of sites, despite the ESRP's potential for creating 'friendly' population centers in the vicinity of US troop concentrations. It is unclear to the Authors whether this lack of interest resulted from a deontological respect for the independence of humanitarian assistance on the part of NATO (in our view unlikely), a lack of communication and information-sharing (possible), or simply poor imagination on the part of the US military (probable). One OFDA official surmised that the Pentagon's strong institutional misgivings about strategic hamlet-type experiences were a possible explanation.[81]

Selecting the Beneficiaries

The NGOs knew from previous experience in shelter programs that it was never easy to find beneficiaries who were committed to return.[82] It was also clear that there was going to be little time. At least one NGO was confident enough that it would be selected that it started on beneficiary identification before the award was made.[83] The process was the following. Some NGOs requested a

[78] Interviews, OFDA staff.

[79] Boilerplate Form for ESRP Cooperative Agreements, Attachment 1, section (c).

[80] Gersony and Gersony: "Summary of Findings and Recommendations...:" p. 17.

[81] Interview, OFDA.

[82] Interview, former NGO field officer in central Bosnia.

[83] Interview, ESRP NGO.

list from the municipal authorities with beneficiaries who met the criteria. Others, such as CRS, made a sustained effort to achieve community involvement by devolving authority to ad hoc committees.[84] In at least some cases, and we believe in most, the NGO checked the list through individual interviews, and then submitted the list to the Selection Committee for a final review of the ethnic mix. At least one NGO stressed that "OFDA was not involved in the selection process other than agreeing on their very stringent standards of what could be repaired and what could not (degree of damage). The communities, mayors, etcetera were very involved and usually not easy to work with."[85] In some places, such as Sanski Most and Ključ, municipal authorities accompanied the NGO in their site visits.[86] The reconstruction advisors (the former assessment team members), who visited all proposed villages, vetted many individual houses.[87]

Monitoring

Part of the decentralization to the DART included close monitoring of the program, also a reflection of the project's high profile within the agency. The management of BHR was adamant that the DART report on a weekly basis how many houses had been completed.[88] This raised some problems with the NGOs, especially at headquarters level: their understanding was that, in order to concentrate on implementation, reporting would be kept to a minimum. NGOs in the field had told the DART that weekly reporting would not be a problem.[89] But they may have been telling their home offices otherwise. USAID's Office of Procurement pointed this problem out to the field and suggested that, if necessary, an amendment could be made to reflect the new requirement. "[W]e can't 'require' [the NGOs] to submit weekly or even monthly reports. If we need reports, the max we can ask for is quarterly — which we didn't even require, we only asked them for the final report."[90] The offer to amend the cooperative agreements was not taken up. This misunderstanding was emblematic of the variance that can occur between the DART's operational priorities on the ground and the regulatory environment in which it operates.

There was also an upside to the close tabs the DART kept on the implementing NGOs: in one instance DART monitoring picked up — after some delay that caused an acrimonious exchange of correspondence between the contracting officer and the DART — that one NGO was experiencing

[84] Catholic Relief Services: "Final Report, USAID/DART Emergency Shelter Repair Program, Ilijaš, Olovo, Vogoš□a," December 1996: p. 3.

[85] Interview (written reply to questions), NGO.

[86] Interview, municipal authorities in Sanski Most, ESRP NGO.

[87] Interviews, DART staff, NGO staff

[88] Interview, OFDA.

[89] Interviews, DART, NGO.

[90] Interviews; USAID internal correspondence, 19 June 1996.

difficulties due to high material prices and would not be able to meet the program deadline. The DART's intervention allowed for timely palliative measures to be taken, including a reallocation of units, ensuring that the program objectives were met. This example showed the value of the DART's watchful monitoring on the ground.

The Mini-Infrastructure Program

An important component of the ESRP was the Small Municipal Infrastructure (MIS) Repair Program.[91] The rationale was that shelter alone would not convince people to return. The program targeted village-level social infrastructure such as schools, clinics, water systems and electricity, and the rationale was the same as for the ESRP: minimal repairs to make the facility serviceable, and completion within 1996. ESRP NGOs implemented twenty-eight MIS grants, which the DART managed under the ESRP, with $2 million from OFDA and $2 million from ENI. There had been some resistance to the idea of the MIS in OFDA/Washington because it was not part of OFDA's mandate, but the overall thinking was "in for a dime, in for a dollar."[92] Nonetheless, the administrator was again asked to bestow his blessing upon the project and help it through the bureaucracy. The MIS ultimately resulted in 15 water repair projects, 14 schools, four health clinics and two electricity repair projects. Many of the facilities were designed to serve the population in general, not just the ESRP returnees.[93]

Results

According to DART figures, 2,548 houses were repaired (48 above quota) at a cost of about 23.7 million (well below the initial $25 million forecast), and all in a timely manner, that is to say by december 1996, a mere 7-8 months after OFDA issued the cooperative agreements to the NGOs. Over 8,000 people were estimated to have returned and more than 4,000 short-term jobs were created. These are very considerable results in a very short period of time, given the daunting logistical and bureaucratic obstacles the project faced both in the field and in Washington. In the field, the war had just ended and to carry out the reconstruction within the deadline required experience and determination. But the real miracle happened in Washington where the DART and the assessment team-cum-reconstruction advisors were able to push a major project through USAID's bureaucracy in record time. The DART had proven in spectacular fashion that USAID could move fast when required and be relevant to US foreign policy. But the political repercussions of the project, never analyzed, undermine its apparent success.

[91] Not to be confused with USAID's broader Municipal Infrastructure Services program (also MIS).

[92] Interview, USAID/BHR.

[93] USAID: "Emergency Shelter Repair Program...:" pp. 13 and 15.

II. The ESRP: Discussion

The ESRP rationale

The assessment team's "Summary of Findings and Rrecommendations" was a well-constructed, well-argued, convincing document that lay out a compelling rationale for the ESRP. But a careful and informed reading reveals a series of disturbing shortcomings, which should have been picked up on and addressed.

Poor Sense of Context

The assessment team's summary report failed to give the reader a grasp of political dynamics in Bosnia in late 1995 and early 1996. According to one experienced observer, their "take on Bosnia was totally divorced from the Bosnian political context on the ground."[94] The largest gap was the lack of analysis of how the political environment had changed after Dayton. NATO's bombing campaign and the Dayton Peace Accords brought radical changes to Bosnia, in terms of both the parties to the conflict and the international community's role there. The West had finally flexed its military muscle in a convincing manner. UNPROFOR was out, IFOR was in. United States troops were involved on the ground. Gains made through ethnic cleansing had been rolled back. A strong message had been sent to the wartime leaders on all sides: the war is over. The time of consent had passed. A new chapter had begun.

There was no sense of any of this in the assessment team's findings. Most blatantly, nowhere did their brief report mention that Annex 7 of the Dayton Peace Accords enshrines the right to return — not the obligation, but the right — for all displaced Bosnians.

The assessment team's findings also failed utterly to give any sense of context, any sense of proportion to the problem of displacement. How many internally displaced were there in the Federation, and how many refugees? Within the Federation, how many of the displaced were displaced from RS and how many from within the Federation? More importantly for this study, within the Federation, what were the numbers of cross-ethnic and same-ethnic displaced? In other words, if the ESRP only targeted 10,000 same-ethnic returns, how big was that compared to the overall number of same-ethnic refugees? And how big a proportion was the pool of potential beneficiaries compared to the overall number of displaced? It must be said that these numbers were very hard to come by: UNHCR did not collect data on places of origin.

[94] Interview, former ESRP NGO field staff.

The absence of any discussion of numbers made it impossible — and still does — to say how representative the ESRP's target group was. The team's findings made assertions that were at best unverifiable. For example it stated that, "before the conflict, most of these [same-ethnic] families lived in privately-owned, single-family homes in rural homes."[95] In other words, according to the assessment team, most same-ethnic families met the basic social criteria for the ESRP. This assertion was more self-serving than self-evident: it would have been hard to verify, and hence held the attraction of being hard to challenge.

For all the emphasis on the assessment team's field-based listening methodology, their findings give no sense of their fieldwork. There is no itinerary, no list of officials met.[96] There is no analysis of their 'sample' of 150 displaced families. Who were the they? Bosniac, Croat? Male, female, old, young? Rural, urban? Where did they come from? The Federation? The RS? Were they cross-ethnic, same-ethnic? When did they leave and under what circumstances? Were they refugees or internally displaced? What were their sources of income? Did they receive relief assistance? Were they in collective centers, in abandoned housing, living with relatives? And so on. All questions that, if answered, would have spoken volumes to people who know Bosnia. It is possible that this information was gathered, but if it was, it was never made public. In the absence of these answers, the findings, when looked at coldly, were no more convincing than the opinions of people who were new to the region. In essence, the reader is asked to take the findings on faith.[97]

The assessment team makes equally little sense of the geographic aspects of the political situation in Bosnia Herzegovina in November 1995. By then, the war had affected different parts of the Federation in different ways, and 'peace' had come to these areas in a staggered manner. Places like Sanski Most and Jajce, newly liberated, or the Gora)de and Bihać pockets, just opened after years of isolation, were tense and angry. Sarajevo and Tuzla had been among the more tolerant areas in war-time Bosnia, but they were full of embittered refugees from eastern Bosnia, particularly Tuzla where the Srebrenica survivors were. Central Bosnia and Herzegovina on the other hand, had benefited from a measure of peace, however tenuous, for the previous 18 months. By late 1995, 18 months

[95] Gersony and Gersony: "Summary of Findings and Recommendations...:" p. 3.

[96] Many ordinary Bosnians would have doubtless requested that their names be withheld (as was the case in the present study).

[97] It is interesting to note that a 1989 report on Somaliland by the main assessment team consultant follows a far more solid methodology: the qualitative analysis comes only after a careful presentation and statistical analysis of the sample at hand. As a result, the reader has a far better idea of the basis on which the author bases his assertions. A report by the same consultant on northern Uganda, written since the ESRP assessment, also gives the reader a more detailed sense of context before it issues recommendations (although it, too, lacks a list of official interviewees and information on the sample). See: Gersony, R.: "Why Somalis Flee — Synthesis of Accounts of Conflict Experience in Northern Somaliland by Somali Refugees, Displaced Persons and Others," Bureau of Refugee Programs, U.S. Department of State (Washington DC), August 1989; Gersony, R.: "The Anguish of Northern Uganda — Results of a Field-Based Assessment of the Civil Conflict in Northern Uganda," U.S. Agency for International Development (Kampala, Uganda): August 1997.

after the end of the Bosniac-Croat conflict, openings for minority return and reintegration were beginning to appear. These opportunities were not numerous and, of course, many local leaders remained intransigent, particularly on the issue of minority return, but some parts were beginning to show change. Any post-Dayton reintegration program required careful geographic tailoring to take advantage of opportunities, and conversely not to waste resources on unrealistic efforts. The assessment team should have picked up on this, but failed to. As a result, the ESRP's blanket approach to all of Bosnia Herzegovina was not appropriate, a fact recognized even by some of its supporters.[98] The program was most relevant only to areas where the fighting was most recent. Elsewhere, it failed in one of its main objectives: to build momentum for peace.

Misreading Bosnians

On the basis of an undefined sample, the assessment team drew the conclusion that Bosnians were simply not ready to live together. This came out only tangentially in their report, but was reportedly a major feature of the team's briefings.[99]

This conclusions have been borne out neither by experience nor by recent evidence. Different ethnic, religious, national communities have long coexisted in Bosnia. The Bosnian reality is a textured one — neither all 'harmonious tolerance' nor 'centuries of ethnic hatred' — but an intricate web of proximity, reciprocal obligations and mutual misgivings. It is true that there was often mistrust between ethnic groups, particularly in rural areas.[100] It is also undeniable that the latest war and its cruelties have bred enduring resentments and hatreds. Anyone who has spent any time in Bosnia in recent years has heard these views. But evidence today, four years after Dayton, shows that people want to go home. Not all people, perhaps not even a majority of people, but a strong proportion nonetheless. Spontaneous, or more accurately, 'self-managed' return movements throughout Bosnia, even in the face of strong political and economic odds, are proof of this: Serbs going home to Drvar and Bihać, Bosniacs to Jajce, Croats to Travnik.[101] People are trying to go home, and have been trying to do so for several years. According to observers, both Bosnian and international, it is clear that this is not because people want to live together, or because they necessarily believe in the benefits of a multi-ethnic Bosnia Herzegovina. It is simply because they want to go back to their own homes.[102] It is true that it would have been unrealistic to expect many of these returns in early 1996,

[98] Interview, former ESRP NGO field staff.

[99] See: USAID: "Bosnia: When Customers Tell Us...:" p. 2.

[100] See, among many others: Bringa, T:, *Being Muslim the Bosnian Way: Identity and Community in a Central Bosnian Village*, Princeton University Press (Princeton, NJ), 1995, on central Bosnia. See also: Sudetic, C.: *Blood and Venegeance: One Family's Story of the War in Bosnia*, W.W. Norton and Company (New York), 1998, on the Drina Valley.

[101] Interviews, NGOs; International Crisis Group: "A Tale of Two Cities: Return of Displaced Persons to Jajce and Travnik", Report Nr. 34, 03 June 1998: *passim*.

[102] Interviews, NGO staff in Bosnia, 1998.

especially returns to *Republika Srpska*. But there was then some movement towards cross-ethnic return in Central Bosnia and in the Tuzla region, areas where there had been no fighting since early 1994. The assessment team failed to recognize this, though it was evident at the time.

Accepting the Unacceptable

The assessment team presents key factors as immutable realities, when in fact they were part of the problem that needed to be dealt with. For example, their summary describes the hostility of most authorities in Bosnia to cross-ethnic return, but failed to indicate that Dayton was a rude challenge to this central tenet of nationalist leaders. Similarly, when the summary indicates that local authorities were in favor of same-ethnic return, it fails to explain that this was because same-ethnic return strengthened their control, furthering their goals of ethnic separation. In short, the assessment team offers as an ingredient of success the very attitudes that sparked the war to begin with.

Reversing the Domino Effect: An Incorrect Assumption

The main assumptions on which the report was predicated have turned out to be incorrect. The rationale was that, once their own homes were repaired, displaced families would vacate their homes of refuge in the towns, "and the domino pattern of displacement would begin to be reversed."[103] In fact, the problem of double occupancy was already well recognized within international circles in Bosnia. The fact that the 'reversing the domino' theory was also endorsed by municipal, cantonal and republic officials is easy to explain in terms of their interest to encourage donor support for same-ethnic return. By late 1995, experience showed that people did not just return to their homes, but rather sought to keep their options open. Some family members, often the elderly, might return. Younger generations were more likely to remain in towns. Often, the returnees did not stay in the repaired home full-time, but commuted to the home of refuge. The assessment team should have picked up on these issues. Anecdotal evidence shows that double occupancy bedeviled the ESRP, along with many other shelter programs (see below).

Furthermore, many displaced families were residing with host families — relatives or friends in towns and elsewhere. One NGO reported that "the majority of [target] families were living with extended family members in major cities..." and that many of its (Croat) beneficiaries were in Croatia and Germany, not Bosnia.[104] The return of these people, if indeed it took place, would not have freed up additional space in Bosnian cities.

No Advocacy

[103] Gersony and Gersony: "Summary of Findings and Recommendations...": p. 12.

[104] World Vision Relief and Development: "DART/Bosnia Emergency Shelter Repair Program Final Report, submitted to OFDA," January 1997: p. 4.

The report failed to explore, even in a cursory manner, any of the core issues at stake: NATO's role, the role of the US as a donor, or the potential repercussions of the ESRP.

On NATO, an important issue remains unclear to the Authors. Were advocates of same-ethnic return swayed by the assumption that IFOR, and especially US forces, would not support cross-ethnic return? When asked this question, many interviewees involved in the program answered with an emphatic 'no.' The rationale, they insisted, was that Bosnians were not ready to live together. The time was not right for reconciliation. The fighting was too recent. Nevertheless, security figures prominently in the assessment team report, a fact that highlights the conspicuous absence of any careful analysis of NATO's potential to provide security.

This throws open the issue of advocacy. In the face of the US military's predictable resistance to support cross-ethnic return, is it USAID's role to push for a more proactive attitude on the part of the military? Could USAID have seized on the high bi-partisan regard in which the DART was held in Washington to advocate for the victims of ethnic cleansing? Or, conscious of its secondary status on the foreign policy totem pole, should USAID just accept the way the cookie crumbles, as USAID did in 1996 on Bosnia? These questions strike to the heart of OFDA's twin-mandate: is OFDA's role to serve as a tool of US policy or an advocate for victims?

On NATO's role in supporting cross-ethnic return, the assessment team report draws a critical distinction between IFOR's 'macro' role and security at the local level: "displaced families assert that NATO troops cannot function as local police to assure law and order at the village level."[105] This walks a fine line between reporting what refugees said and endorsing the reported statement as fact. No effort was made to explore whether it was realistic or desirable to see IFOR play a proactive role in encouraging cross-ethnic returns. For instance, the report simply accepts that land mines would hamper returns along the Federation's northern borders in the US IFOR zone and that IFOR would not help in clearing activities. Why accept this? Why not push for greater IFOR involvement? On another score, the assessment team indicated in its findings that in its February briefings, it had predicted large-scale departures from the Serb suburbs of Sarajevo about to revert to Federation control. But there was no recommendation that NATO might intervene to prevent this. Again, why accept this as inevitable? Would it not have been appropriate to underline the importance of keeping Sarajevo as Bosnia's last major multi-ethnic urban center, and NATO's potential contribution to defending that?

In fact, evidence shows that NATO could have— and at times has — assumed local security functions in support of minority protection and cross-ethnic return. In Jajce, following a spate of anti-minority cross-ethnic violence in the summer of 1997, British SFOR initiated 24-hour patrols in minority villages.[106] The British contingent also maintains a return database, registers minority

[105] Gersony and Gersony: "Summary of Findings and Recommendations...:" p. 6.

[106] SFOR was the successor force to IFOR.

returnees and makes small grants to help jump-start economic activities. This, combined with high-level political pressure, has helped get the return process started in Jajce again.[107] All this took place about eighteen months after the Dayton agreement, which was about the amount of time that had gone by between the end of the fighting in central Bosnia and Dayton. Were there not then similar opportunities for NATO in central Bosnia in 1996?

Nevertheless, the assessment team report called for a major policy decision — the switch from cross-ethnic to same-ethnic return. Yet, it provided no analysis of the potential political repercussions of such of a shift. This was unfortunate in as highly political a context as post-Dayton Bosnia, where every US decision was — still is — scrutinized by the actors on the ground. The absence of political analysis was exacerbated by two facts. One, the assessment team provided no out-briefing in Bosnia, arguing that it reported directly to USAID's administrator. Two, neither the DART, nor USAID/Bosnia, nor OFDA/W, nor BHR ever ensured that the report was well distributed. For example, the American ambassador in Sarajevo and the US special envoy to the Federation never received a copy, and neither did the USAID mission directors in Sarajevo and Zagreb.[108]

ESRP Achievements

In its implementation the ESRP was a stunning program. As mentioned earlier, the ESRP was completed on time, above quota and below budget, in an environment that, while far easier than the war years of 1992-95, remained difficult. With the spotlight on them, OFDA and the DART seemed to have demonstrated two facts that the agency perceived as critical to its survival. One, USAID could be relevant to US policy, and two, it could be relevant in a timely manner. This ran against the perception of USAID on the Hill and within the State Department.

After the project's successful conclusion, Administrator Atwood requested a memo outlining what had enabled the DART to pull it off so successfully. The DART team-leader's response was at once encouraging and disappointing. The bright side was that nothing institutionally inherent to OFDA — neither special regulations, nor extraordinary clauses — was involved in the ESRP: in theory, any office in USAID could have done it. The depressing reality of course was that only OFDA could have done it, and this because the DART was already in place.[109]

The DART's operational qualities and field readiness were central to the success of the program, as

[107] International Crisis Group: "Promoting Minority Returns in Central Bosnia: Analysis of Austrian-Funded Housing Projects," Sarajevo, 7 September 1998: p. 6; and "A Tale of Two Cities...:" p. 20. It must be noted that British SFOR's proactive approach is far more of the exception than the rule: for instance, ICG report Nr. 34 indicates that the Dutch contingent in Travnik shows far less initiative in supporting returns.

[108] Interviews, State Department and USAID officials.

[109] Interview, former DART member. The Authors were not able to obtain a copy of this memo.

was the high level of decentralization to the field. In implementing the program, the DART showed itself to be responsive, flexible and practical. The DART's ESRP team integrated the valuable preparation work of the assessment team. The criteria gave the program cohesion and consistency. The deployment of an on-site contracting officer was critical in the early months of the ESRP. Cooperative agreements handed the DART strong control over the NGOs, and the use of local contractors, rather than self-help, meant that work progress could be monitored on the basis of a business contract.

Viewing the ESRP with the benefit of three years' hindsight, the program appears to have yielded two main achievements, the first in Bosnia, the second in Washington. But in neither case is it clear how deep or permanent the progress has been.

In Bosnia, 2,548 badly damaged houses were weatherproofed in 48 villages. Many people have returned, over 8,000 according to OFDA. There is substantial anecdotal evidence, both from various final OFDA and NGO reports and from our own field visits, that life in these villages has picked up.[110] But there is no follow-up monitoring of the returns. Several officials dealing with Bosnia on a daily basis in both USAID and State told the authors that they believed no one, including OFDA, had any idea of how many people had returned and stayed in the 48 villages.

There was circumstantial evidence of success in Washington, too. USAID escaped the ax of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1996 — unlike the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA) and the US Information Agency (USIA). Again it is not clear how much credit is due to the ESRP. One interviewee told the authors that the ESRP "was meant to save AID, and it did."[111] Others maintained that it was ludicrous to think that the agency's management would stake even part of its survival strategy on a three-month assessment and one-year housing program, or indeed, that a $25 million program could have any impact whatsoever on foreign policy. Nevertheless, the degree of involvement of the administrator's office in both the inception and the implementation of the ESRP indicate that it was no run-of-the mill program.

From Return to Shelter: Focus Slippage

The assessment team's findings focused very clearly on return: promote same-ethnic return to show support for Dayton. But as the implementation of the ESRP gathered momentum, a slippage in emphasis occurred, away from a focus on the return of displaced families, to one on 'units' repaired. In the course of 1996, as the US government turned to the ESRP for quick results, attention zeroed in on the more readily quantifiable aspects — the number of houses completed, the increase in living

[110] We visited ESRP villages in Hotonj, Jajce, Kiseljak and Sanski Most municipalities.

[111] Interview, State Department.

space (expressed in square meters), even the number of contractor jobs created. For starters, the program's very title indicates an emphasis on shelter. The program's preoccupation with houses emphasized the shelter aspect. In contrast with the assessment team, at least some in OFDA's senior management viewed the project in quite utilitarian terms: its purpose was to provide shelter to people in need; for them it had no "demonstrative value" and was not intended as a political message that the US brokered peace in Bosnia was working.[112]

Even more indicative was USAID's own reporting on the program. The DART's stringent schedule of weekly reporting to BHR, based on NGO reports, tracked the progress in construction, village by village, unit by unit.[113] An internal USAID audit of the program, while indicating that one of the ESRP intents was to promote return, focused solely on the "principal program goal--[the] emergency repair of 2,500 destroyed homes."[114] The word 'return' does not appear past the background section on page one. Further, the fieldwork for the audit was conducted from 8 July through 10 October 1996 (even if bolstered by statistical evidence up to mid-November), months before any returns were expected. This undermines the credibility of the audit's optimistic final conclusion that "USAID/DART/Former Yugoslavia ensured that disaster assistance authorized under the [ESRP] in Bosnia-Herzegovina was delivered to the intended beneficiaries."[115] It was more a monitoring of work in progress than an evaluation. But it was, as far as the we can ascertain, the only outside look (i.e., not by BHR or the implementing NGOs) at the ESRP until this review.

OFDA's own final reporting placed the onus on the number of shelters completed, rather than on return. The 'before' and 'after' photographs which the NGOs were contractually obligated to provide for each unit repaired, some of which grace the DART's final report, clearly underscore the fact that the house was the result, not the return. The report stresses (in bold) the major achievement that "[n]o USAID/DART rehabilitated houses have been destroyed."[116] Amazingly, it devotes less than a page to an analysis of returnees. So, while return was the essence of the program, outside observers were pointed in the wrong direction: the number of houses repaired. The means had become the end.

One other slippage occurred, this one in the definition of 'same-ethnic.' The assessment team report unambiguously defined same-ethnic refugees as "displaced families who reside [...] in areas which fall

[112] Interview, OFDA management.

[113] USAID/Office of Inspector General: "Audit of USAID's Disaster Assistance Activities in Bosnia-Herzegovina," Audit Report No. B-168-97-001-P, Regional Inspector General, Budapest (Hungary), January 10, 1998: p. 5. Also, USAID interviews.

[114] Ibid.: pp. 1 and 2.

[115] Ibid.: p. 7.

[116] USAID/DART: "Emergency Shelter Repair Program...:" p. 3.

under the security control of the military forces of their own 'majority' ethnic group."[117] This is a widely accepted definition. The OFDA final report, on the other hand, oddly defined same-ethnic return as the return of a displaced family of *any* ethnic background, provided the areas of displacement and return were under the control of the same military.[118] For instance, Croat displaced from the village of Turbe (Bosnian-held), who had found refuge in the nearby Bosnian army stronghold of Travnik, then returned to their villages in 1996.[119] But such cases were exceedingly rare. The DART's peculiar definition of same-ethnic return lent it a multi-ethnic gloss that the reality on the ground did not support.

Ambitious Reporting, Ambiguous Returns

In their end-of-project reports, most of them compiled in December 1996 and January 1997, both the NGOs and the DART quantified the number of returns. But in their reporting, both were liberal in their estimate of actual returns and their forecast for future returns.

The OFDA final program report estimates that 73 percent of beneficiary families returned by the last day of 1996 — 1,860 families, for a total of over 8,000 individuals. There are a number of problems with this figure. As far as we can ascertain, it was based on the final reports of NGOs for individual villages and on final reports for the cooperative agreement. Not only were these final reports uneven in thoroughness, but many were handed in at a time (late 1996) when refugees could not be expected to have returned. The bulk of the return was expected in spring 1997 — people do not return to empty houses in the heart of winter. It is highly improbable that over 8,000 displaced people had returned to the ESRP homes by December 31, 1996.

