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ABSTRACT

The United States has developed a reputation for consistently failing to respond to mass killing and genocide throughout history. The conventional wisdom is that the United States has the resources and intelligence to act, but fails to do so because of a lack of political will. However, a closer examination of history reveals that although the modal response of the United States is indeed to refrain from devoting significant resources to these crises, at times the United States reverses course to pursue policies aimed at assisting victims of atrocity. Previous analyses have not fully explained the sources this policy variation. Drawing on extensive archival research, this dissertation proposes a theory explaining when these shifts in US policy occur. I suggest that three factors—the level at which dissent occurs within the government, the degree of congressional pressure, and the direction of a variable that I term political liability—are responsible for shifting US policy toward a more robust response. I illustrate the theory with case studies covering US responsiveness to the following cases: the Holocaust (1938-1945) under presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman; mass killing in Bosnia (1992-1995) under presidents George H.W. Bush and William J. Clinton; and mass killing in Rwanda (1994) under Clinton. A comparative analysis of US responsiveness to the Armenian Genocide (1915-1918) and to atrocities in Bangladesh (1971) is also included.

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2 Ibid.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>4-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>8-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 1: A THEORY OF US RESPONSIVENESS TO MASS KILLING</td>
<td>15-67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 2: &quot;FROM ONE OF TWO OF A KIND:&quot; THE HOLOCAUST 1938-1945</td>
<td>68-187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 3: &quot;RELUCTANT DRAGONS:&quot; THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION AND BOSNIA 1992</td>
<td>188-260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 5: GENOCIDE IN RWANDA 1994</td>
<td>377-469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER 6: UNDERSTANDING DISSENT: ARMENIA AND BANGLADESH</td>
<td>470-496</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
<td>497-502</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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When I traveled to Independence, MO for my first trip to a presidential library, I had the pleasure of staying at the Higher Ground Hotel, just down the road from the Truman Library. I would like to thank owners Kay and Moreta Hartman for their kindness during my stay. Staying at Higher Ground was a wonderful start to my presidential library research.
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My family has been an integral part of this dissertation project in more than one way. My father has been a dedicated supporter throughout my life and this dissertation project. His hard work motivates me every day, and I am grateful to him for being my very first mentor. My mother set an example for balancing academic and policy interests and always encouraged my intellectual and other passions. I have learned much from their collective work ethic—from my mother as the first in her family to attend college and from my father as a first-generation American. My older sister once again paved the way for me by entering a PhD program first. Her advice, encouragement, and example have been crucial throughout my doctoral program. My nephew, though only two years old, has provided motivation for this project by showing me firsthand the innocence and joy that is destroyed by genocide and mass atrocity, crimes that never spare the young.

I am in fact indebted to several people for the opportunity of life. My dissertation examines the role of dissenters—those who risked their own professional and personal well-being to advocate for the lives of others. The Holocaust case details a particularly courageous group of men in the Treasury Department, who alongside informants at State, helped save hundreds of thousands of lives during the Holocaust. Across the Atlantic, another network of courageous individuals was working to save my grandmother’s.

Hans and Alice Schoemann, Jean Degroof, and Baron Friedrich Carl von Oppenheim risked their lives in the course of protecting and hiding my teenage grandmother from Nazi persecution over several years during World War II. This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of these courageous individuals, who never forgot their friends, and had the courage and empathy to save strangers. They have my eternal gratitude.

The dissertation is also dedicated to the memory of several relatives who faced genocide courageously: to my great-great-grandfather, Joseph Rothschild, murdered at Auschwitz; to Malli Rothschild, my grandfather’s aunt, murdered at Sobibor; to Moritz Rothschild, my grandfather’s uncle, murdered at Auschwitz; to Ernst Chan, my grandmother’s cousin, only seventeen, also murdered at Auschwitz; to Josef Levi my grandfather’s uncle, murdered in an unconfirmed location; and to still many other family members, whom I have not been able to track down. To my great-grandfather, David Rothschild, imprisoned at Buchenwald, and to my great-grandmother, Auguste, for surviving together and for courageously standing up to the Nazis amid such destruction. To my great-grandparents, Wilhelm and Helene Chan, also for surviving and for trying to help along others in the process. To my grandfather, Ernest Rothschild, who endured Kristallnacht—seeing his father arrested, his apartment destroyed, his pet murdered—and escaped Europe only to turn right around as a soldier with US army intelligence in order to defeat the Nazis. Finally, to my grandmother, Edith Rothschild, who passed away just before I completed this dissertation, for her survival, for her kindness, and for her courage.

Over the course of this project, many have asked me if it is difficult to study issues of genocide and mass killing. A quote from Viktor Frankl’s *Man’s Search for Meaning* expresses my feelings more accurately than I could myself:
[W]e have come to know man as he really is. After all, man is that being who invented the gas chambers of Auschwitz; however, he is also that being who entered those gas chambers upright, with the Lord’s Prayer or the Shema Yisrael on his lips.¹

I have also come to know man as he really is in my studies of mass killing, from the Armenian Genocide, to the Holocaust, to Rwanda. Man is capable of immense and terrible cruelty. However, he is also capable of incredible courage and sacrifice, at times for others, and even for strangers. Hans and Alice Schoemann, Jean Degroof, Baron Friedrich Carl von Oppenheim, Henry Morgenthau Sr., Henry Morgenthau Jr., Josiah DuBois, John Pehle, Randolph Paul, Bernard Meltzer, Donald Hiss, Sumner Welles, Ansel Luxford, Harry Dexter White, Henrietta Stein Klotz, Archer Blood, George Kenney, Jon Western, Steve Walker, and Marshall Harris prove this—so too do Joseph, Malli, Moritz, David, Auguste, Ernst, and Edith Rothschild, Josef Levi, and Wilhelm, Helene, and Ernst Chan.

_In Memory of Joseph Rothschild, Malli Rothschild, Moritz Rothschild, Ernst Chan, and Josef Levi_

_David and Auguste Rothschild_

_Wilhelm and Helene Chan_

_Hans and Alice Schoemann_

_Baron Friedrich Carl von Oppenheim_

_Jean Degroof_

_Ernest and Edith Rothschild_

For their bravery and my life.

¹ Viktor E. Frankl, _Man’s Search for Meaning_ (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2006), 134.
INTRODUCTION

An enormous degree of mass killing took place over the course of the twentieth century. From the Armenian Genocide of World War I, to the horrors of the Holocaust during World War II, to the 1994 Rwandan Genocide, millions of ethnic, national, rational, and religious groups were targeted for death around the world. The United States, as a leading liberal and military power for much of this period, has been criticized by historians, political scientists, pundits, activists, journalists, and still others for failing to do more to prevent and halt these killings.

This dissertation project closely reviews the history of US foreign policy in response to mass killing. The goal of this project is to present as detailed and as accurate an historical account as possible so that we as scholars, as students, and as teachers of US foreign policy and human rights might fully understand how the United States formulates policy. The Harry Truman quotation inscribed in stone at his presidential library, “The truth is all I want for history,” is the guiding spirit of the project. The thesis allows deep historical research, with a heavy emphasis on primary source documentation, to dictate the case study accounts and theory. In doing so, the thesis amends certain inaccuracies in previous case narratives.

An explanation of US policy driven by a spirit of accuracy, over theoretical parsimony or political agenda, provides several benefits in addition to scholarly rigor. It firstly provides a modicum of justice for the victims of the atrocities and for all of the policymakers discussed in the case studies. Telling their stories truthfully is a way of honoring their experiences and upholding the highest ethical standards of research. Historical research is at its core human subjects research, even though many of the subjects are deceased, and as such, it demands thoughtful consideration of ethical obligations. Additionally, a highly accurate explanation of the sources of US policy places all those who share an interest in preventing future atrocities in the best possible position to improve US and international responsiveness. Although this dissertation is an academic undertaking, the project has profound human consequences—consequences which deserve recognition and the thoughtful consideration of scholars engaged in this area of research.

1 Harry S. Truman to George Elsey, February 15 1950, Box 68, Presidential Historical Inquiries, George Elsey Papers, Truman Library. This quotation is also inscribed at the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library in Independence, MO.
The close examination of the history of US foreign policy undertaken in this project determined that although the modal response of the United States is indeed to pursue limited measures in response to cases of mass killing, the United States does at times change policy midcourse to intensify its response effort. The current academic literature, which frequently points to a lack of political will as a source of limited responsiveness, does not adequately explain the sources of the policy variation exhibited by these dramatic shifts in strategy. The focus of this thesis is consequently on explaining this understudied area in US foreign policy, international relations, and human rights. The guiding question of the project is the following: Why and when does the United States alter its strategy to take more active and engaged measures in response to a given case of mass killing?

The historical evidence demonstrates that three factors are together responsible for shifting the United States toward more robust measures: an inner-circle dissent for policy change toward more intensive measures; a high degree of congressional pressure for policy change; and perceived political costs specific to the president for inaction, or a positive value on “political liability.” These three variables are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for a shift toward increased responsiveness, which can assume a variety of forms—for instance humanitarian measures, diplomatic measures, and military measures. In the absence of any one of these three factors, policy remains unchanged.

This pattern holds both within and across several historical cases of mass killing explored in this dissertation. The theory can explain the creation of the War Refugee Board during the Holocaust in 1944, which dramatically changed the policy of the United States toward Hitler’s genocide, and the launching of the 1995 military intervention in Bosnia known as Operation Deliberate Force. Further, the theory can explain why policy remained stagnant, without a major shift, in the early years of both of these cases, and during atrocities in Bosnia and Rwanda under the tenures of the George H.W. Bush and Clinton administrations. The theory also illuminates US policymaking during the Armenian Genocide of the First World War and during the 1971 mass killings in Bangladesh.

The fact that three factors are consistently responsible for policy change over the course of several cases and decades, despite changing administrations, international and domestic circumstances, and cultural mores, is an important and in many ways unexpected finding. The root causes of the three variables—dissent, congressional pressure, and political liability—do
vary among the case studies. For instance, the motivating factors for the dissenters are often
different in each case, and the influences on the presidents' political liability variables are
likewise usually unique to the particular circumstances and goals of the given president.
Importantly, the significant conclusion for this project is that despite a variety of root causes, we
nevertheless see the same three factors consistently shaping US policy over a long period of
time. These three variables are enduring causal factors. As such, they are likely to continue shape
US policy in the future.

Pinpointing these three factors as being responsible for large shifts in US policy has
several implications for the study of foreign policy, international relations, and human rights in
both political science and history. In particular, the thesis reveals that simply getting the
president and other high-level officials to pay attention to the case is critical to changing policy.
The three factors responsible for a major shift in policy—inner-circle dissent, congressional
pressure, and political costs for inaction—are likely to seize the president's attention and provide
him with the political incentive to remain engaged in the case. Because these factors can take
years to develop, the thesis also helps explain why prompt US responsiveness to mass killing
rarely occurs. Additionally, a key contribution of the thesis is that it is the first to identify the
causal role of dissent in determining US policy on mass killing over time. In the cases studies,
we see that dissent is omnipresent, whether it reaches the inner circle of the president or not.
Finally, it is significant that the three variables responsible for shaping US policy occur at the
domestic or individual level, and not at the international level. The broader implication of this
finding is that understanding certain international relations issues requires an examination of
domestic politics and leadership.

My methodological approach in the project is historical. The cases under examination
included the following: the Armenian Genocide (1915-1918); the Holocaust (1938-1945);
atrocities in Bangladesh (1971); atrocities in Bosnia (1992-1995); and the Rwandan Genocide
(1994). The analysis covered the presidential administrations of Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D.
Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, George H.W. Bush, and
William Clinton. To gather data for my case studies, I traveled to eight archives across the
United States: the Library of Congress; the National Archives; the National Security Archives;
the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library; the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library; the
Lyndon Johnson Presidential Library, the George Bush Presidential Library; and the William J.
Clinton Presidential Library. For the more recent cases, I also draw on oral history interviews with key officials involved in shaping US policy. Newspapers, memoirs, and secondary source historical works also provided important data for this project.

The remainder of the dissertation proceeds as follows. In the first chapter, “A Theory of US Policy and Mass Killing,” I outline my methodological approach in further detail and provide an overview of the theory underpinning the thesis. In this chapter, I also discuss other theories of US responsiveness to mass killing, elaborate on definitions and case selection, and explain how the theory specifically applies to each case under study.

The second chapter, “From One of Two of a Kind,”2 covers US responsiveness to the Holocaust from 1938 until 1945. Drawing on primary documents from the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library, the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library, and the Library of Congress, this chapter details the significant policy shift that occurred in January of 1944 with the creation of the little-known War Refugee Board. The Board, which Roosevelt cited as the principal US response to the Holocaust in June 1944, was charged with rescuing victims of enemy oppression and represented a major change in US policy.3 Approximately 200,000 potential victims of the Holocaust were eventually saved by War Refugee Board efforts.4 The Board was the direct result of an inner-circle dissent by Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau Jr., a close friend of Roosevelt’s, and a team of his subordinates. In their dissent, the Treasury team exposed State Department malfeasance and incompetence in handling the European refugee issue and asked Roosevelt to create an independent government committee to address the problem. Increased pressure from Congress and the threat of an impending administration scandal gave Roosevelt incentive to act quickly and in accordance with the dissent.

2 “Franklin D. Roosevelt and Henry Morgenthau Jr.,” February 9, 1934, Photographs, 8176, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.
The third chapter, “Reluctant Dragons,” details the George Bush administration’s response to atrocities in Bosnia beginning in 1992. In this chapter, I employ documents from the George Bush Presidential Library as well as oral history interviews to argue that the three key variables necessary to ignite significant policy change toward a more robust response were not present. In this case, although President Bush and his administration took a variety of humanitarian, economic, and diplomatic measures to alleviate the suffering of victims, the administration did not take action to directly halt the killings and did not undergo a significant intensification of policies or strategy at any point during the short time in which the administration addressed the crisis. However, contrary to previous analyses, I argue that the documentary record reveals that President Bush was in fact highly engaged in formulating policy on the crisis, and that more attention should be devoted to an understudied humanitarian initiative pursued by President Bush in the summer of 1992.

The fourth chapter, “A Decisive Summer,” draws on oral history interviews and documents from the William Clinton Presidential Library and the Library of Congress to chronicle the Clinton administration’s handling of the Bosnian crisis from 1993 until 1995. In this chapter, I argue that a dramatic shift in policy occurred in the launching of Operation Deliberate Force in August of 1995. Deliberate Force was a sustained military intervention designed to end the killings and bring parties to the negotiating table. In parallel to the Holocaust case, prior to Clinton’s decision to change strategy, an inner-circle dissent, high congressional pressure, and a positive value on political liability (costs for inaction) converged. The dissent came from United Nations Ambassador Madeleine Albright whose argument for a change in strategy in June of 1995 sparked an internal policy review that ultimately led Clinton to change course. Similar to Roosevelt, Clinton was pressured to act quickly because of the dual forces of congressional pressure and the possibility of political embarrassment. Congress had taken action that summer to force a unilateral lift of the arms embargo, which in the absence of a strategy


change, would have provoked the deployment of US ground forces to evacuate UN troops in Bosnia in the middle of the 1996 presidential campaign.

The fifth chapter, “The 100-Day Genocide,” details US policy toward the 1994 Rwandan Genocide under the Clinton administration and also draws on documents from the Clinton Library and the Library of Congress in addition to oral history interviews. During the genocide in Rwanda, from April to July 1994, the United States did not exhibit a significant shift in policy and pursued only limited measures in response to the crisis. I argue that consistent with the theory advanced in this dissertation, the three variables individually necessary and jointly sufficient for policy change were not present. Although some lower level officials favored more robust measures, these officials were unable to channel their views to potential inner-circle dissenters and lacked access to the president. In the wake of recent American casualties suffered during a humanitarian mission gone awry in Somalia, Congress held anti-peacekeeping sentiments and opposed significant American engagement. The political liability variable was negative, as limited press coverage, the memory of Somalia, and distractions with other politically salient events presented perceived costs for action and US involvement. US action was also stilted as a result of the rapid speed of the genocide, which complicated intelligence processing, exacerbated the consequences of a sluggish bureaucracy, and impeded the emergence of dissent and advocacy.

The sixth chapter, “Understanding Dissent,” delves into the Armenia and Bangladesh cases in order to further illuminate the role of dissent in shaping US policy toward mass killing. The chapter draws on documents primarily from the National Archives, the National Security Archive, and the Library of Congress, in addition to several memoirs, to detail the experiences of two dissenting diplomats whose dissents were met with opposite reactions in Washington. Henry Morgenthau Sr., a political appointee and inner-circle dissenter in Woodrow Wilson’s administration, argued for increased US responsiveness to the Armenian Genocide during his time as American Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. Archer Blood, US Consul General in Dacca, East Pakistan and a civil servant, led a team of dissenters during atrocities in East Pakistan or what is now Bangladesh. Morgenthau’s efforts were met with praise from President Wilson as well as several other key members of the Wilson administration. Blood, on the other hand, was recalled from his position, had his career destroyed, and several of his subordinates were fired.
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“Caring for Refugees in the United States, Message from the President of the United States,” June 12, 1944. White House Central Files: OF 127 (1945), Box 673, Truman Papers. Harry S. Truman Library.


CHAPTER 1: A THEORY OF US RESPONSIVENESS TO MASS KILLING

INTRODUCTION

Scholars within the fields of political science and history, as well as journalists, advocates, atrocity survivors, and political pundits, have closely examined US responsiveness to mass killing around the world. The United States has received particular scrutiny in light of its perceived failure to adequately address such atrocities despite its role as a global military and liberal power and its stated commitment to upholding human rights.

However, a close examination of the history of US foreign policy in response to mass killings reveals a more nuanced pattern of policymaking. The historical evidence suggests that although restraint is the modal response of the United States, in certain cases the United States shifts strategy to better address the atrocities through more robust diplomatic, economic, humanitarian, and occasional military measures. Furthermore, when the United States does shift strategy to adopt a more intensive response, three factors are consistently present at high levels: internal government dissent within the president’s inner-circle; a high degree of congressional pressure for action; and perceived political costs for inaction on the part of the president. If even one of these variables is not present, however, policy will continue to be limited. These three factors are therefore individually necessary and jointly sufficient for a policy shift. Together, they represent a theory of when and why the United States intensifies policy in response to mass killing and when and why US policy remains stagnant.

These findings offer several insights for the study of US foreign policy and mass killing. The dissertation firstly identifies an enduring historical pattern in US foreign policy and provides a novel theoretical explanation that can explain when and why the United States will increase its responsiveness to mass killing and when and why policy will remain stagnant. A secondary contribution relates to the nature of the variables responsible for the shift in policy. All three variables responsible for a policy change bring the case of mass killing to the president’s immediate attention and provide incentives for the case to remain a top priority for the administration. We can therefore infer that a significant obstacle to the prevention of mass killing is that such human rights abuses often remain a low priority for presidential administrations consumed with issues that might have more immediate security implications for the United
States or political implications for the president. Additionally, the study strongly suggests that
domestic variables—individuals and domestic political dynamics—are more important in
shaping US policy toward this particular human rights abuse than international or systemic
variables. This particular conclusion ties the theory to a diverse literature on bureaucratic
politics, innovation and self-correction in organizations, foreign policy decision making,
leadership in international politics, levels of analysis, and the domestic sources of foreign
policy.1 Finally, as the first study to identify the critical role of dissent in determining US policy
on mass killing, the dissertation has relevance to wider historical literature related to dissent in
the US government.2

This chapter provides an overview of the theory and summarizes the methods I
employed in the analysis. The first section explores the driving research question in further
depth, outlining why studying mass killing and the United States over a long period of time is a
worthwhile research endeavor. The second section explains my methods in further detail,
including my dependent variable, case selection, data collection, and data analysis. The third
section outlines the theory. The fourth section provides a summary of the theory applied to the

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case studies. The fifth section illustrates the theoretical implications of the theory. The sixth section highlights the practical implications of the theory for the prevention of mass killing, for US foreign policy, and for individual members of the foreign policy bureaucracy. The seventh section explores alternative explanations, or potential criticisms of the theory. The final section summarizes the chapter.

RESEARCH QUESTION

QUESTION OVERVIEW AND EXTANT LITERATURE

My primary research question is the following: what explains significant shifts in US policy in response to mass killing? In answering this question, my project also speaks to the converse question: why does US policy remain stagnant during cases of mass killing?

Previous theoretical scholarship relevant to understanding the sources of state responsiveness to mass killing generally falls into four categories: first, studies arguing that a lack of will for engagement and intervention is responsible for inaction; second, studies emphasizing that national interest calculations shape responses; third, studies examining norms and intervention; and finally, studies asserting that individual-level ideational variables are critical to policy outcomes.

A number of studies stress that a lack of political will for intensive response measures has been a leading cause of state unresponsiveness to mass killing. Though this literature has identified a consistent and important pattern in international history—states are typically reluctant to respond to mass killing—the root causes of policy remain opaque. The argument that

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3 Barnett makes this point in relation to the United Nations in Rwanda: Michael N. Barnett, Eyewitness to a Genocide: The United Nations and Rwanda (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 3; Note that Samantha Power wrote her book as a journalistic and not a social science analysis. The book thus primarily serves to detail the facts of the cases under study, and importantly to document US inaction in cases of genocide throughout history. She nonetheless concludes that “the real reason the United States did not do what it could and should have done to stop genocide was not a lack of knowledge or influence but a lack of will. Simply put, American leaders did not act because they did not want to.” Power argues in her conclusion that a democratic state should be susceptible to pressures for increased responsiveness from inside and outside of government. However, in contrast to my historical analysis, she asserts that the executive has been free from internal pressures with the exception of mid-level State Department resignations in the Bosnia case and has been largely immune from domestic political pressures (i.e., Congress, lobbying, advocacy groups) with the exception of Senator Dole’s actions during the atrocities in Bosnia. Power does not detail how these pressures might alter US policy and what that new policy might be. See in particular pages 508-509: Samantha Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide (New York: Harper Perennial, 2002); Thomas G. Weiss, “The Sunset of Humanitarian Intervention? The Responsibility to Protect in a Unipolar Era,” Security Dialogue 35, no. 2 (June 1, 2004): 135–36; Thomas G. Weiss, “R2P after 9/11 and the World Summit,” Wisconsin International Law Journal 24 (2006): 742–743; 745; 747; 757.
a lack of political will to respond causes unresponsiveness tautologically suggests that states do not react when they do not want to react. More research will be needed to pinpoint the specific sources of state aversion to prompt action.

Other analyses suggest that intervention decisions are largely a result of the national interests at stake. Miller (1998) asserts that intervention policies have their roots in a simple cost-benefit analysis focused on three areas: the expected casualties of an intervention; the proximity of the intervention to the intervener state and allies; and the resources at stake where the intervention occurs. However, further research is necessary to understand variation in interventions of similar costs. Why, for instance, did the United State intervene in Somalia but not in Rwanda, both coded by Miller as low interest to the United States? Because Miller’s study is explicitly focused on military action, more work is also required to understand nonmilitary responses.

Still others point to the important role of norms. In her study on the changing purpose of intervention, Finnemore (2003) notes that humanitarian interventions in the post-World War II period have typically been made to assist non-Christian and non-European victims. In Finnemore’s view, these interventions were possible because interveners had come to recognize these groups as part of humanity and consequently deserving of assistance. Nevertheless, more analysis is needed to determine the sources of international unresponsiveness to recent cases of mass killing, when victim groups are non-European or non-Christian—in short, late twentieth-century variation—and nonmilitary policy efforts.

Finally, a subset of literature argues that individual-level, and particularly ideational variables, have a central role to play in shaping policy. Specifically, these analyses argue that leader beliefs and actions have a substantial effect on policy. These studies have done much to

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6 Ibid., 52–73.
advance knowledge in this area of research, but more research is still needed to further understanding of responsiveness to mass killing. Roskin (1974) and Saunders (2011) concentrate on interventions and foreign policy decision making in the Cold War and World War II periods, and they do not analyze humanitarian interventions specifically. Western (2000; 2002; 2005) studies the determinants of military intervention in several twentieth-century cases, but he too is not primarily focused on humanitarian cases or nonmilitary responses. Finally, Bass (2013) investigates a single case of mass killing in great detail—the 1971 killings in Bangladesh—and does not seek to identify longstanding patterns.

This dissertation expands on this previous literature to theorize major changes in US policy in response to violent, state-sponsored mass killing. The theory advanced in this dissertation departs from previous studies in that it elucidates the sources of nonmilitary responses, including diplomatic and humanitarian measures. The theory therefore explains a wider range of variation and cases, offering a more complete understanding of US policy. Nonmilitary responses have been severely understudied in political science and history. For example, scholars have devoted relatively little attention to understanding the creation of the War Refugee Board, which President Franklin D. Roosevelt cited as being central to the US response to the Holocaust. The Board, created in January of 1944, is estimated to have saved approximately 200,000 Jews from extermination through nonmilitary means.

Second, my project departs from previous work by examining US responsiveness to mass killing over a long period of time. As mentioned, many prior studies on US foreign policy and mass killing have been either single-case studies or post-Holocaust, post-Cold War case studies. These analyses have furthered our understanding of US responsiveness to mass killing

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and laid important theoretical groundwork for my project. In contrast to these studies, however, my dissertation takes a longer historical view to attempt to identify enduring historical patterns over the past one hundred years. This long historical window also allows me to assess how shifting US relative power and changing human rights norms, laws, and definitions influence policy.

Finally, my project departs from previous work in its reliance on archival sources and on primary documents. Employing primary documents increases the accuracy of my study, and allows me to incorporate overlooked historical evidence and to investigate internal administration debates in detail. Relying on primary sources also provides a degree of protection against selection bias, choosing secondary source histories that bolster any underlying hypotheses, and facilitates the critical task of discriminating among competing and conflicting secondary source historical explanations. My archival research also allows me to incorporate understudied documents that revise inaccuracies in prior case narratives. Finally, focusing on primary sources allows me to analyze the individual-level debates and disagreements in policy preference within a presidential administration. Diaries, personal letters, and internal memoranda offer immensely substantive data on the policymaking process.

**Why Mass Killing?**

A study focused on state responsiveness to mass killing, as opposed to other human rights or global issues, is particularly valuable for three reasons. First, man-made violent mass killing, and in particular genocide, is considered the most egregious of war crimes, and an analysis of states’ failure to prevent the worst human rights abuse arguably sheds light on states’ ability to prevent all human rights abuses. William Schabas, an expert on genocide, law, and war crimes, has argued that “something must sit at the top” in international criminal law, and genocide has assumed this position as the crime of crimes. Modern normative theory on human rights also suggests that the right to life is the most basic and significant human right. In analyzing

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attempts to protect against the worst human rights abuse, this project has the potential to contribute to research on human rights protection more broadly. For the purposes of the analysis, I define an act of mass killing as the intentional killing of a large number, fifty or more, civilian noncombatants.¹⁴

Second, a project analyzing a failure to prevent the worst human rights abuse, and a parallel failure to protect the most basic of human rights, serves a worthwhile human purpose. A distinguishing feature of state-sponsored mass killing targeted against ethnic, national, racial, or religious groups—what will be the focus of this dissertation—is that victims usually cannot simply defect to the opposing side to escape persecution.¹⁵ Targets of these atrocity campaigns are consequently truly the world’s most vulnerable populations. A project designed to understand the policies of the state most capable of responding may contribute to saving lives in the future.

Third, states have continually pledged to prevent this specific kind of man-made violence, legally through the 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crimes of Genocide (Genocide Convention), and in recent years through the Responsibility to Protect (R2P). Although millions perish from natural disasters and from civil wars, states have not made comparable pledges to disaster relief and to ending civil conflicts. The fact that mass killing and genocide often proceed without a robust international response, despite these pledges from the international community, thus raises a puzzle requiring further study.

**WHY STUDY THE UNITED STATES?**

My dissertation will focus on US policy in particular for three reasons in addition to the fact that US policy has come under intense scrutiny. First, the United States has been one of the states most capable of enacting a range of responses to various cases of mass killing and has been a

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¹⁴ This definition is similar to the one used by Valentino (2004): the intentional killing of a massive number of noncombatants. Valentino notably only includes cases in which 50,000 or more deaths occurred over five or fewer years. Valentino notes that his definition is similar to Rudolph Rummel’s concept of “democide.” However, Rummel does not consider the number of civilians killed in his definition, and he notes that killing must be committed by government groups. Benjamin A. Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the 20th Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 10–12; 256 (note 6); Rudolph Rummel, *Death by Government* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1994), 31–43, cited by Valentino.

leading great power since World War II. Second, the United States, a seasoned liberal democracy by the start of the twentieth century, is ostensibly committed to upholding human rights, and in 1988, the United States ratified the Genocide Convention. Thus, the United States is a most likely state to have addressed previous mass killings because of growing military capabilities, relative power, and longstanding values. Third, analyzing the policies of one state allows me to control for confounding variables in some areas while varying key variables in other areas. For instance, focusing on the United States allows for a more accurate test of the influence of international human rights norms and of the Genocide Convention, as well as the geographic distance from the mass killing, but fluctuating US relative power over time also allows me to analyze how varying US standing in the world influences policy.

**WHY A LONG HISTORICAL WINDOW?**

This project is designed to examine the policies of the United States over a one-hundred-year period. Other studies in politics and international affairs, such as Peter Ronayne’s examination of US responsiveness to genocide since World War II, do not study cases before the Holocaust.\(^\text{16}\) Further, some of the most comprehensive historical works, such as Jay Winter’s edited volume on US policy in response to the Armenian Genocide or David Wyman’s investigation of US responsiveness to the Holocaust, only focus on detailing the facts of a single case.\(^\text{17}\) And yet, studying US policy over a one hundred year period offers certain advantages for theory development.

One advantage of analyzing several cases over a long historical window is that the researcher is more likely to notice patterns. For instance, a political scientist may notice an important statement in an archival document on the Holocaust precisely because the statement is similar to a statement uncovered in a document she examined on the Armenia Genocide. A historian focused solely on the Holocaust may not have noticed the same statement or found it important. Analyzing cases over a long historical time period thus increases the chances of developing theoretical insights and observing patterns that may have been overlooked by historians.

\(^\text{16}\) Ronayne, *Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust.*

A second advantage is the opportunity to examine how prior cases of mass atrocity might influence US policy in future cases of mass atrocity.\textsuperscript{18} A scholar can only be confident in claiming that an historical event, for instance the Holocaust, changed future state behavior by examining policies both before and after the Holocaust.

A third advantage of analyzing state behavior over a long period of time is the ability to test the effects of norms, of changing human rights definitions, and of the 1948 Genocide Convention.\textsuperscript{19} Testing the effect of normative change requires examining the relevant period of time during which norms developed. In studies of atrocity prevention, this period arguably includes pre-WWII cases. Similarly, determining whether or not the 1948 Genocide Convention has had an effect on policy necessitates research both before and after 1948.

In sum, this project's unusually long historical window will allow me to uncover patterns over time, to analyze the effects of past cases of mass killing, and to test the role of norms and international laws. Still, studying US policy over a long historical window does pose some challenges. American domestic institutions and mores have evolved over the twentieth century. Most conspicuously, the human and civil rights of African-Americans and women have changed significantly from the beginning of the century to the end. In analyzing my cases, I am therefore particularly cognizant of the need to account for the possible effects of such domestic variables, and I take care to detail domestic ideological trends, such as American anti-Semitism during the Holocaust, where relevant.

METHODS

The following section explains my dependent variable, my case selection method, my data collection, and my data analysis.

\textsuperscript{18} For research that suggests that previous wars or humanitarian interventions can affect future policies, see: Holly J. Burkhalter, "The Question of Genocide: The Clinton Administration and Rwanda," \textit{World Policy Journal} 11, no. 4 (December 1, 1994): 44–54; Roméo Dallaire, \textit{Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda} (New York: Random House Canada, 2003); Power, "A Problem from Hell:" \textit{America and the Age of Genocide}; Roskin, "From Pearl Harbor to Vietnam."

\textsuperscript{19} For an example of a study focusing on how normative change impacts intervention see: Finnmere, \textit{The Purpose of Intervention}. 
DEPENDENT VARIABLE

This dissertation proposes a theory explaining when and why the United States changes policy to pursue more robust measures in response to mass killing. The dependent variable is the policy of the United States in response to the killing. The dependent variable is coded as either policy change toward more intensive responses or policy stagnancy with limited responses. I measure the intensity of policies in terms of the costs—both in terms of resources and political costs—and the extent to which the response is directly intended to stop the killing or merely address the consequences of the violence. To assess whether or not a true change in policy has occurred, I consider the duration of the deviation in policy—temporary shifts do not qualify as strategy changes—and most importantly, I consult the documents to see if policymakers in fact regarded the shift as a deliberate change in strategy.

The United States may pursue a range of policies in both periods of stagnancy and periods of change. The theory advanced in the dissertation does not forecast specific types of responses, but rather identifies the timing of shifts toward increased responsiveness. For simplification purposes, I cluster policies in seven categories: enable; ignore; private diplomacy; public condemnation; humanitarian; punishing; and intervention. Enable policies include those that support the perpetrating state in some way—for instance military or economic assistance. Ignore policies arise when the United States does not devote substantial resources into a policy response. Private diplomacy policies include those that pressure the perpetrating state through private diplomatic channels, such as efforts to work privately with other states in the international system. Public condemnation policies include those that exert public pressure on the state—for instance denouncing atrocities in public environments. Humanitarian policies include those that provide aid the victims, such as rescue efforts. Punishing policies include punitive measures (excluding military force) directly on the perpetrating state—for instance sanctions, exclusion from international organization, or warning of criminal trials following the crisis. Intervention policies include military operations conducted against the perpetrating state.

Figure 1: Dependent Variable Categories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Response Category</th>
<th>Policies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enable</td>
<td>the United States delivers military or economic aid to perpetrating state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignore</td>
<td>the United States does not devote substantial resources into a response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Diplomacy</td>
<td>the United States uses private diplomatic channels to pressure the perpetrating state or works with other states to address the crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>descriptor</td>
<td>description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Condemnation</td>
<td>the United States condemns the killings publicly and pressures the perpetrating state in public environments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian</td>
<td>the United States provides aid to the victims, arranges rescue efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punishing</td>
<td>the United States punishes the perpetrating state through means short of military force, including sanctions, removal from international organizations, or threats of criminal trials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>the United States employs military force against the perpetrating state</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These descriptive categories are not mutually exclusive, meaning that the United States may implement policies within several of them concurrently. A policy falling into the intervention category could be pursued alongside humanitarian actions. The United States could also pursue limited, circumspect, or intermittent policies in humanitarian, punishing, public condemnation, and private diplomacy, while mainly following a limited and overarching ignore policy.

Additionally, policies highlighted in these seven groupings are not exclusive to mass killing responsiveness. Many of these strategies—military intervention, diplomatic pressures, public denunciations—are common tools used by states in international affairs. The groupings simply allow for a more systematic analysis of movement on the dependent variable—from stagnancy toward robust measures.20

**CASE SELECTION**

The most general universe of cases for this dissertation would broadly include US responses to all historical instances of mass killing. In order to maximize the comparability of my cases and to control for confounding variables, the study focuses on a subset of cases within this general universe: US responses to crises characterized by state-sponsored, violent mass killing against ethnic, racial, national, and religious civilian groups within the political or territorial control of the perpetrating state. Examples of cases that meet this criteria in the twentieth century include the following: the Armenian Genocide from 1915 to 1918; the Holocaust from 1938 to 1945; Ustasha violence against Serbs and Jews in Yugoslavia from 1941 to 1945; the atrocities in Bangladesh in 1971; the killings of Hutu in Burundi in 1972; the Cambodian massacres from 1975 to 1979; massacres of the Acholi, Lango, and Buganda Tribes in Uganda in the 1970s and 1980s; the Guatemalan killings of Mayans from 1981 to 1985; the Iraqi atrocities against the

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20 Note that the definitions for the categorization of policies are deliberately agnostic to the reasons why the United States would pursue certain policies. The reasons for pursuing policies would constitute independent variables in this study.
Kurds in 1988; massacres of the Isaaq tribe in Somalia in 1988; the atrocities in the Balkans in the 1990s; and the Rwandan Genocide of 1994. Figure 2 diagrams the case categories of significance to my project. The subset of most relevance is the “ethnic, racial, national, religious group” circle.

**Figure 2: Defining the Universe of Cases**

**State-Sponsored Mass Killing Against Civilians**

To maximize the comparability of my cases, I focus on state-sponsored mass killing against civilian groups. I thus exclude colonial mass killings against indigenous populations and civilian deaths during interstate conflict.\(^{21}\) Other types of mass violence, including terrorism or civil war, are also outside of the scope of this study.

**Violent vs. Nonviolent Killing**

Within state-sponsored mass killing against civilians, two subcategories emerge: violent mass killing; and nonviolent policies that indirectly cause a significant number of deaths. Nonviolent

\(^{21}\) For more on colonial mass killing see: Valentino, *Final Solutions: Mass Killing and Genocide in the 20th Century*, 77–81.
mass killing would include famine, deprivation of resources, and economic discrimination. For the purposes of this study, violent mass killing includes the direct use of force to inflict death, including death by weapons of any kind—bombs, guns, machete, gas, or any type of blunt force object—as well as forced physical exertion designed to cause death and under threat of violence. Distinguishing between violent and nonviolent means of causing death again allows for comparability across cases and helps me control for the potential resistance faced by the United States in responding.

**Ethnic, Religious, Racial or National Group vs. Political or Ideological Target**

Finally, state-sponsored, violent mass killing against ethnic, racial, national, or religious groups (identity-based violence) is distinct from violence aimed at political or ideological targets who could more easily defect.\(^{22}\) Notably, there are likely exceptions to this pattern. For instance, a campaign of state-sponsored mass killings could be launched against a political group without the possibility of defection. Mass killing against political and social groups without the possibility of defection arguably characterized the Khmer Rouge’s mass killing in Cambodia.\(^{23}\) However, I found that empirically violent state-sponsored campaigns against civilians without the possibility of defection were typically aimed at ethnic, racial, national, or religious groups.

My universe is notably not restricted to cases that meet the legal definition of genocide. I judged that this definition would not be useful in selecting my cases for four main reasons. First, because the genocide label only emerged in 1948, the term is irrelevant (and nonexistent) to policymakers in earlier cases. Second, the genocide label is typically applied by policymakers and scholars retroactively, making the question of whether or not atrocities constituted genocide in my window of study—the time of the response—less relevant. Third, my preliminary research demonstrated that whether or not a case meets the legal definition of genocide does not usually effect US policy. If the United States wishes to evade responsibilities under the Genocide Convention, officials will simply avoid calling the massacres genocide, as they did in Rwanda case. Fourth, studying US responsiveness to both mass killing and genocide allows me to determine whether or not the United States responds differently to cases that would retroactively

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\(^{22}\) Although this distinction has not been discussed at length in the literature on mass atrocities, the distinction between defection and non-defection in civil wars has been discussed at length in the civil war literature. Byman and Seybolt, “Humanitarian Intervention and Communal Civil Wars,” 38; Kaufmann, “Intervention in Ethnic and Ideological Civil Wars,” 66.

meet the legal definition of genocide. For a case to be classified as genocide, the perpetrators of the killings must have demonstrated intent to destroy a racial, national, ethnic, or religious group in whole or in part. 24

### Universe Subset Table

The following figure details several cases falling within the subset of relevance to this project: twentieth century state-sponsored mass killing against civilian ethnic, racial, religious, or national groups under the state’s political or territorial control.

**Figure 3: Universe Subset Diagram Twentieth Century**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
<th>Primary Target(s) of Killings</th>
<th>Approximate Death Toll 25</th>
<th>Dependent Variable (stagnancy vs. change) 26</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ottoman Empire</td>
<td>1915-1918</td>
<td>Armenians27</td>
<td>500,000-1,500,000</td>
<td>STAGNANT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>1938-1945</td>
<td>Jews28</td>
<td>5,000,000-6,000,000</td>
<td>MAJOR CHANGE (1944)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>STAGNANT (1938-1943)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


26 Note that there is variation within these categories (stagnant vs. change) in terms of policies pursued.


28 Poles, Roma, the disabled, political opponents, Jehovah’s Witnesses, homosexuals, and still others were also targeted by the Nazi regime. The focus in this dissertation will be on Jews because they were the primary target of the mass killing and of the genocidal campaign known as the Holocaust: “Mosaic of Victims: In Depth,” Holocaust Encyclopedia, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington DC, accessed July 23, 2016, https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007329.
Cases Selected from Universe Subset for Detailed Study

In examining US responsiveness to mass killing over the past one hundred years, my project focuses on the policies of seven presidential administrations in response to five cases of mass killing: Ottoman massacres of Armenians from 1915 to 1918; the Holocaust from 1938 to 1945; Pakistani mass killings in Bangladesh in 1971; atrocities in Bosnia from 1992 to 1995; and the genocide in Rwanda in 1994. The presidential administrations under examination include the administrations of Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, George H.W. Bush, and William Clinton.

I considered five criteria in selecting these cases. First, I selected cases that maximized variation on the dependent variable within and across cases. I wanted to include cases that experienced a significant shift in policy and cases that did not. Maximizing variation on the

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
<th>Target Group</th>
<th>Estimated Deaths</th>
<th>Policies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavia (Ustasha)</td>
<td>1941-1945</td>
<td>Serbs and Jews</td>
<td>350,000-530,000</td>
<td>STAGNANT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Bengalis, Hindu</td>
<td>500,000-3,000,000</td>
<td>STAGNANT/ENABLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>1971-1985</td>
<td>Acholi, Lango, and Buganda Tribes</td>
<td>600,000</td>
<td>STAGNANT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>1972</td>
<td>Hutu</td>
<td>100,000-200,000</td>
<td>STAGNANT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambodia</td>
<td>1975-1979</td>
<td>Social groups became racialized</td>
<td>1,000,000-2,000,000</td>
<td>STAGNANT/ENABLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(rich peasants, landlords, political</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and religious leaders)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guatemala</td>
<td>1981-1984</td>
<td>Mayan Indians</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>STAGNANT/ENABLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iraq</td>
<td>1988</td>
<td>Kurds</td>
<td>100,000</td>
<td>STAGNANT/ENABLE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>1988-1989</td>
<td>Isaaq Tribe</td>
<td>100,000-400,000</td>
<td>STAGNANT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia-Herzegovina</td>
<td>1992-1995</td>
<td>Bosnian Muslims</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>CLINTON:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>MAJOR CHANGE (1995)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>STAGNANT (1993-1994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BUSH:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>STAGNANT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kosovo</td>
<td>1998-1999</td>
<td>Kosovar Albanians</td>
<td>2,100-11,000</td>
<td>MAJOR CHANGE (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>STAGNANT (1998)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Tutsi</td>
<td>500,000-800,000</td>
<td>STAGNANT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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29 Although the targeted groups in the Cambodia case are not strictly ethnic, religious, national, or racial groups, I include the case in the subset because, as mentioned, defection was not possible.
dependent variable—and among the cases more generally—improves the generalizability and accuracy of my theoretical findings.  

Second, I selected cases that maximized geographic variation. Analyzing cases in regions of varying strategic import allows me to better assess the role of security interests. For instance, if an administration were pursuing a grand strategy of selective engagement, it might only be concerned with atrocities occurring in regions of strategic value to the United States or regions in which great power involvement is likely.

Third, I selected cases that maximized temporal variation. As explained previously, maximizing temporal variation allows me to test the effects of the 1948 Genocide Convention, the effects of prior mass atrocities, and the effects of changing human rights norms, laws, and definitions.

Fourth, I selected cases that had higher death tolls. The dissertation examines how government officials react to mass killings primarily through the analysis of primary documents. Major events with high death tolls are more likely to provoke leaders into revealing their thought processes on policy formation in more frequent and more extensive discussions in the documents. Studying cases with higher death tolls thus enhances the quality of my data.

Fifth, I selected cases that allowed me to better control for confounding variables or to test alternative theories. Analyzing the Rwanda and Bosnia cases permits an investigation of the same administration’s (Clinton) response to two different cases of mass killing. The Bosnia case also allows me to examine the response of two different administrations (Bush and Clinton) to the same case. The Bangladesh case allows me to build on and explore Gary Bass’s recent work on US responsiveness to the crisis.

**Figure 4: Case Study Selection**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cases</th>
<th>Temporal Variation</th>
<th>Geographic Variation</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>1994 Africa</td>
<td>-SC</td>
<td>~SC = NO SIGNIFICANT CHANGE</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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DATA COLLECTION

My methodological approach to this project is historical, and I draw the majority of my evidence from archival sources. I have completed archival research at eight archives across the United States: the Library of Congress; the National Security Archive; the National Archives; and the presidential libraries of Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Lyndon B. Johnson, George H.W. Bush, and William Clinton. I also analyze published primary source documents, such as newspaper articles.

For my more recent cases, Bosnia and Rwanda, I also supplement the written material with several oral histories of the key government officials involved in shaping US policy. I have thus far interviewed James O’Brien, Jim Dobbins, William Howard Taft IV, Nicholas Burns, Robert Hutchings, John Shattuck, Don Steinberg, David Gompert, Jane Holl Lute, Jon Western, and Marshall Harris. I also rely on oral history interviews available through the University of Virginia’s Miller Center and other educational institutions. Through the Miller Center, I was able to review oral histories of Madeleine Albright, Sandy Berger, Nancy Soderberg, Anthony Lake, William Perry, John Shalikashvili, Dick Cheney, James Baker, Colin Powell, Brent Scowcroft, Strobe Talbott, Warren Christopher, and Jim Steinberg. I also reviewed a set of oral histories specific to US policy and Rwanda through PBS Frontline. This compilation included oral histories of Anthony Lake, Prudence Bushnell, George Moose, John Shattuck, Madeleine Albright, Michael Sheehan, David Rawson, Joyce Leader, Laura Lane, and Samantha Power.

DATA ANALYSIS

In keeping with the historical tradition, the project is inductive by design. My goal was to identify patterns by examining deliberations within the US government on how to respond to several cases of mass killing. Approaching the project inductively allowed me to keep an open
mind as to which variables could be driving policy and likewise allowed the historical evidence to drive the identification of the independent variables. I utilize within-case process tracing to confirm that similar variables indeed led to similar outcomes across cases.

THEORY

SUMMARY
My theory proposes that three variables determine shifts in US policy from limited measures toward more intensive actions: the level at which dissent occurs within the government; the degree of congressional pressure; and the direction of a variable termed political liability. When dissent occurs within the president’s inner circle of advisers, when congressional pressure for a policy change is high, and when the president perceives personal political costs for inaction, US policy will shift toward more robust responsiveness. If any one of these variables is not present, or if one or some are present only in low levels, US policy will continue to be limited. Thus, inner-circle dissent, high congressional pressure, and perceived presidential political costs for maintaining the status quo are individually necessary and jointly sufficient variables for significant policy change.

I code dissent as being present or not present and as occurring either within the inner circle of the president or among mid or low-level officials. An inner-circle dissent occurs when a senior member of the administration—someone with frequent access to the president and often a political appointee—expresses a desire for a policy change toward more robust action to the president, to other high-level officials, or to the public. A low or mid-level dissent occurs when a more junior official—typically a civil servant—favors a change toward more robust action and expresses such within the administration or publicly. In the Holocaust case study, Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau Jr., a senior Cabinet official with a strong personal relationship to the president, leads an inner-circle dissent. In other cases, members of the foreign policy bureaucracy—desk officers, intelligence officers, and Foreign Service Officers in the State Department for instance—dissented in favor of policy change toward increased responsiveness. These latter dissents would be coded as low to mid-level.

32 Bass, The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide, 75-80; 344-345; Interview with David Gompert, interview by Amanda J. Rothschild, July 13, 2015; Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 284; 287; 301; 315; Interview with Marshall Harris, interview by Amanda J. Rothschild, August 20, 2015; Interview with Jon Western, interview by Amanda J. Rothschild, July 14, 2015.
Importantly, normal policy contestation and development processes would not qualify as dissent. Internal debates on an array of policy options, for instance, would not be coded as dissent. A dissent requires that an official conveys his or her disagreement, typically without formal solicitation, with existing policy and suggests a different policy be pursued instead. Such dissents may emerge through diverse channels. In the case studies, inner-circle dissent is usually private, as inner-circle dissenter tend to approach the president or other high-level officials directly. Conversely, low or mid-level dissent more often becomes public, as these dissenter are more likely to resign in protest. They may also use formal dissent channels within their bureaucracy. Low or mid-level dissenter of course lack the type of access available to inner-circle dissenter and consequently have a very different set of channels available to them for voicing their views.

I code congressional pressure as high, medium, or low. A high coding occurs when members of Congress advocate for a change in policy toward robust measures and successfully pass legislative measures that would alter policy toward increased responsiveness in deviation from the current and favored policy of the White House. A low coding occurs when members of Congress do not argue for more robust responsiveness, when they promote restraint, and when they pass measures to confine US policy. A medium coding is given to cases where legislative measures to shift policy are proposed, but they do not receive enough support to pass or to receive a vote. For instance, in the Bosnia case study, congressional pressure is coded as being high in the summer of 1995 when both houses of Congress passed bills terminating US compliance with the arms embargo on Bosnia. In the Rwanda case study, congressional pressure is coded as being low. During this period, many members of Congress harbored anti-

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peacekeeping sentiments, and few suggested that the United States should take more robust action. 34

Lastly, I code political liability as being positive, negative, or neutral. This variable measures the extent to which the mass killing crisis is likely to result in political costs for the president. In assigning a value to this variable, I consider whether or not the case is perceived to influence the president’s legacy, reputation, electoral prospects, or domestic and international political agenda. A positive coding on political liability is given when maintaining the status quo is likely to result in political consequences (costs for inaction): the president is liable to lose favorability with the public or reelection, and other political initiatives may suffer. A negative value is given when shifting toward more intensive measures is likely to result in political consequences (costs for action). A neutral value is given when the case of mass killing is unlikely to result in any political costs. For example, in the Rwanda case study, President Clinton’s political liability variable was negative (costs for action). Domestic groups within the United States were not agitating for increased responsiveness, and in the aftermath of American casualties in Somalia, Clinton was likely to suffer political consequences for another US military intervention in Africa. 35

In summary, three variables—inner-circle dissent, high congressional pressure, and a positive value on political liability—together spur policy change toward more intensive measures. The absence of any one of these factors, or their presence at lower or negative values, leads to policy stagnation. This pattern holds within an across the case studies.

**Figure 6: Political Liability Variable**

- **Political Liability**
  - **Negative**
    - Taking action to address mass killing → political consequences
    - Costs for Action
  - **Neutral**
    - Insignificant political effects
  - **Positive**
    - Failure to address mass killing → political consequences
    - Costs for Inaction

**Figure 7: Theoretical Argument**

- Positive Political Liability (Costs for Inaction) + High Pressure in Congress + Inner-Circle Dissent = Policy Change
THE LOGIC OF NECESSARY AND JOINTLY SUFFICIENT FACTORS

The three variables of inner-circle dissent, high congressional pressure, and positive political liability are individually necessary and jointly sufficient factors to cause the United States to shift toward more robust measures.

Two logical statements must hold for a condition X to be a necessary condition for a Y outcome. First, X must be present when Y occurs.36 Second, in the absence of X, Y must not occur.37 Inner-circle dissent, high congressional pressure, and positive political liability are always present when major policy shifts occur, and absent any one of these variables, policy remains unchanged. Consequently, these three variables are individually necessary for significant shifts in policy.

The variables are not individually sufficient because their presence in isolation does not result in the outcome under study.38 Instead, the variables are jointly sufficient. Sufficiency entails that a variable guarantees the outcome.39 In the theory proposed in this dissertation, the joint presence of all three key variables guarantees the outcome of policy change toward robust measures.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE VARIABLES

The observation that three variables are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for an outcome raises two questions: first, whether or not one variable is causing one or all other variables; second, whether an omitted variable is in fact causing all three variables.

Two of the variables, congressional pressure and political liability, are certainly linked in certain scenarios. Congressional advocacy for action can intensify political costs for inaction, especially if the pressure comes from an opposing political party. We might also envision a case in which a root source of congressional pressure and political liability—for instance public opposition to liberal immigration policies—affects the values on both political liability and congressional pressure. Thus, although these variables capture distinct dynamics, in certain cases

38 Mahoney, Kimball, and Koivu, “The Logic of Historical Explanation in the Social Sciences,” 118; 121.
39 Ibid., 121.
they may be related. Importantly, these political variables cannot result in significant policy change on their own. An inner-circle dissent is also needed.

Conversely, in the cases studied in this dissertation, dissenters are typically uninfluenced by the other variables. Though dissenters at times use heightened congressional pressure and looming political consequences as leverage in voicing their dissents, the evidence does not suggest that these factors motivate the dissents. Congressional pressure and political liability therefore do not appear to effect dissent in the cases under study.

However, it is important to keep in mind that dissent might shape political liability and congressional pressure in other cases through leaks to the media or to members of Congress. We do see leaking behaviors in several case studies. Lower level officials did leak information in the Bangladesh and Bosnia cases, but these leaks did not lead to variations in values on congressional pressure or the political liability variable. Still, in other cases, similar leaks might be more influential. Additionally, dissent might be linked to political liability in cases where dissenter resignations are thought to humiliate the administration. A dissenter in the Holocaust case, for instance, threatens to resign and expose sensitive material.

I do not find evidence suggesting that an omitted variable is in fact the root cause of all three variables. The omitted variable problem can largely be ruled out because the causes of the three main variables are typically diverse across the variables and oftentimes specific to the particular historical case under study. For example, dissent in the Holocaust case occurs when Treasury officials uncover State Department obstruction of rescue and relief plans by chance. Congressional pressure in the Holocaust case was moreover shaped by a variety of factors, including domestic advocacy efforts, increasing information about the Holocaust, a degree of partisan politics, and frustration with false testimony by a State Department official. The political liability variable was influenced by the election cycle for President Roosevelt, changing attitudes in Congress, diminishing security concerns, and the potential threat of a political scandal. Many of these factors—false testimony, an impending political scandal, diminishing security concerns, and the president’s particular election cycle—were unique to this case.

In the other case studies, the driving forces behind the three variables also tend to be specific to the case. Dissenters, for instance, are often motivated by personal aversion to US policy in that particular case, and not by external factors. As will be detailed in the case studies and case summaries below, root sources of the values on congressional pressure and political liability in the other cases include a varied array of factors.

To summarize, a diverse range of factors contribute to the strength or weakness of each variable within and across the cases, suggesting that an omitted variable is not driving policy. A primary contribution of this dissertation is showing that despite variety in the root causes of the variables and particularities among the historical cases, three variables are in fact consistently responsible for shaping US policy over a long period of time.

THEORY APPLIED TO CASES

The following section will provide an overview of the cases under study and a sampling of the evidence from each case in support of the theory.\(^\text{42}\)

During the Holocaust, US policy does change significantly in January of 1944 with the creation of the War Refugee Board. When this policy change occurs, an inner-circle dissent is present; congressional pressure is high; and political liability, which had been negative from 1938 to early 1943, shifts to a positive value.

In Bosnia under the Bush administration, dissent occurred, but at the low to mid-level; congressional pressure was present, but not as high as it would be in 1995; and political liability was neutral. Under Bush, the United States did not experience a significant policy change toward more robust measures.

In Bosnia under Clinton, US policy moved significantly when the United States launched Operation Deliberate Force. In parallel to the Holocaust case, when Clinton decided to pursue this more robust option, dissent occurred among the inner-circle; congressional pressure was high; and, political liability was positive.

\(^{42}\) In these summaries, I have provided notes for the reader’s reference for any factual claims. However, these chapter summaries provide just a brief overview of the evidence in support of the arguments made in each chapter. The vast majority of the evidence, and corresponding supporting sources, from the empirical chapters are omitted from these summaries.
In the Rwanda case, notable dissent did not emerge; congressional pressure was likewise low; and political liability was negative, counter to action. In Rwanda, US policy does not undergo a major policy change.

In Armenia, dissent occurred in the inner-circle, but the congressional pressure variable was low, and political liability was negative.

In Bangladesh, dissent occurs but at the low to mid-level; political liability is negative; and congressional pressure is at medium strength.

**Figure 8: Theory Applied to Cases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dissonance Inner Circle</th>
<th>Dissent Mid or Low</th>
<th>Congressional Pressure</th>
<th>Political Liability</th>
<th>Degree of Movement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>LOW/MED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holocaust</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late 1943-1944</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>HIGH LOW/MED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938-1943</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>MED</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>NONE/VERY LOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia Bush</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>MED</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>LOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia Clinton 1995</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>HIGH</td>
<td>HIGH LOW/MED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-1994</td>
<td></td>
<td>MED</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>NONE/VERY LOW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td></td>
<td>LOW</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>NONE/VERY LOW</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ARMENIA**

In the Armenian case, the United States exhibits only limited movement in policy response. Efforts that were pursued were largely driven by inner-circle dissenter Henry Morgenthau Sr., who had been US Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. Morgenthau had not only spoken out forcefully against the atrocities directly to Ottoman officials while Ambassador, but he had also driven the establishment of the American Committee on Armenian Atrocities, which eventually became Near East Relief.\(^{43}\) The Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, supported Morgenthau’s appeals to Turkish officials and pressed German officials to attempt to restrain their ally, and the State Department indirectly assisted with relief efforts.\(^{44}\) Yet, low values on the other two

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\(^{44}\) Robert Lansing, “‘Lansing to Amembassy Constantinople, July 15 [16], 1915’ contained in ‘Documents: The State Department File,’” *Armenian Review* 37, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 79; Power, “A Problem from Hell: ” America and the Age of Genocide, 13; The Germans did condemn the persecution of Armenians and express the disapproval
variables prevented more from being done. President Wilson and his aides were particularly concerned about the following: maintaining American neutrality to facilitate his efforts as a peace broker; ensuring his reelection; protecting American citizens abroad; and continuing commercial and other cooperative relations with the Ottoman Empire.\textsuperscript{45} Congressional pressure was also relatively low, with its primary action during this period being the passage of a resolution designating a day for Americans to provide relief aid.\textsuperscript{46} Members of Congress and of the Ottoman government: Ara Sarafian, ed., “Count J.H. von Bernstorff to Secretary of State, Washington, 8 October 1915,” in \textit{United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917} (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute, 2004), 222, Original Citation Provided: The Internal Affairs of Turkey 1910-1929, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, National Archives, NA/RG59/867.4016/173; Ara Sarafian, ed., “Germany Embassy to Sublime Porte, Constantinople, 9 August 1915,” in \textit{United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917} (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute, 2004), 223, Original Citation Provided: The Internal Affairs of Turkey 1910-1929, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, National Archives, NA/RG59/867.4016/173; For more on US appeals to Germans: Ara Sarafian, ed., “Robert Lansing to Berlin Embassy, Washington DC, 1 November 1916,” in \textit{United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917} (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute, 2004), 547, Original Citation Provided: The Internal Affairs of Turkey 1910-1929, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, National Archives, NA/RG59/867.4016/299; Ara Sarafian, ed., “Henry Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Constantinople, 12 August 1915,” in \textit{United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917} (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute, 2004), 81, Original Citation Provided: The Internal Affairs of Turkey 1910-1929, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, National Archives, NA/RG59/867.4016/91; Ara Sarafian, ed., “Secretary of State Lansing to Constantinople Embassy, Washington DC, 18 August 1915,” in \textit{United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917} (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute, 2004), 82, Original Citation Provided: The Internal Affairs of Turkey 1910-1929, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, National Archives, NA/RG59/867.4016/91; German Ambassador Baron Hans von Wangenheim appears to have resisted Morgenthau’s attempts to persuade him to use his influence on behalf of the Armenians. For more on this and other German objections to helping the Armenians: Henry Morgenthau, \textit{Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story}, ed. Peter Balakian (1918; reis., Detroit, MI: Wayne State University, 2003), 250–63; Roger W. Smith, “Introduction,” in \textit{Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story}, ed. Peter Balakian (1918; reis., Detroit, MI: Wayne State University, 2003), xxix; Henry Morgenthau, \textit{Ambassador Morgenthau's Story} (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1918), 364–84; On issue of Germany’s position, see also: Simon Payaslian, \textit{United States Policy toward the Armenian Question and the Armenian Genocide} (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 88; 96-97; For more on debate about Germany’s role, see: Armenian Hairapetian, “‘Race Problems’ and the Armenian Genocide: The State Department File,” \textit{Armenian Review} 37, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 43–44; On State Department facilitation of relief: Balakian, \textit{The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America’s Response}, 290–91; Also on State and relief: Pomakoy, \textit{Helping Humanity: American Policy and Genocide Rescue}, 86–87.


certainly the American public were concerned about the plight of the Armenians, and the press did give the atrocities widespread coverage, but these sentiments were not enough to outweigh the aforementioned concerns of the Wilson administration and to result in significant policy movement. The Wilson administration did not strongly condemn the atrocities, propose sanctions, threaten intervention, or sever diplomatic ties with the Ottoman Empire. The administration rejected Morgenthau’s suggestion to confront the Empire directly on aid delivery and the killings.

**THE HOLOCAUST**

The policy response of the United States to the Holocaust was ignore for most of the period under study, 1938 to 1945. In January of 1944, the creation of the War Refugee Board, however, represented a significant change in US policy. The Board’s creation gave relief and rescue of Holocaust victims an “independent priority” within the government. Following the creation of the Board, the United States substantially intensified its humanitarian, private diplomacy, condemnation, and punishing efforts. I argue that the War Refugee Board’s creation can be explained by the theory advanced in this dissertation. A combination of a high value on congressional pressure, an inner-circle dissent, and a positive political liability in late 1943 into early 1944 together led Roosevelt to take the unusual action of creating a government.


organization to rescue Holocaust victims. In late 1943, Congress became more critical of the administration's handling of refugee issues and was poised to pass resolutions in both the House and the Senate calling for a new refugee commission; a forceful dissent came from Roosevelt's closest friend in his Cabinet, Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau Jr., who in turn was supported by a small cadre of Treasury dissenters; finally, previous domestic political considerations running counter to action on refugee issues dissipated in 1943 while a potential scandal at State emerged to threaten the President with political consequences for continued inaction.  

BOSNIA

I examine US responsiveness to atrocities in Bosnia from 1992 to 1995 under both the George H.W. Bush administration and the William Clinton administration.