This points to the ambiguity of the term 'return,' an ambiguity that has bedeviled many a shelter program in the post-Dayton period. What exactly constitutes a return? Is it one person for one night (UNHCR's rather lax definition)? Is it a head of household for a certain amount of time? Is it a nuclear family? To the best of our knowledge this was never defined. A communication from IRC's shelter coordinator to IRC/Sarajevo shows the confusion:

> Here are the answers to the questions sent by OFDA to you. First of all to clarify the statement that 352 families returned in 255 houses. Namely [Field Officers] were counting grandfather and grandmother like one family, one brother's family (him, his wife and children) like second family... It is safe to say that there are up to 35 houses where people did not return. Number of individuals (1200) is correct.[120]

[117] Gersony and Gersony: "Summary of Findings and Recommendations..:" p. 3.

[118] USAID/DART: "Emergency Shelter Repair Program...:" pp. 2-3.

[119] United Methodist Committee on Relief: "Final Report, USAID Emergency Shelter...:" p. 2.

[120] IRC internal memo, 31 December 1996.

The problem obviously was that there was no definition as to what 'a family' was. (The number of 352 returns re-emerges in IRC's final report as the number of *overall* returns for the program.)

With no clarity around the notion of family, reporting family sizes was difficult. An IRC field report from Jablanica-Konjic based its claim of 100 percent return in Glavatičevo, Torlakovac, and Čehajići on the fact that "at least one member of each family has returned home to their repaired home as of November 1996."[121] Were those families of one? The report did not specify. At least one NGO report described uncharacteristically low average family sizes: 2.7 in Maglaj, Doboj South and Usora, 3 in Bihać.[122] According to the DART final report, the overall average family size for the ESRP was 3.6: "The average family size is lower than expected, which is most likely due to the number of returning elderly couples whose children have moved out."[123] In 1994, a UNHCR-funded social study of 5,413 households across the Federation and Serb areas of Sarajevo reported an average family size of 3.8.[124] However, this sample covered both rural and urban areas. One would have expected to see slightly higher average family sizes in ESRP villages, which were mostly rural.

Furthermore, returns are not monolithic. People return for a few days, a few weeks, then leave, then reassess and may go back again. According to one NGO final report:

> The number of displaced persons returning to their homes is in a constant case of flux. Extended family numbers are returning at intervals that depend on the personal situations of each family. For instance many owners with children did not return with their entire families due to the commencement of school in the area where they had been re-located. Elderly family members also delayed in joining their family members until weather conditions were more favorable.[125]

Remarkably, this disclaimer, reasonable for anyone who has worked on return issues anywhere, did not deter the same NGO from stating on the next line that it "estimates that at the time of this writing [December 1996] 280 families have returned to their homes." This represents a return rate of 90.3 percent. Clearly, such claims were possible because definitions (of family, of return) were never established. Even more remarkably, the NGO reports in the same breath that "although 110 homes were repaired in Usora, a large portion of the homes are not occupied yet."[126] In the midst of this

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[121] IRC-Jablanica: "USAID/DART Housing Program Final Report," internal document, December 1996: p. 5.

[122] World Vision Relief and Development: "DART/Bosnia Emergency Shelter Repair...:" p. 1; CARE: "Final Report, USAID/DART Emergency Shelter Repair Program," December 1996: p. 5.

[123] USAID/DART: "Emergency Shelter Repair Program...:" pp.: iii and 10.

[124] CIET International: *Food Security, Social Support and Agriculture in Central Bosnia & Herzegovina*, New York, 1994: table 3, p. 13.

[125] World Vision Relief and Development: "DART/Bosnia Emergency Shelter...:" p. 3.

[126] Ibid.: p. 3. The report indicates that returnee reluctance was due to an electricity hook-up problem.

confusion — and the cacophony of contradictory statements — how could the DART realistically claim a return rate of 73 percent? The claim remains devoid of nuance, context and, ultimately, credibility.

The Problem of Double-Occupancy

Following the 1994 Federation accords, double occupancy — when a family who, before the war resided in one home, now resides in two or more homes — emerged as one of the single most arduous obstacles to return. In Sarajevo, in central Bosnia, in Herzegovina, and in the Tuzla region, NGOs and donors saw that substantial 'pull' factors enticed displaced families to keep a foot in the areas where they had settled, particularly in urban areas that were at a premium for a number of reasons. Refugees felt more secure in urban areas. Services were often better because of a greater international presence. Earning a living was easier for wage earners. Schools were an important factor, too. And, in most cases, municipal authorities had very few incentives to evict people, especially if they lived in the homes of 'other' ethnic groups. By late 1995, this was recognized across the board in Bosnia. The ESRP, too, experienced problems that were foreshadowed in the tri-partite agreement process: "...[G]etting tripartite agreements signed [by beneficiaries] prior to actual construction took longer than [the NGO] expected. People did not want to leave nice city apartments with all the amenities for bombed out places in the country."[127] The tri-partite agreements were the ESRP's safeguard against double occupancy.

The problem is that, to the best of our knowledge, the ESRP envisaged no mechanism to monitor that the tri-partite agreements were being enforced. One NGO report indicated that municipal authorities in Maglaj actually evicted displaced families whose houses had been repaired under the ESRP.[128] But in general, the NGOs finished off their final reports before the 60-day grace period had expired, so they would not have known whether the municipality was evicting people or not.[129] Senior staff at the USAID mission in Sarajevo, in OFDA and in the ESRP NGOs indicated to the Authors in 1998 that

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Another explanation was that many Croat beneficiaries who were in Croatia and Germany never *intended* to come back to Usora (interview, former NGO field officer). World Vision even goes so far as to say that municipal authorities in Usora provided them with misleading information (p. 5).

[127] DART correspondence to OFDA/W commenting on delay in signing tri-partite agreements in Unsko-Sanski Canton, 06 September 1996.

[128] World Vision Relief and Development, "DART/Bosnia Emergency Shelter...:" p. 5: ("[...] many of our families returned kicking and screaming because the municipality threw them out of their apartments in town [...]").

[129] It is unclear whether this was due to negligence on the part of the NGOs or because of pressure from the donor. In either case it shows how little emphasis was placed on the tri-partite agreements; and if the donors and aid agencies lent that little importance to the agreements, it is unlikely the local authorities were very serious about them either.

there was little sense of how those villages had evolved.[130] It is acknowledged that no one can say with any certainty how many people have returned. USAID had no contact with the ESRP villages other than random interaction through the implementation of other, much larger programs, such as the Municipal Infrastructure and Services (MIS) or the Bosnian Reconstruction Finance Facility (BRFF).[131] USAID is not monitoring the villages in any systematic way. OFDA is not monitoring the villages. The ESRP NGOs that we spoke to are not monitoring the villages. No one is. As one former senior OFDA official candidly put it: "It's hard to tell whether [the ESRP] was a success."[132] Monitoring was a problem that has beset many shelter programs in Bosnia, but the ESRP set the trend: the repairs of the homes were monitored, the return of the refugees was not.[133]

There is significant evidence that double-occupancy was and remains a problem for the ESRP, as examples from Glavatičevo (Konjic), Žeželovo (Kiseljak) and Jajce show.

Glavatičevo (Konjic)

One example is in the village of Glavatičevo, near Konjic. Under the ESRP, IRC repaired 46 houses in this settlement some 25 km up the Neretva river from Konjic town. According to IRC's final report, 46 families comprising a total of 220 people returned to Glavatičevo.[134] An internal report out of the IRC Jablanica office in December 1996 sheds a more textured light on the outcome:

> Unfortunately, two repaired rooms [the ESRP standard] were not sufficient to accommodate larger families *and some members remain in their displaced residence* [emphasis added].[135]

The report went on to describe the positive impact as families upgraded their homes, predicting a "permanent move in the spring of 1997." The move never happened. According to a 1998 report on Konjic by the International Crisis Group:

> Many houses in the village of Donje Selo, just outside the town [of Konjic], are being occupied by people whose homes were rebuilt with donor funds in the village of Glaveticevo [sic]. On a high-profile trip in July 1997, US Ambassador to the UN Bill RichardsNon brought attention to

[130] Interviews, USAID/Bosnia, OFDA, NGOs.

[131] Interview, USAID/ENI.

[132] Interview, former OFDA official.

[133] Interview, PRM.

[134] International Rescue Committee: Bosnia-Herzegovina, "Final Report, Emergency Shelter and Small Infrastructure Repair," submitted to OFDA, 03 January 1997: summary report table.

[135] IRC-Jablanica: "USAID/DART Housing Program..." p. 5.

> these cases. Many of the houses now serve as weekend homes or only part of the family has returned. By March 1998 the occupants still had not moved back to their reconstructed homes even though the Mayor [of Konjic] had told them that they had to have returned by then. The US Embassy even gave the municipality a van for transportation to and from the village since the temporary occupants cited the lack of transportation as a reason for not returning.[136]

ICG went on to describe how the Mayor of Konjic agreed to evict 37 double occupant families from Serb homes in Donje Selo. But Serb would-be returnees remained skeptical and, as of 1 June 1998, had not submitted requests for return. This example points to several problems. First of all, same-ethnic return has not led to cross-ethnic return. In Konjic — which is considered fertile ground for cross-ethnic return because of, among other things, the rather open attitude of municipal authorities — "the principal obstacle [to minority return] is double occupancy."[137] Second, the tri-partite arrangement clearly did not guarantee return.[138] Finally, it is interesting that reporting on ESRP results grew progressively more sanguine as it moved further away from the field: in Glavatičevo, the IRC Jablanica report warned of incomplete return, while the IRC final report estimated return at 100 percent (with a household average of five), and this was in turn endorsed by the DART's final ESRP report.

Žeželovo (Kiseljak)

Double occupancy is also an issue in Kiseljak municipality, where IRC repaired 52 houses in a cluster of buffer-zone villages east of Kiseljak town, Donje Žeželovo, Gornje Žeželovo and Gojakovac. There is a discrepancy between IRC's internal field report on the Žeželovo project, which states the number of houses there at 52, while the final report to OFDA put that number at 56.[139] Interviews with residents and Croat and Bosniac municipal officials seem to indicate that the field report is correct.[140] This was the only straightforward attempt on the part of the ESRP to promote cross-ethnic return.

By the end of November 1996, according to an internal IRC-Zenica report, 15 families had returned. IRC's final report to the DART did not specify the number of returns per site. A series of interviews that were conducted for this review indicated that 15 to 17 families have returned to D. Žeželovo (out

[136] International Crisis Group: "The Konjic Conundrum: Why Minorities Have Failed To Return To Model Open City," (report Nr. 35), Sarajevo, 19 June 1998: p. 8. The Authors were not able to confirm the issue of the van.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Ibid.: p. 9.

[139] IRC: "OFDA Shelter Project, Žeželovo and Brestovsko Buffer Zones, Final Report," internal document, 19 November 1996: p. 1; and IRC, Bosnia-Herzegovina, "Final Report, Emergency Shelter and Small Infrastructure Repair," submitted to OFDA, 03 January 1997: p. 9 (appendix C). The discrepancy cannot be accounted for by IRC's 'over quota' houses as these were in Memići (four) and Glavatičevo (six).

[140] IRC: "OFDA Shelter Project, Žeželovo and Brestovsko...:" p. 1.

of 26), about five to Gojakovac (out of 17), and all nine to G. Žeželovo, for a total of 29 to 31 families. This represents progress on IRC's 1996 estimate, and is consistent with the experience that returns take time.[141] It is interesting that, while return rates appeared high among Bosniacs (about 90 percent), they are low among Croats (under 20 percent). The Croat municipal official reported high rates of return for Croat families that were not borne out by our field interviews in D. Žeželovo, and that should therefore be suspect for Gojakovac. Interviews indicated that many Croat families visit their repaired homes regularly and tend to their gardens but continue to live in formerly Bosniac-owned houses in or near HVO-controlled Kiseljak. This can in part be explained by the fact that the economy and social services are better in Kiseljak than in Bosnian army-held Tarčin, where the majority of the Bosniacs fled during the war. But, most important is the fact that Croat municipal authorities in Kiseljak are discouraging Croat returns to outlying villages, as that would vacate Bosniac homes in Kiseljak.[142]

Shoddy planning and lax monitoring led to unintended consequences: the water system was rehabilitated in a project that IRC implemented in Žeželovo under an ESRP/MIS program. According to residents, the valve installed by an IRC contractor in 1996 has led to an unfortunate system where either the majority Bosniac section of the village has water and the Croat section does not, or vice-versa. This has become a major source of tension between the two communities.

Jajce

The Authors conducted cursory site visits in the villages of Donje and Gornje Mile (Jajce municipality). We saw several recently repaired houses, including some that had the bronze USAID plaque on, but that were clearly uninhabited (no garden, no firewood, broken windows, boarded doors). Others showed sign of intermittent occupancy (gardens, but no animals, no vehicles, no presence). The settlement was totally empty. Inquiries in a nearby village revealed that people have not returned because there is no electric power. This could not be confirmed. One local man quipped that the international community had built nice *vikendice* (weekend homes) for Jajce residents — Mile overlooks the idyllic Plivsko lake, a mere four kilometers west of Jajce. It is likely that Croat displaced families from Mile have returned to the municipality but chosen to live in Jajce town instead. UMCOR also ran ESRP projects in two small villages — Carevo Polje and Vrbice — which are really suburban neighborhoods of Jajce. It is possible that return rates are higher there as they lie

[141] In fact, on the day one of the Authors was conducting a field visit (September 1998), Croat refugees were returning to the other IRC buffer-zone project in Kiseljak, Brestovsko-Bilalovac, nearly two years after the completion of the houses.

[142] Interviews, NGO field staff, Croat and Bosniac residents of D. and G. Žeželovo, Bosniac and Croat municipal officials in Kiseljak. We did not interview residents of Gojakovac so our information about conditions there is second-hand; it is also interesting to note that the elected Bosniac municipal authorities have not yet been allowed to gain office space in Kiseljak; they have their offices in the neighboring village of Bilalovac (ARBiH control), in the house of a Croat former resident.

only a few hundred yards outside Jajce city limits.

These examples show that neither OFDA nor the NGOs ever fully addressed the issue of double occupancy in their final reports. The DART's final report even raised the problem of double occupancy without fully explaining its ramifications:

> Rather than return to the village, these children [of returnees] are more likely to remain in the cities where job opportunities are greater, higher education is available, and utilities are functioning. Until further opportunities in the villages and surrounding areas are available for younger individuals/families many of these people will remain in the cities.[143]

The report chose not to explain that double occupancy not only contravened the tri-partite agreements, but actually undermined the very premise of the ESRP, that is to say achieving political space through the creation of physical space.[144]

Encouraging the Partition of Bosnia

By the standards of other post-war donor programs, the ESRP was relatively modest program. But the fact that it was the first major post-war US program made it very conspicuous. It sent a powerful political message. It also set a precedent for other donors in terms of beneficiaries, areas of work and activities. All told, the ESRP sent a clear pro-partition message to national-level leaders, local hard-liners, NGOs and donors, and to the US foreign policy establishment, including US military commanders. As such, it enabled nationalist politicians on both sides of the Federation to consolidate their geographic control.

The ESRP Message to National Level Leaders: We Won't Hold You to Dayton

The ESRP was the first major US post-Dayton project. It was high profile. It concentrated cohesively on same-ethnic return and its adoption resulted in the scuttling of USAID's reintegration-focused activities. On the ground, the ESRP could be seen as nothing else than a policy shift.

Some leaders at the national level were well aware of the ESRP. Jadranko Prlić, former head of the HDZ and Federation Foreign Minister, was unhappy about the project's predominant focus on Bosniac areas.[145] It is not clear whether he voiced his complaints to US officials merely as a

[143] USAID/DART: "Emergency Shelter Repair Program...:" pp. 10-11.

[144] To reiterate: Increased political space is hoped for when a local authority finds it easier to authorize minority returns because they will not need to evict displaced people of their own nationality in order to free up space.

[145] Interview, State Department.

bargaining chip, or whether he was truly concerned by the project. But he was aware of it. On the Bosniac side, local leaders who were very influential in central level SDA politics, such as Ferid Alagić, mayor of Sanski Most, were involved in the project. Furthermore, the assessment team met with ranking Federation officials — it is likely they would have discussed the program rationale with them. And it would be unlikely that senior political figures would not be watching the most powerful political player's most visible program. At a time, in the first half of 1996, when it was unclear how closely the US would enforce the spirit of Dayton, the ESRP sent the following message: We are not interested in reintegration. We will not push you on the right to cross-ethnic return. We will not enforce Annex 7. We will help you consolidate your ethnic areas.

The ESRP Message to Local Hard-liners: We Won't Take You On

The ESRP's vocation was to work at the local level. The natural counterparts were municipal authorities, both in fairly moderate areas like Tuzla and Gradačac, and in hard-line bastions like Jajce, Sanski Most, and Kupres. It seems that the program did much to strengthen hard-liners and may even have undermined moderates.

Consolidating Nationalist Power

The ESRP helped nationalist parties, whose agendas center on the ethnic partition of Bosnia Herzegovina, extend their control over newly liberated areas. At the local level, it played right into the hands of local nationalist thugs. It offered unconditional support to hard-line fiefdoms such as Jajce and Sanski Most.

In late 1995, two things were happening in Bosnia. One, local conditionality projects were beginning to gain donor acceptance. Two, Dayton had ushered in a new deal. This was the very moment when OFDA and USAID chose, with the ESRP, to go down the path of non-conditionality. The message to local authorities was: no matter what you do or do not do to help minorities, we will help you get *your* people home. This represented a 180-degree turn in USAID policies in the field. It was also a shift in State Department policy.

The result was disastrous. For local hard-liners who had remained defiant, often successfully, it was a clear victory. They were able to turn to their constituents and say: 'See, I stood firm.' The message to them was: hold out long enough, and the internationals will fold. And this message came at a time, after NATO's bombing and after Dayton, when the nationalist tide was ebbing. One former NGO field officer lamented that, within six months of Dayton, "these guys [the hard-liners] had never been stronger — when they should have been at their weakest."[146]

[146] Interview, former NGO and OTI field officer, central Bosnia.

The ESRP supported local hard-liners in several ways. To begin with, the same-ethnic returns that did take place strengthened the demographic hand of the local nationalists because there were no corresponding cross-ethnic returns. Moreover, they were in charge of most municipalities throughout Bosnia, and could claim credit for international assistance: in a carry-over of the communist mind-set, beneficiaries perceived the State's local representatives — the municipal authorities — as the donor, especially when the Municipality had a say in determining who the beneficiaries were.[147] Unconditional assistance schemes such as the ESRP helped nationalist parties build their patronage networks. This was particularly important in Bosnia in the run-up to the September 1996 elections that cemented the nationalist parties' grip on power.

Second, local firms benefited in opaque ways from ESRP contracts, especially publicly-owned companies. This, too, was a source of patronage. The problem emerged in several municipalities, when authorities sought, with varying degrees of success, to impose 'their' contractors. In Donji Vakuf and Konjic, for instance, IRC reported coming under intense pressure to use publicly owned companies. "Public companies employed more workers on the books, which translates into higher taxes for the government and social benefits for its employees."[148] Public companies seemed to take longer to complete the task so as to keep more workers employed.[149] Thus, one of the ESRP's initial objectives, short-term employment, an objective that was specifically pushed by Administrator Atwood, actually turned out to be a source of patronage for local nationalist hard-liners. Several beneficiaries interviewed for this study declared that they were convinced that the repairs carried out by the contractors cost far less than the amount agreed upon with the NGO.[150]

Third, it is clear that both the SDA (*Stranka za demokratska akcije* — Bosniac nationalist party) and the HDZ (*Hrvatska demokratska zajednica* — Croat nationalist party) are using their own resources to build housing and social services in majority-return areas. Same-ethnic returns, and the resettlement of refugees, form the popular backbone of the nationalist demagogues. Their resources come for the most part from exogenous sources: Islamic countries for the SDA; Croatia and the Croat diaspora for the HDZ; and corruption and crime for both. The Federation is dotted with Saudi schools and Croatian Government housing projects.[151] The ESRP, as well as the small infrastructure project furthered their political agendas and meant that nationalist party funds that might otherwise have been used on same-ethnic refugees could be re-directed elsewhere.

Working With the Municipalities: Cooperation or Cooption?

[147] Interviews, Bosnian interviewees, USAID/OTI staff, NGO staff.

[148] IRC-Jablanica: "USAID/DART Housing Program...:" p. 4.

[149] Ibid.

[150] Interviews with ESRP beneficiaries in Žeželovo (Kiseljak) and Hotonj (Vogošća).

[151] The Saudis adopted an approach similar to that of the ESRP in a shelter program in Brčko: weatherization of two-three rooms and use of local contractors (interview, OSCE Brčko).

The DART's final report explained at length the importance of involving the municipalities in the ESRP. "[T]he municipalities cooperated with USAID/DART and the NGOs in locating villages which corresponded to the program criteria. This cooperation continued throughout the extensive progress of locating beneficiaries and signing of the tripartite agreements."[152] The report failed to point out the potential political and economic value for local leaders of a same-ethnic return scheme. It claimed that "selecting program beneficiaries was the sole responsibility of the NGO so as to ensure impartiality."[153] As the examples in Kiseljak, Travnik and Sanski Most show (see below), this was often only the case in theory: the municipal sign-off requirement could only mean that the selection process would result from negotiations with the municipality. And, as noted earlier, the municipality's ultimate responsibility — enforcing the tri-partite agreements — was never monitored.

Sanski Most and Jajce: Nationalist Strongholds

Nowhere is the ESRP's support to hard-liners clearer than in Sanski Most. Sanski Most was liberated in the fall of 1995. Mehmet Alagić, a hard-line Bosniac military leader, commander of the much-feared Seventh Muslim Brigade, installed himself as mayor. Some observers believe his units may have been involved in some of the few war crimes committed by Bosnian army forces.[154] Serb forces expelled Alagić from his home in 1992, and he represented a group of brutal, ruthless and fiercely determined refugee-warriors who knew that the only way they would go home was atop a tank. Which is precisely what they did in Sanski Most in late summer 1995.

Up to the writing of this report, Sanski Most was one of the more tightly controlled Bosniac municipalities in the Federation. Minorities are not welcome. Political and economic violence is widespread.[155] But in the early days, establishing the SDA's rule was a challenge in an area that had been completely cut off from Sarajevo. The arrival of UMCOR and the ESRP in the municipality was very important to Mayor Alagić. The notoriously obstructive mayor pledged full support to the program, offering office space, housing and security to the NGO. Municipal officials accompanied UMCOR staff when visiting local villages.[156] Because of the depressed economic situation in Sanski Most, UMCOR ran into problems obtaining fair prices for building materials and identifying

[152] USAID/DART: "Emergency Shelter Repair Program...:" p. 20.

[153] Ibid.: p. 20.

[154] Vulliamy, E.: *Seasons in Hell: Understanding Bosnia's War*, Simon and Schuster (London), 1994: p. 294. Alagić has since been removed from office by the High Representative, the international official responsible for coordinating the overall civilian implementation of Dayton.

[155] Interviews, NGOs, Bosnian officials. Economic violence refers to intimidation of business-owners; harassment of employees; discrimination for things such as access to housing, social benefits, utilities, credit, etc.; manipulation of state benefits; and so on.

[156] Interview, NGO.

contractors (as did CARE in Bihać).[157] But unlike CARE, UMCOR initially relied openly on municipal authorities to help organize labor. Later, local contractors came on line.

Interviews that we conducted for this review with past and present local authorities in Sanski Most municipality indicated that municipal authorities had great influence over the ESRP. This was done in two ways. First, according to these sources, the mayor was the prime decision-maker in identifying the beneficiaries. The NGO submitted its criteria, but the Municipality came up with the individual houses. One source estimated that 95 percent of the houses suggested by Alagić were retained by the NGO.[158] Second, the Municipality had a key role in deciding which contractor would get the ESRP business. While monitored by the international NGO, the decision process was, in reality, adjudicated by the Municipal Bureau for Reconstruction, which is headed by a close relative of Alagić.[159] There have been serious reports in the Bosnian media that Alagić took hefty bribes from Sanski Most construction contractors who were bidding on international donor contracts in 1996.[160] Furthermore, local residents told how the mayor took personal credit for the reconstruction projects, saying that he and his party provide all that is necessary for refugees to return.[161] According to official sources, the apartments that were freed up in town by people returning to houses repaired by the international community (not necessarily in the ESRP) were then taken over by the Municipality who used them as a tool of political patronage with other returnees.[162]

Interviews with local authorities in the ESRP villages in Sanski Most Municipality were inconclusive. An official in Vrhpolje told us that 40 houses had been repaired in two villages in the Vrhpolje Local Community, 10 more than the 30 announced by UMCOR and the DART.[163] However, authorities in Fajtovci Local Community, which includes Gorica and Modra, claim that only 43 houses were repaired there under the ESRP, instead of the 65 announced by the NGO.[164] Fajtovci is Alagić's birthplace.

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[157] Interviews, NGO.

[158] Interview, member of Una-Sana Cantonal Parliament.

[159] Interviews, member of Una-Sana cantonal Parliament, Bosnian public prosecutor.

[160] See "Zbog Pohlepe i Načina Vladanja Građani Sanskog Mosta Svog Načelnika Zovu 'Bosanski Mobutu'!" ("Greed and Leadership Style Lead Citizens of Sanski Most To Dub Their Mayor 'Bosnian Mobutu!'"), *Slobodna Bosna*, 7 September 1997: pp. 10 ff.

[161] Interviews, residents of Sanski Most.

[162] Interview, former Sanski Most municipal official. The people who were leaving town for their villages belong to the initial wave of Bosniac returnees to the Sanski Most region, often fighters in Alagić's Seventh Muslim Brigade, who settled in town because their homes were destroyed.

[163] Interview, Local Community official, Vrhpolje (Sanski Most).

[164] Interview, Local Community official, Fajtovci (Sanski Most).