During the Bush years, the United States did not experience a major policy shift. The Bush administration did eventually increase its humanitarian and punishing in the summer and into the winter of 1992, but a significant response to the atrocities did not materialize. President Bush's inner circle of top advisers did not favor significant action on the Bosnia issue.  

Dissent did emerge in strength at lower levels of government, but did not reach senior levels of the administration. Senior members of the administration, including National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, Secretary of State James Baker, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Colin Powell, believed that force should only be employed in cases in which the United States was willing to do everything it could to ensure ultimate victory despite all obstacles or when national

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54 Interview with David Gompert; Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 284; 287.
interests were at stake. Bosnia was not such a case. Congressional pressure for more action surfaced to some degree, culminating in August of 1992 when revelations of Serbian concentration camps ignited criticism from Congress and the media. I categorize this congressional pressure as medium in strength. Congress was criticizing the administration, but had not yet reached the level of taking direct action to change US policy. The political liability variable for Bush was neutral during this period. He did not seem positioned to gain from increased action on the crisis, nor did he seem particularly subject to lose politically from not taking action. Clinton’s criticism of his administration’s handling of the situation might have presented some political liability, but campaign pressure on Bosnia did not appear to be threatening to the administration. With dissent at low levels, with congressional pressure present, but not intense, and with political liability neutral, the administration did not launch a significant response to the killings.

The Clinton administration also did not launch a significant response, beyond pinprick airstrikes, for much of the crisis in Bosnia until the summer of 1995. During the early years of Clinton’s first term, dissent in government remained at lower levels within the bureaucracy. Although this period in fact witnessed the largest wave of State Department resignations in history and the use of official dissent channels, Clinton’s inner circle did not express significant dissent until the summer of 1995. In the summer of 1995, then United Nations (UN) Ambassador Madeleine Albright and National Security Adviser Anthony Lake began pushing for a more robust response. During this time, the pressure in Congress peaked with votes in both the House and the Senate to end US participation in the arms embargo of Bosnia. The political liability variable also shifted decidedly in the positive direction that summer. The election of

55 Western, “Sources of Humanitarian Intervention,” 117; Interview with David Gompert.
58 Power, “A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide, 324.
59 Ibid., 301; 315; Interview with Marshall Harris; Interview with Jon Western.
Jacques Chirac in France, the looming threat of having to send US troops into Bosnia to evacuate a failing UN force, and the growth in public outrage following Srebrenica, pressured Clinton to do more or else appear weak and face political repercussions. The convergence of inner-circle dissent, congressional pressure, and a positive political liability value led to a significant change in US policy that summer—the launching of Operation Deliberate Force, a substantial military intervention that ultimately brought the Serbs to the negotiating table at Dayton.

**Bangladesh**

During Pakistani atrocities in East Pakistan, what is now Bangladesh, in 1971, US policy was largely that of *enable* and *ignore*, with the United States in fact providing resources to Pakistan during the crisis. Although dissent did exist among members of the US Foreign Service serving in East Pakistan and Delhi, including the first ever dissent cable in the history of the US Foreign Service, these officials were not in politically appointed or senior positions and were consequently silenced by the Nixon administration. The administration temporarily derailed the career of US Consul General in Dacca, Archer Blood, removed the top US Information Service officer in Dacca, Brian Bell, removed Dacca development officer Eric Griffel, a signer of the dissent cable, and at one point, Nixon even considered firing US Ambassador to India, Kenneth Keating. Congressional pressure and criticism of the administration’s response did emerge, but it did not rise to levels comparable to 1943 in the Holocaust case or 1995 in the Bosnia case. Finally, the political liability variable for President Nixon was decidedly pointed in the negative direction. Nixon was using Pakistan as an emissary for arguably his most important foreign policy initiative—normalizing relations with China—and the administration also sought to

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balance against Soviet support of India. He would not allow mass killing in a foreign country to interfere with his own international political agenda.

**Rwanda**

The United States response to the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 was largely that of ignore. I argue that this crisis did not witness significant dissent at any level of government, that congressional pressure was low, and that the political liability variable ran counter to taking significant action to stop the genocide. All three critical variables thus held low or negative values during the crisis. The political liability variable in particular was against action on Rwanda. In the wake of Somalia, amid significant domestic opposition to UN peacekeeping, President Clinton was likely to face political consequences for engaging the United States in another conflict in Africa, and congressional pressure did not emerge to move this variable in the positive direction. A lack of advocacy by domestic groups for action on Rwanda further reinforced the negative value on the political liability variable. Clinton had nothing to gain and potentially something to lose politically by acting. In this case, low values on all three variables coincided to result in low movement on the dependent variable.

**THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL IMPLICATIONS**

The theory advanced in this chapter offers a novel theoretical understanding of an important component of US foreign policy and mass killing: why and when the United States increases its responsiveness, and conversely, why policy remains stagnant. Yet, demonstrating that three variables—dissent, congressional pressure, and political liability—as consistently responsible for

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70 Power, “A Problem from Hell:” *America and the Age of Genocide*, 376.
determining US policy on mass killing also has broader implications for international relations and history.

First, the theory emphasizes the degree to which mass killing cases are dismissed when they do not capture the attention of the president. The three variables cited in this theory—a dissent within the president’s key advisor group, a high degree of congressional pressure, and perceived political costs for the president—focus the president’s attention on the case of mass killing and provide him with significant incentive to address the issue. Human rights abuses in other countries might not otherwise receive much attention.

Second, the theory helps explain why rapid responsiveness to mass killing is uncommon. Collectively, the three variables of inner-circle dissent, congressional pressure, and political liability represent three sources of stress on the White House: pressures from within the administration; pressures from other government branches; and pressures directly affecting the president. All three of these pressures are needed for a major policy shift, and they can take time to develop.

Third, the study makes several contributions to the historical record. Most importantly, to this author’s knowledge, the theory advanced here is the first to identify the enduring presence and important role of dissent in the history of US responsiveness to mass killing. The case narratives thus contribute to ongoing historical research on dissent in the US government. Of particular interest is my finding that low or mid-level advocates using official dissent channels in my cases studies are not in fact very effective in changing US policy. On the other hand, inner-circle dissenters who used informal channels of communication are successful in swaying the president’s mind. The study also contributes to the historical record in that portions of the information marshalled in support of the theory throughout the dissertation correct factual inaccuracies in previous accounts.

Fourth, the three independent variables outlined in the theory are all driven in large part by domestic or individual factors. This finding is noteworthy because it suggests that systemic or international factors, such as international laws, changing alignments, events on the ground, and calculations of national interest, are not as important as we might have thought in directly

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shaping US policy on mass killing. It further supports a range of scholarship on the critical role of individual actors in international relations. The dissertation more generally indicates that third-image analyses—those focused on the international system—may miss critical causal explanations at the domestic and individual levels of analysis.

The specific conclusion that individual actors, the inner-circle dissenters, can be consequential in changing policies has implications for current literature in bureaucratic politics. In particular, it suggests that individual action can counteract inflexibility and inadaptability within organizations and bureaucracies. The conclusion that dissent is one of the three key variables responsible for shaping US policy also lends support to Alexander George’s (1980) argument that the policymaking process is less effective when contrarian opinions are not communicated to the president.

Finally, the theory is generalizable to other states able to respond to mass killing. Two of the three variables, dissent and political liability, travel fluidly to other contexts. In the case of dissent, all leaders will have an inner circle of advisers and an outer circle of officials, irrespective of the political system in that state. Political liability, or costs specific to the present, would also apply across a variety of domestic political systems. Democratic leaders would likely be the most affected, as they are directly responsible to the public and would consequently be highly attuned to their legacy, image, and electoral prospects. Yet, even leaders in nondemocratic states may be concerned with public approval, particularly if their government is susceptible to coups or revolution, and all leaders have domestic and international political agendas that they seek to protect from undue harm. The final variable, congressional pressure, is not as applicable to other states, though further research is required to determine just how generalizable the congressional pressure variable may be. It is likely, however, that the two-party structure in the

75 George, Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy, 23-24; 122; 124-129.
United States results in exceptional stresses on the president when congressional pressure for action is high.

**PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS**

Policymakers and human rights advocates could garner several lessons from this project. First, individual policymakers have the potential to contribute to substantial change in US policy should they have the opportunity and willingness to voice their dissent to the president. Dissents are likely to be effective, however, only if the person voicing them is within the president’s inner circle of advisers. Instead of employing often ineffective official dissent channels, low or mid-level dissenters should attempt to convince senior officials to join their cause. Second, human rights advocates interested in increasing US responsiveness to genocide and mass killing should focus their attention on members of Congress and, whenever possible, on senior officials within a presidential administration. Third, linking human rights issues to other political concerns of a president may offer the best method of changing the president’s attitude on how to respond to a given case of genocide or mass killing. The political liability variable, a necessary condition for change, measures the degree to which the president perceives a personal political stake in the case of mass killing.

**ALTERNATIVE EXPLANATIONS AND COMPLEMENTARY THEORIES**

This section will outline several possible alternative explanations or complementary theories. In discussing complementary theories, I will explain how the theories pair with my theoretical framework. In discussing alternative explanations, I will highlight the observable implications of each, arguing that none are supported by the empirical evidence.

**SECURITY ENVIRONMENT AND NATIONAL INTERESTS**

One possible alternative explanation is that something in the security environment changes when we also see movement toward more robust action. For example, one might theorize that diminishing external threats might make the United States more likely to pursue robust measures. If changes in the security environment were the primary drivers of US policy change, we would expect to observe the following evidence: 1) the main actors would discuss the changing security situation and make reference to diminishing security threats; 2) leaders would frame their
decisions in terms of cost-benefit for US national interest; 3) significant change in the security environment would precede significant change in policy. The only case in which a diminishing security threat for the United States coincided with increased US responsiveness was the Holocaust case. In the Holocaust case, the creation of the War Refugee Board in January of 1944 occurs toward the end of the war, when US victory was more certain. However, none of the primary documents reviewed by this author suggest that diminishing security considerations or a cost-benefit analysis of US interests caused Roosevelt to create the War Refugee Board. None of the Treasury officials cited a changing security environment as reason for their success. I do argue that a changing security environment helped create a positive value on political liability and could thus at most be considered a conditioning variable, but it did not drive the creation of the War Refugee Board on its own. Moreover, several other factors influenced the political liability variable in this case, including the election cycle, public opinion polling, domestic anti-Semitism, anti-immigration views in Congress, and the potential scandal at the State Department.76

**FEASIBILITY**

Another potential alternative explanation relates to the feasibility of potential policy options. Feasibility will directly matter to the theory advanced here under two scenarios: first, when a president favors a policy change, but the intensified policies are infeasible (see point number 1 below); second, when a president favors a policy change at the same time that the feasibility of the robust measure or measures increases (see point number 2 below). Feasibility does not matter to the theory when the infeasibility of policies contributes to policy stagnation (see point 3 below).

Feasibility matters to the theory:

1. **When a president favors a policy change, but the intensified policies are infeasible:** Leaders decide they do want to change policy, and the administration considers more intensive condemnation, punishing, diplomatic, humanitarian, or intervention efforts, but these options are rejected as a result of infeasibility.

   In this case, my theory would have predicted action, but the infeasibility of the policies would have resulted in inaction. This occurrence would undermine the theory’s explanatory power.

76 For more on this, see the case summary in this chapter as well as the Holocaust case study chapter.
2. **When a president favors a policy change at the same time that the feasibility of robust measures increases:**
   The administration experiences a shift in policy in the presence of an inner-circle dissent, high congressional pressure, and costs for inaction, but the shift also coincides with increased feasibility of more robust options.

   In cases in which the feasibility of policies increases alongside the dissent and political variables, I must determine whether the increase in feasibility also contributed to the president’s decision to change course, and if so, how did the change in feasibility compare to the change in the three variables as determining factors in the president’s decision-making process.

   Feasibility does not matter to my theory:

3. **When the infeasibility of responses contributes to policy stagnation:**
   The theory advanced here explains when presidents decide to change course and intensify their responses to mass killing through a range of measures, including nonmilitary policies. I argue that inner-circle dissent, high congressional pressure, and costs for inaction are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for policy change toward more robust measures. A corollary to this argument is that these factors will not be present when policy remains stagnant. The absence of inner-circle dissent, the absence of costs for inaction, and the presence of low congressional pressure are the most important factors keeping the president from changing policy. However, other factors, such as the infeasibility of responses, may also contribute to stagnation. The contribution of other factors to stagnation or to an *ignore* response is not inconsistent with the theory.

   Note also that feasibility can act as a cause of cause for one of the three key variables, political liability.

   Feasibility concerns—for instance the potential for quagmire—could contribute to a president’s calculus that the political costs of action are too high (a negative political liability). In this scenario, feasibility variables act as a root source of one the main causes. This effect of feasibility is also consistent with the theory.

   Feasibility can also act as a cause of cause—particularly a facilitating or underlying cause—for a positive value on political liability. We would imagine, for instance, that the political liability variable is unlikely to shift from negative (costs for action) to positive (costs for inaction) if all potential policy responses are likely to fail. The fact that some policy change is feasible, therefore, can facilitate a shift on political liability by *not* provoking a negative value on political liability.

**Normative Explanation**

A second alternative explanation is that normative variables, such as international laws or norms concerning human rights, influenced US leaders to shift policy. This explanation likewise does not find support in the empirical evidence. If this explanation were true, we would expect to see
the following: 1) leaders citing obligations to the Genocide Convention or to other international human rights norms in formulating their responses; 2) somewhat stagnant responses within cases, as normative change is unlikely to happen in a matter of months or years; and 3) more robust responses following the passage of the Genocide Convention. None of these observable implications emerge. As mentioned, Martha Finnemore (2003) has argued that normative change—an expanding understanding of which groups belong to the human community—has resulted in increased interventions on behalf of non-Christian and non-European populations.77 This study does not come across direct evidence to support her claims. Among my case studies, we see the United States seek to avoid intervention completely in Rwanda, but intervene on behalf of Bosnian Muslims. Both decisions appear to have been made based on dissent and political costs.

**MANIPULATIVE ELITES**

In studying US decisions for intervention in crises abroad, Jon Western has argued that leaders belong to certain belief communities, selective engagers or liberal humanitarianists, and that these belief systems dictate whether or not they will intervene militarily in crises abroad.78 He further asserts that leaders will compete for public support for their worldview, seeking to frame the public’s understanding of the crisis in a way that is consistent with the leader’s preferred course of action. This theory has some commonalities with the theory advanced here in the dissertation. Both theories point toward domestic sources of US decision making. Both theories also highlight the importance of individual actors in shifting policy. The theories are complementary in that my theory arguably could explain why leaders appear to espouse the normative preferences that Western identifies following a decision for an intervention. My theory makes no judgment or analysis as to what the administration does to bolster support for its policies. However, in my case studies, I do find that the critical causal arrow is flowing in the opposite direction: in my cases, the president is influenced by administration employees (the dissenters), by the public, and by the Congress to change strategy. The administration is not

77 Finnemore, *The Purpose of Intervention*, 52–73.
primarily acting as an agent to shape public opinion and the president’s calculus is based on political costs and internal pressures, not normative belief systems.

**UNCAPTURED EFFECTS OF REGION**

A fourth alternative explanation concerns the region in which the mass killing occurs. Because we see significant policy change in Bosnia and in the Holocaust, perhaps the United States simply responds more forcefully to crises in Europe than it does to those in Africa, Asia, or the Caucasus. If this explanation were true, we would expect the additional observable implications: 1) the United States would respond quickly in both European cases and within-case variation would be minimal; 2) leaders would cite regional considerations in structuring their response by referring to the importance of supporting allies or maintaining US dominance in the region. The primary document evidence does not indicate a direct role for regional variables in influencing US policy. Moreover, the region of each respective case of mass killing does not change, and yet, we do see significant within-case policy variation in some cases. Nevertheless, I do argue in several cases that regional factors influenced political liability on the margins. For instance, my Rwanda case study argues that the aftermath of failed US policy in Somalia contributed to a negative value on political liability. A second US intervention in an African country would have resulted in significant consequences for Clinton. In the Bosnia case, the fact that the atrocities were shamefully occurring in Europe also exacerbated Clinton’s political liability variable. 79

**RACISM**

A fifth alternative explanation is that racism contributes to US leaders being more sympathetic to suffering among white victim groups in Europe than they are to victim populations in Africa or the Middle East, or relatedly, that as a result of racist attitudes, leaders are more likely to define Europe as being a region of national interest than they are to define Africa as being a region of national interest. 80 For instance, the possibility of elite racist attitudes, perhaps subconscious ones, influencing US policy in Rwanda was raised as a question by Donald Steinberg, Senior Director for African Affairs on the National Security Council staff in 1994, and by Nicholas

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79 For more on the Rwanda and Bosnia case studies, see case summaries in this chapter as well as the case study chapters.
Burns, Senior Director for Russia, Ukraine and Eurasia Affairs and Special Assistant to President Clinton in 1994, in separate interviews with this author, though both were speculating on the possibility, and neither cited any direct evidence that racism played a role. If this alternative explanation were true, we would expect to observe the following evidence: 1) leaders would be likely to make racist statements in private conversations and refer to the victim group disparagingly; 2) the United States would respond more vigorously to suffering by white, European populations than it does toward African or Asian populations; 3) the suffering of the victim group would likely not be ignored, in general, by elites of that same racial or ethnic group; 4) the public, members of Congress, and dissenters would have reason to feel affinity with the targeted group. Rwanda and Bangladesh both had non-white victim groups, and we do not see a significant policy change in either case. Yet, we also do not see a policy change in Bosnia under the Bush administration, which did launch an intervention in Somalia, an African country. Moreover, Armenians, a white Christian population, also do not evoke a policy change. Additionally, our two cases of significant change, Bosnia under Clinton and the Holocaust under Roosevelt in 1944, were to benefit Muslims and Jews respectively, both groups for which the American public arguably felt little identity-based affinity when these crises occurred. Further, I do not see evidence of explicitly racist attitudes on the part of US leaders in the Rwanda case. Moreover, as Donald Steinberg pointed out, Rwanda did not witness significant activism even by African-American leaders and organizations, groups otherwise vocal on African issues or issues affecting non-white foreigners. In addition, though difficult to measure, the root sources of the dissent, congressional pressure, and political costs do not appear to be related to personal affinity for the victims. As discussed below, Morgenthau’s Jewish identity does not seem to have been the impetus behind his dissenting action, nor was identity a motivating factor for inner-circle dissenter Madeleine Albright in Bosnia, or for low-level dissenters in Bangladesh. In sum, I do not see significant evidence indicating a substantial role for racism in shaping US responsiveness to mass killing, though the theory does not explicitly rule it out as a cause of one of the three causes.

81 Interview with Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns, interview by Amanda J. Rothschild, September 18, 2015; Interview with Donald Steinberg.
82 There is some evidence to suggest Nixon held certain biases against Indians, but it is not clear how or if this influenced his policies toward Bengalis in East Pakistan, see for example: Bass, The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide, 177; 214.
83 Interview with Donald Steinberg.
Finally, a sixth potential alternative explanation is that victim group resources influence the US response to mass killing. The case in which this explanation is perhaps most likely to have an effect is the Holocaust case where the leader of the dissenter group, Henry Morgenthau Jr., was Jewish and in which funds from Jewish organizations were used in relief efforts. If this alternative explanation were true, we would expect to see the following evidence: 1) Jewish members of government would have disproportionately been the key proponents of the War Refugee Board; 2) evidence would suggest that if Morgenthau were not Jewish, he would not have approached the president; 3) Morgenthau would cite his Jewish identity as reason for caring about the issue of Holocaust refugees; 4) Roosevelt would cite available resources as reason to create the Board; 5) evidence would suggest that absent the funding from Jewish organizations, Roosevelt would not have created the Board.

Victim group resources and representation as an alternative explanation does not find significant support in the historical evidence. First, in the Holocaust case, the key members of Henry Morgenthau’s team of Treasury dissenters, who initially gathered the evidence and had to persuade Morgenthau to go to Roosevelt—Josiah DuBois Jr., John Pehle, Randolph Paul—were not Jewish. Although Bernard Meltzer, a State Department official who provided information to DuBois, was Jewish, Donald Hiss and Sumner Welles of State, who also worked to improve the US rescue response, were not. Further, I do not have strong evidence to suggest that Meltzer provided information to DuBois because of his faith, though Treasury officials noted that Meltzer had been difficult to work with on other issues and Morgenthau did ask if Meltzer was Jewish. The documents on his interaction with DuBois, however, suggest that he talked with DuBois in his capacity as a civil servant, one who was concerned with his department’s obstructionism. Second, when Morgenthau discusses raising State Department malfeasance, he

84 On DuBois not being Jewish, see the following sources. I also find no evidence to indicate that Pehle or Paul were Jewish. Medoff, Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. and the Struggle for a US Response to the Holocaust, 76; Laurence Jarvik Interview with Josiah E. DuBois, Camden, NJ, October 23, 1978, cited in Medoff.
86 Ibid., 170–71.
explicitly says that he is not going to raise the issue as a Jew, but as Secretary of the Treasury, in his official capacity as a Cabinet member.\textsuperscript{88} He states the following:

I want to go as Secretary of the Treasury. Just because I am a Jew, why shouldn’t I look after the Jews, or the Catholics, or the Armenians?\textsuperscript{89}

Further, when an interviewer once suggested to John Pehle of Treasury that Morgenthau acted as a Jew, he immediately corrected him: “He acted as a member of the [C]abinet of the US.”\textsuperscript{90}

Third, many Jewish government leaders in fact were the primary opponents of the War Refugee Board. Sol Bloom, chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee, was Jewish and was a principal opponent of the House Resolution pushing for more action on refugee issues. Treasury dissenters noted that Bloom was “having to do everything he [could] possibly do to keep that resolution from being reported out.”\textsuperscript{91} As detailed in the Holocaust chapter, Roosevelt’s Jewish adviser, Sam Rosenman, would not even show up to meetings about Jewish issues because of fears of being accused of undue sympathy.\textsuperscript{92} He opposed admission of Jewish refugees, opposed assistance to Jews in settling elsewhere, and opposed “virtually every other rescue measure.”\textsuperscript{93} Secretary of State Cordell Hull’s wife was Jewish, and, as the Holocaust chapter details, Hull was a significant obstacle to action on rescue.\textsuperscript{94} In general, Jews were concerned that their support for the war effort might be interpreted as support for co-ethnics, and not support for American national interests.\textsuperscript{95} Historian Henry Feingold, who explicitly examines

the role of Jewish Americans in US policy toward the Holocaust, notes that such fears made it “difficult for Jewish leaders to oppose the administration’s argument [that winning the war, not rescue]” had to take precedence. Even Treasury staffers, who were not Jewish, feared that Jewish members of government could be accused of undue sympathies. Joan Morgenthau, Henry Morgenthau Jr.’s daughter, has argued that “My father didn’t want to push things too far [...] as a Jew he felt that he needed almost to be extra careful to be sure that he was speaking first as an American [...] I think it must have been very difficult for him to—to push the issue to the extent that he did.” Feingold summarizes:

The kind of political influence required to change such basic public policy was simply not available to American Jewish leaders, whose position, despite the rantings of anti-Semites regarding the “Jew Deal,” was, in fact, only marginally enhanced during the Roosevelt era.

In this context of widespread anti-Semitism and fear, most Jewish leaders did not in fact advocate for Jewish victims of the Holocaust. With the exception of Morgenthau, the American-Jewish response was largely a failure. The argument that Jews had significant influence on refugee issues is thus undermined by the historical evidence. In fact, the evidence suggests that, if anything, Jewish government officials faced significant hurdles to speaking out on behalf of victims of the Holocaust.

Jewish organizations did provide some financial resources to the War Refugee Board, and Jewish groups were involved in advocacy for congressional action. Yet, the role of Jewish organizations in this manner does not undermine the theory. In addition to receiving funding from the US government, the War Refugee Board received $19,000,000 from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Vaad Hahatzala, and the World Jewish Congress. Victim group resources thus likely made the Board’s efforts more successful, but I do not find evidence to suggest that resource considerations factored into Roosevelt’s decision to create the

96 Ibid.
97 “Jewish Evacuation, December 18, 1943, 12:00 M., Meeting Transcript,” 86.
100 Feingold, “‘Courage First and Intelligence Second:’ The American Jewish Secular Elite, Roosevelt, and the Failure to Rescue,” 78–79.
101 Ibid., 77–79.
Board. I further do not see evidence, anywhere in the empirical record, that Treasury officials mentioned extensive resources from the Jewish community in their discussions with Roosevelt or in their deliberations regarding their dissent. Moreover, the Armenian case, which witnessed significant fundraising for the victim group, more than $116,000,000, did not witness a comparably significant response. The existence of potential resources thus does not appear to significantly affect the decision-making process.

Some Jewish advocacy groups did pressure Congress for increased action on relief, influencing the congressional pressure and political liability variables. Most notably, a Jewish political action committee, the Bergson Group, had pushed for a separate rescue agency for Holocaust victims since February, 1943, and had drafted the famed Gillette-Rogers Resolution, detailed extensively in the Holocaust chapter, which called for the establishment of a separate US government commission devoted to rescue. The Bergson Group was contentious and controversial, with Rabbi Stephen Wise, a prominent Jewish leader, fearing that Bergson was plotting his assassination. When Treasury dissenterers discussed the influence of the Bergson Group in March, 1944, they noted that the Group, though uninfluential in their own dissent, likely did influence Congress and public opinion, both the congressional pressure variable and the political liability variable:

H.M.JR: [...] I have been doing a little kidding around town about this Bergson. Every time I kidded about it, everybody gets so excited, so I stopped kidding. And I just want to know where the President's refugee group stands, versus Bergson.

[...]

H.M.JR: [...] What is our contact with him and what are we doing with him and what is he doing with us. [...]

Mr. Pehle: [...] they brought considerable pressure on Congress to pass a resolution which called for the setting up of an agency such as the War Refugee Board, which was ultimately set up. [...]

H.M.JR: May I interrupt you? The first time that that thing was suggested to me was a memorandum from Oscar Cox last June or July. [...] 

[...]

Mr. DuBois: They certainly made a contribution toward the establishment of the Board.

Mr. Pehle: Even the people who hate them agree they made a substantial contribution in stirring up public opinion here.[...] 107

Despite the role of the Bergson Group, Jewish agencies nevertheless faced the same fears as Jewish individuals in advocating for rescue, deliberately holding back at some critical moments, and were more often than not unsuccessful in their initiatives. 108 Of particular note, the Wagner-Rogers bill to allow 20,000 German Jewish children to come to the United States, discussed in detail in the Holocaust chapter, was promoted more forcefully by non-Jewish agencies than by Jewish agencies. 109

To summarize, Jewish representation in government and victim group resources is not a compelling alternative theoretical explanation for the creation of the War Refugee Board. Jewish leaders were divided on support for rescue initiatives; dissenters came from a variety of faith backgrounds; and significant anti-Semitism within the United States in fact created substantial hurdles for the small number of Jewish government officials to advocate for Jewish victims. Although Jewish organizations provided resources to the War Refugee Board after its creation, no evidence suggests that the Board would not have been created in the absence of such resources, and some of the Board's activities were funded solely with government funds. 110

However, the evidence in this dissertation does not rule out victim group resources as a potential cause of a cause: a root driver of one of the three variables. Indeed, because dissenter motivations seem to be unique to the dissenter in each case, we could imagine a future scenario where a dissenter is in fact motivated to dissent primarily because of his or her affiliation with the targeted group. We could also foresee situations in which victim group resources influence the congressional pressure and political liability variables. In sum, while the cases studied for

this dissertation do not reveal a prominent role for victim group resources, the theory does not suggest that this variable could not influence one of the three primary drivers of policy change.
CONCLUSION

This chapter has outlined the theoretical framework of the dissertation. The history of US foreign policy and mass killing reveals that although the modal response of the United States is to not muster resources into a response of any kind, at times the United States does change policy and strategy to respond more forcefully. The current academic literature does not explain or theorize why or when these policy changes occur. This dissertation does offer a theoretical explanation for significant US policy change in response to mass killing. I argue that three historical factors must be present in order for policy change to occur—inner-circle dissent, a high degree of congressional pressure, and a positive value on political liability. Within and across my case studies, spanning nearly one hundred years of US history, these three factors are consistently responsible for provoking the United States to take increased action. Further, the absence of any one of these factors consistently leads to policy stagnation. The theory offers several noteworthy implications for academic literature in international relations and foreign policy as well as for policymakers and advocates interested in US foreign policy and mass atrocity. The case studies, the subject of the following chapters, further contribute to the historical record by providing a narrative of the critical role of dissent and by correcting previous inaccuracies in the historical record.
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CHAPTER 2: “FROM ONE OF TWO OF A KIND:”
THE HOLOCAUST 1938-1945

"Perhaps the more that the politicians, the press, and the pulpits denounce what the United States did and did not do during the Holocaust, the less it is likely that the United States will make the same mistakes in the event of genocide elsewhere. But, the effects of historical-moral condemnation do not seem to have resonated very far into the U.S. government in the cases of Cambodia and Bosnia. And Breckinridge Long, John J. McCloy, and Franklin Roosevelt cannot be blamed for insensitivity there."  

1 “Franklin D. Roosevelt and Henry Morgenthau Jr.,” February 9, 1934, Photographs, 8176, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.
Franklin D. Roosevelt with Henry Morgenthau Jr. 1930

INTRODUCTION

"I think we will just go as the Treasury. This is Treasury business. We are interested in this." 4

THE UNITED STATES AND THE HOLOCAUST

The limited US response to the Holocaust and to other Nazi atrocities has been the subject of longstanding and wide-ranging critique. 5 Even the titles of many key Holocaust texts, from Arthur Morse’s While Six Million Died to David Wyman’s The Abandonment of the Jews, depict the US response as apathetic, or at least, anemic. 6 The commonly heard refrain “Never Again,” serves to condemn the tepid response of the United States and the international community as much as it admonishes Nazi Germany. The analysis here thus codes US policy as being stagnant: ignore with limited and sporadic humanitarian, private diplomatic, punishing, and condemnation policies for most of the period under study from 1938 through 1943. The coding changes in January of 1944 when the United States experienced a dramatic shift in policy through the creation of the War Refugee Board (WRB).

The question of whether or not, and when, the United States knew about Nazi killing of Jews has largely been settled. Several historians, political scientists, and journalists have researched and documented US knowledge of the Nazi plans to exterminate Jews. 7 Some of

these accounts point to primary sources indicating US government knowledge of Nazi genocidal plans, and certainly of intensifying Nazi discrimination against Jews by 1938, and scholars agree that President Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) was aware of the Final Solution (Hitler’s plan to exterminate the Jewish people of Europe) by November 1942 at the latest. By mid-1942, the mainstream British and American press had begun publishing articles about widespread Nazi killings of Jews. And, by the end of 1942, FDR was quite candid about his knowledge of the atrocities in private meetings. For example, on December 8, 1942, Adolph Held of the Jewish Labor Committee, Rabbi Israel Rosenberg of Agudath Israel, Henry Monsky of B’nai B’rith, and Rabbi Stephen Wise of the Jewish Congress met with President Roosevelt to discuss German atrocities in Poland and to urge the President to take “immediate action” against Nazi killings of Jews. In this meeting, the Jewish delegation asked Roosevelt to “raise [his] voice—on behalf of the Jews of Europe [...] to warn the Nazis that they will be held to strict accountability for their crimes.” In response, Roosevelt acknowledged US intelligence about the Final Solution:

The government of the United States is very well acquainted with most of the facts you are now bringing to our attention. Unfortunately, we have received confirmation from many sources. Representatives of the United States government in Switzerland and other neutral countries have given up proof that confirm the horrors discussed by you. We


Breitman and Lichtman, FDR and the Jews, 196.

Ibid., 208–9.


cannot treat these matters in normal ways [...] As to your proposal, I shall certainly be
glad to issue another statement such as you request. 14

In short, the United States knew of the atrocities, and yet did not mount a significant response for
most of the period under study beyond limited and ineffective measures.

In the early years of Roosevelt’s second term, from 1938 to 1939, the United States
engaged in limited humanitarian initiatives to help refugees from Europe enter the United States
and other countries around the world. Buoyed by his election win in 1936 and, at this point, still
free from US military engagement in the war, Roosevelt circumvented congressional, public, and
State Department opposition to increase immigration by expanding the immigration quotas for
Germany and Austria, by supporting Jewish settlement in Palestine, and by spearheading the
however ineffective Evian Conference. 15 Throughout this early period, the United States was
also a leader in private diplomatic and punishing behavior, as the only power to recall its
Ambassador from Germany following Kristallnacht in November 1938. 16 However, in spite of
these limited measures, the overarching response during this early period was ignore. The
President refrained from exerting significant pressure on the anti-immigration Congress and
State Department. Moreover, anti-Semitic and anti-immigrant sentiment within the public made
efforts to support Jewish victims unpopular at home. Policies pursued successfully, such as
recalling the Ambassador, were largely symbolic. More practical efforts—immigration initiatives
and the Evian Conference—failed.

During the 1940 to 1942 period, US entry into World War II, in combination with losses
in the domestic political sphere, imposed new challenges for the FDR administration’s response
to atrocities in Europe. The Roosevelt administration shied away from forceful public
condemnations of Nazi atrocities, fearing that such statements could inflame domestic anti-
Semitism or bolster Nazi propaganda asserting that the United States was fighting the war solely
because of Jewish pressures. 17 Compounding political pressures was the fact that Roosevelt had

14 Breitman and Lichtman, FDR and the Jews, 208–9; “Report On Meeting of Jewish Leaders with Roosevelt
(December 1942) | Jewish Virtual Library.”
15 Breitman and Lichtman, FDR and the Jews, 102–103; 316; Felix Belair, Jr., “Welcome Offered to All,” New York
Times, March 26, 1938, 1; 4; “Welles to Morgenthau March 23, 1938,” March 23, 1938, 264–75, Diaries of Henry
D. Roosevelt Library; Breitman, “The Failure to Provide a Safe Haven for European Jewry,” 132.
16 Arthur Schlesinger Jr., “Did FDR Betray the Jews? Or Did He Do More Than Anyone Else to Save Them?,” in
FDR and the Holocaust, ed. Verne W. Newton (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), 160; Breitman and
suffered losses in the 1942 midterm elections to conservative Republicans and southern Democrats, political groups that frequently opposed measures to aid Jewish refugees.\textsuperscript{18} During this period, the State Department tightened immigration restrictions, reversing the advances of the 1938 to 1939 period.\textsuperscript{19} The most notable US response to the atrocities during this period primarily fell in the \textit{public condemnation} category and occurred at the very end of 1942, with the United States partaking in joint condemnations of Nazi policies alongside allies.\textsuperscript{20}

However, in January of 1944, the creation of the War Refugee Board marked a significant change in US policy. The Board, as historian Henry Feingold has noted, was “remarkable because it [for the first time] gave the notion of rescue an independent priority.”\textsuperscript{21} Following the creation of the Board, the United States intensified its \textit{humanitarian, private diplomacy, condemnation, and punishing} measures.

\textbf{Figure 1: Policies by Year}

\begin{itemize}
  \item 1938-1940
    \begin{itemize}
      \item Ignore
      \item Sporadic and limited humanitarian, condemnation, punishing, private diplomacy
    \end{itemize}
  \item 1940-1943
    \begin{itemize}
      \item Ignore
      \item Sporadic and limited public condemnation, private diplomacy, and punishing
      \item Humanitarian efforts decrease from the 1938-1939 period
    \end{itemize}
  \item 1944-1945
    \begin{itemize}
      \item Creation of War Refugee Board
      \item Significant increase in humanitarian, public condemnation, punishing, and diplomatic efforts
    \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

The creation of the War Refugee Board was a direct result of the action of a handful of men in the United States Department of the Treasury—Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau Jr., John Pehle, Randolph Paul, Josiah DuBois Jr., Harry Dexter White, and Ansel Luxford. After encountering difficulties working with the State Department to secure the necessary license for a rescue plan in the summer of 1943, these Treasury officials began gathering incriminating documents that revealed deliberate State Department obstructionism on rescue and relief policies.

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 75.
led by then Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long. They compiled their findings into a document—originally entitled “Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of the Jews”22—and presented their case to President Roosevelt in January of 1944.23 The Treasury men argued that the rescue initiatives of the United States government should be taken out of the hands of State and transferred to a separate government board.24 Roosevelt agreed, and subsequently created the War Refugee Board through Executive Order 9417 in late January of 1944.25 Following the Board’s creation, the United States increased its activity in humanitarian, public condemnation, punishing, and private diplomacy, in addition to distancing itself from British restrictions on US immigration to Palestine and working toward the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine.26 The Board’s programs centered on evacuating refugees from Axis territory, engaging in psychological operations against German forces and satellite countries, and implementing measures to provide humanitarian relief or improve conditions in German camps.27 The War Refugee Board is directly credited with saving 200,000 Jewish lives and 20,000 non-Jewish lives, despite facing continued obstructionism by the State Department and War Department.28

28 Medoff, Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. and the Struggle for a US Response to the Holocaust, 119; 129; Breitman and Lichtman, FDR and the Jews, 294. Breitman and Lichtman and Medoff both
Although the creation of the Board represented a major shift in US policy, and a relative success of US responsiveness to the Holocaust, few in-depth studies of the Board exist. Notably, many who are familiar with Raoul Wallenberg’s humanitarian actions do not realize that he was actually working for the War Refugee Board.  

Although some works covering the United States and the Holocaust more generally or covering key actors in the Roosevelt administration do mention the Board and the events leading up to its creation, the founding text exclusively on the history of the Board is arguably Monty Penkower’s 1980 article, “Jewish Organizations and the Creation of the US War Refugee Board.” The article provides an overview of the most important historical events leading up to the Board’s creation, with Penkower arguing that a combination of public and congressional pressure alongside Morgenthau’s intervention combined to produce the Board. This understanding of the events preceding the Board’s creation is consistent with the theoretical argument advanced in this dissertation, which stresses the importance of dissent, congressional pressure, and political factors.

In 1991, Ariel Hurwitz, who was affiliated with Kibbutz Galon, also attempted to discern who deserved credit for the Board’s creation in an article in Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Hurwitz argued that the Treasury group’s action alone was a sufficient condition for the establishment of the War Refugee Board and that congressional support was not essential. In contrast, I will argue that congressional pressure had a very important role in the establishment arrive at the 200,000 figure. Medoff argues however that further unaccounted for lives were saved as a result of war-crimes warnings and food aid delivery into concentration camps. Breitman and Lichtman also assert that the war-crimes warnings may have saved individuals not counted, but they settle on 200,000 as the total number of lives saved. They suggest in the corresponding footnotes of their estimates that further study of the War Refugee Board is required. Oral history interview, Josiah E. DuBois Jr., interview by Richard D. McKinzie, June 29, 1973, Sec. 23, Harry S. Truman Library, https://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/duboisje.htm; Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945, 214.

32 Ibid., 133.
34 Ibid., 28.
of the Board by removing obstacles to the creation of the Board that hindered previous refugee endeavors, by providing the Treasury men with incentive to approach the president quickly, as they state explicitly in their meetings, and by creating further reason for Roosevelt to accept Treasury’s proposal. Hurwitz claims that there is “no documentary evidence indicating that Roosevelt was influenced by political factors […] all claims that such factors were the ones that determined his stand are only conjectures.”35 I will argue that historical evidence, particularly the writings of Treasury group men, does support an important role for Congress, and I suggest that we approach conjecture only when we imagine the creation of the Board in the absence of the historical context in which it emerged, amid unprecedented action in Congress to press the administration on refugee issues. In contrast to Hurwitz’s argument, I will also assert that, in 1944, the refugee issue carried a positive political liability value (costs for inaction).

Other than Penkower and Hurwitz’s attempts, very few people, and almost no academics, have followed in devoting significant, or exclusive, attention to understanding the factors leading up to the Board’s creation. In 1993, during a symposium with preeminent Holocaust scholars at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, historian Richard Breitman noted that “A major study of the War Refugee Board would be a significant contribution to the body of scholarship.”36 Bernard Bellush, Henry Feingold, and William Korey agreed, with Korey arguing that “very little has penetrated at the popular level about […] the War Refugee Board […] and Morgenthau’s intervention.”37 In 2009, Rafael Medoff’s book, Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois Jr. and the Struggle for a US Response to the Holocaust, moved us much closer, arguably the closest yet, to understanding the critical role of the Treasury men in the lead up to the creation of the War Refugee Board.38 Medoff’s account focuses on the role of Josiah DuBois Jr., Assistant General Counsel at Treasury, in working towards advancing the rescue of Jews in Europe. In explaining DuBois’ efforts, Medoff covers the Treasury deliberations in much greater detail than is normally found in the literature on the US response to the Holocaust. Nevertheless, the story of the Treasury whistleblowers continues to remain largely absent from the academic literature and from public knowledge. Medoff echoes the sentiments of the FDR Library

35 Ibid., 27.
37 Ibid., 17-18; 23.
38 Medoff, Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. and the Struggle for a US Response to the Holocaust.
conference participants of sixteen years prior, noting in his book that a history of the War Refugee Board unfortunately has not yet been written. 39 Richard Breitman and Allan Lichtman also note in their 2013 account of President Roosevelt and the Holocaust that “There is still a need for a thorough study of the War Refugee Board.” 40 This chapter will build on Medoff’s efforts to understand the origins of the Board by exploring the Treasury deliberations in even further detail and by incorporating a wider array of primary sources.

The lack of academic and public attention devoted to the WRB is somewhat surprising given that it was “the apogee of the American effort to rescue European Jewry.” 41 The Board’s actions constituted “the most concerted effort [...] by the American political establishment to aid in the rescue of Jews.” 42 Prior to 1944, the United States was intently focused on winning the war and did not expend significant independent resources on rescue efforts. 43 As was noted previously, the War Refugee Board, however, “gave the notion of rescue an independent priority and an independent agency to administer it.” 44 Its work “represented a significant reversal of earlier wartime policy.” 45 The first Executive Director of the War Refugee Board later explained the dramatic shift in policy in an interview now archived with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:

the most important thing about the WRB was that [it] dramatically changed the policy of the US overnight. Before the board was established, nothing really was being done to help Jews [...] With the establishment of the board it became the policy of the US to do whatever could be done, consistent with the war effort, to help people escape. 46

President Roosevelt also perceived the WRB to be a key turning point in US policy. In his June 12, 1944 message to Congress, President Roosevelt named the War Refugee Board as the primary US response to help victims Nazi persecution:

39 Ibid., ix.
40 Breitman and Lichtman, FDR and the Jews, 402 (n. 60).
42 Breitman and Lichtman, FDR and the Jews, 274.
43 Feingold, “Courage First and Intelligence Second:” The American Jewish Secular Elite, Roosevelt, and the Failure to Rescue,” 76.
44 Ibid.
45 Breitman, “Roosevelt and the Holocaust,” 121.
In January of this year I determined that this Government should intensify its efforts to combat the Nazi terror. Accordingly, I established the War Refugee Board, composed of the Secretaries of State, Treasury, and War. This Board was charged with the responsibility of taking all action consistent with the successful prosecution of the war to rescue the victims of enemy oppression in imminent danger of death [...] it was entrusted with the solemn duty of translating this Government's humanitarian policy into prompt action, thus manifesting once again in a concrete way that our kind of world and not Hitler's will prevail. Its purpose is directly and closely related to our whole war effort.47

In 1945, Henry Morgenthau Jr. wrote to President Harry S. Truman on the impact of the War Refugee Board, highlighting its role as the first initiative that married the full power of the United States government with rescue initiatives:48

With a small staff in Washington and representatives in strategic neutral countries, the War Refugee Board put the full prestige and power of the United States Government behind the efforts of private agencies and inter-govern-metal organizations [...] Although it is impossible to measure the success of the Board in terms of exact statistics, there is no doubt that many thousands of lives were saved as a result of its work. This was accomplished because the problem was recognized and dealt with as one requiring attention by the government at the highest level.49

The creation of the War Refugee Board thus represented a significant deviation from the longstanding United States policy of ignore, coupled with the occasional humanitarian, diplomatic, condemnation, or punishing effort. The important question for this project is therefore the following: what led to this significant change in policy, to this deviation from the modal response of ignore, through the establishment of the War Refugee Board in 1944?

I argue that the events leading up to the establishment of the War Refugee Board are consistent with the theory outlined previously in this dissertation to explain precisely such significant shifts in US policy. A combination of inner-circle dissent from within the Department of the Treasury, a high degree of congressional pressure, and a positive value (costs for inaction) on political liability together led Roosevelt to take the unusual action of removing refugee issues from the jurisdiction of the State Department. In the fall of 1943, congressional agitation for increased action on refugee issues was rising while Treasury was simultaneously conducting its investigation of State Department malfeasance and obstruction. In November of 1943, both the

47 “Caring for Refugees in the United States, Message from the President of the United States,” June 12, 1944, White House Central Files: OF 127 (1945), Box 673, Truman Papers, Harry S. Truman Library.
48 Henry Morgenthau Jr., “Memorandum for the President,” May 23, 1945, White House Central Files: OF 127 (1945), Box 673, Truman Papers, Harry S. Truman Library.
49 Ibid., 1.
Senate and the House had introduced resolutions, collectively known as the Gillette-Rogers Resolutions, proposing a commission to formulate plans to save European Jews; by December, the Senate version had received a unanimous vote from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and was awaiting a floor debate scheduled for January 24 when Treasury met with Roosevelt.\textsuperscript{50} At this point, the House versions of the resolution were also expected to pass by a large majority.\textsuperscript{51} As evidence presented here will show, the impending resolutions, if passed, were likely to embarrass the Roosevelt administration by forcing his hand on the refugee issue and highlighting the ineffectiveness of the administration's refugee policy. On top of this mounting congressional pressure, the Treasury revelations about State Department obstructionism threatened the administration with a potential scandal if Roosevelt did not take action soon. The political liability variable thus assumed the costs for inaction, or positive, value.

Prior to late 1943, the political liability variable was negative (costs for action), congressional pressure was low, and an inner-circle dissent did not emerge. Congress had been isolationist and anti-immigrant, seeking to avoid US engagement in the war and any alteration of the immigration quotas, which would have allowed more Jews to enter the United States. Proposals similar to the War Refugee Board had been suggested to members of Roosevelt's administration prior to Morgenthau's personal presentation in 1944, but the advocates of those earlier proposals were not members of Roosevelt's inner circle and lacked Morgenthau's access and special relationship with the President.\textsuperscript{52} Finally, prior to late 1943, the larger political forces in the country ran counter to presidential action on issues related to the Holocaust. Roosevelt was focused on mustering support for the 1940 presidential election, on managing losses to a conservative coalition in the midterm elections in 1942, and on avoiding the perception that he was taking any special action on behalf of Jews, who were still the targets of anti-Semitism in the United States. It was not until three variables converged—a high degree of congressional


\textsuperscript{52} Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945, 100; 183-184; Breitman, "Roosevelt and the Holocaust," 118.
pressure, an inner-circle dissent, and a positive value on political liability—that significant policy change occurred.

Figure 2: The Theory Applied to the Holocaust Case

The remainder of this chapter proceeds as follows. First, I provide a summary of US policy in response to the persecution of Jews in Europe in the 1938 to 1939 period. Second, I provide a summary of US policy for the 1940 to 1942 period. These first two sections offer the reader a general sense of the pattern of US policy prior to 1944, though they do not go into as much detail as the section addressing the change in US policy. The third section of this chapter details the period of most significant change, 1943 to 1945. In this section, I explain the development of the War Refugee Board, arguing that a convergence of inner-circle dissent, high congressional pressure, and a positive political liability value led the United States to change its policies. The fourth section of the chapter will discuss the theory as applied to the Holocaust case in greater detail. In this section, I will once again affirm that all three factors were necessary to moving US policy. The final section summarizes the key findings and implications of the chapter.

Methodological and Analytical Notes

Before proceeding to the analysis, it is necessary to clarify two methodological and analytical points.

First, the reader will notice that this analysis centers on US responsiveness to the Holocaust—the murder of six million Jews. In addition to murdering millions of Jews in the Holocaust, however, the Nazi regime was also responsible for the deaths of approximately 1.9
million non-Jewish Polish civilians, 220,000 Roma, and 185,000 disabled persons. The Nazis also persecuted political enemies and imprisoned in concentration camps between 5,000 and 15,000 German homosexuals and 3,000 Jehovah’s Witnesses who would not serve in the military, among others. Yet, because Jews were the primary target of Hitler’s genocidal campaign, debates within the United States on how to respond to Hitler’s extermination plans often centered on Jews and Jewish immigration issues. As John Pehle, a key Treasury dissenter and the first Executive Director of the War Refugee Board, explained when questioned about other victims of the Holocaust, “the basic problem had [to do] with Jews and everybody knew it.” The persecution of Jews was “the major problem [they] were dealing with.” Still, the Board’s mission statement clearly stated that the Board would seek to “rescue victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death,” without naming a particular group. And, in total, the Board saved 20,000 non-Jews from Axis territory.

Secondly, although Nazi discrimination against Jews had begun prior to 1938, I begin my analysis of US responsiveness to Nazi mass killing in 1938. This year witnessed a significant, violent, and nationwide pogrom against Jews—Kristallnacht—and as explained below, such heightening discrimination and violence, and forecasts of continued violence in Germany, were increasingly apparent within the United States in 1938. I end my analysis in this chapter with

55 “Claude Lanzmann Shoah Collection, Interview with John Pehle, Transcript,” 7.
56 Ibid., 20.
58 “Claude Lanzmann Shoah Collection, Interview with John Pehle, Transcript,” 20; Medoff, Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. and the Struggle for a US Response to the Holocaust, 129.
the conclusion of World War II in 1945, though my research on the case continued further into the Truman administration.

1938-1939

During the 1938 to 1939 period, the Roosevelt administration was aware of the deteriorating situation for Jews in Europe. Isolated attempts to increase refugee immigration, to solve the global refugee crisis, and to punish Germany diplomatically did occur during this period. Most of these initiatives were spearheaded by President Roosevelt against the wishes of the Congress and American public. The president used his executive powers to allow more immigrants to enter the United States from Germany and Austria. He also first conceived of and supported the idea for the Evian Conference, an international conference on refugee issues, that took place during this period.61 In addition, Roosevelt was the only world leader to recall his Ambassador from Germany following Kristallnacht in November of 1938, and he asked Ambassador Kennedy and Myron Taylor to advocate for refugees in Great Britain during these early years as well.

Nevertheless, this period also witnessed disappointments on rescue and relief initiatives. The Evian Conference failed to produce practical relief for the victims of Nazi persecution. The 1939 Wagner-Rogers Bill, which proposed admitting 20,000 German Jewish refugee children outside of the quota, met significant public and congressional opposition. Such anti-immigration, and indeed, anti-Semitic views, in the Congress and in the public prevented more significant action on Holocaust issues during this period. In the end, Roosevelt would calculate that his political interests, particularly an impending presidential run in 1940, ran counter to taking meaningful action on behalf of Jewish and other victims. The primary response during this period would be ignore.

THE EVIAN CONFERENCE

One of the major refugee projects of this early period was the Evian Conference, first suggested by President Roosevelt in March of 1938 to improve the emigration of refugees from Germany and Austria, though its main purpose was to help Jews in those countries.62 Historians Richard

61 “Welles to Morgenthau March 23, 1938,” 264–75; Breitman and Lichtman, FDR and the Jews, 102–3; Belair, Jr., “Welcome Offered to All,” 1; 4.
62 Ibid.
Breitman and Allan Lichtman judge that “no hidden political motive underlay Roosevelt’s humanitarian initiative.” Jewish voters overwhelmingly supported the Democratic Party, and Roosevelt had “little to gain and much to lose politically from potentially antagonizing anti-Semites and restrictionists.” Indeed, in late June, 1938, just prior to the Evian Conference, a George Gallup poll showed that Roosevelt’s popularity had fallen from sixty-three percent in October of 1937 to fifty-four percent. Polls conducted by the American Jewish Commission that spring showed that forty-five percent of the 3,000 person sample believed that Jews had too much power in the United States, and twenty-five percent believed a campaign against the Jews was possible in the United States. A shocking approximately twenty-six percent believed that Germany would be better off by forcing Jews out of the country. Roosevelt thus had little to gain, and something to lose, by supporting refugee assistance efforts.

In the end, the Evian Conference, held from July 6 to July 14 at the Hôtel Royal in Évian France, would produce little practical result for refugees. Thirty-two countries sent delegates to the conference. The US representative was businessman Myron C. Taylor, a friend of Roosevelt’s. Roosevelt had not requested any monetary support from governments attending, claiming that private organizations would support refugee efforts. He had also reassured governments that no country would be asked to admit more immigrants than they were legally permitted to accept. During the conference, nearly all countries, including the United States, refused to alter their immigration restrictions to permit more refugees to enter their countries. Only the Dominican Republic agreed to accept more people. Myron Taylor reported to Washington that “almost without exception [the Latin American delegates] told us that they had

64 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
71 Breitman and Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 104.
72 Ibid.
73 “The Evian Conference.”
received no instructions whatsoever from their Governments.” Some, including Great Britain, even suggested that concessions on the Jewish refugee issue would encourage governments to further persecute their Jewish populations in order to be rid of them.

The conference did result in the establishment of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (ICR), an international organization devoted to refugee issues. Yet, this committee was also largely regarded as a failure, even in President’s Roosevelt’s eyes. In 1938, Roosevelt had written to Myron Taylor, who had represented the United States at Evian, to say that the ICR had not produced any “concrete results.” Historian David Wyman likewise regards the committee’s legacy as largely “one of failure,” highlighting comments by former Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles on its ineffectiveness:

The final results [of the ICR] amounted to little more than zero. The Government of the United States itself permitted the committee to become a nullity.

Even those working for the committee doubted its impact and role as a leading international organization for refugees. As late as April of 1944, the American vice-director of the ICR, Patrick Malin, stated, “We hope to operate as little as possible,” noting that “There is very little that can be done with regard to rescue.”

75 Myron C. Taylor, “Intergovernmental Meeting at Evian,” July 20, 1938, 5, Record Group 59, A1 1409: Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (08/1938-06/30/1947), Alphabetical Subject Files, compiled 1938-1941, Box 5, Folder: Evian Verbatim Reports (Plenary Sessions), National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
76 Breitman and Lichtman, FDR and the Jews, 110; “Ambassador Kennedy to Secretary of State,” April 6, 1938, Record Group 59, A1 1409: Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (08/1938-06/30/1947), Alphabetical Subject Files, compiled 1938-1941, Box 5, Folder: Evian July 6 to 15 1938, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
77 Breitman and Lichtman, FDR and the Jews, 110; “Resolution to Be Adopted by the Intergovernmental Meeting at Evian,” n.d., Record Group 59, A1 1409: Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (08/1938-06/30/1947), Alphabetical Subject Files, compiled 1938-1941, Box 6, Folder: INTERGVT’L COM—Evian July 6 to 15 1938, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
78 For Roosevelt’s views, see his letter to Myron Taylor, “Franklin D. Roosevelt to Myron Taylor,” November 23, 1938, 1–4, Papers of Myron Taylor, Box 5, Folder: Intergovernmental Committee on Political Refugees Correspondence 1938, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.
79 Ibid., 1.
In sum, although Evian produced a committee that could have formed the foundation of a comprehensive and active international response to the refugee crisis, in reality, both the conference and the ICR did little to assist the victims of Nazi persecution.

**Roosevelt Early Immigration Initiatives**

During this early period, the Roosevelt administration, with leadership from the White House, did institute several immigration policies that facilitated the immigration of Jewish refugees. Firstly, Roosevelt supported Jewish settlement in Palestine, and attempted to persuade Britain to allow more Jews to seek refuge there. In March of 1938, President Roosevelt also circumvented an anti-immigration Congress to combine the German and Austrian immigration quotas to a total of 27,370. This quota, just shy of 30,000, was filled completely in 1939, and still, a total of 300,000 German and Austrians had hoped to enter the United States. However, as detailed in this section, congressional opposition to immigration would block more from being done on refugee initiatives during this period.

**Kristallnacht Response**

Following Kristallnacht, when Jewish shops, synagogues, and people were violently attacked from November 9 to November 10, 1938, Roosevelt and his administration engaged in limited punishing, condemnation, humanitarian, and diplomatic efforts. First, the President recalled his Ambassador to Germany, Ambassador Hugh Wilson, and began raising the refugee issue with members of his Cabinet. The *New York Times* reported that his condemnation of the attacks on Jews was “one of the most vigorous statements that it was possible to make in protest of the events.” He denounced the attacks “in language as sharp as had ever been employed by a

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83 Ibid., 102; Breitman, “The Failure to Provide a Safe Haven for European Jewry,” 132.
President against the course pursued by a foreign government.” 87 Henry Morgenthau Jr.’s November 16, 1938 diary entry notes that the President had discussed refugee resettlement possibilities with Morgenthau and that he was primarily working alone on the endeavor. Morgenthau had written, “The point is the President has this. Nobody is helping him.” 88

The following day, on November 17, Roosevelt extended the temporary visitors’ visas for German Jews, acting upon a suggestion from Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins. 89 This measure allowed twelve to fifteen thousand German Jews the opportunity to remain in the United States for another six months. 90 George Messersmith, United States Assistant Secretary of State, argued that such action was illegal and contrary to public opinion and Congress. 91 Roosevelt nevertheless went ahead with the proposal. 92

On November 23, 1938, Roosevelt wrote to Myron Taylor, who had represented the United States at Evian, about the US and international failure to do more for refugees in Germany. 93 He instructed Taylor to go to London to resume his activities on behalf of refugees:

My dear Mr. Taylor:

The recent wave of extreme persecution which has swept Germany and which is continuing in many of its aspects has greatly increased both the difficulty of providing refuge and settlement for the unfortunate victims and the urgency for concrete action to meet the problem.

The Intergovernmental Committee on Political Refugees which your devoted and effective efforts created at Evian and launched at London has not yet produced the concrete results I had hoped. This has been due to forces and circumstances beyond the control of any of us, but I feel that the time has come when a special effort must be made to make the Committee’s work really effective. We must produce concrete and substantial results and we must produce them soon.

I have accordingly asked you to go again to London […] to resume active leadership in this vital work and to undertake such negotiations as may be necessary to do so.

[...]

87 Hulen, “Roosevelt Condemns Nazi Outbreak; Could Scarcely Believe It, He Says; London Studies Jewish Colonization.”
91 Breitman and Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 115; “Messersmith to Secretary State,” November 17, 1938, RG 59 Visa Division 1910-1939, 150.01/2607 1/2, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, cited in Breitman and Lichtman.
I know that it is unnecessary to emphasize to you the importance which I attach to the Intergovernmental Committee continuing in existence until the problem of political refugees from Germany is substantially solved.94

The President had also asked that Ambassador Joseph Kennedy, United States Ambassador to Great Britain, deliver a note to United Kingdom Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain urging him to use his influence with Hitler to improve refugee treatment and to allow the Intergovernmental Committee to negotiate on refugee issues.95 Ambassador Kennedy did not in fact deliver the note to the Prime Minister personally, as instructed, choosing instead to send it in writing.96 Chamberlain responded that he would confer with the British ambassador in Berlin about the issue, but would allow formal diplomatic channels to handle the issue.97 George Rublee, Director of the Intergovernmental Committee, reported to Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Undersecretary Sumner Welles that Roosevelt’s message to Chamberlain had not had any influence on the Prime Minister.98

**IGNORE**

Despite these initiatives—President Roosevelt’s personal intervention to expand immigration, the Evian Conference, for all its failings, the recalling of the US Ambassador to Germany, and the sporadic public and private condemnations—the response for most of the 1938 to 1939 period was that of ignore. Roosevelt’s unwillingness to push a truly anti-immigration Congress and an equally anti-immigration and anti-Semitic public prevented more from being done on behalf of refugees. The successful endeavors of this period were symbolic—the condemnations, recalling the Ambassador. The practical solutions—FDR’s immigration initiative, Evian, other immigration initiatives—were largely failures.

Both the Congress and the public harbored anti-immigrant and anti-Semitic sentiment during this period. A large contingency of the Congress was highly restrictionist regarding immigration policy.99 Such attitudes were in fact bipartisan: southern Democrats and restrictionist, conservative Republicans both objected to measures designed to assist Jewish

94 Ibid., 1; 4.
96 Ibid.
97 Ibid.
98 Ibid.
refugees. Anti-immigrant organizations within the United States “wielded substantial political power,” and many members of Congress were simply espousing their true views or those that were common in their districts, and rooted in economic concerns and xenophobic prejudices. For example, in 1939, Senator Robert Wagner (D-NY) and Representative Edith Rogers (R-MA) introduced the Wagner-Rogers Bill to accept 20,000 German Jewish children outside of the immigration quota, but the proposal faced opposition in Congress, and two-thirds of the American public disapproved of the measure. The bill was subsequently revised to bring the children into the United States within the existing German quota. Although this revision indeed increased support for the measure in the Senate, the House Immigration Committee did not even report the bill out. Roosevelt never endorsed the bill and did not publicly fight for its passage.

Data on the attitudes of the American public illustrates the significant extent of restrictionist opinion in the United States. In July of 1938, only 4.9 percent of the American public was willing to raise the immigration quotas for refugees, and only 18.2 percent were willing to allow refugees to immigrate within the quotas. A strong majority, 87.4 percent, favored further limiting immigration. Even after Kristallnacht, when 94 percent of the American public disapproved of Germany’s persecution of Jews, 72 percent nevertheless were against permitting immigration for large numbers of German Jews, and 52 percent even objected to assisting Jews in settling in other countries. In 1939, polling continued to show that

100 Ibid., 55; Breitman and Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 105.
103 Breitman, “The Failure to Provide a Safe Haven for European Jewry,” 134.
104 Ibid.
105 Feingold, “‘Courage First and Intelligence Second’: The American Jewish Secular Elite, Roosevelt, and the Failure to Rescue,” 57; Breitman, “The Failure to Provide a Safe Haven for European Jewry,” 134.
108 Breitman, “The Failure to Provide a Safe Haven for European Jewry,” 131; For more on this and polling see the following citations provided by Breitman: Daniel Yankelovich, “Re-Creation of the American Public’s Perception of the Events from 1933-1945,” May 19, 1998, paper presented at “The Holocaust and the Media,” Harvard Divinity
approximately half of Americans thought that Jews had too much power, and about one-third thought that a campaign against Jews was conceivable in the United States. Twenty percent of respondents to a Gallup poll said they would either support such a campaign against Jews or be in sympathy to it. These views would not change as more information about Nazi extermination programs reached American citizens. Even in June 1945, 58 percent of Americans still thought that Jews had too much power. In short, as Henry Feingold has argued, the government’s indifference, or failure to take more significant action, was representative of American society. The democracy was working.

In light of the views of the public and Congress, the most politically expedient course for the Roosevelt administration was to downplay efforts on behalf of the Jews, to keep refugee efforts out of the public light, and to refrain from sparking disagreements with Congress. FDR indeed “avoided any public moral stands that would endanger his standing with Congress and his capacity to conduct an increasingly anti-Nazi foreign policy.” Action on behalf of the Jews entailed action on behalf of an “unpopular minority.” President Roosevelt’s New Deal was disparagingly referred to as the “Jew Deal.” Roosevelt, for his part, was called “President Rosenfeld,” again, in an attempt to insult him for being overly influenced by Jews.

Henry Morgenthau also surmised that Roosevelt’s assessment of the 1940 presidential election changed in 1938. In 1938, Roosevelt came to believe that a war was imminent and he would need to run for yet another term to lead the country through the conflict. Morgenthau summarized Roosevelt’s thinking during comments made in 1946:


Breitman and Lichtman, FDR and the Jews, 146.

Ibid.

Breitman, “The Failure to Provide a Safe Haven for European Jewry,” 131; For more on this and polling, see the following citations provided by Breitman: Yankelovich, “Re-Creation of the American Public’s Perception of the Events from 1933-1945”; Dinnerstein, Uneasy at Home: Anti-Semitism and the American Experience, 179; Stember, Jews in the Mind of America.


Ibid.


Feingold, “‘Courage First and Intelligence Second:’ The American Jewish Secular Elite, Roosevelt, and the Failure to Rescue,” 77.

Ibid., 56.

Breitman, “Roosevelt and the Holocaust,” 114.

Breitman and Lichtman, FDR and the Jews, 124.

Ibid.
Well, it was in '38 that Roosevelt, in his own mind, went from deciding he was not going to run to deciding he was going to be the great war President; he had to lead us out of this thing.\textsuperscript{120}

Although historians Richard Breitman and Allan Lichtman rightly point out that historians do not know exactly when Roosevelt decided to seek a third term, the impending war is believed to have been responsible for his decision.\textsuperscript{121} In short, the administration's policy of \textit{ignore} for much of the 1938 to 1939 period was based in part on political judgments.\textsuperscript{122} Richard Breitman judges that Roosevelt "reacted as most realistic politicians would."\textsuperscript{123} Taking substantial public action to assist refugees was secondary to Roosevelt's political goals: ensuring public approval and cooperation from Congress, particularly on his foreign policy agenda.\textsuperscript{124}

To conclude, the 1938 to 1939 period primarily consisted of an \textit{ignore} policy with limited measures in \textit{humanitarian, punishing, private diplomacy, and public condemnation}. FDR's combining of the German and Austrian quotas increased Jewish immigration, despite restrictionist attitudes in Congress.\textsuperscript{125} The United States stood up to Germany after \textit{Kristallnacht}, and made its objections to the treatment of the Jews known through public and private channels. The failed Evian Conference produced an international committee devoted to refugee issues. Yet, these initiatives were indeed sporadic, and only marginally assisted refugees. Some were regarded at the time as significant failures. Anti-immigration and anti-Semitic sentiment throughout the country prevented more from being done, including the passing of a bill designed to help 20,000 children. Roosevelt's assessment of the political situation prevented him from fighting Congress, and indeed the public, for more to be done, beyond combining the immigration quotas. The Evian Conference failed, even in Roosevelt's assessment, to produce any concrete results for Jewish refugees. With the congressional pressure variable running against refugee measures, with the political liability variable counter to action, and with no sign of inner-circle dissent, US policy failed to move toward more significant action.


\textsuperscript{121} Breitman and Lichtman, \textit{FDR and the Jews}, 124.

\textsuperscript{122} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{123} Breitman, "Roosevelt and the Holocaust," 114.

\textsuperscript{124} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{125} Breitman and Lichtman, \textit{FDR and the Jews}, 102.
Figure 3: 1938-1939

Low Pressure in Congress + Negative Political Liability + No Inner-Circle Dissent = Policy Largely Stagnant
1940-1942

In the 1940 to 1942 period, heightened US security concerns and US engagement in World War II began to have detrimental effects on US responsiveness to the persecution of Jews and others targeted by the Nazis abroad. Both the White House and the State Department feared the emergence of a Fifth Column. Such fears only exacerbated anti-immigration sentiments in government. By mid-1940, the immigration gains implemented by Roosevelt were reversed. After the United States entered the war, Nazi propaganda asserted that it had done so only at the insistence of Jewish elements within the population. A desire to counter this propaganda, and prevent further backlash against Jews in the United States, led officials to dampen public expressions on behalf of Jewish victims and refugees. Jewish Americans still faced significant anti-Semitism in the United States, even as news about Germany’s Final Solution began to reach the United States. It would not be until July 21, 1942 that Roosevelt would make a public statement mentioning Jews explicitly as victims of Nazi atrocities. Once again, in the context of growing security concerns, with Congress opposed to refugee initiatives, with a public hostile to Jewish causes, and with no one in Roosevelt’s inner circle yet pushing for more action, the United States continued to express a policy of ignore.

SECURITY CONCERNS RISE

The 1940 to 1942 period witnessed a significant change in the security of the United States: the broadening of World War II; the Japanese attack on the United States; and US entry into the war. The Roosevelt administration reassessed its priorities in the context of this new security environment. In 1940, Roosevelt no longer promoted use of the full German and Austrian quota for victims of Nazi persecution. Amid growing security concerns, he instead supported more restrictive immigration regulations. He decided to intern Japanese Americans. He asked the Attorney General to press criminal charges against antiwar advocates, and sought to

127 Breitman and Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, 175.
129 Ibid.
130 Ibid., 114.
remove alien waiters in Washington DC area restaurants. In June, 1940, Congress passed the Smith Act, which required aliens to be registered and fingerprinted.

A particular security concern of President Roosevelt and his government was the danger of a Fifth Column emerging in the United States. Roosevelt had been troubled by the case of Tyler Kent, an American serving in the US Embassy in London, who had provided fascist sympathizers with secret American-British correspondence. The material allowed the Germans to crack American codes, which were subsequently changed. Verne Newton, longtime director of the FDR Library, has commented on FDR’s views:

[FDR] deeply believed [his emphasis] that the existence of a Fifth Column was the only way to explain France’s complete collapse and surrender. In fact, his concern bordered on an obsession; FDR eagerly sought information about it. His fears were reinforced by the State Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Historian Richard Breitman concurs, arguing that “with the advent of war, the Fifth Column was no ruse for FDR.”

The State Department, and in particular those responsible for refugee issues, helped fuel fears of refugees. In October of 1940, Roosevelt met with Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles and Assistant Secretary Breckinridge Long to discuss the refugee issue. Long argued that action had to be taken to limit immigration because refugees could serve as enemy agents. On February 27, 1941, the American consul in Basel, Switzerland sent word to Washington that German officials were using bribes to persuade prospective Jewish immigrants to work secretly for the Germans.

Others in the State Department cited different reasons to be concerned about the effects of refugee initiatives on US security. In December of 1940, Sumner Welles reported to FDR that Germany was trying to “force our hand on the refugee problem” by driving Jews into unoccupied

131 Ibid.
132 Ibid., 111.
133 Ibid., 110.
134 Ibid.
136 Ibid., 10.
137 Ibid.
138 Breitman and Lichtman, FDR and the Jews, 175; “Blake to Secretary of State, February 27, 1941,” February 27, 1941, RG 59, 811.111 Refugees/1048, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, cited in Breitman and Lichtman.
France. He suspected that if the United States were to assist these Jews, the Germans would then force the remaining Jews in Germany into France culminating in a “reign of terror” against the Jews. In an early allusion to the phenomenon described by Kelly Greenhill in *Weapons of Mass Migration*, Welles believed that this particular German strategy was aimed at weakening enemies by overwhelming them with refugees. Although Germany is believed to have used this strategy in the 1938 to 1939 period, by 1940, German policies against the Jews were primarily aimed at harming them, not weakening enemy countries.

Some, including more than one official from the time, have argued that widespread and institutional anti-Semitism in the State Department also contributed to visa restrictions, though John Pehle notably disputes that the organization as a whole was anti-Semitic, and historian David Wyman, who wrote arguably the most critical account of US policy during this period, argues that “direct proof of anti-Semitism in the department [in Washington] is limited.” However, Wyman does go on to note that there is “no doubt” that American consuls abroad were plagued by widespread anti-Semitism.

In sum, in the 1940 to 1942 period, heightened security concerns made the Roosevelt administration reluctant to take significant action on refugees. The United States had been attacked and was now fully engaged in the war. Civil liberties were curtailed throughout the United States. Leaders, however irrationally, feared the emergence of a Fifth Column and believed that Jewish refugees could be used as spies. Others worried that Germany could use refugees to overwhelm and weaken the United States. Such concerns ran counter to significant action to help the targets of Nazi persecution.

139 Breitman, “Roosevelt and the Holocaust,” 113; “Welles to Mr. President, December 21, 1940,” December 21, 1940, RG 59, Central Decimal File 840.48 Refugees/23 52, National Archives, cited in Breitman.
140 Ibid.
142 Breitman, “Roosevelt and the Holocaust,” 114.
IMMIGRATION TIGHTENED

With security concerns mounting in the 1940 to 1942 period, the State Department imposed new restrictions on immigration. Unfortunately, these new restrictions coincided with an increase in Germany’s persecution of Jews and the Nazi Final Solution to exterminate them. In June, July, and September of 1940, the State Department instructed its consuls to reject or suspend any visa application about which they had doubts.145 American minister Herbert Pell recounted the comments of Visa Division chief Avra Warren in Lisbon on July 15, 1940:

[Warren] explained in detail the policy which had been adopted by the Department to meet the situation caused by the turn of military events in France.... Visas should be granted only when there was no doubt whatsoever concerning the alien.146

On June 26, 1940, Breckinridge Long wrote to his colleagues that they could effectively stop the number of immigrants coming into the United State by imposing new restrictions:

We can delay and effectively stop for a temporary period of indefinite length the number of immigrants into the United States. We could do this by simply advising our consuls to put every obstacle in the way and to require additional evidence and to resort to various administrative advices which would postpone and postpone and postpone the granting of the visas. However, this could only be temporary. In order to make it more definite it would have to be done by suspension of the rules under the law by the issuance of a proclamation of emergency—which I take it we are not yet ready to proclaim.

[...]

We can effectively control nonimmigrants by prohibiting the issuance of visas unless the consent of the Department is obtained in advance, for universal application.147

In September of 1940, Breckinridge Long wrote to Mr. Hackworth, a legal adviser at State,148 about his beliefs on immigration:

Personally I believe in making the exemptions as strict as possible in order to admit just as few persons as possible.149

145 Breitman, “Roosevelt and the Holocaust,” 112.
146 Breitman and Lichtman, FDR and the Jews, 170; “Pell to Secretary of State, September 6, 1940,” September 6, 1940, RG 59, 840.48 Refugees/2599, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD, cited in Breitman and Lichtman.
147 “Breckinridge Long to Mr. Berle and Mr. Dunn, June 26, 1940,” June 26, 1940, 2, Breckinridge Long Papers, Box 211, Folder: Visa-Division, GEN, 1940, Library of Congress.
149 “Breckinridge Long to Mr. Hackworth, September 3, 1940,” September 3, 1940, 1, Breckinridge Long Papers, Box 211, Folder: Visa-Division, GEN, 1940, Library of Congress.
Congress would approve the Bloom-Van Nuys Bill in June 1941, allowing consuls to refuse a visa if the applicant was likely to undermine public safety.\footnote{Breitman, "The Failure to Provide a Safe Haven for European Jewry," 133.} On June 6, 1941, instructions were relayed to American consuls asking them to deny visas to applicants with close relatives in Germany, Italy, or the Soviet Union.\footnote{Breitman and Lichtman, \textit{FDR and the Jews}, 177.} Regulations thus began to particularly disadvantage Jews fleeing persecution.\footnote{Ibid.} On June 17, they received instructions noting that any visa from Germany or German-controlled territories must receive preapproval from Washington.\footnote{Ibid.} From July, 1940 to March, 1941, American consulates in Germany granted just 2,126 visas.\footnote{\textit{Visas Issued at German Issuing Offices by Months from 1 July 1940 to 31 March 1941}, 1940 to 1941, 1994.A.0342, reel 48, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington DC, cited in Breitman and Lichtman.} In the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, visa restrictions were further tightened for individuals who were born in enemy states or had resided in them for an extended period.\footnote{Ibid., 176; "Visas Issued at German Issuing Offices by Months from 1 July 1940 to 31 March 1941," 1940 to 1941, 1994.A.0342, reel 48, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington DC, cited in Breitman and Lichtman.} By November of 1942, the only American consuls granting visas on the European continent were located in Spain and Portugal.\footnote{Ibid., 135.} In June of 1943, Chief of the Visa Division, Howard K. Travers, revealed that the Barcelona and Madrid consulates were not issuing visas even to those applicants with approvals from Washington.\footnote{Ibid.} The United States would not return to its pre-war visa screening system until July 1, 1945.\footnote{Ibid., 136.}

**COUNTERING PROPAGANDA AND AMERICAN ANTI-SEMITISM**

Historian Richard Breitman has noted that President Roosevelt wanted to avoid the perception that he was providing special accommodations for Jews, writing that “It was not advisable—it was strongly inadvisable politically—to make a public issue of the Holocaust.”\footnote{Breitman, "Roosevelt and the Holocaust," 119.} As a result, Roosevelt refrained from drawing attention to the persecution of Jews in public, or taking any other highly visible action to help them.\footnote{Ibid., 115–19.} A further reason for avoiding public discussion of the Holocaust was the desire to avoid bolstering Nazi propaganda asserting that Jews were
responsible for the US entry into the war.\textsuperscript{161} Even US Ambassador William Bullitt argued that the US focus on Europe, instead of on Asia, was due to Jewish influence.\textsuperscript{162} Breckinridge Long wrote about the propaganda in his diary, noting that efforts on behalf of Jews, “may lend color to the charges of Hitler that we are fighting this war on account of and at the instigation and direction of our Jewish citizens.”\textsuperscript{163}

The President had reason to believe that the American public might be susceptible to anti-Semitic attitudes and propaganda. Roosevelt’s Jewish advisers, Felix Frankfurter, Henry Morgenthau Jr, Ben Cohen, and Sam Rosenman, were specifically singled out in anti-Semitic attacks.\textsuperscript{164} National hero Charles Lindberg claimed that the Jews were one of the groups responsible for convincing America to go to war.\textsuperscript{165} Polls indicated that about one-third of Americans were anti-Semitic.\textsuperscript{166} Although one poll did demonstrate that only one in sixteen Americans actually believed that Jews had instigated the war, this particular poll appears not to have influenced US policy.\textsuperscript{167} And, when FDR approved admission of 5,000 French Jewish refugees in the fall of 1942, Sumner Welles took particular care to avoid publicity.\textsuperscript{168} In sum, during this early period, Nazi propaganda and a reluctance to single out Jewish people publicly increasingly impeded \textit{public condemnation} efforts.

\textbf{LIMITED EFFORTS}

Because of mounting concerns about security, Nazi propaganda, and domestic anti-Semitism, US relief for refugees was practically nonexistent. As mentioned, Roosevelt did approve, without hesitation, a plan to allow five thousand French Jewish children into the United States.\textsuperscript{169} The

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{161} Breitman, “The Failure to Provide a Safe Haven for European Jewry,” 136.
  \item \textsuperscript{162} Breitman, “Roosevelt and the Holocaust,” 115.
  \item \textsuperscript{163} Breckinridge Long, “Diary Entry April 20, 1943,” April 20, 1943, 323–24, Breckinridge Long Papers, Box 5, pp. 323-324, Library of Congress.
  \item \textsuperscript{164} Schlesinger Jr., “Did FDR Betray the Jews? Or Did He Do More Than Anyone Else to Save Them?,” 160.
  \item \textsuperscript{165} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{166} Medoff, \textit{Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. and the Struggle for a US Response to the Holocaust}, 3; Wyman, \textit{The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust}, 1941-1945, 14-15; Wyman points to Stember for this polling data: Stember, \textit{Jews in the Mind of America}, 131–33.
  \item \textsuperscript{168} Breitman, “Roosevelt and the Holocaust,” 116.
  \item \textsuperscript{169} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
plan was aborted, however, when the Vichy government severed diplomatic ties with the United States following the landing of Allied forces in North Africa.\textsuperscript{170}

The US government did engage in some \textit{private diplomatic} efforts, which fortunately were not impeded by the need to avoid publicity. In 1942, Sumner Welles reported to American Jewish organizations that the State Department had protested Jewish deportations through the American Embassy at Vichy.\textsuperscript{171} The American chargé d’affaires in Vichy, Somerville Pinkney Tuck, had condemned the deportations directly to Premier Pierre Laval in strong enough terms to spur his colleagues at State to argue that he had overstepped his bounds.\textsuperscript{172} Secretary Hull subsequently communicated his own condemnation of the deportations to Gaston Henry-Haye, the Vichy ambassador to the United States.\textsuperscript{173}

Roosevelt also appears to have made an attempt to alleviate, perhaps, some of the restrictions on refugees at this time. In November of 1942, he asked Congress for the authority to suspend immigration laws to benefit the war effort with the Third War Powers Act.\textsuperscript{174} The introduction of the bill happened to have coincided with increased press about the Final Solution.\textsuperscript{175} Roosevelt denied that the bill was intended to increase refugee immigration, but the bill would have allowed him to ignore immigration restrictions.\textsuperscript{176} The \textit{New York Times} noted that the bill would provide Roosevelt with “sweeping wartime power to suspend any laws hampering ‘the free movement of persons, property and information into and out of the United States.’”\textsuperscript{177} Congress opposed the particular provision permitting the suspension of immigration laws, and it was ultimately removed from the bill.\textsuperscript{178} Roosevelt then attempted one last time to persuade congressional leaders to liberalize the immigration restrictions, but when told that Congress would not support the bill if it loosened restrictions, Roosevelt yielded.\textsuperscript{179} \textit{Newsweek}

\textsuperscript{170} Wyman, \textit{The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945}, 37.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{173} Wyman, \textit{The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945}, 36.
\textsuperscript{174} Breitman, “Roosevelt and the Holocaust,” 116–17.
\textsuperscript{176} Breitman, “Roosevelt and the Holocaust,” 116–17.
\textsuperscript{179} Breitman and Lichtman, \textit{FDR and the Jews}, 204–5.
relayed that “the ugly truth is that anti-Semitism was a definite factor in the bitter opposition to the President’s request for power to suspend immigration laws.” A different *Newsweek* piece on congressional attitudes reported, “Above all else, senators and representatives fear a flood of postwar immigration, particularly from Nazi-occupied Europe.”

The most significant efforts on behalf of the Nazi victims during this period were *public condemnation* efforts at the very end of 1942. On July 21, 1942, Roosevelt finally publically mentioned Jews as victims of Nazi persecution. This statement was followed by an October 7, 1942 US commitment to punish war criminals following the war. Then, in December of 1942, a joint declaration from the Allies condemned the extermination of Jews and committed the Allies to prosecuting these crimes following the war. Great Britain had drafted the statement, which was signed by the United States, Russia, and Britain, as well as by eight other United Nations countries. It was “a major turning point” in the Allies public acknowledgement of the Final Solution. The impetus behind the joint declaration apparently lay with British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden, who felt as though significant public pressure and lobbying from the exiled Polish government necessitated a response.

Thus, amid intensifying security concerns, widespread anti-Semitism, and prolific anti-immigration sentiment within the public, within the State Department, and within the Congress, the Roosevelt administration in fact largely regressed on its policies toward victims of Nazi persecution in the 1940 to 1942 period. Visa restrictions became tighter. Consulates simply stopped issuing visas. The United States did not pursue rescue options, and would largely avoid mentioning Jews publicly until late 1942. Roosevelt’s proposal to loosen immigration restrictions, through the Third War Powers Act, was rejected by Congress. He did not fight back. His political position was threatened. In 1942, he had lost the midterm elections to a coalition of conservative Republicans and southern Democrats—blocs that had consistently opposed

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181 “House Says No, Then Yes But, to President on War Powers,” 34.
proposals to aid Jewish refugees. No one in his inner circle yet pushed for more action. The United States was now at war with the country committing genocide, but their newfound reason to oppose Nazi Germany did not spur them to take action on behalf of its victims.

Figure 4: 1940-1942

\[ \text{Low Pressure in Congress} + \text{Negative Political Liability} + \text{No Inner-Circle Dissent} = \text{Policy Largely Stagnant} \]

\[ \text{Ibid., 319; Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945, 55.} \]
1943-1945

The 1943 to 1945 period witnessed the most significant change in US policy in response to the Holocaust—the creation of the War Refugee Board. This window is thus the most important period of time for the central question of this dissertation: what factors lead to substantial deviation from stagnant and limited policies?

By the summer of 1943, the war situation was improving and knowledge of Hitler’s Final Solution had reached the highest levels of the United States government. Congressional pressure for increased action on the refugee issue also began to mount from the spring of 1943 throughout the year’s end. The administration faced bipartisan criticism from members of both the House and the Senate on their handling of the refugee crisis, and in particular, of their handling of immigration for Jewish victims of Nazi persecution. During this same period, a small team from the Treasury Department began working alongside Secretary Morgenthau to document and expose deliberate attempts by State Department officials to block rescue and immigration initiatives for Jewish refugees. Despite several State Department efforts to conceal information and prevent this group from presenting their case to the President, Secretary Morgenthau, an old friend of Roosevelt’s, and his colleagues presented their case on January 16, 1944. In less than one week, Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9417 establishing the War Refugee Board on January 22, 1944. The Board would eventually save approximately 200,000 Jewish and 20,000 non-Jewish victims of Nazi persecution and would constitute the most significant US response to the Holocaust.

CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE MOUNTS

In 1943, congressional pressure for a more robust response to the crisis reached high levels, as advocacy for measures to help refugees increased alongside amplified criticism of the administration’s management of relief and rescue. Early in 1943, the Senate had unanimously approved a resolution that condemned Nazi atrocities and declared that perpetrators would face

punishment. The same resolution would subsequently be passed by the House without dissent. In April 1943, Representative Emanuel Celler (D-NY) and six additional Jewish members of Congress went directly to Roosevelt to discuss the State Department’s policies on refugee immigration. They requested that Roosevelt simplify the screening procedures for refugees seeking admission into the United States. Roosevelt would eventually refer the issue to Breckinridge Long, the official who Treasury would later reveal was leading State Department action to prevent Jewish immigration. On June 30, 1943, Representative Celler stated the following in the House:

Without any change in our immigration statutes we could receive a reasonable number of those who are fortunate enough to escape the Nazi hellhole [...] Private charitable agencies would be willing to pay the entire cost thereof. There would be no expense to the Government whatsoever. [...] We house and maintain Nazi prisoners [...] We should do no less for the victims [...].

However, the most consequential congressional pressure would not emerge until the autumn of 1943 when the so-called Gillette-Rogers Resolution—to create a US government commission devoted to rescue—was introduced in both chambers of Congress. Senators Guy Gillette (D-Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945, 155; Medoff, Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. and the Struggle for a US Response to the Holocaust, 24–25; Breitman, “Roosevelt and the Holocaust,” 120–21; The David Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies, “Rescue Resolution,” Encyclopedia of America’s Response to the Holocaust, accessed September 9, 2015, http://enc.wymaninstitute.org/?p=474; “Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of the Jews,” 216.)
IA) and Robert Taft (R-OH) had introduced the Senate version, Resolution 203. In the House of Representatives, Congressmen William Rogers Jr. (D-CA) and Joseph Baldwin (R-NY) introduced identical House Resolutions 350 and 352.

The congressional resolutions originated with the Bergson Group—a term for several political action committees led by Peter Bergson, whose real name was Hillel Kook. In response to the failures of the Bermuda Conference, Bergson’s followers convened a highly publicized Emergency Conference to Save the Jewish People of Europe in July of 1943. The conference created the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe, which then began an initiative to lobby for a new government agency charged with rescuing Jewish refugees. After organizing a march to the White House of four hundred rabbis in order to bring attention to the issue, they would secure the backing of Senator Gillette, Representative Rogers, and several other members of Congress. The New York Post and the newspaper chain owned by William Randolph Hearst covered the Gillette-Rogers Resolution favorably and devoted several editorials to the subject. The Emergency Committee also promoted the resolution through a series of radio broadcasts, which were bolstered by a string of petitions supporting the resolutions that were sent to Congress alongside messages from several prominent individuals.

Hearings on the Gillette-Rogers Resolutions would bring the State Department’s mishandling of the refugee situation to light and set a political scandal in motion. In late


202 The David Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies, “Bergson Group.”


204 Ibid.


November 1943, the House Committee on Foreign Affairs held hearings on House Resolutions 350 and 352, "Resolutions Providing for the Establishment by the Executive of a Commission to Effectuate the Rescue of the Jewish People of Europe." In the hearings, Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long would assert that "We have taken into this country since the beginning of the Hitler regime and the persecution of the Jews, until today, approximately 580,000 refugees." Yet, the New York Post, the Nation, and the New Republic—in addition to several Jewish organizations—would subsequently question the validity of his figures. A Christmas Day Nation editorial, "Crocodile Tears," noted that Long's "figures could hardly be more deceptive." Long would write in his diary that he was "pilloried as an enemy of the Jew and as trying to discredit them."

In December of 1943, pressure on these resolutions would intensify. Treasury official John Pehle noted the increase in pressure in December, just weeks before Treasury would approach Roosevelt, in an interview:

By December 1943 the pressure for some action on the part of the government grew much more intense. In the Senate a resolution had been introduced, signed by twelve different senators and asking that plans be formulated to save the Jews of Europe.

On December 20, Representative Celler had denounced Long's testimony in strong terms:

His statement drips with sympathy for the persecuted Jews, but the tears he sheds are crocodile.

[...]


210 "Crocodile Tears (Editorial)."


212 Claude Lanzmann Shoah Collection, Interview with John Pehle, Transcript, 7.
Frankly, Breckinridge Long, in my humble opinion, is least sympathetic to refugees in all the State Department. I attribute to him the tragic bottleneck in the granting of visas. The Interdepartmental Review Committee [...] has been glacierlike in its slowness and cold-bloodedness. It takes months and months to grant the visas and then it usually applies to a corpse.

I brought this difficulty to the attention of the President. He asked Long to investigate at once. No, there has been no change in conditions. The gruesome bottleneck still exists.

[...]

[T]he State Department has turned its back on the time-honored principle of granting havens to refugees. The tempest-tossed get little comfort from men like Breckinridge Long.

[...]

By the act of 1924, we are permitted to admit approximately 150,000 immigrants each year. During the last fiscal year only 23,725 came as immigrants. Of these only 4,705 were Jews fleeing Nazi persecution.²¹³

On January 11, 1944, just days before Treasury approached Roosevelt, Celler continued his campaign against the false testimony of Breckinridge Long:

It is time for men of compassion, for men of true democratic stature to redeem the ineptitudes and prejudices of our conduct relating to refugees and potential refugees. It is time that men took charge who know it as a problem where humans are the pawns, not checkers.²¹⁴

When Treasury officials would compose their “Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of the Jews,” a revised version of which Morgenthau took to FDR in meeting with him to expose State Department obstructionism, they would refer to Breckinridge Long’s testimony as “The most patent instance of a false and misleading

In other instances, Treasury officials would refer to his testimony as simply "diabolical." Intensifying congressional criticism and the impending resolutions provided significant leverage to Morgenthau and the Treasury dissenters when they met with Roosevelt in mid-January to advocate for the War Refugee Board. The dissenters would use this pressure to their advantage in presenting their case. On December 20, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee had voted unanimously to report the Gillette-Rogers Resolution out, and by the time Treasury met with FDR on January 16, the resolution’s scheduled date for debate, January 24, was fast approaching. The House resolutions had not been reported out when Treasury officials met with FDR, but likely “[p]assage [of the Gillette-Rogers initiative] by an overwhelming majority had been indicated,” and House critics were being forced to do “everything [they could] possibly do to keep [the] resolution from being reported out.” If the President did not act immediately after Treasury’s dissent to get out ahead of Congress, his administration was likely to be embarrassed by the pending action in Congress, especially since many supporters of the resolutions were Roosevelt opponents. Negative publicity of Long’s false testimony also happened to emerge in force in late December, just before Treasury dissented to Roosevelt.

The Treasury group would thus unsurprisingly cite congressional pressure as their most important leverage in presenting their case to Roosevelt. Historian Richard Breitman agrees with their assessment, arguing that “by far the most important factor” inducing the president to take action was the changing public and congressional climate. Historian David Wyman also agrees, writing that Roosevelt’s “hand had been forced by the pressure on Capitol Hill and by the..."
danger that a major scandal would break over the State Department’s persistent obstruction of rescue.”

Yet, I argue that congressional pressure and the threat of scandal alone were not sufficient conditions to lead Roosevelt to make such a major reversal in policy, as evidenced by Roosevelt’s rejection or deferral of highly similar proposals advanced by others in the months leading up to the Treasury presentation. When the congressional delegation had proposed a revision in policy in April 1943, Roosevelt simply referred them to the State Department. When then Undersecretary of State Edward Stettinius had approached Roosevelt about a committee in the fall of 1943, he was also referred to the State Department, where he faced resistance from Secretary Hull and Assistant Secretary Long. A plan emanating from Oscar Cox and Milton Handler of the Foreign Economic Administration—one that would ultimately provide the foundation for the War Refugee Board—was rejected before Morgenthau became interested in the proposal. Indeed, it was not until “the decisive intervention of Josiah DuBois relayed by Treasury Secretary Morgenthau” that Roosevelt realized he “had to take the refugee problem away from Long and the State Department or he would face a nasty political scandal.” The trust Roosevelt placed in his old friend Henry Morgenthau, coupled with the unique access Morgenthau had to the President and to his inner circle of which he was an integral part, allowed the Morgenthau team to be effective where none had yet found success.

**WAR REFUGEE BOARD**

**Lead-Up: April-August 1943**

The Treasury Department dissenters came across State Department obstructionism while performing their usual duties related to processing a license for the transfer of funds overseas. In 1943, Gerhart Riegner, a representative of the World Jewish Congress in Geneva who had been

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223 Ibid., 100–101; Breitman, “Roosevelt and the Holocaust,” 118.
224 The precise date when Stettinius approached Roosevelt is unclear in the document. Cox notes that Stettinius did so during the Moscow Conference; however, there were several such conferences. Given that Hull and Long objected to the proposal because of possible interference with the report from the 1943 Bermuda Conference, Cox is probably referring to the Third Moscow Conference (1943). “Jewish Evacuation, January 15, 1944, 9:30 A.M., Meeting Transcript,” 92–93; “Stettinius Confirmed as Undersecretary,” *Washington Post*, October 1, 1943, 3.
226 Breitman, “Roosevelt and the Holocaust,” 121.
relaying information about the deteriorating Jewish situation to Washington, had contacted the World Jewish Congress offices in New York to inform them that he had further critical information regarding Jews in Europe. Rabbi Stephen Wise then asked Sumner Welles to look into the situation, and Welles asked Leland Harrison, the American minister in Bern, to obtain and transmit Riegner's message to Washington. Harrison transmitted the message on April 20, 1943, in cable number 2460. Riegner's message suggested a plan to provide private relief money to Jews in Romania and France to allow them to evacuate. Jews of financial means in Romania and France would lend money for relief and evacuation, and they would subsequently be reimbursed by Jewish organizations around the world through American or Swiss banks.

Negotiations on the Riegner plan between State Department officials, the Treasury Department, and representatives of the American and World Jewish Congress continued throughout the summer of 1943. On July 15, Treasury held a conference on the matter with three State Department officials: Reams (likely Robert Reams), a Foreign Service Office from the European Division; Bernard Meltzer, then Acting Chief of the Foreign Funds Control Division; and a man by the name of Kuppinger (likely Eldred D. Kuppinger). During the

conference, the State Department voiced concerns about the feasibility of the proposal, fearing
that it would be unrealistic to promote the evacuation of large numbers of Jews, who would not
be able to obtain entry into other countries.234 Yet, Treasury officials would nevertheless endorse
the proposal on July 16, having resolved their concerns about direct or indirect communication
with enemy territory.235 The State Department drafted a proposed cable to the American Mission
in Bern explaining the Riegner plan, which was approved by Treasury with only minor
changes.236

On July 22, Rabbi Wise informed Roosevelt about Riegner’s World Jewish Congress
plan during a meeting at the White House.237 Roosevelt, who favored the plan, sent a request to
Treasury and contacted Henry Morgenthau Jr., Secretary of the Treasury, to personally advocate
for the policy.238 Treasury officials felt that the president “should be able to give Wise an
authoritative answer on this matter” and contacted Meltzer at State to obtain approval for telling
Wise that “both State and Treasury were sympathetic to the proposal and that Treasury was
prepared to license it and that the details were being worked out between Bern and
Washington.”239 Meltzer responded that there was significant opposition within the State
Department and that another State official, Dr. Herbert Feis, was in charge of the issue.240
Objections in State focused on concerns that the Riegner plan would provide enemy countries
with foreign exchange.241 Feis advised Treasury that the matter was stuck on Hull’s desk, that he

234 Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945, 180; “Mr. (Randolph) Paul to
The Secretary, August 12, 1943,” 15-16.
235 Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945, 180; “Mr. (Randolph) Paul to
The Secretary, August 12, 1943,” 16; “Claude Lanzmann Shoah Collection, Interview with John Pehle, Transcript,”
9.
236 “Mr. (Randolph) Paul to The Secretary, August 12, 1943,” 16.
237 Breitman and Lichtman, FDR and the Jews, 227; Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the
Holocaust, 1941-1945, 180; “Mr. (Randolph) Paul to The Secretary, August 12, 1943,” 16.
238 Breitman and Lichtman, FDR and the Jews, 227; “Mr. (Randolph) Paul to The Secretary, August 12, 1943,” 16–
17.
239 “Mr. (Randolph) Paul to The Secretary, August 12, 1943,” 16–17.
240 Ibid., 217.
241 Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945, 180; Cordell Hull,
“Memorandum for the Secretary of the Treasury,” August 7, 1943, 10, Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr., April 27,
“AMLEGATION, Bern to Secretary of State, Washington, October 6, 1943, No. 6269,” October 6, 1943, 88–89,
Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr., April 27, 1933-July 27, 1945, Book 688, Part I, May 7-December 9, 1943, pp. 88-
89, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library; “Mr. Paul to Secretary Morgenthau, December 17, 1943,” December 17, 1943,
70–72, Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr., April 27, 1933-July 27, 1945, Book 688, Part II, December 13-31, 1943,
pp. 66-75., Franklin D. Roosevelt Library; “Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the
MURDER OF THE JEWS,” 227.
had done all he could to get the proposal approved, and that the most effective way to get a result would be for Secretary Morgenthau to call Secretary Hull. 242

On August 5, Morgenthau wrote to Hull informing him that the president had asked him to reply to Stephen Wise, and reiterated that Treasury “was prepared to take the necessary action to implement this proposal.” 243 Yet, before Hull could reply to Morgenthau, Meltzer called Josiah DuBois, Assistant General Counsel at Treasury, to inform him that the State Department had no comments to make on the proposal but would not object to Treasury issuing the license. 244 He also expressed his frustration at the way the State Department was handling the matter. 245

On August 7, Hull finally gave Treasury permission to contact Dr. Wise, although he did not, exactly, express State’s support for the proposal. His memorandum had explained:

Treasury itself is entirely free to act on this matter and to grant the necessary license if it should so decide. In the latter event the State Department would be pleased to send the appropriate notification through State Department channels to our Legation at Bern, informing them of the projected arrangement. Any view that this would make funds available to the enemy is not correct; the funds would remain blocked in Switzerland until the end of the war. 246

On August 14, Roosevelt thus informed Wise that Treasury would license the transaction and that matter was awaiting “a further exchange of cables between the State Department and our mission in Bern regarding some of the details.” 247 In short, Wise had confirmation that President Roosevelt supported the plan and that, pending the processing of a few logistical details, the proposal would move ahead.

The delay in processing the license request in the summer of 1943 reflected the divisions within a combustible wartime State Department. Treasury General Counsel, Randolph Paul, described at the time “a very bitter fight” within the Department on refugee issues, noting that

242 “Mr. (Randolph) Paul to The Secretary, August 12, 1943,” 17.
245 Ibid.
246 Hull, “Memorandum for the Secretary of the Treasury,” 10.
the Foreign Service Officer group as whole seemed to be obstructing proposals for refugee relief. In the summer of 1943, divisions in the Department would also force out a strong ally of the Jews and of relief causes, Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles. Welles, who had initially encouraged Harrison, the American representative in Bern, to relay information about the Jews, was forced to leave his position at the end of August when colleagues began exposing his homosexual activities.

In the summer of 1943, the Treasury Department had experienced significant difficulty in simply carrying out a license request in support of a refugee rescue plan favored by President Roosevelt. They had faced stiff State Department opposition from the beginning. First, State argued that the rescued Jews would have nowhere to go. Next, State argued that the plan would somehow provide enemy countries with foreign exchange. Then, the proposal would be stuck on Secretary Hull’s desk, only to be resurrected by the direct intervention of President Roosevelt through his trusted friend and Secretary of the Treasury, Henry Morgenthau Jr. Unfortunately, the difficulties in carrying out Riegner’s rescue plan would only increase in the coming months.

Lead Up: September-November 1943
In mid-September, Herbert Lehman, director of European relief, telephoned Secretary Morgenthau to inform him that the State Department had not yet sent the authorization for the license to the American diplomats in Bern. Morgenthau contacted Secretary Hull directly, who

248 “Mr. (Randolph) Paul to The Secretary, August 12, 1943,” 17.
249 On Welles’ role as ally of Jews, see following cite in addition to evidence presented in this chapter: Breitman and Lichtman, FDR and the Jews, 228.
assured him that the cables would be transmitted immediately.\textsuperscript{252} On September 28, the Treasury license was eventually granted to Harrison in Bern.\textsuperscript{253} However, Harrison responded on October 6 that he required specific State Department sanction to issue the license, adding that the British opposed the plan.\textsuperscript{254} The State Department did not alert Treasury to Harrison’s message.\textsuperscript{255} Treasury would eventually discover the Harrison message through informal contacts at State on October 16.\textsuperscript{256} Treasury subsequently drafted a message for State to send to Harrison instructing him to issue the license.\textsuperscript{257} Treasury’s John Pehle also spoke with Long on the telephone, arguing that obtaining British clearance was not necessary to proceed with the license.\textsuperscript{258} On October 26, State finally gave Harrison permission to issue the license, a license which the president had favored since July.\textsuperscript{259}

Yet, upon receiving these latest instructions, Harrison still did not, in fact, issue the license. The British had continued to voice their objections, and Harrison again wanted explicit permission from the State Department to defy the British (somewhat surprisingly in order to institute a policy favored by his own president and government).\textsuperscript{260} It seemed that in granting Harrison permission to issue the license, the State Department had not made it clear to Harrison that they supported the plan.


\textsuperscript{253} Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945, 181.


\textsuperscript{255} Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945, 181; “Randolph Paul to Secretary Morgenthau, November 2, 1943,” 85.

\textsuperscript{256} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{258} “Randolph Paul to Secretary Morgenthau, November 2, 1943,” 86; Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945, 181.

\textsuperscript{259} Ibid.

Alarmed by continued resistance from State, Treasury’s Randolph Paul, John Pehle, Josiah DuBois, and two other Treasury officials, Ansel Luxford and Harry Dexter White, began to develop a strategy for confronting State. In a transcript from a November 23 Treasury meeting, John Pehle noted that Harrison undoubtedly discerned that the State Department was opposed to the plan and questioned whether or not it was time to reveal the State Department’s incompetence in dealing with the refugee issue:

The broader issue is, at what point is the whole question of whether the State Department is going to facilitate evacuation of refugees and all the things that are tied in with that—at what point is that going to be brought out in the open.

[...]

This file is full of cables which we have originated and which State has sent which are full of little remarks like the Treasury wants this, the Treasury desires you to do this, and the Treasury this, and the Treasury that. And, Harrison, unless he is just a dumbbell, can see through that, that State is in effect saying this is what the Treasury wants you to do.

After some discussion, Morgenthau responded that he was pleased with the spirit of his subordinates’ desire to press the State Department on this issue. However, he warned them against getting their hopes raised that they might be able to effect change in State:

Gentlemen, I can say on the record that I am delighted at your motives. No one would like to see this come out in the open more than I. Unfortunately you are up against a successive generation of people like those in the State Department who don’t like to do this kind of thing, and it is only by my happening to be Secretary of the Treasury and being vitally interested in these things, with the help of you people having first made up your mind—you bring it to me—that I can do it. I am all for you, not that I am a cynic or discouraged. I mean, I will do everything I can, and we will get it done. But don’t think you are going to be able to nail anybody in the State Department [emphasis added].

The group decided that Morgenthau, who wanted to go directly to Secretary Hull, would send Hull yet another letter. On November 24, 1943, he sent the letter, which highlighted the three-and-a-half-month delay on the “relatively simple matter of getting our Minister in Switzerland to

Footnotes:


263 Ibid., 115–16.

issue a license,” noting further that such a delay was unacceptable, and asking that American Ambassador to Great Britain, John G. Winant, reassure the British and obtain their consent.\(^{265}\) Hull passed along Morgenthau’s request without incident, though he noted in his response to Morgenthau on December 6, 1943 that the delay was not a result of “any fault on the part of Minister Harrison or the Department,” but rather resulted from flaws in the proposal and British objections.\(^{266}\)

Although the proposal for rescue seemed to be moving along, Josiah DuBois nevertheless sought to gather more information about the delays at State. On December 9, he arranged a meeting with the former Acting Chief of the Foreign Funds Control Division of the State Department, Bernard Meltzer, in order to obtain more information about the Riegner plan delays.\(^{267}\) Meltzer had in fact revealed to DuBois that he had information to share on the State Department months earlier, but he had said he would do so only after he had left the department.\(^{268}\) Meltzer now informed DuBois that Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles, since ousted from the State Department, had originally given the assignment to Herbert Feis, even though it would normally have been assigned to Breckinridge Long.\(^{269}\) Feis called Meltzer, and they both agreed that Long “and his crowd” would likely be opposed to the policy, so they sent the first Riegner cable to Bern in the form of a clarification telegram, allowing them to bypass any objections from Long and his assistant, and Feis delivered the cable to Sumner Welles directly.\(^{270}\) When Riegner replied on June 14, 1943, subsequent State Department debates revealed that only Meltzer, Feis, and a Meltzer staffer, William Hall, favored the plan.\(^{271}\) Long, Long’s assistant George Brandt, and Robert Reams all opposed the rescue proposal.\(^{272}\) Once


\(^{269}\) DuBois, “Memorandum for the Files, December 9, 1943,” 198.

\(^{270}\) Ibid., 198-99.

\(^{271}\) Ibid., 199.

\(^{272}\) Ibid.; The following source allowed me to confirm first names of Brandt and Reams: Monty N. Penkower, *The Jews Were Expendable: Free World Diplomacy and the Holocaust* (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University, 1988), 129.
Treasury had advised State that they were prepared to issue the license, Brandt sent a memorandum to Secretary of State Hull arguing that the transaction would benefit the enemy; Feis and Meltzer sent a parallel memorandum arguing the opposite. Hull met with Brandt to discuss the matter, but did not ask to speak with Feis or Meltzer. Meltzer and Feis sent a second memorandum arguing that the Riegner plan could not possibly benefit the enemy financially. Once Hull received this second memorandum, and the letter from Treasury explaining that the President favored the plan and had been in contact with Wise on the issue, Hull decided he would not raise objections to the program. Meltzer finished the conversation by noting that only the State Department’s Dean Acheson, Donald Hiss, and Thomas Finletter would be prepared to promote “issues such as this,” but their usual responsibilities in the department did not include these areas.

**Lead Up: December 1943**

On December 17, the Treasury group reconvened to discuss the situation and to draft yet another letter to Secretary Hull. The British had again sent word of their objection to the Riegner plan, transmitted in a cable through the American Embassy in London to Washington on December 15. Their objection was, in short, with “the difficulties of disposing of any considerable number of Jews should they be rescued from enemy occupied territory” in addition to “difficulties of transportation […] and of finding accommodation in the countries of the Near East.” On December 17, the Treasury men discussed how they would respond to the latest developments in their letter to Secretary Hull:

> Mr. Paul: There is not a statement in this letter [to Hull] that can’t be documented.

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275 Ibid.

276 Ibid.

277 Ibid., 201.


Mr. Luxford: We have gone through it with a fine-toothed comb, on that very point.

H.M.JR: Can he rebut on this?

Mr. DuBois: He may try.

Mr. Luxford: If he uses the same tactics he used in the last letter, yes, Mr. Secretary.

Mr. Pehle: You never can be sure [...] but we have gone to every length to be sure this letter is sound, and shows the first letter is sound.

 [...] 

Mr. Luxford: The point is, if he misrepresents his position as he did in the last letter, yes, he can blast back; but on the record, he can’t.

 [...] 

Luxford: I think it is important too, in this field, to keep in mind this isn’t a choice of the British saying “no action” and our saying “action.” The British by doing nothing, are condemning these people to death.

 [...] 

Mr. DuBois: The British say condemn them to death and we say they should get out.

Mr. Paul: I don’t know how we can blame the Germans for killing them when we are doing this. The law calls them para-delicto, of equal guilt [underline].

The final draft of the December 17, 1943 letter that went to Hull highlighted discrepancies in Hull’s letter from December 6, 1943 and noted that “While we may still disagree regarding some of the points involved in this particular case, these matters I must agree are insignificant in terms of your willingness to review the whole matter and your assurance that it is the policy of your Department to deal expeditiously and [sympathetically] with proposals of this nature.”

With the knowledge of State Department delay, furnished by their own experience and by information from Meltzer, Treasury officials now began to urge Secretary Morgenthau to expose
State’s wrongdoing directly to President Roosevelt. On December 18, 1943, Treasury’s Paul, Luxford, DuBois, Pehle, Morgenthau, and Morgenthau’s assistant, Mrs. Henrietta Stein Klotz, met again. His team now urged Morgenthau to suggest that the refugee and rescue initiatives be taken out of State Department hands. Morgenthau insisted that he go to Secretary Hull one last time before approaching the president:

Mr. Pehle: I think we ought to do some real thinking at this point, Mr. Secretary. As I understand it, the financial thing is out of the way, really, and the British are saying, in effect, that they don’t propose to take any Jews out of these areas. […]

[…] H.M.JR: Then why don’t I ask to see Mr. Hull about this thing Monday?

Mr. DuBois: Mr. Secretary, the only question we have in our mind, I think, is the bull has to be taken by the horns in dealing with this Jewish issue, and get this thing out of the State Department into some agency’s hands that is willing to deal with it frontally.

For instance, take the complaint, “What are we going to do with the Jews”—we let them die because we don’t know what to do with them.

Mr. Paul: We are speaking as citizens, now.

Mr. Pehle: It seems to me the only way to get anything done is for the President to appoint a commission or committee consisting of sympathetic people of some importance.

H.M.JR: But I still think I have got to go to Mr. Hull.

Mr. Pehle: That may be, but I think—

H.M.JR: Wait a minute, excuse me. I have got to be in a position to say to the President, “Well, I have satisfied myself that Mr. Hull won’t go along.” I can’t say that now. I don’t know that Mr. Hull might not go along.

[…] H.M.JR: […] I still think—I mean, if I talked to the President about it tomorrow he would say, “What does Cordell Hull say?” If he called him on the phone he would say, “I am just in the process of answering Henry.” So I think the thing to do is to ask to see Hull. I might better go and see him alone.

283 Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945*, 182-83; *Jewish Evacuation, December 17, 1943, 10:30 A.M., Meeting Transcript,* 61; *Jewish Evacuation, December 18, 1943, 12:00 M., Meeting Transcript,* 82-91; *Jewish Evacuation, December 19, 1943, 5:30 P.M., Meeting Transcript,* 106-30. 284 *Jewish Evacuation, December 18, 1943, 12:00 M., Meeting Transcript,* 82-94.
Mr. Pehle: I think that is correct.

[...]

Mr. Pehle: It has got to be done by somebody who is free to act. But I think you are entirely right that before you go to the President you ought to have Hull’s reaction on this cable.

H.M.JR: I was told last night that the State Department and the Foreign Office are very sensitive to criticism on this Jewish business.

Mr. Luxford: The shoe fits—

Now that it was decided that Morgenthau would approach Hull before taking the matter to the President, the conversation turned to Mr. Hull’s unusual personal situation. Hull, in fact, was married to a Jewish woman, and under the Nazi rule, he too would have persecuted:

H.M.JR: I would like to say to Mr. Hull, “After all, if you were a member of the Cabinet in Germany today, you would be, most likely, in a prison camp, and your wife would be God knows where,” because Mrs. Hull is a Jewess, you know. Did you people know that?

Mr. Luxford: Yes, sir.

H.M.JR: Her name was Wirtz. And if he was in Germany today, he couldn’t hold the position he has, because he is married to a Jewess, even though she changed her name to Whitney. Did you people all know that? (General agreement)

The meeting concluded with Morgenthau reaffirming that he would approach Hull not as a private citizen, or as a Jew, but as Secretary of the Treasury. The Treasury men had taken an interest in this issue. Morgenthau would represent the Department in the meeting:

H.M.JR: If I am going as Secretary of the Treasury I don’t think we want to make a Jewish delegation out of this. I think we will just go as the Treasury. This is Treasury business. We are interested in this.

[...]

DuBois: They say they won’t let them come out, because if they let a few come out they might get more and wouldn’t know what to do with them; therefore they won’t let any come out.

Mrs. Klotz: Tragic!

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285 Ibid., 84–88.
286 Ibid., 88.
Mr. DuBois: It just speaks for itself—contradicts itself.

[…]

H.M.JR: Again, I can’t say how much I appreciate your sympathetic interest in these things.

Mr. Luxford: We appreciate yours, too, Mr. Secretary.
Mr. Paul: Sympathetic! God!

Mr. Luxford: It is our gain that you feel that way.

H.M.JR: Anyway, there is nothing more tragic.\(^{287}\)

Morgenthau made an appointment to see Secretary of State Hull on Monday, December 20.\(^{288}\) That same day, Breckinridge Long sent a license authorization for $25,000, acting so hurriedly that he failed to clear the final version with Treasury.\(^{289}\)

Before the meeting, the Treasury group—Pehle, Luxford, Paul, DuBois, and Morgenthau—met again on Sunday, December 19.\(^{290}\) The gang was now joined by Oscar Cox of the Foreign Economic Administration.\(^{291}\) Cox had been pushing for a separate government committee for rescue, outside of the State Department, since June, 1943.\(^{292}\) The State Department had rejected his plan in October, and Treasury had not been interested in supporting his initiatives then either.\(^{293}\) Joining them in the meeting, he argued that rescue issues needed to be taken out of State, and that pressure from Congress would make it all the more important that President Roosevelt take action on this issue:

Mr. Cox: […] Now, within the State Department there have been basic differences of view on this problem. On the Hill there has been pending before the House Foreign Affairs Committee the so-called Rogers-Gillette resolution to create a special commission

\(^{287}\) Ibid., 89–92.
\(^{290}\) “Jewish Evacuation, December 19, 1943, 5:30 P.M., Meeting Transcript,” 103–30.
to handle this problem. There has been a fight within the House Foreign Affairs Committee on the thing.

Now, my view is that the only way you will solve this thing is if the President, taking yourself [Morgenthau], Stettinius [Sumner Welles’ replacement as Undersecretary of State], and Crowley [Foreign Economic Administration] as the three principal officers of the Government who are concerned directly with the functions that are required to be performed here, and responsible directly to him—not through whatever machinery happens to be in the State Department—to utilize, as far as this group thinks is necessary, in a Governmental Committee—the Africa thing, the Bermuda conference, the private corporations, and so forth; [...].

You [Morgenthau] ought to be in because of the financing thing.

[...]

The other thing in terms of the President that is basic here, which has come out on the Hill, is you also have, incidentally, a domestic political problem, and the people who have been backing the resolution on the Hill are, interestingly enough, with some exceptions, all people opposed to the President.

Now, this whole proposition of setting up this Committee has been discussed with the President. He is in favor of it. The thing was to be taken up with Hull and that is where the people who have been handling this thing oppose any new setup.

Now, my hunch is that the way practically to do it is to put up to the President, you don’t need an Executive Order or anything else to do that, where he just announces this is being done [...].

[I]t can be done. It is a difficult job, and the major difficulty is that the people who have been working on this really don’t feel it strongly enough and emotionally enough that the job ought to be done. [...]

[Y]ou can get these people out, and you can find the next hop-off point for them, if you really want to do it [emphasis added].

The group then began to plan in more detail for a conversation with President Roosevelt about the need to form a rescue committee outside of State Department jurisdiction. The men felt they now had a good excuse to take the refugee issue to the president:

Mr. Luxford: We have the specific excuse before us right now for this thing being presented to the President. You will be seeing Mr. Hull tomorrow morning—you are not going to get satisfaction as long as this is left with Long.

So you can say, “I think that the two of us should go see the President on this matter right away.”

[...]

Mr. Cox: I think the other thing, they forget about it. The Secretary of State has never professed to be, and hasn’t, in fact, been the kind of administrator you are. He just doesn’t know a lot of the things that are happening inside of the Department until they eventually explode in his face. On this thing, it has been coasting along; there have been a lot of recommendations written on it, and a lot of testimony up on the Hill. But when you see specific cases like this one, then you realize that the failure of action means that hundreds of thousands of people are being killed.

[...]

Mr. Luxford: Here is what you have. Oscar has a whale of a good plan, but he has to have an excuse to get it to the President. We have the excuse to get it to the President. We have a beautiful issue here to take to the President and say, “We want a solution to it [...].”

[...]

H.M.JR: All right, listen, I am tired now. Let me have this thing to simmer, and we will meet at nine o’clock tomorrow morning. I will see where I am then. This is tough. Everybody has made a mess of it up to now. Have you discussed any of this at all with [Undersecretary] Stettinius? Have you reason to believe he is sympathetic?

Mr. Cox: Yes, sir, I have good reason to believe he is sympathetic.

I have also discussed it with Crowley and he is sympathetic. But I know Stettinius is, because, as a matter of fact, he has been having his problems inside of the State Department for the last six weeks on this.

H.M.JR: He has. I have my own.295

DuBois’ Private Mission

While the Treasury group deliberated how to best respond to Hull in these early winter weeks, Josiah DuBois was determined to locate a cable referenced in a confusing April 20 message contained in the license materials. Treasury officials inquired about the cable with the State Department on multiple occasions, but they were told that it was none of their business.296 The

295 Ibid., 121–30.
perplexing cable that caught their attention, cable number 2460 from the American Minister in Bern, Leland Harrison, had made reference to a second cable, number 354, which was strangely omitted from the license materials available to Treasury.297 The cable from Harrison had been in response to a request from then Undersecretary Sumner Welles, on April 10, 1943, to relay information from Dr. Gerhart Riegner, the representative in Geneva for the World Jewish Conference, concerning Nazi treatment of Jews.298 Harrison’s cable number 2460, also summarized in DuBois’ memorandum for the files of December 18, 1945, had stated the following:

While I have not transmitted R’s [Riegner’s] messages as such in compliance with the terms of your 354, February 10, I have at the same time felt that information which he is able to furnish and which appears to be reasonably authentic should be in your hands. […]

[…] May I suggest that messages of this character should not (repeat not) be subjected to the restriction imposed by your 354, February 10, and that I be permitted to transmit messages from R more particularly in view of the helpful information which they may frequently contain?299

DuBois, not knowing what instructions were contained in cable 354 or why the cable was relevant to securing the [Riegner plan] license, requested cable 354 from the State Department. His request was met with immediate resistance. DuBois recalled the difficulties during a 1978 interview with Laurence Jarvik:

We were advised that this cable did not relate to any matters that concerned the Treasury; that it had been seen by only a few people in the State Department; and that it could not be furnished to the Treasury.300

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297 Welles, ‘Secretary of State to American Legation, Bern #877’ contained in ‘Memorandum: For Secretary Morgenthau’s Information Only,’ 223–V.
298 DuBois, “Memorandum for the Files, December 18, 1943,” 2; DuBois, “Memorandum for the Files, December 18, 1943,” 100; Harrison, “Bern to Secretary of State #2460” contained in ‘Memorandum: For Secretary Morgenthau’s Information Only.’” 223–W.
His memorandum for the files, written on December 18, 1943, describes a similar series of events:

We requested the State Department for a copy of cable 354. We were advised that this cable did not relate to any matters that concerned the Treasury; that it had been seen by only a few people in the State Department; and that it could not be furnished to the Treasury. Thereafter I called Donald Hiss, State Department, (over a week ago) and requested that, if possible, he get me a copy of this cable. Several days later I again called Donald Hiss, at his home, and he advised me that he was having considerable difficulty getting a copy of this cable and the cable to which it referred and that he would let me know as soon as he was able to get copies. Today I received a call from Donald Hiss’s office requesting that, if possible, I be in his office at 2:30 inasmuch as he had something to speak to me about.301

The memorandum goes on to say that Hiss gave DuBois copies of cable 354 and of a second cable to which 354 referred, cable 482.302 When he gave the cables to DuBois, Hiss explained that “it had been made clear to him that cable 354 was none of Treasury’s business and that in no event should it be shown to Treasury.”303 DuBois believed that he was liable to lose his job if anyone found out that he had revealed the cable to DuBois, that that his phone had been tapped, and that others were listening to his conversations with Treasury.304

Donald Hiss’s distress was likely based on the fact that cables 482 and 354 together exposed purposeful State Department action to suppress information about the Holocaust. The cable originally sought by DuBois, number 354, was not particularly revelatory on its own.305 Yet, when viewed with the other cable provided by Donald Hiss—cable 482—the cables together reveal State Department efforts to block communication related to the persecution of Jews.306 Treasury officials explained the situation in 1943:

Although this cable [354] on its face is most innocent and innocuous, when read together with the previous cables it is the most vicious document we have ever read. It was

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302 Ibid.
303 Ibid.
304 Ibid.
obviously designed to suppress information requested by this Government concerning the murder of Jews by Hitler. One would have thought, however, that the diabolical men in the State Department who were responsible for this cable would have been intelligent enough to have picked a better excuse, since it is well known that private messages from commercial companies in neutral countries are transmitted every day through State Department channels [underlining in document].

Josiah DuBois similarly explained in a later interview that though 354 is “on its face is most innocuous,” when read alongside cable 482, “it nothing less than attempt at suppression of information by this government concerning the murder of the Jews.”

Cable 482 was sent prior to cable 354. It was sent by the American Legation at Bern on January 21, 1943. The cable included a message from the Secretary of the World Jewish Congress, Gerhart Riegner, and Richard Lichtheim, also a representative of the Congress in Geneva, on the deteriorating status of Jews in Europe. The contents were as follows:

[M]ass executions have taken place in Poland and it is reported from one source that 6,000 are killed daily […] The remaining Jews in Poland are now confined to approximately fifty-five ghettos […] Some Jews, both Polish and those deported from other countries, are in labor camps in Silesia and Poland. […]

It is reported from Prague and Berlin that no Jews will be left in either city by the end of March.

[…] These conditions have resulted in the death of approximately 60,000 while 70,000 are starving [in Romania].

[…] [T]he community requires urgent assistance.

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307 “Memorandum: For Secretary Morgenthau’s Information Only,” 223-L.
310 “American Legation, Bern to Under Secretary of State, Washington, DC #482,” 1–2; “American Legation, Bern to Under Secretary of State, Washington, DC #482” contained in ‘Memorandum: For Secretary Morgenthau’s Information Only,’” 223–R–223–S.
On February 10, 1943, the State Department responded to 482 with cable 354, the second cable. Signed for Hull by Sumner Welles, who Treasury determined was unaware of the purpose of the cable, and initialed by James (Jimmie) C. Dunn of the State Department’s Division of Political Affairs, by Ray Atherton, the acting chief of the State Department’s Division of European Affairs, and by Elbridge Durbrow and John D. Hickerson of the European Division, the cable stated the following:\(^{311}\)

> In the future we would suggest that you do not accept reports submitted to you to be transmitted to private persons in the United States unless such action is advisable because of extraordinary circumstances. Such private messages circumvent neutral countries’ censorship and it is felt that by sending them we risk the possibility that steps would necessarily be taken by neutral countries to curtail or forbid our means of communication for confidential official matter.\(^{312}\)

In short, do not relay any further messages from Riegner.

Treasury officials believed that the suppression of information about the Final Solution was a deliberate strategy to prevent more action on refugee issues. Josiah DuBois would later explain their findings in an interview:

> [B]y November of ’42, sufficient information had been received that Sumner Welles authorized the Jewish organizations to make this public....Then apparently the State Department felt that all of this information coming to the American people was causing too much pressure to be put upon the American [government], upon the State Department to take action, that they decided to prevent...the furnishing of this information.\(^{313}\)

DuBois certainly believed that some in State were anti-Semitic, and even remarked in an oral history interview in 1973 that “There’s no question in my mind that some of the people over


there [...] were actually just plain anti-Semitic. It’s just that simple, there’s no question.” John Pehle, echoing DuBois, also argued that the suppression was intended to prevent action on refugee issues:

The suppressing of the information was the key to action being taken on behalf of the refugees. If you don’t know what’s going on, and you suppress the information, the government becomes an accomplice to what the Nazis were doing, by hiding the information from the American public.

[...]

I suppose the State Department felt that this was going to stir up a lot of people and that the main thing was to win the war and take care of these problems later. If anybody existed.315

DuBois’ mission to obtain the mysterious cable referenced, but not included, in their license materials had given the Treasury men proof that the State Department was suppressing information about the Final Solution. Although Treasury had been unable to obtain the cable through official channels, Donald Hiss was willing to risk his job to furnish Treasury not only with cable 354, but also with cable 482, which, when read alongside 354, revealed the State Department’s efforts to prevent information about the Final Solution from reaching Washington. Morgenthau could now enter his December 20 meeting with Hull fully aware of the degree to which the State Department had impeded relief and rescue for victims of the Holocaust.