Croat authorities in Jajce have also resisted Dayton, and particularly minority returns. In August 1997, mobs organized by the local HDZ chapter attacked Bosniac returnees who had been returning in increasing numbers.[165] Despite lengthy negotiations, USAID never signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Jajce authorities because they were "not compliant on freedom of movement, refugee return and war criminals."[166] Yet, the ESRP selection committee took an early and special interest in Jajce.[167] Ultimately, the ESRP repaired 150 units within 4 km of the town, at a time when Jajce authorities were anxious to get Croats (and not Bosniacs) back. Once again the ESRP provided support for the nationalists' political agenda.

Kiseljak: Undermining Prior Progress in Cross-Ethnic Returns

By 1995, before the ESRP, a cross-ethnic return project by IRC in the Brestovsko-Bilalovac buffer zone west of Kiseljak had registered definite, if slow, progress.[168] IRC managed to obtain clearances from both sides to proceed with mixed returns in the buffer zone, proof that there were openings for cross-ethnic return. According to IRC, local authorities were shaken by Dayton and uncertain what the deployment of IFOR meant for them. This made them more cooperative.[169] Nevertheless, when Croat authorities found out that a large number of the Bosniac houses were actually in HVO-controlled territory (and not in the buffer zone), they withdrew their permission. There was also a shortage of Croat houses that met the program criteria, which meant that Croats would be under-represented in the project. HVO police forcibly stopped the work and roughed up Bosniac displaced who were visiting their homes. IRC was only able to secure permission for 71 houses. According to the DART:

> After extensive negotiations, the NGO ultimately decided to reprogram the 20 units to other areas in its overall program, *in order not to suffer further delays in program implementation* [emphasis added].[170]

Permission was then requested from OFDA — and promptly granted — to select additional houses in the Brestovsko buffer zone. In the end, only 52 (or 56) houses were built.[171] In keeping with the ESRP's strict adherence to ethnic balance, the newly selected houses were Croat-owned.[172]

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[165] International Crisis Group: "A Tale of Two Cities...," quoting a United Nations IPTF document of September 1997.

[166] Interview, USAID/ENI.

[167] IRC internal memo, 18 March 1996.

[168] Gersony and Gersony: "Summary of Findings and Recommendations...:" p. 10.

[169] Interviews, NGO staff, residents, municipal authorities.

[170] USAID/DART: "Emergency Shelter Repair Program...:" p. 3.

[171] About the discrepancy in numbers, see above, "the problem of double-occupancy (Žeželovo)."

[172] Interview, ESRP NGO field staff.

Intransigence was rewarded. The ESRP's preoccupation with producing rapid results meant that municipal authorities had to be kept on board so as to avoid more time lost — as a DART memo pointed out: "An important consideration in reallocating the houses is how it will affect the relationship between the municipality and the NGO."[173]

Travnik: Strengthening or Weakening Local Moderates?

In their initial proposal for Travnik Municipality, UMCOR had included two Croat villages, Podkraj and Delilovac, both under Bosnian army control. These were then dropped when the Bosnia municipal authorities in Travnik failed to give written approval. When the DART requested proposals for additional houses in July 1996, UMCOR again suggested the two Croat villages. This time, Travnik Municipality agreed, and the amendment was signed, only to see the Municipality once again withdraw its approval. When UMCOR then suggested that houses be selected in Bosniac areas (Bistrica and Hrasnica in Gornji Vakuf municipality, and Turbe in Travnik Municipality), the DART approved the amendment within one day of its submission.[174]

Internal correspondence shows the DART going to some pain to explain why they had allowed even this small cross-ethnic 'lapse' to occur with the Croat villages. The reason proffered for the Travnik Municipality's change of heart on the Croat villages was that "they had been pressured from 'above'... UMCOR was informed that any jurisdiction the municipality had in this issue had been assumed by Cantonal and Federal authorities."[175] The withdrawal of the permission was clearly political and aimed at undermining the Croat villages, as at least 20 Croats who had been displaced in Travnik town were allowed to return to Turbe under the ESRP.[176] This was not about people not wanting to live together: Podkraj has been since 1996 a major destination of self-organized cross-ethnic return for Croats from Nova Bila and Novi Travnik.[177] So what effect did the ESRP's failure to push for cross-ethnic return have on local politics in Travnik?

The local political backdrop to all this was a political struggle between the mayor of Travnik, a moderate, and local hard-liners in the run-up to the upcoming elections (mid-September 1996). The central question is what impact did the program have on the local moderate? A cross-ethnic return effort, if it is only localized, puts the moderate under pressure. In Travnik, Mayor Granov had to make a decision on UMCOR's request with hard-liners breathing down his neck. The fact that the ESRP was mostly same-ethnic made the pressure formidable: how could the mayor give his blessing to assistance for Croat villages in his municipality when, under the same project, no Bosniacs could

[173] OFDA internal correspondence, 15 June 1996: p. 3.

[174] Interview; United Methodist Committee on Relief: "Final Report, USAID Emergency Shelter...:" p. 2.

[175] DART internal memo, 30 September 1996: pp. 2-3.

[176] United Methodist Committee on Relief: "Final Report, USAID Emergency Shelter...:" p. 2.

[177] International Crisis Group, "A Tale of Two Cities...:" pp. 10-11.

go back to, say, HVO-controlled Nova Bila? At the same time, the ESRP offered the mayor a same-ethnic way out of his predicament: he called for the repair of Bosniac homes in Gornji Vakuf and Turbe, an offer which, we have seen, the DART promptly accepted. The ESRP made doing the hard thing harder and doing the easy thing easier: the pressure on the moderate to give in to the hard line had now become unbearable. Again, intransigence was rewarded. The hard line carried the day, which further weakened the moderate. Mayor Granov was finally ousted at the end of the summer; by 1998, Travnik Municipality had become, according to the International Crisis Group, "more obstructionist than the Sarajevo leadership [of the SDA]."[178]

Some argue that it is international intransigence — demands for political movement and refugee reintegration — that undermine local moderates. But this is mostly true when alternatives exist that are not conditional, such as support for same-ethnic return, and when there is no political pressure at the national level. These unconditional alternatives make the hard line possible, which in turn makes moderation nigh-impossible. And yet, moderate local leaders, even minority leaders, can survive and push a policy agenda. It is difficult, it is dangerous, it requires international commitment, including security measures at the local level, but it is being done. In Travnik, the ESRP did just the opposite.

Žepče / Begov Han: Unconditional Surrender

Begov Han is a Bosniac rump-municipality carved out of the Croat-controlled municipality of Žepče. There was no mention of Begov Han in World Vision's first and second proposals for the ESRP.[179] But after conferring with the DART's selection committee, WV decided to propose 20 houses in the village of Brezovo Polje. Apparently, a joint DART-NGO field assessment had come to the conclusion that this was a Croat settlement, attached to Žepče Municipality. When work began in Brezovo Polje, the Bosnian police intervened.[180] A subsequent letter from the Bosniac mayor of Begov Han explained that the village was indeed Croat, but under ARBiH control, and that no Croats would be allowed to return until Bosniacs could return to Croat-held Žepče.[181] The DART estimated that Brezovo Polje no longer conformed to ESRP criteria and that neither WV nor the DART could influence the political aspects of the situation. It instructed WV to find "a suitable replacement village" in the Maglaj finger.[182] WV proposed the Croat village of Makljenovac, near Usora. "It was the only decision, not right or wrong. Those villages are done now."[183] By the end of the project, WV repaired 110 Croat homes in Usora Municipality. Many families, who were in Croatia and

[178] Ibid.: p. 14.

[179] World Vision Relief and Development, first and second proposals for the USAID Emergency Shelter Repair Program, Zenica, 18 March 1996.

[180] World Vision amendment request to DART, 31 May 1996.

[181] Letter from Begov Han Municipality to World Vision, 28 May 1996.

[182] Internal OFDA amendment justification, 15 June 1996.

[183] Interview (written reply to questions), ESRP NGO.

Germany, never returned.[184]

This example raises several points. First, is the sudden appearance of Žepče/Brezovo Polje on WV's third proposal (and the unfortunate misunderstanding over who controlled the village). Were these units added because of DART concerns for a more balanced ethnic mix in the Maglaj finger, i.e., because DART wanted more Croats in an otherwise solidly Bosniac area?[185] Second, the DART was unwilling to explore openings for negotiation and cross-ethnic return between Žepče and Begov Han. In his letter to WV, the mayor of Begov Han refers to a previous proposal to Žepče authorities for a reciprocal minority return, thus opening the door to a negotiation process. But political negotiations were precisely what the ESRP sought to avoid for fear of losing time.[186] Third, hard-liners were rewarded. Usora was known to have strong connections to the Croat diaspora and hence to be in better shape than other Maglaj finger municipalities. Croat authorities in Žepče were always considered as hard-line. In the end, obstructionism that began in Žepče ultimately translated into 90 additional Croat houses in Usora. And the hapless rump-municipality of Begov Han lost both its chance for repairs and its only bargaining chip.

Roads Not Taken — Stup and Brčko

There are two clear instances where the ESRP could have sent a pro-reintegration message and refused to even get involved at all: Stup and Brčko. Stup is a primarily Croat, front-line suburb on the western outskirts of Sarajevo that was heavily destroyed during the war. In early 1996, Stup was a ghost town, controlled by the Bosnian army. In its initial proposal, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) suggested the rehabilitation of 40 Croat and 10 Bosniac houses there. The returnee candidates were displaced Croats in Sarajevo town. These were people who had lived under SDA 'rule' and were committed to returning to their homes. They had the support of Croat leaders in Sarajevo. True to their community-based approach, CRS had identified a community organization, the Bosnian-Croatian Friendship Association that represented inhabitants of Stup displaced in Sarajevo and had a mixed Croat and Bosniac leadership.[187]

Stup was an important choice. It had high symbolic value at the entry of Sarajevo. It enjoyed a special relationship with its mostly Bosniac sister settlement of Dobrinja: in the early days of the war, Stup inhabitants and Caritas had organized foods shipments to Dobrinja which Serb forces were

[184] See above, "Ambitious Reporting, Ambiguous Returns."

[185] A World Vision official familiar with the program stressed in a written reply to our questions that "Žepče was not added" (interview, NGO). However, the official did not explain why Žepče/Brezovo Polje appears on the third proposal and not on the two first.

[186] It must be said that relations between Žepče and Begov Han were strained by the Croats' insistence on redrawing municipal boundaries and the alleged presence of *mujaheddin* units around Begov Han.

[187] Catholic Relief Services: "Original Proposal for the USAID Emergency Shelter Repair Program," Sarajevo, 18 March 1996: p. 4.

trying to overrun.[188] Helping Croats and Bosniacs return to Stup together would have sent a powerful, pro-tolerance signal in the wake of the massive exodus of Serbs from the Serb suburbs of Sarajevo (February-March 1996). It would have stressed the same ideals of a multi-ethnic capital city that the 1998 Sarajevo Declaration has since sought to impose through the conditionality of aid. In April 1996, none of this registered with the ESRP selection committee. It rejected CRS's proposal for Stup allegedly because it was too awkward and could not guarantee success.[189]

Brčko was another missed opportunity. The pre-war population of Brčko, a small town on the Sava river just across from Croatia, was more or less equally divided between Bosniacs, Croats and Serbs. But it was also of strategic value as it commands the Posavina corridor, the narrow strip of territory between eastern and western *Republika Srpska*. Serb forces brutally cleansed out the Croats and Bosniacs in late spring 1992. Brčko was deemed too tough an issue to deal with at Dayton, and the parties agreed to binding arbitration. It remains a highly emotional issue on all sides.

In its initial proposal, MC-SEA suggested repairing 50 houses in Brčko municipality, 25 majority Croat (mostly in the ZoS) and 25 majority Muslim (not in the ZoS).[190] Brčko was an opportunity for the West to signal its will to reverse ethnic cleansing. The date for the initial arbitration was December 1996, about the time of the completion of the ESRP (it was then postponed to early 1997). Minority return in Brčko would have sent a powerful signal to the international arbitrator that people were willing to return to Brčko, and to local leaders that there was donor support for their quest to return home, whichever way the arbitration went. Further, with the proximity of US-IFOR's Camp McGovern and the prominent role played by the US in the arbitration, Brčko would have been an ideal location to get American IFOR involved in cross-ethnic return. Finally, the outskirts of Br□ko would have been a natural place to repair some Serb homes. The selection committee chose not to fund these repairs. MC-SEA, the best established NGO in north-eastern Bosnia, also suggested a further 175 houses in the ZoS in Gradačac, Doboj East, Čelić and Lukavac municipalities, including the mixed Croat-Muslim village of Krekane (Gradačac).[191] They, too, were rejected.

These examples show how one of the ESRP's chief premises — that same-ethnic return might jump-start minority returns — was undermined by two factors: one, double occupancy and two, the fact that the ESRP's unconditional approach made intransigence an always viable option for local hard-liners. Indeed, municipal authorities, particularly in HVO-held areas, were and continue to be unwilling to crack down on double occupancy because evictions would free up space for minority

[188] Interview, Bosniac Civil Defense official in Dobrinja.

[189] Interview, NGO.

[190] Mercy Corps /Scottish European Aid: "Initial Proposal for the Emergency Shelter Program," 18 March 1996.

[191] Ibid.

returns. Thus, by failing to recognize the problem of double occupancy, the ESRP's performance ran into local political intransigence, the very goal it had sought so strenuously to avoid by focusing on same-ethnic return.

The ESRP Message to the NGOs

The ESRP message to the NGOs was consistent and ubiquitous, from the village selection process, to the requirement for before/after photographs and weekly reporting, to the absence of funds for monitoring: the reintegration of Bosnia is not a US policy priority. Many NGO interviewees remembered their clear understanding that speed, visibility and risk-avoidance, whatever the results may be, were USAID's prime goals. This message was admittedly part of a broader negative message, broadcast, among others, by NATO troops hunkering down in their bases in February and March 1996 while Serb thugs burned down Sarajevo's Serb suburbs as they 'reverted' to the Federation. Finally, the fact that the completion of the houses was more important than actual returns was made obvious by the fact that the NGO final reports — even the more thoughtful ones — placed far more emphasis on construction and technical issues than on analysis of refugee return.

It is interesting to note that, while NGO headquarters and even country-level management were pleased with ESRP priorities and funding, some field staff, both international and Bosnian, often expressed frustration at the program's lack of ambition. But numerous NGO final reports also indicated how gratifying a project it was for them. Peace was signed, and there were houses to be repaired. This was a welcome change for the NGOs after the difficulties of wartime programs and the unfamiliar and frustrating experiences of conditional aid programs (OTI and ENI). Two years after the program's conclusion, some NGO staff continued to remember the program's single-minded sense of purpose with fondness.[192]

The ESRP's lack of political awareness, even in hindsight, shows the price of the DART's directive approach. At a time when US policy was casting about for a way forward towards the reintegration of the country, the ESRP stifled much of the NGOs' ability to create, think critically, and contribute to policies on return. This was a complete reversal of the DART's early tack in former Yugoslavia, when it had taken a back seat and let the NGOs lead US humanitarian policies. The DART, now a mature and seasoned institution, had gained in experience and pride and lost in flexibility: it was now in the driver's seat.

The ESRP Message to Other Donors

In late 1995 and early 1996, according to several interviewees, there was a consensus building among

[192] Interviews, former ESRP NGO field staff.

a number of donors in the Federation that local conditionality (conditional aid) could yield results, however painfully, and that the post-Dayton environment could facilitate this.[193] This was originally a USAID-led effort, with both OTI and ENI pushing the NGOs toward local conditionality and reconciliation-based projects.[194] But the donor environment was also very competitive.. As soon as it became clear that the US was going to take the easy bite of the apple and go down the same-ethnic path, and that it would be successful in doing so given the unbeatable asset it had in the DART, other donors followed suit (see below for UNHCR). Thus, the ESRP shattered the fragile yet growing consensus in Bosnia in support of local conditionality.[195] Senior USAID/BHR officials traveled to Europe in early 1996 to explain the new tack being taken. This was key, in their view, to building a donor constituency around the ESRP rationale.[196]

Setting the Precedent

The ESRP set a same-ethnic return precedent for other donors. The program's short term success guaranteed of this. According to the DART's final report, "The shelter repair activity in itself generated interest from other donors, as it became obvious that the ESRP areas were likely to have a large percentage of returnees in 1996."[197] The easy bite of the apple was beginning to look sweet to all.

The main beneficiaries of the ESRP were same-ethnic refugees. Some of these had been ethnically cleansed and others not, depending on whether the areas they were returning to had been under Serb control during the war. Many ESRP beneficiaries were in fact returning to areas where the Federation had just established its authority, e.g., Jajce, Sanski Most, Ključ, Ripač (outside Bihać), Ustikolina (outside Foča), Olovo and the Sarajevo suburb of Ilijaš. Many other villages were front-line settlements where ethnic cleansing may well have taken place in the early months of the war. The criticism that the ESRP ignored victims of ethnic cleansing is therefore somewhat unwarranted. But this distinction comes out neither in the assessment team's summary of findings nor in the DART's final report.

Other donors targeted same-ethnic refugees whose homes were not as badly destroyed as the ESRP houses were. Many of the smaller or more hands-off donors did not give implementing agencies

[193] Interviews, former NGO field staff, OTI.

[194] See: United Nations Civil Affairs and U.S. Agency for International Development, *Federation Workshop*, presented by J. Carter (UN) and Ray Jennings (IRC/OTI), handout, Zenica (BiH), 20 November 1995. These workshops were very well attended by the NGOs, showing that they were more interested in Federation-building, reintegration and local conditionality that they are given credit for.

[195] Interviews, NGO staff, USAID officials, State Department.

[196] Interview, USAID/BHR.

[197] USAID/DART: "Emergency Shelter Repair Program...:" p. 13.

criteria for their aid.[198] As a result, since the flavor of the day was numbers, donors and implementing agencies gravitated naturally toward the 'easier' cases: majority return, rural areas, privately-owned houses. Agencies glowingly reported their successes to delighted donors, who in turn used these figures to show that they were right in the first place — repeating the ESRP pattern.

Recently, as funds for Bosnia have grown less easy to come by, and requests for assistance from cross-ethnic returnees have increased (especially from the RS to the Federation), some NGOs find themselves in the ironic position of having to tell potential minority returns that "their programs are full."[199]

This was particularly clear with UNHCR. In December 1995, UNHCR had signed a $30 million contract with UMCOR to implement a countrywide housing-improvement project. This was the single largest shelter repair program around. The project was expressly aimed at facilitating the return of refugees from abroad. Under pressure from donors and host nations (especially Germany) to keep numbers up, UNHCR targeted houses that were not heavily damaged.[200] As these houses started running out, UNHCR ended up focusing on same-ethnic returns. However, unlike the ESRP, same-ethnic was not one of the criteria of the project — on the contrary: in the words of a close observer, "UNHCR maintained plausible deniability."[201] But it "adopted a 'target area' approach in July 1996, which effectively emulated the USAID/DART's decision to focus on 'same-ethnic returns.'"[202] The ESRP message had been well understood: if the Americans were not going to push cross-ethnic returns, why should UNHCR? If they were going to ignore the spirit of Dayton, why shouldn't UNHCR?

The presence of exclusive same-ethnic return schemes also made it difficult for donors who remained committed to cross-ethnic return and reintegration to carry out such programs, such as that funded by the Austrian Federal Chancellery in Travnik, Jajce, Bugojno and Busovaća. The ICG noted that donors have leverage over municipal authorities where they are implementing projects and recommended that:

> In order to be able to encourage more 'co-operation' from municipalities, donors should work together, monitor their projects, share information about their return successes and failures, and, where necessary, condition future projects on a municipality's satisfactory completion of other donor projects. Co-ordination is best handled through the regional RRTFs [Return and Reconstruction Task Forces], which can mobilize pressure from other international

[198] Interview, NGO.

[199] Interview, NGO in Bihać.

[200] Interview, UNHCR.

[201] Interview, NGO.

[202] USAID/DART: "Emergency Shelter Repair Program...:" p. 3.

> organizations against recalcitrant municipalities.[203]

The ESRP, with its unilateral preoccupation with speed and visibility, was clearly not in the business of inter-donor cooperation. Two of the Austrian project's municipalities, Travnik and Jajce, were ESRP municipalities. The presence of the US same-ethnic project in the vicinity makes the achievement of the Austrian project all the more remarkable: of the 333 families targeted by the Austrian program, 120 were minorities and, of these, 67 returned (56 percent).[204]

Magnet Effect

As one OFDA official rhetorically asked: "Would you rather struggle through a project in Appalachia or do something quick and successful in Alexandria?"[205] The very success of the ESRP created a magnet effect for other programs, i.e., "the attraction of other donors to the areas selected under the ESRP."[206] This is in fact what 'multiplied' the ESRP's pro-partition impact. There is abundant evidence of this. The DART's final report explained that:

> Whereas all 48 villages were essentially 'ghost towns' before the ESRP , most villages later benefitted [sic] from the 'magnet effect' when ECHO, IMG, the World Bank, UNHCR, and other organizations provided utility and municipal building repairs. [...] Although the 'magnet effect' was a very positive benefit of the ESRP, [...] other donors snapped up projects that fit the MIS criteria.[207]

According to an IRC report on Glavatičevo, "The USAID/DART program implemented by IRC was the primary reason for other donor interest in the area."[208] Other programs built on the ESRP's legwork: identifying destroyed villages, understanding local dynamics, initiating a dialogue with local authorities, and so on. Often, ESRP NGOs sought funds from other donors to pursue other work in ESRP villages. World Vision "made every attempt to consolidate the [ESRP] areas where we worked...": IMG funded several school repair projects and the World Bank launched a pilot small enterprise scheme in ESRP areas.[209] Some of this was the result of good coordination: for instance, other donors might finance projects that were necessary to the ESRP villages but that were outside the MIS mandate, such as high-voltage cable repair. USAID itself found the ESRP villages a natural

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[203] International Crisis Group, "Promoting Minority Returns in Central Bosnia...:" p. 19. The Cantonal Return and Reconstruction Task Forces (RRTFs) did not exist in 1996.

[204] Ibid.: p. 16.

[205] Interview, OFDA official.

[206] USAID/DART, "Emergency Shelter Repair Program...:" p. 13.

[207] Ibid.: pp. 13-14.

[208] IRC-Jablanica: "USAID/DART Housing Program...:" p. 5.

[209] World Vision Relief and Development, "DART/Bosnia Emergency Shelter...:" pp. 2 and 5.

outlet for its larger MIS and Bosnian Reconstruction Finance Facility (BRFF) programs.[210] However, one NGO reported, somewhat confusingly, that

> "In the various areas where we worked, UNHCR, Caritas and DRC [Danish Refugee Council] are doing housing; AICF, electrical repairs; the Austrian Government, water system repairs; UMCOR, Agriculture projects. We assume that none of the work is due to this project."[211]

The result of the magnet effect was of course beneficial to the ESRP: it helped provide support for targeted returnees, assistance that was often necessary, such as UNHCR's return kits and agricultural and livestock support. But the overall result was to further direct other donors down the ESRP path of same-ethnic return, in rural villages, near main roads. Minority returns and remote areas did not receive the same level of attention. The overall effect was to reinforce ethnic homogeneity. This was a clear step towards the ethnic partition of Bosnia Herzegovina, something that US policy had consistently sought to avoid since the beginning of the war.

The ESRP and US Policy: The Message to the Foreign Policy Establishment

Who was the Audience?

Congress, the White House, the State Department and the Department of Defense were the ESRP's intended audience. The ESRP's widely publicized successes in repairing houses reinforced those who already believed in same-ethnic return, and converted many of those who were against it.[212] Most of the USG was certainly well aware of the project: embassy cables reported regularly on the ESRP's progress.

It remains unclear, however, how aware they were of the program's details, and especially of the program's same-ethnic component and its political consequences. Senior embassy officials claim that they were never told that the ESRP would only target majority returns.[213] A May 1996 embassy cable from Sarajevo bolsters that assertion. While explaining the 'opening up physical space' theory, the six-page review of the program does not once mention the fact that all the anticipated returns were same-ethnic.[214] If the embassy in Sarajevo was unaware of the same-ethnic component, then one can assume that officials in Washington were also unaware.

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[210] Interviews, USAID/ENI.

[211] United Methodist Committee on Relief: "Final Report, USAID Emergency Shelter...:" p. 4.

[212] Interviews, State Department, USAID (ENI, BHR).

[213] Interview, State Department.

[214] U.S. Department of State: "Overview of USAID/DART's $25 Million Emergency Shelter Repair Program," Embassy Sarajevo Cable, 05 May 1996.

The ESRP and NATO

NATO reluctance to get involved in local security was clearest — and in hindsight most damaging to US policy goals — during the reintegration of Sarajevo's Serb held suburbs in February and March 1996. At the same time, the assessment team was holding widespread and high-ranking meetings in Washington. Their briefings joined the voices of those within the administration who argued that Bosnians were unwilling to live together and that it was not NATO's role to ensure civilian security. The ESRP's message to NATO and the US military was equally clear: the administration is not committed to minority return.

Several interviewees indicated their belief that, by adopting a high-profile non-integration position, USAID made it easier for US military commanders to adopt a hands-off attitude with regard to the return of so-called 'minorities.'[215] If anything, had the DART adopted a more aggressive approach to cross-ethnic return, NATO would have *had* to deal with the issue,[216] much the way the British had to in Jajce in summer 1997 and the Canadians should have in Drvar in April 1998.[217] Instead, IFOR was left fulfilling a purely logistical role. The highest degree of interaction between NATO troops and the US government's premier return project was somewhat anticlimactic: MC/SEA got IFOR's BELUGA logistical unit (trucks from Belgium, Luxembourg, Greece and Austria) to transport 10,000 MT of building material from Hungary to Bosnia between May and September 1996.[218]

The ESRP and the Switch to Cross-Ethnic Return

In late summer and fall 1996, as the ESRP was at its height, a spate of ugly incidents between Bosniac returnees and 'local' Serbs erupted on the ZoS near Čelić in northeastern Bosnia, in the villages of Mahala, Gajevi and Omerbegovača. American IFOR troops found themselves in the midst of firefights, and on several occasions took the controversial decision of barring Bosniac returnees from visiting their homes. At one point, they began "what their officers [had] sought for almost a year to avoid: a combat patrol [...] searching for well-armed and determined opponents."[219] One

[215] Interview, ENI.

[216] Interview, ENI.