315 Medoff, Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. and the Struggle for a US Response to the Holocaust, 20; Martin Ostrow Interview with John Pehle, Bethesda, Maryland, cited in Medoff.
Treasury Confronts State

“Thousands upon thousands will have the cruel hand of suffering and death lifted from them by what you have done. To feel with and as humans whom you haven’t seen in the lands of persecution is one of the marks of your human depth and greatness. Deep in my heart I am warmed. Rare individuals like you are what give me, at least, the driving hope to carry on with the war and what comes after.”

Oscar Cox to Henry Morgenthau Jr., January 17, 1944

At their December 20, 1943, 9:00 A.M. meeting, the Treasury group again went over Morgenthau’s strategy for approaching Hull in his meeting later in the day. Once again, the topic of increasing pressure in the Congress was raised, as was State’s continued battle against the ousted undersecretary, Sumner Welles, whose requests for more information about the Final Solution had been vital to starting the deliberations between State and Treasury, and as Treasury would learn in a few days, whose request for further information about European Jews would be the reason Harrison broke the stop order contained in cable 354 to relay the Riegner plan details:

Mr. Luxford: Cox mentioned that particularly yesterday. There is a strong feeling in the House committee for something like this (Points to newspaper).

H.M.JR: Who introduced that?

Mr. Paul: Will Rogers.

Mr. Pehle: Baldwin and Will Rogers, I think.

H.M.JR: The funny thing on the radio last night that I heard was, Mr. Hull announced he had served notice on Sumner Welles that if he wrote anything about foreign affairs in his articles about the State Department he would invoke the Espionage Act.

Later that day, at the meeting between Treasury and State officials, State officials continued to obscure the truth about their processing of the license request, and Secretary Hull appeared

317 Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945, 179; Welles, “Secretary of State to American Legation, Bern #2314’ contained in ‘Memorandum: For Secretary Morgenthau’s Information Only,’” 223–Q; Welles, “Personal for the Minister from the Acting Secretary,” 1–2; Welles, “Secretary of State to American Legation, Bern #877’ contained in ‘Memorandum: For Secretary Morgenthau’s Information Only,’” 223–V; Harrison, “‘Bern to Secretary of State #2460’ contained in ‘Memorandum: For Secretary Morgenthau’s Information Only,’” 223–W–223–X.
318 “Jewish Evacuation, December 20, 1943, 9:00 A.M., Meeting Transcript,” 138.
uninformed about his department’s relief and rescue activities. Hull noted difficulties with people “down the line,” but he was not knowledgeable about refugee affairs in the department, and he would subsequently reveal that he did not know the names of four of the five State Department officials handling refugee issues. Also attending the meeting was Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long, who claimed that Meltzer was responsible for the holdups during a private discussion with Morgenthau. Treasury was naturally quite aware that Meltzer (DuBois’ informant) had been a principal supporter of the proposal.

The meeting had allowed Secretary Morgenthau to once again express his displeasure at State’s handling of refugee issues. Moreover, the mere request for the meeting had prompted the State Department to finally issue an authorization, the long awaited license, to Leland Harrison in Bern. They had also sent a strongly worded retort to the British regarding their opposition to the rescue plan. Morgenthau and Pehle recounted the specific events of the meeting for the Treasury group later on December 20:

Mr. Luxford: So Hull was worried?

H.M.JR: Worried! Wait until you hear what he has done!

Mr. Pehle: Can I go ahead and dictate the meeting?

H.M.JR: Yes.

Mr. Pehle: Before we had a chance to present the memorandum to Mr. Hull, Mr. Hull said that he had [focused] on the cable from Winant [American Ambassador to Great Britain] and he had sent a reply. The reply was read and was to the effect that this Government was astounded with the position which the British had taken, and that it was not in accordance with the position of this government and that Winant should press the matter.

[...]

H.M.JR: [...] And then Long interrupted to say, “Well I don’t know whether you are going to like it or whether you are going to approve or disapprove, but I drafted


321 Ibid.
personally a license Saturday and issued it and cabled it to Switzerland as of last Saturday.”

Mr. Pehle: That is right. Long then described—

H.M.JR: I have a couple of cold fish here! (Refers to Mr. Luxford and Mr. DuBois)

[...]

H.M.JR: But the point is that from the time I called the State Department and said that I wanted to have an appointment with Mr. Hull—from that time on something must have happened damned fast. Because Hull must have answered this cable from Winant. I told him in the message what I was going to see him about. He must have gotten hold of Breckinridge Long. Long must have issued the license. When I walked in there on Monday morning, the decks were clear.

Mr. Paul: Of course.

[...]

H.M.JR: It just dynamited this thing loose which has been hanging for five months. I just want to say on the record for you boys—I have said consistently that until I faced Hull on this thing, I wouldn’t say that Hull wouldn’t do the right thing.

Mr. Paul: We didn’t disagree with that.

Mr. DuBois: We didn’t disagree with that. Just as a general statement, I think we all predicted that Long would come through with some very prize statements as to how much he had been doing. My prediction still is to the extent that this is left in the hands of Long and isn’t dealt with by Hull that you are not going to have any substantial—

H.M.JR: That is over-obvious.

Mr. DuBois: I shouldn’t have said it!

H.M.JR: No, that’s all right.

Mr. Paul: No, it can’t be said too often. 322

As mentioned, Secretary Morgenthau had also met privately with Long following the meeting. John Pehle now wanted Morgenthau to finish recounting what had been said in that private meeting, when Long had tried to pin the delays on Meltzer, who was in fact one of DuBois’s sources within the department:

322 Ibid., 150–54.
Mr. Pehle: [...] Can we get in something about your talk privately with Long?

H.M.JR: Yes, then we’ll go back on the Argentine business. You are a little curious as to what he told me, huh!

Mr. Pehle: Well, you told us part of it.

H.M.JR: Do you mind leaving the room? (Laughter)

Mr. Long took me into another room and said he wanted to talk to me privately. “I just want to tell you,” he said, “that unfortunately the people lower down in your Department and lower down in the State Department are making a lot of trouble.” He said, “There is a fellow by the name of Meltzer who used to work…”

Mr. Luxford: Meltzer! That’s our ally over there!

H.M.JR: Well, he said, “He is the fellow who used to be associated with Feis, and he has been spreading this stuff.” And he says, “I am storing it up.” He spoke about everybody being anti-Semitic and all the rest of that stuff.

As a matter of fact, he said, “Meltzer is one of the fellows who has been raising technical difficulties. I think you ought to know it. I know that he has been creating a lot of trouble.”

So I said, “Well Breck, as long as you raise the question, we might be a little frank. The impression is all around that you, particularly, are anti-Semitic!” I looked him right in the eye. He said, “I know that is so. I hope that you will use your good offices to correct that impression because I am not.” I said, “I am very, very glad to know it.” Is Meltzer no longer with the Department?

Mr. DuBois: He is the fellow in the Navy whom I got that information from.

H.M.JR: You have got a report from me on that?

Mr. DuBois: Yes. Meltzer is the one who gave me all this information, how he and Feis were in favor of it and all the rest had opposed it, and how he had tried to fight to put the thing through.

H.M.JR: You gave me a report.

Mr. Luxford: Let’s say, if you are looking for objective evidence on that, when Meltzer came over to the Treasury, he was the only State man that argued for it.\footnote{Ibid., 156-157; 164-165, on Breckinridge Long and Morgenthau’s conversation, see also latter pages.}
Morgenthau began to conclude the meeting by thanking his team for their diligent work on the matter. He continued to try to obtain more of an elated, or at least satisfied, reaction out of his team, who still seemed cold to him despite the good news. Morgenthau was thrilled that the meeting had gone well, but his team was preoccupied with the lack of practical results for the refugees:

H.M.JR: [...] Anyway, boys, [thanks] to all of you, all of us working together; we have done a job on them.

Mr. DuBois: This is just the beginning, I am afraid.

[...]

H.M.JR: But just stop and think. Here, suddenly, out of a clear sky, without consultation with the Treasury, Breckinridge Long on his own issues a license that this thing can be done.

Mr. DuBois: When way back in February they were even trying to prevent messages from coming over.

Mr. Luxford: You see why that was, Mr. Secretary; what I suspect happened is that when we sent our first letter they came back and said, “We don’t like your implications.” They tried to give an excuse. We devastated their excuses. That left them only one thing.

H.M.JR: Don’t you fellows feel a little good about this? (To Cox) These fellows are regular icicles over here.

Mr. Paul: What do you want us to do?

H.M.JR: Well, kick up your heels! I once saw Lew Douglas get on that table, roll over on his back, and throw his heels in the air.

Mr. Cox: These fellows are more conservative than Lew Douglas. Mr. Secretary, this is not dissimilar to the job you did on aid to the Allies in the early days. That is, you get a great deal of inertia, and finally you blast something out and set a new path. [...] 

[...]

H.M.JR: Yes, I feel very, very happy, inside, because I was taking an awful risk with the people over there, you know. You didn’t know who would take this memorandum, who would take this thing. Supposing Hull was cold on this thing, and didn’t want to be bothered—that my memorandum was slipped to Nye or Wheler or Fish. I realized all of it.

Mr. Cox: Sure. You were sticking your neck out.
H.M.JR: I realized it could get into their hands, and it still could.

Mr. Pehle: The State Department cable is exactly your position.

H.M.JR: So we are all right.

Mr. Luxford: Mr. Secretary, I think any solemnity that may have been evidenced here is at the next step.

Mr. Cox: These fellows give up hard.

Mr. Pehle: You see, their [sic] issuing a license, Mr. Secretary, Doesn’t get anybody out of Rumania.

Mr. DuBois: We have got to still put—

H.M.JR: All right, now don’t spoil it. I still taste it! I haven’t quite digested it. I have seven stomachs like a cow, and I like to ruminate. I am in the process of ruminating now, and chewing my cud until I go through the seventh stomach—not the seventh veil, but the seventh stomach! 324

The conservation now turned back to Meltzer. Cox worried that State might retaliate against him if they found out that he had supplied the Treasury with so much information:

Mr. Cox: One thing that concerns me a little bit, and that is whether there is any likelihood that they may go after Meltzer on this thing.

H.M.JR: He is out.

Mr. Cox: But even so.

H.M.JR: He is in the Navy. What can they do?

Mr. Pehle: I don’t think they’d dare to.

Mr. DuBois: I think he knows too much for them to go after him.

Mr. Paul: Of course, they are after Welles for espionage.

Mr. Cox: Sumner Welles?

H.M.JR: He simply told me that Meltzer talked, and so forth and so on. He said, “Do you know Meltzer?” and I said, “I have simply heard the name. That is all I know.”

Mr. Luxford: State could never touch him.

324 Ibid., 158–68.
Mr. Cox: All I am saying is that somebody better keep an eye on it, just to make sure.

[...] 

H.M.JR: Tell Meltzer if any day a ton of brick falls on his head to let you know, and I’ll take it up with the President. I don’t want to go and say, “Frank Knox, don’t let anything happen to Meltzer.” Then he’ll say, “Why?” Wait for the ton of brick to fall.

Mr. Luxford: You know, Mr. Secretary, in this particular field Meltzer has always been one of the boys we had the most trouble with over there; not on this issue, but on others. It just shows how strongly he felt on this issue, that he lined up with Treasury.

Mr. Pehle: We had an awful lot of trouble with him.

H.M.JR: Is Meltzer Jewish?

Mr. Pehle: Yes. On other issues he was terrible.

Mr. DuBois: On this issue he and Feis carried the whole ball in the State Department.

Mr. Luxford: It shows the extremes he had to go to, to come to Treasury.325

Morgenthau and his team had decided that now was not the appropriate time to raise the issue of a new committee for rescue initiatives with State or with the President.326 Even Cox agreed to hold off on the committee suggestion until a more appropriate time.327 They did, however, decide to begin drafting documents on the committee to be ready to propose the idea to the President when the time was right.328

The feeling of subdued accomplishment continued into meetings later in the day on December 20. Mr. Harry Dexter White, also of Treasury, weighed in, arguing that State never would have reversed its policy if not for Morgenthau’s actions.329 However, their conversation was interrupted by Mr. Pehle and Mr. Luxford, who now had further proof of the State Department’s efforts to cover up their obstruction of Jewish rescue efforts.

325 Ibid., 170–71.
326 Ibid., 148–71.
327 Ibid., 167.
328 Ibid., 169.
Treasury had in fact arranged a trap to test the people at State. In the meeting with Hull that morning, Morgenthau had requested to see cable 354. Of course, Morgenthau already knew the contents of 354 and 482 thanks to DuBois’ sources at State.

H.M.JR: Aren’t you excited about what has happened this morning?

Mr. White: Yes. I am more excited about the way you are pushing them around. I think you are right in your evaluation of Hull’s willingness to go along, but I think that the other fellows are quite insincere in that they are just thoroughly scared. This was piled on top of the other things, and they probably feel very guilty and very vulnerable, and they will go along for the time-being, anyhow.

But I don’t think they would have done the thing if it wasn’t for the fact that you pushed them and they are frightened.

H.M.JR: Well, it is high time somebody pushed them. Without undue modesty, I don’t know anybody in town who could have done it, unless the President, besides myself.

Mr. White: Unless there was danger of it becoming public. But they managed to keep those things pretty insensitive.

(Mr. Pehle and Mr. Luxford enter the conference)

Mr. Luxford: Mr. Secretary, you did not get the cable of January. You didn’t even get the reference to it.

Mr. Pehle: They took the reference out [emphasis added].

Upon Morgenthau’s request from that morning, Long had sent over the requested cable, number 354, but with one minor alteration. He removed the reference to cable 482—the cable that importantly revealed that 354 was not routine communication, but rather an effort to suppress information about the Holocaust. Long must have hoped to prevent Treasury from uncovering the truth about the cables and about State’s attempt to suppress news about the Final Solution. The conversation continues as follows:

H.M.JR: You mean 354 isn’t there?

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331 See also: Medoff, Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. and the Struggle for a US Response to the Holocaust, 32–33.
Mr. Luxford: 354 started in the true text: “Your number 4[8]2,” so and so, which was deleted in the copy we got.

(Mrs. Klotz enters the conference)

They left out the reference which would have been the clew [*sic*] to the first cable.

[...]

Mr. White: They were afraid you might tie it in.

[...]

Mr. White: Who gave you this cable--under whose direction?

Mr. Pehle: Breckinridge Long.334

On December 20, acting on instructions from Morgenthau, Randolph Paul called Breckinridge Long to inform him that Treasury was “having some trouble understanding Cable No. 354.”335 He noted that Morgenthau thought the paraphrased cable may “have been garbled” and requested that Treasury be given the original cable 354 to help alleviate their confusion.336 Treasury’s Ansel Luxford was dispatched to retrieve the cable.337 Upon viewing the unparaphrased copy of 354, Luxford told Long that the initial copy sent to Treasury had omitted the reference in the heading to cable 482 of January 21 included in the original document.338 Luxford asked that Treasury also be provided with cable 482, and Long arranged for the file to be retrieved first thing the following morning.339 The next morning, however, State officials would struggle to find the file.340 The reason for their difficulty was that Donald Hiss had not yet returned the copy he had taken to share with DuBois, despite having promised Treasury that he would return it by Monday.341

337 Ibid.
341 Ibid., 205–6.
The contents of cable 482 were at last made available to Luxford later that day on December 21.\(^{342}\) In Luxford’s words, the cable was “in all respects as shocking as Mr. DuBois’ memorandum of December 18 indicated.”\(^{343}\) The cable “describes conditions as being perfectly horrible in Poland, Germany, and Rumania [...] They are putting them in the ghetto, shooting the Jews four thousand a day [...] Well, you can’t read it without being horrified.”\(^{344}\) At this point, the full extent of the State Department conspiracy was abundantly clear:

Mr. DuBois: The amazing thing about this is this cable plus the other one, in which they tried to stop these messages from coming through.

Mr. Luxford: You have enough here.

Mr. Pehle: You have got the full flavor of what they have done.

Mr. Luxford: That is the important thing here.

Mr. DuBois: After they get that cable describing the horrible conditions, in direct response they sent out a cable saying that private messages of this character shouldn’t be transmitted. Riegelman [of State and a Treasury source] pointed out yesterday that they are getting private messages by the hundreds from commercial firms in Switzerland, and yet they try to stop this on that ground. No wonder they tried to hide the facts.\(^{345}\)

The Treasury men now felt that the evidence of the State Department’s malfeasance in handling the rescue issue and the information coming out of Europe was overwhelming. Morgenthau once again suggested writing Hull, but members of his team felt that a stronger approach was in order. They also began to worry about repercussions for Donald Hiss if they acted too rapidly:

H.M.JR: [...] You fellows draft a letter for Hull, see? [...] “Dear Cordell: In view of your very sympathetic interest when I was there, in view of the fact that you said at times you were unaware of what went on below [...] the kind of information contained in this cable certainly should come out.”

Mr. Luxford: That doesn’t hit it quite, though, Mr. Secretary. The big point is when we asked for that cable three times we didn’t get it.

Mr. Pehle: Can we hit that?


\(^{343}\) Luxford, “Memorandum for the Files, December 21, 1943.”

\(^{344}\) “Jewish Evacuation, December 21, 1943, 2:30 P.M., Meeting Transcript,” December 21, 1943, 206.

\(^{345}\) Ibid., 207.
H.M.JR: Try it. You fellows write it.

Mr. Paul: I'd like to add one footnote to what you say. I think that we ought to do whatever we can at any point to protect Hiss in the situation.

H.M.JR: That is why my inclination is to let it lie a week so it doesn't come too close.

Mr. Luxford: I'd say that Hiss is in, and I think he is resigned to the fact that he is.

H.M.JR: But what damage can we do to the Jews in Rumania if we wait one week, as far as these cables are concerned?

Mr. Luxford: One thing, Mr. Secretary, we have got them wobbling right now. Hit them again while they are wobbling. A week from now Hull may be thinking about something else.

Mr. DuBois: I think there is a possibility, Mr. Secretary, that through this you may be able to get Long out of there. I think we can either get him out or divorce the issue from him.346

The conversation then turned back to Donald Hiss, and others like Bernard Meltzer who had helped Treasury get this far. Morgenthau's staff was worried about possible repercussions for them, yet Morgenthau seemed preoccupied with his feelings of pride for his staff. They had, in his opinion, demonstrated two of the four qualities of the 4-H club—the heart and the head:

Mr. DuBois: Hiss was over here. He takes it awfully like a man.

H.M.JR: Has he been here today?

Mr. Paul: He came over.

Mr. Pehle: He is going to admit the facts tomorrow when they ask him. He is going to say, "Sure," he showed it to the Treasury.

[...]

H.M.JR: The last thing Riegelman [of State] said to me last night was, "Look, Cousin Henry, [...] Those two letters you sent were awfully tough" [...] I said, "That is wonderful." He said, "Some of your people were practically ready to hit some of the State Department." I said, "Isn't that wonderful!"

I said, "Isn't that wonderful! That's the kind of people I have. They are a swell crowd." [...]

346 Ibid., 211–12.
Mr. Luxford: [...] Bernard Meltzer was a very fine man. He was a young fellow [...] until he went into the State Department [...] and that man came out a year and a half later fighting everything Treasury did except this issue. And he was with us in heart.

Mr. Paul: They ruined Dean Acheson.

H.M.JR: Let’s see if I can do this correctly, as a member of the 4-H Club: the hand, the heart, the head, and health. I don’t know what you do when you demonstrate health, but anyway, I congratulate you on the heart and the head, anyway.347

Treasury was also aware of the pressure continuing to come from Congress on the issue, and the leverage that this pressure gave them should they act now to present Roosevelt with their findings. Towards the end of the 2:30 meeting on December 21, John Pehle stressed the need to take advantage of mounting congressional criticism of State. He specifically referenced the Senate Foreign Relations Committee’s recent unanimous approval for the Gillette-Rogers Resolution:

Mr. Pehle: Mr. Secretary, in the Times this morning a significant newspaper clipping says that [the] Senate Foreign Relations Committee approved unanimously yesterday a resolution by General Gillette and eleven others proposing that President Roosevelt set up a commission of diplomatic, economic, and military experts to devise ways to save the surviving people of Europe [...].

[...] It was aimed right at the State Department. So they are under terrific pressure right now. This is a resolution that the Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously passed [underlining in document].348

A day earlier on December 20, Oscar Cox also raised the issue of mounting congressional pressure with Morgenthau in sending him his executive order draft and press release on the creation of a new rescue committee.349 Cox had noted, “It might also be that getting the executive order signed would forestall some of the action on the Hill in connection with the

347 Ibid., 213-16.
348 Ibid., 216.
Rogers-Gillette Resolution.” In short, the rescue proposal could also serve a political purpose: it could relieve a major source of criticism of the administration.

**Treasury Prepares Their Case: Late December-Early January 1943**

Although Treasury officials had reasoned that sufficient evidence existed to implicate the State Department in the suppression of information about the Final Solution and deliberate delay in processing the rescue proposal, more information would still come out in the final weeks of December, 1943. They located even more cables, showing that the ousted undersecretary Sumner Welles had in fact been trying to obtain information about the Final Solution, but that his subordinates had gone behind his back to block further information from reaching Washington and to conceal their actions from Welles. The Treasury men were now determined to present their findings to Roosevelt and to have the rescue issue removed from the State Department, but they would first have to convince Morgenthau, who appeared to be more concerned about the timing and presentation of the evidence. His team would argue that only the President could change US policy on rescue and relief, and only Morgenthau could change the President’s mind. They would use the congressional pressure to their advantage, as their stated most significant leverage.

The evidence of Sumner Welles’ role came to light in a meeting among Treasury officials on December 23, 1943. Morgenthau’s staff presented him with a Secret Memorandum as a result of “further developments” on the conflict with the State Department. Treasury had found cables revealing that Sumner Welles had repeatedly asked for information about the treatment of Jews in Europe, as early as October 1942, but was blocked by the actions of his

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350 Ibid., 191.
351 “Memorandum: For Secretary Morgenthau’s Information Only,” 223–J–223–X.
353 These cables were obtained by a State Department official by the name of Riegelman. Riegelman was a second cousin of Morgenthau’s, who Treasury believed was unqualified for the job and had been deliberately put on the issue to dampen criticism of State, or to possibly accuse Morgenthau of having a spy in State. Riegelman had been sympathetic to State’s position, but Morgenthau had tried to caution him during a conversation on the night of December 20. For more on Riegelman see: “Jewish Evacuation, December 23, 1943, 3:00 P.M., Meeting Transcript,” 223–223–I; “Jewish Evacuation, December 21, 1943, 2:30 P.M., Meeting Transcript,” December 21, 1943, 201–16; “Jewish Evacuation, December 20, 1943, 2:25 P.M., Meeting Transcript,” 172–85.
subordinates, who had apparently gone behind Welles’ back to prevent the information from getting to Washington. The memorandum stated the following:

On the basis of the cold facts contained for the most part in State Department documents (which we have finally [what appears to be managed] to obtain despite the strenuous opposition of certain State Department officials, including what appears to have been a deliberate falsification of one of the documents), the following points stand out so clearly and so sharply that, despite our efforts to explain them away we have been unable to do so:

(1) In October 1942 Sumner Welles as Acting Secretary of State instructed our Minister in Switzerland to obtain full information confirming the plans of the German Government for the complete extermination of the Jews of Europe.

(2) Notwithstanding the specific instructions of the Acting Secretary of State, Atherton and Dunn not only failed to facilitate the obtaining of this information but in their official capacity went so far as to stop the obtaining of information concerning the murder of the Jewish population of Europe.

(3) Breckinridge Long is responsible for the attempt to conceal this whole situation from this Department.

To put it bluntly, Mr. Secretary, it appears that certain responsible officials of this Government were so fearful that this Government might act to save the Jews of Europe if the gruesome facts relating to Hitler’s plans to exterminate them became known, that they not only attempted to suppress the facts, but, in addition, they used the powers of their official position to secretly countermand the instructions of the Acting Secretary of State ordering such facts to be reported. We leave it for your judgment whether this action made such officials the accomplices of Hitler in this program and whether or not these officials are not war criminals in every sense of the term [underlining in document].

The memorandum went on to detail the specific cables sent by Sumner Welles and explained that cable 354, though signed S.W. for Hull, was “so crafty that there is not a word in the cable that would even suggest to the person signing it that it was designed to countermand the

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Department’s specific requests for information on Hitler’s plans to exterminate the Jews. The cable was obviously contrived as a normal routine message which a busy official would sign without question \[underlining in document\]."\[356\] In short, it appeared that Sumner Welles had initialed cable 354 without knowing what he was signing because the purpose of the cable was deliberately obscured by his underlings.

The Treasury group now deliberated on how to proceed with this new incriminating information. Morgenthau’s staff had accused members of the United States Department of State of being war criminals, and they urged Morgenthau to take action to have these State men removed from their positions:

H.M.JR: [...] What did you people think I was going to do with this [the Secret Memorandum]?

Mr. Paul: You ask what should be done with this? I think there is only one thing to do. I think that is the ideal opportunity to get three of the most vicious men removed from their offices in the State Department you will ever have.

H.M.JR: You still haven’t answered my question.

Mr. Paul: I think you have to talk to Hull about it.

Mr. Pehle: This document, Mr. Secretary, was written to bring you up to date [...] This is for you, so that you would know there are certain documents in there that you had not seen before which we obtained yesterday.

H.M.JR: Which?

Mr. Pehle: [...] The documents that show that in October ’42 Welles sent a message marked “personal” to the Minister telling him he wanted that information. (Refers to file of cables)

Mr. Pehle: The language of that cable shows he was most anxious to get that information. In the face of that, his subordinates—

Mr. Luxford: ...countermanded that.

Mr. Pehle: Following the countermanding he again asked for it, showing that he didn’t realize it had been countermanded.

H.M.JR: Of course, the whole thing is terrifically upsetting. I was under the impression you wanted this thing to go to Hull.

\[356\] Ibid., 223–K–223–M.
Mr. Paul: No, no. This is to you. We were trying to get something to you today because we thought you might want to be thinking about it.

[...]

Mr. Pehle: We wanted to be sure you got the full flavor.

H.M.JR: I get it. I mean when you call these people accomplices of Hitler in this program, they are war criminals in every sense of the term.

Mr. Pehle: I agree with you.

H.M.JR: You are finding them guilty without trying them.

Mr. Pehle: That is right. We are awfully sure of our position, Mr. Secretary. [...]

Mr. Luxford: I think they have had a trial for two years, while they have been working on this program, and they have kicked it around in every possible way.

[...]

Mr. Paul: One of the cleverest conspiracies of silence and suppression. If they are doing this, it has a larger significance and issue than this issue. If they are doing this, what else are they doing with other issues?

Mr. Pehle: Mr. Secretary, we agree on two points. One of them is that it must be presented to State in such a way that Hull will not rise to the defense of his Department, as such.

H.M.JR: That is the point.

Mr. Pehle: Secondly, we must not put him in a position so that this becomes a fight between Mr. Welles and people who are still in the Department.

Thirdly, we don’t think this ought to go to the President and have the President tell Mr. Hull how to run his Department, because that is what got the Welles difficulty at least stirred up.

[...]

H.M.JR: All right. I am physically ill.\textsuperscript{357}

While the Treasury men deliberated on how to proceed with this new information, the license that originally started the Treasury-State negotiations reached its final stage of processing. On

\textsuperscript{357} “Jewish Evacuation, December 23, 1943, 3:00 P.M., Meeting Transcript,” 223–223–E.
December 23, in cable 8096, Harrison informed the State Department that the license had been personally delivered to Dr. Riegner, who planned to use the newly available funds, the equivalent in Swiss francs of $25,000, to begin evacuating Jews from Rumania and evacuating Jews currently in France and Spain to Switzerland. Finally, a rescue proposal favored by President Roosevelt since July of 1943 would be implemented.

Morgenthau would be reluctant to take the issue to the President until the second week of January. Although Morgenthau was contemplating telling the President about the Treasury’s discovery by December 28, he nevertheless wrote to Oscar Cox on December 31 that he did not want to proceed just yet on his proposed executive order or press release on refugees. In a meeting on January 10, his staff tried to convince him that only the President could change policy and only Morgenthau could change the President’s mind. He was in the unusual position of having a close personal relationship with the commander-in-chief. Morgenthau and his staff were now in general agreement that the refugee relief and rescue programs required new leadership. The question was how, and when, to pursue the issue with President Roosevelt:

Mr. White: [...] [T]his Government has played a role that is little short of sickening, and there is only one man who can alter it, and one only, and that is the President. And there is only one who can make the President alter it, and that is yourself. There doesn’t happen to be two other men in this situation capable of making a change in this particular role.

Roosevelt has the power to alter the complexion of this whole treatment in Europe if he feels keenly enough that he wishes to do so.

England will put obstacles, and there will be other obstacles, but he can do it by himself. And he will never do it by himself—he will never pay attention to the problem, unless he is brought to the point where he has to make a decision.

Now, I don’t know whether you could be successful, because it is a difficult job, but I know this, if you can’t nobody can, and that nobody can have a chance to do it except you.\textsuperscript{362}

In these passages, Harry Dexter White is likely alluding to Morgenthau’s unusually close relationship to President Roosevelt. Henry Morgenthau Jr. and the Roosevelts shared a similar socioeconomic background, with Morgenthau having close connections to the families of both Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt.\textsuperscript{363} The Morgenthau family, which also had roots in New York, had longstanding associations with the Roosevelts, and in Eleanor’s judgment, Henry Morgenthau Jr. eventually became “Franklin’s conscience.”\textsuperscript{364} She believed that despite Morgenthau and Roosevelt having frequent disagreements, the relationship between them was based on “underlying deep devotion and trust which never really wavered.”\textsuperscript{365} Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt cherished the Morgenthau “as neighbors and friends before politics and work.”\textsuperscript{366} As Eleanor recounts, Roosevelt had not held a political office “without having Henry Morgenthau, Jr., in some way in his official family” since the period of his governorship.\textsuperscript{367} Morgenthau’s trustworthiness and allegiance were readily apparent to Roosevelt.\textsuperscript{368} Morgenthau biographer and historian John Blum has documented Eleanor’s belief that Morgenthau was one of only two people who “dared tell her husband categorically that he was wrong.”\textsuperscript{369} He knew FDR better than any other senior administration official.\textsuperscript{370} Morgenthau, in short, was a friend.

By January 12, Pehle judged that Treasury was at a decision point, but Morgenthau was still skeptical that anyone at State would be fired. His staff pressed that even if Long, and others, were not fired, they might lose their responsibilities for refugee and relief issues:

Mr. Pehle: You see, we are at the deciding point, right here, as I see it. The Treasury can follow one of two different paths: one is the one of saying, “I can’t get results working

\textsuperscript{362} "Argentina; Jewish Evacuation, January 10, 1944, 3:00 P.M., Meeting Transcript,” 289–90.
\textsuperscript{363} Feingold, “‘Courage First and Intelligence Second:’ The American Jewish Secular Elite, Roosevelt, and the Failure to Rescue,” 63–65; Blum, \textit{Roosevelt and Morgenthau: A Revision and Condensation of From the Morgenthau Diaries}, 24.
\textsuperscript{364} Feingold, “‘Courage First and Intelligence Second:’ The American Jewish Secular Elite, Roosevelt, and the Failure to Rescue,” 65; Blum, \textit{Roosevelt and Morgenthau: A Revision and Condensation of From the Morgenthau Diaries}, xvi.
\textsuperscript{365} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{366} Blum, \textit{Roosevelt and Morgenthau: A Revision and Condensation of From the Morgenthau Diaries}, xvi.
\textsuperscript{367} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{368} Feingold, “‘Courage First and Intelligence Second:’ The American Jewish Secular Elite, Roosevelt, and the Failure to Rescue,” 65.
\textsuperscript{369} Blum, \textit{Roosevelt and Morgenthau: A Revision and Condensation of From the Morgenthau Diaries}, 23.
through Long and his group of people over there,” and go to the President and try to get somebody else to take the job; the other is to help them in what little ways the Treasury can to make Long’s program a success in the mild way in which it is going to be a success. I don’t object to that because it makes the record. Nobody cares about the record, but what it does, it enables Long to say to anybody who criticizes, “Well I have the plans working; [...]”

[...]

H.M.JR: [...] As I once told the President—what does he want Social Security for, or old-age pension? As long as you work for Roosevelt you don’t need it. He never fired anybody.

Mr. Pehle: He might take your job away from you.371

By their 11:00 A.M. meeting on January 13, the Treasury group was talking through specific plans to engage President Roosevelt.372 They realized that consulting the President at this moment had a particular advantage given the agitation in the Congress for more action on refugee issues.373 They surmised that Roosevelt could avoid the embarrassment of having his hand forced to act on refugee issues as the result of congressional criticism. Instead, Roosevelt could act on his own through executive order:

Mr. Paul: That ties in with Connally’s and Bloom’s objections to this Senate bill.

H.M.JR: What is that?

Mr. Luxford: We can give you a little background on that. There have been hearings before both the House and the Senate on the ridiculous operations of State on the refugee problem.

Now, the House Foreign Relations Committee, Bloom’s committee, had been holding hearings on the same problem, and Bloom is having to do everything he can possibly do to keep that resolution from being reported out of the House Foreign Relations Committee.

Now Bloom—

H.M.JR: Why shouldn’t’ it be?

371 “Jewish Evacuation, January 12, 1944, 10:45 A.M., Meeting Transcript,” 88–89.
372 “Jewish Evacuation, January 13, 1944, 11:00 A.M., Meeting Transcript,” 187–211.
373 Ibid.
Mr. Luxford: [...] he was in on the Bermuda conference.\footnote{For more on Bermuda see: David S. Wyman, “Bermuda,” in The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945 (1984; reis., New York: The New Press, 2007), 104–23.} he was the delegate—the case reflects on that; and secondly, he probably feels that it will be a blow to the Administration to have this thing thrown onto the [f]loor of the House and debated on the basis that it will be debated. It will not be a pleasant thing.

Mr. Paul: Therefore, his remedy is an Executive Order—let’s do it without a statute.

Mr. Luxford: That is the point—let’s do this thing and get credit for it.\footnote{“Jewish Evacuation, January 13, 1944, 11:00 A.M., Meeting Transcript,” 204–8.}

Morgenthau now suggested bringing Judge Sam Rosenman, an adviser to Roosevelt, into discussions about the refugee crisis the following Saturday.\footnote{Feingold, “‘Courage First and Intelligence Second’: The American Jewish Secular Elite, Roosevelt, and the Failure to Rescue,” 51; “Jewish Evacuation, January 13, 1944, 11:00 A.M., Meeting Transcript,” 204–8; “Telephone Conversation Transcript between Henry Morgenthau Jr. and Judge Rosenman, January 13, 1944, 11:33 A.M.,” January 13, 1944, 205–8, Diaries of Henry Morgenthau, Jr., April 27, 1933-July 27, 1945, Book 693, January 11-13, 1944, pp. 205-208., Franklin D. Roosevelt Library.} During the January 13 meeting, he called him to ask him to join the Treasury discussions.\footnote{“Jewish Evacuation, January 13, 1944, 11:00 A.M., Meeting Transcript,” 204–8.} Rosenman was a little hesitant to agree, at first. He feared that having too many Jewish men at the meeting might send the wrong message should a leak occur, or should there be any publicity. Morgenthau was stunned that Rosenman was caught up in the appearances of the meeting, given the lives at stake:

\begin{quote}
HM JR: And I’m inviting you to come as Assistant to the President. It will take most of the morning.

R: Uh-huh...Well, now is that wise to have the President to have the President in it?

HM JR: Oh, yes, because the chances are the thing will have to go to the President. Don’t worry whether it is wise or not until you hear it.

R: Well, there won’t be any publicity about that?

HM JR: There never is from Treasury.

[...]

R: I see. Well, do I understand only Treasury people are going to be there?

HM JR: No, I am inviting you, and I am inviting Ben Cohen and Oscar Cox.

[...]
\end{quote}
R: I don’t suppose there will be any leak on the thing, will there?

HM JR: There will be no leak.

R: The thing I am thinking about is whether when you talk about refugees you want to have three Jews. You’re not only talking about Jewish refugees?

HM JR: I’m talking about refugees.

R: Yes. Well, I have my reservations about those three people. I can see that I can be there with respect to the President. What would Ben be there? Just as an individual?

HM JR: No, he is coming from the White House, too.

R: And Cox?

HM JR: Cox is coming over as a special advisor to me, but with the understanding that he is coming—that this is just between the Treasury and the President, and nobody else. [...] I don’t think you have any conception of how serious this thing is.

R: Well, I am sure I have.

HM JR: Well, if you have I don’t see how you can keep the President out of it.

R: Well, I don’t—I don’t say the President ought to be kept out of it. He is the only one who can solve it eventually.

HM JR: Well, that’s the point.

R: But the thing that I am most—if it is an off-the-record thing, why I don’t see any harm in it at all.

HM JR: Well, look if the only thing you are worrying about is publicity, I can guarantee you there will be no publicity.

R: All right. Well then certainly it doesn’t make much difference who is there. If it is—if there were to be publicity, I think the choice of the three people is terrible.

HM JR: Don’t worry about the publicity. What I want is intelligence and courage—courage first and intelligence second.378

Morgenthau turned to the other members of Treasury after hanging up the phone to summarize the conversation. They were as stunned as he was at Rosenman’s preoccupation with publicity. It was during this exchange that Randolph Paul would highlight the primary difference between Morgenthau and his team and Rosenman. Morgenthau had told Rosenman that he wanted courage first. It was courage that had assisted Bernard Meltzer in conveying information to Josiah DuBois, courage that had prompted Donald Hiss to risk his career to provide Treasury with both of the cables—one of which they had not requested—that together revealed State’s suppression efforts, and courage that Morgenthau demonstrated in confronting Hull, Long, and soon, Roosevelt. These were not men concerned with appearances:

H.M.JR: My God! Sam Rosenman: “Would there be any publicity? Would there be any leaks?” He thought the choice of people coming was very bad. […]

I said, “Do you realize how serious it is?”

He said, “I realize, but it is a bad time to bring the President in.”

“Yes, I realize nobody can solve it but the President. Will anybody know I am going to be there?”

Mrs. Klotz: It is inconceivable.

[…]

H.M.JR: […] Well, I could have talked more freely, a little bit more emphatically, if I hadn’t had some people here, but maybe it is just as well that I didn’t.

Mr. Luxford: You told him it took courage.

H.M.JR: I said courage and intelligence.

Mr. Paul: Courage first.

H.M.JR: All right.379

Rosenman would not in fact show up to the scheduled meeting on January 15 as planned.380

379 “Jewish Evacuation, January 13, 1944, 11:00 A.M., Meeting Transcript,” 209–11.
By this point, Josiah DuBois had summarized Treasury’s findings in a comprehensive report, which would provide a written case for the Treasury Department in their presentation to Roosevelt.\footnote{On DuBois’s role, see: Medoff, Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. and the Struggle for a US Response to the Holocaust, 34; 55; On DuBois also: Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945, 187.} On January 13, 1944, Morgenthau received this report, which was entitled “Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of the Jews.”\footnote{Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945, 187; “Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of the Jews,” 212–29.} The eighteen-page document described State Department actions to deliberately prevent rescue measures to assist Jews.\footnote{“Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of the Jews,” 212–29.} The report stated the following:

I am convinced on the basis of the information which is available to me that certain officials in our State Department, which is charged with carrying out this policy have been guilty not only of gross procrastination and willful failure to act, but even of willful attempts to prevent action from being taken to rescue Jews from Hitler.

[...]

Unless remedial steps of a drastic nature are taken, and taken immediately, I am certain that no effective action will be taken by this Government to prevent the complete extermination of the Jews in German controlled Europe, and that this Government will have to share for all time responsibility for this extermination.

The tragic history of this Government’s handling of this matter reveals that certain State Department officials are guilty of the following:

1. They have not only failed to use the Governmental machinery at their disposal to rescue Jews from Hitler, but have even gone so far as to use this Government machinery to prevent the rescue of these Jews.

2. They have not only failed to cooperate with private organizations in the efforts of these organizations to work out individual programs of their own, but they have taken steps designed to prevent these programs from being put into effect.

3. They not only have failed to facilitate the obtaining of information concerning Hitler’s plans to exterminate the Jews of Europe but in their official capacity have gone so far as to surreptitiously attempt to stop the obtaining of information concerning the murder of the Jewish population of Europe.

4. They have tried to cover up their guilt by:
   (a) concealment and misrepresentation;
(b) the giving of false and misleading explanations for their failures to act and their attempts to prevent action;
(c) the issuance of false and misleading statements concerning the “action” which they have taken to date [underlining in document].

The report goes on to detail various State Department delays and misrepresentations, including the Riegner plan delays and concealments, and the increased advocacy in the US Congress for more action on refugee issues from the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, as well as from representatives Celler, Samuel Dickstein (D-NY), Arthur Klein (D-NY), and George Sadowski (D-MI), and Senator Wagner. DuBois specifically cited the Gillette-Rogers Resolutions: Senate Resolution 203, introduced by Senator Gillette, and the identical House Resolutions 350 and 352 introduced by Representatives Baldwin and Rogers. He also noted that “The most glaring example of the use of the machinery of this Government to actually prevent the rescue of Jews is the administrative restrictions which have been placed upon the granting of visas to the United States [underlining in document].” He continued, “If anyone were to attempt to work out a set of restrictions specifically designed to prevent Jewish refugees from entering this country it is difficult to conceive of how more effective restrictions could have been imposed than have already been imposed on grounds of ‘security[,]’ It is obvious of course that these restrictions are not essential for security reasons [underlining in document].” DuBois ended the report with a quote from Congressman Celler’s December 20 denunciation of Long’s testimony before the House:

If men of the temperament and philosophy of Long continue in control of immigration administration, we may as well take down that plaque from the Statue of Liberty and black out the “lamp beside the golden door.”

On January 15, the men of the Treasury Department met again to go over their plans for approaching President Roosevelt. Now, they discussed their proposed executive order to establish a “War Refugee Board,” headed by the Secretary of State, the Secretary of the

384 Ibid., 212–13.
385 Ibid., 215–16.
386 Ibid., 216.
387 Ibid., 217.
388 Ibid., 218.
Treasury, and the Foreign Economic Administrator, and tasked with taking “all measures within its power to rescue the victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death and otherwise to afford such victims all possible relief and assistance consistent with the successful prosecution of the war.”

The conversation again covered the role of congressional pressure:

H.M.JR: Oscar, for me, as well as for everybody here, give us the status of this resolution on the Hill. Where would that fit into the picture?

Mr. Cox: It would fit in this way: [t]he Senate Foreign Relations Committee, with ten members present, voted unanimously to report the resolution out, so the only problem now is the debate on the floor. Most of the people who know about the resolution feel that when it gets to the floor two things will probably happen. One element thinks the resolution will be passed; the other that in the course of debate State Department’s position will be ripped open in that Breckinridge Long’s testimony will be attacked in the specific content that his figures were wrong, in that his facts were wrong, and it was an attempt to sugar-coat an action when action should have been taken.

On the House side the Committee has had a terrific internal fight between—[led] in the main on one side by Will Rogers [...] and Gillette, and on the other side by Sol Bloom.

During this meeting, it was finally decided that Morgenthau would approach President Roosevelt himself, without consulting Hull again, to present him with DuBois’s report. He would rely on his close personal friendship:

H.M.JR: [...] I know the President well enough to go to him and say, “I want to see you on a matter that is very, very close to my heart. I want your advice. How would you handle this situation?”

Secretary Morgenthau suggested that rising congressional pressure would be their strongest source of leverage with the President:

H.M.JR: [...] I personally hate to say this thing, but our strongest out is the imminence of Congress doing something. That is our strongest out. Really, when you get down to the point, this is a boiling pot on the Hill. You can’t hold it; it is going to pop, and you have either got to move very fast, or the Congress of the United States will do it for you.

Mr. White: I would hate to see that argument used by you, because you are putting it on, it seems to me, the extremity of your position of getting something done. Let the President think of that himself.

Mrs. Klotz: No, Harry, Mr. Morgenthau is right.

392 Ibid., 88.
393 Ibid., 95.
Mr. Cohen: It is the best argument the President can use to get things started with Hull. […]

Mr. Pehle: Mr. Secretary, there is one danger in using too much of that political thing, and that is that what is done here must be more than a symbol to satisfy and stop Congressional action. […]

H.M.JR: Look, if you don’t mind, I think I know him well enough to present a case to the President, and I can’t get into all this legal thing, but I do think I know what will have weight with him. And to preface those remarks, I hate to say that I have to use this at all. The arguments ought to be settled on the merits of the case we are talking about here in the Treasury family, and we are calling a spade a spade. […]

H.M.JR: It isn’t a question of the force with which you present it; it is a question of giving him the facts and his own chemical reaction. You just don’t know what his own chemical reaction will be. I have been up against him on so many tough propositions, and I never know how he is going to react. [Sometimes] he has been very gentle and very considerate, and other times he just veers away. I mean, the first time I was down here I went through the most embarrassing thing of my life. He wanted to fire Miller from the Federal Reserve Board. He invited Miller in. There were four couples that had dinner together while I was Assistant Secretary once a week, Roosevelt, Miller, and I don’t remember who the others were. I had to sit there for one hour while he tried to fire Miller. He kept saying, “Isn’t that so, Henry? Isn’t that so, Henry?”

Morgenthau interrupted the meeting to make an appointment with the President for him, Pehle, and Paul on January 16, 1944, the next day. With overwhelming evidence demonstrating the State Department’s deliberate attempt to conceal their suppression of information, and with the team, including Morgenthau, now convinced that Morgenthau was in an unusual position to present this information to Roosevelt, and with congressional pressure mounting, it was now time for the Treasury to approach the President.

394 Ibid., 97–98; 108.
395 Ibid., 100; 109.
Treasury Meets with Roosevelt

“From one of two of a kind”
Note written by FDR on photo of him and Henry Morgenthau, above, sent to Elinor Morgenthau

During the meeting on January 16—a meeting that would last only twenty minutes—Secretary Morgenthau relayed to President Roosevelt that the Treasury had “uncovered evidence indicating that not only were the people in the State Department inefficient in dealing with this problem, but that they were actually taking action to prevent the rescue of Jews.” Morgenthau had taken with him a revised version of the “Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of the Jews,” now signed by him and entitled “Personal Report to the President.” Morgenthau referenced his father’s actions to help Armenians targeted by the Ottoman Empire, asserting that measures could still be pursued to help Jews. Roosevelt was receptive to the proposal and suggested that the Secretary of War should be on the Board instead of the proposed Leo Crowley of the Foreign Economic Administration. Roosevelt asked

396 “Franklin D. Roosevelt and Henry Morgenthau Jr.”
397 Pehle, “Memorandum for the Secretary’s Files, January 16, 1944,” 190.
399 Pehle, “Memorandum for the Secretary’s Files, January 16, 1944,” 190–91.
400 Ibid.
Morgenthau to discuss his plans with Undersecretary Stettinius and Judge Rosenman, concluding
the meeting with “We will do it.”

At 5:30, that same day, Morgenthau, Pehle, Paul, Judge Rosenman, and Stettinius met at
Secretary Morgenthau’s home to discuss the plans for a new refugee board. Stettinius favored
the proposal but agreed that the Secretary of War should replace Crowley on the Board. The
group decided to amend the proposed executive order accordingly and to deliver the corrected
versions to Judge Rosenman by 9:15 the following morning. Rosenman would then take the
new documents immediately to President Roosevelt. Paul, Pehle, Luxford, and DuBois all met
at Pehle’s house to revise the documents overnight.

The obstacles facing Treasury had not yet ceased, however. Pehle and Paul arranged for
separate government cars to pick them up at 8:00 the following morning and take them to the
White House to deliver the documents to Judge Rosenman, who would then pass them on to
Roosevelt, but neither car would arrive on the morning of January 17. Pehle was informed at
two minutes of eight that they simply did not have a car, leaving him scrambling to find a way to
the White House before Rosenman’s appointment with the President. An outraged Henry
Morgenthau immediately called the office responsible for arranging the government cars, and
spoke to a Norman Thompson:

HMJR: I was just talking with John Pehle and he was to go to the White House this
morning for me.

T: I see.

HMJR: He ordered a car at eight o’clock.

T: Yes.

401 Ibid., 190; Medoff, Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. and the Struggle for a US Response
to the Holocaust, 64; Martin Ostrow Interview with John Pehle, Bethesda, Maryland, cited in Medoff.
402 Pehle, “Memorandum for the Secretary’s Files, January 16, 1944,” 191.
403 Ibid., 192.
404 Ibid.
405 Ibid.; “Telephone Conversation Transcript between John Pehle and Henry Morgenthau Jr., January 17, 1944,
406 Although not stated explicitly, it is implied that Randolph Paul was in the group. “Telephone Conversation
407 Ibid., 186–87.
408 Ibid.
HMJR: And at two minutes of eight they called him up—they were trying to find a car and he ordered it last night. When I get in tomorrow morning I want a written report where every car is and I'm not going to take any God-damn excuse either.

T: Yeah.

HMJR: Or any lies from these people. Now, this was a very, very important thing.

T: Well, it should have been taken care of.

HMJR: Well, I know, but I'm not going to be given the run around down the line, they didn’t understand or somebody this or that...

T: Yes.

HMJR: ...the way I always get it.

T: Yeah.

HMJR: Now, I want a written report and I want to know where every car was, every chauffeur was, and who they looked after from seven to nine this morning.

T: I see. I’ll have that for you.

HMJR: And it’s—I’ve taken a lot of this and I’m not going to take any more.

On January 22, 1944, the efforts of Secretary Morgenthau and his team at Treasury bore fruit in the issuance of Executive Order 9417, which created the War Refugee Board. Senator Gillette and Congressman Rogers subsequently withdrew their corresponding resolutions. The order tasked the new Board with taking “action for the immediate rescue from the Nazis of as many as possible of the persecuted minorities of Europe—racial, religious or political—all civilian victims of enemy savagery.” More specifically, it was charged with “the development of plans and programs and the inauguration of effective measures for (a) the rescue, transportation,
maintenance and relief of the victims of enemy oppression, and (b) the establishment of havens of temporary refuge for such victims,” and was to do so “without limitation." The Board would be directly responsible to the president and would report directly to him.414

Following the Board’s creation, Edward Stettinius, Undersecretary of State, asked John Pehle what the State Department could do to be helpful to the Board’s mission.415 Pehle said that the most helpful action would be for the Department to understand that the US policy toward refugees had just undergone dramatic change.416 Stettinius requested Pehle come to his office the following day.417 The Undersecretary had gathered all State Department Division Heads together and explained that the policy of the State Department would be to cooperate fully with the War Refugee Board.418 As Pehle recalls, Stettinius then went around the room saying, “do you understand this, do you understand it[,] this was a powerful thing. Nothing like this had ever been done that I ever heard of.”419

In effect, the creation of the War Refugee Board transferred responsibility for refugees and rescue from the State Department to the Treasury Department. The Treasury Department would house the War Refugee Board’s offices.420 John Pehle would be named the Board’s first Executive Director, while Josiah DuBois would become its general counsel.421 Still others at Treasury would be named to senior staff positions.422 Indeed, Pehle recruited most of his staff, which never numbered more than thirty, from the Treasury Department.423 The task of implementing US rescue initiatives to save persecuted Jews in Europe had become “essentially a Treasury operation.”424 Treasury had now assumed responsibility for relief and rescue. In the words of historians Richard Breitman and Allan Lichtman, “Morgenthau moved into the vacancy

415 Claude Lanzmann Shoah Collection, Interview with John Pehle, Transcript,” 24–25.
416 Ibid., 25.
417 Ibid.
418 Ibid.
419 Ibid.
420 Medoff, Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. and the Struggle for a US Response to the Holocaust, 70.
422 Medoff, Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. and the Struggle for a US Response to the Holocaust, 70.
424 Medoff, Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. and the Struggle for a US Response to the Holocaust, 70.
created by Welles’ ouster.” Roosevelt quickly “relegated Long to purgatory” and Long was completely out of government in just months following the meeting with Treasury. Long described it best in his diary entry, which, though undated, is likely from early August 1944:

I once had Roosevelt’s confidence. That seems to have been withdrawn. Passing me over for appointment on two different occasions—once under unfortunate circumstances—has been a definite announcement of less than full confidence to say the least.

He wrote the following later in August:

I went to the White House today—not specially invited but as a member of the Dumbarton Oaks conference. It was the first time I had seen the President face to face for three and a half years […] I hesitated a bit about going—because I was not sure he really wanted me and might not realize I was a member of the American delegation. […] I am sure he was incredulous when he looked at me as I approached him at the head of the line […] His face was at first inscrutable. Then I smiled—he smiled—we shook hands—and he said—“Mr. Long”—nothing else. As far as my recollection goes it is the only time in my memory he has called me anything but “Breck”.

427 Dating is based on the placement of this page relative to other pages in the diary.
WRB Rescue Action

The War Refugee Board’s work immediately increased the US policy response in the categories of humanitarian, public condemnation, private diplomacy, and punishing. The Board gave those pushing within the US government for increased action on relief and rescue issues the necessary bureaucratic and administrative support to advance their policies. It also gave these people the financial means to achieve their goals. The Board initially received $1,000,000 from the President’s Emergency Fund, and later $150,000 from the same fund. It also received $15,000,000 from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, over $1,000,000 from Vaad Hahatzala Joint Distribution Committee, and over $300,000 from the World Jewish Congress. The United States Treasury Department would eventually license approximately $20,000,000 in private funds to carry out rescue and relief projects supervised by the Board’s representatives overseas. The Board also received funding from the Congressional Appropriation for Foreign War Relief and from private donations. As noted, although the Board understood that “the major problem” for refugees involved Jews, the Board’s mission entailed assisting all victims of Nazi aggression, including non-Jewish refugees.

In their own administrative history of the Board, War Refugee Board staff write that they “took the position from the beginning that precedent and red tape had to be eliminated and bold unprecedented action taken if any lives were to be saved.” The Board had three main programs falling under humanitarian, punishment, private diplomacy, and public condemnation. The first program included efforts to evacuate refugees from enemy territory by hiding them or by securing their status as protected nationalities. The second program focused on psychological actions to convince Nazi forces, especially satellite countries, to stop cooperating with Nazi atrocities, including measures against Jews. The third program included efforts to provide relief to those in German camps and help prisoners survive long enough to be

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430 Breitman, “Roosevelt and the Holocaust,” 123.
432 Ibid., 6.
433 Ibid.
434 Ibid., 7.
435 Ibid., 7.
437 Ibid., 8.
438 Ibid.
439 Ibid.
rescued or liberated. The War Refugee Board deployed representatives abroad to aid in rescue initiatives, including to Turkey, Spain, London, and Sweden.

Many of the evacuation operations were carried out clandestinely, through underground channels and by bribing German officials. The Board worked to obtain false identification papers, trusted places for hiding, and secret shipments of food. In its history of its activities, Board staff estimated that tens of thousands were saved through these clandestine programs.

The Board also sought to take advantage of what they perceived to be “defection in the Nazi ranks evidenced by the attack on Hitler’s life and the mounting successes of the Allied armies.” Germans had begun to suggest limited relief proposals for Jews ostensibly in exchange for “personal protection” from repercussions for atrocities committed against Jews. Although the Board would not directly partake in formal negotiations with Germans, the Board did assist in facilitating such negotiations by foreign citizens. For instance, they transferred five million dollars to a restricted account in Switzerland for Saly Mayer, a negotiator, to bolster Meyer’s negotiation position and to buy time. In the course of that particular negotiation, German officials released 1673 prisoners from the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, cancelled the deportation of 200,000 Jews still in Budapest, Hungary in August 1944, and redirected transports of 17,000 Hungarian Jews intended for Auschwitz to Austria. The Schutzstaffel (S.S.) also agreed to allow the International Red Cross in Budapest to care for 3,000 Jewish children, and arrangements were made to distribute humanitarian supplies to 7,000 Jews in Vienna-area labor camps. A similar WRB effort to place funds in an account abroad, which would never be paid in full, in order to bolster a negotiator’s position, helped facilitate the release of 1200 Jews from the Theresienstadt concentration camp. The Board was also involved in a negotiation that resulted in the release of a few thousand prisoners from a

440 Ibid.
441 “Claude Lanzmann Shoah Collection, Interview with John Pehle, Transcript,” 20.
443 Ibid.
444 Ibid.
445 Ibid., 215.
446 Ibid.; “Claude Lanzmann Shoah Collection, Interview with John Pehle, Transcript,” 41.
448 Ibid., 217.
449 Ibid.
450 Ibid.
451 Ibid., 217–19.
Ravensbrück, Germany concentration camp. Although these numbers are relatively small compared to the total number of Nazi victims, the Board had hoped that the negotiations would primarily serve to buy more time to allow Jews in German custody the opportunity to survive.

The Board perceived psychological warfare and threat of punishment to be the best way to save the largest numbers of lives. It urged the United States to adopt a clear and public policy conveying that those within the Axis who had “committed crimes against stateless persons and Axis nationals” would be viewed as war criminals. The United States eventually adopted this policy, and it was integrated into the United Nations program for war criminal punishment. The Board further sought to clearly communicate to Axis satellites that the United States regarded all assistance in any form to the persecution of Jews and others as “criminal participation in organized murder.” The Office of War Information and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) broadcast warnings to Hungary and throughout Europe. Warning pamphlets were dropped into Hungary. Because the deportations of Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz did not begin until May of 1944, following the Nazi invasion in March of that year, the War Refugee Board had a unique opportunity to save lives in that country.

When the Board had received information concerning impending deportations in Hungary, it had also urged the International Red Cross, the Vatican, and European neutrals to increase their representation in the country. Sweden, the Vatican, and the Red Cross would ultimately do so. After learning that orders had been given to exterminate surviving Jews in several concentration camps in the fall of 1944, the Board cabled their representatives in Switzerland, Sweden, Portugal, Italy, and Turkey to ask that they communicate to German officials that the United States had this intelligence and that all individuals involved in carrying

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453 Ibid., 219.
454 Ibid., 9; 12; 295.
455 Ibid., 12.
456 Ibid.
457 Ibid., 295-297; 298-302. For more details on this, see latter pages.
459 Ibid.
462 Ibid., 297.
out such an order would be held accountable.\textsuperscript{463} The Board also encouraged Swiss and Swedish consuls to visit areas where surviving Jews were held, which they viewed as one of the most effective methods of saving lives.\textsuperscript{464}

The Board also launched relief efforts to prevent the Nazis from killing through starvation.\textsuperscript{465} It expanded private programs and created new ones in order to deliver food parcels from neutral countries to concentration camp prisoners.\textsuperscript{466} The Board also instituted its own food relief program, financed by the President’s emergency funds, to send parcels to concentration camp prisoners.\textsuperscript{467} It also worked to establish refugee havens and was successful in launching camps in the vicinity of Casablanca and in North Africa, as well as expanding camps and havens in the Middle East, Switzerland, and Sweden.\textsuperscript{468} The Board also arranged for 1,000 refugees who had escaped to Italy to come to the United States and stay at Fort Ontario, Oswego, New York Emergency Refugee Shelter.\textsuperscript{469}

As mentioned, in total, the War Refugee Board is directly credited with saving approximately 200,000 Jews and 20,000 non-Jews from the Axis Powers.\textsuperscript{470} These estimates do not include lives saved indirectly by the Board as a result of the Board’s war-crimes warnings and its delivery of food relief into concentration camps as the war came to a close.\textsuperscript{471} The US record on rescue was better than that of Great Britain, Russia, or other Allied nations in large part because of the War Refugee Board.\textsuperscript{472} Thus, although the total number of victims saved is only a very small portion of the total victims of the Holocaust, the War Refugee Board’s efforts represent a relative success of rescue during this period.

The Board was also hindered by the fact that it was started after the Nazi extermination program had been underway for several years. By the time that the Board was established in 1944, the Nazis had killed over 1 million Jews, Roma, and others in Soviet territory, had already

\textsuperscript{463} Ibid., 297–98.
\textsuperscript{464} Ibid., 299–301.
\textsuperscript{465} Ibid., 10.
\textsuperscript{466} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{467} Ibid., 10–11.
\textsuperscript{468} Ibid., 11.
\textsuperscript{469} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{470} Medoff, Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. and the Struggle for a US Response to the Holocaust, 129; Breitman and Lichtman, FDR and the Jews, 294.
\textsuperscript{471} Medoff, Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. and the Struggle for a US Response to the Holocaust, 129.
\textsuperscript{472} Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945, xxi.
ordered complete liquidation of all ghettos in the Soviet Union and Poland, and had been deporting Jews to killing centers from Belgium, Croatia, France, the Netherlands, Poland, Germany, Greece, and Norway for several years.\textsuperscript{473}

The Board also continued to face obstacles from the State Department—which on occasion held urgent cables for long periods of time and delayed warnings to satellite countries—and from the War Department, from the British, and from the Russians.\textsuperscript{474} A March 10, 1944 memorandum from the War Refugee Board Office of the Executive Director stated the following:

The efforts of the War Refugee Board are being effectively nullified by the failure of the State Department to act promptly on the Board’s programs, especially in the prompt transmission of cables. Delays of weeks have occurred in sending out important messages and even simple informational cables have been delayed for days and days.\textsuperscript{475}

The War Department also famously blocked the War Refugee Board proposal to bomb sites at the Auschwitz concentration camp.\textsuperscript{476} The Board was the only government agency that considered and advocated for bombing the camp.\textsuperscript{477}

It was thus in spite of these obstacles that the Board saved 220,000 people from death at the hands of the Axis Powers. Morgenthau’s reflection on the Board’s successes from 1945 bears repeating:

With a small staff in Washington and representatives in strategic neutral countries, the War Refugee Board put the full prestige and power of the United States Government behind the efforts of private agencies and inter-govern-metal organizations […] Although it is impossible to measure the success of the Board in terms of exact statistics, there is no doubt that many thousands of lives were saved as a result of its work. This was


\textsuperscript{475} “Memorandum for Mr. Stettinius, March 10, 1944,” March 10, 1944, 1, National Archives, RG 59, A1 1407 Subject Files 1942-1947, Box 2, Folder: IGC-War Refugee Board, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

\textsuperscript{476} Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945, 288–97; For more on the Auschwitz bombing deliberations, see: Michael J. Neufeld and Michael Berenbaum, eds., The Bombing of Auschwitz (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000).

\textsuperscript{477} Breitman, “Allied Knowledge of Auschwitz-Birkenau in 1943-1944,” 175.
accomplished because the problem was recognized and dealt with as one requiring attention by the government at the highest level.\textsuperscript{478}

The creation of the War Refugee Board would not have occurred without the efforts of Secretary Henry Morgenthau and his team at Treasury, as well as the efforts of Donald Hiss and Bernard Meltzer at State, who provided Treasury with key documents and information. Treasury’s months of work to uncover State Department obstruction and suppression of information, and to present that information in a powerful and comprehensive way to President Roosevelt, ultimately made the difference in shifting US policy. They were successful despite efforts to conceal information within State, and even despite their cars not showing up to allow them to deliver necessary files. Using Morgenthau’s personal relationship with Roosevelt and growing pressure in Congress to their advantage, the small group succeeded in accomplishing what Oscar Cox could not accomplish in June 1943, what congressional delegates could not accomplish in April of 1943, and what Edward Stettinius could not accomplish in the fall of 1943: create a new organization within the US government solely devoted to the rescue of victims of the Holocaust.\textsuperscript{479}

\textsuperscript{478} Morgenthau, “Memorandum for the President,” May 23, 1945, 1.
\textsuperscript{479} “Jewish Evacuation, January 15, 1944, 9:30 A.M., Meeting Transcript,” 92–93.
DISCUSSION

The theory proposed in this dissertation argues that significant policy change has historically occurred within the United States when three factors converge: inner-circle dissent; a high degree of congressional pressure; and a positive value (costs for inaction) on political liability.

In the case of the Holocaust, the United States primarily expressed policies falling into the *ignore* category until January of 1944. From 1938 until 1943, limited actions within *humanitarian, public condemnation, punishing, and private diplomacy* did occur, but these policies were often sporadic and ineffective. Moreover, they lacked a significant institutional backing from the US government. In the early years, from 1938 to 1939, Roosevelt bypassed an isolationist and anti-immigration Congress to push immigration liberalization through on his own. From 1940 to 1942, heightened security concerns reversed many of the previous advances, and little was accomplished to help victims of the Holocaust besides condemning the atrocities publicly. In 1943, Congress began to exert more pressure on Roosevelt to improve his handling of the refugee issue while criticizing the State Department’s management of relief and rescue. Concurrently, the Treasury team began negotiations with State on a license agreement to rescue European Jews. These negotiations would eventually reveal that the State Department had deliberately sought to suppress information about the Final Solution from reaching Washington and subsequently to conceal their actions. Treasury officials decided that the only person who could use this information effectively to change Roosevelt’s mind was Henry Morgenthau Jr, Secretary of the Treasury. Morgenthau presented Treasury’s findings to the President, aided by pressure in Congress as well as the possible threat of a political scandal in the wake of these revelations. In less than one week, Roosevelt issued the executive order creating the consequential War Refugee Board.

*Figure 5: Theoretical Diagram*
The congressional pressure variable was strong and present in the months leading up to the creation of the War Refugee Board. Indeed, congressional pressure from both the House and the Senate gave the Treasury group significant leverage in presenting their plea for a separate rescue agency to President Roosevelt. In early 1943, the Congress had spoken out unanimously and forcefully against Nazi atrocities in resolutions arguing the following:

[T]he American people view with indignation the atrocities inflicted upon the civilian population in the Nazi-occupied countries, and especially the mass murder of Jewish men, women, and children […]

[...] the dictates of humanity and honorable conduct in war demand that this inexcusable slaughter and mistreatment shall cease […] it is the sense of this Congress that those guilty, directly or indirectly, of these criminal acts shall be held accountable and punished in a manner commensurate with the offenses for which they are responsible. 480

By the fall of 1943, both the House and the Senate had introduced resolutions, the Gillette-Rogers Resolution, which proposed a separate US government commission charged with rescuing victims of the Holocaust. The resolution received a unanimous vote from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to report the resolution out, just a few weeks before Treasury approached Roosevelt, and though the House resolutions were not yet reported out at the time of the Treasury-FDR meeting, the press had predicted passage by an overwhelming majority. The tide in Congress was now in favor of action on refugee issues. The Congress was no longer serving as an impediment to measures aimed at helping victims of the Holocaust. Instead, Congress was pushing resolutions, supported by a number of Roosevelt’s opponents, that would serve to embarrass the administration on refugee issues. Congress was highlighting Roosevelt’s failures on the issue to the public, criticizing the response of his administration, and urging increased action. Given this degree of pressure, taking executive action allowed Roosevelt to avoid the public perception that he had to be forced by Congress to move on refugee issues. He would act before Congress had the chance, and just in time. Roosevelt’s executive order

establishing the War Refugee Board was signed only two days before the Senate planned to vote on Gillette-Rogers.\textsuperscript{481}

The Treasury officials strongly believed that congressional pressure was crucial to their success. In addition to having credited congressional pressure in several of the aforementioned meetings from the months leading up to the Board’s creation, they also acknowledged the role of Congress in hindsight. In a meeting on March 8, 1944, Morgenthau would highlight the importance of congressional pressure to the Board’s creation. DuBois would note that Morgenthau’s role was also critical:

H.M.JR: [...] [T]he thing that made it possible to get the President really to act on this thing—we are talking here among ourselves—was the thing that—the resolution at least had passed the Senate to form this kind of a War Refugee Committee, hadn’t it? [...] 

[...]

Mr. DuBois: It was more because of what you did than anything else, in my opinion.

H.M.JR: I had something to do with it, granted, but the tide was running with me.

Mr. DuBois: That is true.

H.M.JR: I think that six months before I couldn’t have done it. [...]\textsuperscript{482}

This conversation is representative of the fact that all three factors mattered in the path toward action on the Holocaust. Congressional pressure was important, but so was Morgenthau. Morgenthau needed the pressure from Congress to bolster his case for executive action. Yet, DuBois is also correct that Morgenthau himself was critical to the success of their initiative. Others with similar ideas had failed where Morgenthau had succeeded. He was the rare individual that combined personal friendship and a Cabinet post.\textsuperscript{483}

\textsuperscript{481} Medoff, \textit{Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. and the Struggle for a US Response to the Holocaust}, 70.


\textsuperscript{483} Trude Lash, former chairman of the Eleanor Roosevelt Institute and board member of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, argues that Morgenthau was in fact the high-level official closest to Roosevelt: Newton, “Transcript of the Summary of the Conference on ‘Policies and Responses of the American Government to the Holocaust,’ 11-12 November 1993,” 10; Newton, \textit{FDR and the Holocaust}, 274.
On March 16, 1944, Morgenthau described a conversation he had with Myron Taylor, a Roosevelt administration official, regarding the War Refugee Board’s origins. In the conversation, Morgenthau had once again cited the significance of congressional pressure:

H.M.JR: […] I said, […] “[…] Now we have a group together, and we are a little bit more frank, if you know about the Resolution in the House and in the Senate by which we forced the President to appoint a Committee.”

I said, “A part of the thing was in order not to have the President’s hand forced where he has shown so much interest in this thing and getting it started under his own free will—not to have him forced by the Congress to do this.”

Here, he notes that the congressional resolutions forced the President to act. These resolutions pressured Roosevelt to take action now or to be forced later by Congress. The increase in congressional pressure in 1943 thus not only removed a prior impediment to Roosevelt taking action on behalf of refugees, it added a significant incentive for him to do so.

Morgenthau’s role in leading the Treasury dissent was critical to the shift in US policy. He was the key inner-circle dissenter in the Holocaust case. Congress had proposed taking action directly to Roosevelt and was unsuccessful. Edward Stettinius’s proposal to the President for a committee could not survive the opposition from State. Oscar Cox’s proposal, the proposal that formed the basis of the War Refugee Board, could not get approved until Treasury’s intervention.

Morgenthau was a member of FDR’s trusted group of friends. He was “the only one of FDR’s circle to act,” and when he did, he was effective in provoking Roosevelt to create an entirely new government agency charged with rescuing victims of genocide abroad in under one week. Feingold has written that the story of Morgenthau shows that “one key to a stronger response within the Roosevelt administration was the activation of those power holders of Jewish background who, like Morgenthau, had found a place in Roosevelt’s official family.”

486 Wyman, The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust, 1941-1945, 100; Breitman, “Roosevelt and the Holocaust,” 118.
Morgenthau “made up part of Roosevelt’s entourage […] Ultimately, Jewish-rescue advocates had to involve the highest political office in the nation for an enlistment of the full energies and resources of the government.” As John Pehle commented, Morgenthau “used his own relationship with the President, which was a very close one, to get the Board established.” In short, the “sole resolute proponent of rescue in FDR’s inner circle,” Henry Morgenthau, had changed the course of US policy in response to the Holocaust. As Treasury officials discussed in a March 8, 1944 meeting, being effective on the refugee issue in general required someone who was willing to fight and had the confidence of the President:

Mrs. Klotz: You see, Mr. Morgenthau, you have to get somebody who is close enough to the President who is willing to fight.

Mr. Pehle: And whose political judgment the President would have some confidence in. We need someone who would say to the President, “Don’t be afraid of this issue. It will make you, not break you.”

Morgenthau had the confidence of the President in January of 1944. In Roosevelt’s words, they were “two of a kind.” They had a close and longstanding friendship, characterized by loyalty, trust, and support. When Morgenthau approached Roosevelt that winter, he did not just do so as the Secretary of the Treasury: he did so as a friend. Roosevelt listened to Morgenthau when he would not listen to others. The fact that it was Morgenthau, the person in his Cabinet whom Roosevelt knew best, presenting the case, made the difference. In less than one week, the United States would have a new policy.

The men working with Morgenthau in the dissent—Josiah DuBois, John Pehle, Randolph Paul, Ansel Luxford, and Harry Dexter White—were also critical to the creation of the Board, as were the officials in the State Department—mainly Donald Hiss and Bernard Meltzer—who assisted Treasury in their efforts. Their actions to document and to expose State Department malfeasance were necessary to the Board’s establishment. Without their discoveries and their pressure on Morgenthau, the Secretary of the Treasury likely would not have approached

491 Ibid., 74.
492 “Claude Lanzmann Shoah Collection, Interview with John Pehle, Transcript,” 18–19.
495 “Franklin D. Roosevelt and Henry Morgenthau Jr.”
Roosevelt at all, or at the very least, he would not have approached him as forcefully as he did in January of 1944. Moreover, without the documentation about the State Department cover-up, Roosevelt would not have faced the same degree of political pressure to act. John Pehle remarked in an interview that the War Refugee Board “was established merely because of the Treasury Department.” He acknowledged that the Board perhaps could have come about at a later date, but in January of 1944, “it’s clear that the Treasury was the impetus by which the Board was established.” Given that Roosevelt had rejected three other proposals to establish the Board prior to Treasury’s dissent, the evidence appears to support Pehle’s assertions that the Treasury Department’s dissent was a key driving factor in the Board’s creation.

The question of why Treasury became the home of dissent is perhaps suited to another research project, but some evidence suggests that Secretary Morgenthau had created an atmosphere unusually open to alternative viewpoints. Edward Bernstein, a former Treasury official, notes that Secretary Morgenthau “was eager to find new ideas […] and he had a group of men there who were encouraged to think.” Robert Morgenthau, his son, argues that his father “created the atmosphere where [Treasury officials] were willing to come forward and tell him what they thought and how it should be done.” In contrast to other Cabinet officials, Morgenthau would regularly share information discussed at Cabinet meetings with his underlings in the Treasury Department. For their part, the young lawyers who had flocked to Treasury following the New Deal were “very anxious to improve the world,” and they did not feel compelled to focus solely on Treasury’s domain. Such attitudes were, in the words of John Pehle, “anathema to the State Department.” The Treasury Department thus may have held all of the necessary ingredients for creative thinking, innovation, and dissent in 1944: a Secretary who kept his subordinates informed and encouraged them to voice their opinions and a

497 “Claude Lanzmann Shoah Collection, Interview with John Pehle, Transcript,” 1.
498 Ibid., 18.
499 Medoff, Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. and the Struggle for a US Response to the Holocaust, 16; Martin Ostrow Interview with Edward Bernstein, Washington, DC, cited in Medoff.
501 Medoff, Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. and the Struggle for a US Response to the Holocaust, 16; Martin Ostrow Interview with John Pehle, Bethesda, Maryland.
502 Medoff, Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. and the Struggle for a US Response to the Holocaust, 17; Martin Ostrow Interview with John Pehle, Bethesda, Maryland, cited in Medoff.
503 Ibid.
crop of new, idealistic lawyers who cared little for traditional divisions of labor and authority across various government agencies.

**Political Liability**

In the winter months of 1944, the environment in the United States was moving the political liability toward a positive value (costs for inaction). Maintaining the status quo on the Holocaust was likely to exacerbate intensifying congressional pressure and the unfolding political scandal regarding the State Department’s actions. Treasury’s Josiah DuBois had already threatened to go public with his report on the State Department if the administration did not act on their findings. As Josiah DuBois explained in an interview with Henry Morgenthau III in February of 1981:

> I said, Mr. Secretary, if it means anything and if you want to, you can tell the President—if the President doesn’t take any action on this report, I’m going to resign and release the report to the press. Whether he ever told that to Roosevelt or not, I don’t know, probably not, but I just don’t know. That’s how deep I felt about the thing, and I think that also impressed [Morgenthau], the fact that I was willing to resign. I would have to. Believe me, I would have, if the President hadn’t acted….I have a feeling [Morgenthau] acted because he knew if he didn’t act, it was going to become a very explosive thing politically. And that’s why he acted, would be my guess. 504

Treasury’s John Pehle also believed that Roosevelt was influenced by impending embarrassment regarding State Department actions, suggesting in an interview “I would assume that [Roosevelt] recognized [these] political implications too, because the State Department was found taking these actions which the American public would not agree with.” 505

Treasury’s revelations to Roosevelt about the State Department’s suppression of information and attempted cover-up—including the undercutting of another old Roosevelt friend, 506 Sumner Welles—were likely to become more widely known in the future. Assistant Secretary Breckinridge Long had already given false testimony in front of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and was accordingly under fire. The refugee issue was firmly in the political spotlight, and Treasury’s discoveries were likely to inflame criticism of the administration.

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505 “Claude Lanzmann Shoah Collection, Interview with John Pehle, Transcript,” 17.

506 On friendship between Welles and Roosevelt see: Breitman and Lichtman, FDR and the Jews, 99; 165.
Senate vote on Gillette-Rogers in just a few weeks threatened to once again highlight the administration’s failures in this area.\textsuperscript{507}

In sum, the political liability variable was positive, costs for inaction. Creating the War Refugee Board through executive order would allow Roosevelt to preempt the pending congressional resolutions, which would have highlighted his administration’s failures on refugees if passed. Changing policy in this manner also protected Roosevelt from a potential scandal if DuBois or other whistleblowers went public with the information about State, and Roosevelt’s failure to act on their revelations. Political factors previously keeping the political liability negative (costs for action) had also dissipated. Congress, which was poised to take its own action on the refugee commission, would not fight the Board’s creation, and had at this point forcefully condemned the Final Solution. In 1944, Roosevelt was further liberated from a need to placate immigration opponents in order to maintain support for an anti-Nazi foreign policy or for an upcoming election. Now, the political liability variable was positive: Roosevelt had political incentive and political freedom to respond more intensively.

**DISCUSSION SUMMARY**

In sum, all three variables were vital to the shift in policy. The dissent, in this case, was certainly the proximate cause of the change—Roosevelt decided to change policy in the meeting with Morgenthau—but political liability and congressional pressure were also needed. History does not allow us to test what would have happened if Roosevelt had received only an inner-circle dissent, without the impending political scandal and absent an environment in which Congress was about to force his hand on refugee issues. What we do know for certain, however, is that the evidence suggests that previous obstacles to action on refugee issues had included congressional opposition and Roosevelt’s concerns about maintaining political support from Congress and the public. We know also that these forces diminished at the time of Treasury’s dissent, allowing Roosevelt more freedom to act. Further, we know that increased congressional pressure for refugee issues and the threat of a scandal provided him with incentive to act. Finally, we know that the Treasury dissenters themselves believed that Roosevelt acted in large part because of the impending action on Capitol Hill and the political consequences of failing to address the State

\textsuperscript{507} Medoff, *Blowing the Whistle on Genocide: Josiah E. DuBois, Jr. and the Struggle for a US Response to the Holocaust*, 70.
Department's obstruction and obfuscation. The evidence we have, therefore, strongly indicates that these three variables were jointly responsible for the change in policy.
CONCLUDING COMMENTS

History has judged the US response to the Holocaust as inadequate, indifferent, and insignificant. For most of the period under study, this characterization is accurate. The United States exhibited a policy of ignore with very limited humanitarian, public condemnation, private diplomacy, and punishing efforts. Few have paid attention to the actions of the War Refugee Board, or perhaps just as importantly, to how the War Refugee Board came about, how US policy could shift so dramatically in the last months of the war, how the United States, which had otherwise turned a blind eye to victims of the Holocaust, could establish an independent agency tasked with their rescue.

This chapter has explored the creation of the War Refugee Board in significant detail. The historical evidence reveals that much of the credit for the Board’s establishment lies with several men at Treasury—Pehle, Paul, DuBois, Luxford, White, and of course, Morgenthau—as well as with a few courageous State Department officials—Bernard Meltzer, Donald Hiss, and arguably, Sumner Welles. Yet, these men were aided in their initiative by a changing environment in Congress, which had previously been a significant obstacle to action on behalf of refugees. In 1943, Congress began to criticize the Roosevelt administration’s response to the humanitarian crisis in Europe and to argue that more needed to be done to help refugees. A related factor, the potential political liability of the issue, also moved in favor of action on refugee issues in the 1943 to 1944 period. Previously, political considerations dictated that the President take only limited action on refugee issues and that he avoid publicity when doing so. By January, 1944, however, the direction of this variable had changed. Breckinridge Long had been caught obscuring immigration data in public; the Roosevelt administration looked weak on rescue; and Congress was poised to point all of this out explicitly by passing the Gillette-Rogers Resolutions. All three factors—inner-circle dissent, a high degree of congressional pressure, and a positive value on political liability—converged in the winter of 1944, and Roosevelt took action. He created the War Refugee Board. As a result, hundreds of thousands of potential victims of the Holocaust lived.

Still, the War Refugee Board came too late for most victims of the Nazi extermination programs. The Holocaust case thus highlights one of the key implications of this dissertation: significant policy change requires an immense degree of pressure on the administration both from within and outside of government, pressures that may take some time to emerge if they are
able to emerge at all. We only see a major change in US policy in this case after several years of ongoing Nazi extermination programs. The inner-circle dissent took months to emerge and depended on a series of rarities: an unusually proactive group of Treasury Department officials; a Secretary of the Treasury who happened to be a close friend of Roosevelt’s; and their discovery of another agency’s wrongdoing in addressing the crisis. It also depended on several brave State Department informants. The congressional pressure variable became conducive to action only after a significant lobbying campaign by Jewish organizations that was able to gain the support of members of Congress, among them Roosevelt opponents. Finally, political liability shifted toward costs for inaction only after an Assistant Secretary of State had been caught lying to Congress and an administrative scandal loomed on the horizon. Policy change in the Holocaust case required a confluence of all of these various factors, some of which occurred despite significant obstacles and some of which depended on highly unusual events.
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CHAPTER 3: “RELUCTANT DRAGONS:” THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION AND BOSNIA 1992

INTRODUCTION

This chapter will illustrate the theory through a detailed examination of US responsiveness to mass killings in Bosnia in 1992 under President George H.W. Bush. The conflict in Bosnia began in the last several months of the Bush administration, just before the 1992 presidential election. Violence occurred during a series of wars that led to the disintegration of the six republics comprising Yugoslavia. Atrocities committed by Serbian and Bosnian Serb forces against Bosnian Muslims and Croats during this period consisted of mass killings of civilians, rape, forced castration, and genocide at the United Nations (UN) safe haven of Srebrenica—the largest massacre in Europe since the Holocaust. In total, a minimum of approximately 100,000 people were killed during the Bosnian war, about sixty-five percent of whom were Bosnian Muslims. Of these 100,000 who perished, about 45,110 were killed in 1992, making 1992 the deadliest year of the conflict.

In November of 1992, eight months after Bosnia’s referendum on independence, the Bush administration would be on its way out of Washington. In the relatively brief period during which the administration implemented US policy in response to the Bosnian conflict, the United States largely remained focused on the provision of humanitarian relief and refrained from pursuing robust action aimed at bringing an end to the fighting. In short, the focus was largely on ameliorating the consequences of the fighting, not on ending the conflict itself.

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5 “The Bosnian Book of Dead.”
Still, from the beginning of the crisis, the response of the administration was more than ignore. My research suggests that President Bush, contrary to some previous analyses, was concerned about and engaged with the conflict in Bosnia, even attempting to garner international support for more forceful delivery of humanitarian aid on the day of his daughter's wedding. His administration instituted economic sanctions (punishing), severed diplomatic ties (punishing), supported peace negotiations and worked with allies to resolve the conflict (private diplomacy), condemned the atrocities (public condemnation), and employed American military assets to assist in delivering humanitarian aid (humanitarian), beginning what would become America’s longest humanitarian airlift. However, the three key variables necessary to ignite significant policy change toward a more robust response: inner-circle dissent, high degrees of congressional pressure, and a positive value on political liability, did not emerge.

Dissent never surfaced among senior members of the administration, despite advocacy for increased responsiveness within the State Department and among the National Security Council (NSC) staff. The highest ranking officials, including National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, Secretary of State James Baker, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Colin Powell, were united in their belief that force should only be employed in cases in which the United States was willing to do everything it could to ensure ultimate victory despite all obstacles or when national interests were at stake. Bosnia did not meet these requirements. However, several junior officials, in the State Department and on the National Security Council staff, did favor a more robust response and did advocate for change. Yet, unlike the Treasury dissenters in the Holocaust case, these junior dissenters were unable to co-opt a high-ranking official in their efforts. They thus lacked a channel to the president and were subject to opposing pressures by the junior

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officials in the Department of Defense (DOD), who mirrored the views of the senior Department of Defense leadership.

Congressional pressure likewise never reached high levels in the ten months in which the Bush administration addressed the crisis. Pressure for more action culminated in August of 1992 when revelations of Serbian concentration camps sparked increased attention to the Bosnian issue among members of the public, the Congress, and the media. Yet, I categorize congressional pressure during this period as medium in strength. Bills and resolutions passed by Congress throughout the tenure of the Bush administration affirmed the administration’s approach to the crisis. Congressional action was supportive of the policies of the administration and did not attempt to push President Bush toward taking measures he opposed. Proposals that may have challenged the administration, for instance measures concerning the use of US combat forces or lifting the arms embargo, did not make it out of committee.

Finally, the political liability for President Bush remained neutral throughout this period. He was neither liable to suffer costs for not responding more forcefully to the crisis (costs for inaction), nor was he liable to suffer political costs for launching a more forceful response (costs for action). Clinton’s criticism of his administration’s handling of the crisis during the presidential campaign might have presented some political liability, but campaign pressure on Bosnia did not appear to be threatening to President Bush and his advisers. During the campaign, they felt that the President’s record was in fact strongest on foreign policy, particularly in the wake of perceived successes related to the Gulf War, the unification of Germany, and relations with Russia and China. Bush’s potential political vulnerability, and the focus of the election, instead concerned economic policy. In addition, increased public support for engagement in Bosnia, which indeed increased following the camp revelations, is not equivalent to an increased likelihood that the public will punish a president for failing to mirror its preferences.

The remainder of the chapter proceeds as follows. First, I offer a brief note on methodological issues pertinent to the Bosnia-Bush case. Second, I provide background on the

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11 Interview with David Gompert; Interview with Jane Holl Lute; Interview with William Howard Taft IV; Power, "A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide," 275.
12 Interview with William Howard Taft IV.
13 Ibid.
conflict in Bosnia, on US intelligence regarding the killings, and on US-European relations during this period. Third, I detail US policy under the Bush administration, arguing that the response was primarily stagnant with only limited measures pursued, aimed primarily at alleviating the consequences of the killing. The fourth section details the role of the three critical independent variables in this case, arguing that an inner-circle dissent did not emerge; congressional pressure never reached high levels; and political liability remained neutral. The final section summarizes the key findings of this chapter.

**METHODOLOGICAL NOTE**

Prior to delving into the Bush-Bosnia case, it is necessary to briefly provide the reader with some information on sources, evidence, and method relevant to this particular case study.

First, source material in the Bush case, in contrast to earlier cases, is limited in part by what is currently available for scholarly use. Some materials that I hoped to consult were withdrawn or still classified at the Bush Library. Additionally, this case has not received the same degree of attention from historians and political scientists as some of the other cases explored in the dissertation, such as the Holocaust and Armenian Genocide. Consequently, the secondary literature is also more limited. To address these omissions in the written record, I employ several oral history interviews. I also utilize books written by policymakers from the administration.

Second, this chapter is similar to the treatment of the early years of the Holocaust case in that policy does not exhibit a significant change. The purpose of the chapter is therefore to show that the three variables present for a significant policy change—inner-circle dissent, high congressional pressure, and political costs for inaction—were not present. The chapter will also explain why policy remained limited, highlighting any other factors that contributed to policy stagnancy.

Finally, this case does not witness a significant change in policy, but that does not mean that the Bush administration did not respond at all. We will see in this chapter that President Bush worked toward a UN resolution that in theory would have allowed for the use of all necessary measures to enforce humanitarian aid delivery. The administration also contributed to a humanitarian airlift into Sarajevo. These were noteworthy efforts and have received too little attention by prior accounts. However, when challenged, the United States and its allies were not
willing to follow through on their commitment to use all measures necessary, to enforce the UN resolution, and aid delivery had been a goal of the administration from the very beginning of the conflict. Thus, I do not consider these measures a significant change in US strategy or policy in deviation from the prior course of the administration.

CONFLICT SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

Lead-Up

The republics comprising Yugoslavia—Serbia, Montenegro, Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Macedonia—united in a federation at the end of the Second World War, had formed a precarious bond since death of President Josip Broz Tito in 1980. Due to stipulations in the 1974 Yugoslav constitution, Tito’s death led to a weakening of the federal government and increased independence for the republics.

By the time of the Bush administration, the United States anticipated that the breakup of the six republics comprising Yugoslavia would be violent and bloody. In the early years of the crisis, the administration thus supported maintaining the territorial and political unity of the country in order to prevent what they believed would be inevitable bloodshed if Yugoslavia disintegrated. David Gompert, Senior Director for Europe and Eurasia on the Bush National Security Council, has written the following:

Those who criticize the Bush administration for contributing to the outbreak of hostilities by favoring a unified state have yet to explain how favoring disunity would have prevented the conflict.

As early as the summer of 1990, the United States transmitted cables to every European capital warning that the dissolution of Yugoslavia would be violent. An October 1990 Deputies Committee Meeting on Yugoslavia discussion paper outlined administration concerns:

Dissolution of Yugoslavia would pose grave problems at the local, regional, and European levels. […]

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17 Ibid., 125.
Our interest in avoiding violence among the Yugoslavs and instability at the Balkan and European levels, our interest in promoting political democracy, market-based economies, and enhanced respect for human rights [...] all would seem to point in the direction of preserving Yugoslavia’s unity.19

National Intelligence Estimate 15-90 of October 18, 199020 predicted that Yugoslavia would “cease to function as a federal state within one year and will probably dissolve within two.”21 Just two months later, in December of 1990, Slovenia voted for independence from the federation.22

Amid increasing tensions, Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger traveled to Yugoslavia to warn Slobodan Milosevic, the Serbian president, against violence.23 Milosevic had fueled Serbian nationalism and had expanded his influence by integrating the Kosovo and Vojvodina provinces into Serbia and by forming stronger ties with Montenegro.24 Eagleburger returned from the trip with renewed pessimism, predicting that the conflict following dissolution of the country would be “bloody as hell.”25 By May of 1991, Croatia too would hold an independence referendum.26

The Slovenian and Croatian bids for independence worried US leadership. Officials believed that secession by Slovenia and Croatia—and the breakup of Yugoslavia more generally—would likely lead to a declaration of independence by Bosnia and widespread violence; given the ethnic heterogeneity of Bosnia, intelligence officials predicted that a Bosnian conflict would result in the most severe ethnic violence.27 According to David Gompert, the Central Intelligence Agency had estimated that roughly two million people were in the “wrong

20 “National Intelligence Estimate 15-90: Yugoslavia Transformed,” October 18, 1990, Special Collection, Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency, Document Number: 5235e80c993294098d5174dd, CIA Historical Collections.
21 Ibid., iii.
place” in Bosnia, intermingled with members of other ethnic groups. Intelligence officials had argued that “Bosnia-Hercegovina represents the greatest threat of bringing the fundamental ethnic division in Yugoslavia—that between Serbs and Croats—into large-scale communal violence. This republic’s ethnic mix [...] has always been potentially dangerous.”

In June of 1991, Secretary Baker made one last visit to the region to try to persuade Slovenia not to pursue unilateral secession. However, the Germans and the Austrians had provided the Slovenes with unofficial approval of their bid for independence, undermining Baker’s appeals. In late June, Slovenia and Croatia passed formal declarations of independence, which, as anticipated, ignited a conflict between the Serbian capital under President Slobodan Milosevic and both republics. The Yugoslav National Army (JNA), perceived to be a “Serb-dominated institution,” intervened in both Slovenia and Croatia, in the latter case to support the Serbian minority in Croatia, which sought integration with Serbia.

The United States asked that the international community refrain from premature recognition of Slovenian and Croatian independence, but the Germans recognized both republics in late December, 1991. Following a January 3 ceasefire between the warring parties, the United Nations Security Council voted, through Resolution 743, to send approximately 14,000 peacekeeping troops to Yugoslavia in an attempt to prevent an escalation in violence.

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28 Interview with David Gompert.
31 Gompert, “The United States and Yugoslavia’s Wars,” 126.
established the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), which would eventually play a decisive role in shaping US policy toward the region.36

US fears of secession spreading to Bosnia were realized later in the spring of 1992. As noted, Bosnia was the most ethnically heterogeneous republic with a forty-three percent Muslim, thirty-one percent Serb, and seventeen percent Croat population composition.37 In March of 1992, Bosnia held a referendum on independence during which 99.7 percent of voters favored secession, with 63.4 percent of eligible voters participating amid a Serbian boycott.38 Just as bids for independence led to war for Slovenia and Croatia, the Bosnian referendum led to a violent clash between the Serbian Yugoslav National Army and local Bosnian-Serb forces on one side, and the Bosnian Muslims and Croats on the other.39 Bosnian Serbs sought to create their own ethnically homogenous state and opposed the multiethnic, independent Bosnia established by the referendum.40

In short time, the United States convinced the European Community to recognize the newly independent multiethnic Bosnia in exchange for US recognition of Slovenia and Croatia.41 Officials within the United States had hoped that US-European recognition of Bosnia would strengthen the newly independent state and protect the United States from holding primary responsibility for Bosnian security.42 Prior to US-European recognition of an independent Bosnia, a European Community special commission had in fact been hoping to reach a settlement for the ethnic partition of Bosnia.43 In February of 1992, Alija Izetbegovic leader of the Bosnian Muslims, Radovan Karadzic, leader of the Bosnian Serbs, and Mate Boban, leader

36 “United Nations Protection Force.”
38 My figures are taken from the CSCE report: Ibid., 2; 10-11; 19; Interview with David Gompert; Power uses the 99.4 figure for votes in favor: Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 247–48; Geir Lundestad, The United States and Western Europe Since 1945 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 250; Note that Hutchings writes that sixty-four percent voted in favor; this figure is in fact incorrect, and he likely meant that approximately sixty-four percent had voted. Hutchings, American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War, 315.
40 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
of the Bosnian Croats, had supported a plan for partitioning Bosnia into three ethnic regions. Yet, Izetbegovic claims that he never favored the plan, and he communicated as much to American Ambassador Warren Zimmerman at the time, renouncing the plan publicly shortly after agreeing to it.

The United States for its part was skeptical that a partition of the country would mitigate the growing threat of violence and instead believed that international recognition of Bosnia was the best way to deter Serbian aggression. Going forward, they would continue to oppose partition on the grounds that it rewarded Serbian aggression and could spark conflict elsewhere. In part, the United States was constrained by European recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, which, in the absence of Bosnian recognition, left Bosnia vulnerable and isolated. Zimmerman further argues that the initial European Community partition plan was never viable because parties had not agreed on a map for division and were unlikely to do so.

As the spring wore on and a diplomatic solution began to look less promising, ethnic violence in Bosnia was already underway. In early April, the European Community members finally announced their support for an independent Bosnia and Herzegovina. The United States followed by announcing publicly that it would recognize all three republics. With the dissolution of Yugoslavia now certain, the war in Bosnia had begun.

Knowledge of Mass Killing

The leadership and lower-level officials within the Bush administration for the most part understood the dynamics of the killing and that the Serbs were the primary perpetrators, despite the administration’s public comments at times about the conflict’s intractable ethnic hatreds or

44 Ibid.; Zimmermann, Origins of a Catastrophe, 188–89.
48 Zimmermann, Origins of a Catastrophe, 191.
49 Ibid., 190–91.
51 Ibid.
the existence of a centuries-old “blood feud.” In April of 1992, the United States had information about clear patterns of Serbian force aimed at forcing population transfers of non-Serbian Bosnians from ethnically mixed areas within Bosnia. By May and June of 1992, the National Security Council staff had received detailed reports of Serbian “death camps, torture, and gang rape.”

David Gompert recalls that the massacres during the Bush administration were different in degree but not in kind from what would occur in 1995 at the Srebrenica safe area, when more than 8,000 Muslim men and boys were massacred.

Although officials did refer to age-old highly intractable ethnic hatreds in discussing the conflict, the administration understood that the Serbian regime held primary responsibility for the atrocities and made this point several times in public settings. As early as April 1992, Bush administration officials told the press that Serbia, the Yugoslav army, and other allies of the Serbian regime “bear the major responsibility for the fighting” in Bosnia. In June 1992, draft written testimony for Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs Ralph Johnson’s appearance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee noted the following in the opening remarks: “From the beginning of this crisis, we have identified the Serbian government and its allies as the primary culprits. Today, I can’t emphasize this point strongly


54 Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 264.

55 Hutchings, American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War, 316; Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 269.


enough.” Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, Thomas Niles, made similar comments in his July 30 testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In his comments, he noted that although the administration has cited human rights violations on both sides, “the essential truth” was that hundreds of thousands had died as a direct result of the actions of the Milosevic regime and its allies. During the August 1992 London Conference on the Former Yugoslavia (London Conference), Secretary Eagleburger once again reiterated Serbian culpability for human rights abuses: “[I]t is the Serbs, alas, who are most guilty today of crimes which mimic those of their former tormentors [the pro-Nazi Croats].” As Ambassador Warren Zimmerman has since written, “there was no debate” about the causes of the war: “everybody knew that Milosevic and [Radovan] Karadzic [Bosnian-Serb politician] were the guilty parties.”

In sum, although some in the administration genuinely believed that hatreds and human rights abuses existed on all sides of the conflict, the administration did have sufficient intelligence about the extent of Serbian atrocities and did identify the Serbian regime as the primary culprits.

Europe’s Role

The final background consideration in analyzing US foreign policy during this period concerns the role of European allies. European countries, and particularly the French, envisioned a more

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62 Ibid.


64 Zimmermann, Origins of a Catastrophe, 214.

65 Interview with Jane Holl Lute; Interview with David Gompert; “Memorandum of Conversation, Meeting with Aliza Izetbegovic, President of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 11:45 A.M.-12:30 P.M., Helsinki, Finland,” July 9, 1992, 2, Jane E. Holl Files, CF01476-001-CF01476-016, Box 1, Folder: Bosnia-Herzegovina-June 1992 (cont.) [1] [OA/ID CF01476-009], George Bush Presidential Library.
active and independent role in Bosnia and in international politics during this period, free from the interference of the United States. For example, when US leaders tried to warn the Europeans of the impending violent disintegration of Yugoslavia, European countries accused the United States of overstating the danger in order to justify the existence of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The French had also opposed American efforts to begin NATO consultations on the issue. In June 1992, when William Howard Taft IV, US Permanent Representative to NATO, chose to devote parts of his final remarks to the North Atlantic Council to urging more US involvement in the growing crisis, the French, in Taft’s recollection, reacted with dismay.

Officials in the United States had additional reasons, other than European wishes, to defer to the European Community early in the conflict. First, some in the United States believed that the crisis did not in fact require US leadership. Former Ambassador to the European Union, James Dobbins, noted in an interview with this author that although the United States was a necessary counterweight to the Soviet Union, any European power should have been a sufficient counterweight for the Serbian-led Yugoslav government. In short, in Dobbins’ analysis, the crisis did not necessitate US engagement. Second, others assessed that the Europeans were in fact better positioned to negotiate with the parties in the crisis. In September of 1991, American Ambassador to Yugoslavia at the time, Warren Zimmerman, had argued that “ceding to the EC [European Community] of the primary role in dealing with the Yugoslav crisis was the right move” because the Europeans wanted a leadership role and because the Europeans were in a better position to offer incentives to the Yugoslavs, such as full entry into Europe.

Nevertheless, ceding leadership to Europe would present certain complications for policy formulation. Firstly, European countries had significant disagreements over the best approach to

67 Interview with David Gompert; Hutchings, American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War, 307.
68 Hutchings, American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War, 307; Gompert, “How to Defeat Serbia,” 35.
69 Interview with William Howard Taft IV.
70 Interview with James Dobbins.
71 Zimmermann, “For the Secretary, ‘A Plan for Yugoslavia,’” 2.
the crisis. In fact, two of the most important countries in the European Community—the Germans and the French—favored opposing sides in the conflict. The Germans were more sympathetic to Croatians while the French had significant sympathies with the Serbs. The Germans and the Croats had ties dating back to the Second World War, when a German-supported regime in Croatia, the Ustasha, murdered approximately 320,000 to 340,000 Serbs. Later in the crisis, Europe’s decision to contribute troops to UNPROFOR would create further hurdles for a more robust response on the part of the United States. European countries with troops on the ground feared that an increased US presence, or airstrikes, would provoke Serb retaliation against their troops serving with the United Nations.

In sum, as Yugoslavia began to disintegrate, the Bush administration was tasked with formulating a policy response to an increasingly violent conflict while still showing deference to a divided European Community. The administration had anticipated that the breakup of Yugoslavia would be violent and had consequently attempted to work with European allies to maintain the federation, but by the spring of 1992, bids for interdependence by Slovenia and Croatia, bolstered by German and Austrian support, had led the most ethnically heterogeneous republic, Bosnia-Herzegovina, to secede as well. Bosnia’s secession was met with an intensive military conflict and a significant degree of mass killing of civilians. With less than a year left in his administration, President Bush and his team would focus on the delivery of humanitarian aid and would not attempt to become involved militarily in stopping the conflict.

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72 Interview with William Howard Taft IV; Interview with Jane Holl Lute; Gompert, “The United States and Yugoslavia’s Wars,” 129.
73 Interview with William Howard Taft IV; Interview with Jane Holl Lute.
75 Interview with David Gompert; Gompert, “The United States and Yugoslavia’s Wars,” 133.
US POLICY RESPONSE

This section will summarize the policy response of the Bush administration from March of 1992, when Bosnia held its independence referendum, until the end of the administration. During these ten months, March to January of 1992, the United States did not exhibit a significant change in policy toward more robust measures. From the beginning of the crisis, the highest levels of the Bush administration had judged that the conflict was not vital to US interests and that deep involvement in the crisis was unwise. None of the senior officials in the administration dissented. In fact, the senior leadership—comprised of seasoned regional and foreign policy experts—was united in its belief that US involvement be minimal. The political liability variable was neutral during this period, and congressional pressure was medium, with many members of Congress opposing intervention. US involvement thus remained limited and focused on improving the humanitarian situation on the ground.

The first subsection will detail the March to August period. I will suggest that during these early months of the crisis, the Bush administration focused on primarily two policy strategies: punishing and humanitarian. I will emphasize that the United States was highly committed to the delivery of humanitarian aid during this period and was willing to use military assets, short of ground forces, to ensure aid delivery. However, the United States was strongly opposed to using military force to halt the killings and had ruled out the insertion of US ground forces. In the second subsection, I will discuss US policy in the last months of the Bush administration, from September 1992 to January 1993. During these months, the United States continued to pursue humanitarian policies and had turned its focus on preventing contagion of the conflict to Kosovo, where the Bush administration was prepared to draw a redline.

MARCH 1992-AUGUST 1992

During the early months of the conflict in Bosnia, the Bush administration focused its efforts on punishing and humanitarian strategies. The administration implemented sanctions on the Serbian regime aimed at halting Serbian aggression, limited Serbia’s participation in international organizations, closed Yugoslav consulates, and refused to recognize Yugoslav representation at the ambassadorial level. In the humanitarian realm, the administration, and President Bush in particular, worked to ensure the delivery of aid. This period witnessed the implementation of the Sarajevo airlift, instituted to provide relief supplies to suffering Bosnians and constituting the
longest running humanitarian airlift in history. Although the administration was willing to use military assets in aid delivery, it was unwilling to use military force to stop the atrocities or to use ground forces in any capacity.

**Punishing**

The United States implemented several punishing policies in the early months of the crisis. In late May of 1992, the United States began pushing for increased penalties on the Serbian regime. Shortly thereafter, the United Nations Security Council approved a sanctions regime designed to pressure the Serbian government into ending the conflict. United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 757 of May 30 asked that states limit economic exchange with Yugoslavia, deny flight permission to non-humanitarian aircraft landing in or taking off from Yugoslavia, curtail Yugoslav participation in sporting events and intellectual cooperation and exchange, and reduce staff at Yugoslav diplomatic and consular posts. By this point, President Bush had already frozen Yugoslav assets through Executive Order 12808 and had recalled the US Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Warren Zimmerman. When issuing the sanctions regime, the administration was clear that they had “ruled out unilateral U.S. military action” and were focused on “political, economic and diplomatic measures.” Ralph Johnson, Principal Deputy

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76 Haulman, “Provide Promise”; Squitieri, “History’s Longest Airlift Ends with Delivery to Sarajevo.”
81 “Statement by Ralph Johnson, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, US Department of State, before the Subcommittee on European Affairs, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, June 11, 1992,” 6; In the oral remarks, Johnson does not use the written text of “ruled out unilateral U.S. military action,” but instead says that “We are prepared to cooperate with future multilateral efforts;” “Conflict in Former Yugoslavia,” June 11, 1992.
Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, affirmed that the US would “act with prudence and caution” in dealing with the crisis.82

By early June, the United States had closed Yugoslav consulates in New York and San Francisco, along with two-thirds of Yugoslav military attaches in Washington.83 In late June, Secretary of State Baker recommended that the United States cease accepting representation from Belgrade at the ambassadorial level, that the Chicago consulate be closed, and that the United States intensify efforts to suspend Serbia from international organizations.84 The US initiative to suspend Serbia from international organizations eventually bore fruit when the Serbian-led regime was suspended from the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) in July 1992, when it was suspended from the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in June 1992, and when it was suspended from the United Nations General Assembly in September 1992.85

Humanitarian

March-June

From the beginning of the crisis, the United States was also committed to ensuring the delivery of humanitarian aid. The Bush administration was willing to use military assets, air and naval power, to assist in aid delivery, but it would be unwilling to offer US ground forces in the humanitarian effort.

83 “Statement by Ralph Johnson, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs, US Department of State, before the Subcommittee on European Affairs, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, June 11, 1992,” 12.
In an understudied series of phone calls throughout the late spring and summer of 1992, President Bush lobbied world leaders to move toward passing a United Nations resolution to allow for the forcible delivery of humanitarian aid. In late May 1992, President Bush spoke with Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers of the Netherlands. In the conversation, Bush explained that “We think we have got to act now”—the United States and its partners needed to go to the United Nations to obtain a resolution authorizing the use of “all necessary means” to ensure adequate delivery of humanitarian aid. Bush explained that the United States was willing to “do all possible on the air side—airlift support, open the airport, and if needed provide air cover.” He emphasized that he was reluctant to insert US troops, noting, mostly correctly, that the parties did not want the United States involved on the ground. The Bosnian Serbs were in fact opposed to US involvement.

The aid situation had been deteriorating around this time as well. A June 2, 1992 memorandum from the files of the Senior Director for Europe and Eurasia on the NSC Council, David Gompert, entitled “Humanitarian Aid to Bosnia-Hercegovina,” notes that both the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross had suspended their relief operations in Bosnia, fearing attack by irregulars and rejecting the option

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86 The fact that Bush had these conversations is detailed in this New York Times article; however, the article does not detail the content of the phone conversations, transcripts of which are contained in the George Bush Presidential Library. The article therefore does not note that Bush was pushing for a UN resolution authorizing all necessary measures for aid delivery: Eric Schmitt, “Bush Calls Allies on a Joint Effort to Help Sarajevo: Seeking an End to Siege President Says US Is in Accord with Europe on Using Force to Airlift Relief Supplies,” New York Times, June 29, 1992, A1; A6.


88 Ibid., 2.


of armed escort. The memorandum stated that the primary objective of the United States should be to use whatever measures were necessary to deliver aid:

Our object should be to get aid into Bosnia. […]

[…]

The U.S., together with the Russians and Europeans, deliver a simple demarche to Belgrade that we intend to bring humanitarian aid into Bosnia […] In our message, we would underscore [our intent] to use whatever capability is required to ensure that humanitarian assistance is brought in.

The document goes on to note the advantages and disadvantages of US participation in such a humanitarian mission. The advantages of US participation in humanitarian efforts included the following: demonstrating US concern for the victims; supporting the Izetbegovic [Bosnian president] regime; the fact that the “Serbian regime [was] a nearly perfect adversary; totalitarian, aggressive, (communist), defiant in face of international condemnation;” the opportunity to increase domestic opposition to Milosevic; keeping Croatia out of Bosnia; and “the Serbs could very well blink” when faced with US participation. Disadvantages to US involvement included the following: the emergence of the worst case scenario in terms of hostile conditions, which could result in US deaths; the possibility that aid reaches the airport but does not continue further, making the operation appear “gimmicky and token;” the fact that the Europeans could fail to follow through, leaving the United States with the primary responsibility for the conflict; the possibility of attacks on aid shipments resuming after initial cooperation by the parties; and the difficulties in limiting the scope of the operation after initial success.

Despite these potential challenges, President Bush continued pushing European partners to accept a resolution allowing for the use of all necessary measures to deliver humanitarian aid. In a conversation with British Prime Minister John Major on June 27, Bush noted that although he was “not eager” to see ground forces employed and that “none of us are enthusiastic” about using force, “we need a more forward leaning position, including the use of military support by

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92 The document itself contains brackets here.
93 “Humanitarian Aid to Bosnia-Hercegovina,” 1–2.
94 Ibid., 2.
95 Ibid., 3.
96 Ibid.
When John Major, who was skeptical of the plan and worried that the conditions were similar to Dien Bien Phu, pushed back by saying that the aid delivery was the responsibility of the United Nations, Bush argued, “But there is a humanitarian need. We’ve got to get the UN going. We need a resolution to authorize whatever is necessary.” Prime Minister Major continued to press concerns about the Sarajevo airport being a “dead ringer” for Dien Bien Phu, highlighting the dangers of being dragged into a prolonged and larger operation. Bush assured Major that perhaps they could deliver the aid and “haul ass out of there.”

President Bush was able to obtain the support of other Western leaders more easily. In his conversations with them, he stressed that the United States would not insert US ground forces, in part due to opposition from warring parties, but was willing to support any military action, through air power and transport, to facilitate aid delivery. Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney welcomed the move toward a more forceful aid posture. German Chancellor Helmut Kohl agreed that more needed to be done during a conversation in which President Bush noted that the US “military is not enthusiastic about this at all […] but we have to act.” Bush also spoke about the need for more action with President Francois Mitterrand of France, Prime Minister Cavaco Silva of Portugal, Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti of Italy, and Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel of Turkey. On June 27, he received confirmation in a conversation with

98 Major is likely referring to the fact that Dien Bien Phu is located in a valley surrounded by mountains, similar to Sarajevo, and the fact that in the Battle of Dien Bien Phu, of May 7, 1954, the French were defeated and were forced to retreat from Vietnam: “Dien Bien Phu & the Fall of French Indochina, 1954,” Milestones: 1953-1960, US Department of State Office of the Historian, accessed January 16, 2016, https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/dien-bien-phu; On mountainous terrain, see also: “Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, Telecon with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney of Canada, June 27, 1992, 8:12-8:23 A.M., Camp David,” 1.
101 Ibid.
102 “Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, Telecon with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney of Canada, June 27, 1992, 8:12-8:23 A.M., Camp David,” 1-2; “Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, Telecon with Helmut Kohl, Chancellor of Germany, June 28, 1992, 2:00-2:16 P.M.,” 2.
104 “Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, Telecon with Helmut Kohl, Chancellor of Germany, June 28, 1992, 2:00-2:16 P.M.,” 2.
105 “Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, Telecon with Prime Minister Cavaco Silva of Portugal, June 28, 1992 2:22-2:33 P.M.,” June 28, 1992, 1–2, Jane E. Holl Files, CF01476-001-CF01476-016, Box 1, Folder: Bosnia-
Russian President Boris Yeltsin that Yeltsin would support international military action for humanitarian aid delivery even if it cost him domestic political support.106

Still, the British had expressed opposition, and the French were similarly reluctant to push the resolution.107 During the summer of 1992, the French had deployed troops to Bosnia as part of the UNPROFOR peacekeeping coalition, which had by now expanded its mandate to include aid delivery.108 The French thus had serious practical concerns about possible Serb retaliation or the consequences of a botched delivery operation.109

As progress stalled on the all necessary measures resolution that summer, humanitarian airlifts to Sarajevo began in what became known as Operation Provide Promise.110

July

In early July, after Canadian UNPROFOR troops were able to take the Butmir airport from Serbian control, Operation Provide Promise—the so-called Sarajevo airlift—began delivering
medical supplies and food to Bosnia. Intelligence estimates had shown that more than 100,000 Bosnians would die in the winter of 1992-1993 without increased humanitarian aid to the country, and a humanitarian airlift was consistent with US policy at the time of delivering relief but not undertaking efforts to directly defeat Serbian aggression. The first supplies reached Sarajevo on July 1, amid continued fire from Serbian forces near the airport. To support the relief operation, the United States provided funding, positioned 2,200 Marines in six ships in the Adriatic, and contributed planes to the approximately twelve flights per day of humanitarian relief into the city. By the end of 1992, the United States had supplied 5400 tons of supplies through the airlift. During the operation of the airlift under the Bush administration, and despite the risk from opposition gunfire, no US planes were hit by enemy fire; notably, by the end of the airlift in 1996, ninety-three total aircraft would have been hit in the operation. The airlift would also be suspended for about a month in early September 1992, after an Italian plane was downed by enemy fire.

Around the start of the airlift in early July, President Bush and Secretary Baker met with Alija Izetbegovic, the President of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in Helsinki, Finland. US leaders had traveled to Helsinki for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Summit. In the meeting, Izetbegovic argued that European intervention in the crisis would fail without US support and that military action would be needed to resolve the current situation. President Bush explained that the US position was “to alleviate human suffering,” but that they “may stop short of inserting forces on the ground,” believing that more force would lead to more
conflict. When President Bush added that US military leaders worried about geographic similarities to Dien Bien Phu, Izetbegovic noted, “There are other names that come to mind [...] like Ausch[witz] and Treblinka.” Izetbegovic then offered a summary of the atrocities committed, noting that twenty-seven concentration camps were located in Bosnia and that people were being loaded into sealed carts and taken to Hungary. Bush responded that Izetbegovic’s words were bringing “home the picture very clearly,” but reiterated that the United States was prepared to “maintain humanitarian relief” only and that the US was reluctant to use force.

The Bosnian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Haris Silajdzic, would write to President Bush a few days later that “tens of thousands of lives are in direct and imminent jeopardy [...] This is an urgent appeal. I kindly request you do everything in your power to come to the assistance of these innocent, defenseless civilians.”

David Gompert, who attended the meeting with Izetbegovic and President Bush, remembered thinking at the time that what Izetbegovic described in terms of atrocities sounded a lot like the Holocaust. Gompert felt that the United States was now in a difficult position politically. The President had now heard arguments about genocide-scale human rights abuses in Bosnia. Evidence—both documentary and from former officials—indeed suggests that the administration had confirmed reports of the existence of concentration camps in June and July of

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120 Ibid., 2.
121 Ibid., 3.
122 Ibid.
123 Ibid., 3–4.
125 Interview with David Gompert.
126 Ibid.
127 Ibid.
1992. The Europeans were unlikely to act, and if the United States did not fill the leadership void, it could accused of being indifferent to the atrocities.

David Gompert had written President Bush’s speech for the OSCE summit. In the speech, Gompert had inserted the words “no matter what it takes” in reference to US efforts to assist with humanitarian relief. Gompert, who favored a more robust response, doubted that the speech would make it through National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft or Secretary of State Baker. After hearing that the strong language did make it through, Gompert visited Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger. In the meeting, Gompert said to Eagleburger that it sounded as though the United States was going to use force. However, despite the language getting through the censors, the policy had not in fact changed. Gompert argues that policy remained the same because President Bush was still opposed to using force, and the Department of Defense was seriously opposed to any military action.

In sum, by the end of July, the consensus objective was still to focus on aid delivery—on ameliorating the consequences of the fighting and providing relief to the victims—not on taking measures to address the violence directly. A July 22, 1992 memorandum from David Gompert summarized the “As discussed, [...] formulation of our objective” for CIA’s John Gannon, State’s Ralph Johnson, the Office of the Secretary of Defense’s Bruce Weinrod, and the Joint


129 Interview with David Gompert.

130 Ibid.


132 Interview with David Gompert.

133 Ibid.

134 Ibid.

135 Ibid.

136 Ibid.
Chiefs’ David Hale. The memorandum notes that the US objective was to do whatever was necessary to ensure humanitarian relief access:

> The U.S. and other members of the international community will do what is necessary to maintain access, by land or air, for the delivery of humanitarian relief supplies to parts of Bosnia, including Sarajevo, where innocent citizens are deprived of basic needs because of the fighting.

The memorandum continues as follows:

> The formulation does not mean that we must react anywhere and anytime [...] But it does mean that we could use our military power, as part of a coalition, if that’s what it takes to meet the basic goal of maintaining access.

In short, the United States wanted to deliver relief to the region and was by now in theory committed to using military power in order to maintain access for aid. Yet, President Bush was still hesitant to commit to using force, and the administration had ruled out the use of US ground troops in any capacity. Moreover, as described later in this chapter, when the delivery of relief would indeed be threatened, the United States and international partners would not follow through on their commitment to do everything possible to maintain aid delivery.

**August**

In early August, intensive media coverage of Serbian concentration camps led to the most significant public pressure on the administration to assist the victims of Serbian atrocities. Roy Gutman of *Newsday* had published a series of articles in late July and early August detailing the camps and the abuse of Muslim prisoners. His articles, including one entitled “Like

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137 David C. Gompert, “Memorandum for David Hale (JCS), Bruce Weinrod (OSD), Ralph Johnson (STATE), and John Gannon (CIA), ‘Humanitarian Relief for Bosnia,’” July 22, 1992, David Gompert Files OA/ID CF01301, Folder: Bosnia [4] [OA/ID CF01301-004], George Bush Presidential Library.

138 Ibid.

139 Ibid.

140 Gompert, “The United States and Yugoslavia’s Wars,” 132–33.

Auschwitz,” recounted atrocities that reminded readers of the Nazi concentration and death camps of the Second World War. Following a particularly disturbing account of the mutilation and killing of Muslim prisoners in Gutman’s August 2 article, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher commented to the public:

We’re deeply concerned about the reports that are coming out, continuing reports that Serbian forces are holding Croatian and Muslim non-combatants in what are called “detention centers.” We’ve received continuing reports of abuses, torture, and killings in these Serbian camps.

Although Boucher expressed concern about the reports, Assistant Secretary of State for Europe, Tom Niles, would testify to Congress on August 4, the following day, that the administration did not yet have “substantiated information” for confirmation of the camps.

As noted, evidence—both textual and from former administration officials—reveals that the US government did have confirmation of the camps’ existence in June and July of 1992.

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At the time, John Fox, who worked within State’s Policy Planning Office and knew that the State Department had evidence of the camps, had asked the European Bureau and his superiors about Niles’ backtracking.\textsuperscript{146} The response from the European Bureau was that the issue was too provocative and that the administration could not “afford to confirm [the camps’ existence].”\textsuperscript{147}

Still, the damage was mostly done. The possibility of death camps reemerging in Europe captivated media attention. The three major news networks broadcast forty-eight news stories on the atrocities in the region between August 2 and August 14, up from just ten stories in the twelve days prior.\textsuperscript{148} On August 6, the Independent Television News (ITN) was the first to broadcast images directly from the camps.\textsuperscript{149} The pictures displayed starving Muslims trapped behind barbed wire, images highly similar to those of Nazi victims during the Holocaust.\textsuperscript{150}

In the midst of this media attention, public opinion shifted toward increased support for airstrikes. In July, forty-five percent of Americans objected to airstrikes while thirty-five percent supported airstrikes.\textsuperscript{151} In early August, fifty-three percent of Americans approved of the strikes while thirty-three percent objected to them.\textsuperscript{152} The images of concentration camps had amplified public concern for Bosnia.\textsuperscript{153} Congressman Tom Lantos (D-CA), a Holocaust survivor, criticized Niles for the administration’s unwillingness to confirm the existence of the camps, arguing that there was “plenty of confirmation. All you have to do is flip on your television set.”\textsuperscript{154} By mid-August, US public support for contributing peacekeepers to the conflict would reach eighty percent, and the Senate would approve the use of funds for US participation in any UN force.\textsuperscript{155}

The administration responded to the increase in media attention and public outrage by continuing to push for a resolution to ensure delivery of humanitarian aid and by devoting

\textsuperscript{146} Jon Western, “Warring Ideas: Explaining US Military Intervention in Regional and Civil Conflicts” (Columbia University, 2000), 298.
\textsuperscript{147} Ibid., direct quotation as cited in Western.
\textsuperscript{149} Power, “A Problem from Hell: ” America and the Age of Genocide, 276.
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{151} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{152} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{153} Western, “Warring Ideas: Explaining US Military Intervention in Regional and Civil Conflicts,” 298.
\textsuperscript{154} Power, “A Problem from Hell: ” America and the Age of Genocide, 273; “Statement of Thomas M.T. Niles, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs,” 12.
\textsuperscript{155} Power, “A Problem from Hell: ” America and the Age of Genocide, 282.
increased resources to intelligence gathering. President Bush mentioned increasing pressures in an August 7 phone conversation with British Prime Minister John Major:

I can’t tell you the political and emotional pressure that has resulted because of these pictures of concentration camps and TV scenes. [...] 

[...] I didn’t want to embark on an open-ended military commitment, but rather to signal our resolve that we mean to get relief through while keeping our responsibilities bounded.

We’ve got to demonstrate that we’re not impotent here. I hope we can get together on this.156

Bush urged John Major to consider the resolution that he had been pushing for to allow the use of all measures necessary to delivery humanitarian aid.157 Bush believed that using air power to deliver aid would send “a tough and frightening message to Serbia.”158

Two days earlier, on August 5, State Department Spokesman Richard Boucher read a statement by now Acting Secretary of State Eagleburger to the public.159 The statement read in part that “Although unconfirmed, [the reports of camps] are profoundly disturbing.”160 It further confirmed that Red Cross representatives had visited nine camps and had found that while conditions in the camps were deplorable, none of the camps visited constituted death camps.161 The statement went on to say that all of the camps must be made accessible to the Red Cross and other neutral parties.162

On August 6, President Bush made a similar public statement while departing from Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs.163 He explained that he had been pushing for the United Nations Security Council to authorize the use of all measures necessary to deliver humanitarian aid, and though he hoped that force would not be necessary, “the international

157 Ibid., 1–3.
158 Ibid., 2.
160 “Statement by Acting Secretary Lawrence S. Eagleburger,” 1; “State Department News Briefing: Situation in Yugoslavia.”
162 “Statement by Acting Secretary Lawrence S. Eagleburger,” 1.
163 “Remarks by the President upon Departure, Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado Springs, Colorado.”
community cannot stand by and allow innocent children, women, and men to be starved to death.”

On August 7, President Bush made a second statement, this time connecting the Serbian camps to the Holocaust, asserting that “The shocking brutality of genocide in World War II, in those concentration camps, are burning memories for all of us, and that can’t happen again.”

Still, for President Bush, ground troops would be the “absolute last stage.” The administration’s focus was entirely on providing humanitarian aid, not on ending the fighting that was causing the dire humanitarian situation.

As noted, following public outcry over Serbian detention centers, the United States also began a high-level intelligence initiative to gather more information on the camps. Jon Western, the State Department intelligence analyst responsible for compiling data about ethnic cleansing, had been working closely with a colleague at the Central Intelligence Agency, who was responsible for gathering intelligence about the camps. Although they had repeatedly asked for more resources to assist in their intelligence collection efforts throughout the summer, they did not receive them until now, after the images of the camps were widely distributed. The invigorated intelligence effort eventually led to the identification of more than 200 camps.

After the Red Cross began thorough inspections of camps, the most brutal were closed.

In mid-August, President Bush’s summer initiative for a Security Council resolution finally bore fruit in UN Security Council Resolution 770. The resolution asked states to coordinate with the United Nations in taking “all measures necessary” to facilitate humanitarian aid distribution to Sarajevo and throughout Bosnia. It also demanded access for the Red Cross to “all camps, prisons, and detention centers.” Importantly, the resolution gave states the authority to use military force to deliver humanitarian aid, making threats to use force more

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164 Ibid., 1–2; 4.
166 “Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, Telecon with Prime Minister John Major of Great Britain, August 7, 1992, 1:40 P.M.-2:00 P.M.,” 2.
168 Interview with Jon Western, interview by Amanda J. Rothschild, July 14, 2015.
170 Ibid., 409.
171 “United Nations Protection Force.”
credible.\textsuperscript{174} In fact, the resolution represented the first ever authorization by the UN Security Council for the forcible delivery of humanitarian relief.\textsuperscript{175} However, as detailed below, subsequent Serbian obstruction of aid delivery would not in fact be met with an international response, undermining the credibility of this historic resolution.\textsuperscript{176}

\textit{The London Conference}

A few weeks later, from August 26 to August 28, the international community convened in London for the London Conference on the Former Yugoslavia.\textsuperscript{177} The conference included twenty-four national delegations, representatives from the United Nations and humanitarian community, and all Yugoslav parties, including, controversially, the Serbian parties.\textsuperscript{178} Although the agreements reached at London could have brought an end to the fighting, the United States and European allies were unwilling to enforce the agreements in the aftermath of the conference. As a result, the London Conference produced little practical relief for civilians in Bosnia.