[217] Following the murder of an elderly Serb couple outside this southwestern Bosnian town, Canadian SFOR deployed an extra company in Drvar, but withdrew the troops a week later. That day, a Croat mob attacked Serb returnees, Serb officials and international staff. (International Crisis Group, "Impunity in Drvar," Sarajevo, 20 August 1998: pp. 4-5).

[218] Mercy Corps/Scottish European Aid: "USAID/DART Emergency Shelter Repair Program — Final Report," 1996: p. 9.

[219] "Second Day of Fighting is Worst Since 1995 Pact," M. O'Connor, *New York Times*, 12 November 1996.

American NATO officer commented: "We're going to have to get out quick or stay a lot longer."[220] News reports at the time underscored the reality on the ground. One, displaced families were determined to go home, even to Serb-held areas. Two, whether they liked it or not, US troops had to deal with the consequences. And three, US policy in Bosnia was in danger of unraveling over the issue of cross-ethnic return. Cross-ethnic return to areas where hard-liners still held sway created security problems, which in turn hindered prospects for the pullout of the troops. Cross-ethnic return was again on policy screens.[221] There was real disagreement in policy circles in Washington. Some wanted to promote cross-ethnic return. Others disagreed and even suggested curtailing refugee freedom of movement to avoid future incidents. By Thanksgiving 1996, the decision was made to push cross-ethnic returns. Since 1997, that has been a cornerstone of US policy in Bosnia.[222]

The question is whether the ESRP made it easier or more difficult to start on cross-ethnic return. Several reasons seem to indicate that it made it harder. In early 1996, at what must have been a time of grave existential doubt triggered by NATO's sudden burst of assertiveness, nationalist leaders could draw reassurance from the ESRP that the US was not eager to push ethnic reintegration. The ESRP bolstered hard-liners at the municipal level, thereby strengthening the very authorities that first initiated the original expulsions and were now obstructing cross-ethnic returns. Opportunities had been lost. Intransigence had been rewarded. The cycle of violence had been, inadvertently perhaps but nonetheless clearly, fueled.

Most importantly perhaps, with the ESRP, USAID missed an opportunity to provide guidance to policymakers in Washington. Had the DART used its reputation and knowledge to push for cross-ethnic return in the aftermath of Dayton, the foreign policy establishment may have been more amenable to the idea. Less inertia would have had to be overcome — at the State Department, at the Department of Defense, in the military, on the Hill — when it became clear that the issue of cross-ethnic return had become a key component of US interests in Bosnia. The history of the post-Dayton period mirrors that of the war. During the war the US sought a hands-off, no-casualty approach that kept them out of the fray but allowed the situation to fester. Ultimately the US was obliged to take a more proactive approach — the 1995 bombing campaign and Dayton — in order to avoid the

[220] Ibid.

[221] "New Refugee Conflict Points Up Flaw in Bosnia Pact," M. O'Connor, *New York Times*, 28 April 1996; "U.S. Troops Detain Serbs Briefly After Bosnia Clash," C. Hedges, *New York Times*, August 29 1996; "Guarded by NATO, Muslims Await Vote; Troop's Presence Boosts Hope for Elections," C. Spolar, *New York Times*, 11 September 1996; "Blowing Up Houses Is Tactic in Bosnia's Latest War of Nerves," C. Spolar, *New York Times*, 25 October 1996; "Second Day of Fighting Is Worst Since 1995 Pact, M. O'Connor, *New York Times*, 12 November 1996; "No Passage Allowed, Tensions Flare Between Serbs, Muslims," combined news services, *Newsday*, 14 November 1996; "Blasts Shake Foundation of Bosnian Peace Plan; Violence targets Refugees Reclaiming Homes and Highlights the Dangers Facing U.S. Troops," T. Wilkinson, *Los Angeles Times*, 18 November 1996.

[222] Interview, PRM official. The DART final report insists that these incidents "support the USAID/DART decision to concentrate in 1996 on 'same-ethnic return.'" (USAID/DART: "Emergency Shelter Repair Program...:" p.3.)

situation spiraling out of control and dragging the US in on terms it did not control. After the war, the same cautious, path-of-least-resistance approach was adopted with cross-ethnic return until it became clear — in the fall of 1996 — that if allowed to fester, it would fuel further violence and instability, jeopardizing the withdrawal schedule for American troops.

The $25 Million Question: Did the ESRP Change US Policy?

In late 1995, early 1996, as the US became more involved on the ground, the idea of a multiethnic Bosnia seemed to decrease as a US priority. On the ground, there was a 180-degree change in US policy. Reintegration-based activities were shut down and replaced with the ESRP. So the key question is: did the ESRP change US policy in Bosnia, from a reintegration-oriented approach to a more hard-nosed policy, or did it merely follow a policy that existed already? Opinions vary, depending chiefly on whether or not one believes that it is at all possible for USAID to influence US foreign policy.

Many interviewees, often outside USAID, expressed the belief that no one in US foreign policy circles in late 1995 was seriously considering cross-ethnic return. The focus was all on IFOR deployment, force separation and, later, on elections. In that regard, the assessment team briefings and the ESRP went in the direction of US policy. These interviewees mostly thought it unrealistic that USAID could ever influence policy: the consensus was that they were — still are — too far removed from policy circles. One interviewee suggested that, had USAID called for minority returns in late 1995 and early 1996, the State Department would have told them "'Oh, you assistance people, go do your thing, *we* are focusing on peace!'"[223] But it was also suggested to the Authors that the only individual who may have been successful in articulating a rationale for cross-ethnic return was the assessment team-leader himself: he was persuasive and he had the contacts. "But he would have been going against the flow."[224]

Within the agency, and particularly among people who were close to the ESRP, several interviewees expressed the belief that USAID played a key role in changing policy. They argue that there was substantial opposition to the idea of same-ethnic return in the State Department and on the Hill. They point out that the assessment team briefings and political legwork of senior USAID/BHR staff in support of a same-ethnic return policy were key to winning the opposition over. To this day, they feel that BHR did US policy a favor by contributing something doable.[225] The ESRP fell on fertile political ground — OTI's frustration with local conditionality, USAID's concerns about its battle for survival, the administration's trepidation over deploying ground troops in Bosnia. BHR's efforts and the ESRP were the key to its moving forward, and its implementation paved the way for a conservative, ultra-realist US policy in Bosnia.

[223] Interview, State Department.

[224] Interview, State Department.

[225] Interviews, USAID (ENI, BHR).

The Impact of the ESRP on USAID

The ESRP had a strong impact within USAID. It created tension between two of the agency's major bureaus, ENI and BHR, forcing the administrator to adjudicate, not once, but several times. On a broader level, this 'battle' exemplified the tensions that sometimes occur between BHR (or sometimes one or the other of BHR's constituent offices) and the regional bureaus. For BHR, still in 1996 a relatively new bureau within USAID (BHR was created in 1993), this was a major battle — and one fought as such. Individuals on both 'sides' considered the outcome as an important victory for BHR.[226] In terms of institutional viewpoints, the quarrel crystallized the clash of corporate cultures between two agency stereotypes, the 'Cowboy' and the 'Bureaucrat,' a brash, can-do, field-oriented approach on the one hand, and a more cautious, traditional and bureaucratic approach on the other. In conducting individual interviews on the ESRP, the Authors encountered more acrimony and jaundiced attitudes — sometimes understated and sometimes belligerent — than on any other topic treated in this study.[227] What is interesting is that the ESRP marked the moment in the 1991-1997 period in ex-Yugoslavia when OFDA was least true to its 'cowboy' tradition. Yes, the DART managed the ESRP in a pragmatic and effective manner: but it implemented the concept as it was handed to it, following orders and asking no questions. Gone were the days of openness to the NGO community and understanding of the local society.

The intra-USAID tensions were obvious to outsiders. One senior ESRP NGO representative in the field described never knowing whether to refer to the ESRP as a 'USAID,' a 'BHR,' an 'OFDA,' or a 'DART' program, further remarking that, especially in dealings with ENI or 'mainstream' USAID in Bosnia (as opposed to OFDA), one never knew whether one would encounter support or hostility for the program.[228]

Amazingly, the acrimony within USAID that surrounded the ESRP does not seem to have hampered its implementation in any significant way.[229] There are several reasons for this. First, the DART and the assessment team were very pro-active in the field, working with NGOs to convince them that this program was going to happen and getting them started on the village selection process. Second, back in Washington, the administrator intervened clearly and repeatedly in BHR's favor. Third, the

[226] Interviews, USAID (BHR, ENI).

[227] This may be in part explained by the fact that the ESRP is still relatively recent.

[228] Interview, ESRP NGO.

[229] ENI's initial opposition to the ESRP and to its key tenets — DART-run, NGO-implemented, and shelter-focused — may have caused some delay in the obligation of the monies.

consensus that developed in official Washington around the assessment team's findings and recommendations effectively rendered moot any internal USAID or field-level opposition to the ESRP.

In effect, by the end of the first quarter of 1996, USAID/ENI was faced with an all-round *fait accompli* on the ESRP: an operational *fait accompli* in the field where the implementation of the ESRP was outstripping the USAID mission's ability to become operational, and an administrative and political *fait accompli* in Washington where there was widespread support for the program. Altogether, one gets the impression that minimal contact between the mission and the DART, rather than sterling cooperation, contributed to the program's effective and timely implementation. There is no mention of USAID's long-term activities in the DART's final ESRP report. Conversely, the mission has not monitored the evolution of return in the ESRP villages. Operationally, the main point of contact was infrastructure: the ESRP villages were a natural target for USAID's larger infrastructure program, which also picked up several projects that were too large for the ESRP mini-infrastructure. But there were still mutual complaints of poor coordination.[230]

In terms of overall responsibility, the mission continues to stress that the ESRP, as all other OFDA activities, came under its control.[231] But this control was largely theoretical inasmuch as the mission had no say in DART budgeting and programming.[232]

Changing the Relationship with the NGOs

In terms of its relations with the NGOs, the ESRP bred a heavy-handed interpretation of the cooperative agreements. Both USAID and NGO staff stressed that the ESRP was a tightly managed program. Several interviewees argued that the NGOs had acted as OFDA contractors, receiving many instructions and asking few questions. While some NGO field-workers expressed frustration, many country-level and headquarters types clearly appreciated it:

> The cooperative contract was great. It was simple. No ten-page budget. Only four budget lines, functions, parameters and a time line. Going toward a performance-based contract is what it [was].[233]

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[230] In at least one case (electrification of Orašac in Unsko-Sanski Canton), USAID's larger infrastructure program was unable to 'cover' an ESRP village that it had said would be covered, at least by the end of 1996: it is unclear where the responsibility for this problem was (CARE: "Final Report, USAID/DART Emergency Shelter Repair Program," December 1996).

[231] Interview, USAID.

[232] Interviews, USAID (BHR, ENI).

[233] Interview, senior ESRP NGO official.

The price to pay for the NGOs in terms of independence and creativity quickly became apparent. In August 1996, the Bosnia USAID Mission issued a *USAID Handbook — Guidance for Facilitating the Operations of U.S. Private Voluntary Organizations, Contractors and Grantees Working in Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Despite the title, the text built on the assumption that the reader was a commercial company bound to USAID by a commercial contract:

> Please keep in mind that your *company* is in Bosnia-Herzegovina to respond to the requirements of its *client*, USAID. The company is not here and not allowed to use its *contract* or task order as an opportunity to enhance its image in Bosnia-Herzegovina or for *marketing* purposes [emphasis added].[234]

The mission left few openings to take advantage of the experience of organizations that had been in Bosnia for many years (and whose knowledge may have helped USAID navigate the treacherous waters of Bosnian politics):

> All operational and programmatic guidance [...] will be provided through the USAID/Bosnia Project Manager who will, if necessary, liaise with the appropriate [American] Embassy officials. [...] It is the best interests of both the Grantee/Contractor and USAID/Bosnia that USAID/Bosnia be kept well-informed of all substantive contact between Grantee/Contractors and Host Government officials.[235]

The political importance of Bosnia to USAID in Washington came through clearly:

> The USG foreign assistance activities you implement in Bosnia-Herzegovina are part of a highly-visible program closely followed by the President, Congress, international and domestic media, as well as USAID and the State Department in Washington. It is important that USG-funded activities and achievements *receive appropriate publicity*. [...] All contact with the media should be cleared with the USAID Press Officer [emphasis added].[236]

This was a far cry from the creative free rein that the NGOs enjoyed in 1992 and 1993. The NGOs were well aware of what was happening. One NGO country director wrote back to his Head Office:

> I am sending you this copy [of the handbook] because I am a bit surprised by the requests... [They] are quite limiting... Please let me know if [Head Office] has any comments on the potential impact these requests may have about what we say, or else![237]

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[234] U.S. Agency for International Development: "USAID Handbook — Guidance for Facilitating the Operations of U.S. Private Voluntary Organizations, Contractors and Grantees Working in Bosnia-Herzegovina," USAID Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina (Sarajevo), August 1996: p. 1.

[235] Ibid.: pp. 2-3.

[236] Ibid.: pp. 3-4.

[237] Internal IRC document, Sarajevo, 8 August 1996.

While it is clear that a post-conflict situation can not reproduce war-time arrangements, the leash appeared to be so tight as to smother NGO creativity. This was the price paid by OFDA: the relationship with the NGOs was now a contractor-client relationship. The NGOs were no longer encouraged or able to provide USAID with the kind of analytical input that had been so central to BHR's performance in former Yugoslavia since late 1991. The NGOs offered no political analysis of the program or of its future repercussions. They did not suggest any alternatives. And as the program progressed, its focus slipped increasingly from return to shelter repair.

Were There Alternatives to the ESRP?

Given the situation in Bosnia after Dayton — heavy US diplomatic involvement, troops on the ground, high political stakes — did OFDA have alternatives to the ESRP? The answer is yes. Same-ethnic return was not the only way that USAID could have supported US policy objectives. The following alternatives are not the result of hindsight — they were all on the table in late 1995, early 1996. And they are not, except for the last, mutually exclusive: OFDA could have mixed and matched.

- A first alternative would have been to concentrate on the most vulnerable elements of Bosnian society: the elderly, the sick, the very poor, the long-term disabled, single-mother refugees, people in collective centers, and so on. Recognizing that the new peace agreement was not going to change things overnight, this type of program would have been intended to provide a 'Dayton social safety-net,' until longer term USAID economic restructuring came into play. The NGOs would have been natural partners: several large NGOs had experience with these types of programs that addressed some of the effects of the violence, and at least one was thinking that an expansion down the social safety-net was the way to go.[238] Furthermore, such activities would have remained in close keeping with OFDA's mandate.

- A second alternative could have been to continue with local conditionality and use the new, post-Dayton, NATO environment to advocate active political and military support for cross-ethnic return, and social reintegration in general. As the assessment team pointed out, there was scope for improvement in the reintegration-based programs. In late 1995, a consensus was building among donors in favor of local conditionality.[239] As their initial proposals for the ESRP show, NGOs felt that localized openings for cross-ethnic return and other reintegration-oriented activities existed. The 1994 OTI Federation Assessment report had

[238] IRC document by Barbara Smith, Nov 1995

[239] See: UN Civil Affairs and USAID/OTI, "Federation Workshop," presented by J. Carter (UN) and Ray Jennings (IRC/OTI), handout, Zenica (BiH), 20 November 1995.

identified several buffer-zone 'soft spots' — chinks in the nationalist armor — where local authorities had requested assistance. These included Travnik, Fojnica, Busovaća, Gornji Vakuf and Novi Travnik.[240] Two experienced former NGO field officers in central Bosnia stressed to us that, had anyone set out systematically in late 1995 to find 'soft spots' where cross-ethnic return was possible, they would have come up with a dozen in a few weeks. And, most importantly, the arrival of 60,000, mostly NATO, troops configured for battle the way UNPROFOR had never been, had completely altered the relative ability of hard-line nationalists to make mischief at both the national and local levels.

- Another possibility was to engage in high-profile activities such as window-glazing that offered a symbolic indication that the war was over. (UNHCR did decide to embark on glazing; the program started off as more of a public relations operation, but ended up being one of the most dramatic, far-reaching and cost effective post-war donor programs, with a strong social effect.[241])

- A final possibility, at least for OFDA, would have been to do no harm by doing nothing, i.e., to phase down the DART and only fund run-of-the-mill post-war projects.[242] This was defensible in terms of OFDA's emergency mandate. If the DART's analysis had been that NATO was not going to provide any support to cross-ethnic return and that nothing could be done about this, then doing nothing was a solution that would have allowed the DART to stay away from the difficult, intensely political choice of same-ethnic versus cross-ethnic return, and avoid doing the harm that was done.

These alternatives were less appealing only inasmuch as the criteria for post-Dayton activities had already been laid out by the agency's management: speed, visibility, measurability and no soft stuff. We found no evidence that OFDA or the DART ever considered these or other alternatives. The feeling is that, buckling under political pressure from both within the agency and outside it, OFDA dutifully marched down the ESRP blind alley, with some initial misgivings and then ever more blithely.

[240] USAID (BHR/Office of Transition Initiatives): "Donor Options for Strengthening the Bosniac/Croat Federation...:" p. 130.

[241] Interviews, UNHCR, NGO.

[242] See Anderson, M.: "Do No Harm: Supporting Local Capacities for Peace through Aid," Collaborative for Development Action, December 21, 1998 (Cambridge, MA), 1996: *passim*.

Conclusions: Tough Questions

What is the Role of the Alpha Donor?

The ESRP began as part of USAID's struggle for survival. But anything the US does has a political impact on the ground. The US is the world's sole remaining superpower. The US is the lead-donor, the most purposeful, the most powerful (if not always the most generous). The US is the alpha donor. In a situation like post-Dayton Bosnia, as indeed in most situations, all eyes are on the US. In Bosnia in 1996, the fact that the ESRP was implemented swiftly, competently, and forcefully only increased that impact. This raises important questions for US foreign policymakers, for USAID, and for OFDA, and one lone question for the international relief agencies:

- **For policymakers:** Are they aware of the survival pressures that are placed on USAID and that condition its activities? More broadly speaking, what is the role of the lead donor? Is it to shore up sure support for a US-brokered diplomatic *coup* by going after the easy bite of the apple? Or, as the bigger dog on the block, with both the military and the diplomatic initiative, is it to tackle some of the tough issues, such as cross-ethnic return, and demonstrate leadership? What are the repercussions? Are they beneficial to US policy? Do policymakers think through the political impact of humanitarian programs?

- **For USAID:** Is it USAID's role to offer support to policy decisions, however short-term the goals may be? Or does it have an obligation to approach the problem from a different standpoint, to offer advocacy and alternatives to policies that are going awry? Can USAID influence policy? Does it think through the repercussions of humanitarian programs? As the agency grows increasingly embattled, will politically expedient programs such as the ESRP — which promoted visibility and expedience at the expense of refugees who could not return home — become more prevalent?

- **For OFDA:** What is the price of being USAID's shock troops? What is the price of emergency programs without a political analysis of their impact on the crisis at hand and on the local societies? And what is the price of a contractor-client relationship with the NGOs — can OFDA still count on NGO creativity and their sense of commitment to the victims? If OFDA does not think through the political impact of the programs it funds, drawing on its field experience and contacts, who will? If OFDA does not advocate for the victims, who will? If OFDA is not willing to do no harm, who will?

- **For international relief NGOs:** What is the price of becoming a second-rate contractor?

These questions, in turn, posit a wider question for US disaster assistance: what is the price of

relevance?

What is the Price of Relevance?

The ESRP was stunning in its implementation, but fundamentally flawed in its conception. The designers chose not to recognize two critical, inter-linking elements. One is that security, not reconciliation, is the pre-condition for return. People do not need to like one another to go home. But they do need to feel secure. The second is that Dayton offered new prospects for an early, aggressive pursuit of the right to return. These prospects needed advocacy. None was forthcoming from USAID. On the contrary, the agency, obsessed with its own survival, engaged on a path of "preemptive capitulation."[243] USAID — through BHR, OFDA, the DART — advocated support for same-ethnic return on the basis that it was the only feasible option. The agency argued — and convinced many in Washington — that Bosnians were not yet ready to live together. It ignored the fact that the Croat-Muslim war had ended in March 1994, eighteen months before Dayton, and that openings for successful reintegration programs existed then. It failed to recognize that OTI's painful lessons in the previous year were not applicable to a post-Dayton environment where 60,000 troops, three-quarters of them from NATO countries, had deployed on the ground. And finally, USAID accepted as fact, with no obvious or conscious analysis, the premise that NATO troops were incapable of providing security at the community level, a fact disproved by British peacekeepers in Jajce and other areas. In so doing, USAID accepted the lack of political will to involve American troops in assisting refugee return and the reintegration of a multi-ethnic Bosnia Herzegovina, rather than advocate for it.

Operationally, in terms of houses repaired before the winter of 1996, the program was a resounding success. It met the objectives laid out by USAID's senior management: the ESRP was effective, visible and measurable. But this success placed US reconstruction policy out in front of the donor pack, blazing the trail for same-ethnic return. OFDA fell victim to its own speed. In embracing the ESRP, OFDA followed USAID's leadership in furthering the kind of short term policy priority that seems to currently hold sway over US foreign policy. The implementing NGOs of the ESRP, contended contractors all of them, failed to offer policy alternatives. When, in late 1996, US policy swung back toward encouraging cross-ethnic return, not only could USAID offer only limited help, but the switch was all the harder because of the prior emphasis on same-ethnic return.

OFDA, in its implementation of the ESRP, did not stop to think through the momentous political implications of its first major post-Dayton program. As such, it failed in its traditional role as an advocate for the victims. In our system of government, different agencies, even different parts of agencies, have different mandates, agendas and priorities. Policy is the result of their negotiations. This is how our administrative democracy works — the inter-agency process. In that process, OFDA

[243] Interview, senior USAID official.

failed to fulfill its role, it failed to argue the cause of those who could not return home. Both American policy in Bosnia and many Bosnians are the poorer for it.

Concluding Chapter

Aid and Politics in Former Yugoslavia 1991-1996: What changed?

Lessons Learned?

'Lessons Learned' are subjective interpretations of past events that, once identified, usually come too late to have an impact on the present and remain largely irrelevant to the future. Lessons learned are a peculiarly contemporary term for what is otherwise known as history. Nevertheless, in their absence, reports and analytical studies are often deemed to be incomplete.

From the very onset of this project, the Authors felt wary of drawing conclusions from what they deemed to be a unique situation or making recommendations based on their findings. Conflict is a complicated phenomenon. Numerous factors play out in the instigation of a war-induced humanitarian crisis. They affect how it evolves and how the local and international communities respond to it. These factors include the political, social, economic and cultural status of both the affected population and the agents of aggression, as well as that of the host population in the case of massive displacement. The configuration of the international community also defines a crisis response: which UN agencies, NGOs, regional organizations, donor governments, and military forces are present. Other factors intrude as well, factors that are at times more important to the international community. They include national interest, domestic politics and electoral deadlines, threats to vital resources, the economic value of the regions at hand, media involvement, and the activities of special interest groups. Finally, geographic factors such as terrain, climate, season, and the condition of local infrastructure have a critical impact on the logistical ability of people to flee and of organizations to assist. All of these variables interact in such a complex fashion that each humanitarian crisis is a unique event.

The wars of former Yugoslavia have been a fixture in OFDA operations since 1992 — Croatia, Bosnia, Kosovo. The region saw the longest running Disaster Assistance Response Team ever (1993-1997). Year in, year out, between 1992 and 1996, OFDA devoted large amounts of money to relief assistance in ex-Yugoslavia. It is just this that warns against recommending action in other crises based on the Yugoslav experience: how many of them will receive the sustained commitment and interest shown for this European crisis? Is it possible to extract from one emergency recommendations on responding to the next? The Authors are skeptical; however, we will try.

Looking at What Has Changed...

Ours is a single case-study — we could therefore not hope to draw comparative lessons by contrasting OFDA in ex-Yugoslavia with other crises. But there exists another realm of potential 'lessons'. Those are the lessons drawn from the examination of change over time, i.e., an analysis of how key issues evolved in the course of the period under consideration. Certain options for responding to crises may no longer exist. New ones may have emerged. In this concluding chapter to our review of OFDA's involvement in the former Yugoslavia, we explore the changes that OFDA, the aid community, and even aspects of the larger international community underwent during the crisis. To do this, we chose the following four questions which seemed to have the most to offer in terms of understanding what changed over the 1991-1996 period:

- **What changed: the NGOs.** We look at the evolution of the NGOs, traditionally critical to OFDA's response to disasters. They started in 1991 ex-Yugoslavia with ethical quandaries and an OFDA-supported flurry of creative chaos. By 1996 and the post-Dayton period they had become docile and well-coordinated contractors, unwilling and probably unable to analyze the impact of their programs on Bosnian society.

- **What changed: OFDA as grant-maker.** The role of donor is very dependent on that of the grantee. We explore the impact of ODFA's funding on how relief agencies approached the crisis. We try to show how OFDA went from a laissez-faire, let-'em-run-free attitude in the early days — an attitude that encouraged NGO creativity — to a confident, directive and at times heavy-handed style after Dayton, one that stifled NGO input.

- **What changed: OFDA as reporter.** OFDA's information gathering and dissemination role grew during the wars in the former Yugoslavia, carrying serious repercussions for both OFDA itself and US assistance strategies there. We review how OFDA naturally became the preferred interpreter for official Washington of the confused realities of the field, and how this enhanced OFDA's reputation.

- **What changed: OFDA's relationship with other actors.** We look at OFDA's evolution within its institutional context: the changing relationships that OFDA has with other assistance agencies

and other US governmental agencies. OFDA's decisions had an impact on the decisions of other parts of the US government. (They also had an impact on the decisions of foreign actors and on those of the parties to a conflict, of the host population and of the population being assisted, but we do not examine these in detail here.) These decisions in turn influenced OFDA's decisions. The complexity of the defining factors may be what lays out the architecture of a crisis, but it is in the realm of relationships that the politics are played out.

These questions make up the four sections of the concluding chapter. Our common thread is a focus on the reluctance of aid agencies to analyze, monitor, take stock of or even acknowledge, the political impact of their programs on a given crisis, and on the dangers of this reluctance. Invoking neutrality and the need for greater efficiency, aid agencies have slowly relinquished their role as advocates for the victims. They have become relief agencies, i.e., mere suppliers of emergency relief aid. They are not humanitarian organizations. The following pages are an attempt to lay out this broader trend in the particular case of the former Yugoslavia during 1991-1996, in the NGO community, within OFDA and in terms of OFDA's relations with other organizations, especially within the US government. We also offer some recommendations as to how OFDA might try to address these problems at the end of sections II (for sections I and II), III and IV.