Entering the conference, the United States was prepared to commit to employing air and naval assets to assist in the delivery of humanitarian relief. Documents prepared in advance of the London Conference reveal the mindset of the Bush administration in the lead-up to the conference. The evidence demonstrates a concern with finding a role for NATO and with ensuring humanitarian aid delivery. A National Security Council memorandum notes that the United States must “consider every possible means of American support and contribution—short of committing U.S. ground combat troops.”\textsuperscript{179} The United States had determined that NATO needed to have a role, particularly in light of the fact that allies had decided to introduce ground forces.\textsuperscript{180} The National Security Council documentation also reveals that the US goal was to “at a

\textsuperscript{174} "Points for Use by Secretary Eagleburger in Consultation on Bosnia and Kosovo' contained in 'Memorandum for Brent Scowcroft, ‘Warnings on Bosnia and Kosovo,’” December 11, 1992, 2, Jane E. Holl Files, CF01747, Folder: Bosnia-Herzegovina-December 1992 [4] [OA/ID CF 1747-006], George Bush Presidential Library.


\textsuperscript{176} Gompert, "The United States and Yugoslavia’s Wars," 132–33.


\textsuperscript{180} Ibid.
minimum” produce a statement at London committing all parties to assist and cooperate in aid
delivery.¹⁸¹

President Bush reflected on his plans for the London Conference in a message to Prime
Minister John Major. In his message, Bush thanked Major for offering ground troops to escort
UN humanitarian convoys and explained that the United States was willing to deploy US air and
naval assets in the effort.¹⁸² Bush added that he was “hopeful that the London Conference […]
will promote effective action on the following related fronts.”¹⁸³

Stopping the killing; demonstrating strong international resolve to prevent forcible
creation of a ‘Great Serbia;’ setting in motion a renewed diplomatic process grounded
firmly in CSCE principles; building a solid coalition under UN auspices for the delivery
doing humanitarian relief, by force if necessary, and for access to detention camps;
mobilizing international support for the pressing needs of refugees as winter approaches
and preventing spillover into areas not yet directly affected by the fighting.¹⁸⁴

Thus, the United States entered the London Conference eager to develop a more robust role for
NATO and to invigorate aid delivery. The Bush administration would commit to deploying US
air and naval assets and hoped that the conference would help end the violence.

US efforts at London appeared successful, on paper. Milan Panic, a Serbian California
native then serving as premier of Yugoslavia, would in fact agree to a cease-fire, a ban on
military flights, increased support for relief efforts, and restrictions on heavy weapons.¹⁸⁵ David
Gompert explains that these proposals could have effectively led to a cessation of the conflict,
but in the aftermath of the conference, the Serbian leadership did not obey a single agreement,
and Western countries and the UN Security Council did not impose penalties for
noncompliance.¹⁸⁶ The Serbs continued to commit atrocities, and the United States and its
European allies were not willing to use force to ensure compliance with the agreements.¹⁸⁷ In
short, the will to develop ideas to end the fighting did not extend into a willingness to enforce
agreements that may have ended the fighting.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.
¹⁸² “White House Situation Room Message for Prime Minister Major from President Bush,” August 24, 1992, 1–2,
David Gompert Files OA/ID CF01301, Folder: Bosnia [2] [OA/ID CF01301-002], George Bush Presidential
Library.
¹⁸³ Ibid., 1.
¹⁸⁴ Ibid.
¹⁸⁵ Gompert, “The United States and Yugoslavia’s Wars,” 133.
¹⁸⁶ Ibid.
¹⁸⁷ Zimmermann, Origins of a Catastrophe, 217.
Former government officials thus regard the London Conference as one of the most disappointing episodes in US policy on the conflict. Gompert termed the conference “a sorry chapter in the West’s mishandling of the conflict.”\textsuperscript{188} Robert Hutchings, then Director of European Affairs on the National Security Council staff, agrees that the agreements reached in London “were the right ones,” but that force was needed “to punish and deter.”\textsuperscript{189} Warren Zimmerman, who was responsible for coordinating London Conference decisions, commented that there was “no enthusiasm” for the proposals agreed upon at the London Conference.\textsuperscript{190} John Fox, of State’s Policy Planning Office, likewise believed that “There was no serious thought about the Conference […] it was not a serious effort.”\textsuperscript{191} When the State Department’s Acting Yugoslav Desk Officer resigned in late August, he called the conference “a charade” with a predetermined outcome.\textsuperscript{192} Headlines in the aftermath of the conference reflected these views: “In London, Talk but No Real Action” (\textit{Los Angeles Times}, 8/31); “More Heavy Shelling in Bosnia is Casting Doubt on London Talks” (\textit{New York Times}, 8/23); and “Diplomats Take Aim at Yugoslav Crisis With Harsh Words, Wishful Thinking” (\textit{Wall Street Journal} 8/27).\textsuperscript{193} In sum, the US commitment to an invigorated response prior to London led to little action following London. Agreements had been reached that may have halted the conflict, but the United States and European countries were not prepared to enforce them.

\textbf{March 1992-August 1992 Conclusion}

To conclude, during the summer of 1992, the primary focus of the administration had been on achieving access for humanitarian aid.\textsuperscript{194} In the face of increasing atrocities on the ground and heightened public awareness of the human rights violations in Bosnia, the administration successfully achieved the passage of the historic United Nations Security Council Resolution

\textsuperscript{188} Gompert, “The United States and Yugoslavia’s Wars,” 133.
\textsuperscript{189} Hutchings, \textit{American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War}, 316.
\textsuperscript{191} Western, “Warring Ideas: Explaining US Military Intervention in Regional and Civil Conflicts,” 305, Fox as quoted in Western.
\textsuperscript{192} Oberdorfer, “US Aide Resigns Over Balkan Policy,” A1, Kenney as quoted in Oberdorfer.
\textsuperscript{194} Interview with David Gompert.
770, authorizing the use of force for the delivery of humanitarian aid to Bosnia. However, the administration was not devoting significant attention to stopping the atrocities, the killing that was resulting in the dire humanitarian situation. Further, the United States failed to enforce the London agreements. Enforcement would have required the use of force, likely more than air power, something that the administration had consistently said it would not do.

The Bush administration made a key distinction between force employed for humanitarian purposes—to deliver aid—and force aimed at halting the killings or enforcing the agreements reached at London. In the summer of 1992, the administration championed the former use of military assets, but staunchly opposed the latter. Former Secretary Cheney has argued that this distinction was why the United States intervened in Somalia and not in the Balkans. Cheney notes that the use of force in Somalia was “essentially a humanitarian one,” and as this chapter has argued, US offers for force in Bosnia were also connected to humanitarian efforts, through the Sarajevo airlift and through pressure for UNSCR 770 calling for relief delivery using all necessary measures.

Even if the United States had been willing to use force to halt the killings or to enforce the London agreements, the objections of other parties may have prevented its doing so. Some evidence suggests that the United States wanted NATO to at least plan for the use of force beyond humanitarian efforts. In July, 1992, Secretary Baker drafted a message to Secretary General of NATO Manfred Woerner. In the message, Baker notes that NATO was “at a crucial moment in defining how allied militaries will be used in the ongoing crisis” and that “without prejudice to our future decision-making [...] NATO should begin planning out potential options for further military action beyond humanitarian aid and sanctions enforcement.” According to David Gompert, the United States also sent a query to

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195 Gompert suggested that the intensifying humanitarian posture was due to increasing recognition of problems on the ground: Ibid.
196 Ibid.
197 Gompert, “The United States and Yugoslavia’s Wars,” 133.
199 Ibid.
200 This is the spelling of his last name (Woerner) in the document: “Letter from Secretary Baker to SYG Woerner,” July 1, 1992, Jane E. Holl Files, CF01475-01 to CF01475-014, Folder: Bosnia-Herzegovina-July 1992 [6] [OA/ID CF 01475-006], George Bush Presidential Library.
201 As spelled in the document.
202 “Letter from Secretary Baker to SYG Woerner,” 1; 3.
UNPROFOR and to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to ask how they would respond if the United States used air power to stop the slaughter of civilians. Both UNPROFOR and UNHCR responded that they would withdraw from Bosnia if the United States used airpower. The British, moreover, conditioned their participation in protecting UNPROFOR convoys on the United States not using airpower, and they declined the US offer in late 1992 to conduct punitive airstrikes if UN personnel were harmed by Serbs. Finally, as previously mentioned, on June 24, 1992, the United States was informed that the Bosnian-Serb Cabinet had formally objected to US participation in the UNPROFOR peacekeeping force. As a result, the United Nations rejected a US offer to provide personnel at the Sarajevo airport. The objections of international parties to US military involvement thus likely reinforced the hesitancy of the Bush administration to commit military resources to the conflict. The United States would focus on humanitarian and diplomatic efforts, not on military action.

SEPTEMBER 1992–DECEMBER 1992

As the Bush presidency came to a close in the fall and early winter of 1992, the administration remained committed to humanitarian aid delivery and maintained its aversion to the insertion of US ground forces into the conflict in any capacity. On September 25, a National Security Council document outlined the “most critical issues from the standpoint of U.S. interests.” These priorities included the following: distribution of humanitarian relief; releasing camp detainees; ensuring sanctions effectiveness; and preventing the spread of the conflict to Kosovo. A few months later, in December, the administration—by now aware that it would be leaving Washington in January—had narrowed its most critical objects to humanitarian relief and avoiding a spread of the conflict into Kosovo.

203 Interview with David Gompert.
204 Ibid.
205 Gompert, “The United States and Yugoslavia’s Wars,” 133.
207 Ibid.
208 Interview with David Gompert.
209 Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 263.
211 Ibid.
212 “Points for Use by Secretary Eagleburger in Consultation on Bosnia and Kosovo” contained in “Memorandum for Brent Scowcroft, “Warnings on Bosnia and Kosovo,”” 2.
During this period, US intelligence indicated that the humanitarian situation was worsening, that current US and international policies were ineffective, and that Milosevic would soon be emboldened to expand his reach throughout the region. Indeed, documentary evidence from analysis produced at the time reveals troubling conclusions: economic sanctions had failed; the Serbs were continuing ethnic cleansing and were impeding relief convoys; the London agreements and UN resolutions had been ignored; and the Serbs were likely to spread the conflict into Kosovo. Further, the United States anticipated that Milosevic would win his upcoming December 20, 1992 election, and that in the aftermath, he “may decide he has a ‘window of opportunity’ to maximize Serbian gains,” particularly given the US preoccupation with a presidential transition and Somalia at this time. Adding to the dismal predictions was the aforementioned US estimate that hundreds of thousands of Bosnians would die in the winter of 1992 to 1993 without increased aid to the region.

In light of the worsening humanitarian situation, the Bush administration proposed several policies aimed at preventing further abuses and ensuring aid delivery: a no-fly zone; lifting the arms embargo on the Bosnian government; and prosecuting perpetrators of atrocities for war crimes. Even Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, who was vocal in his caution about Bosnia, now wanted to convey “greater resolve, bordering on automaticity” with respect to US plans in December for contingent actions, such as lifting the arms embargo and possibly conducting airstrikes to ensure humanitarian aid delivery, to secure compliance with the flight ban, to retaliate in the event of attacks on UN or allied forces, and to prevent Milosevic from spreading the conflict or ethnic cleansing into Kosovo.

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Yet, many of these initiatives were either blocked by allies or were not given the resources necessary to bring them to complete fruition. The lifting of the arms embargo was blocked at the United Nations Security Council by France and Britain, who worried that an influx of weapons into the region could harm their troops on the ground. The United States assigned responsibility for collecting evidence for the War Crimes Commission to a State Department intern and to a Foreign Service Officer with limited knowledge of the region. The administration did not investigate whether or not a prosecution of genocide was possible against Milosevic or against Serbia and Montenegro. Warren Zimmerman remembers that in the last months of the administration, “there was no inclination toward greater activism” and that discussion of the crisis mainly centered on “carping at European governments and at the UN High Commissioner for Refugees […] for not doing enough.”

Still, a “marginally useful” no-fly zone was in fact instituted in the last months of the administration. This occurred despite significant reluctance from European allies. The Serbs had initially agreed to a flight ban during the London Conference of August. And, on October 9, 1992, United Nations Security Council Resolution 781 had banned military flights into the airspace of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Yet, following these agreements, the ban had not been enforced because the Serbs had threatened to attack peacekeeping forces if it were. The British consequently argued against enforcing the flight ban in order to prevent Serb retaliation against UN peacekeeping forces and the possibility of detrimental effects on aid delivery. The British had also rejected a US offer in late 1992 to respond militarily if any harm befell UN troops. Notably, the British may have been right to be fearful about retaliation. Serbian forces would

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218 Gompert, “How to Defeat Serbia,” 38; Ronayne, Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust, 120; Ross, Statecraft: And How to Restore America’s Standing in the World, 54.
220 Ibid., 290.
221 Zimmermann, Origins of a Catastrophe, 218.
222 Gompert, “The United States and Yugoslavia’s Wars,” 135.
224 “United Nations Protection Force.”
225 Gompert, “The United States and Yugoslavia’s Wars,” 135; “Points for Use by Secretary Eagleburger in Consultation on Bosnia and Kosovo” contained in ‘Memorandum for Brent Scowcroft, “Warnings on Bosnia and Kosovo,”’ 3.
227 Ibid., 133.
later famously respond to Clinton administration airstrikes by taking UN personnel hostage, even chaining some to bridges.\textsuperscript{228}

In response to European opposition, the United States attempted to convince allies that enforcing the ban was essential to UN credibility. In December of 1992,\textsuperscript{229} a document entitled “Points to be Raised with Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom,” notes that “enforcement of the [no-fly] zone is a far greater issue than Bosnia itself,” that actions taken now will set precedent, and that states could not “allow the will of the UN Security Council to be ignored.”\textsuperscript{230} The United States feared that if the United Nations and Western countries backed down, “any statements or warnings we make Milosevic will not be credible.”\textsuperscript{231} David Gompert argues that this line of reasoning, stressing the implications for UN credibility, ended up convincing the allies to support the flight restriction plan.\textsuperscript{232}

The credibility of warnings issued to Milosevic was of particular concern to the Bush administration at this moment in the crisis, given its strategy for preventing the spread of conflict to Kosovo. The aforementioned document preparing for a conversation with Prime Minister Major had also noted the following:

\textit{[O]n Kosovo, we are serious. I know you agree with me in the necessity for giving Milosevic a stern warning. We must be prepared to back that warning up.}\textsuperscript{233}

The United States believed that possible spillover of the conflict into Kosovo could have significant detrimental effects on US interests and allies.\textsuperscript{234} Officials were particularly concerned about a series of events that might ignite a conflict among NATO allies: 1) violence in Kosovo spreads into Albania; 2) violence in Albania inflames the Albanian minority in Macedonia; 3)

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{229} The date is not included on the document itself. The December 1992 date was inferred from the fact that the document is contained in a folder dated December 1992 and the fact that the document is attached to other documents dated 12/1992 in a packet of documents related to an upcoming conversation with Prime Minister John Major.
\item \textsuperscript{230} “Points to Be Raised with Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom,” December 1992, Jane E. Holl Files, CF01747, Folder: Bosnia-Herzegovina-December 1992 [3] [OA/ID CF01747-005], George Bush Presidential Library.
\item \textsuperscript{231} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{232} Gompert, “The United States and Yugoslavia’s Wars,” 135.
\item \textsuperscript{233} “Points to Be Raised with Prime Minister John Major of the United Kingdom.”
\end{enumerate}
Serbia or Greece (a NATO member) feels compelled to intervene; 4) Turkey (also a NATO member) and Bulgaria in turn intervene to oppose a strong Greek presence in Macedonia. The spread of violence to Kosovo could thus interfere with the “chief American strategic concern” during this period: preventing the spread of violence into the southern Balkan region where it could wreak havoc on NATO partnerships. The White House thus wanted to prevent Milosevic from inferring that a restrained response in Bosnia would predict a restrained response in Kosovo.

In November of 1992, the White House had prepared presidential messages outlining US posture to be sent to other heads of state. The draft messages, approved by State and DOD by November 19, noted that the spread of the conflict to Kosovo could result in extensive violence, the deaths of thousands, and an influx of refugees into other states. It would be a danger to international peace, international security, and democracy. The presidential messages to Major, Mitterrand, and Yeltsin added that the United States was willing to consider the use of force in conjunction with an international response if ethnic cleansing or Serbian violence spread to Kosovo. By force, the United States once again did not mean ground forces, which it explicitly ruled out, but rather air power against military and economic targets. Finally, the United States wanted to send a strong warning to Milosevic to deter him from expanding the conflict. US leaders were “especially concerned” at this moment that Milosevic would assume that “there will be no international reaction” if he escalates in Kosovo. To prevent Milosevic

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237 Interview with David Gompert; “Points for Use by Secretary Eagleburger in Consultation on Bosnia and Kosovo” contained in ‘Memorandum for Brent Scowcroft, “Warnings on Bosnia and Kosovo,’” 3.
238 Gompert, “Memorandum for Brent Scowcroft, ‘Presidential Messages on Kosovo.’”
239 Ibid.
240 Ibid.
243 Gompert, “Draft Presidential Message to French President Mitterrand (Dear Francois) and UK Prime Minister Major (Dear John), from President Bush Via Head of Government Channels’ contained in ‘Memorandum for Brent
from developing this perception, Bush proposed they “send strong, private messages to Milosevic.”

Several weeks later, President Bush indeed sent a strong, private message to Milosevic. The notice, which became known as the *Christmas Warning*, argued that the United States would employ force against the Serbs if Milosevic spread the conflict into Kosovo. Sent on December 24, 1992, and drafted by Secretary Eagleburger, the message stated, “In the event of conflict in Kosovo caused by Serbian action, the United States will be prepared to employ military force against Serbs in Kosovo and in Serbia proper.” On its way out of power, in the last weeks of the administration, the Bush team had taken a forceful rhetorical stance with regard to Milosevic’s continued aggression, ethnic cleansing, and disregard for international agreements. Would the administration have followed through with its stern warning, had they had the opportunity to continue into a second term?

Any conclusions on this question would of course be purely speculative. However, we do know that the Bush administration did periodically match its rhetoric with its actions: the administration ruled out ground troops from the beginning of the crisis and kept this promise; it refrained from drawing redlines that it was unprepared to execute; at times it persuaded allies to enforce international agreements; and it focused on relieving the humanitarian situation, which was its stated priority. Marshall Harris, a notable State Department dissenter and former Baker

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Scowcroft, “Presidential Messages on Kosovo,” 2; Gompert, “Draft Presidential Message to Russian President Yeltsin from President Bush Via Head of Government Channels” contained in ‘Memorandum for Brent Scowcroft, Presidential Messages on Kosovo,” 2; Gompert, “Draft Presidential Message to Turkish Prime Minister Demirel (Dear Suleyman) from President Bush Via Head of Government Channels” contained in ‘Memorandum for Brent Scowcroft, Presidential Messages on Kosovo,” 2; David C. Gompert, “Draft Presidential Message to Turkish Prime Minister Demirel (Dear Suleyman) from President Bush Via Head of Government Channels” contained in ‘Memorandum for Brent Scowcroft, Presidential Messages on Kosovo,” 2; Nicholas Rostow Files CF01744, Folder: Yugoslavia [2] [OA/ID CF 01755-005], George Bush Presidential Library.

244 Gompert, “Draft Presidential Message to Russian President Yeltsin from President Bush Via Head of Government Channels” contained in ‘Memorandum for Brent Scowcroft, Presidential Messages on Kosovo,” 2; Gompert, “Draft Presidential Message to French President Mitterrand (Dear Francois) and UK Prime Minister Major (Dear John), from President Bush Via Head of Government Channels” contained in ‘Memorandum for Brent Scowcroft, Presidential Messages on Kosovo,” 2; Gompert, “Draft Presidential Message to Russian President Yeltsin from President Bush Via Head of Government Channels” contained in ‘Memorandum for Brent Scowcroft, Presidential Messages on Kosovo,” 2; Bush mentions the idea of a private message in his letter to Demirel, though the wording is different: Gompert, “Draft Presidential Message to Turkish Prime Minister Demirel (Dear Suleyman) from President Bush Via Head of Government Channels” contained in ‘Memorandum for Brent Scowcroft, Presidential Messages on Kosovo,” 2.


247 Ronayne, *Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust*, 126; 139-140.
aide who resigned in protest of US policy toward Bosnia during the Clinton Administration, thinks that the Bush administration may have intervened in the conflict had they stayed on for a second term, though he notes that his reflection is only speculation.248

Nevertheless, the policy analysis here deals with the facts of what actually happened during the ten months in which the Bush administration formulated US responsiveness to the killings in Bosnia. During this period, US policy did not witness significant movement toward more robust measures, which in this case would have consisted of a shift toward intervention: using military forces to end the killings. From the beginning of the crisis, the administration was focused on aid delivery, on isolating the Serbian leadership diplomatically, and on enforcing economic sanctions. The administration ruled out the use of US ground troops in any capacity and the use of military force to halt the killings.

In the next section, I will argue that the key factors that could have shifted the policy in the direction of more robust action—an inner-circle dissent, significant congressional pressure, and a positive value on political liability—did not surface in the last ten months of the administration. The senior leadership was in fact in near unanimous agreement about the appropriate response to the crisis. Key senior officials wanted to limit US involvement and opposed the insertion of US ground forces or even threatening significant military action. Lower-level dissenters, who were pushing for a more robust response, were unable to co-opt a senior official capable of channeling their opinions to the president. Their experience thus contrasts with the Holocaust dissenters who were able to convince Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau Jr. to join in their efforts. Congressional, media, and public pressure peaked around the time of the camp revelations in August of 1992, but Congress was largely united with the President in opposing the insertion of US ground troops, and Congress did not pass measures that would have directly pressured Bush to alter US policy. Finally, President Bush’s political standing and agenda were largely unaffected by his Bosnia policies. He neither stood to gain, nor lose, significant political capital by maintaining his approach to the crisis.

248 Interview with Marshall Harris, interview by Amanda J. Rothschild, August 20, 2015.
THE VARIABLES
This section will provide extensive detail on the three variables that I argue are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for a significant change in policy toward more robust responsiveness. I will first outline the dissent variable, arguing that consensus, not discord, characterized the senior administration leadership and that junior level officials were thus unable to channel their dissents to the president. Second, I will discuss the role of congressional pressure during the Bush administration, suggesting that pressure was of only medium strength, as Congress did not pass bills or resolutions calling for policy change from the preferred course of the executive. Finally, I will argue that the political liability variable was neutral: Bush would neither gain nor incur losses from changing his Bosnia policy.

DISSENT IN THE BUSH YEARS: CONSENSUS WINS
The Bush administration did not witness dissent at the highest levels of the administration and among Bush’s key advisers on the conflict. In fact, the senior leadership of the Bush administration was largely united in its views on the most appropriate response to the crisis: deep US engagement in the crisis was not in US interests. As a result, policy focused on humanitarian aid and sanctions enforcement, not on military involvement.

I argue that this lack of dissent within the inner circle—which is otherwise a necessary factor for significant policy change—in part explains why the Bush administration did not undergo a significant policy change. Although the Bush administration did witness disagreements at lower levels within various departments and agencies and among the National Security Council staff, these junior officials were unable to co-opt an inner-circle official to channel their dissent to the president. \(^{249}\)

In the discussion of the dissent variable, I will first explain the dynamics among the senior members of the administration, arguing that high-level, inner-circle officials were in agreement about the appropriate response to the crisis. I will then turn to a summary of dissent at the junior level. In this section, I will suggest that lower-level dissenters were ineffective because they could not obtain a senior ally.

\(^{249}\) Gompert, “The United States and Yugoslavia’s Wars,” 129.
United Senior Leadership

The senior leadership of the Bush administration was largely united in opposition to the use of force to halt the atrocities and to the use of US ground forces in any component of the policy response.\(^{250}\) Key administration officials formulating US policy toward Bosnia, in addition to President Bush, included the following people: Secretary of State James Baker, until Baker left to assist the Bush presidential campaign in August of 1992; Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, who would become Acting Secretary of State upon Eagleburger’s departure and Secretary of State beginning in December of 1992; and Brent Scowcroft, the National Security Adviser.\(^{251}\) The senior leadership in the Department of Defense consisted of Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Colin Powell.

These leading decision makers, and many of their direct subordinates, did not believe that the United States should become heavily involved in the crisis or launch a military intervention.\(^{252}\) Their reluctance for deep engagement stemmed from two related beliefs shared by administration officials on the appropriate use of American military forces: first, the belief that the conflict did not pose a critical threat to US interests, and US military force should only be employed in defense of vital US interests; and second, the belief that force should only be threatened in cases in which the United States is willing to follow-through on the threat and see the crisis to its conclusion.

The first belief, that US military assets should only be employed in cases in which vital interests are threatened, ruled out intervention in Bosnia. The top US leadership—President Bush, Secretary Baker, and Secretary Cheney—believed that the conflict did not threaten US interests and that absent such a threat, US force should not be employed.\(^{253}\)

The second belief, that force should not be threatened unless the United States is willing to do whatever is necessary to succeed likewise prevented significant engagement in the

\(^{250}\) Interview with Richard B. Cheney, 152.


\(^{252}\) Interview with Jane Holl Lute; Interview with David Gompert; Ross, Statecraft: And How to Restore America’s Standing in the World, 49–50; Interview with William Howard Taft IV; Interview with David Gompert.

\(^{253}\) Interview with David Gompert.
conflict.\textsuperscript{254} Doing whatever would be necessary to succeed in Bosnia might mean being willing to use ground troops.\textsuperscript{255} The top leadership in the Bush administration was of the opinion from the earliest stages of the crisis that although intervention might successfully defeat the Serbs and halt the killing, if it did not work, the United States could be drawn into a more protracted conflict similar to Vietnam with high casualties and a limited chance of success.\textsuperscript{256} Officials recalled challenges faced by the Nazis in attempting to overpower Yugoslavia during the Second World War.\textsuperscript{257} Further, the Bush administration had just completed a military engagement in the First Gulf War, and they anticipated that any operation in Yugoslavia would be more complex.\textsuperscript{258} The crisis in Bosnia was not of sufficient interest to the United States to warrant a prolonged and potentially costly commitment.\textsuperscript{259} Because the United States could not commit fully to seeing the conflict to its termination, the leadership believed that force should not be threatened at all.

Among the senior leadership, the views of Secretary Eagleburger and Brent Scowcroft were particularly trusted, in light of their expertise on Yugoslavia. Eagleburger had been American Ambassador to Yugoslavia, and Scowcroft had amassed a twenty-nine-year military career that included a stint as assistant air attaché in Belgrade.\textsuperscript{260} Given their expertise, the administration relied heavily on their input, allowing Eagleburger to exert more influence than a typical Deputy Secretary of State.\textsuperscript{261} Both Eagleburger and Scowcroft favored limited US involvement.

Eagleburger’s support for restraint was in part influenced by US experiences in Vietnam. In an interview with David Halberstam, Eagleburger explained that “what [he] always feared was

\textsuperscript{254} Gompert, “The United States and Yugoslavia’s Wars,” 132; Hutchings, \textit{American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War}, 314; Interview with Robert Hutchings; Interview with David Gompert.


\textsuperscript{256} Interview with David Gompert; Gompert, “The United States and Yugoslavia’s Wars,” 132; Power, \textit{A Problem from Hell}, \textit{America and the Age of Genocide}, 283; “Memorandum of Conversation, Meeting with Aliza Izetbegovic, President of Bosnia-Herzegovina, 11:45 A.M.-12:30 P.M., Helsinki, Finland,” 3; Ross, \textit{Statecraft: And How to Restore America's Standing in the World}, 51.

\textsuperscript{257} Interview with David Gompert.

\textsuperscript{258} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{259} Western, “Warring Ideas: Explaining US Military Intervention in Regional and Civil Conflicts,” 284.


\textsuperscript{261} Interview with Richard B. Cheney, 152; Ross, \textit{Statecraft: And How to Restore America's Standing in the World}, 49; “Lieutenant General Brent Scowcroft”; “Biographies of the Secretaries of State: Lawrence Sidney Eagleburger”; “Brent Scowcroft”; Interview with Marshall Harris; Interview with William Howard Taft IV.
Vietnam—the tar baby. Something that started out small but kept growing.” 262 Ambassador Zimmerman also recalls that Eagleburger had mentioned that his views had been influenced by US experiences in Vietnam and in Lebanon. 263 In the former case, limited US involvement escalated into quagmire, and in the latter case, over two hundred US Marines stationed abroad perished in a terrorist attack. 264

Scowcroft was more amenable to hearing arguments in favor of the use of force, particularly in regards to airstrikes, but he worried that such measures would not be effective, and he was a strong adherent to the view that force should not be threatened unless the United States was willing to commit to seeing the conflict through to resolution. 265 Scowcroft also felt that the United States did not have an interest in the conflict, pointing out that “It appeared to us as a never ending involvement. And the images of Vietnam came to mind on that count.” 266 In Scowcroft’s judgment, Bosnia only became a US concern if the war spread into Kosovo and consequently threatened US interests. 267

Several other factors reinforced the Bush administration’s hesitancy to become heavily involved in the Bosnian conflict. Ambassador Zimmerman concluded that some of these other factors included the following: European objections to the US use of force; the possible risks to UN Peacekeepers; opposition from UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali; a lack of NATO consensus; Russian support for the Serbs; and a Congress unable to recommend a strategy. 268 The French and the British believed that military engagement in Bosnia would be similar to Vietnam, particularly in light of the mountainous terrain around the Sarajevo airport. 269

In a telephone conversation with President Bush on June 27, 1992, John Major explained British fears:

262 Halberstam, War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals, 32.
263 Zimmermann, Origins of a Catastrophe, 214.
264 Ibid.
265 Ibid., 215.
266 Western, “Warring Ideas: Explaining US Military Intervention in Regional and Civil Conflicts,” 277, Scowcroft as quoted in Western.
268 Zimmermann, Origins of a Catastrophe, 225.
We’ll get the Serbs to back off initially, then an international organization like the Red Cross will deliver the supplies. Soon snipers will start shooting at them, and we’ll have to send troops to protect them. Step by step we’ll be dragged into an even bigger operation. That is our nightmare.270

Moreover, as discussed, when the United States asked the UNHCR, which was responsible for delivering aid, and UNPROFOR leadership what they would do if the United States used air power to stop the Serbs, both UNPROFOR and UNHCR said they would have to withdraw.271 Further, as noted, the Bosnian-Serb Cabinet had in fact formally objected to US participation in UNPROFOR in June of 1992, which prevented the UN from accepting the US offer to provide personnel support for the airport in Sarajevo.272

Thus, the top leadership of the Bush administration, led by Secretary Eagleburger and National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, had judged that it was not in US interests to threaten or launch a military intervention in the conflict. The conflict itself was of little relation to vital US interests and could lead to a quagmire akin to Vietnam. Further reinforcing their views was the fact that the United Nations, European allies, and some parties on the ground opposed US military involvement in the crisis.

**Low-Level Dissent**

Although the top leadership in the Bush administration was united in opposition to heavy involvement, the lower levels of the administration witnessed intensive disagreements on US policy between various government departments and agencies, including the National Security Council staff. The effect of this interagency quibbling was twofold: first, it impeded the policy making processes at the lower level of the administration; second, junior dissenters were unable to co-opt anyone in Bush’s trusted circle of advisers to channel their views to the president.

**Policy Breakdown**

The National Security Council system completely broke down during the crisis in Bosnia.273 A Council that had previously been characterized by a high degree of trust, transparency, and

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271 Interview with David Gompert.
273 Interview with David Gompert.
information sharing, struggled to obtain basic information from the Department of Defense, to ascertain a comprehensive policy plan from the State Department, and to ensure cooperation across government agencies.274

During the crisis, interagency meetings would lead to few policy advances because attendees were representing the divided views of the various departments.275 National Security Adviser Scowcroft would often refrain from taking sides because he wanted an airing of different positions.276 As former NSC staffer, Jane Holl Lute, explained, oftentimes “You want disagreement over policy […] You want to know: what are the contrary views.”277 In this case, however, the airing of differing opinions appeared to lead to stagnation. David Gompert had discussed the breakdown of the National Security Council system with Brent Scowcroft at the time, and in hindsight, gives the administration an “F” on process.278

One of the most significant impediments to the policy making process on Bosnia stemmed from the Department of Defense’s unwillingness to cooperate with National Security Council requests. The NSC staff, which normally has significant authority within an administration, struggled to obtain requested analysis on military options for Bosnia from the Department of Defense.279 NSC staffers would ask for plans and analysis for a no-fly zone or airstrikes and nothing would come back from DOD.280 A memorandum for Scowcroft from December 11 is particularly indicative of the problem. In the memorandum, David Gompert writes the following:

The Secretary [Cheney] has no problem telling allies that we would react with air power if their UNPROFOR contingents were threatened or attacked. He is not sure what operational options would make sense, and he has asked General Powell to examine this.281

Gompert explained in an interview with this author that this document is representative of the NSC struggles to obtain military analysis.282 Under normal circumstances, the NSC would be evaluating military options every day, and it would be highly unusual for the Secretary of

274 Ibid.
275 Ibid.
276 Ibid.
277 Interview with Jane Holl Lute.
278 Interview with David Gompert.
279 Ibid.
280 Ibid.; Interview with Robert Hutchings.
281 Gompert, “Memorandum for Brent Scowcroft, ‘Warnings on Bosnia and Kosovo.’”
282 Interview with David Gompert.
Defense not to know the details of these options, particularly when the United States is about to tell European allies that, after continued reluctance to use force in the conflict, they would be willing to use force if UNPROFOR were attacked. 283

Former staffers suspect that the lack of cooperation with the NSC at lower levels in the Department of Defense stemmed from the fact that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Colin Powell, was against intervention, and senior Department of Defense officials were afraid that someone might actually choose one of the limited options presented. 284

The views of the senior leadership in the Department of Defense were well known at the time. Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Colin Powell “were in total agreement” and thought the use of force “was a bad idea.” 285 The Joint Chiefs had objected to airdrops, which Powell and Cheney believed would be “random and scattered,” and sought to block the no-fly zone. 286

Colin Powell’s views on the use of force—known as the Powell Doctrine—were also detailed in his 1992 Foreign Affairs article. 287 In the article, he suggests that before committing US forces to crises abroad, several questions require evaluation: 1) Is the political objective important, defined, and understood? 2) Have nonviolent policies failed? 3) Will force achieve the political objective? 4) How much will force cost? 5) Have the risks and benefits been considered fully? 6) How might the crisis change when force is introduced? 288 In short, Powell believed that troops should not be put in danger when the US objective was unclear, particularly in conflicts with significant ethnic and religious divides that would ultimately require political solutions. 289

Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney did not think that the Balkans comprised a “strategically vital part of the world” for the United States and that the conflict consequently did not merit a full-scale military response. 283

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283 Ibid.
284 Ibid.; Interview with Robert Hutchings.
285 For quotations: Interview with Richard B. Cheney, 152; Interview with David Gompert.
not justify military intervention or the risk of US casualties and financial expenditure. In contrast to statements made by administration officials at the time, Cheney argues that he did not believe that there were any “good guys and bad guys.”

Scowcroft, in his own words, “strongly opposed the Powell doctrine,” which he judged was “nonsense” and unnecessarily precluded the use of military power unless the United States “went all out” in the conflict. Yet, neither National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, nor President Bush, felt compelled to demand the furnishing of military options when they did not materialize.

Paul Wolfowitz, Undersecretary of Defense, represented an exception to DOD consensus in that he opposed the arms embargo on Bosnia, fearing that the embargo would lead to a worsening of the crisis that would eventually necessitate significant American engagement.

In the instances in which the Department of Defense did present military options, the plans usually called for a significant number of forces. When the Bush administration considered plans for the Sarajevo airlift in the summer of 1992, military analysts estimated that 50,000 ground troops would be needed to secure a thirty-mile perimeter around the airport (notably under an assumption of significant resistance from Serbian forces). However, the airlift was implemented later on with only 1,000 United Nations troops at the airport, amid an agreement with Serbian forces to remove tanks and guns from the airport, though as previously noted, the airport was not free from the threat of violence.

In early August of 1992, Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Lieutenant General Barry McCaffrey, estimated that enforcing a ceasefire in Bosnia would require 400,000 troops—an estimate which Scowcroft has...
acknowledged was likely inflated.\textsuperscript{297} The Joint Chiefs had developed an “aversion to casualties” that Ambassador Zimmerman believes led them to suggest that military options were likely to fail.\textsuperscript{298}

Yet, just as the civilian leadership refrained from demanding military options when they were not provided to them, the civilian leadership also failed to question military estimates that were likely inflated. Scowcroft and Ambassador Zimmerman have noted that the military plans were simply uncontestable by civilian “armchair strategists.”\textsuperscript{299} Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral David Jeremiah, however, claims that military officials were in fact frustrated by the lack of civilian leadership during this period.\textsuperscript{300} He has since commented that “they [the civilian policymakers] could never make up their minds” and that they had the “unreasonable” expectation of receiving military options that could solve complex political problems without any casualties.\textsuperscript{301} He further claims that had the policymakers “told us exactly what they wanted us to do, we would have drawn up our plans.”\textsuperscript{302}

**Dissenters Fail to Convince Senior Leadership**

Although senior officials were in agreement that the United States should not become deeply involved in the crisis, several lower level officials argued for a more robust policy. Many of these officials believed that intervention was needed “on Never Again grounds” because what they saw in Bosnia, in their view, looked like genocide.\textsuperscript{303} These people in general were individuals on the NSC staff and within the State Department.\textsuperscript{304} According to David Gompert, some even felt that the use of force was called for as early as the crisis in Croatia.\textsuperscript{305}

Among those in favor of a more robust response was Ambassador Warren Zimmerman, who thought that Western force could successfully deter the Serbs, and that in mid-July 1992, the
United States should have begun airstrikes against Serbian military targets in Bosnia. Zimmerman thought that continued Serbian aggression was motivated in part by the perception that the West would not respond. Zimmerman determined that Serbian forces—in his view, untrained and often drunk—were weak militarily and that they would cease their efforts as soon as NATO confronted them. The Serbs, in Zimmerman’s words, “were not to be bombed back to the Stone Age, just to the negotiating table.” Zimmerman further argued, as early as September 1991, that the United States could not “stand aside” if Europe failed to resolve the emerging conflicts in Yugoslavia, though he conceded that “there [was] virtually no public or parliamentary backing” for US or European military force.

Zimmerman has written that, at the time, he shared his views with Eagleburger and Scowcroft, but for reasons detailed above, they did not agree with Zimmerman’s point of view. State’s Jim Hooper, whom Zimmerman had asked to assist him in working on Bosnia policy, recalled that Zimmerman worried that he would lose his access to the top officials, namely then Deputy Secretary Eagleburger, if he pushed too hard for military strikes. Zimmerman had been urging Hooper to push for policy change instead, but Hooper, then director of the Office of Canadian Affairs, did not think that he would be taken seriously by someone of Eagleburger’s rank. Faced with opposition to his views and an inability to affect policy, Zimmerman would eventually resign from his position as Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugee, and Migration Affairs in 1994, citing frustration with Bosnia policy.

David Gompert joined Zimmerman in the belief that Serbian aggression resulted from the Serbs’ belief that NATO and the United States would not respond. And, like Zimmerman, Gompert shared his views at interagency meetings. He judged that the threat of intervention

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307 Zimmermann, Origins of a Catastrophe, 214.
308 Ibid.
309 Ibid., 216.
310 Zimmermann, “For the Secretary, ‘A Plan for Yugoslavia,’” 2–3.
313 Ibid.
315 Zimmermann, Origins of a Catastrophe, 214; Interview with David Gompert.
316 Interview with David Gompert.
might change the Serbian calculus entirely. In his opinion, even the appearance of US strike aircraft would deter Serbian aggression. When Gompert presented his point of view, the Pentagon would respond that he could in fact be right that limited force would deter the Serbs, but if he were to be wrong, the United States would not be able to just withdraw. Recalling his time on the NSC staff, Gompert feels that, at the end of the day, the Bush administration made a mistake in failing to take what could have been successful limited action to deter the Serbs early in the crisis.

Robert Hutchings, Director of European Affairs on the National Security Council staff, has noted that those arguing for increased US intervention “did so all too timidly,” knowing that “the burden was entirely on [them]” to prove the validity of such proposals over the “known opposition of the NSC principals.” Senior officials would overrule recommendations at the staff level for a more robust response, including a proposal that NATO assume a leadership role under a CSCE mandate. Hutchings judged that the opinions of the Department of Defense and Joint Chiefs, who opposed US involvement, also “carried even more weight in administration councils than usual.” Lower-level staff suggestions were “dismissed out of hand at the highest levels of the State Department and especially the Pentagon as being pointless,” unless the United States was willing to do everything possible to assure complete resolution of the conflict.

Hutchings and Gompert both believed that proposals for military force confronted the dual lessons of Vietnam and the Gulf War. The former was used to argue that the Bosnian conflict could become a quagmire, the latter to show the validity of the Powell Doctrine on the limited use of force.

Over in the Department of State, several lower level dissenters were also advocating for increased responsiveness to the crisis in Bosnia. What Samantha Power has described as a

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317 Ibid.
318 Ibid.
319 Ibid.
320 Ibid.
321 Hutchings, American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War, 314; Interview with Robert Hutchings.
322 Ibid., American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War, 308.
323 Ibid.
324 Ibid., 314.
325 Ibid.; Interview with David Gompert.
326 Zimmermann, Origins of a Catastrophe, 214–15; Interview with David Gompert; Hutchings, American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War, 314.
327 Interview with Jon Western.
"posse" of State Department officials sent several cables in favor of a more robust response to senior officials.\textsuperscript{328} Their arguments were usually based on moral grounds.\textsuperscript{329} They asserted that intervention to stop the killings was simply the right thing to do.\textsuperscript{330} In parallel to members of the National Security Council staff, State Department dissenters were moved by perceived comparisons to the Holocaust.\textsuperscript{331} One State official, John Fox, has since recounted that State officials had seen five hundred documentaries on the Holocaust; some had been to Auschwitz; "The Holocaust was part of the equipment that one brought to the job."\textsuperscript{332} The State Department's Jim Hooper encouraged others to read Martin Gilbert's \textit{Auschwitz and the Allies} and suggested that they might use such parallels in their arguments for increased US involvement in the crisis.\textsuperscript{333}

At one point, Hooper had asked then Acting Secretary Eagleburger for a meeting for him and a colleague, Richard Johnson, about the crisis.\textsuperscript{334} Eagleburger agreed to the meeting, which occurred in mid-September, 1992.\textsuperscript{335} Following their discussion, during which Hooper and Johnson argued that the United States lacked a strategy, the Secretary requested that Hooper construct a memorandum formulating a new policy approach.\textsuperscript{336} Hooper and Johnson prepared a twenty-seven-page\textsuperscript{337} memo and sent it to Eagleburger through the State Department's Dissent Channel, bypassing their direct superiors.\textsuperscript{338} The Dissent Channel was created following Vietnam to allow junior officials to send information to senior officials without the intervention of their direct superiors or of anyone else between them and the intended point of contact.\textsuperscript{339} On November 11, 1992, Eagleburger met with both Hooper and Johnson and applauded their

\textsuperscript{328} Power, "A Problem from Hell:" \textit{America and the Age of Genocide}, 266-67.
\textsuperscript{329} Ibid., 267.
\textsuperscript{330} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{331} Ibid., 278.
\textsuperscript{332} Ibid., direct quotation of John Fox from Power.
\textsuperscript{333} Ibid., 279; Martin Gilbert, \textit{Auschwitz and the Allies} (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1981).
\textsuperscript{334} Power, "A Problem from Hell:" \textit{America and the Age of Genocide}, 287; The Power and Halberstam accounts differ on a few details of the sequencing of events and when certain things were said: Halberstam, \textit{War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals}, 140.
\textsuperscript{335} Power, "A Problem from Hell:" \textit{America and the Age of Genocide}, 287.
\textsuperscript{336} Ibid.; Halberstam says Hooper and Johnson asked to write the memo. Power says that the Secretary requested they do so: Halberstam, \textit{War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals}, 140.
\textsuperscript{337} Halberstam says it was twenty-five pages: Halberstam, \textit{War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals}, 140.
\textsuperscript{338} Power, "A Problem from Hell:" \textit{America and the Age of Genocide}, 287; Halberstam, \textit{War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals}, 140.
\textsuperscript{339} Power, "A Problem from Hell:" \textit{America and the Age of Genocide}, 287.
memorandum. He remarked that he had not wanted to discuss their concerns in detail before the election when policy was unlikely to change. During the meeting, Hooper and Johnson in fact discovered that they were the only ones within the bureaucracy criticizing the policy directly to Eagleburger.

The culture of the State Department may have prevented some potential dissenters from voicing their views and from passing dissenting views up the chain. For instance, Jon Western, the State Department intelligence analyst responsible for gathering information about ethnic cleansing, has noted that lower level officials would send information about atrocities up State’s hierarchy, but would never hear anything back. Advocacy for military action in Bosnia was discouraged, as was any behavior that could be construed as disturbing the status quo. In interagency meetings, which occurred almost every week, the Department of Defense was averse to military options in Bosnia because such efforts did not fit into their understanding of the types of operations appropriate for the United States military. In Jon Western’s opinion, they were still focused on the Cold War and avoided anything that reminded them of Vietnam.

In late August of 1992, the State Department’s Acting Yugoslav Desk Officer, George Kenney, resigned in protest of US policy toward Bosnia. In his letter of resignation, Kenney, who argued for an air cap over Bosnia, military strikes on Serbian targets, the interdiction of military supplies for Serbs in Bosnia, and a lifting of the arms embargo, noted that he could “no longer in clear conscience support the Administration’s ineffective, indeed counterproductive, handling of the Yugoslav crisis. I am, therefore, resigning in order to help develop a stronger public consensus that the United States and the West must act [...].” In an article in the

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343 Ibid., 270.
344 Ibid., 266–67.
345 Interview with Jon Western.
346 Ibid.
Washington Post, Kenney wrote that “a potential quagmire is just a smoke screen. It is cold political calculus that explains why the administration does not want to exercise US leadership [...] to contemplate any significant use of US and Western military force [...] to face the fact of genocide.”349 He continued to note that he believed that the administration had made the decision that “politically it has more to gain” from not becoming involved in the conflict than from becoming involved and risking being blamed for failure.350 He was further quoted in the Washington Post as saying that the “strong language and graphic reports of suffering in Bosnia” were “often deleted or watered down by mid-level officials seeking to minimize the pressure for U.S. intervention.”351 Upon hearing of the resignation, Eagleburger commented that he doubted whether Kenney had ever been to Yugoslavia.352

In the aftermath of the Kenney resignation, nearly every Bosnia policy discussion was leaked to the press.353 Jon Western argues that such leaks were intended to counter the administration’s public narrative of the crisis as stemming from irreconcilable age-old hatreds.354 Dissenters in all agencies and departments had failed to persuade higher level, inner-circle officials of the merits of their policy proposals. Lacking access to the president and the ability to change policy, some of these dissenters had now resorted to leaking information to try to influence policy through alternative channels.

**Summary**

To summarize, the senior, inner-circle advisers to President Bush were in agreement that limited US engagement was the most appropriate response to the crisis. Military intervention, on the ground for humanitarian purposes or aimed at stopping the killing, could only be employed in instances in which vital US interests were threatened or in which the United States was willing to commit to see the crisis through to its conclusion. In their opinion, Bosnia did not threaten US interests, and the United States was accordingly not willing to commit to a prolonged involvement that could mirror the US experience in Vietnam. Lower level officials did argue for

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349 Kenney, “Bosnia—Appeasement in Our Time”; On the date of the article: Kenney, “Bosnia - Appeasement in Our Time.”
350 Ibid.
a more robust response, from David Gompert and Robert Hutchings on the NSC staff, to Warren Zimmerman, Jim Hooper, Jon Western, George Kenney, and others at State. However, these officials struggled to co-opt a senior official in their cause, and the NSC staffers met opposition from their counterparts in the Department of Defense, who were attuned to the message coming from senior DOD leadership against significant US involvement. In this climate, a high-level, inner-circle dissent did not emerge.

**Political Liability**

The political liability variable during the Bush administration was neutral: the president was not likely to lose favorability with the public; lose an upcoming election; or have aspects of his political agenda suffer as a result of failing to change his policies on Bosnia. Although some public and media pressure did surface, particularly around the concentration camp revelations of August 1992, the Bush administration did not perceive significant costs for failing to change its policy. The 1992 presidential election was looming during the Bosnia crisis, but with significant foreign policy successes behind him, the administration did not feel that the Bosnia crisis constituted an electoral liability.

Limited political pressures ran both for and against increased action on Bosnia during this period. As discussed, agitation for some sort of increased responsiveness appears to have been most intense around August 1992, when the public and media became aware of the possibility of Serbian concentration camps. Yet, President Bush and his advisers were not concerned with being punished politically for their restrained policy in response to Bosnia. In fact, little evidence suggests that public opinion had any effect on the Bush administration’s decision making during this time. For example, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney has since noted that although pressures emanating from the press and the television media did emerge, he maintained his view that the Balkans did not concern US national interests, and he therefore did not believe that the United States should become involved and structured policy accordingly.355 David Gompert and Robert Hutchings, two members of the Bush National Security Council staff, likewise noted in separate interviews that public pressure for deep engagement in Bosnia was for the most part limited and did not affect their decision making.356

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355 Interview with Richard B. Cheney, 155.
356 Interview with David Gompert; Interview with Robert Hutchings.
In addition, there was some chance that pushing for increased involvement in Bosnia would in fact backfire politically. Dennis Ross, then Director of Policy Planning at the State Department, has argued that Bush’s poll numbers were falling in 1992 “in no small part because he seemed interested only in foreign policy and not domestic needs.” In this climate, “the last thing President Bush needed” was a war in a faraway country. Although I do not find evidence in the documentary record to suggest that Bush perceived that he was too interested in foreign policy, Dennis Ross’s comments reflect the general lack of public interest in deep US engagement in Bosnia during this time, as well as the public’s unwillingness to inflict costs on President Bush for maintaining his restrained response.

The upcoming 1992 election perhaps could have exerted some influence on the Bush administration, had they perceived foreign policy to be a potentially weak area of Bush’s portfolio. After all, during the election, Clinton had argued that he would support a more robust policy in Bosnia. Yet, the administration did not feel threatened by Clinton on foreign policy issues. Indeed, they believed that foreign policy was their greatest strength. Former US Permanent Representative to NATO, William Howard Taft IV, noted that President Bush, Scowcroft, and Secretary Baker did not feel that candidate Clinton was a threat on foreign policy. The Bush administration had successfully handled the Gulf War, German unification, and the collapse of the Soviet Union, and they believed that, in general, they had a strong record on Iraq, Germany, Russia, and China. In short, the foreign policy legacy was ensured.

Finally, even if political factors had emerged to threaten consequences for inaction, it is worth noting that President Bush may have been somewhat insulated from these concerns. The senior foreign policy leadership was mainly comprised of experts, not political gurus. Deputy, Acting, and eventually Secretary of State Eagleburger and National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft had significant foreign policy and military experience. Eagleburger had joined the Foreign Service in 1957, eventually rising through several service roles spanning both democratic and republican administrations, and including stints as the American Ambassador to

357 Ross, Statecraft: And How to Restore America’s Standing in the World, 52.
358 Ibid.
360 Interview with William Howard Taft IV.
361 Ibid.
362 Ibid.; Interview with David Gompert.
363 Interview with David Gompert.
Belgrade, as Political Adviser and Chief of the Political Section of the US Mission to NATO, and as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense. Scowcroft meanwhile boasted a twenty-nine-year military career that included time as assistant air attaché in Belgrade. Secretary Baker, who was arguably the closest to a political operative and would leave his position in August of 1992, had also served in the military, as Under Secretary of Commerce under the Ford administration, and as Secretary of the Treasury and White House Chief of Staff under Reagan.

These men, who had spent much of their lives as civil servants and in important foreign policy and military positions, may have been less attuned to the political effects of US policy toward Bosnia. As issue-area experts, the Bush leadership appears to have focused on what they perceived to be the national interests at stake in Bosnia; in short, they were less inclined to be preoccupied with Bush’s political standing. The fact that Bush’s inner circle on Bosnia was not comprised of political operatives would serve as a contrast to the Clinton administration leadership. As discussed in the following chapter, Clinton’s team would include several officials highly concerned with politics and sensitive to public opinion. In sum, given the non-political composition of the Bush administration, we might expect that even if the public became more engaged on Bosnia, and started to condition their support of Bush on his taking more significant action, the effect of political liability would have been somewhat muted.

To conclude, the political liability variable, which measures the president’s perception that his policies toward the issue will affect his standing with the public, his election prospects, or his political agenda, held a neutral value during the Bush administration. The public eventually did come to support US airstrikes and US participation in peacekeeping efforts, moved by increasing publication of images of the atrocities, but the public did not feel strongly enough to make Bush liable to incur significant political consequences for failing to act. Moreover, President Bush does not seem to have believed that he was likely to incur any significant political costs: his foreign policy legacy had been ensured through several prior successes in international affairs; his rival in the election was not a threat on foreign policy; and his chief advisers were largely inattentive to political events.

365 “Biographies of the Secretaries of State: James Addison Baker III.”
366 Interview with Marshall Harris.
367 On the contrast in political focus of Bush vs. Clinton administration: Ibid.; See also: Interview with Jon Western.
CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE

I categorize the value of the congressional pressure variable as medium for the Bush administration. Congressional policy largely tracked with the administration during this period. Congress condemned the atrocities, supported economic sanctions, and urged the delivery of humanitarian aid relief. Although some members of Congress did advocate for further responsiveness, Congress did not pass bills or resolutions to change policy in deviation from the preferred course of the executive.

Legislative Action and Resolutions

The Senate passed seven noteworthy proposals—not encompassed in other bills (i.e., amendments to successful bills)—concerning Bosnia during Bush’s tenure: S.Res.290; S.2743; S.Res.306; and S.Res.330. All of these measures were in keeping with White House policy to institute economic sanctions on the Serbian regime, ensure aid delivery, and pressure the United Nations. None of them called for or forced a change in policy. Resolution 290 of April 1992, introduced by Senator Robert Dole (R-KY), resolved that the United States should “hold accountable” the Serbian government for recent attacks on the republics and should withhold diplomatic recognition of Serbia and Montenegro until Serbia halted attacks.368 The Yugoslavia Sanctions Act of 1992, S.2743 of May 1992, imposed economic and travel sanctions on Serbia and Montenegro.369 Resolution 306 of June 1992, urged President Bush to pressure the United Nations to provide them with a plan and possible budget for intervention to enforce the Security Council resolutions.370 On August 11, in the wake of the concentration camp revelations, the Senate approved Senate Resolution 330, which asked the President to pressure the United Nations Security Council to use “all necessary means” to deliver humanitarian aid and gain access to prisoner of war camps, in keeping with the White House’s longstanding initiative for

such a resolution. Notably, the resolution also prohibited the use of US military personnel in combat roles without “clearly defined objectives and sufficient resources.” In arguing for the resolution, Senator Biden asserted, “other than access to the camps, this resolution goes no further than where the President already is.” Yet, it is not clear how much this resolution even differed from Bush’s stance on the camps issue. The administration had already called for access to the camps by the time of Biden’s comments, and UNSCR 770, championed by Bush and passed on August 13, would demand access to detention centers as well.

A Senate resolution, introduced by Senator Slade Gorton (R-WA) in September of 1992, that called for change in US policy did not receive significant support. The resolution, which asked the United Nations to consider terminating the arms embargo on Bosnia and Croatia, was never reported out by the Committee on Foreign Relations and did not receive a vote.

The House passed two resolutions concerning Bosnia. These resolutions were also largely in line with White House policy. The first, H.Res.554, passed on August 11 amid the camp revelations, affirmed support for President Bush’s statement of August 6, 1992, cited previously in this chapter, in which Bush explained that he had been pressing for the UN Security Council resolution for the use of all measures necessary to deliver humanitarian aid. The resolution further commended President Bush’s actions to isolate Serbia diplomatically, to enforce sanctions, to restrict heavy weaponry in the region, and to resume peace talks. The second resolution, H.Res.557, introduced on August 12 and passed in late September, likewise called for intensifying relief efforts and gathering intelligence on the refugee situation.

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372 Ibid.
374 “Statement by Acting Secretary Lawrence S. Eagleburger,” 1-3; “Resolution 770 (1992),” 2.
376 Ibid.
378 “H.Res.554 - Concerning the Situation in Bosnia-Hercegovina.”
Three congressional measures eventually reached the stage of becoming law: H.R. 5132; H.R. 5258; and H.R.5368. These bills were also in accordance with the Bush administration’s policy of isolating Serbia diplomatically, ensuring humanitarian aid delivery, and enforcing economic sanctions. H.R. 5132 passed both the House and the Senate in May of 1992 to provide funding for humanitarian assistance in Bosnia. H.R. 5258, introduced by Representative Frank Wolf (R-VA) in May of 1992, removed most favored nation status from Serbia and Montenegro and authorized the President to restore such status if Milosevic ceased his aggressive activities. H.R.5368, which passed the House in June and the Senate in October, provided funds for humanitarian aid to Bosnia and allowed the President to transfer defense articles to Bosnia if the articles would provide for self-defense and security and if US allies would be joining in providing military assistance.

Advocacy

Although congressional bills and resolutions tracked with the administration at this time, some members of Congress were exerting limited pressure on the administration to change policy. Holocaust survivor and congressman Tom Lantos (D-CA) argued that the United States needed to “take a united stance in the face of an outrageous, unacceptable mass extermination.” He argued for “complete isolation of Serbia and its ally, Montenegro […] at once.” Congressman Frank McCloskey (D-IN), who had traveled to the Balkans in December of 1991, also argued for a more robust response, including lifting the arms embargo on the Bosnians. Senator Bob Dole (R-KS), who had also visited the region, likewise advocated for a strong response to the crisis.

383 “Statement of Thomas M.T. Niles, Assistant Secretary of State for European and Canadian Affairs,” 12; Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 273.
Yet, many members of Congress also supported limited engagement. Even at the height of media pressure in early August 1992, republican congressmen, people with potentially the most to lose by a Bush administration embarrassment, were opposed to ground forces. Meeting notes from Scowcroft’s August 5 gathering with the House Republican Research Committee Task Force on the Balkan Crisis recorded that “All members other than [Rohrabacher] did not want to use U.S. ground forces.”387 In addition to Rohrabacher, other attendees at the meeting included Susan Molinari (R-NY), Ben Gilman (R-NY), Bill Zeliff (R-NH), Frank Wolf (R-VA), Duncan Hunter (R-CA), and the task force directors Ron Phillips and Paul Behrends.388 Dana Rohrabacher (R-CA), the lone dissenter, had in fact introduced a resolution in June of 1992 that would have expressed the willingness of the United States to join in an international military campaign to end the killing.389 The resolution was never reported out and was never voted upon by the House or Senate.390

Others joined members of the House Republican Research Committee Task Force on the Balkan Crisis in advocating for a cautious response. In regards to the then impending United Nations resolution authorizing the use of force for humanitarian aid delivery, Representative Steven Schiff (R-NM) asked why European countries had not taken the lead on humanitarian aid delivery and on the crisis:

Although, of course, the humanitarian concerns affect all of us, it is in Europe’s clear national interest to act because the violence is destabilizing their continent. Why have they not done so?391

Senator Warren Rudman (R-NH) similarly pushed back against Senate Resolution 330, the resolution supporting the President’s initiatives to obtain the UN Security Council Resolution for the forcible delivery of humanitarian aid, arguing that the resolution was not based on cautious

388 Ibid.
390 Ibid.
analysis of the situation.\textsuperscript{392} In his opinion, it was instead “an emotional response.”\textsuperscript{393} Moreover, the resolution had outlined “objectives which cannot be met without the massive application of American force [...] That is a commitment I am not now prepared to make, and I am confident the American people are not prepared to support.”\textsuperscript{394} Although Resolution 330 eventually passed, Senator Rudman’s comments are representative of the hesitancy of some members of Congress to increase US involvement in the crisis.

In sum, congressional pressure during this period was of medium strength. The bills and resolutions passed by Congress were in accordance with the Bush administration’s policies. Indeed, congressional action served to bolster, rather than to challenge, the administration’s approach. Senator Biden even explicitly noted that Resolution 330 did not go beyond the measures suggested by President Bush. Although some members of Congress, such as Senator Dole and Representatives Lantos and McCloskey, were pushing for more engagement, others were warning that the United States should not become deeply involved in the crisis and should be cautious about a US combat role. Measures that called for a change in the administration’s policy would not even be reported out by committees and would not receive a vote.

\textsuperscript{393} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{394} Ibid.
CONCLUDING COMMENTS ON BUSH ADMINISTRATION

The Bush administration did not exhibit a significant policy shift during the ten months, from March of 1992 to January of 1992, in which the administration addressed the conflict in Bosnia. From the beginning of the crisis, President Bush and his advisers focused on delivering humanitarian aid, on enforcing economic sanctions, and on isolating the Serbian government politically. Military intervention to halt the killings and the insertion of US ground forces in any capacity were consistently opposed by members of the senior Bush administration leadership. The administration would not make threats or draw redlines that it was not prepared to enforce. European powers opposed the use of American military power even to protect their forces on the ground.

The key variables that can move US policy toward policy change for more robust measures held low and neutral values during this period. Inner-circle officials in the Bush administration, the President’s most trusted senior advisers, believed that the United States should not become deeply involved in the crisis. Congress largely mirrored the administration’s policies. Finally, the political liability variable was neutral. Bush was neither likely to gain nor lose by changing his policy toward Bosnia. Although public opinion did shift in favor of increased involvement in the wake of the Serbian camp revelations, little evidence suggests that the public was likely to inflict costs on the President or that any of his political initiatives would suffer significantly as a result of his policies toward Bosnia. Consequently, the Bush administration left Washington without a significant change in policy. From the outset of the crisis until January of 1993, policies largely focused on alleviating the humanitarian situation, not on confronting the violence directly.
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"More often than not, somebody makes a difference."1

INTRODUCTION: CLINTON IN WASHINGTON

In January of 1993, the Clinton administration arrived in Washington, taking control of the White House and US policy toward Bosnia. The arrival of the Clinton team marked the first time a democratic administration held the presidency since President Jimmy Carter’s term in the early 1980s. As a result, many officials in the administration were either highly inexperienced or had not been in Washington for a long time.2

Despite their relative inexperience, candidate Clinton and his campaign team had already criticized the Bush administration’s approach and staked out a more forceful position on Bosnia during the election. On the campaign trail, Clinton had urged increased US engagement, deliberately drawing a distinction between himself and President Bush.3 Nancy Soderberg, Foreign Policy Director for the Clinton-Gore 1992 campaign, has since explained that the Bosnia issue was one of three foreign policy topics, along with Haiti and China, that the campaign had specifically chosen to attack.4 They “wanted to take [the Bush administration] on” without appearing too bellicose.5 Soderberg further described Clinton as “an activist in all aspects of his life.”6 In the summer of 1992, the Clinton campaign decided to advocate for the use of military force.7 A memorandum to then Governor Clinton from Soderberg in late June 1992 notes the campaign’s position on military action:

If asked about the use of force, you should say you hope the current efforts to reach an agreement to open the [Sarajevo] airport are successful. If the crisis is not resolved, you

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1 Interview with Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns, interview by Amanda J. Rothschild, September 18, 2015.
2 Interview with David Gompert, interview by Amanda J. Rothschild, July 13, 2015; Interview with Jon Western, interview by Amanda J. Rothschild, July 14, 2015.
5 Interview with Nancy Soderberg, 12.
6 Ibid., 54.
7 Ibid., 12.
would support a US participation in a multilateral humanitarian effort. (The important point is to ensure the US does not act unilaterally.)

The Clinton team argued that military force was appropriate to deliver humanitarian aid, to open the camps, and to punish those attacking Sarajevo. Further, they argued, economic sanctions should be increased and enforced. Clinton hoped to charge Serbian leaders with crimes against humanity, to tighten the United Nations (UN) embargo against Serbia and Montenegro, and to conduct airstrikes against groups hindering humanitarian aid in Sarajevo. A New Republic editorial from August 17, a copy of which was also stashed in soon-to-be National Security Adviser Anthony Lake’s campaign papers, opined “At least Bill Clinton has a plan for a U.S.-led military effort.”

Yet, despite the Clinton campaign’s rhetoric, the administration’s policies toward Bosnia would largely mirror those of the Bush administration in the early years of Clinton’s first term. During this early period, 1993-1994, the administration’s policies centered on humanitarian aid and limited airstrikes. In these first two years, congressional pressure did not reach high levels; dissent remained only among junior officials and among those outside of Clinton’s inner foreign policy team; and President Clinton’s political liability variable was negative (costs for action). US policy would not change until the summer of 1995, with the launching of Operation Deliberate Force. As the theory advanced in this dissertation predicts, the policy change occurred when the President was liable to face political consequences for inaction, when an inner-circle dissent emerged, and when Congress passed legislation to change policy.

Operation Deliberate Force represented a complete reversal of earlier US policy toward Bosnia. Deliberate Force was a sustained air campaign implemented with the intention of finally bringing an end to the fighting and reaching a peace agreement. In the months leading up to Clinton’s decision to change course, congressional pressure reached its most intense levels yet with the passing of Senator Bob Dole’s (R-KS) Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Act in

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10 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
both houses of Congress.\textsuperscript{13} Importantly, the legislation, which would have forced the administration to unilaterally lift an arms embargo on Bosnia, had veto-proof support.\textsuperscript{14} Critically, the legislation would have also triggered the evacuation of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) peacekeeping troops with American ground forces. The administration’s aggressive efforts to oppose the legislation are documented extensively in the primary source materials.\textsuperscript{15}

The political consequences of implementing Dole’s legislation would have been catastrophic for the Clinton administration. The reasons for the potential political catastrophe were twofold: first, European partners had insisted that if the arms embargo were lifted, they

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would withdraw their UNPROFOR forces; second, the President had promised that, in the case of UNPROFOR withdrawal, the United States would send 20,000 US ground forces to evacuate UN forces. In short, the passing of Dole’s bill would likely result in US ground troops on the ground in Bosnia, and not at the time of Clinton’s choosing. The Clinton administration believed that such a military mission would humiliate them and face criticism from the American public. Officials further worried that the evacuation was likely to take place at the height of the 1996 presidential campaign. Thus, in the summer of 1995, the costs for inaction were high—the political liability variable was positive. In parallel to President Roosevelt’s position in the winter months of 1944, in 1995 Clinton too faced a choice between taking action to preempt Congress or having his hand forced by the Congress. In this case, forcing the president’s hand would eventually lead to American ground troops in Bosnia.

Clinton’s political vulnerability had also increased that summer due to a series of additional political humiliations, most notably atrocities at the UN safe area of Srebrenica—where civilians had sought refuge under ostensible UN protection—and Jacques Chirac’s perceived usurping of Clinton’s position as leader of the free world. The press was highly critical of President Clinton for Srebrenica and for failing to be as forceful as Chirac. Clinton’s personal frustrations with the situation would famously come to a head in the middle of the summer, when he exploded to his staff about how he was being hurt by US Bosnia policy.

17 Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 106.
An initial inner-circle dissent would emerge in late June when UN Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright sent a forceful memorandum noting the dire political situation.21 The dissent led to a widespread policy review involving secret deliberations and an internal competition among the Department of State, the Department of Defense (DOD), Albright, and National Security Adviser Anthony Lake regarding new policy options.22 Clinton heard final arguments for the competing proposals on August 7, 1995, and in the end, he decided Albright and Lake had proposed the best options—both plans notably called for US air power to persuade combatants to negotiate.23 Both Lake and Albright had argued that if Clinton did not act now, he was liable to suffer significant political consequences, as UNPROFOR would be withdrawn with US ground forces during the middle of the presidential campaign.24 Following the strategy change, Clinton vetoed the Dole legislation just as Congress left for its summer recess, indeed on the day that the Senate adjourned, creating a window of opportunity to execute his new plan.25 Shortly thereafter, US airplanes would strike Serbian targets throughout Bosnia in Operation Deliberate Force.

Despite the relative recentness of this case, many of the important primary documents for Bosnia have in fact been released by the William J. Clinton Presidential Library and by the Center for Intelligence Agency’s Historical Collections.
Division. I was also able to investigate National Security Adviser Anthony Lake’s personal papers, available at the Library of Congress, which provided further clues into the internal workings of the administration. Another useful resource was the State Department’s own history of the case, *The Road to Dayton*, by Derek Chollet. The oral history interviews available through the University of Virginia’s Miller Center William J. Clinton Presidential History Project, as well as oral history interviews I conducted, also served to fill informational gaps left by the textual record. Books written by members of the Clinton administration, such as Ivo Daalder’s *Getting to Dayton*, Madeleine’s Albright’s *Madam Secretary*, Dick Morris’s *Behind the Oval Office*, and George Stephanopoulos’s *All Too Human*, proved useful in understanding the dynamics of the case. Several secondary source histories of the case, including Samantha Power’s *A Problem from Hell* and David Halberstam’s *War in a Time of Peace*, also provided helpful background information on the events from 1993 to 1995. Woodward’s *The Choice* did prove useful as well, but it was published while Clinton was still in office in 1996, and it makes no mention of Madeleine Albright’s dissent, or even her role, in the summer of 1995. For instance, in recounting the crucial August 7, 1995 meeting between Clinton and his foreign policy team, Woodward does not acknowledge that Albright was in attendance, naming only Lake and Peter Tarnoff. Given that it was during this meeting that Clinton decided to change policy by following Albright’s strategy, his omission of her role (and attendance) is unfortunate.

One of my interviewees, former Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor John Shattuck, had mentioned to me that previous works have not paid enough attention to the inner workings of the government at the time, to the role of bureaucracy, and to the interaction between various departments and agencies. Shattuck argued that these factors are, however, critical to understanding how the United States developed policy in response to mass atrocities during the Clinton administration. My hope is that my findings on the

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30 Ibid., 265.
31 Interview with John Shattuck, interview by Amanda J. Rothschild, July 14, 2015.
32 Ibid.
importance of inner-circle dissent, and my discussion of the dynamics between the Department of State, the Department of Defense, the National Security Adviser, and the Ambassador to the United Nations, help address this deficiency in current treatments of the case. Just as few have recognized the importance of the Treasury whistleblowers in the Holocaust case, the role of Ambassador Albright in provoking a complete reversal of US policy has likewise been understudied.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, I discuss the period of limited US involvement, 1993-1994. In this section, I outline the circumspect measures pursued by the United States in response to atrocities in Bosnia, including humanitarian aid, pinprick airstrikes, and limited diplomatic initiatives. Second, I discuss the role of each variable—dissent, congressional pressure, and political liability—during this early period. Here, I argue that all three variables held low, medium, or negative (costs for action) values. Importantly, none of them reached the high levels necessary to force a change in policy. The third section of this chapter discusses the most critical period for this case study, the year of 1995, when US policy underwent a significant change in the launching of Operation Deliberate Force. I detail the role of the three variables throughout the discussion of the events of 1995. However, I also include in the fourth section of this chapter a separate section discussing the high and positive (costs for inaction) levels on congressional pressure, inner-circle dissent, and political liability. The final section provides a summary of the chapter.
POLICY RESPONSE 1993-1994

INTRODUCTION
The 1993 to 1994 period witnessed, akin to the early years of the Holocaust, sporadic and often ineffective measures in response to the crisis in Bosnia. After criticizing the Bush administration during the presidential campaign, Clinton now concluded that he would continue its policies. The administration focused on humanitarian aid delivery, the no-fly zone, economic sanctions, and diplomatic negotiations. Further, the United States remained committed to a multilateral solution that demanded full consensus with European partners, who wanted to limit US engagement in order to protect their troops on the ground from bearing the brunt of Serbian retaliation.

A PINPRICK STRATEGY

THE EARLY MONTHS: A POLICY REVIEW
From February 1993 until April 1994, the Clinton administration would conduct a policy review on Bosnia to determine their preferred policies to address the crisis. A White House document from January 27, 1993, outlines US objectives as they reviewed options for Bosnia. At this point in time, priorities included the following: delivery of humanitarian assistance; halting Serbian aggression; rolling back Serbian advances; strengthening the Vance-Owen diplomatic efforts; and affirming the Bush administration’s Christmas Warning. By February, the administration had heard from General Powell that US military action, while resulting in low American casualties, would likely result in significant civilian casualties and refugee flows. Further, the “public outcry would be great;” American allies may not be willing to help; and the

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35 Vance-Owen was a diplomatic plan devised by Cyrus Vance and David Owen to divide Bosnia into ten semi-autonomous districts based on geographic and ethnic considerations. See: Daalder, *Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy*, 10–11.
37 “Memorandum for the Record, ‘Principals Committee Meeting on the Former Yugoslavia, 28 January 1993,’“ January 29, 1993, 3, Special Collection, Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency, Document Number: 5235e80d993294098d51758a, CIA Historical Collections.
“'Russians would go nuts.'” Airpower, moreover, would be ineffective, and enforcing Vance-Owen would require 20,000 troops.

The administration now weighed four possible policy options: (A) “Own the Problem, by abandoning Vance-Owen and asserting US leadership; (B) “Lead the Effort,” by modifying Vance-Owen to make it acceptable to the United States; (C) “Support the Effort,” by pressing parties toward reaching a settlement but not suggesting any specifics; and, (D) “Disown the Problem,” by allowing Europe to handle the crisis and providing aid and sanctions.

The Principals eliminated options “A” and “D,” and arguments emerged as to whether or not the United States should pursue a weak “B” or strong “C” approach. Secretary of State Warren Christopher argued for “B,” on the condition that military force not be used until Vance-Owen failed. Secretary of Defense Les Aspin (until February, 1994) argued for “C,” “not imposing anything,” and suggested that Bosnia could become a “peacekeeping mission without an end.” National Security Adviser Anthony Lake argued that Vance-Owen was unacceptable—the administration believed it rewarded Serbian aggression—and concluded that the consensus of the group appeared to be “C+.”

The Central Intelligence Agency document on the meeting, written by the Interagency Balkan Task Force Director of Central Intelligence Chief, Daniel Wagner, would record that “it was not clear precisely what this [C+] means.”

Indeed, these early discussions among the Clinton foreign policy team were symptomatic of a problem that would plague interagency deliberations in the years to come: discussions would often lack focus and fail to conclude in concrete plans for moving forward. In February, a different CIA official would describe a meeting as “largely an editorial exercise.” Still others,

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38 Ibid.
40 Ibid., 1.
41 Ibid., 1-2.
42 Ibid., 1.
43 Ibid., 2.
44 Ibid.; On administration’s feeling that Vance-Owen rewarded the Serbs: Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 10–11.
46 “CIA Post-Meeting Memorandum for the Record, ‘Deputies Committee Meeting on the Former Yugoslavia, 8 February 1993,’ February 8, 1993, 1, Special Collection, Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency, Document Number: 5235e80c993294098d5174b9, CIA Historical Collections.
in separate documents, would term them “long and rambling,” with participants struggling to focus.\textsuperscript{47} A former participant in Principals Committee meetings noted that “people [would] interrupt each other and there’s not enough discipline.”\textsuperscript{48} Minutes from a February 5, 1993 meeting are particularly illustrative of the confusion and circular discussion of Bosnia deliberations:

General Powell: I agree the draft PDD is too pallid [...] But what would Madeleine suggest we do?

Albright: NATO action.

Several speakers: I thought we had agreed that we would help enforce a settlement.

Miss Walker: OSD and JCS Working Group members believed their principals had not agreed to that. [...] Powell and Aspin: [B]oth said that had not been their position.

General Powell: I thought we agreed that we would be willing to use force to enforce a settlement, but leave our willingness to do so “just behind the screen”.

Mr. Berger: What is the end toward which Madeleine would apply force? To get an agreement or enforce it?\textsuperscript{49}

Over in the State Department, Lake had delegated the policy review to Tom Niles, an Assistant Secretary of State in the Bush administration, who had been a key designer of the Bush administration’s policy toward the crisis.\textsuperscript{50} Niles did the review over a weekend without consulting others in the Department, including the State Department Balkans intelligence analyst responsible for analyzing atrocities in Bosnia, Jon Western.\textsuperscript{51} The review unsurprisingly concluded that continuing the Bush administration’s policies would be the best course of action for the Clinton administration.\textsuperscript{52} Western and many of his colleagues had concluded that US
policy was not going to change. The United States was in Somalia already, and Powell was still opposed to increased US engagement in Bosnia.

Indeed, the Clinton policy review would conclude with recommendations that largely mirrored the policies of the Bush administration. The Clinton team decided that they would work toward a peaceful settlement, provide humanitarian aid, work towards establishing a war crimes tribunal, tighten sanctions, and enforce the no-fly zone. The Bush administration had likewise been committed to aid delivery, sanctions enforcement, and had pressed allies to establish and enforce the no-fly zone.

Policy thus remained stagnant, as congressional pressure remained at only medium strength, inner-circle dissent did not emerge, and the political liability variable remained negative (costs for action). Importantly, European allies continued to constrain US decision making, particularly on the issue of altering US policy on the arms embargo on Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Clinton administration was able to engage in limited public condemnation efforts, humanitarian measures, private diplomatic initiatives, and constrained pinprick military airstrikes. The following sections will discuss these policies in further detail.

EUROPE, TAKE THE WHEEL

The Bush section of this chapter detailed the constraining influence of European partners in preventing increased Western engagement on Yugoslavia. This dynamic would continue during the Clinton administration, in large part because European powers had a military presence on the ground in Bosnia and the United States did not.

Britain and France both had troops on the ground in Bosnia, numbering 5,000 in total, and they did not want the United States to take any action that could endanger them. When airpower was suggested, for instance, European officials claimed that they would only approve such measures if the United States also put their troops on the ground. European partners

53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
56 Power, "A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide, 304.
57 Halberstam, War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals, 199.
similarly opposed lifting the arms embargo, fearing that their troops might be endangered by an influx of weapons into the country, and threatening to withdraw their troops in the case of an embargo lift.\textsuperscript{58} Anthony Lake recounts that when the United States would push for more forceful measures, such as lift and strike, discussed later in Section I, the European countries would respond that “We can’t do this because if our soldiers get killed as a result of that, we are in big trouble domestically, at home. And in any case, we don’t want to put our soldiers at that risk.”\textsuperscript{59} Further complicating matters was the fact that European partners opposed taking sides in the conflict, and the French were thought to favor the Serbs.\textsuperscript{60} Russia, for its part, did not want to upset pro-Serb elements internally.\textsuperscript{61}

Because the administration was committed to working multilaterally on the Bosnia issue and reaching consensus with European partners, European concerns were highly valued.\textsuperscript{62} Richard Holbrooke, who would lead diplomatic negotiations on the crisis in 1995, has written that Bosnia represented “the first time since World War II, [that] Washington had turned a major security issue entirely over to the Europeans.”\textsuperscript{63} As General John Shalikashvili, who succeeded Powell as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Clinton administration, has explained, part of the reason for valuing European opinions also stemmed from an American desire to adapt NATO to the post-Cold War environment. He has remarked that, following the Cold War, “we needed to develop a new set of rules for NATO. One was that in order to go into Bosnia or someplace like that you need to have a partnership, and everyone has to agree to participate.”\textsuperscript{64} In the words of Anthony Lake, “if we had acted unilaterally, we were going to blow NATO apart. I don’t think there was any question about it.”\textsuperscript{65}

\textsuperscript{59} Interview with Anthony Lake, 36–37.
\textsuperscript{60} Halberstam, \textit{War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals}, 227; Geir Lundestad, \textit{The United States and Western Europe Since 1945} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 251.
\textsuperscript{62} Power, \textit{“A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide}, 304.
\textsuperscript{65} Interview with Anthony Lake, 52.
Nevertheless, many members of the Clinton administration, including the President, appear to have been frustrated by the constraints imposed by Europe. Samantha Power has previously quoted Clinton as saying, “O.K., here’s a problem in Europe. The Europeans ought to take the lead.” In present form, this quote would suggest that Clinton believed that the Europeans should be driving policy. In fact, the original quote reads:

[W]e don’t have troops on the ground now. And this distribution of responsibility all grew out of a decision made prior to my Presidency—which I am not criticizing, I say again—to try to say that, okay, here’s a problem in Europe, the Europeans ought to take the lead, they would put people on the ground. We have had troops since I have been President, I would remind you, in Somalia, in Rwanda, in Haiti. We have not been loath to do our job. But we have tried to support the base commitment of the Europeans there. And it has not worked. No one can say it has worked.

The full quotation importantly reveals Clinton’s frustration with a decision made prior to his taking office. In Clinton’s opinion, the Bush administration had decided that the Europeans would lead and put troops on the ground, and as long as the United States did not have troops on the ground, the United States would be in a supporting role.

President Clinton also reportedly mentioned to Congressman McCloskey (D-IN) during the crisis that he could be doing more in the conflict if the British were only more cooperative. Secretary of Defense William Perry (February 1994 onwards) has likewise lamented that formulating US policy was difficult when “the Europeans, through the UN, really had the whip hand on what to do in Bosnia.”

In sum, the Clinton administration, despite their frustrations, was committed to a multilateral approach to the crisis in Bosnia. The administration agreed with Europeans that European states had a right to constrain US policy because the Europeans had forces on the ground in Bosnia, and officials believed that the ability to achieve consensus was a vital part of the post-Cold War NATO alliance. Europe was against taking sides and wanted to support the Vance-Owen diplomatic negotiations while they were still viable from January 1993 to June

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68 Power, “A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide, 324.
1993.\textsuperscript{70} As long as the United States wanted to reach agreement with European partners—and as long as high congressional pressure, inner-circle dissent, and a positive value on political liability remained absent—the United States could pursue only limited measures. The United States would not demand complete leadership until high and positive values on these three variables did surface in the summer of 1995.

**TOUGH TALK, LIMITED MEASURES**

The policies that the United States did pursue to address the ongoing crisis in Bosnia were limited, low risk, and ineffective. The United States under Clinton did speak out forcefully against the atrocities. Yet, at this stage, the administration’s forceful rhetoric was not met with equally forceful practical responses to the atrocities, beyond limited and circumspect measures. The United States chose policies that were low risk and that key decision makers could all support. Their *condemnation, humanitarian, punishing, diplomatic, and intervention* efforts did not result in any meaningful difference on the ground.

**Condemnation**

One of the steps that the United States could take without European objection and without committing significant resources to the problem in Bosnia was *public condemnation*. The administration did condemn the atrocities.\textsuperscript{71} In March 1993, when asked if genocide was occurring in Bosnia, Secretary Christopher noted that “There’s no doubt in my mind that rape and ethnic cleansing and other almost indescribable acts have taken place and it certainly rises to the level that is tantamount to genocide [...] It must be stopped.”\textsuperscript{72} He did add, “Although the Serbs are the principle villains [...] [there are] a lot of problems on all sides; the hatred is so deep [...] so centuries long, religiously oriented, that people seem to have lost rationality on all sides.”\textsuperscript{73}


\textsuperscript{71} Power, *"A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, 295; 324; Ronayne, *Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust*, 121.

\textsuperscript{72} Warren Christopher Testimony, Fiscal Year 1994 Foreign Operations Funding, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee; Power, *"A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*, 298.

\textsuperscript{73} Warren Christopher Testimony, Fiscal Year 1994 Foreign Operations Funding, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee.”
The administration became more forthright in its assessment of the atrocities by the summer of 1993. During a congressional hearing in June, Representative McCloskey asked Tim Wirth of the State Department whether or not the State Department was prepared to say that the atrocities in Bosnia were genocide, instead of simply “tantamount to genocide.” Wirth responded that “We have done so. We have done so [...] In supporting the Tribunal on Genocide. We have done so.” McCloskey asked for a written statement, noting to Mr. Wirth that he had been attempting to obtain a straight answer on this question from Secretary Christopher since April 1. The State Department provided the following note, which indeed stated that Bosnian Serbs were committing acts of genocide:

As the Secretary indicated in his testimony of May 18 before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, the Department of State does believe that certain acts committed as part of the systematic Bosnia Serb campaign of “ethnic cleansing” in Bosnia constitute acts of genocide.

**Humanitarian**

On the humanitarian front, the United States air dropped supplies intermittently and sponsored a Joint Action Program to protect six UN Security Council safe areas: Sarajevo; Tuzla; Bihac; Srebrenica; Zepa; and Gorazde. The air drops were viewed as “neither very risky nor very expensive,” according to an Anthony Lake memorandum to President Clinton. Other textual evidence reveals that US military analysis concluded that the drops were the “safest method of US participation,” with the added advantage of being “high profile” and a “demonstration of US concern;” however, they did not address the causes of the dire humanitarian situation; they were not as effective as ground distribution; and they prevented the United States from ensuring that

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75 Ibid.

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid.

78 Ronayne, Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust, 130.

79 Anthony Lake, “Memorandum for the President, ‘Presidential Decision on Humanitarian Air Drops for Bosnia,’” February 19, 1993, 1, Special Collection, Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency, Document Number: 523e39e5993294098d51765b, CIA Historical Collections.
aid reached the people with the greatest need. The safe areas would likewise be a compromise policy, between the United States and partners at the UN Security Council, after Europeans rejected US plans for lifting the arms embargo and conducting airstrikes, detailed below.

**Punishing**

US officials also continued to support a post-conflict *punishing* policy: the War Crimes Tribunal. The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) was established through United Nations Security Council Resolution 827 of May 25, 1993. The tribunal work was, in Secretary Christopher’s words, one of the “main aspects” of US policy toward the crisis. Jim O’Brien, who began working on the tribunal in November of 1994, explained in an interview with this author that the tribunal was one of the few initiatives that everyone within the administration could agree was worth pursuing.

**Diplomatic**

The United States also continued to press for a diplomatic solution during these early years. At first, the United States reluctantly supported the European diplomatic plan known as Vance-Owen. Later, however, the United States supported an agreement that united Croatians and Muslims and would have divided Bosnia on ethnic lines. Additionally, the United States looked away as the Croats transferred armaments from Iran to Bosnian forces.

In 1993, the United States grudgingly supported a European plan for peace—Vance-Owen—despite concerns about the plan’s enforceability and that it appeared to reward Serbian

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84 “Warren Christopher Testimony, Fiscal Year 1994 Foreign Operations Funding, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee.”
aggression. Vance-Owen would have divided Bosnia into ten semi-autonomous districts, divided mainly along ethnic lines. During this time, the United States tried to convince Bosnian Muslims that “the cavalry [would not be] not coming” and that negotiations were the best course forward. While Vance-Owen negotiations were still ongoing in 1993, the United States attempted to persuade all parties, through diplomatic measures and economic sanctions, to support the agreement. As early as June of 1993, the New York Times reported that the administration was not only open to Vance-Owen, but was also tacitly supporting plans that “pave[d] the way for the dismemberment of the country” and that “The consensus within the Administration is that the carving up of Bosnia […] may be inevitable.” Perceived Clinton administration backing of partition proposals at this stage would lead to the resignation of Bosnia desk officer Marshall Harris, as detailed later in the chapter.

In 1994, the United States largely abandoned attempts to conceal support for plans that divided Bosnia on ethnic lines. In February and March, US-backed negotiations led to the Washington Agreement, or Federation Agreement, forging an alliance between Muslims and Croats. The negotiations had their origins in a suggestion from Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajdžic that the Muslims and Croats attempt to reach an arrangement that could give them a united voice in discussions with Serbs. The negotiations also marked a diplomatic reengagement on the part of the United States following the failed lift-and-strike proposal

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87 Ibid.
89 “Memorandum for the Record, ‘Deputies Committee Video Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, 26 February 1993,’” March 1, 1993, 4, Special Collection, Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency, Document Number: 5235e80d993294098d517553, CIA Historical Collections.
90 “Warren Christopher Testimony, Fiscal Year 1994 Foreign Operations Funding, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee.”
94 Williams, “Easing the Blow for Bosnia’s Muslims,” A22.
detailed in the following section. The Washington Agreement called for providing the Muslim-Croat federation with approximately half of Bosnian territory in a peaceful settlement, and it diminished the Serbian military advantage on the ground. Publicly, the Clinton administration continued to deny that they approved of partitioning Bosnia, though the disintegration of Bosnia was foreseen as a likely consequence of the agreement.

Shortly after the Washington Agreement, international powers formed a new negotiating medium—the Contact Group—consisting of the United States, Russia, Britain, France and Germany. Notably, this new forum allowed major players to avoid involving all members of the United Nations and the European Union in dealing with the crisis.

The Contact Group worked during the spring and summer of 1994 to devise a new peace settlement that would have given the Muslim-Croat federation fifty-one percent of territory and the Bosnian Serbs forty-nine percent. The Muslims and Croats supported the settlement. However, the Bosnian Serbs refused to sign the plan. Subsequently, in exchange for relief from sanctions, Milosevic cut off economic—though not military—aid to Bosnian Serbs. Thus, for now, the Washington Agreement resulted in little immediate progress in resolving the conflict, though the alliance would come to play an important role in ending the fighting in 1995.

A second important diplomatic initiative during this period involved the United States looking the other way while arms shipments reached Bosnia from Iran via Croatia. The Clinton administration had known of the transfer of arms—Ambassador Peter Galbraith had informed top leadership—but did not directly approve it or disapprove of it, fearing that the latter could collapse the Federation Agreement and the former would in spirit violate the arms embargo (though under the embargo the United States was only obliged not to arm Bosnians

97 Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 27.
98 Greenhouse, “Muslims and Bosnian Croats Give Birth to a New Federation.”
99 Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 28.
100 Ibid.
102 Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 30.
themselves). A Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Report would find that the United States had “turned a blind eye to activity that violated a United Nations Security Council resolution,” but that sufficient evidence for violations of international or US laws did not exist.

Former Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott had testified to the Select Committee that the administration was faced with deteriorating Bosnian-Government forces, but could not multilaterally lift the embargo—in light of European opposition—and would not openly encourage other states to violate the embargo. Thus, the Clinton administration had simply offered no instruction on the matter when informed by Galbraith.

**Proposed Intervention**

These condemnation, humanitarian, punishing, and diplomatic initiatives were important aspects of the Clinton approach to the Bosnian crisis in the beginning of Clinton’s first term. Yet, perhaps the most important policy proposal during this early period was the failed lift and strike proposal. If implemented, the lift and strike plan would have entailed a lifting of the arms embargo on Bosnia and NATO airstrikes on Serbian positions. However, the proposal, which never truly had the full support of the President, failed to gain European approval.

On May 1, 1993, Clinton had decided to pursue the plan for lift and strike—a proposal which all key Clinton officials, with the exception of Les Aspin, favored. During the deliberations, Vice President Al Gore and UN Ambassador Madeleine Albright had been the most favorable to airstrikes; Anthony Lake and Secretary Christopher had favored limited strikes; and Secretary of Defense Les Aspin thought that the United States should at a maximum defend the safe havens.

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108 Ibid.

109 Pomfret and Ottaway, “US Allies Fed Pipeline of Covert Arms to Bosnia.”

110 Ronayne, *Never Again?*: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust, 122.


112 Ibid., 13.
Because the proposal required European approval, Secretary Christopher was dispatched to consult with European allies. David Halberstam argues that it was in fact known before Christopher's departure that his trip was not likely to succeed. Congress was against the plan; the military was against the plan; and European partners already resented Clinton's criticism of their handling of the Bosnian conflict during his presidential campaign, as well as his unwillingness to commit US troops to the cause. US Ambassador to London, Ray Seitz, was also opposed to lift and strike. Further, Clinton's support of the policy was apparently uncertain. He reportedly began to have serious doubts about lift and strike after reading Robert Kaplan's *Balkan Ghosts*, which details the deep ethnic hatreds of the Balkan region.

In his consultations with allies, Secretary Christopher reportedly gave a tepid presentation on the lift and strike proposal. Then Secretary-General of NATO Manfred Woerner has since noted that Christopher highlighted the disadvantages of the policy proposal instead of the advantages. Nancy Soderberg likewise reports that Christopher allegedly "was really not forceful, not selling [...] it was a big failure all around [...] he was doomed from the beginning because he was authorized to send a weak message." As Anthony Lake recalls, Christopher was sent to Europe "to consult rather than to sell." To make matters worse, Defense Secretary Les Aspin would call Christopher on the third day of his trip to inform him that the President no longer supported lift and strike.

European partners unsurprisingly did not bite on the tepid proposal. In addition to Christopher's lack of enthusiasm, Milosevic had offered a peace plan just prior to the consultations, and the Europeans wanted to pursue the opportunity for peaceful settlement. Christopher recalls that, in the end, the Europeans were either "strongly against [lift and strike]"
or just against it.” European countries believed that they were about to obtain a resolution to the crisis without increased force, and they did not want to put their own troops on the ground in unnecessary danger. 

Upon Christopher’s return to the United States, he argued that although European allies opposed the policy, lift and strike could still be implemented if the United States pushed more strongly and if President Clinton became personally involved. Christopher thought that the United States should “stay the course,” but the President needed to say “get on board and follow me.” Yet, Christopher found that the foreign policy team had already soured on the plan. In the Secretary’s words, “There had been a sea change in the atmosphere in Washington from the time I’d left to the time that I returned.” Now, previous proponents of the policy failed to speak up in defense of Christopher’s suggestions. It had been decided that the United States would rely only on diplomatic processes. A May 17 Principals Committee Meeting document charted the path forward: the United States would make its preferences for lift and strike known, but it “[would] not press it to the point of shattering relations with Allies or the Russians.”

Although lift and strike failed, the United States nevertheless instituted pinprick airstrikes and threatened force during the early years of Clinton’s first term. In August of 1993, NATO decided that it would launch airstrikes if the Serbian forces continued to impede humanitarian relief and strangle Sarajevo. This decision instituted the dual key system, which meant that both the United Nations and NATO had veto power over airstrikes and had to approve them before they could occur. Warren Christopher has since commented that the UN key was “only reliable in the sense that they would never pull it.”

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125 Interview with Warren Christopher and Strobe Talbott, 64.
126 Ibid.
128 Interview with Warren Christopher and Strobe Talbott, 64–65.
130 Interview with Warren Christopher and Strobe Talbott, 64.
131 Ibid.
132 Ibid.
136 Interview with Warren Christopher and Strobe Talbott, 65.
In February of 1994, the United States and its allies would successfully threaten the use of force in delivering the Sarajevo ultimatum to halt assaults on Sarajevo. Issued on February 9, the ultimatum demanded that Serbian forces move weaponry and artillery beyond the range of Sarajevo over the course of ten days, or they would be subject to airstrikes. The ultimatum was successful, albeit short-lived. On February 10, a United Nations ceasefire went into effect, and Serbian forces complied with demands.

One of Anthony Lake’s handwritten notecards is somewhat revealing of the US mindset at the time. Dated February, 1994, with the word “Shali,” an abbreviation for Shalikashvili, at the top, the notecard reads as follows:

No empty threats.

[…]

As soon as know Serbs, one time blow at artillery. Better than nothing.

The United States knew that continued empty threats would be damaging. They wanted to do something, and a one-time blow seemed better than simply acquiescing to Serb aggression.

The Sarajevo ultimatum would be followed by the so-called “pinprick” airstrikes. By the spring of 1994, the situation on the ground in Bosnia had deteriorated even further, as Serbian forces began an assault on the UN safe area of Gorazde, which they successfully entered on April 17, 1994.

The United States and its partners began airstrikes on Serbian military targets. These strikes were done with advanced warning and usually consistent of a single strike.

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137 Ronayne, Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust, 128.
138 Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 83; Ronayne, Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust, 128.
139 Interview with Anthony Lake, 48; Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 25; 83; Ronayne, Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust, 128.
140 Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 26.
143 Power, “A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide, 324.
144 Ibid.
The pinprick airstrikes would have only marginal effects on the conflict. Early strikes around the Gorazde safe area were judged to have had “limited effectiveness.” As time went on, Serbian forces responded to NATO strikes by taking UN peacekeepers hostage, impeding UN military observers, or launching further assaults on Bosnian Muslims.

Intensifying the strikes was ruled out in order to appease allies and manage the media and public narrative. An April 18, 1994 summary of the Principals Committee meeting notes that they might “review whether the US has any military options, but, more importantly, how to deal with the media and Congress.” The Wall Street Journal reported at the time that US officials privately informed them that the United States would not intensify bombings because they feared antagonizing Russia and Western allies, domestic opposition to increased US engagement, and negative effects on peace negotiations. Documentary evidence from the National Security Council also shows that US officials believed that NATO airstrikes would lead to fracture in NATO and “further antagonize Russians.” Former Secretary of Defense William Perry recalls that “everybody wanted actions that were token actions […] we’d send a few airplanes over and drop a few bombs as a show of force, but not in any way changing the facts on the ground.”

The US focus on maintaining cordial relationships with allies, instead of increasing US engagement, culminated in the fall of 1994, when yet another UN safe area would come under fire from Serbian forces: this time, Bihac. When faced with the option of either conducting airstrikes to save the safe area or siding with European allies, who feared that airstrikes would endanger their troops, the United States chose its allies. A Washington Post article that fall noted that the administration had now “appeared to have joined its European partners on a path

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146 Power, “A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide, 324; Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 32.
150 Interview with William Perry, 52.
152 Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 32–33.
that will reward Serb military gains” and was intent on relegating the Bosnian crisis behind concerns about improving NATO relations. A Principals Committee Meeting Summary from November explains that the Principals had “discussed the impact of recent events in Bosnia on NATO and strongly reaffirmed the importance of the alliance to the United States, recognizing that future U.S. involvement in Bosnia should be conducted in concert with our allies.” At this stage, as Anthony Lake explains, the United States was resigned to containment instead of a more engaged strategy. Lake recalls that after November of 1994, the United States began to disengage for what he recalls as a period of several months. A few months later, in January of 1995, the ceasefire that Carter had negotiated would go into effect. It would hold until April, 1995, providing the United States and European allies with a respite from the crisis.

The United States had thus far not been able to take effective actions to end the killings and cleansings in Bosnia or to bring an end to the conflict. The early period of Clinton’s first term witnessed tough rhetoric, but limited action, shaped in part by European opposition to a more forceful strategy and a United States administration that was strongly committed to multilateralism and unwilling to match Europe’s stake in the crisis by inserting American ground forces.

As Section II will describe, during this early period, the three key variables that are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for a significant policy shift remained low and negative. Congressional pressure did not reach high levels. An inner-circle dissent for a policy change did not emerge. The political liability variable, which captures the degree to which the case of mass killing represents a political burden to the president, held a negative value (costs for action).

155 Interview with Anthony Lake, 52–53.
156 Ibid., 53.
157 Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 37.
158 Ibid.
THE VARIABLES 1993-1994

As summarized in Section I, the Clinton administration pursued limited measures during the 1993-1994 period. The United States was content to allow European allies to dictate the terms of engagement on Bosnia, and it would not challenge European partners until 1995 when the values on the three key variables shifted to high and positive levels. During this earlier period, the values on these three variables—inner-circle dissent, congressional pressure, and political liability—remained low, medium, or negative.

CONGRESS

I code congressional pressure during this early period as medium in strength. Congress did not pass legislation to change policy, ruling out a high coding. In fact, some in Congress were arguing for increased restraint during these early years. Still, there were some isolated instances of advocacy within the Congress, and because of these isolated cases of advocacy for change, the coding is medium instead of low.

CONGRESSIONAL PROPOSALS

During the early years of Clinton’s first term, all congressional measures passed by either the House or the Senate that became law were consistent with administration policy.\(^\text{159}\) Eleven bills or joint resolutions related to Bosnia became law during this period: H.R.2295; H.R.2333; H.R.2401; H.R. 2519\(^\text{160}\); S.J.Res.111; H.R.3116; H.R.3759; H.R.4426; S.J.Res.195; S.2182; and H.R. 4650.\(^\text{161}\) Some of these measures simply authorized the president to transfer defense items to Bosnia in the case of an embargo lift and if allies would be joining in the assistance package.\(^\text{162}\) Others asked for reports on the security of US diplomatic officials in Bosnia, assisted

\(^{159}\) This data was found on the Congress.Gov website by filtering the date with “Bosnia,” “legislation,” and 103 (1993-1994).


\(^{161}\) “Legislation That Became Law, Bosnia, 103 (1993-1994),” Congress.Gov, accessed March 10, 2016, https://www.congress.gov/search?pageSort=dateOfIntroduction%3Aasc&pageSize=100&q=%7B%22source%22%3A%22legislation%22%2C%22search%22%3A%22bosnia%22%2C%22congress%22%3A%22103%22%2C%22billingstatus%22%3A%22law%22%7D.

in implementing executive branch sanctions, facilitated humanitarian assistance, insisted that funds not be used to deploy US forces to Bosnia to enforce a peace agreement unless authorized by Congress, asked that congressional committees be provided with a report on the readiness of US ground forces for peacekeeping operations, supported diplomatic negotiations, urged the United Nations to accelerate the tribunal processes, or simply expressed the sense of the Congress that the President should end the arms embargo if the Bosnian government requested that it be terminated and should pressure the United Nations to do so as well.\textsuperscript{163} Other proposals designated August 1, 1993 and August 1, 1994 “Helsinki Human Rights Day,” and condemned the atrocities in Bosnia.\textsuperscript{164}

The bill that came the closest to altering US policy was S.2182, National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1995, presented to the President in September of 1994, which stipulated that if by November 15, 1994, the United Nations Security Council had not agreed to terminate the arms embargo on Bosnia and if a peace agreement had not yet been reached, no funds appropriated could be used for enforcement of the arms embargo by any department or agency within the United States.\textsuperscript{165} The language in S.2182 came from an amendment that passed the Senate 56-44, sponsored by Senator Sam Nunn (D-GA) and Senator George Mitchell.


(D-ME), and proposed to block a more severe Dole amendment aimed at terminating the embargo.\textsuperscript{166} The Dole amendment, S.Amdt.2479 agreed to in the Senate 52-48, had asked that Clinton terminate the embargo by November 15, but did not mention the peace agreement conditions.\textsuperscript{167} A similar amendment calling for a unilateral lift of the arms embargo—H.Amdt.611, proposed by Representative McCloskey—had passed the House on June 9, 1994.\textsuperscript{168}

Just before the S.2182 legislation could go into effect, and just days after Republicans secured both houses of Congress for the first time since 1954, the Clinton administration announced, on November 10, 1994, that it would not partake in activities to enforce the embargo.\textsuperscript{169}

It is important to note that even the S.2182 legislation did not depart significantly from administration policy at the time. President Clinton did, after all, propose the lift and strike plan in May of 1993. Clinton further noted in a 1993 conversation with Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic that he "never understood why they [the Europeans] would not vote to lift the arms embargo."\textsuperscript{170} Clinton’s favoring of the embargo lift, and the allies’ opposition, was widely known at the time.\textsuperscript{171} Further, his administration’s policy during this early period was to support multilateral lifting of the embargo. Senior US officials had decided that they would pressure Contact Group ministers for sanctions tightening and strict enforcement of weapons exclusion zones; if these measures could not be agreed upon, the United States would push for multilateral lift of the embargo.\textsuperscript{172}


\textsuperscript{171} “Lift Bosnia Arms Embargo: Dole/Lieberman Amendment Requires Termination of US Arms Embargo Against Bosnia,” April 21, 1994, 1, Digital Archive, Press Releases, Folder 77, Robert J. Dole Archive and Special Collections, the Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics, the University of Kansas, http://dolearchivecollections.ku.edu/collections/press_releases/940421lif.pdf.

a multilateral lifting of the embargo on Bosnia. The United States proposed a UN Security Council Resolution to multilaterally lift the embargo in the fall of 1994. Madeleine Albright would attempt to convince the Security Council to support the proposal, but Britain, France, and Russia opposed her efforts.

The administration’s steadfast opposition to lifting the arms embargo on Bosnia would only intensify later on, when Congress was poised to pass legislation for a unilateral lift, which the administration had consistently opposed, and which would trigger the withdrawal of European troops and the deployment of American ground forces at the height of the 1996 presidential election. Textual evidence from a National Security Council document does reveal that the Clinton administration anticipated allied requests for US ground forces in the event of an UNPROFOR evacuation as early as October, 1994, but the document does not express any opposition to lifting the embargo at this point in time and notes that the United States has “made no specific commitment” to supply ground forces in an UNPROFOR withdrawal. The United States would not agree to use US ground forces for UN evacuation in principle until November


President Clinton would not approve OPLAN 40104—the operation that committed US ground forces to a UN evacuation—officially until June of 1995. The Senate and the House separately passed other notable bills, resolutions, and amendments that were relevant to US policy toward Bosnia and to the actions of President Clinton and his administration. One of these resolutions was H.Con.Res.189, which Representative McCloskey introduced in November of 1993. The resolution passed the House in November and called upon the United States and international community to deliver necessary medical and food supplies to the people of Bosnia during the 1993-1994 winter. A second House bill gave President Clinton permission to terminate the embargo and to provide military assistance to Bosnia should a request for help occur. H.R.4301, which was left in the resolving differences stage on July 12, 1994 and passed both the House and Senate, supported diplomatic negotiations and suggested that the arms embargo be lifted if Serbs attacked safe areas. It also requested that the President consult with Congress regarding unilateral termination if the United Nations Security Council did not end the embargo. S.2208 and S.2211 served the same purpose as H.R.4301, and passed the Senate on July 20 and July 14 respectively. On May 12, 1994, the Senate passed a bill proposed by Senator Bob Dole by voice vote that prohibited the President or any other official affiliated within the executive branch from impeding the transfer of arms to Bosnia; required the United States to comply with a termination request of the embargo by Bosnia and to seek NATO agreement on the issue; and authorized the President to support UNPROFOR, to use NATO airpower to protect Sarajevo, and to strike Serbian weapons.

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179 Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, xvi.
181 Ibid.
184 Ibid.
and military targets.\textsuperscript{186} It also forbade the use of US ground forces in Bosnia unless authorized by Congress.\textsuperscript{187} The bill was referred to the House Committee on Foreign Affairs on October 7, 1994.\textsuperscript{188} Other notable amendments, not included in measures yet mentioned, included the following: S.Amdt.1281, expressing the sense of the Senate that President Clinton should end the arms embargo of Bosnia and provide military assistance upon a request from Bosnia to do so; and H.Amdt.571, asking that the Department of Defense report to Congress on the consequences for US military readiness of US ground combat participation in peacekeeping operations in Bosnia.\textsuperscript{189}

In sum, congressional action during this period largely mirrored administration policy at this time. Measures approved by Congress primarily served to reinforce administration efforts on humanitarian aid and diplomatic negotiations, and some even prohibited the use of US ground forces in Bosnia. Pressure did exist for lifting the arms embargo, but at this point, the Clinton administration was also pressing for a Security Council decision to exempt Bosnia from the embargo. Although some members of Congress did propose measures for more forceful action, the proposals that passed the Senate and the House did not force a policy change and were largely consistent with Clinton administration goals.

\textbf{Congressional Advocacy}

The reluctance of Congress to push for more interventionist action during this period may have stemmed in part from a degree of anti-interventionist sentiment within the legislative branch.\textsuperscript{190} Several bills calling for outright termination of the embargo, H.R.4290, H.R. 2315, and S.1044,

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{187} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{188} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{190} John Shattuck, \textit{Freedom on Fire: Human Rights Wars and America’s Response} (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 123.
\end{itemize}
did not make it to a vote. Senator Claiborne Pell (D-RI) explained his opposition to lifting the embargo on May 6, 1994:

First, it would put the United States in the position of abrogating a U.N. Security Council resolution [...] Second, it could begin a process of unilateral United States involvement in the Bosnia conflict—or as some Senators put it when we took up this issue 2 weeks ago—start us down the slippery slope to greater engagement in the crisis. Third, unilaterally lifting the arms embargo could actually leave the Bosnian Government forces vulnerable to further Serbian obstruction of humanitarian assistance and brutal attack. Fourth, lifting the embargo at this time could upset the delicate peace process that is underway.

Pell mentioned that he was in agreement with Senators John Kerry (D-MA) and John Warner (R-VA), and others, that lifting the embargo unilaterally would be “the beginning of a United States decision to go it alone in Bosnia.” Pell continued to say that the conflict in Bosnia was no different than Rwanda, Haiti, or Algeria, and it was not clear what interest America had in Bosnia that it did not have in those other countries. Congressman Doug Bereuter (R-NE) similarly argued on April 29, 1993 that the introduction of US ground forces into Bosnia would lead to a situation akin to Vietnam. Senator Kerry argued that the United States was a neutral party, and it should not take any action that would “send the message to the Bosnian Serbs that all of a sudden the United States has decided we are coming in on the side of Bosnian [Muslims].” Kerry also feared that lifting the embargo would endanger allied troops and leave the United States responsible for any escalation in violence. Representative Ron Dellums (D-CA), Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, argued that lifting the embargo unilaterally would “destroy an entire range of international agreements.”

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193 Ibid.
194 Ibid.
197 Ibid.
Bosnian policy, Representative Ike Skelton (D-MO) argued, “Remember Vietnam? Remember the Gulf of Tonkin?” Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Lee Hamilton (D-IA) and Pell, Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, wrote an op-ed in the *New York Times* on May 5, 1994, arguing against any measures that might force a unilateral lift of the embargo and claiming that while President Clinton wanted the embargo lifted, doing so unilaterally would “Americanize the war” and make the United States responsible for Bosnia. Pell and Hamilton concluded, “We do not have vital interests [in Bosnia].”

These advocates for restraint were met by others in Congress who favored increased engagement. Senator Joe Biden (D-DE), for instance, argued that Bosnian civilians were more likely to be killed by Serbian attacks than by hunger or disease, implying that the United States should focus on ending the violence, not on humanitarian aid. Biden wrote a report for the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, entitled *To Stand Against Aggression*, in which he argued that the United States “must now, for reasons of both conscience and stark self-interest, rise above its confusion and inertia and respond to Serbian military aggression in the only language the aggressors understand.” The United States needed to cease in its “futile half-measures,” to confront Milosevic, who was then “[operating] under the shelter of Neville Chamberlain’s umbrella.” The Holocaust Memorial Museum, he noted, would open that spring, and would “symbolize either our hypocrisy or our remembrance and resolve.” On May 21, 1993, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-NY), also an advocate for increased engagement, wrote to President Clinton to express his frustration with Clinton’s policy and his lack of responsiveness to Moynihan’s requests to meet. He suggested that no one in the White House had actually heard the sound of the machine guns in Bosnia, as he had during his visit to the region:

Last November I put myself very considerably in harm’s way to get into Sarajevo to get a sense of the fighting and the killing up close. Back in Zagreb I wrote you a [fifteen-page]

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199 Ibid.
201 Ibid.
203 Ibid., 3.
204 Ibid.
205 Ibid.
memorandum which I then sent you. I wrote of Sarajevo that it is “The most intense urban warfare environment in the world just now.” I said it would be waiting for you when you assumed the Presidency. In closing, I said I would be happy to talk with anyone you asked to call me. Six months have gone by and still no one has called. I suppose my feeling is that there is no one downtown who has actually heard those machine guns. And so with nothing more than the hope that I might be of help, I would repeat my offer that I would be happy to talk with anyone you might ask to do so. 206

Senator Dole, one of the leading proponents of increased action, wrote an op-ed in the Washington Post in August of 1993 criticizing the administration in the wake of the failed lift and strike proposal. 207 In July of 1993, Senator Dole had argued that “By allowing Bosnia to be cannibalized, we are sending a green light to would-be aggressors around the globe […] it is not too late to do the right thing.” 208 Representative McCloskey had also been pushing hard for changes to US Bosnia policy, arguing in the House of Representatives that “As we talk here, thousands and thousands of people are dying. […] Quite frankly, what are we doing? […] as months and months go by and as some 200,000 Bosnians have died, we continue to be in a stilted and almost inert position.” 209 Senator Joe Lieberman (D-CT) argued on December 1, 1994 that “the United States should reject the course of appeasement” in Bosnia. 210 Senator Dennis Deconcini (D-AZ) called US policy “disgraceful,” arguing that “we have all allowed the position of the United States as leader of the world’s greatest democracy and as the world’s only superpower to erode to a dangerous and humiliating degree.” 211

CONGRESS SUMMARY

In short, the verdict was split in the legislative branch, leading to a coding of medium pressure. Congress contained passionate advocates for restraint and passionate advocates for engagement. Both groups made their case to their congressional colleagues and to the public. Yet, in the end, proposals that were able to pass and become law, or even pass just one of the chambers of Congress, did not fundamentally change US policy. The strongest proposed measures from Congress during this period concerned the lifting of the arms embargo, but the Clinton administration had been working for an exemption for Bosnia during this time as well, and Congress was not yet able to pass law that would have forced a lift. Had Congress in fact passed law to unilaterally lift the embargo, the pressure would have been coded as high. Because the laws passed by Congress during this period did not diverge significantly from Clinton administration policy, the coding is medium.

POLITICAL LIABILITY

The value on the political liability variable during this period was negative (costs for action). At the beginning of his first term, the Clinton administration believed that engagement in Bosnia would damage Clinton’s political agenda and prospects for future elections. This calculation would change in the summer of 1995, but when Clinton first came into office, he and his staff believed that the American public would oppose significant involvement in Bosnia and that Clinton’s important domestic agenda would be harmed by further engagement.

In these early years of the Clinton presidency, high-level Clinton administration officials were advising against significant involvement in Bosnia, fearing that the American public would oppose engagement. When the use of force came under discussion in early February 1993, in regards to US willingness to partake in the enforcement of a peace settlement, senior White House officials cited political concerns as reason to reject US involvement, despite the fact that Defense had been arguing that costs would be low.212 During the February 5 meeting, Defense suggested that there would not be “major resistance” in a peace enforcement mission, and US casualties would be “relatively low.”213 They further estimated that although enforcement would require ground forces, American casualties “would be acceptable” because none of the parties

212 “National Security Council Minutes on 5 February 1993 Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia.”
213 Ibid., 6.
would be willing to fight a US-NATO force. Yet, Powell nevertheless added that “it would be expensive and could be open ended with no promise of getting out.” During the discussion, Vice President Gore seemed reluctant to engage US forces in peace enforcement, noting that “the American people will not want to send our boys there.” Clinton’s lone interjection into the discussion, other than to ask for Powell’s advice and rule out demanding that the Europeans alone enforce a settlement, was to suggest that the United States should not be involved in multiple humanitarian missions at once, asking “Can we get out of Somalia first?” A summary of a Principals meeting from September 1993, likewise notes concerns about “opposition we are likely to face in the U.S.” if it were to be announced that the United States was committed to assisting in the implementation of a peace settlement. Secretary of Defense William Perry would later argue during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing that one of the main reasons keeping the United States from entering the conflict as a combatant, in addition to the number of forces required and the lack of US vital interests, was “a political judgement, and that is that there is no support, either in the public or in the Congress, for taking sides in this war as a combatant, so we will not.” Even if polling showed US support for intervention, the administration believed that support would immediately deteriorate as soon as the United States suffered casualties.

President Clinton further came to believe, and was advised, that too much focus on the conflict in Bosnia would detract from his domestic policy agenda. He was reportedly influenced by a Wall Street Journal opinion piece by Arthur Schlesinger, in which Schlesinger warned that US engagement in Bosnia might have negative effects on Clinton’s broader domestic and foreign policy agenda. Dick Morris, Clinton’s pollster, had similarly advised against over involvement in the conflict from the beginning, reminding Clinton that “You don’t want to be Lyndon Johnson, sacrificing your potential for doing good on the domestic front by a destructive, never-

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214 Ibid., 7.
215 Ibid.
216 Ibid., 6.
217 Ibid., 6–7.
218 “Summary of Conclusions of NSC Principals Meeting on Bosnia, September 1, 1993,” 2.
220 Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 304.
221 Drew, On the Edge: The Clinton Presidency, 158.
ending foreign involvement.”

Morris’s internal polling had showed that about forty percent of Americans were isolationist. Nancy Soderberg, then Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, believed that “for the most part, the American public couldn’t care less about Bosnia. Most of them don’t know where Canada is, much less where Bosnia is.” Albright remembers that “the problem at the beginning was the President deciding he had been elected on a domestic agenda and spending a lot of time on that.” As David Halberstam has documented, for Clinton, domestic concerns were “a far higher priority politically.” All of his domestic policies ultimately “centered around the health of the economy.” He also did not want to pursue any initiatives that might have detrimental effects on his health care reform plans.

In summary, President Clinton, Vice President Gore, the Secretary of Defense, Clinton’s personal pollster, and other top advisers all believed that the American public would not support significant US engagement in Bosnia. In this climate, with the United States engaged in Somalia and with Clinton elected on what he believed to be a domestic platform, the Clinton administration saw perceived political costs to increased involvement in the Bosnia conflict. The value on political liability was therefore negative (costs for action). President Clinton did not want responsibility for a conflict that could harm domestic initiatives deeply important to him or ruin his legacy for decades. He did not want to repeat the unfortunate fate of Lyndon Johnson.

**DISSENT**

The following section will detail the role of dissent in the early years of Clinton’s first term. I will argue that an inner-circle dissent did not emerge during this period. Although some high-ranking officials, such as Richard Holbrooke, John Shattuck, and Warren Zimmerman, favored

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224 Interview with Nancy Soderberg, 77.


228 Ronayne, *Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust*, 121; 140.
increased engagement, they were critically not members of Clinton's inner circle of advisers. In fact, they were largely shut out of the inner circle. Among members of the inner circle, dissent was stifled in large part because of a policymaking process that encouraged consensus. I argue that lower level dissenters were unsuccessful because, in parallel to the lower level Bush administration officials, they were unable to co-opt higher ranking officials. Their inability to persuade senior officials whom President Clinton trusted stemmed from the institutionalization of dissent and from the policy preferences of these senior officials.

THE INNER CIRCLE
For much of the early Clinton years, a forceful inner-circle dissent did not emerge. Clinton had in fact instituted an interagency process that entailed reaching consensus on all significant policy decisions. An environment that requires agreement and places a high value on accord understandably stifles dissenting views. One senior policymaker recalls that "It wasn't policy-making. It was group therapy—an existential debate over what is the role of America." Further, within this small group of decision makers striving for agreement, Powell's sterling reputation and experiences allowed his position to become the default position of the group. Alexander George has previously described how status considerations affect small group decision making:

A particular danger in small decision groups is that irrelevant status characteristics or power-prestige differences among members may importantly influence their relations, interactions, and performance of the tasks of policy analysis and appraisal of options.

Within Clinton's team, Powell had all of the power and prestige, and few felt comfortable challenging his views. Powell, who was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs until September of 1993, was opposed to significant US involvement and intervention because he felt that US national interests were not at stake. Clinton and his closest advisers, meanwhile, were inexperienced in military affairs. When Defense expressed opposition, alongside State, to NATO airstrikes, National Security Adviser Anthony Lake did not push back, feeling as though he lacked the

229 Shattuck, Freedom on Fire: Human Rights Wars and America's Response, 123.
232 Power, "A Problem from Hell:" America and the Age of Genocide, 304.
233 Ibid.
authority and expertise to challenge military experts. According to Albright: "There is something about arriving in a meeting with medals from here to here and having just won the Gulf War and having been National Security Advisor and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs." She wrote in her memoir that "I found it hard to argue with Powell […] Even though I was a member of the Principals Committee, I was still a mere female civilian." As Nancy Soderberg explained, "Colin Powell was a hero […] he could pretty much do what he wanted." Secretary of State Christopher likewise remembers that Powell was "a big force in the situation room."

Further complicating interagency discussion was Clinton’s reputation as a draft-dodger and his initiatives on gays in the military. Clinton’s team had brought many politically-driven young people to Washington, and their choice to focus the first defense initiative on gays in the military exacerbated the already stressed relationship between the military and the White House, and especially between Powell and Clinton. Albright recalls that the military thought that the Clinton team "were all idiots […] They were not friendly toward us." Further, she notes, "clearly the gays in the military issue had a big effect on how Clinton dealt with the military. Some of the questions that had come up over his draft status in Vietnam played a role […] So there was some tension in that regard." To make matters worse, Clinton believed that Powell might run against him in the 1996 presidential election.

When National Security Adviser Anthony Lake or Secretary of Defense Les Aspin would ask for military plans, Powell, in Albright’s words, would suggest "it’s going to take 500,000 men and $500 billion and 50 years. What are you going to say to Sergeant Slepchok’s mother when he dies from having stepped on a land mine? [...] you’d end up with no options." Soderberg likewise recalls, "I sat in these meetings where he said, ‘Don’t fall in love with air

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234 Ibid., 316.
235 Interview with Madeleine K. Albright, 27.
236 Albright, Madam Secretary, 183.
237 Interview with Nancy Soderberg, 42.
238 Interview with Warren Christopher and Strobe Talbott, 61.
239 Power, "A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide," 304; Ronayne, Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust, 122; Interview with Nancy Soderberg, 42; Interview with Jon Western.
240 Interview with Jon Western.
241 Interview with Madeleine K. Albright, 39.
242 Ibid., 26.
243 Interview with Nancy Soderberg, 43.
244 Interview with Madeleine K. Albright, 27.
power; you can’t do it, it won’t work. You can do Bosnia, but you’re going to do 200,000 troops.” As Warren Christopher recalls, Powell was “consistently against the use of American troops.” Soderberg believes Powell’s opposition “effectively tied Clinton’s hands,” noting that “you can’t get this done if you don’t have a Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman who will come up with options for you.” Powell “saw Bosnia as another Vietnam, and he was going to stop it.” In Soderberg’s opinion, Powell was “just wrong” about the effectiveness of airpower and the number of troops required. He simply “wasn’t a constructive player on the whole Bosnia issue.” Albright likewise felt that he was one of the main obstacles to more engagement on Bosnia.

Anthony Lake disagrees somewhat with Soderberg and Albright’s characterization of Powell, however. Lake reports that although Powell initially expressed hesitancy on air drops, he eventually came back with options. He also agreed with Powell’s decision to lower expectations on the efficiency of air power. Lake notes that he supported elements of the Powell Doctrine, so “it never bothered [him] that [Powell] would say, ‘No we can’t do this,’ and ‘Yes we can do that.’” When Albright and Powell were at odds over the use of force—with Albright asking “What are you saving this superb military for, Colin, if we can’t use it?”—Lake sided with Powell. Still, in Lake’s opinion, Defense calculations of 300,000 American troops needed for peace in Bosnia were inflated.

Notably, the State Department leadership was able to cooperate with Defense effectively. Secretary of State Warren Christopher has remarked that he did not have any tense interactions with members of the military during his time in the Clinton administration. Strobe Talbott, Ambassador-at-Large and Special Adviser to the Secretary of State and Deputy Secretary of

245 Interview with Nancy Soderberg, 42.
246 Interview with Warren Christopher and Strobe Talbott, 61.
247 Interview with Nancy Soderberg, 42.
248 Ibid.
249 Ibid., 42–43.
250 Ibid., 42.
251 Interview with Madeleine K. Albright, 27.
252 Interview with Anthony Lake, 41.
253 Interview 2 with Anthony Lake, 31.
254 Ibid., 30.
255 Albright, Madam Secretary, 182–83; Interview 2 with Anthony Lake, 31.
256 Interview 2 with Anthony Lake, 30–31.
257 Interview with Warren Christopher and Strobe Talbott, 62.
State under the Clinton administration, likewise has remarked that he had “total support and cooperation” from his contacts in the military. 258

Furthermore, the relationship between the White House and the Pentagon improved when General John Shalikashvili succeeded Powell as Chairman of the Joint Chiefs in 1993. 259 Soderberg recalls “a sea change when Shalikashvili came in. [...] He was an incredible, thoughtful, interesting, brilliant man who came up with options [...] Powell never understood why [US engagement in Bosnia] mattered. Shali did.” 260

Nevertheless, Powell’s dominance of the early discussions coupled with an interagency process that valued agreement were likely the principal causes of a lack of inner-circle dissent during the early years of Clinton’s first term. Even Madeleine Albright, arguably the principal proponent of engagement among the foreign policy team, limited her interjections to highlighting the failure of US policy—something well understood within government. 261 Others have reported that Anthony Lake, at the start of the administration, had noted that absent an effective policy plan, Bosnia could become a cancer affecting the administration’s entire foreign policy, but it is not clear if Lake offered any alternatives, or if he was suggesting a dramatic change in course, as he would in the summer of 1995. 262

The New York Times did report on April 23, 1993, that Albright had sent a memorandum arguing for strikes. 263 However, the reporting here is a bit misleading and exaggerates the degree to which Albright was suggesting a policy change. A memorandum from Albright to Anthony Lake from April 14 appears to address the incident in question. 264 In the memorandum, Albright notes that she is addressing “whether to use American air power to supplement an enhanced

\[258\] Ibid.

\[259\] Ibid.

\[260\] Interview with Nancy Soderberg, 42.

\[261\] Albright had previously highlighted how US Bosnia policy was having a negative effect on NATO and UN credibility and the administration’s foreign policy more generally: Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 24.

\[262\] Halberstam, War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals, 302; Woodward, The Choice: How Bill Clinton Won, 253; In discussing Lake’s reaction to Albright’s dissent, Daalder notes that Lake “had raised similar concerns with the president” before, citing an interview with an unnamed senior administration official. This may be what Daalder is referring to because I do not find evidence of another interjection: Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 93.