Note: This concluding chapter relies entirely on analyses and sources that are laid out in the main body of the review, either in the OFDA-specific part or in the two annex papers. Footnoting would have been a redundant process, considering the amount of ground covered in the following pages. For back-up and sources, we refer the reader to the relevant sections of the review, of which we try to give an indication as we go along.

I. What Changed? The NGOs in Former Yugoslavia 1991-1996

From Creative Chaos To Coordinated Contractors

This section explores the evolution of the NGO community in the former Yugoslavia. We do not argue that these changes are global and that they have altered the way NGOs function worldwide. Nevertheless, the former Yugoslavia, and particularly the war in Bosnia, supplied NGOs with both high-profile and high-income opportunities that were without precedent. It is unlikely that the experience left these organizations unmarked.

Early Humanitarian Action in Yugoslavia: Humanitarianism or Relief?

In late spring 1991, as the political crisis of Yugoslavia was about to boil over into armed conflict, the West intervened militarily in Iraqi Kurdistan to address the refugee emergency there. The operation was dubbed a 'humanitarian intervention.' It marked the culmination of the concept of *droit d'ingérence*, which translates literally as the right to interfere, i.e., to interfere in a State's internal affairs for humanitarian — moral — purposes. *Droit d'ingérence*, initially championed by politicians and humanitarian thinkers in France, had been gaining credibility over the previous decade. It promotes the idea that certain moral precepts can override national sovereignty. The end of the cold war opened new horizons for the application of these concepts, of which Northern Iraq seemed to be the first example. *Droit d'ingérence* exists in a yet more militant form as *devoir d'ingérence* — the duty to interfere. Thus, Yugoslavia descended into war — and humanitarian needs increased — at a time when the mood in the international NGO movement had seldom been more bullish. Curiously, however, most major NGOs were slow to recognize the crisis breaking at their doorstep, or were reluctant to get involved.

The experience of Médecins Sans Frontières - France, a leading advocate of the *droit d'ingérence*, was especially interesting. It lends insight into how, from the very beginning, the Yugoslav crisis called into question conventional ideas on the efficacy, or indeed the appropriateness, of emergency relief — because it was clearly a war, because it was different from traditional Third World 'complex emergency' settings, because it was closer to home (although these same arguments could just as easily justify heavy involvement). In Yugoslavia, MSF was one of the first in and one of the first out. As early as late 1991, a traumatic episode had led MSF to understand that the right to interfere was far from universally accepted. In Vukovar, in the eastern Slavonia region of Croatia, Serbian military blocked an MSF convoy at a check-point outside the town, while others abducted and executed Croatian wounded whom the convoy had come to evacuate. The political frailty of humanitarian action was plain for all to see, especially that of relief aid. At Paris headquarters, amidst anger and soul-searching, MSF staff remember that the debate boiled down to a stark question: what is it that

we are providing, *couvertures ou linceuls?* (blankets or shrouds?).[1] The anguish behind this cry underpinned the distinction between humanitarianism and relief aid. The former is a rights-based, broad interpretation of assistance to victims, including through advocacy. The latter is emergency assistance: food, clean water, or blankets — blankets that too easily become shrouds. Following Vukovar, MSF-France concluded that bearing witness was of greater use to the victims of Yugoslavia's war and (temporarily) suspended most of its relief operations. The later attempt by the European Commission to use MSF's humanitarian assistance as a political opening for negotiations also contributed to the organization's operational withdrawal from the Yugoslav scene.[2]

The Growth of the NGOs: Creativity and Collaboration

At the same time, other NGOs started to drift in. The International Rescue Committee took the initiative in Sarajevo. Overcoming skepticism and objections, IRC's Sarajevo field officer helped organize a two-day US military airlift in April 1992. The US government seized the political opening: in an ironic twist of *droit d'ingérence*, it took advantage of the IRC-organized airlift to offer the new state of Bosnia Herzegovina diplomatic recognition of its secession from Yugoslavia.

The ethnic cleansing that took place in eastern Bosnia in early summer 1992 resulted in several hundred thousand non-Serbs being driven into Croatia. Western NGOs, largely European, many of them formed as ad hoc reactions to the crisis, began arriving on the edge of Bosnia's borders in a spontaneous manner. Some merely dropped the (often inappropriate) 'relief' they had collected and dissolved; others went back for more. A few started down the path of growth: they developed proposals, raised funds, and made plans. They became semi-permanent fixtures in helping Croatian authorities meet refugees needs. By early to mid-1992, Croatia was largely peaceful. But the aid community, through the tales the refugees told and first-hand press accounts, was seared by the violence in neighboring Bosnia. On occasion, European Commission military monitors, UNHCR officials and other brave souls ventured in, only to return with harrowing stories of confusion, violence, looted trucks and close calls. Well into the latter half of 1992, Bosnia remained *terra incognita*, and a dark one, at that.

The situation was not the only confusing element. The setting was equally confounding: a modern

[1] Interview, MSF.

[2] MSF-France resumed operations a little less than a year later, after a further assessment of its role. In late 1992, when large numbers of ethnically cleansed civilians from northwestern Bosnia began to arrive in Croatia, MSF decided that it could not be an effective advocate without a more intimate knowledge of the situation on the ground, knowledge that could only come from running programs in the crisis zone. In keeping with this line of thought, MSF later became one of the only NGOs to aggressively pursue programs in the besieged eastern enclaves. MSF staff were present when Bosnian Serb forces overran Srebrenica in July 1995 and executed at least 8,000 Muslim men. (MSF, unlike Dutch UNPROFOR, was able to evacuate its male local staff.)

war, a relatively prosperous local population, a temperate European climate, a centralized yet industrialized economy. This was very different from the aid community's usual points of reference in Third World emergencies. NGOs had little Yugoslavia expertise per se: no experts, no desk officers, no historical perspective. But they benefited from a blessing in disguise. Many of their staff, and indeed some of the organizations themselves, had little prior aid experience — so they brought few inappropriate solutions to the Yugoslav crisis. In such conditions, the only way forward was to create, innovate, experiment. This is what they did.

An explosion of humanitarian forays into Bosnia took place over the fall and winter of 1992-93. It was NGO-driven and launched from Split, the logistically accessible port on Croatia's Dalmatian coast, where most organizations had their operational headquarters. Most importantly, it was chaotic: a succession of initiatives, spontaneous, unplanned and unhampered by attempts at coordination. Cooperation amongst NGOs was extensive and was assisted and encouraged by targeted, though flexible, OFDA funding.

There was however, also competition amongst NGOs. But it was healthy competition: it was competition to meet needs. The needs were great, and the obstacles daunting, made all the more so by the lack of knowledge. Where do you go? How do you get there? The NGO that could get a convoy over this mountain or across that front-line, or maneuver through to besieged Sarajevo would return to Split full of experience and prestige. Tuzla — *ultima Tuzla* — seemed dark and unreachable in the far north. Attempts to elude the aggressive authorities and bring succor to the besieged multiplied. Proposals were written. Grants were signed. Staff was hired. Premises were rented, vehicles bought. Organizations grew.

By early spring 1993, the small handful of NGOs active in the summer of 1992 had grown to nearly a hundred. These organizations were providing assistance to one section or another of Bosnia Herzegovina. At that point, a new pattern began to emerge. While some NGOs focussed all their efforts on delivering supplies into the Bosnian war-zone, others felt their efforts better spent in Croatia, where one could work with greater efficiency. Some of the larger agencies attempted to do both. The war-zone being by definition a hazardous place — and growing more so with the outbreak of full-fledged conflict between Muslims and Croats in Central Bosnia — most organizations attempted to minimize their staff in areas where there was fighting. The relative security of Croatia became the base for many of the administrators, accountants, and grant managers whom NGOs had begun to hire as their Yugoslav program portfolios grew. Agencies became more successful at reporting on Croatia-based programs where regulations could be met, and problems identified and corrected before grant deadlines were broken. The war-torn areas of Bosnia, however, were not easily accessible to these people. And accounts, reports and six-month plans were not a high priority for the field staff who actually lived in Bosnia or spent most of their time there. While the donor funds available were still overwhelmingly targeted at the war zone, a movement had been set in motion that tended towards a more conservative approach to program planning.

Peace in Central Bosnia and the Demise of NGO Creativity

The April 1994 Washington Agreement that ended the Bosnian-Croat war gave an important spur to this rising tide of conservative compassion. Large chunks of central Bosnia that had previously been difficult to access due to the Croat blockade and the fighting suddenly became mostly accessible. That is where the NGOs concentrated their efforts. With a few exceptions, the NGO community ignored the areas of most continued urgent need, leaving the besieged Bosnian enclaves other than Sarajevo — Srebrenica, Žepa and Goražde, Bihać — to the whims of the UN agencies and their would-be helpers, UNPROFOR. Indeed, there was now enough money available for NGOs to not have to venture into such risky environments. The brewing ferment lay more in the donor community where, leveraging the newfound accessibility in Central Bosnia, innovative efforts were underway to solidify the tenuous peace with aid programs. Different strategies came to the fore as donors began to take the lead. The Europeans calculated that large amounts of aid money could 'buy stability.' This led to the set-up of the EU administration in Mostar (EUAM). The US on the other hand explored ideas of conditioning aid on notions of 'reconciliation' through small community-oriented initiatives. This was the path which BHR/OTI embarked on in Central Bosnia. In Sarajevo, donors came together to seek ideas on how to jump-start normalcy with quick-impact projects (the UK/US Assessment, the UN Special Coordinator for the Reconstruction of Sarajevo).

The NGOs stayed largely out of the debate. But they did begin, without foresight it would seem, to tailor their programs to the approach of their donors. Some NGOs took both approaches — the big money and the reconciliation approaches — without realizing they were doing so. The lack of analysis, on the part of the NGOs, of the impact their programs were having on Bosnia, its society and its wars was striking. This was mid-1994: after over two years of war in Bosnia, and three years after the war started in Croatia, there was no excuse possible for such political naïveté.

The slow metamorphosis of the NGOs from cowboys fighting wars to conservative contractors claiming 'politics is not us' does not mean that the two are phenomena of mutual exclusivity. Both attitudes can occur simultaneously in the same organization. For instance, in 1992 an NGO could be dodging snipers and shelling to deliver aid to a besieged enclave in Bosnia while another department of the same NGO was managing a capacity-building program in Croatia. Or later an NGO working out of the same office in Zenica could be at once supporting siege-busting in Sarajevo and reconciliation in Travnik. Interestingly, both types of programs often relied on common administrative mechanisms and personnel. It was the program people who differed. Those in relatively peaceful Travnik would get their reports in on time, fine-tune their accounts and make financial projections, and perhaps slip away for a weekend on the coast. Their Sarajevo colleagues, meanwhile, still spent half their time trying to support themselves — securing water, food and fuel supplies — and holding candle-lit meetings in bleak basement offices. For the aid agencies, the outcome was simple: the organizational impetus slowly but irresistibly gravitated towards the money allocated to the 'doable' programs: not only was the news better, but it could be reported in a timely fashion.

This natural trend did not, however, snuff out emergency programs altogether. There was staff committed to working in the war-zones. The prestige of war-time ops was still great, both on the ground and for fund-raising purposes. Besides, donors were still allocating significant funds to these programs and seemed to understand the administrative difficulties involved. In other words, all involved wished to be seen as doing something, regardless of the true effectiveness of their efforts.

Summer of 1995

This situation left the NGO community quite unprepared for the all-out squeeze that the Bosnian Serb forces applied to the remaining besieged areas, Sarajevo included, in late spring 1995. The NGOs made few attempts to run the blockade, literally or through advocacy. It is debatable whether an active and aggressive NGO community could have overcome the tightening of the noose. In fact, some evidence might even point to the contrary: UNHCR never gave up and yet it was stymied until late summer, unable to deliver more than a pittance to Sarajevo from April through August 1995. But then the UN had never displayed an aggressive approach: why should the Bosnian Serbs pay any attention to them now?

In the absence of the uncontrolled and therefore less predictable NGOs, the Serbs found it that much easier to shut down access. Ever fearful of provoking Western intervention, would the Bosnian Serbs have consistently shot at NGO attempts to break the siege? How would they have reacted if convoy after convoy had lumbered up to the infamous Sierra One checkpoint (the Serb choke-point west of Sarajevo), only to be turned back? How would it have looked in the press? What pressure would this have placed on Western governments that were already growing aware of the untenability of the situation?

We will never know. With very few exceptions, the NGO community demurred. Some sat the problem out in the (relative) comfort of central Bosnia. Others that were in the besieged areas patiently observed the privations of those they were there to help, sometimes even suffering the same privations alongside, rather than publicly advocate against the abuses they were witnessing. In 1992, US Secretary of State Baker had declared, referring to the conflict in Bosnia, that the US had no "dog in that fight."[3] Three years of incremental involvement later — after NATO's bombing and Dayton had taken the fight out of Serbs, Croats, and Bosnians alike — the aid agencies, who had indeed become the international community's dog in the Bosnian war, had long since rolled over and played dead.

[3] Drew, E.: *On the Edge: The Clinton Presidency*, Simon and Schuster (New York), 1994: p.139.

After Dayton

In the post-Dayton years, the NGOs, now tame and compliant, were easily manipulated by agenda-driven donors. Incredibly, after years in the most politicized of environments, in the midst of events that many saw as the late twentieth century's moral equivalent of the Spanish civil war, at a time when the humanitarian emphasis should have been on rolling back nationalist gains, the aid community now claimed to be apolitical and delivery-oriented. Yet now that the emergency was over, there was no programmatic or moral excuse for not taking the trouble to examine the impact of their programs on society.

Part of the problem was that the NGOs had not laid any of the ground work for this type of thinking. Since early 1993, they had unleashed packs of proposal writers, deployed hordes of grant managers, fielded flocks of field officers and received countless gaggles of board-members. But the need for social, economic, and political impact analysis remained unrecognized, dismissed by the ignorant with squeals of neutrality and ignored by the savvy with a blunt 'there is no money in that.' The NGOs had abdicated their natural role of advocates for the local society.

And so they remain to this day.[4]

4 The persistent inability of many international NGOs in Yugoslavia, after nearly ten years of presence, to recognize the importance to the regime of their main implementing partner, the Yugoslav Red Cross, or to devise any alternative solutions, bears witness to their lack of concern for how their programs affect local politics and the local society.

II. What Changed: OFDA as Donor

OFDA's influence on the NGOs

Disbursing money for emergency programs is, along with reporting, one of OFDA's two major functions. The following paragraphs track OFDA's influence on the evolution of the NGOs. The analysis is weighted towards the latter period, 1994-96, when OFDA had a more direct and directive impact on the NGOs.

The Early Years (1992-1994): Funding Creativity

Tapping NGO experience and creativity

The availability of OFDA seed funding was responsible for establishing many NGOs in the former Yugoslavia in 1992 and early 1993. This was the heyday of NGO creativity. For some organizations such as CRS, it allowed them to leverage other grants in the food distribution sector. For IRC, OFDA funding started in early 1992 with a grant to deploy three field-based information gatherers-cum-facilitators — these IRC field officers served as OFDA's initial on-the-ground reporting staff. This then turned into a flexible, generalist's approach to programs: do whatever helps to meet the needs, regardless of sector or approach. IRC's first million-dollar grant from OFDA came in late 1992. It covered "general winterization," a term that IRC, with OFDA encouragement, interpreted liberally. Was the local production of shoes to be considered as 'shelter'? Well, shoes covered the feet of the displaced and war-affected; so, yes, shoes were shelter. Were oats 'fuel'? The horses carrying supplies over the mountain trail to besieged Goražde ran on oats; so, yes, oats were fuel. Go for it. During much of 1993 and early 1994, OFDA, represented by its DART, encouraged creativity in the NGO community.

With this bold stratagem, the DART — never more than a team of six or seven — tapped the humanitarian intelligence gathering of hundreds. During this period the DART rarely had ideas of its own. But its expertise, and all-important contribution, resided in assessing the ideas of the NGOs and funding those it deemed had a chance of success. In this European war, in a northern climate and semi-industrialized economy, everyone was improvising. By the time the DART arrived on the scene in December 1992, the NGOs had been at it longer. They were innovating their way through problems. They were getting good at it. The hundreds of different creative efforts were coming up with answers to some of the problems presented by this new environment. The DART, and through it OFDA, had the good sense to ride this wave of creativity.

Funding innovative responses

In the 1992-1993 period, OFDA funding was at the origin, at least partially, of some of the most striking programmatic innovations in the early years of the crisis. Ex-Yugoslavia presented new problems and new opportunities. Population displacement, for example, was massive. But this was very different from traditional refugee emergencies: displaced people in ex-Yugoslavia often had cars or tractors, and were highly mobile; they often had family and friends in non-conflict areas; the road networks are dense. Buses ran. The refugees moved around. Large camps were not an appropriate solution. People would not have remained in them. And it would have been prohibitively expensive to build camps that met the expectations of this relatively prosperous refugee case-load, and prepare them for the harsh winter. OFDA funded IRC to play an advisory role with UNHCR, among others. Together, they came up with new, more appropriate solutions: rather than building camps, resources went to helping communities and individuals host the refugees. Agencies helped renovate, repair or simply prepare vacant buildings — hotels, factories, government buildings — to serve as hard shelter collective centers for small numbers of refugees. Today, some seven-eight years and several Balkan refugee crises later, host-family accommodation and collective centers have become second nature. They are part of established practice.

Another example was how aid agencies resorted to local production, especially in central Bosnia in 1993-1994. The fighting that broke out between Bosnian Government and Croat forces in 1993 led to the isolation of large Government-controlled pockets in central Bosnia as the HVO blocked the roads from the coast. These were large areas, and the food situation never grew as desperate as in besieged Sarajevo or the eastern enclaves. But, there were still needs, especially as winter drew near. To overcome the logistical problem of getting material in, aid agencies, again with IRC in the lead and again mostly with OFDA funding, decided to take advantage of local production capacities: the factories and cottage industries that were idle for want of business and cash, and the fields that were fallow for want of seed and fertilizer.

NGOs started contracting for the production of stoves, clothes, shoes, hygiene products, building materials, and so on. The cash enabled production managers to buy the material they needed (of which there were often large pre-war stocks) and pay their workers. The result was that much of the assistance distributed was produced locally. While the primary aim was to avoid the security problems of trucking goods in, local production also carried beneficial spin-off effects by generating modest employment and by helping people help themselves. A very successful variant of local production was the widespread distribution of seed (wheat, barley, corn, vegetables, potato) — vegetable seed was particularly successful in fresh produce-starved Sarajevo. Again the primary rationale was logistical: seed yields seven to twenty times its weight in final produce. It was a rational use of convoy capacity.

In several occasions, OFDA funding also enabled aid agencies to implement what one might call militant programs, i.e., programs that clearly sought to empower one side and make a difference in

the struggle underway. In late 1992 early 1993, the DART facilitated and funded a small consortium of NGOs to provide assistance directly to the departure point of the Grbak trail, a mountain trail that snaked across rugged terrain and Serb lines to the Goražde pocket. An OFDA field officer had made the dangerous trek in December 1992. At that point, Grbak was Goražde's only lifeline, and the nightly horse-trains run by the Bosnian army were the enclave's main source of supplies, including weapons and ammunition. But neither the DART, not the NGOs involved doubted that this was a truly humanitarian project, i.e., one that reduced the vulnerability of an at-risk population.

The Latter Years (1994-1996): Snuffing Out Creativity

By mid-1994 the DART had been on the ground long enough to have begun to learn and develop experience of its own. It was able to initiate longer and more complex funding arrangements. OFDA input increased into how programs were structured. The irony was that the DART's main geographic area of interest, central Bosnia, was now building towards peace in the wake of the March 1994 Washington Agreement. But this did not mean that relief programs there shrank. Many previous cease-fires had broken down: the aid community — NGOs, UN agencies and donors — was wary of dismantling their operational infrastructure too soon. But there was a consequence: the DART's unabated funding for emergency programs in the relative security of central Bosnia provided little incentive for an increasingly money-driven NGO community to push into the more hazardous areas, such as the eastern enclaves or Bihać (Sarajevo always remained attractive because of its high profile). While there were still creative approaches possible for the NGOs in central Bosnia (for example OTI's approach), they were no longer in the realm of emergency assistance.

The war-driven humanitarian crises of 1995 — Sarajevo, Biha□, the Kninska Krajina, and the eastern enclaves[5] — generated needs that were largely unmet by the NGOs. The aid community was no longer configured to aggressively push at besieging authorities, nor flexible enough to respond, for instance, to the consequences of the Croatian assault on Knin. The DART attempted to fund NGOs for some of these situations. But, at that point, it was not as successful in instructing the NGOs what to do as it would be a year later, after Dayton. Nevertheless, a clear trend was emerging: the NGOs were growing more passive and the DART more directive.

Then, just as the Washington accords had suddenly changed the situation in central Bosnia, another sudden and dramatic development in 1995 gave the opportunity to radically change this dynamic: the war ended. The fall 1995 NATO bombing campaign helped bring forth the Dayton Peace Agreement. By early 1996, the withdrawal of UNPROFOR and the deployment of NATO forces made it clear

[5] All the these areas witnessed major humanitarian problems in 1995, mostly as a result of fighting: failed Bosnian army offensives in late spring, early summer and the counter-squeeze by Serb forces in Sarajevo; offensives and counter-offensives in Bihać all year long; the Croatian army's Operation Storm in UNPA South (Knin); and Bosnian Serb offensives against Srebrenica, Žepa and Goražde in spring and summer 1995.

that a peace of sorts was at hand. After over four years of experience in the region, the aid community again found itself in uncharted waters: they now had to deal with the aftermath of a war and the needs of a European society in economic, social and political transition.

Once again, a hundred creative approaches were needed to muddle through this new situation. But now the international community was no longer just reacting to the situation; it felt empowered, in charge. Large organizations were arriving on the ground — NATO, OSCE, the EU, the World Bank, USAID, embassies. They deployed senior staff, set up offices in Sarajevo and throughout Bosnia, negotiated mandates and programs. They saw themselves trying to bring order to confusion. They also knew that the political stakes were high and that their political masters — at the highest levels — were keeping a careful watch. Creative chaos was the last thing anyone wanted.

The US approach, for one, had undergone a striking change. As the main instigator of both the air strikes and Dayton, Washington felt, for the first time in the Yugoslav conflicts, a direct responsibility for the situation. Compounding this was the election year factor: for the administration, the political stakes were high and room for failure was small. Unbridled creativity was hardly the flavor of the day. The DART, with its hard-to-beat on-the-ground expertise and extensive NGO network, was a unique asset. OFDA was naturally tasked to implement the initial post-war aid program. But, true to the emerging emphasis on direction, OFDA discouraged the aid agencies from adopting innovative approaches. This was largely moot as there were at that point only a few embers of creativity left in the NGO community. They were easily smothered. The tight-rein approach was one of the DART's few points of common ground with the new USAID mission in Bosnia. At the last moment, USAID pulled the plug on a long-planned, well-publicized request for proposals that sought to build on the reintegration experiences of OTI and its grantees in Central Bosnia.

In its stead, 30 million dollars were made available for an emergency house repair and refugee return program. OFDA, through the DART and a senior consultant with a special mandate from the USAID administrator himself laid out the criteria for what became the Emergency Shelter Repair Program (ESRP). Against a backdrop of a politically embattled USAID, the ESRP's thrust was clear: support US policy, show positive momentum and quantifiable results, don't screw up. The program's central pillar was same-ethnic return in the Federation — i.e., Croats to Croat-held areas and Muslims to Muslim-held areas — and same-ethnic return only. Cross-ethnic returns, that is to say the return of victims of ethnic cleansing, were not eligible for support under the ESRP: they were deemed too risky. The rationale was based on the centuries-of-ethnic-hatred theory that charged that 'these people' were unable to live together again. To the NGOs, the message was clear: challenge any aspect of the program, and you were out of the game — and no longer in the money.

Throughout the life of the ESRP, the DART acted as an intrusive though benevolent master. Micromanaging the program as they had done with no other, the DART brought it in on time, above quota and below budget. This was a stunning programmatic achievement in a difficult program environment. But, as the first major post-Dayton program, it undermined the notion that cross-ethnic

return was feasible. By the end of 1996, the return of cross-ethnic refugees were once again a major US goal in Bosnia, a goal that OFDA had spent the prior year undermining. In the end, OFDA failed to serve both the victims of ethnic cleansing and US policy interests in Bosnia.

The ESRP also turned eight key NGOs into run-of-the-mill government contractors.[6] The management of these NGOs thrived in their position of subservience. Not having to think, they were lulled by the assumption that, as emergency programs wound down, the incoming USAID mission would pick up on such reliable and acquiescent partners. But USAID had other intentions: the ESRP was the last large program that USAID funded through the war-time NGOs in Bosnia.

Conclusions: Encouraging Creative Chaos

The following are specific 'lessons' from the evolution of the aid strategies in Bosnia 1992-97. Again these are taken from this one case-study, but, in the best tradition of lessons learned, they are phrased as if they had universal application.

- Due to the unique nature of each crisis, a chaotic approach of at least some of the available funding allows for the experimentation needed to identify new and appropriate responses. By 'chaotic' we mean experimental, flexible, decentralized and fast. In the early stages of a crisis, when new problems arise and confusion reigns, OFDA should encourage non-coordinated approaches, and give NGOs a free rein.

- Over time, in protracted crises, the more conservative and safer programs naturally come to the forefront. The shift occurs when management systems are put in place, especially financial management and reporting procedures, and as public information efforts highlight the more orderly programs. To counter this trend, OFDA needs to maintain funds for and purposefully encourage the more risky initiatives to meet the life-threatening needs of war-victims. Even as a crisis matures, it is wise to keep a 'chaotic response capacity' alive to respond to unexpected developments on the ground.

- As the NGOs become more conservative, OFDA tends to become more directive. This is a natural result of the experience that a compact, cohesive donor unit such as the DART gains over time. The larger its field presence, and the greater the continuity of field staff, the more directive OFDA will tend to become. Also, the higher the US political stakes, the more top-down OFDA will become.

[6] These were: Action Internationale Contre la Faim, CARE, Catholic Relief Services, EquiLibre, the International Rescue Committee, Mercy Corps / Scottish European Aid, the United Methodist Committee On Relief, and World Vision.

- Dramatic events during a crisis, both good and bad — military offensives, peace plans, massacres, political announcements — provide opportunities for a radical shift in approach. These are opportunities to shift whatever trends have developed in the provision of relief aid. They are opportunities to again encourage creativity and innovation.

- Aid agencies — OFDA included — are reluctant to think through the political impact of their actions and programs. This means that, is spite of the heavy lip-service given, they are reluctant to engage in do-no-harm types of analyses. This leads to bad decision-making and prevents them from taking advantage of sudden shifts in the crisis to adopt a more promising tack.

Finally, the Authors would like to alert OFDA to the very real possibility that the Bosnia experience — and its sustained high levels of funding — may have changed the essential nature of the NGOs themselves, both individual organizations and the NGO community as a whole. We suspect that drives to best the 'competition' have replaced much of the creative risk-taking, physical and programmatic. A mentality based on market share is edging out advocacy. Associations have become companies. Committees have become corporations. The next time that new, innovative approaches are needed, OFDA may no longer be able to rely on its NGO partners to find them.

III. What Changed: OFDA as Reporter

Reporting is — along with funding humanitarian programs — one of OFDA's two central roles within the US government. This makes information-gathering a key function of any DART. During critical moments of the Kurdish emergency, in April and May 1991, the northern Iraq DART sometimes sent several sitreps to Washington each day: DART leaders like Fred Cuny, mindful that their reporting would help shape policy in Washington, spent hours painstakingly chiseling every sentence and argument. This was not bureaucratic overkill. It was proof of the recognition on the part of experienced field managers that information drove the decision-making process in Washington and that the DART's field presence gave it a unique edge. But Operation Provide Comfort in northern Iraq was a short, if intense, sputter of reporting activity: while our study is not comparative, we feel safe in believing that OFDA played an unprecedented reporting role in the former Yugoslavia, unprecedented in terms of both depth and duration of influence.

The Field-Based Oracle: ODFA As Interpreter of a Confused Reality

During the cold war, relief assistance was seldom a central tenet of US policy in a country in crisis. National interest, most often expressed in terms of countering Moscow, usually outweighed any

concern for the victims. The demise of the Warsaw Pact left the US with no defining enemy. There were no longer any opposing policies to counter. The tools and mechanisms of statecraft of the last 45 years seemed irrelevant. It is no surprise then, that new tools began to fill the policy vacuum. The provision of relief assistance, whether by the State Department or USAID, was one of these tools. This posed a new set of problems. American Foreign service officers responsible for Europe, unlike their counterparts for Africa, were largely ignorant of the ways and means of relief assistance. As the Yugoslav crisis unfolded and relief aid took on an ever higher profile in US policy, American officials keenly felt their lack of expertise. They also felt stymied by the confusion of the war zone: information was scanty, confusing, unreliable. As the policy debate lurched from side to side against the backdrop of the 1992 US presidential campaign, the old adage 'information is power' appeared more relevant than ever. But who was to provide the information? Who would be the Sybil?

In the former Yugoslavia, OFDA field officers in 1992, then the DART from 1993 onward, provided the US government with a constant stream of first-hand, field-based information, often on a daily basis. The importance that this information took on in Washington cannot be overstressed, particularly with regard to Bosnia during 1992 and 1993. Aside from brief assessments and junkets, few other US governmental representatives traveled inside Bosnia. OFDA provided the continuity. Some claim that the DART's reporting was more textured than much of what the intelligence agencies were putting out. OFDA field staff could compare the situation from week to week, month to month, and identify improvement or deterioration. They came to know local actors. They grasped quickly what others in the NGOs and UN were reporting, and interpreted it for Washington. They gave US government departments a reality check on press accounts that often seemed too dramatic — and showed them to be true.

The four types of reports described in our review — field reports, field sitreps, Washington sitreps, and assessments — fill two main needs: information and advocacy. By information we mean what is happening on the ground. How much assistance is getting through? Who is blocking? Which NGOs are successful? What are the unmet needs? Where are they? This is not to imply that this information was always objective. On the contrary, judgements were made all the time. Where to go on a trip: Tuzla or Livno? Whom to talk to: UNHCR, the local Red Cross or Merhamet? Whom to believe? Time and security were constant constraints, and getting a complete view was often a rare luxury. Even where OFDA people could gather comprehensive information, inevitable contradictions remained, requiring constant judgement calls as to where the truth lay. Nevertheless, OFDA laid out the basic information.

Advocacy involved two types of activities. On the one hand were blunt, openly political, and at times militant calls for a certain interpretation of the conflict. For example, an OFDA field-officer indicated in his December 1992 end-of-contract report his belief that the Bosnian Serbs were guilty of genocide on the Muslim population of Bosnia Herzegovina and that, should it persist with this policy, the US

would be guilty of complicity.[7] Such instances of strident advocacy were rare. Far more common, on the other hand, were ODFA's recommendations as to what to do about the situation that emerged from the information gathered. Once it proposed a solution, normally driven by an analysis of what was best for the victims, OFDA would often advocate for that solution.

Information and Reporting

There were several ways that information was passed from OFDA to other parts of the US government. Some were as simple as telephone calls or faxes. These were often ad-hoc and informal, based on contacts that DART members had on the Hill or in State. Another conduit for information were the visits of Washington-based program personnel and dignitaries. Time and time again, DART staff was lauded for its ability to articulate and interpret to short-term and often under-informed visitors the complex and confusing situation in the former Yugoslavia. The impression of the crisis that many visitors took back with them to Washington was largely a result of what the DART had told them and shown them.

The written information, sitreps and field reports, was the real fodder for those in Washington who did not have the opportunity to regularly visit the field. Here lay the hard evidence that justified why so much of the US government's resources — the military aircraft, the officials and press spokespeople, the time of the president and his entourage — should be devoted to the provision of aid to Bosnia. The information that the DART provided served both hawks and doves in the conflict. It could show that the humanitarian approach to policy was successful in averting large-scale death. It could also serve to prove there were areas not being met due to the intransigence of local leaders, which could in turn serve to justify tougher action. Above all it was valid ground-based information, with a level of expertise and detail that could bolster or counter other sources of information or pressure.

Advocacy

Some see OFDA as an office that should concern itself solely with emergency relief. These individuals — within OFDA and outside of it — are uncomfortable when OFDA takes positions of open advocacy. But the reality is that advocacy is everywhere. In ex-Yugoslavia for example, there was more to OFDA's advocacy than Tom Brennan's thinly veiled recommendation to bomb Serb forces in Bosnia into ceasing activities that were deemed genocidal. In their reports, OFDA field staff also took and advocated positions on such issues as how to perform the airdrops during 1993, what negotiating stance to take with obstructive local authorities, or the role of international military forces

[7] Brennan, T.: "Final Report on Humanitarian Assistance in Bosnia-Herzegovina," US Agency for International Development, Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance: 7 December 1992.

in improving access for the aid community. In meetings of the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Working Group, chaired by the State Department, OFDA sometimes pushed issues that fell under a broad definition of humanitarianism, but had little to do with relief aid. For example, in 1993 OFDA repeatedly raised the issue of Croat-run detention camps near Mostar, at a time when the Bosnian Serbs were the only 'bad guys' that US policy would admit to. At one point, the State Department official chairing the meetings impatiently requested the OFDA representative (a member of OFDA's senior management team) to hold his emotionalism in check. OFDA remained undeterred.

One common method for advocacy, not usually thought of as such, are assessment missions. Often, such missions have some preconceived bias of what they intend to find. The final recommendations may either further or mitigate the bias, depending on the strength and integrity of the team. For instance, the spring 1993 USG Interagency Mission was intended to demonstrate the newly arrived Clinton administration's commitment to Bosnia. It was also intended to find only 'humanitarian' solutions. While the mission did just that, returning with numerous humanitarian recommendations, the FHA and OFDA team-members, ostensibly the main experts on the team, were the most adamant that there was no 'humanitarian' solution to the crisis.

Another example is the 1994 joint UK-US assessment mission for the urgent restoration of utilities to Sarajevo. This assessment was intended to demonstrate the quick benefits that could come from a cessation of hostilities, and would hopefully build a momentum towards peace in the rest of Bosnia. Sure enough, the team came back with reams of possible projects in sectors from electricity to education. But they also began sensitizing key donors to the longer term issues of a society that not only faced war, but also the massive transitions that resulted from the war or even pre-dated it, such as the transition from a sclerotic centralized economy to open markets, problems for which quick-impact projects offered no panacea.

A final example is the post-Dayton assessment that led to the emergency shelter repair program (ESRP). This was a classic example of an assessment with an agenda: the assessment consultants had been instructed to come back with a program for USAID that was visible, quick, and fail-proof. A magic bullet. The team succeeded magnificently and in doing so, according to some, it helped shift US government policy away from cross-ethnic return (at least until end 1996).

One episode — OFDA's assessment of Goražde in December 1992 — is particularly instructive in terms of OFDA's combined approach to advocacy and programming.[8] The background to this assessment were the desperate reports, transmitted by ham-radio, coming out of the eastern enclaves in the early winter months of 1992. No one really knew what the situation was in these areas — no one had carried out a proper assessment there. There were even rumors of cannibalism. The senior management of OFDA and the Bureau for Food and Humanitarian Affairs (the precursor bureau to BHR) were closely following these reports and were very concerned about them. They requested

[8] The following relies on interviews with former DART staff, OFDA personnel and NGO personnel.

that one of OFDA's field officers carry out a field assessment. Bill Stuebner made the harrowing night-long trek through the mountains, across hostile Serb lines, in the heart of winter. He found the situation in Goražde to be less bad than the wilder rumors (no cannibalism), but very bad nonetheless. A highly trained former military officer with experience in such matters, he recommended that the US military make low-altitude airdrops of humanitarian aid. He deemed the low-level aspect critical to the success of the operation. OFDA then brought Stuebner back to Washington so that he could argue his recommendations personally with administration officials, law-makers and others. But while the airdrop solution struck a sympathetic policy chord, the recommendation that they be low-level was ruled out as too dangerous. The airdrops took place but from a higher altitude. Now comes the interesting part: rather than push the envelope, OFDA returned a disconsolate Stuebner to Bosnia. There, he shepherded NGO support to the Bosnian army mule-trains that re-supplied Goražde: in effect, OFDA abandoned advocacy and went back to grant-making. This was clearly commendable in that it showed OFDA's determination — and ability — to follow up on the findings of its field assessment. It also showed that grant-making, even aggressive and militant grant-making, was a weapon of second resort: advocacy came first, even if ultimately OFDA had chosen not to turn up the volume. .

One of the more common methods of advocacy is the use of the media for public pressure. On several occasions OFDA reports found their way into the newspapers. Some of them seemed to have emerged from OFDA itself while others came from those on the distribution list. The Brennan report was leaked to the *New York Times*. Interestingly, the paper only reported fairly innocuous parts of the report that criticized UNHCR; the comments about genocide and the danger of US complicity to genocide, and the recommendations to bomb the Serbs, were omitted. Nevertheless, the report became unusable within the administration because no one wanted to be associated with it, even people who agreed to its conclusions. Other instances when the press used OFDA reports were more positive. For instance, the large 1993 Inter-Agency Humanitarian Assessment yielded differing opinions: part of the team wanted to recommend that the administration up the tempo on the relief operation. FHA and OFDA, on the other hand, argued for more forceful recommendations, such as giving up on access-by-consent and backing field assessments with US military force. In the end they were overruled, but the disagreement, and the administration's less-than-transparent manner of handling it, was reported in the *New York Times*. Conversely, it is interesting to note that, to the best of our knowledge, the $30 million post-Dayton shelter program was hardly reported on in the American press. This was unfortunate for a project whose main *raison d'être* was to show that both USAID and US policy in Bosnia were capable of forward movement.

As OFDA becomes more vocal, and more forceful in its positions, it will come up against the issue of the embassy: ranking US diplomats will almost always have to clear out-going cables. The process will be more or less smooth depending on how congruent the views of OFDA and the embassy in question are. In former Yugoslavia, the embassy in Zagreb cleared the DART's cables. Their respective views were not always in sync, particularly concerning the Bosnian-Croat war in central Bosnia and Croatia's role in it. On these types of issues, the DART learned to be cautious in its

wording, and probably more moderate then it might otherwise have been inclined to.

Concluding Questions: Objectivity or Advocacy?

It is worth pointing out the types of issues, questions, and debates that we feel OFDA should ponder. Again these are the types of points that any dynamic and thriving organization will never totally resolve but can use to spur creativity and self-awareness.

- Should individual members of a DART or OFDA field representatives be allowed or even encouraged to pass information outside of official channels? If so, should this be expanded to advocacy? Is there a difference between sharing information or opinions with colleagues in the aid community, in the government, on the Hill, in the press? What is the real fear of openness?

- Should OFDA be actively attempting to increase its 'readership,' especially on the Hill? What does this do to the content? Does it weaken it, reduce it to a lowest common denominator of understanding? Is it feasible to have two tiers of reporting; one for the general and one for the expert audience?

- How are advocacy positions developed? Should the field determine it? Up to and including the allegation of genocide? If not, how much should Washington-level concerns be allowed to impact on the victim?

- Is OFDA an advocate for the victim? What if the needs of the victim go beyond flour and blankets? What if house repairs and shelter kits undermine some of those less tangible needs, such as the right to return or the right to protection, or the right to shape one's social environment?

- What happens if OFDA is wrong in its advocacy? This possibility increases when OFDA: is a new-comer to the area; is preoccupied with relief to the exclusion of broader issues; views a large country through the experience and paranoia of a smaller neighboring country; is under political pressure; or has to deal with an ambitious Ambassador.

These issues involve moving the discussion beyond the mandate of OFDA, to the evolving nature of humanitarian aid and relief assistance itself. These points will now be taken on through the prism of the relationships that OFDA had with other organizations and the political issues that these relationships raise.

IV. Aid & Politics: OFDA's Relations With Other Actors

In all creative organizations, there should be an on-going self-reflection, based on the evolution of its organizational mandate, the quality of its personnel, the impact and constraints of other organizations, and the relationships that emerge from the interaction of the three. What recommendations we have, we place at the end of each sub-section.

Relations within OFDA:

The key relationship within OFDA was that between the DART and OFDA Washington (OFDA/W), and within that relationship the central factor was the role of the team-leader. The DART in the former Yugoslavia is widely considered within OFDA as having had more autonomy than any previous DART. This was due to a combination of several factors. First, the team-leader was a known quantity with previous senior level OFDA experience. He had been energetically recruited and enjoyed the personal trust of OFDA's senior management. Second, southeastern Europe was not a region where OFDA had significant experience. In the absence of real expertise, personnel deployed to the field quickly became experts, and OFDA/W wisely deferred to them. Third, the DART remained in existence for over four years, with remarkable continuity in personnel. The team leader remained the same practically throughout. In the memorable 'god or peon' classification (offered by one longtime OFDA staff person), this DART team-leader was clearly the former.

The forcefulness of the team-leader's conduct at times generated opposition and resentment, both within the DART and back in Washington. But it was never enough to threaten his influence. Often for better and sometimes for worse, the team-leader conceived, articulated and implemented the DART's strategy, which in turn was at the source of the US government's humanitarian policy in former Yugoslavia. From mid-1993 through 1996 OFDA maintained the approach of trusting their man on the ground. OFDA's emphasis on the team-leader meant policy was, for the most part, formed where it should have been: closest to the problem at hand. Only after Dayton and active US involvement, civilian and military, was policy created away from the field. USAID/W became more intrusive, especially the office of Administrator Atwood and the front office of the Bureau for Humanitarian Response. The emergency shelter program, while endorsed by the DART and its team-leader, was not originally their idea; it was instigated by the administrator and his hand-picked consultants.

The conclusion to be drawn from the role of the DART and the team-leader 1992-97 is the same for any organization that wishes to be creative and successful in a fluid and dynamic situation:

- The head office's primary task is in choosing the right personnel they wish to deploy. Once the

field management has been chosen, the head office role should become one of support to the decisions made in the field. Put more plainly: decentralization, good; centralization, bad. ODFA must devolve decision-making to the field, where it is closest to the needs and the people the office seeks to assist.

Relations within BHR: OFDA and OTI

It was during the former Yugoslavia crisis that USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) was created. OTI was not only a child of the Clinton administration; it was also a programmatic response to post-cold war environments that, rightly or wrongly, were perceived as new. States that had been mired in centrally planned systems or heretofore unresolved civil wars were now in 'transition.' America cast itself as the benevolent victor: it would provide assistance, but assistance that encouraged movement towards liberal economics and democracy. These are overt political goals that have not always sat well with OFDA, for two reasons. First, some within OFDA are still, like many relief professionals, caught up in the illusion that relief aid is non-political, in terms of both US politics and local politics. Second, OFDA's mandate is to save lives, and while this clearly has political implications, particularly in conflict situations, OFDA does not feel that its mission and actions need be so tied to the ideology of Western systems. In other words, OFDA will strive to save lives regardless of whether the local government is moving towards democracy (and under the critical political proviso that the Ambassador makes a disaster declaration).

On paper, the concept of transitional programs that follow on from emergency relief makes sense. There may be some rubbing of elbows in the overlap period, but the original mandates are complementary in essence and in theory consecutive: as a crisis ends, the need for life-saving assistance ebbs, and foreign assistance can begin to address the underlying structural problems that contributed to the crisis in the first place.

In Bosnia, several factors came together to blur this neat vision of things. There was an inherent lack of understanding in each office's view of the other's mandate, which sometimes bordered on animosity or even contempt. OFDA staff saw OTI as a touchy-feely interloper in the serious business of saving lives, while OTI staff saw OFDA programs as blunt and unhelpful in the post-emergency transition. To a certain extent, this remains the caricature of how OFDA and OTI view one another. But in 1994, OTI was not only new on the Bosnian block, it was nascent as a unit: it did not have the institutional or administrative wherewithal to receive the post-crisis baton from OFDA. In the early days, OTI was reliant on ODFA for administrative support. Both organizations resented this. It was not always smooth sailing. Second, OTI's funds came from the same congressional allocation as OFDA's. This caused some jockeying for funds, and with that came bouts of mutual resentment. Third, while Bosnia's several transitions to peace were dramatic (the Washington and Dayton agreements, and various lesser accords and cease-fires), they were nonetheless staggered: conflict subsided in different ways in different places and at different times. It was never clear-cut. This meant

that OFDA needed to ebb and flow at the same time in different areas, while OTI needed to expand and then maintain programs in the same areas consecutively. The result was, OTI's infancy aside, that OFDA probably never proffered the baton in the first place. Bosnia may have been an exception in that the crisis and post-crisis was clearly delineated. But should decisive international interest be lacking, war, peace, low-intensity conflict, transition and complex emergency can be more of a muddle than a continuum. OFDA can not always count on a clear separation of roles. Bosnia, at least in this sense, was an easy one.

The points that arise from that relationship are the following:

- OTI is now an established organization and is therefore no longer dependant on others. Nevertheless, it may still need a jump-start while deploying to a country emerging from crisis. It is in OFDA's interest to act in a collegial fashion, particularly since this can also work in the reverse order as cycles of peace and conflict alternate, as has been the case for instance in Angola, D.R.Congo and Kosovo.

- OFDA must make a systematic effort to think through and analyze the social and political impact of its programs on a society in crisis. In the event of an eventual reconfiguration of BHR within a broader restructuring of US assistance, OTI, because of its greater level of comfort with political issues, could play that role on a bureau-wide basis. This could clearly entail a high level of discomfort for both OFDA and Food for Peace (FFP), but it is a solution worth pondering until these offices are prepared to lend serious consideration to the political repercussions of their activities.

Relations within USAID

Mainstream USAID, was on the ground in Yugoslavia prior to OFDA.[9] As war broke out and emergency assistance began, USAID's lone representative in Belgrade attempted to direct the provision of aid — his efforts were by all accounts neither impressive nor successful. A fracas followed the deployment of OFDA personnel as it was unclear where they were to turn for instructions: the USAID representative in the recently downgraded embassy in Belgrade, the consulate, soon to be embassy, in Zagreb, or back to Washington. The fracturing of the embassy structure mirrored that of the country. This, combined with the rapid increase in emergency assistance, gave OFDA all it needed to see off the attempt by USAID Belgrade to control its activities.

[9] By 'mainstream USAID' we mean the non-BHR parts of USAID, especially the regional bureaus. In former Yugoslavia this was USAID's Bureau for Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States (ENI — now simply the Bureau for Eastern Europe, E&E).

The next interaction between OFDA and other portions of USAID outside of BHR was in 1994. USAID's Bureau for Europe and Newly Independent States (ENI) was trawling for projects in Bosnia that would carry over into a post-conflict setting. As its Bosnia representative, ENI sent out an experienced and well-liked senior ex-OFDA official. The relationship with OFDA was therefore collegial. USAID began some important and effective programs that did in fact carry over into post-war Bosnia.

It was in the post-conflict phase that the relationship became the most intense and controversial. In 1996, plans for the emergency shelter program — the ESRP — were troubling to other offices within USAID. USAID abruptly pulled the plug on OTI's reconciliation programs in the Federation. USAID/ENI also saw its reconciliation-based programs halted. More pointedly, the decision to entrust the shelter program to OFDA was deeply unpleasant to ENI. Fundamental philosophical differences in approach between OFDA and ENI caused a bitter bureaucratic ruckus. BHR, with support from the administrator, pushed OFDA's shelter program to the fore and secured that the DART would run it. OFDA accepted after initial misgivings linked not to the essence of the program — an exclusive focus on same-ethnic return — but rather to fears of getting bogged down in a non-emergency program. For ENI, insult compounded injury when OFDA, after winning the internal USAID battle, gobbled up all the money made available by the cancellation of the other projects (ENI was forced to foot half of the ESRP's $25 million price-tag). But this was to prove OFDA's high-water mark. Just as the trend in 1992 had led inexorably away from USAID's European Bureau and towards OFDA, in post-Dayton Bosnia, that trend was reversed. Regardless of whether or not it may have wished to stay around, there was clearly no long-term role for OFDA in Bosnia. The emergency shelter program, in spite of USAID's opposition, was actually beneficial to USAID as it bought time for the Bosnia mission to establish itself. ENI stayed out of the limelight until it was able to establish its own programs in Bosnia. Once that happened, and with the shelter program's 2,500 houses 'successfully' repaired, the USAID mission was not unhappy to see the DART scale down its presence and finally pack its bags in late 1997.

Former Yugoslavia is a clear example of the often difficult relationship between BHR and the regional bureaus. But which is the dog and which is the tail? In other words, the rhetoric about the USAID representative being the overall agency representative aside, how does OFDA on the ground really relate to the rest of USAID? This question is further complicated, as was the case with OFDA in former Yugoslavia, by the fact that BHR, be it OFDA or OTI, is often on the ground in crises situations well before USAID proper. The arrival of a green Mission is all the more painful.

OFDA and the Department of State

Political Aid?

The relationship between OFDA and State Department is varied, complex, and in some cases,

undefined or unrecognized. The issues raised by this relationship get to what the Authors consider some of the key and fundamental questions brought up by the crisis in former Yugoslavia. Is the mandate of OFDA static or evolving? What role does emergency assistance play in US foreign policy? Who does OFDA represent or advocate for: the US government, the values of the American people, or the well-being of at-risk populations? Is OFDA a political organization? As part of the Executive branch, can it afford not to be? Can at-risk populations afford for it not to be?

The State Department views emergency assistance in a political fashion: it attempts to accomplish other goals in addition to meeting humanitarian needs. Examples from the former Yugoslavia are as eloquent as they are abundant: the use, by the Bush administration, of the April 1992 humanitarian military airlift to recognize the newly established state of Bosnia Herzegovina; the 1992-1995 ban on aid to Serbia or Serb-held areas of Bosnia; the hope that implementing airdrops would lead to negotiations for peace, etc. The clash with OFDA's mandate occurs when State's additional political goals supercede the aim of saving lives. Mandate clashes however do not always result in open or even closed-door disputes. Mandates can be interpreted differently. Mandates are not always upheld.

OFDA and BPRM

The State Department bureau with which OFDA has the most interaction and whose mandate is closest to that of OFDA is the Bureau for Population, Refugees and Migration (BPRM). BPRM, while being a leading advocate for humanitarian action within the State Department, also has other important interests in mind, such as US national interests and the interests of the current administration, as well as those of the Department itself. BPRM also takes a keen interest in the well-being of the international organizations it funds — the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) being the main ones.

The relationship between OFDA and BPRM in the former Yugoslavia was generally cordial. Operationally, the two organizations were never at loggerheads. The ban on aid to Bosnian Serb-held areas could have been problematic, but was not: while OFDA never had an official proscription on aid to the Serbs, the lack of needs in Serb-held areas and Serb obstruction to meeting the few needs they had, meant that, in practice, OFDA funded little work on the Serb side. By mid-1995, needs were on the increase in Serb-held areas, especially after the fall of UNPA South (Knin) to the Croatian army in August. But by then, the State Department had become more amenable and did not protest when OFDA initiated programs in those areas — it may even have found it expedient in the face of the displacement of as many of 400,000 people by a US ally (Croatia). BPRM meanwhile was able to accomplish its political goals of providing assistance, but not to the Serbs. Its grants to international organizations carried the proviso that no funds would be used in Serb areas. This had little effective impact on the ability of agencies such as UNHCR to provide aid in Serb-held areas — donors funds are fungible and UNHCR would just use a disproportionate share from another donor. Nevertheless all were happy. The UN agencies provided enough aid to the Serbs to justify their claim of even-

handedness and State was able to claim it was not helping the most aggressive party — the Serbs.

The only real clash occurred in the aftermath of the fall of Srebrenica, when the BPRM refugee coordinator, based in Zagreb, was preferred over the DART as the main US government reporter, despite the fact that the DART was on the ground and the victims were IDPs, not refugees.

OFDA: On-the-ground Legitimacy vs. Increasing Security Restrictions

ODFA played a central role in an important State Department initiative, the Inter-Agency Humanitarian Working Group. The objective of this group was to co-ordinate within the US government various interested agencies, including intelligence agencies and the Department of Defense. This was an important forum for OFDA to air its message to the rest of the US government. In the absence of access to the historical written record, the Authors have only anecdotal evidence on this role. From what we could judge, there was little consistency: at times OFDA was an aggressive defender of the victims and at others did not contribute to this forum with the energy required. The main point here is that OFDA's operational status consistently lent legitimacy to its advocacy. This will most likely remain the case in emergencies to come. It is up to OFDA how much they wish to exploit this opening in the future.

But OFDA will only maintain its field-based aura and the resulting credibility if the State Department allows it to retain unhindered access to the field, including potentially dangerous areas. Throughout the war in Bosnia Herzegovina, OFDA staff did their work at great personal risk, including extensive travel through hostile frontlines and checkpoints, and visits to besieged areas under shelling and sniping. Both the personnel in the field and OFDA/Washington were aware of these risks. They saw them for what they were — an inherent part of the job. And all accepted them as such, something that was necessary to accomplish the task at hand. It is a paradox that after Dayton — at a moment when security improved throughout Bosnia — this changed: USAID personnel, including the DART, were to travel only in armored ('hard-skin') vehicles. The extent to which the DART complied remains unclear.[10] In terms of security, this of course made no sense, especially when contrasted to the levels of risk of the previous years. Nonetheless, these restrictions seem to have been the first in a series of security restrictions mandated by State's Bureau of Diplomatic Security and prompted, not by any increase in risk, but by political considerations (and possibly a change in the nature of the risk).[11] These restrictions hamper OFDA's ability to do its work and ultimately undermine its very

[10] The measure certainly hampered the establishment of OTI's field offices.

[11] In 1999 in Albania and, to a lesser extent, Kosovo, the DART was subjected to paralyzing security restrictions. In Albania, DART members could not travel outside of Tirana without bodyguards and even in Tirana were requested to use armored vehicles. Some felt this all but cancelled out the benefits of having a DART there at all. While there were doubtless bona fide security concerns, staff who in the past had done OFDA business in places like Juba, Sarajevo, Huambo, Goma, Erbil, Monrovia or Baidoa — just to mention a few — felt a sense of frustration and mystification at the restrictions they faced.

purpose: using on-the-ground expertise to make grants and report on emergencies. OFDA must fight relentlessly to retain the ability to judge where is and is not safe to send its people.

OFDA 's Relations with the Embassies

Throughout the war in Bosnia, the DART had to maintain relations with two embassies, Zagreb, where the DART was based until 1996, and Sarajevo (Vienna).[12] As often happens is such cases, the two embassies took different views of the crisis, particularly in their analysis of central Bosnian politics and Croatia's role there. Moreover, the embassies were in disagreement as to which had primacy over the affairs in Bosnia. The State Department in Washington never adjudicated the dispute. This left the DART and its team-leader in an awkward, but not unfamiliar, limbo.[13] Problems were especially difficult concerning security clearance and reporting. By 1993, the DART had opted for pragmatism and deferred to the Zagreb embassy on most issues. Such situations remain basically beyond OFDA's control, which only reinforces the importance of the personality and political savvy of OFDA's field representatives, and the need for OFDA/W to defer to their judgment.

Information Dissemination

A final point of intersection with the State Department is the dissemination of information. The recipient list for OFDA sitreps, both field- and Washington-generated, grew steadily through the life of the crisis. The reports written by OFDA field staff in Zagreb or Zenica moved up the chain far and fast, landing on the desks of officials the drafter may never have heard of. Their impact was significant. The perception in Washington of what was black, what was white, and what remained gray, was influenced by the judgements of OFDA personnel in Croatia and Bosnia. There is no evidence to show that OFDA/W took into account the growing influence of its reports in Washington. The question thus arises whether or not it should have. Along with the reports on quantities of aid delivered was the occasional description of who obstructed aid and how. Had OFDA/W taken into account political considerations as to the impact of these reports, would it have highlighted or discouraged some of them? Once hooked up through Zagreb, the DART seems to have factored in political considerations vis-à-vis its relationship with the embassy there. Some field reports, critical of Croat obstructionism and abuses in Central Bosnia, were sometimes softened. This accommodated Embassy Zagreb's desire to not undermine the reading in Washington that the 'bad guys' were the Serbs and no one else. But Bosnian victims of hard-line Croat aggression were further victimized by OFDA's need to 'negotiate' its message with Embassy Zagreb. (It must be said, however, that there were instances when the DART reported on Croat atrocities and abuses, and advocated the issue in Washington, such as with the Croat-run detention camps in Mostar in 1993.)

[12] The tenuous security situation in Sarajevo resulted in the embassy being located in Vienna, with the Ambassador making occasional trips to Bosnia.

[13] People familiar with both cases say that a similar situation of OFDA caught in an inter-embassy dispute is Kinshasa v. Kigali since summer 1994.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- The issue of IDPs versus refugees can divide OFDA and BPRM. The current infatuation with the notion of amalgamation — amalgamation of refugees and IDPs and amalgamation of US relief assistance — could lead to heightened tensions by blurring existing lines of responsibility. To manage this, OFDA and BPRM must continue to work together and make decisions on a case-by-case basis as to where responsibilities lie. The practice of including BPRM personnel on DART, which was done in former Yugoslavia in 1993-1994 and since in Albania and Kosovo (1999), is very valuable and should be continued.

- Security restrictions will undermine OFDA's ability to operate as an effective funding office and neuter its role as a field-based information-collector for the US government. It will kill OFDA as we know it. The senior management of OFDA must relentlessly fight attempts to restrict the movements of its people — including by mobilizing the support of BHR and withdrawing field-based staff if they are prevented from doing their job by security measures that are unreasonable.

- When confronted with a disagreement between embassies, and in the absence of any direction from State/Washington, OFDA must of course take into account practical considerations, i.e., which embassy offers better political and administrative support; but it should also balance these with advocacy-based considerations, such as which embassy's stance is more beneficial to the victims of the crisis.

OFDA and the Department of Defense

During the crisis in the former Yugoslavia this relationship was mostly free of acrimony. One exception was the excess property program — where DoD donated mostly useless excess military supplies for use and distribution by the aid agencies — which was time-consuming and, from a programmatic stand-point, mostly useless. It eventually caused the DART — and the DART's implementing partners — considerable headaches. A more positive point was OFDA's instigation of the 'humad' concept, that of a humanitarian advisor to the military, which proved valuable during the deployment of NATO forces in 1996, and offered promise for the future.

It is this Jiminy Cricket role — OFDA perched on the shoulder of the US military, whispering advice in its ear — that is the most interesting. OFDA can play that role both in normal times, or with regard to specific crises. Whenever the military is deployed in such settings, they often find themselves working alongside OFDA. This was the case in Iraq, Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia, and more recently in Albania, Venezuela, Kosovo and Mozambique. Though they may work side by side, there is an important difference between OFDA and the military. By the time the military deploys in the crisis area, it is likely that OFDA has been there for a while. It is easier for OFDA field staff to

delve into the problem: OFDA field staff are freer in their contacts and their movements.[14] And as civilians, their take is different. In Bosnia, OFDA was on the ground for the entire length of the war and enjoyed remarkable continuity of staff throughout. They had excellent contacts in the region and an intimate grasp of the situation. By late 1995, when the first sizeable US units arrived, OFDA's analysis was well honed. Military units and commanders, on the other hand, were newcomers. They underwent constant rotation, making it hard to maintain institutional knowledge and influence. The same may well be the case in future crises. OFDA can be a natural ally for the military, and as such, a natural advocate for the victims.

In the course of a given deployment, OFDA and the US military often share a common objective: both tend to want to get out of the situation at hand as quickly as possible. And both encourage other civilian agencies of the US and the international community to take on the mid- to long-term stabilizing role. Another issue is the growing overlap between military and humanitarian spheres, which is most striking in the military's exit strategies. For OFDA the exit goal is fully justified by their mandate, even if things rarely play out that way. After Dayton for instance, at a time when the DART would have been expecting to be winding down, it was tasked with managing the shelter program (re-dubbed emergency for good form), precisely because it was deemed an all-important program.

The military also have to deal with external considerations and pressures that stymie their desire for a quick exit. In former Yugoslavia, these considerations included: encouraging a sense of justice, i.e., arresting indicted war criminals, providing a secure environment, including policing in the absence of workable international police forces, and using muscle to implement aspects of a peace agreement that one or more of the signatories were blocking. These are not easy or pleasant duties for any military; the US military's obsession with force protection makes it even less suitable for these tasks. Thus it was hardly surprising that it sought to gain some PR kudos from the relatively easy and visible assistance programs: photos of US soldiers repairing clinics and schools make domestic audiences and their elected leaders more comfortable with the presence of their young men in a foreign country. This military intrusion into the 'humanitarian space' has started to draw fire in the aid community. OFDA as a trusted interlocutor between the military and the rest of the aid community can help diffuse some of this rising tension and confusion of roles.

A recommendation for OFDA:

- OFDA is a seasoned DOD interlocutor. OFDA should, based on its field presence, experience, and understanding of a crisis, help advise the US military and other aspects of the government define what conditions require the deployment of US forces and what needs to be accomplished

[14] At least they used to be. This certainly was not the case in Albania in the summer of 1999 where US military officers in uniform strolled the streets of Tirana whilst exasperated DART members waited at the curbside for one of the perennially late embassy armored cars.

to facilitate their withdrawal. In formulating its advice, OFDA's foremost consideration must remain with the local population and the victims. OFDA should be particularly alert for possible adverse effects of the military's presence.

Relations with non-US Government agencies

From 1991 to mid-1993, relations with UNHCR were often rocky. Prior to the establishment of the DART, OFDA field officers had often been critical of UNHCR's unassertive attitude towards besieging Serb forces. They felt that UNHCR often gave in too soon to the demands of the Serbs. This criticism appeared publicly, most notably in the *New York Times* in late 1992. This soured relations with UNHCR. With the arrival of the DART, relations improved. While DART members were still critical of UNHCR's efforts and energetically pursued their mandate as watchdog of all US assistance, two factors led to an improvement in relations. First, both organizations now had more people on the ground. This allowed for more interaction and therefore the relationship was less dependant on the likes and dislikes of specific individuals. Each member of the DART had their own set of contacts within UNHCR. This led to a broader and richer view of UNHCR's operation. Second, criticism was no longer public: while some criticism still found its way into field reports, it no longer ended up on the front page of daily newspapers.

An interesting recurring point in many of our non-USG interviews was the ignorance of the mandate and structure of OFDA. In particular, many senior and experienced UN personnel were confused regarding OFDA's role as it related to the rest of USAID, the State Department and even US intelligence agencies. In a way, this is not surprising as these relationships are in a constant state of flux. OFDA's relations with BPRM or any other organization are not only dependant on the outbreak and nature of a given crisis, but also on the relative allocations from Congress, the priorities of any given administration, and the personalities of individuals in contact with their counterparts. Rather than attempting an education campaign of what OFDA does, it may be better to target key interlocutors as to the current status of OFDA's role and relationships within the US government firmament.

A recommendation:

- OFDA must make an effort to educate key interlocutors within selected organizations on its current role and relationships within the US government.[15] OFDA should also adopt a policy of

[15] Such organizations might include, but not be limited to: the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF, the World Food Programme, the Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the UN Department of Political Affairs, the UN Department for Peace-Keeping Operations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the European Commission's Humanitarian Office and other EU institutions, other important bilateral donors, the World Bank, regional development banks, NATO, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and other regional

purposefully explaining to the main actors in a given crisis its presence and mandate in that crisis.

V. Concluding Thoughts: On The Need to Think Politically

Real Humanitarianism is Political

A common strand weaves its way through the six years and manifold issues that we cover in this Review of OFDA in former-Yugoslavia, and that is that emergency assistance operations always have political repercussions. It is not a matter of saying that emergency relief in times of conflict is a band-aid that may save some lives but leaves the root problems unchanged. In some instances, that may be true. This can lead to the easy conclusion that relief is a travesty that should be done away with. We disagree. In order to be effective, emergency relief requires a far broader commitment, one that is based not just on the physical needs of the victims, but on their political and human rights; a commitment that highlights the responsibility of those who wield power in the world to uphold these rights, and seeks to hold these leaders accountable to their responsibility. Therein lies the essence of true humanitarianism.

Judgement calls as to whether relief is appropriate — i.e., whether or not it helps the victims — need to be made constantly, and on a case-by-case basis. Agents of the "humanitarian international" (to use Alex de Waal's expression) — UN agencies, international relief NGOs, donor agencies, think tanks, individuals — must be aware of the political nature of their action. They need to attempt to think through the impact of their presence and their programs. Their conclusions will vary from one instance to the next. In 1991, MSF-France decided to withdraw from Yugoslavia after the Vukovar convoy horror. It deemed that the relief aid it provided was inappropriate. Conversely, in 1993 OFDA chose to provide assistance to Goražde, through NGOs and bypassing the 'official' system of consent. These were opposite decisions made by two very different aid agencies. But they proceeded from the same question: what is most useful to the victim? What course of action gives the at-risk population the best chance of survival? Central to this concept are the notions of advocacy and what the French humanitarian tradition calls *témoignage*, bearing witness. Aid workers must call it the way they see it.

The reality is that, in times of conflict, the provision of aid is never neutral, either in fact or in perception. We hope that our review shows that real objectivity is a fiction and that advocacy is routine. We also hope that the gradual realization that advocacy is not out of the ordinary will make

institutions, and the main NGOs and NGO coordination groups.

aid agency personnel more comfortable with it. People who are on the ground, who witness a crisis unfold and understand its dynamics, should never hesitate to speak out on behalf of the victim. By requiring that relief workers be deaf and dumb, so-called humanitarian neutrality is too often an obstacle to real humanitarianism.

Implications for OFDA: If Aid Is Political, So Is Ignorance

In the course of this review, OFDA's post-Dayton emergency shelter program (the ESRP) emerged as a case in point of what happens when an agency fails to think through the political repercussions of its action. It provides us with a case-study within the case-study. It was the single largest program and was largely considered successful. It was recent. And it also encapsulated the flawed relationship between politics and aid. We were skeptical of the assumptions and the objectives behind the ESRP. We were also surprised: this was a highly political role for an organization — OFDA — that rarely takes an overt political stand.

Yet, we are not critical of OFDA or of the shelter program for taking a political approach to aid. To the contrary. We feel that OFDA should take a more political approach to its work. Thus, we do not blame the ESRP for being political — we blame it for getting its politics wrong. The politics of the ESRP were the politics of moral expediency: let us target same-ethnic returns because they are the easy bite of the apple. And the rationale proffered — these people can no longer live together — was both morally and factually wrong. After years of experience in the region, OFDA misconstrued the Bosnian reality. In contributing to a change of US policy to same-ethnic return in 1996, OFDA combined the wrong politics with a total lack of analysis of the program's political repercussions. The needs of various parts of the administration in Washington carried a higher priority for OFDA than those of the victims of ethnic cleansing. One can not even argue that this was a matter of short term gains superceding long term interests: by the end of 1996, as US policy swung back to encouraging cross-ethnic returns, it was clear that OFDA's focus on same-ethnic return served neither the interests of the victims of ethnic cleansing nor those of US policy.

One could conclude that this sorry state of affairs is what happens when OFDA enters the treacherous realm of politics. Therefore stay away from political considerations. Again, we disagree. Staying out of politics will only leave a vacuum to be filled by some other actor's political agenda. OFDA should go the other way. It should embrace whole-heartedly the fact that its aid is by essence political, because only then will it ensure that its assistance does not worsen the plight of those it seeks to help. After so much talk about the 'do no harm' approach, this is one way to begin actually doing no harm.

The ESRP was the most telling example we found of the lack of political analysis of the relief operation, but there were others. By late summer 1992, for instance, the extension of the Sarajevo airlift, the failure of the London Conference and the deployment of UNPROFOR to assist the delivery

of aid, all made it clear that the first major efforts to stop the war had failed. More people were affected and more aid was allocated. Yet, to our knowledge, there was no analysis of where this was going. OFDA never stopped to consider the relative impact on the war of the provision of aid and the presence of UN forces. Three years later, the failure of the aid juggernaut made the intervention of NATO necessary. Could this have been foreseen? Maybe not. But the fact is that OFDA and the broader aid community, including the authors of these lines, we did not even try. Ignorance was, in this case, political.

Another example was the sudden outbreak of peace in both central Bosnia and Sarajevo in the first months of 1994. This took the aid community by surprise. Even with the UK-US mission to Sarajevo and the EUAM in Mostar, the implementation of non-emergency aid programs that might have helped consolidate the cease-fire took between three and twelve months to initiate. The war in Sarajevo had re-ignited by then. Again, to our knowledge, OFDA offered no analysis of the opportunities — of the altered political situation, of the impact of continuing emergency programs, of the cost of delaying of non-relief programs — not even after the fact.

The point of these examples, as with the emergency shelter program, is that both the rights of the victim and the mid- to long-term US interests lose out when there is a failure to analyze the political repercussions of humanitarian aid. It is to OFDA's credit that, repeatedly during the course of its involvement in former Yugoslavia, its staff were willing and able to think in broad humanitarian terms. But the fact remains that no one systematically thinks through the political repercussions of so-called humanitarian decision-making. Within the US government, no agency does so. Outside government, universities and think tanks remain shallow in their analysis. The fact that, four years after the fact, the ESRP is still considered a stellar success bears witness to the lack of political repercussion analysis. As for the non-profit aid agencies, the lesson that they have learned in the course of the past decade is that analyzing the political impact of their programs in not only unpalatable, it could be unprofitable.

How can OFDA better take into account the political impact of its programs?

The most easy initiative that OFDA could take to increase its political awareness is to make it someone's full-time job. OFDA should consider placing an impact officer on each DART. This person's task would be to attempt to look ahead and articulate the impact that OFDA's programs and more generally the configuration of the international aid community may have on the crisis and the local society. Second, they may be able to lay some programmatic groundwork for any let-ups in the conflict.

A second initiative, and one for which there may be considerable controversy, involves OFDA's main partners — the NGOs and, increasingly, for-profit companies. OFDA should consider inserting political criteria into funding arrangements with the NGOs. This could be done in two ways. First, in defining its approach to a crisis, OFDA could state that it is giving priority to proposals that meet certain political considerations. For example, OFDA could require that a human rights, return or

protection component be built into the programs. It could be something as simple as the demonstrated involvement of the community in the choice and the implementation of the program. The key here is clarity on the political goal that OFDA is attempting to meet. Second, OFDA could insist that grantees perform periodic political impact assessments of programs that OFDA fund, or even of their overall impact on the society and crisis at hand. Culled from the Bosnia experience come the following questions: What is the provision of food doing to the local market? Which local leaders or parties benefit from the aid distribution? Which local leaders or parties benefit from any cash injections? What compromises in terms of needs-based programming are being made in the interests of access to the most vulnerable? And so on. Given the current ostrich-like approach to relief aid ('we are not political, we are humanitarians'), it might take some time for the NGO community to recover from the shock and develop the sophistication to answer these questions. But it must be clear to all that the current financial interests of the NGOs tend to discourage them from looking at these issues on their own. However, should a donor establish such analyses as a precondition to funding, there may yet be a chance that the NGO community could once again play a role that benefits victims in a broader manner, one that recognizes the social and political causes of their vulnerability rather than only providing emergency relief.

Finally, a word on the structure of US assistance. Since 1995, there have been repeated calls for a rationalization of US humanitarian assistance. The current set-up is seen as too messy, too atomized, not purposeful enough. Proponents of increased centralization, particularly within the Department of State may seize on arguments such as ours, arguing that a more centralized structure would offer better political oversight. Aid would be more political and therefore more effective. Again, we disagree. Based on the evidence from this study, as well as on our experience elsewhere, we are convinced that greater centralization inhibits innovation and creativity. In former Yugoslavia, OFDA was never so effective in meeting the needs of victims and fulfilling US policy objectives as in the early days of 1992 and 1993, when there were few constraints on the thoughts and actions of OFDA field staff. Conversely, OFDA's post-Dayton shelter program plainly demonstrated the dangers of excessive centralization, control and micro-management.

We understand that US humanitarian policies must serve the interests of the nation. But that is no reason to silence the few voices within the US government that speak for the victims of war. In fact, any goal beyond the very short-term interests of any administration probably lies, as least in part, in safeguarding the rights of those victims. OFDA is one of the few US government entities with both the mandate and the resources to be an effective advocate for the victims. OFDA may not always succeed or even choose to sound that voice. But excessive centralization would doubtless ensure that it rarely could.

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As noted in the "Roadmap," in order to not get bogged down in interminable explanations, we felt we had to assume a certain degree of knowledge of the Yugoslav crisis in general and of the war in Bosnia in particular. For those readers who wish to learn more, here is a list of selected reading.

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Annex One
Key Events for OFDA During the War in the Former Yugoslavia

This chronology is to help the reader keep in mind the succession of the main events in the 1991-1997 period in Yugoslavia, regarding both OFDA and major developments on the ground. A 164-page chronology was also developed.

June 25 1991 - Slovenia and Croatia declare independence. Fighting breaks out.

Nov. 1991 - Secretary General designates the UNHCR lead agency.

Nov. 18 1991 - Vukovar falls to the Serbs after an 86-day siege.

Nov. 26 1991 - U.S. Ambassador Warren Zimmerman issues a disaster declaration.

Dec. 5-21 1991 - A U.S. assessment team (U.S. Embassy, USAID, and IRC) travel to B-H, Croatia, Vojvodina, and Serbia.

Dec. 17 1991 - President Bush announces the provision of an additional $7 million.

January 1992 - OFDA funds IRC to report on the crisis.

Jan. - Feb. 1992 - Croatia and Serbia agree to a cease-fire. UNPROFOR is established.

March-April 1992 - Bosnians vote for independence in a referendum boycotted by the Bosnian Serbs. Serb paramilitaries and the JNA attack the non-Serb population.

April 18-19 1992 - USG organizes five USAF fights to Sarajevo with OFDA relief goods.

June 1 1992 - OFDA sends an assessment team to Macedonia.

Late June 1992 - OFDA sends two consultants to the former Yugoslavia, one to assist with the distribution of medical supplies in Macedonia and the other to monitor the delivery and distribution of MREs arriving in Zagreb.

July 3 1992 - Sarajevo airlift begins.

Aug 26-28 1992 - EC/UN London Conference.

Dec. 12 1992 -	DART deployed to Zagreb.
January 1993 -	EC/UN negotiators propose a peace plan for Bosnia (Vance-Owen Plan).
Feb. 28 1993 -	The airdrops begin.
Feb.-Mar. 1993 -	Clinton administration sends a humanitarian assessment team to B-H.
May 6 1993 -	UNSCR 824 designates towns including Sarajevo as "safe areas."
August 1993 -	NATO authorizes air support to defend UNPROFOR troops.
February 1994 -	Sarajevo market massacre results in NATO ultimatum.
Mar. 8-23 1994 -	A joint US-UK Civil Planning Mission for Sarajevo.
March 18 1994 -	Washington Agreement results in Muslim-Croat federation.
July 4 1994 -	The U.S. Embassy opens in Sarajevo and DART establishes a sub-office.
Nov. 29 1994 -	NATO air strikes result in UN peacekeepers taken as hostages.
May 26 1995 -	71 killed in Tuzla by Serb shelling. NATO air strikes on Pale. Bosnian Serbs detain hundreds of peacekeepers.
Late June 1995 -	HUMADs deployed.
July 11 1995 -	Srebrenica falls.
Aug. 4 1995 -	The Croatian armed forces launch "Operation Storm" and take the Krajina.
Aug 28. 1995 -	Two shells hit a market hall in Sarajevo killing 37 and wounding 80.
Aug. 30 1995 -	NATO launches a campaign of massive and sustained air strikes.
Oct. 12 1995 -	Bosnian government and Bosnian Serb leaders sign a cease-fire agreement.
November 1995 -	The Gersony team is sent to B-H to develop post-Dayton.

	USAID sets up a mission in Bosnia with Craig Buck as its Director.
Dec. 14 1995 -	The Dayton Accords are signed in Paris.
May 1996 -	Grants for the $25 million Emergency Shelter Repair Program are announced to eight NGOs.
Dec. 1996	Under DART management, ESRP completes the repair of 2,548 'same-ethnic' houses in the Federation.
Oct. 1997	DART leaves Bosnia Herzegovina

Annex Two:
OFDA Program Expenditures 1992 to 1996

The attached database is a comprehensive listing of OFDA's program expenditures from 1992 to 1996, including start date, organization to which funding was granted, sector, funding mechanism and location. Although some data is general (i.e. Bosnia rather than a specific area or city for location) or missing (some start dates and sectors are blank), we feel the database is accurate enough to make an analysis of OFDA's funding strategy (see our paper on OFDA in the former Yugoslavia from 1992 to 1995) and to present as a record of OFDA's activities in the former Yugoslavia. Although we did collect data for 1997, we did not feel it was accurate enough to present and therefore left it out.

We collected information for the database from the following sources:

- A database generated on 25 March 1998 from USAID's Contract Information Management System (CIMS). It contained "Awards with the Former Republic of Yugoslavia" signed as of 1 June 1991. We got the bulk of our information from this database but it was not comprehensive.

- A "Listing of Project and Activities," originally put together for a former DART Action Officer as of 24 October 1994. This listing was also not comprehensive.

- We personally went through grant and contract files at USAID offices both in Alexandria, VA and Silver Spring, MD. This information allowed us to determine the financial breakdown by year of thirty or so large cooperative agreements and grants. The files indicated dates and amounts of modifications — information that could not be found on any available databases. Without this crucial information, we would not have been able to determine how much was spent per year in a grant or cooperative agreement which spanned over a couple of years.

- Internal DART files, including information saved on diskettes from a former DART team member and papers files brought back to Washington from Zagreb (most RRF information was found here).

OFDA Funding Fiscal Years 1992-1996

Org.	FY	Start Date	Sector	Grant	Location	Totals
DOD	1992	18-Apr-92	Logistics (Log)	Contract (C)	Bosnia	125,000
DOD	1992	7-Aug-92	Food (F)		Zagreb, Macedonia	775,000
IRC	1992	15-Jan-92	Admin	Grant (G)	Zagreb,Belgrade, Sarajevo	243,013
IRC	1992	15-Jul-92	mix	Modification (Mod)	Bosnia	1,444,483
MSF/Holland	1992	4-Jun-92	Medical (M)	G	Bosnia	206,057
OFDA	1992	1-Dec-91	Admin	C	Yugoslavia	6,198
OFDA	1992	1-May-92	Food	C	Yugoslavia	2,000
OFDA	1992	1-Jun-92	Admin	C	Macedonia	12,748
OFDA	1992	1-Jun-92	Admin	C	Macedonia	45,618
OFDA	1992	1-Jun-92	Admin	C	Zagreb	71,020
OFDA	1992	22-Jun-92	Log	C	Bosnia	24,338
OFDA	1992	26-Nov-91	F	C	Yugoslavia	25,000
OFDA	1992	18-Apr-92	Winter (WN)	value	Bosnia	77,905
PRO PAC, INC.	1992	30-Sep-92	WN	C	Bosnia	447,300
UNICEF	1992	1-Jul-92	M	C	Macedonia	72,281
UNICEF	1992	28-Sep-92		G	Bosnia	100,000
UNICEF	1992	1-Jul-92	M	value	Bosnia	82,240
Total 1992						**3,760,201**
AICF	1993	10-Apr-93	F	G	Sarajevo	214,575
AICF	1993	30-Sep-93	mix	G	Sarajevo	125,000
AICF	1993	17-Sep-93	F	Mod	Sarajevo	175,000
AICF/USA	1993	2-Jul-93	Water/San (SA,W)	G	Bugojno	369,252
American Red Cross	1993	2-Feb-93	F	G	Bosnia, Croatia	1,442,985
Brother's Brother Foundation	1993	1-Mar-93	F	G	Croatia	219,663
CDC	1993	1-Feb-93	Admin	C	Bosnia	26,463
Church World Service	1993	1-Apr-93	F	G	Bosnia, Croatia	2,108,342
CRS	1993	1-Jan-93	F	G	Sarajevo, Banja Luka	1,878,482
CRS	1993	27-Apr-93	F	G	Kosovo	2,115,870
CRS	1993	12-May-93	F	Mod	Sarajevo,	1,039,642

					Banja Luka	
CRS	1993	15-Sep-93	F	Mod	Sarajevo, Banja Luka	870,953
CRS	1993	30-Sep-93	F	Mod	Sarajevo, Banja Luka	573,962
DART	1993	12-Dec-92	Admin	C	Croatia	869,240
DART	1993	12-Dec-92	Admin	C	Former Yugoslavia	912,501
Equilbre	1993	16-Jul-93	Log	G	Bosnia	676,800
Feed the Children	1993	10-Apr-93	F	G	C. Bosnia	250,000
ICRC	1993	27-Sep-93	WN	G	Bosnia	4,710,000
International Medical Corps	1993	3-May-93	M	G	Zenica	706,515
IRC	1993	5-Mar-93	WN	G	C. Bosnia	2,739,487
IRC	1993	9-Apr-93	Agriculture (Ag)	G	Bosnia	2,055,484
IRC	1993	19-Jul-93	Ag	G	Bosnia	1,765,800
IRC	1993	17-Sep-93	SA,W	G	Bosnia	1,946,429
MCI	1993	1-May-93	F	G	Kosovo	2,873,691
MSF/B	1993	1-Jul-93	M	G	Zenica, Tuzla	808,020
OFDA	1993	23-Nov-92	WN	C	Bosnia	345,740
OFDA	1993	23-Nov-92	WN	C	Bosnia	1,120,238
OFDA	1993	5-Jan-93	Admin	C	Mostar	138,261
OFDA	1993	20-Jul-93	SA,W	value	Bosnia	107,000
Solidarites	1993	10-May-93	F	G	C. Bosnia	1,146,290
Solidarites	1993	14-Jul-93	F	G	Gorazde	264,400
UNHCR	1993	1-Dec-92	mix	C	Bosnia	27,775
Total 1993						**34,623,860**
AICF/USA	1994	3-Mar-94	Ag	G	Bosnia	319,657
AICF/USA	1994	8-Aug-94	mix	Mod	C. Bosnia	442,209
CRS	1994	3-Mar-94	Ag	G	Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Orasje	137,864
CRS	1994	15-Jul-94	SA,W	G	Kosovo	418,552
CRS	1994	27-Sep-94	WN	G	Sarajevo, Visoko	429,290
CRS	1994	29-Sep-94	mix	G	Kosovo	1,998,480
CRS	1994		SA,W	Rapid (RRF)		40,000
DART	1994	1-Nov-93	Admin	C	Former Yugoslavia	1,938,545
DART	1994	4-Jul-94	Admin	C	Sarajevo	211,000
Doctor's of the World	1994	22-Apr-94	H	G	Kosovo	552,733
Equilbre	1994	1-Feb-94	Log	Mod	Bosnia	1,375,158

Equilbre	1994		Log	Mod	Bosnia	1,955,248
International Medical Corps	1994	2-Jan-94	M	G	C. Bosnia	1,238,462
International Medical Corps	1994	15-Oct-93	M	Mod	Zenica	789,793
IRC	1994	1-Sep-94	mix	Coop Agree (CA)	Bosnia	3,500,000
IRC	1994	19-Nov-93	WN	G	Croatia	356,963
IRC	1994	24-Feb-94	F	G	Zenica, Tuzla, BanjaLuka	2,532,000
IRC	1994	1-Mar-94	Admin	G	Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo	1,062,890
IRC	1994	1-Mar-94	Log	G	Bosnia	2,535,647
IRC	1994	11-Mar-94	Log	G	Bosnia	424,942
IRC	1994	7-Apr-94	Ag	G	Bosnia	3,122,681
IRC	1994	26-Jul-94	WN	G	Bosnia	462,510
IRC	1994	2-May-94	Ag	Mod	Zenica, Tuzla, BanjaLuka	819,664
IRC	1994	16-Sep-94	Log	Mod	Bosnia	-404,532
IRC	1994	4-Apr-94	SA,W	RRF	Sarajevo	9,632
IRC	1994	9-Apr-94	Ag	RRF	Sarajevo	24,000
IRC	1994	24-Apr-94	F	RRF	Mostar	25,000
IRC	1994	25-Apr-94	SA,W	RRF	Mostar	24,998
IRC	1994	27-Apr-94	SA,W	RRF	Sarajevo	19,432
IRC	1994	8-Jun-94	SA,W	RRF	Mostar (East)	3,875
IRC	1994	14-Jun-94		RRF	Mostar	24,635
IRC	1994	30-Aug-94	F	RRF	Velika Kladusa	10,424
IRC	1994	23-Sep-94	SH	RRF	Zenica, Steri Vitez, Gornji Vakuf, Travnik	25,000
IRC	1994	26-Sep-94	SA,W	RRF	Sarajevo	21,611
IRC	1994	29-Sep-94	M	RRF	Tuzla	0
IRC	1994		SA,W	RRF	Sarajevo	2,823
IRC	1994		SA,W	RRF	Sarajevo	7,368
IRC	1994		SA,W	RRF	Mostar	43,450
MCI	1994	21-Apr-94	mix	G	Kosovo	387,753
MCI	1994	25-Jul-94	F	G	Kosovo	2,900,088
MCI	1994	27-Jul-94	H	G	Kosovo	440,050
MCI	1994	26-Apr-94	H	RRF	Kosovo	13,366
MCI	1994	26-Apr-94	H	RRF	Kosovo	24,480
Medical Kits	1994	8-Sep-94	M	RRF	Sarajevo	24,300

Sarajevo						
MSF/B	1994	10-May-94	M	Mod	Zenica, Tuzla	395,805
OFDA	1994	1-Oct-93	Log	C	Former Yugoslavia	719,374
Pliva	1994	4-May-94	SA,W	RRF	Gorazde	2,798
Solidarites	1994	28-Sep-94	WN	G	Tarcin, Pazaric	904,311
UMCOR	1994	22-Feb-94	WN	RRF	Zenica	38,000
Total 1994						**32,352,329**
AICF	1995	20-Jan-95	F	G	Mostar (East), Zenica	300,000
AICF	1995	14-Jun-95	mix	G	Bihac, Sarajevo	1,911,271
AICF	1995	18-Jul-95	F	Mod	Mostar (East), Zenica	961,214
AICF	1995	27-Apr-95	F	RRF	Bihac	46,950
AICF	1995	17-Sep-95	WN	RRF	Sarajevo	13,480
AICF/USA	1995	22-Aug-95	WN	G	Bugonjo, Gornji Vakuf	165,207
AICF/USA	1995	20-Jan-95	Ag	Mod	Bugojno, Gornji Vakuf	575,607
American Red Cross	1995	26-Jun-95	F	G	C. Bosnia	112,220
American Red Cross	1995	23-Aug-95	WN	G	Croatia	697,085
ARC	1995	20-Dec-94	WN	RRF	Croatia, Split	9,107
ARC	1995	22-Aug-95	F	RRF	Croatia, Dbonjan Island	24,488
Brother's Brother Foundation	1995	21-Feb-95	F	G	Croatia, Osijek	93,800
Brother's Brother Foundation	1995	25-Jul-95	F	G	Croatia, Osijek	176,700
Brother's Brother Foundation	1995	27-Jul-95	F	G	Croatia, Osijek	176,700
Brother's Brother Foundation	1995	15-Aug-95	F	G	Orasje	135,330
CARE	1995	19-Jul-95	Elderly	G	Bosnia	1,484,275
CARE	1995	22-Aug-95	WN	G	Sarajevo, C.Bosnia	499,983
CARE	1995	28-Aug-95	Elderly	G	Croatia, Dalmatia	117,703

CARE	1995	24-Aug-95	F	RRF	Tuzla	44,700
CRS	1995	27-Sep-95	mix	CA	Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo	2,300,000
CRS	1995	15-Mar-95	WN	G	Sarajevo, Fojnica, Viksoko	1,148,624
CRS	1995	31-Mar-95	Ag	G	Sarajevo	11,353
CRS	1995	31-Mar-95	Ag	G	Sarajevo	354,836
CRS	1995	10-Apr-95	SA,W	G	Sarajevo	344,530
CRS	1995	6-Jun-95	Elderly	G	Sarajevo	635,080
CRS	1995	29-Sep-95	mix	RRF		46,792
CRS	1995		H	RRF		49,934
DART	1995	1-Oct-94	Admin	C	Former Yugoslavia	2,409,840
Doctor's of the World	1995	22-Aug-95	F	G	Kosovo	1,377,689
Feed the Children	1995	21-Aug-95	F	G	C. Bosnia	3,003,463
Feed the Children	1995	9-Jan-95	F	RRF	Croatia, Batnoga, Turanjn	24,816
Feed the Children	1995	11-Apr-95	F	RRF	Bihac	25,970
Feed the Children	1995	18-Jul-95	H	RRF	Banja Luka	45,701
Feed the Children	1995	17-Sep-95	F	RRF	Tuzla	24,206
International Medical Corps	1995	22-Nov-94	M	Mod	C. Bosnia	-164,373
International Medical Corps	1995	30-Jan-95	M	Mod	C.Bosnia, Tuzla	592,354
IRC	1995	17-Nov-94		CA	Federation	982,365
IRC	1995	1-Sep-95	Log	G	Bosnia	22,000
IRC	1995	1-Sep-95	Log	G	Bosnia	245,326
IRC	1995	7-Nov-94	mix	Mod	Bosnia	1,500,000
IRC	1995	14-Jul-95	mix	Mod	Bosnia	2,999,709
IRC	1995	7-Aug-95	Admin	Mod	Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo	554,889
IRC	1995	16-Nov-94	SA,W	RRF	Mostar	23,500
IRC	1995	12-Dec-94	H	RRF	Croatia	7,305
IRC	1995	10-Apr-95	SH	RRF		2,000
LWF	1995	5-Jul-95	SH	RRF	Mostar (East)	21,520
MCI	1995	27-Sep-95	mix	CA	Bosnia, Kosovo	1,200,000
MCI	1995	10-Feb-95	WN	G	Kosovo	652,649
MCI	1995	4-Apr-95	M	G	Kosovo	394,544
MCI	1995	6-Apr-95	Ag	G	Kosovo	1,255,612

MCI	1995	14-Aug-95	H	G	Kosovo	443,560
MCI	1995	30-Jun-95	F	Mod	Kosovo	2,937,095
MSF/B	1995	13-Mar-95	F	G	C. Bosnia	803,800
MSF/B	1995	31-Mar-95	mix	G	Eastern Enclaves	832,673
MSF/B	1995	1-Aug-95	F	Mod	C. Bosnia	916,952
MSF/B	1995	11-Jan-95	H	RRF	Zenica	3,118
MSF/Holland	1995	4-Jan-95	M	RRF	Sarajevo	13,960
MSF/Holland	1995	24-Mar-95	M	RRF	Sarajevo	13,094
MSF/Holland	1995	19-Sep-95	H	RRF	Tuzla	10,000
Open Society Institute	1995	14-Feb-95		G	Sarajevo	297,566
Premiere Urgence	1995	22-Nov-94	F	G	Mostar (East), Jablanica, Konjic, Tuzla	1,096,248
Premiere Urgence	1995	31-Aug-95	F	RRF	Zenica, Tuzla	22,280
PRO PAC, INC.	1995	26-Jun-95	H	C	Bosnia	267,300
PRO PAC, INC.	1995	17-Aug-95	H	C	Bosnia	267,300
SEA	1995	25-Sep-95	SH	RRF	Tuzla	17,627
Solidarites	1995	7-Aug-95	WN	G	Konjic	467,084
Solidarites	1995	31-May-95	F	RRF	Bihac	24,160
St. David's Relief Foundation	1995	3-Mar-95	Ag	G	Bosnia	117,600
UMCOR	1995	1-Sep-95	SA,W	G	C. Bosnia	2,232,010
UMCOR	1995	30-Jun-95	SH	RRF	Maglaj	14,065
UMCOR	1995	24-Jul-95	SH	RRF	Maglaj	15,046
UMCOR	1995	31-Jul-95	H	RRF	Olovo	8,228
UMCOR	1995	25-Sep-95	WN	RRF	Zenica	20,205
WHO	1995	12-Jan-95		G	Sarajevo, Tuzla, Zenica	65,100
World Vision	1995	31-Jan-95	F	RRF	Fojnica	14,016
Total 1995						**40,558,141**
AICF	1996	1-May-96	SH	CA	Gorazde	1,126,060
AICF	1996	16-Nov-95	SA,W	RRF	Sarajevo	7,163
AICF	1996	3-Jan-96	WN	RRF	Gorazde	49,280
AICF	1996	23-Feb-96	M	RRF	Sarajevo	17,167
ARC	1996	7-Mar-96	M	G	Bosnia	814,871
CAMPSF	1996		Log	RRF		2,000
CARE	1996	1-May-96	SH	CA	Bihac, Orasac	1,104,031

					valley	
CARE	1996	15-Nov-95	SA,W	RRF	Croatia, Pakrac - Lipnik (Western Slavonia)	48,765
CARE	1996	9-Feb-96	SA,W	RRF	Pecigrad, Torovo, Cazin	48,826
CRS	1996	18-Apr-96	WN	CA	Sarajevo	1,864,068
CRS	1996	1-May-96	SH	CA	Olovo, Iljas, Vogosca	2,048,234
CRS	1996	2-May-96	mix	CA	Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo	2,600,000
DART	1996	1-Oct-95	Admin	C	Former Yugoslavia	3,319,820
Doctor's of the World	1996	1-Sep-96	M	G	Kosovo	1,099,945
Equilbre	1996	1-May-96	SH	CA	Mostar	989,600
Equilbre	1996	1-Oct-95	Log	Mod	Bosnia	1,299,200
Equilbre	1996	29-Feb-96	H	RRF	Croatia, Srem, Baranja, E. Slavonia	34,597
Feed the Children	1996	12-Dec-95	WN	G	Bihac, Banja Luka, Tuzla	746,180
Feed the Children	1996	23-Jul-96	F	G	Kosovo	988,586
Feed the Children	1996	23-Aug-96	SH	RRF	Mrkonjic Grad, Ribnik, Siporo	45,000
Humanitarian Aid Medical	1996	3-Jun-96	SH	RRF	Bosanska Otoka	9,793
Humanitarian Aid Medical	1996	22-Aug-96	M	RRF	Travnik	48,606
IFRC/CRC	1996	11-Jul-96	H	RRF	Croatia	23,600
Inter SOS	1996	28-May-96	F	RRF	Sarajevo (Serb)	38,797
Inter SOS	1996	22-Aug-96	F	RRF	Sarajevo (Serb)	49,513
International Medical Corps	1996	13-Feb-96	M	Mod	C.Bosnia, Tuzla, Bihac, Gorazde, E. Mostar, Sarajevo	376,167
International	1996	27-Sep-96	M	Mod	C.Bosnia,	303,982

Medical Corps					Tuzla, Bihac, Gorazde, E. Mostar, Sarajevo, RS	
IOCC	1996	13-Nov-95	F	RRF	Krajna	30,350
IRC	1996	1-May-96	SH	CA	Konjic, Zvornik, Donji Vakuf	4,559,325
IRC	1996	1-Sep-96	WN	G	Bihac	445,200
IRC	1996	1-Sep-96	WN	G	Tuzla	663,086
IRC	1996	1-Sep-96	WN	G	Sarajevo	708,040
IRC	1996	31-Jan-96		Mod	Federation	59,259
IRC	1996	28-Jun-96	Admin	Mod	Bosnia, Croatia, Kosovo	451,379
IRC	1996	23-Jul-96	mix	Mod	Bosnia	2,500,000
IRC	1996	9-Feb-96		RRF	Croatia, Vojnic	24,987
IRC	1996	8-Mar-96	WN	RRF	Banja Luka, Prijedor, Baradiska	1,203
IRC	1996	30-Apr-96	H	RRF	Vojvodina	24,390
IRC	1996	30-Apr-96	H	RRF	Vovodina	49,083
IRC	1996	13-May-96	WN	RRF	Banja Luka	45,000
IRC	1996	29-May-96	SA,W	RRF	Gorazde	43,235
IRC	1996	3-Jun-96	WN	RRF	Mostar (East)	38,870
IRC	1996	20-Jun-96	SA,W	RRF	Croatia, Stanic Rijeka	47,645
LWF	1996	30-Apr-96	WN	RRF	Croatia, Sector East	29,581
MCI	1996	30-Jan-96	mix	Mod	Bosnia, Kosovo	2,100,000
MCI	1996	19-Apr-96	mix	Mod	Bosnia, Kosovo	1,700,000
MCI	1996	21-Aug-96	F	Mod	Kosovo	611,915
MCI/SEA	1996	1-May-96	SH	CA	Gradacac, Doboj, Lukavac	5,284,207
MCI/SEA	1996	1-Feb-96	SA,W	G	Bosnia	945,381
MCI/SEA	1996	1-May-96	SA,W	G	Tuzla	658,725
Mercy	1996		H	RRF	Odzak	44,800
Open Society Institute	1996	19-Jun-96	SH	G	Sarajevo	150,000

Project Hope	1996	12-Sep-96	M	RRF	Sarajevo, Hrasnica	38,486
Project Hope	1996	12-Sep-96	M	RRF	Sarajevo, Ilidza	46,686
Refugee Trust	1996	28-Jun-96	WN	RRF	Sarajevo	7,492
Samaritan's	1996		Ag	RRF	Sarajevo	37,689
Save the Children	1996	15-Dec-95	H	G	Bosnia	700,681
Solidarites	1996	26-Feb-96	H	G	C. Bosnia	507,041
Solidarites	1996	14-Nov-95	SA,W	RRF	Croatia, Kupljensko Camp	13,668
Solidarites	1996	15-Feb-96	H	RRF	Pazoric	7,200
Solidarites	1996	29-Mar-96	SA,W	RRF	Croatia , Vojinic	1,962
Solidarites	1996	30-Apr-96	mix	RRF	Donji Vakuf	16,116
Solidarites	1996		WN	RRF		1,786
UMCOR	1996	1-May-96	SH	CA	Travnik, Jajce, Sanski Most, Kupres, Gorni Vakuf	6,888,051
UMCOR	1996	23-May-96	SA,W	RRF	Sarajevo	14,932
UMCOR	1996	23-May-96	SA,W	RRF	Sarajevo	21,563
UNICEF	1996	1-Dec-95	M	G	Bosnia	2,000,000
UNIPAC	1996	9-Mar-96		RRF	Croatia	9,351
World Vision	1996	1-May-96	SH	CA	Maglaj, Doboj, Zepce	3,276,115
World Vision	1996	13-Feb-96	WN	G	Sarajevo	415,123
World Vision	1996	9-Jul-96	WN	Mod	Sarajevo	398,072
World Vision	1996	30-Sep-96	WN	Mod	Sarajevo	917,700
World Vision	1996	8-Aug-96	SH	RRF	Medakoro	11,440
World Vision	1996	8-Aug-96	H	RRF	Brcko	47,500
World Vision	1996	23-Sep-96	WN	RRF	Brcko	39,633
World Vision	1996	23-Sep-96	WN	RRF	Modrica	39,633
Total 1996						**55,777,432**
Grand Total 1992-1996						**167,071,963**

List of Interviewees

Note: An important number of Bosnians (civilian and military and all ethnic groups) requested not to have their names in the list of interviewees. For interviewing and attribution ground-rules, see "Road Map."

Name	Affiliation
Karen Abu Zeyd	UNHCR
Sheppie Abramowitz	International Rescue Committee
Dr. Ferid Alić	Mayor, Zenica (BiH)
Chuck Aanenson	USAID
Mariza Artificio-Rogers	OFDA
Munir Alibabić	former Government of Bosnia Herzegovina
Jason Aplon	USAID/OTI, former IRC
Fuad Alibabić	Civil Defense, Sarajevo
Pamela Baldwin	USAID/ENI
Mira Barata	Freedom House, former staffer
Robert Barry	US State Department
Rick Barton	OTI
Goergia Beans	OFDA
Selim Beslagić	Mayor, Tuzla
Anne-Willem Bjileveldt	UNHCR
Nan Borton	former OFDA
Ante Bosnjak	Businessman, Zenica
Jean-Marie Boucher	World Food Programme
Claire Boulanger	Médecins Du Monde
Peter Scott-Bowden	World Food Programme
Pete Bradford	OFDA
Tom Brennan	OFDA
Merrit Broady	USAID
Craig Buck	USAID
Janusz Bugajski	Center for Strategic Int'l Studies
Ferid Buljubašić	Army of Bosnia Herzegovina
Polly Byers	OFDA
Samir Ćerić	Local official, Fajtovci (BiH)
Norman Cigar	Historian

Jo Anne Cohen	DART
Anne Convery	USAID, former IOM
Mark Cutts	UNHCR
Nijaz Damirović	Army of Bosnia Herzegovina
Asmira Delić	UNHCR
Jovan Divjak	Army of Bosnia Herzegovina
Lisa Doughten	DART
George Dykes	DART
Joan Edwards	UNHCR
Diana Esposito	USAID
Chris Fay	former IRC
Pam Fessenden	OFDA
Jacques Franquin	UNHCR
Tom Frey	OFDA
Bill Garvelink	OFDA
Thierry Germond	ICRC
Angelo Gnaedinger	ICRC
Roy Gutman	Newsday
Amir Hadžiomeragić	Government of Bosnia Herzegovina
David Harland	UN Civil Affairs
Marchall Harris	Freedom House, former State Dept.
Zijo Hasić	Local official, Bilalovac (BiH)
Robert Hauser	WFP
Joel Heysey	USAID
James Hooper	Balkan Action Council
Marguerite Houze	State/BPRM
Leila Hrasnica	UNHCR
Rita Hudson	USAID
Davor Hujić	Reuters
Doug Hunter	State/BPRM
Richard Jacquot	IRC
Annick Jeantet	former Solidarités
Jusuf Jelen	Search for Missing Persons
Ray Jennings	OTI, former IRC
Jennifer Johnson	MCI/SEA, World Vision
Jagorca Jurić	former International Crisis Group
Allan Jury	State/BPRM
Mary Kavaliunas	State/BPRM
Jim Kelly	Catholic Relief Services
Chris Keppler	former OFDA
George Kinney	former State Dept.

Vahid Klajić	Sarajevo University
Julie Klement	OFDA
Gerald Knaus	Office of the High Representative
Tim Knight	DART
Gus Konturas	IRC
Safet Krkić	University of Mostar
Slavo Kukić	University of Mostar
Indira Kulenović	former UNHCR and UNPROFOR
Judith Kumin	UNHCR
Jim Kunder	former OFDA
Tihomir Loza	Institute of War and Peace Reporting
Mike Mahdesian	USAID/BHR
Karl Mahler	DART
Rusmir Mahmutćehajić	former Government of Bosnia Herzegovina
Zoran Mandelbaum	la Benevolencia
Haris Mašić	Businessman, Zenica (BiH)
Kim Maynard	Mercy Corps International
Lionel Marre	former MDM
Dayton Maxwell	former OFDA
José Maria Mendiluce	former UNHCR
John Menzies	State Department
Doug Mercado	WFP, former OFDA, former IRC
Hasan Muratović	Government of Bosnia Herzegovina
Tun Myat	World Food Programme
Andrew Natsios	former OFDA, BHR (FHA)
Domagoj Nikolić	former American Refugee Committee
Theresa Obradovich	IRC
John O'Brien	CARE
Jennifer Oldham	CRS
Phil Oldham	CRS
Amela Omersoftić	former Government of Bosnia Herzegovina
Philippos Papaphilippou	UNHCR
Davor Pavelić	former IRC
Joe Ponte	OFDA
Marguerite Prinze	UNHCR
Clay Ramsay	Program on International Policy Attitudes
Paul Randolph	former OFDA
Pablo Recalde	WFP
Peter Rees	IFRC
Amira Sadiković	former UNHCR, ICG

Mirza Sadiković	BiH TV
Pierre Salignon	Médecins Sans Frontières
Julie Scheckter	State/BPRM
Chris Seiple	US Marine Corps
Daniel Serwer	State Department
Sead Sirbubalo	former Government of Bosnia Herzegovina
Mike Stievator	OTI, former IRC
Bill Stuebner	former DART, former ICTY
Dick Van Dorp	UMCOR
Dick Vengoni	World Vision
Cathy Walker	UNHCR
Joanne Welsh	OFDA
Roy Williams	OFDA, former IRC
Mark Wilson	IFRC
MacKay Wolff	former UNHCR
Warren Zimmermann	former State Department
Sahim Zukić	Public Manager, Zenica (BiH)