UNPROFOR presence in Bosnia and Serbia.” Albright argues that airpower would likely “create a doubt in Serbian minds that they can pursue their objectives unchecked.” Further, she points out that delay in a military response “risks humanitarian catastrophe.” However, Albright explicitly writes that airpower could be “unilateral or multilateral,” and that objections to US airstrikes by the UN, United Kingdom, or France, “would severely undercut our case that we have international support or authority for our actions.” Additionally, she notes that strikes “could result in shutting down the land operations by humanitarian agencies.” Albright concluded with a recommendation to create protective enclaves “if we are prepared to use airpower.” In short, the memorandum was hardly a stubborn dissent for unilateral action.

LOWER LEVEL OFFICIALS

Dissent did emerge at lower levels of the Clinton administration, within the State Department, but these officials were unable to co-opt a higher ranking official and to channel their views effectively to the president.

Several lower level State Department Officials favored a more robust response. Just two days after Clinton’s election, in fact, members of the European Bureau and the Policy Planning staff circulated a policy proposal to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia. The proposal was eventually signed by all relevant bureaus. Later, during the State Department’s “open forum” program—a meeting for employees and State Department guests to discuss policy crises—Jim Hooper and Ralph Johnson, both career foreign service officers, commented on the significant support for intervention within the lower levels of the State Department and noted that this message was not effectively reaching the seventh floor senior officials in State. Hooper

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265 Ibid., 1.
266 Ibid.
267 Ibid., 3.
268 Ibid., 2.
269 Ibid.
270 Ibid., 3.
272 Ibid.
referenced the State Department’s sordid history with genocide issues during the Holocaust. His remarks were transmitted to every diplomatic post around the world.

In the spring of 1993, amid a worsening situation on the ground in Bosnia, Marshall Harris, Bosnia desk officer, drafted a dissent letter to Secretary Christopher arguing that the US approach to the crisis was ineffective and that military intervention should be pursued. Although he felt that he did have an opportunity to be heard, he believed that a group approach might be more effective in conveying his message. The letter represented yet another button they could push.

After completing the letter draft, Harris accordingly asked several State Department country officers to sign the letter. All agreed, and in the end, the letter bore the signatures of desk officers from Serbia and Montenegro, Bosnia, Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Croatia, Slovenia, and others in Eastern European Affairs or affiliated with US policy at the United Nations. In addition to Marshall Harris, signatories included Janet Bogue, Eric Rubin, Gordana Earp, Jon Benton, Jim Moriarty, Brady Kiesling, Ellen Conway, Scott Thompson, Drew Mann, John Menzies, and Mirta Alvarez. The group and their letter became known as the “dirty dozen.”

The letter was leaked and detailed in a New York Times article, allowing the State Department dissenters to gain more allies. According to Harris, Secretary Christopher took the letter to an interagency meeting where he reportedly raised the issue with his senior colleagues. Christopher also arranged a meeting with the signatories of the letter. In the meeting, Christopher, a skilled mediator and negotiator, had his usual lawyerly disposition,

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274 Ibid., 297.
275 Ibid.
276 Ibid., 301; Interview with Marshall Harris; Gordon, “12 in State Department Ask Military Move Against the Serbs.”
277 Interview with Marshall Harris.
278 Ibid.
279 Power, “A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide, 301.
280 Ibid.; Gordon, “12 in State Department Ask Military Move Against the Serbs.”
282 Power, “A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide, 301.
283 Ibid.; Gordon, “12 in State Department Ask Military Move Against the Serbs.”
284 Interview with Marshall Harris.
285 Ibid.; Gordon, “12 in State Department Ask Military Move Against the Serbs.”
listening to them, but quietly disagreeing with their suggested approach for more robust measures.286

Lower level officials in Clinton’s foreign policy apparatus also began to leak information in an attempt to influence US policy. Jon Western, an intelligence analyst in the State Department, and his colleague at the Central Intelligence Agency were tasked with coming up with the total number of people detained in Serbian concentration camps.287 In their report, they estimated that between 10,000 and 70,000 people were being held in such detention centers.288 The next day, the New York Times published an article claiming that officials had estimated that 70,000 people had been detained.289 As Western noted, someone had leaked, and whoever had done it wanted to portray Serbian aggression in its most extreme form.290

By the summer of 1993, dissatisfaction within State would lead to the resignations of several young officials. Marshall Harris’s frustration with US policy reached a breaking point in August of 1993. He had drafted an action memorandum in July of 1993 discussing methods of ending the siege of Sarajevo.291 Yet, before the memorandum could reach the senior levels of the State Department, the memorandum had been downgraded to a discussion paper.292 Following Secretary Christopher’s public statement on July 21 that the United States was doing everything it could in Bosnia consistent with its national interests, Harris had enough and decided to leave the State Department.293 He felt as though he had utilized every possible option, pulled every lever, in his current position.294 He had communicated his views both formally and informally, and the conditions in Bosnia were only worsening.295 By now, it was also clear that the Clinton administration’s policy review was not going to result in any substantial policy changes.296 For Harris, ultimately, the decision was a moral one: he simply did not want to partake in US

286 Interview with Marshall Harris.
287 Interview with Jon Western.
288 Ibid.
290 Interview with Jon Western.
291 Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 313.
292 Ibid.
293 Ibid., 313; 310-311; Christopher statement is cited in Power. I was unable to locate an original copy: “State Department Briefing, Federal News Service,” July 21, 1993.
294 Interview with Marshall Harris.
295 Ibid.
296 Ibid.
policymaking on Bosnia any longer. He believed that the United States could be making a
difference with relatively little commitment and that it was in US interests to stop the
slaughter. He resigned from his position on August 4, 1993.

Harris would go on to work for Congressman McCloskey, who had been advocating for
increased US engagement in Bosnia. In the wake of his resignation, the New York Times
reported that the State Department highlighted his youth and low status in order to imply “that he
was quitting because he was not involved more in policy making.” Such commentary outraged
many at State. The position of Bosnian desk officer was a mid-level position, but in his
position, Harris was considered the top expert on the country and reported to the assistant
secretaries of state.

Jon Western, the State Department intelligence analyst, had also been considering
resigning from his post. On August 6, 1993, he too submitted his resignation letter. He
explained in an interview with this author that he had been given a tour of the Holocaust
Museum when it opened in April of 1993 and that it had a lasting impression on him. In the
summer of 1993, there had been an increase in attacks, and his job as an intelligence analyst
exposed him directly to the horrors of the conflict. He was responsible, for instance, for
analyzing blood splatter patterns in order to infer mortar trajectory following massacres. After
a year of working on war crimes analysis, Western recalls that he no longer wanted to be party to
a policy of indifference. If he thought he could make a difference and be more effective, he
would have stayed on. Notably, Western was in an analysis position, not a policy position. His
bureau was not supposed to recommend policy. What most upset Western was that his

297 Ibid.
298 Ibid.
300 Ibid.
302 Ibid.
305 Ibid.
306 Interview with Jon Western.
307 Ibid.
308 Ibid.
309 Ibid.
310 Ibid.
311 Interview with James O’Brien; Interview with Jon Western.
312 Interview with Jon Western.
analysis was being misrepresented for political purposes: in his opinion, senior officials refused to view the violence through a strategic lens and continued to suggest that the conflict was intractable.\footnote{313}

He dropped his letter off on the seventh floor of the State Department in the Secretary’s office, and by the time he reached his fourth floor office, his phone was ringing.\footnote{314} He was later quoted in the \textit{New York Times}: “In my time, I have met one, possibly two people, in the department below the level of assistant secretary who believe in the policy.”\footnote{315}

Two weeks later, the State Department’s Croatia desk officer Steven Walker resigned on August 23, 1993.\footnote{316} In his resignation letter, Walker wrote, “I can no longer countenance U.S. support for a diplomatic process that legitimizes aggression and genocide.”\footnote{317} Walker likewise felt that he had access and “sufficient opportunity to voice [his] opinions,” but that his views were simply not listened to and had not influenced policy.\footnote{318}

The resiginees later commented that others in the State Department would have likely resigned as well if not for family responsibilities.\footnote{319} Harris (32), Walker (30), and Western (30)—as well as George Kenney, who resigned in 1992 at age thirty-four—were all young men at the time of their resignations.\footnote{320} Soderberg admits that “when those guys resigned—I respected them. We weren’t doing enough.”\footnote{321}

The succession of State Department departures was undoubtedly of historic proportions. Samantha Power argues that it was the largest wave of resignations in State Department history and that “nothing like this had happened before.”\footnote{322}

Arguably, though, something similar had in fact happened before, during the Vietnam War. In 1968, for instance, the State Department weathered the resignations of 266 foreign...
service officers, eighty percent of whom were junior officials. However, it is not known definitively whether or not their resignations were in protest to American policies in Vietnam or simply a result of the war. By June of 1968, all unmarried junior officers who had not served active duty in the military were assigned to Vietnam, and “most American diplomats knew at least one FSO who had died” serving there. Some of the resigning officers therefore may have been attempting to avoid an assignment with a significantly high mortality rate. Notably, the State Department also had difficulty recruiting officers in this period.

Nevertheless, when the Bosnia resignations occurred, “virtually everyone at the State Department” was in agreement that “there [had] not been such public protests [...] since the height of the Vietnam War.” Unlike the foreign service officers of Vietnam, the Bosnia dissenter were public and candid about their reasoning for leaving, offering detailed explanations to the press. In this respect, Power is correct that the resignation wave was indeed a unique historical event: a truly public repudiation of Clinton administration policies through a successive wave of resignations.

In the wake of the resignation wave, the State Department called a meeting with junior officials in the fall of 1993. The meeting was essentially a plea for them to refrain from leaving their positions. Secretary Christopher attended, and in appearance this meeting would serve as a forum for junior officials to have their views heard.

Yet, an inability to be heard was importantly not what had led to the wave of resignations. Marshall Harris clearly felt that he had been heard. He even had a direct audience with Warren Christopher. Lower level officials had been heard, in part thanks to institutionalized dissent channels at State. The problem was that these dissenting views were heard and discounted. An attendee of the Christopher meeting recounted that participants argued over the

no-fly zone and the arms embargo. It does not appear that the discussion had any tangible effects on US policy.

It is possible that the effectiveness of these junior level officials was perversely diminished because of the institutionalization of dissent in 1971. Samantha Power has highlighted that, following the formalization of dissent, dissenters were “shrewdly domesticated or assigned the role of official dissenters.” The official State Department Dissent Channel, for instance, appears to have never had a significant influence on US foreign policy. Hannah Gurman has suggested that the Dissent Channel “proved that dissent could be tolerated so long as it remained inside the bureaucracy.” Further, some still feared repercussions for speaking out, including a US diplomat in Zagreb who had told Peter Maass, a journalist, that the United States should bomb the Serbs and needed to take risks, but subsequently called to ask that he not use the quote in his reporting, fearing retaliation by Colin Powell.

As time went on, some of those higher up in the chain who felt that they lacked access would also resign or consider resigning. In early 1994, Warren Zimmerman, former American Ambassador to Yugoslavia, resigned from his position as Director of Refugee Affairs. In Zimmerman’s memoir, he writes that “it became increasingly difficult for me to justify my personal participation in a policy whose tentative nature was being exploited by Serbian aggressors.” He felt that the United States was dealing successfully only with “the humanitarian symptoms of the Bosnian war […] but we weren’t treating the causes.” Zimmerman had sent back-channel memorandums to Warren Christopher arguing for more

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331 Ibid.
332 On creation of State Department dissent channel at the end of Vietnam War: Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 287; Gurman, “The Other Plumbers Unit: The Dissent Channel of the US State Department,” 323.
333 Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 311–12.
335 Gurman, “The Other Plumbers Unit: The Dissent Channel of the US State Department,” 341.
338 Zimmermann, Origins of a Catastrophe, 226.
339 Ibid.
forceful responses, “but received no acknowledgment that they’d even been read.” Upon meeting with Christopher after submitting his resignation, Zimmerman argued for NATO airstrikes on Serbian artillery around Sarajevo.

Thoughts of resignation also crossed Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor John Shattuck’s mind. Shattuck has written that “To be in charge of human rights in the US government while being excluded from the discussions about the government’s response to human rights crises was intolerable.” Shattuck felt that his frustrations had been heard, but after being heard, he “had less access than ever to the small group in the White House, State Department, and the Pentagon where policy was being made.” He recounted in an interview with this author that he was personally upset by the capitulation to the Serbian forces in the wake of their taking peacekeepers hostage, detailed later in this chapter, and by the lack of responsiveness by the Clinton administration in the wake of the Rwandan Genocide of 1994. In the end, he decided to stay on despite the obstacles because he felt he might be able to make more of a difference on the inside.

Richard Holbrooke, a man with a storied career in the Foreign Service and government, had also sent a memorandum—in which he described the conditions in Bosnia and offered to serve as a US mediator for the Balkans—to Anthony Lake and Warren Christopher early on when he was serving as American Ambassador to Germany. He never received a response. Holbrooke, and his colleague, US Ambassador to Croatia Peter Galbraith, had also considered resigning. Galbraith, who favored a more forceful response in Bosnia, had conveyed his views to Warren Christopher, but Christopher disagreed with his approach, and reportedly remarked on his distaste for Galbraith’s opinionated commentary.

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340 Ibid.
341 Ibid., 227.
343 Ibid.
344 Interview with John Shattuck.
345 Ibid.
347 Ibid., 295.
349 Ibid.
DISSENT CONCLUDING COMMENTS

To conclude, an inner-circle dissent did not emerge during this period. Within the inner circle, a focus on achieving consensus allowed Colin Powell to dominate the discussions and discouraged differing viewpoints. At the lower levels of the administration, in the State Department, dissent was rampant. Dissenters used official channels, informal channels, and leaks to convey opposition to the Clinton administration’s policies. These dissenters were heard; some even had audiences with the Secretary of State; and yet, their views were dismissed. Secretary Christopher continued to reflect the inner circle’s consensus position, and he would not be persuaded to deviate by underlings in his department. The lower level dissenters thus failed to co-opt a senior official within the inner circle. Dissent in the inner circle would come, but not until the summer of 1995, when US Ambassador to the UN Madeleine Albright would suggest an abrupt change of course.
"Sure, we got Dayton because of our brilliance and because we are the greatest diplomats in the history of mankind and got our act together blah, blah blah. [...] But the real reason is, I think, that yes, we did push, and I'm proud of it and by 1995 got Dayton, but that without Srebrenica, and without [Jacques] Chirac..."  

Anthony Lake 2002

INTRODUCTION

The year 1995 was the turning point year in the case of US policy toward the atrocities in Bosnia. At the end of August, the United States launched a military intervention—Operation Deliberate Force—that successfully brought parties to the negotiating table at Dayton to determine a peace settlement. The operation represented the first time in the past several years that US military force was used deliberately and in a sustained manner to bring an end to the conflict. I argue that the events leading up to this significant change in policy are consistent with the theory outlined in this dissertation. An inner-circle dissent, a high level of congressional pressure, and a positive value on political liability all combined in the summer of 1995 to lead to movement toward a more robust response, in this case, military intervention.

This section of the chapter will outline the events leading up to the policy change in the launching of Operation Deliberate Force and evaluate the roles of the three key variables: dissent, congressional pressure, and political liability. The focus of the section will be on the period from April 1995 to August 1995. During the beginning months of 1995, a ceasefire negotiated by former president Jimmy Carter had in fact successfully held. Yet, at the end of April, fighting began again. I end my analysis in August with the launching of the military intervention, Operation Deliberate Force, as this event marked the significant change in policy that my dissertation seeks to explain.

I argue that during this period from May to August 1995, congressional pressure reached its highest levels; the political liability variable took on a positive value (costs for inaction); and a powerful inner-circle dissent occurred.

Congressional pressure during the May to August period culminated in the passing of Senator Bob Dole’s Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Act in late July (Senate) and early

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350 Interview with Anthony Lake, 37.
351 Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 37; xiii.
August (House). The bill, which passed with bipartisan support in both houses, would have forced President Clinton to change his preferred strategy on Bosnia by lifting the arms embargo unilaterally. Because Congress had passed legislation to change policy, congressional pressure received a coding of “high” for this period. Clinton had opposed the legislation and had attempted to fight its passage.

The political liability variable also shifted to take on a positive value (costs for inaction) in the summer of 1995 due to five interacting factors that contributed to presidential political costs for continued inaction in US policy toward Bosnia: Srebrenica; Jacques Chirac; OPLAN 40104; UNPROFOR’s deterioration; and the consequences of Dole’s legislation.

The Bosnian Serb massacres at the UN safe area of Srebrenica on July 11—the largest massacres in Europe since the Holocaust—had embarrassed the Clinton administration and President Clinton in particular. Following the tragedy, the press in the United States criticized Clinton for his failures on Bosnia policy and for humiliating the United States; Senator Dole was also able to gain increased support in Congress for action on his legislation; and Jacques Chirac, President of France, was able to once again outshine President Clinton on the world stage after repeatedly humiliating him that summer by taking more forceful positions on Bosnia. All of this served to embarrass and frustrate Clinton.

The boost of support to Dole’s legislation in the wake of Srebrenica was perhaps the most problematic occurrence for the Clinton administration. Because European leaders had said that they would withdraw UNPROFOR troops in the event of unilateral lift of the arms embargo, the Dole bill was likely to spark an UNPROFOR evacuation. The removal of the deteriorating UNPROFOR force in turn would trigger the deployment of US ground forces to assist in the evacuation as part of OPLAN 40104. Clinton administration officials believed that the deployment of US ground forces in this manner, due to events beyond their control, would be a political disaster. They feared that the evacuation would occur at the height of the 1996 presidential election, and they argued internally that the mission would be unpopular at home and could provide fuel to Republicans. Compounding their political fears was the fact that Senator Dole would likely be Clinton’s Republican opponent in the 1996 election. The

Washington Post summarized the political conundrum created by Dole’s legislation: “Clinton was staring at a potential domestic political disaster in which he would lose control over U.S. policy, and the Republicans would have a tailor-made issue” for the presidential campaign.354

Finally, an inner-circle dissent from UN Ambassador Madeleine Albright and later from National Security Adviser Anthony Lake highlighted the need for President Clinton to act soon or face significant political consequences. Ambassador Albright had raised the embarrassment of US Bosnia policy in June, 1995, noting in a dissenting memorandum—“Elements of a New Strategy”—that Bosnia was becoming a political liability for President Clinton.355 Her dissent sparked a widespread internal policy review and motivated Anthony Lake to develop his own plan for a new way forward.

In August, both Albright and Lake presented new strategies to the President.356 Albright argued that the United States was about to be forced to deploy troops on someone else’s terms because of OPLAN 40104, and she feared that Bosnia would sour the legacy of their entire first term.357 Chirac was further embarrassing the administration, and pursuing the status quo would lead to an UNPROFOR withdrawal at the height of the 1996 presidential campaign.358 Lake, whose plan largely mirrored that of Albright’s, likewise argued that inaction now would likely provoke an UNPROFOR withdrawal and OPLAN 40104 during the election campaign.359 Both argued for a more forceful policy that included the use of US air power to compel the Serbs into diplomatic talks.360

On August 7, Clinton approved a combination of Albright’s and Lake’s plans.361 Clinton too had worried aloud about the consequences of American troops deploying in the absence of a peace settlement, fearing that without a resolution in the next several months, the situation would

357 “Memorandum for the National Security Advisor from Ambassador Albright,” 2.
358 Ibid., 2–3.
359 “Strategy for the Balkan Conflict,” 1; 3.
360 “Memorandum for the National Security Advisor from Ambassador Albright,” 2; “Strategy for the Balkan Conflict,” 1–2; 4; “Outline of a Modified Contact Group Plan” contained in “Strategy for the Balkan Conflict.”
be “dropped in during the middle of the campaign.” Clinton vetoed Dole’s Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Act days later to buy his administration time to implement the new strategy before Congress returned from recess. On August 30, after a Serb attack on a marketplace in Sarajevo, the United States launched Operation Deliberate Force—a military intervention that ultimately brought all parties to negotiate a peace settlement.

To summarize, in the summer of 1995, in parallel to the 1943-1944 period in the Holocaust case, we see the convergence of a high degree of congressional pressure, a positive value on political liability, and an inner-circle dissent to result in dramatic policy change.

The remainder of this section will first proceed chronologically through the summer of the 1995 period. I will begin by highlighting the April to May 1995 period when the administration became increasingly concerned with UNPROFOR’s weakness, as violence resumed in Bosnia following the Carter ceasefire. I will then detail the historical events of June, July, and August, noting the key roles of the dissent, congressional pressure, and political liability variables. I will conclude the section with a discussion of how the three variables influenced policy.

**The Future of UNPROFOR**

**April-June**

As noted, the ceasefire brokered by former President Carter held until the end of April. The renewal of hostilities that spring amplified the weaknesses of UN forces on the ground, and in May, both National Security Adviser Anthony Lake and UN Secretary-General Boutros-Boutros Ghali ordered reviews of the UN force. A May 17 discussion paper on Bosnia, drafted by

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National Security Council staff member Nelson Drew, discussed UNPROFOR and the likelihood of withdrawal.\textsuperscript{367} The document noted that UNPROFOR’s viability was “increasingly being called into question,” as it remained unable to ensure humanitarian aid delivery, to deter fighting, or to defend itself.\textsuperscript{368} Withdrawal of UNPROFOR was a “real, and increasingly likely, option.”\textsuperscript{369}

The possibility of UNPROFOR withdrawal concerned the United States. President Clinton would not officially approve the proposal for a US evacuation of UN troops in the case of withdrawal until June 2, but the planning for OPLAN 40104 was already underway, and Clinton had informally agreed to the plans in November of 1994.\textsuperscript{370} Principal US decision makers understood that “politically, it would be extremely difficult to reject a call from a troop contributing state for NATO assistance in withdrawal.”\textsuperscript{371} In short, if UNPROFOR came out, the United States had to go in, and yet one of the main US objectives around this time was to “avoid American entanglement in fighting on the ground.”\textsuperscript{372}

Thus, as early as May, top policymakers had decided that the United States would do everything possible to prevent UNPROFOR withdrawal. A National Security Council document from May accordingly notes the following:

Principal agreed that the magnitude of the problems associated with both OPLAN 40104 implementation and post-withdrawal strategy made it imperative to keep UNPROFOR in place, and agreed to urgently approach the French to get them to reconsider their possible withdrawal from UNPROFOR.\textsuperscript{373}


\textsuperscript{368} “Bosnia: Strategic Choices, Discussion Paper (Draft),” 1.

\textsuperscript{369} Ibid., 3.


\textsuperscript{371} “Summary of Conclusions for Meeting of the NSC Principals Committee, May 23, 1995,” May 23, 1995, 3, Special Collection, Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency, Document Number: 5235e80d993294098d51754d, CIA Historical Collections.

\textsuperscript{372} “Bosnia: Strategic Choices, Discussion Paper (Draft),” 1.

\textsuperscript{373} “Summary of Conclusions for Meeting of the NSC Principals Committee, May 23, 1995,” 3.
The Principals also agreed that in the unfortunate case of an UNPROFOR withdrawal, the United States would not conduct airstrikes but would instead attempt to obtain a multilateral lift of the arms embargo and provide training to Bosnians.  

Despite US efforts, events on the ground in late May continued to make UNPROFOR withdrawal seem more likely. When the Serbian forces renewed hostilities following the ceasefire, NATO had conducted limited airstrikes aimed at ammunition dumps and weaponry sites. On May 26, Serbs responded to NATO’s strikes by taking hundreds of UN peacekeepers hostage. UN personnel were chained to the ammunition dumps and bridges in order to deter further NATO attacks. Images of the hostage situation were broadcast on television, and by the end of May, Bosnian Serbs held 350 UN hostages in their custody.

On May 28, US officials had a meeting with General Rupert Smith, commander of UNPROFOR in Bosnia. US officials reported back that Smith argued that “UNPROFOR is essentially finished. To attempt to walk some middle ground between war and withdrawal is a delusion.” That same day the United States, in accordance with French and British preferences at the time, decided to suspend airstrikes in order to prevent retaliation on UN peacekeepers. NATO would not conduct an air campaign while the Serbian forces held UN hostages.

With the Bosnian Serbs dictating the terms of allied engagement, European partners became increasingly concerned about UNPROFOR’s vitality. One European leader in particular, newly elected French President Jacques Chirac, wanted to increase the strength of the UN force and focus international attention more intensively on the crisis in Bosnia. Chirac had

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376 Ibid.
378 Ibid., 2.
380 Menzies, “State Department Cable, ‘Smith: We Either Fight or We Don’t,’” 2.
382 Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 41–44.
replaced Francois Mitterrand in mid-May, and with his entry into office came a much more forceful French outlook on the conflict.\footnote{Halberstam, \textit{War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals}, 293; Chollet, “The Road to Dayton: US Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process, May to December 1995,” 4.} Peter Tarnoff, the third highest ranking official at State during this period, said that Chirac’s energy in approaching the Bosnia crisis was a 9/10 as compared to Mitterrand’s 3/10.\footnote{Ibid., 5.}

Chirac sought to bolster UNPROFOR’s capabilities and ensure that UN forces were capable of protecting themselves from harm. In May, he began discussing specifics for increasing the strength of the force, arguing that UNPROFOR needed increased weaponry, the ability to consolidate its forces, and the capability to defend itself.\footnote{Chollet, “The Road to Dayton: US Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process, May to December 1995,” 4.} French pressure for modifications to the force culminated in a proposal for a Rapid Reaction Force (RRF), which would be comprised of heavily armed mobile forces capable of responding to Serbian threats against UNPROFOR.\footnote{Ibid., 5.}

US officials supported the French in their attempt to bolster UNPROFOR’s capability, perceiving it as a means of keeping UNPROFOR on the ground in Bosnia.\footnote{Lake, “Memorandum for the President, ‘Policy for Bosnia--Use of US Ground Forces to Support NATO Assistance for Redeployment of UNPROFOR Within Bosnia,’” 2.} Clinton wrote to Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich that “The RRF would make it less likely that UNPROFOR would have to withdraw.”\footnote{Bill Clinton, “Letter to Speaker Newt Gingrich,” July 1, 1995, 2, FOIA 2006-0647-F, Records of Genocide in the Former Yugoslavia, Box 2, Folder: Clinton Presidential Records, National Security Council, Vershbow, Alexander, European, Bosnia-July 1995 (Early July) [2] [OA/ID 897], William J. Clinton Presidential Library.} If the United States did not support the RRF, there was “an increased danger that we would need to insert a large number of U.S. forces as part of a potentially dangerous NATO operation.”\footnote{Ibid.}

The US commitment to keeping UNPROFOR on the ground had only strengthened in the wake of the hostage crises. A May 29 memorandum from Lake to Clinton notes that the Principals had concluded that withdrawing UNPROFOR would be “seen as capitulation to Bosnian-Serb blackmail and should be avoided.”\footnote{Lake, “Memorandum for the President, ‘Policy for Bosnia--Use of US Ground Forces to Support NATO Assistance for Redeployment of UNPROFOR Within Bosnia,’” 2.} And yet, should UNPROFOR need to withdraw or need assistance in relocation in order to support extraction, Clinton’s team
understood that the United States would have to come to their assistance.\textsuperscript{392} As noted, in June, Clinton would officially approve OPLAN 40104, which would commit 20,000 American troops to evacuating UN forces in Bosnia in the case of withdrawal.\textsuperscript{393}

June brought only increased irritations for President Clinton. While the United States would support French plans to invigorate UNPROFOR in the hopes that they would forestall UN withdrawal, President Chirac’s advocacy on Bosnia began to annoy Clinton as the summer wore on. Chirac’s activism was not just limited to private discussions among world leaders and foreign policy officials. Indeed, his robust posturing extended into the public sphere, and was beginning to embarrass the President. Clinton had been worrying about the press coverage of the US response to Bosnia, conveying these concerns to Chirac in a meeting on June 14, and urging public unity in their positions.\textsuperscript{394} Clinton noted that members of the press “are saying that the Americans are weak and divided,” believing that “we could just snap our fingers and the Bosnian problem would go away.”\textsuperscript{395}

Yet, Chirac would not heed Clinton’s call for public accord. In fact, immediately after Clinton’s conversation with him, Chirac appeared to elbow Clinton out of the limelight at the annual G-7 summit in Halifax from June 15 to June 17. During the summit, Chirac would simply “outshine his counterparts,” according to the official State Department history of US policy toward Bosnia.\textsuperscript{396} Chirac had in fact been the one to put Bosnia on the G-7 agenda after it had been initially omitted from conference plans.\textsuperscript{397} During a press conference of the G-7 leaders, Chirac stood literally in front of the others, reading from a French intelligence document on Bosnia.\textsuperscript{398} The press noted that Chirac had taken on the mantle of leading the international community and that his leadership stood in stark contrast to Clinton’s lack of initiative.\textsuperscript{399} Anne


\textsuperscript{393} Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, xvi; Chollet, “The Road to Dayton: US Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process, May to December 1995,” 2.

\textsuperscript{394} “Memorandum of Conversation, Bilateral Meeting with President Jacques Chirac of France, June 14, 1995, 2:45 P.M.-3:37 P.M.,” 9–10.

\textsuperscript{395} Ibid., 10.


\textsuperscript{397} Lundestad, The United States and Western Europe Since 1945, 252; Halberstam, War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals, 304.


\textsuperscript{399} Ibid.; Swardson, “Chirac, New to G-7 Summitry, Proves Top Attention-Getter,” A22; Lippman and Devroy, “Clinton’s Policy Evolution,” A1; A16.
Swardson wrote in the *Washington Post* that “[e]very summit has its star,” and this year, Clinton “was more in the background” while “Jacques Chirac was the leader.”

At the press conference, Swardson reported, “Clinton stood behind Chirac, gazing off into the distance.”

The *Washington Post* later reported that the “seeming contrast between French activism and U.S. timidity haunted Clinton” during the G-7 meeting.

In sum, Chirac was embarrassing Clinton on the world stage, making him appear weak and second to the French president. To make matters worse for Clinton, when Chirac returned to Paris following the G-7 summit, he further humiliated Clinton by asserting publicly that the “position of leader of the free world is vacant.”

The late spring and early summer of 1995 had brought renewed violence to the conflict in Bosnia and increased scrutiny of the West’s ability to handle the crisis. United Nations peacekeeping forces were being chained, in full view of television cameras, to ammunition dumps. NATO had resisted responding to Serbian aggression, fearing for the lives of forces on the ground and worrying about increasing humiliations. The withdrawal of the UN force seemed more and more likely with each passing week. The United States, feeling an obligation to NATO partners, had agreed to deploy ground troops to assist in evacuating UN forces should withdrawal materialize. All the while, Clinton was embarrassed on the world stage by a blustering, new French president who skillfully captured media attention, implied that Clinton was not the true leader of the free world, and literally and figuratively relegated Clinton to the background of international leadership on the Bosnia issue.

These humiliations had caught the attention of his United Nations Ambassador, Madeleine Albright. They had disturbed her profoundly, particularly Chirac’s statements. Albright would articulate her concerns in a one-and-a-half-page memorandum that would ignite a series of intensive, and at times, secretive policy deliberations among Clinton’s foreign policy team that summer. The dissent would fundamentally change the course of US policy toward Bosnia and eventually lead to Deliberate Force.

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400 Swardson, “Chirac, New to G-7 Summity, Proves Top Attention-Getter,” A22.
401 Ibid.
403 I was unable to locate a transcript of Chirac’s speech. However, the speech is quoted in: Halberstam, *War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals*, 305; James A. Nathan, *Soldiers, Statecraft, and History: Coercive Diplomacy and International Order* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 164.
DISSENT EMERGES

June

"If you don’t have those courageous people willing to risk everything, willing to speak truth to power, challenging the President and Secretary of State to say look we have to do this, for moral reasons, it’s the right thing to do,” the propensity of the United States to respond forcefully to mass killing is diminished.404

Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns 2015

On June 21, President Clinton, National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, Secretary of Defense William Perry, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs John Shalikashvili, UN Ambassador Madeleine Albright, CIA Director John Deutch, and Vice-President Gore met to discuss Bosnia strategy.406 Every two or three months, the National Security Council would complete a policy review for which all major departments would complete policy papers.407 Albright, a longtime supporter of increased engagement, had come to the June 21 meeting with a memorandum arguing for a complete change in policy.408 Her one-and-a-half-page memorandum, “Elements of a New Strategy,” argued that Bosnia was a political liability for Clinton and that current policy made the president appear weak.409 Further, UNPROFOR was preventing a solution the crisis and needed to be withdrawn.410 The United States needed to be in a leadership position, not a reactionary position.411 Moving forward, she argued, the United States should convince the Allies to withdraw UNPROFOR.412 Then, the international community should together lift the arms embargo, and NATO should conduct airstrikes to protect Bosnian Muslims if Milosevic refuses to recognize Bosnia.413

404 Interview with Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns.
405 Chollet spells his name Deutsch, though this appears to be a typo on his part.
407 Interview with James O’Brien.
408 Ibid.; Albright had previously highlighted how US Bosnia policy was having a negative effect on NATO and UN credibility and the administration’s foreign policy more generally: Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 24; Albright had also been a primary advocate for airstrikes: Gordon, “12 in State Department Ask Military Move Against the Serbs.”
410 Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 93.
412 Ibid.
413 Ibid.; Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 93.
Clinton had liked her ideas, though he did not immediately suggest that the United States change policy to comply with the memorandum’s recommendations.\textsuperscript{414}

Instead, the memorandum sparked a widespread internal policy review.\textsuperscript{415} Albright’s proposal represented the first forceful dissent among the inner circle of Clinton policy officials.\textsuperscript{416} Following the June 21 meeting, her memorandum was in high demand within the administration, as several agencies began requesting copies.\textsuperscript{417} Jim O’Brien, an Albright assistant, recalls that her dissent had shifted the debate from how to remain disengaged in the conflict to questioning the costs of following through on what the United States had already agreed to do.\textsuperscript{418}

Importantly, Albright’s dissent had also lit a fire under National Security Adviser Anthony Lake and his team. Lake and Albright had a tense relationship on Clinton’s foreign policy team. For one thing, they had previously been on opposing sides of internal debates.\textsuperscript{419} Further, Lake was known for displaying impatience with Albright—the only female member of the foreign policy circle—in meetings. He was, in short, “the hardest on her,” often drumming his fingers when Albright would speak.\textsuperscript{420} Lake’s behavior and that of other colleagues in Washington had contributed to Albright’s decision to participate in meetings electronically from New York instead of in person.\textsuperscript{421}

Now, however, Albright’s memorandum motivated him to find a solution to the crisis. On June 24, Lake called his deputy Sandy Berger, Alexander Vershbow, Nelson Drew, and Peter Bass to his office.\textsuperscript{422} All of the men in attendance “had Albright’s ideas on their minds.”\textsuperscript{423} He wanted his team to develop an “Endgame” plan, to brainstorm the ideal last stage for the United

\textsuperscript{415} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{416} In discussing Lake’s reaction to Albright’s dissent, Daalder notes that Lake “had raised similar concerns with the president” before, citing an interview with an unnamed senior administration official. Daalder may be referring to Lake’s comments discussed in Section II regarding Lake’s comments about the possible political consequences of a failed Bosnia policy. I do not however find evidence of a dissent by Anthony Lake prior to Albright’s memorandum. It was only after Albright’s intervention that Lake began to intensively devise a new way forward: Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 93.
\textsuperscript{417} Ibid., 93–94 (note 31).
\textsuperscript{418} Interview with James O’Brien.
\textsuperscript{419} Interview with Anthony Lake, 29.
\textsuperscript{420} Halberstam, War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals, 197.
\textsuperscript{421} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{423} Ibid.
States and work backwards to develop a strategy. They developed what became the “Endgame paper:” a strategy with both carrots and sticks, including commitment to a diplomatic settlement and the threat of airpower against the Serbs, even in the face of European objections.

Intent on having his plan chosen as the way forward, Lake kept his deliberations secret and had surreptitious meetings with the President about his proposal. By showing the President his plan privately and first, he could achieve his twin goals of priming President Clinton to favor his plan and preventing the emergence of opposition from other departments and agencies. As Ivo Daalder notes, Lake had decided to use a “less inclusive process that used his physical proximity to the president to get his way.” The interagency consensus meetings were now abandoned. Lake would go it alone, and attempt to have his policy approved by circumventing discussion entirely.

Over in the Department of State, officials were also agitated to come up with their own plan for moving forward on Bosnia. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott had been inviting a small group—Undersecretary of State Peter Tarnoff, Director of Policy Planning Jim Steinberg, and at times CIA Director John Deutch—over to his house and to Peter Tarnoff’s house to discuss Bosnia strategy. Steinberg drafted a paper based on the State discussions, which suggested a new international conference to bring the Bosnian, Serb, and Croatian governments into discussions to recognize each other and agree to a solution. He would later edit the proposal to suggest sanctions relief for Milosevic in exchange for recognition of Bosnia and delivering the Bosnian Serbs to negotiations.

Meanwhile, Robert Frasure, the State Department’s Bosnia expert, was working on his own memorandum, the “waterfall memorandum.” Frasure argued, in parallel to Albright, that the United States was losing control of events in Bosnia; and further echoing Albright, he

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427 Ibid.
430 Ibid.
suggested that the United States extract UNPROFOR as quickly as possible, but that the US should not lift the arms embargo, should covertly arm the Bosnians, and should focus on containment of the conflict.\footnote{Chollet, "The Road to Dayton: US Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process, May to December 1995," 13–14.} The State Department official history argues that Frasure hoped that his plan would “minimize the political and foreign policy disaster” of OPLAN 40104.\footnote{Ibid.; “Memorandum Faxed to Strobe Talbott, ‘Bosnia,’” June 23, 1995, cited in Chollet.} If the Clinton administration did not devise a solution to the conflict before the 1996 presidential campaign, Frasure wrote, they would be “handing a sharp sword to this [a]dministration’s political opponents next year. And we can expect they will use it.”\footnote{Chollet, "The Road to Dayton: US Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process, May to December 1995," 14.}

On June 30, State officials met and discussed both the Steinberg and Frasure proposals. Frasure would draft a new proposal the following day based on revisions to the Steinberg plan that included removing Croatia from any recognition agreement and making Milosevic the negotiator on behalf of Pale.\footnote{Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America's Bosnia Policy, 97–98; Chollet, "The Road to Dayton: US Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process, May to December 1995," 15.} Secretary Christopher relayed the new Frasure-Steinberg plan to President Clinton on July 6 in a “Night Note.”\footnote{“Night Note” as quoted in State Department history: Chollet, "The Road to Dayton: US Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process, May to December 1995,” 15–16; In addition to citing an interview with Christopher, Chollet provides the following citation for the “Night Note”: “Memorandum for the President from Secretary Christopher, ‘Night Note,’’ July 6, 1995.} In the note, Christopher emphasized the impending political crisis if OPLAN 40104 were to be implemented. He argued that the United States would be committing troops to “crown a failure and not to achieve a success.”\footnote{The “Night Note” is cited in State Department history: Chollet, “The Road to Dayton: US Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process, May to December 1995,” 15; “Memorandum for the President from Secretary Christopher, ‘Night Note.’”} OPLAN 40104 would further result in a political backlash:

\begin{quote}
[T]he “all or nothing” character of 40104 does not seem to take into account the wide variety of circumstances in which withdrawal may actually take place—or the strength of public and congressional opinion against the commitment of U.S. ground troops.\footnote{The “Night Note” is cited in State Department history: Chollet, “The Road to Dayton: US Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process, May to December 1995,” 15; “Memorandum for the President from Secretary Christopher, ‘Night Note.’”}
\end{quote}

State had proposed different solutions to the crisis in Bosnia, but the spirit of their plans echoed Albright’s memorandum: OPLAN 40104 would result in a politically disastrous deployment of American ground forces if the United States did not act soon.

Yet, Christopher’s “Night Note” would soon be overtaken by events on the ground in the Bosnian conflict. On July 6, the same day that Christopher delivered his “Night Note,” Bosnian
Serb forces began an assault on the UN safe area of Srebrenica. The military campaign would result in the largest massacre in Europe since the Holocaust, and the deaths of 7,000 to 8,000 Bosnian Muslims.

SREBRENICA

By July 11, the Bosnian Serbs had taken control of the safe haven, where 40,000 Muslim civilians had sought refuge. Serbian forces had overpowered the six hundred Dutch UN peacekeepers responsible for protecting the area.

Textual evidence, including a memorandum from Lake to Clinton, shows that the NSC Deputies met on July 11 and July 12 to discuss “appropriate responses” to the assault of Srebrenica. The meetings led to agreement that UNPROFOR required further strength to carry out its mission and that, without efforts to address UNPROFOR weakness, further attacks on enclaves and the collapse and withdrawal of UNPROFOR were likely. If this series of events were to transpire, it would mean “defeat for the UN, NATO and our allies.” The Deputies also referenced Senator Dole’s efforts to unilaterally lift the embargo and “expressed concern that [failure to strengthen UNPROFOR] would accelerate passage of unilateral lift legislation by the Congress in a manner that would damage relations with our allies.”

The French too were assessing how to respond to the Bosnian Serb attacks on a UN safe area. On July 13, Chirac once again took the most forceful position and argued that the United

445 “Summary Conclusions for Meeting of the NSC Deputies Committee, July 11-12, 1995,” 2.
446 Ibid.
447 Ibid.
States and Western countries should launch a military intervention to reclaim Srebrenica. In a telephone conversation with President Clinton, Chirac pressed:

The fall of Srebrenica, the probable fall of Zepa [safe area] tomorrow and the real threat to Gorazde [safe area] represent a major failure of the UN, NATO and all the democracies. You see what we are seeing on TV, how the Serbs are separating the men from women, sending women to be raped and killing men who are old enough to bear arms [...] we must restore the situation to the way it was guaranteed by the UN.

Chirac argued that “firm and limited military action” should be taken. He asserted his claims in all-or-nothing terms, suggesting that the United States, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany needed to either conduct a joint military intervention to protect Srebrenica, Gorazde, and Zepa or they might as well do nothing. Challenging Clinton even further during the call, Chirac quipped, “So the issue is whether the U.S. is prepared to cooperate in combating ethnic cleansing.” President Clinton responded by stressing the importance of first securing Gorazde and saying that he would talk with US military advisers, who Clinton noted were skeptical of bringing in troops with helicopters.

A few hours later, Clinton was on the phone with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl expressing his opposition to the Chirac plan. To Kohl, he called Chirac’s ideas a “radical proposal,” arguing that recapturing Srebrenica would be “a big risk for little gain.” The better plan, in Clinton’s opinion, was to avoid “[doing] something stupid” by focusing on protecting the Gorazde safe area and avoiding UNPROFOR withdrawal. However, the German Chancellor did not immediately express explicit disapproval of Chirac’s plan. Kohl thought that Chirac was “correctly, extremely upset by the whole situation.” Further, Chirac was right that Srebrenica was “catastrophic in the eyes of world opinion,” and it was impossible to completely prevent all

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450 Ibid.
451 Ibid., 1–2.
452 Ibid., 2.
453 Ibid.
455 Ibid., 1.
456 Ibid., 2.
457 Ibid.
risks to UNPROFOR. Moving forward, Kohl believed that they needed to find ways of protecting the other safe areas and in particular of rallying British Prime Minister John Major to support that initiative.

Yet, John Major’s government was in no mood to collaborate with the French government. The style of Chirac’s proposal had angered the British, who communicated through the American Ambassador in London that “It was not the British custom [...] to launch initiatives without carefully thinking through whether they were feasible. Nor was London in the habit of going around threatening to withdraw British troops.” The American Embassy in London reported that there was “a fair degree of irritation in London over precipitate French rhetoric.” Chirac had been a hawk on Bosnia from the beginning, issuing orders to French military officials in Bosnia for increased engagement outside of UN command. Now, his bold proposal for intervention was irritating the allies.

Back in the United States, the media and the press had begun an assault on the administration for its failure to protect the UN safe area. During a press briefing, State Department Spokesman, Nicholas Burns, was asked whether or not reports of the separation of men from the elderly, women, and children at Srebrenica were true. The reporter noted, “You realize the historical precedent for that, when, of course, the State Department also didn’t act 60 years ago.” Burns responded with the following:

I don’t have specific information about elderly people, women, and children being separated from males. I do have information that a great number of people are being herded into a football stadium. Considering what happened three or four years ago in the same area at the hands of the same people, the Bosnian Serb military, we are obviously concerned—greatly concerned, gravely concerned—about this situation, and we are sending a public message today to the Bosnian Serbs that they have a humanitarian responsibility to treat these people well.

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458 Ibid., 3.
459 Ibid., 2.
461 Ibid.
464 Ibid.
The Bosnian Serbs will be held accountable by the international community for their actions. 465 In an interview with this author, Ambassador Burns explained that Srebrenica was embarrassing and appalling to the United States. 466 He recalls that the days following Srebrenica were the lowest point of his entire time as spokesperson. 467 He felt humiliated by the lack of action. 468

Indeed, the coverage of the West’s embarrassment at Srebrenica would be unforgiving, further stressing the humiliation of Clinton. 469 An internal email from Calvin Mitchell, a national security spokesperson, sent on July 12 notes, “With regards to press and interview requests, we are inundated [...] We cannot maintain the position of the ‘non-existent Knight.’” 470 The email also explained that coverage of Bosnia would “be uniformly bad, highlighting the feeling among journalists that the Administration does not know what to do.” 471 A July 13 article in the Washington Post by a former member of the State Department’s policy planning staff opined, “President Clinton, please go to see the people of Srebrenica. Tell them ‘never again’ was meant for domestic consumption.” 472 Another piece noted that “There is shame enough to go around.” 473 A New York Times piece delineated the “illusions that have led the West to humiliation in Bosnia.” 474 A particularly biting New York Times article suggested that “Bill Clinton will be remembered in history as a man who feared, flinched, and failed” and that the policies proposed by Clinton’s likely challenger in the 1996 presidential election, Bob Dole, were the right way forward. 475 Reporters also began to reference the Holocaust more frequently

466 Interview with Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns.
467 Ibid.
468 Ibid.
469 Ronayne, Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust, 131; Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 430.
471 “Email from Calvin A. Mitchell to @NSA-Nat’l Security Advisor, Subject: Bosnia, Priority: High.”
and to compare the US response then to its inaction on Bosnia.\textsuperscript{476} In addition, twenty-seven humanitarian, professional, and other organizations, including the American Jewish Committee, the American Nurses Association, the Anti-Defamation League, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Refugees International, World Vision, Physicians for Human Rights, and Human Rights Watch, together demanded military intervention.\textsuperscript{477} Brent Scowcroft also joined those calling for a more forceful US response.\textsuperscript{478}

On July 14, Clinton exploded on a golf course, complaining to his advisers about the political consequences of continued failure on the Bosnian crisis. Sandy Berger, Nancy Soderberg, and Mike McCurry had been called to hear Clinton’s complaint, which lasted forty-five minutes.\textsuperscript{479} Clinton was frustrated that he had limited options and that Lake’s Endgame plan was not yet complete.\textsuperscript{480} His profanity-laced explosion, with Clinton yelling “I’m getting creamed,” became known as “Putting Green Day.”\textsuperscript{481} When his advisers tried to explain that they were working on a better policy, he claimed, “That’s not good enough; I want it now.”\textsuperscript{482}

Clinton’s rage had been fueled in part by that unyielding irritant—Jacques Chirac in France—who had once again made President Clinton appear weak, this time in the wake of Srebrenica. Nancy Soderberg recalls that “What had really triggered that [putting green scene] was the fact that Jacques Chirac had just been elected President of France, and he was taking all these very firm positions […] Clinton wondered, Why am I not saying that?”\textsuperscript{483} In Soderberg’s recollection, Bosnia had made Clinton angrier than any other episode during his presidency, noting that “It was the fact that Chirac was beating him to the headlines that drove him crazy.”\textsuperscript{484}

Indeed, Clinton had lamented during the explosion that he felt as though he were in competition with Chirac and that Chirac was obtaining more attention than he was.\textsuperscript{485} Chirac had

\textsuperscript{476} Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 432–33.
\textsuperscript{477} Ibid., 435.
\textsuperscript{478} Ibid., 431.
\textsuperscript{479} Interview with Nancy Soderberg, 54; Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 436–37.
\textsuperscript{480} Interview with Nancy Soderberg, 54; Halberstam, War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals, 316.
\textsuperscript{482} Interview with Nancy Soderberg, 55.
\textsuperscript{483} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{484} Ibid.
been the one to put Bosnia on the agenda at the G-7. Chirac had claimed that the position of leader of the free world was vacant. Chirac had dominated the international press. And now, Chirac appeared more forceful and in control. Clinton had wanted to be the one to solve Bosnia. He had been pushed to his breaking point not by the atrocities themselves, which had been ongoing throughout the conflict, not by concern over US national security, but by his own political future. He was getting creamed. Chirac looked strong. Further, Srebrenica had highlighted the weaknesses of the Clinton presidency: his domestic initiatives on health care had failed; Clinton had lost both the House and the Senate to the Republicans; now his foreign policy too was in jeopardy.

Scholars and actors from the time are in general agreement that Srebrenica was a key turning point in the road toward Deliberate Force. David Halberstam has written that Srebrenica is what “finally pushed the West over the brink.” Former Director of Intelligence James Woolsey argued that “Srebrenica pushed [Clinton] over the edge into finally doing something about the Serbs.” Warren Christopher recalls that “finally the dramatic events in Srebrenica caused us to say that whatever the cost [...] we were going to get it done either with or without [the allies].” Anthony Lake agrees that horrific events during the war “like Srebrenica [...] you shouldn’t say helped, but it did help with public opinion and with other NATO members.”

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486 Lundestad, The United States and Western Europe Since 1945, 252; Halberstam, War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals, 304.
487 I was unable to locate a transcript of Chirac’s speech. However, the speech is quoted in: Halberstam, War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals, 305; Nathan, Soldiers, Statecraft, and History: Coercive Diplomacy and International Order, 164.
489 On perception that Clinton was not in control, see: Interview with James O’Brien.
490 Interview with Nancy Soderberg, 58.
495 Interview with Warren Christopher and Strobe Talbott, 65.
496 Interview with Anthony Lake, 50.
Indeed, the events at Srebrenica also had an effect on European allies.\textsuperscript{497} William Perry recalls that Srebrenica “finally galvanized the Europeans.”\textsuperscript{498} Srebrenica was the “triggering event” for the Europeans to agree to a more forceful response, which was important given how European obstacles would have impeded a more forceful US policy had they decided to push one.\textsuperscript{499} Following Srebrenica, Britain, and clearly France, were prepared for more forceful action.\textsuperscript{500}

Although Clinton and the allies were now convinced that something new had to be done, they still lacked a coherent strategy for a way forward. In the meantime, Clinton, under fire from the press over the embarrassment of Srebrenica, would have to exert every possible means to prevent Dole’s initiative to unilaterally lift the arms embargo. If passed, the legislation would trigger UNPROFOR withdrawal, creating yet another political embarrassment and liability for the Clinton administration, in effect kicking them while they were down.

\textbf{CONGRESS}

Senator Bob Dole, Senate majority leader and the likely Republican nominee for the 1996 presidential race against Clinton, had been pushing for more engagement on Bosnia since 1990.\textsuperscript{501} On January 4, 1995, Dole introduced a bill, known as the Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Act, which called on the President to end the US arms embargo of Bosnia and Herzegovina and required the United States to raise termination of the embargo at the United Nations Security Council.\textsuperscript{502} The bill had sixteen original cosponsors, including, Senator Joseph Lieberman (D-CT), Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC), Senator Strom Thurmond (R-SC), Senator Mitch McConnell (R-KY), Senator Trent Lott (R-MS), Senator Russell Feingold (D-WI), Senator Alfonse D’Amato (R-NY), Senator John McCain (R-AZ), Senator Joseph Biden (D-DE), Senator Connie Mack (R-FL), Senator Jon Kyl (R-AZ), Senator Slade Gorton (R-WA), Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT), Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), Senator Bob Packwood (R-OR), and Senator Larry Craig (R-ID).\textsuperscript{503} By mid-July, the language of the bill required the lifting of the

\begin{footnotesize}
\item[497] Ibid., 38.
\item[498] Interview with William Perry, 53.
\item[499] Ibid., 54.
\item[500] Interview with Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns.
\item[502] Ibid., 423; “S.21 Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Act of 1995.”
\item[503] “S.21 Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Act of 1995.”
\end{footnotesize}
embargo within twelve weeks of the Bosnian government’s request for withdrawal of UNPROFOR.\textsuperscript{504}

Amid the assault and takeover of Srebrenica, Dole increased his advocacy for lifting the arms embargo on both the Senate Floor and with the media.\textsuperscript{505} On July 10, he argued in the Senate that “In order to believe that the United States and European approach in Bosnia is working, one simply has to play a game I call ‘let’s pretend.’”\textsuperscript{506} He went on to say that the United Nations mission in Bosnia was a failure, and that the Bosnian government should be allowed to defend themselves: “The United Nations must begin to withdraw and the arms embargo must be lifted.”\textsuperscript{507} Clinton noted in his July 13 conversation with Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany that “the Congress is saying that the fall of Srebrenica proves that UNPROFOR is no good and that we should lift the embargo unilaterally.”\textsuperscript{508}

The Dole bill was a political nightmare for the Clinton administration. The allies had been resolute in their claims that unilateral lift of the arms embargo would result in the exit of UNPROFOR, which in turn, due to OPLAN 40104, would require the deployment of US ground troops to evacuate the failed UN force.\textsuperscript{509} And yet, Clinton had promised to deploy American forces only in cases with “a genuine peace with no shooting and no fighting” or in the “highly unlikely” occurrence of a UN evacuation.\textsuperscript{510} A memorandum from Anthony Lake to President Clinton in early July notes that Dole’s bill would result in several negative consequences, including encouraging the Bosnian government to precipitate the withdrawal of UNPROFOR, prompting the Bosnian Serbs to launch preemptive strikes before Bosnians could arm, and forcing the United States to violate UN sanctions resolutions.\textsuperscript{511} The administration feared that lifting the embargo would lead to Allied entanglement in the conflict, with the deployment of

\textsuperscript{504} Lake, “Memorandum for the President, ‘Response to the Fall of Srebrenica,’” 2.
\textsuperscript{505} Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 425.
\textsuperscript{507} Ibid., 18217.
\textsuperscript{508} “Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, Telecon with Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany, July 13, 1995, 6:15-6:35 P.M.,” 2.
\textsuperscript{509} “CIA Post-Meeting Memorandum for the Record, ‘Principals Committee Meeting on “Yugoslavia,”’ 3 February 1993,’” 1.
\textsuperscript{510} Morris, Behind the Oval Office: Winning the Presidency in the Nineties, 253; Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 423.
25,000 American troops, and the possibility that Allies “place the blame for UNPROFOR’s failure on the U.S.” Further, Russia would likely supply the Serbs with military support, which could lead to a Russia-US confrontation.

Amid congressional pressure for lift, Clinton tried to assure allies that he could block any legislation with veto power. In June, President Clinton had told Chirac that the Bosnians had become emboldened by US congressional initiatives to lift the arms embargo, believing that they could defeat the Serbs if the embargo were lifted. He assured Chirac that he had conveyed to the Bosnian government that he would veto any lift of the embargo. He further noted that “From the day I took office, Dole has been encouraging the Bosnian government to ignore what I want to do and pushing for an independent strategy to lift the arms embargo” and that “Dole wants to be president.” In July, he told Chirac that “I’m trying to defeat it. I agree with you. I am vehemently opposed to unilateral lift. If they pass it, I will veto it.” Clinton further assured Chirac that he was certain the Congress could not override his veto. Yet, a National Security Council memorandum would inform Clinton that “While we intend to make every effort to sustain a veto of any unilateral lift legislation, you should be aware there is a real chance that a veto could be overridden, especially if we fail to take action to restore UNPROFOR credibility.” Clinton conveyed to Prime Minister John Major that Dole fully understood the implications of OPLAN 40104, and that “Even Dole has acknowledged that we have a moral duty to ensure the safe withdrawal of our allies.”

According to a National Security Council document, coordinated efforts were underway to fight congressional unilateral lift measures in early June. In fact, as early as the end of 1994,

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512 Note that there are in fact several versions of “Points on the Dole Amendment” in this folder: “Points on the Dole Amendment,” July 1995, 2, FOIA 2006-0647-F, Records of Genocide in the Former Yugoslavia, Box 4, Folder: Clinton Presidential Records, National Security Council, Soderberg, Nancy, Staff Director, Bosnia, July 1995 [1] [OA/ID 1402], William J. Clinton Presidential Library.
513 Ibid.
514 “Memorandum of Conversation, Bilateral Meeting with President Jacques Chirac of France, June 14, 1995, 2:45 P.M.-3:37 P.M.,” 2.
515 Ibid.
516 Ibid., 6; 8.
518 Ibid.
the administration had created an interagency group that met daily and was tasked with
developing a congressional and public affairs strategy on the issue of unilateral lift. Ideally,
the administration wanted to avoid putting Clinton in a position to have to use his veto power.

A July 6 document to prepare Clinton for a dinner with members of Congress highlighted the
negative consequences of unilateral lift and noted that NATO forces on the ground would be
disastrous and the American people would be unlikely to support a protracted ground
campaign. Unilateral lift of the embargo would hurt both US national interests and the
humanitarian situation on the ground. A document entitled “Senate Bosnia Vote Strategy,”
reveals efforts before the bill had even passed the Senate to garner enough votes to sustain a veto
of the Dole legislation.

In addition, Secretary of Defense William Perry had testified before the Senate
Committee on Armed Services on June 7 that lifting the embargo would lead to “a slippery
slope” and a worsening of the humanitarian situation. Further, American combat troops would
now be involved, and the NATO alliance could very well “be shattered.” During the question
period, he argued that Europeans believed that withdrawal of UNPROFOR would be a “bad
move,” a “cut-and-run.” He has also since commented that he personally was “intellectually
convinced that [lifting the arms embargo] would be disastrous.”

522 “Summary of Conclusions of NSC Deputies Committee Meeting on Bosnia, December 19, 1994,” December 19,
Bosnia,” Clinton Digital Library, 2010-0533-M, William J. Clinton Presidential Library,
http://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/36614.

523 “Summary of Conclusions of NSC Principals Committee Meeting, January 20, 1995,” January 20, 1995, 3,
Digital Library, 2010-0533-M, William J. Clinton Presidential Library,
http://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/36614.

524 The specific references here are contained in the talking points document: Danvers, “‘Talking Points’ contained
in ‘Memorandum for Anthony Lake, “President’s Meeting with Members of Congress at Congressional Dinner”’,”
5–6 (note that the page numbering in this document appears to be off. What seem to be pages 5–6 of the talking
points have numbers 2–3 on them); Lake and Griffin, “Memorandum for the President, ‘Congressional Dinner with
Members of Congress’ contained in ‘Memorandum for Anthony Lake, “President’s Meeting with Members of
Congress at Congressional Dinner”’,” 1–2; Danvers, “Memorandum for Anthony Lake, ‘President’s Meeting with
Members of Congress at Congressional Dinner.’”

525 Ibid.

526 Although undated, it is likely (based on the document itself) that it was written around July 13: “Senate Bosnia
Vote Strategy,” 1–2.

Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff,” 19–21.

528 Ibid., 20.

529 Ibid., 28.

530 Interview with William Perry, 52.
The administration also recognized that another method of fighting the Dole legislation was to improve US policy toward Bosnia. A National Security Council document noted, "If Gorazde falls, [it] could make things more difficult on the Hill." Similarly, a memorandum to the President from Anthony Lake had explained, "Failure to demonstrate that UNPROFOR retains a viable mission after the fall of Srebrenica will virtually guarantee passage of the [Dole] bill." Clinton had deployed surrogates to the Hill, tried to reassure allies, and fought the legislation in private meetings with members of Congress. Yet, the legislation was still likely to pass with a veto-proof majority. What President Clinton really needed now was a new Bosnian strategy. Otherwise, Dole’s unilateral lift would pass and result in a US ground mission into Bosnia in the absence of a peace agreement—something he and his predecessor had both sought to avoid.

**LAKE’S ENDGAME**

"[I]t is better to go out with a bang than with a whimper; otherwise we go out with our tail between our legs." —President Clinton 1995

Fortunately for Clinton, relief in the form of a new plan for Bosnia was coming soon. With the situation in Bosnia deteriorating, and the embarrassment of Srebrenica fresh in allied minds, John Major invited NATO, the Contact Group, and UN parties to a conference in London on the situation in Bosnia to be held at the end of July. In advance of the conference, General Shalikashvili and military leaders from France and Great Britain met to review military options.

Upon Shalikashvili’s return, Lake had finally briefed the foreign policy team—Christopher, Albright, Perry, Shalikashvili, and Sandy Berger—on his secret “Endgame” strategy.

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532 Lake, “Memorandum for the President, ‘Response to the Fall of Srebrenica,’” 2.
on July 17. Lake’s strategy paper noted that the Serbs were likely to attack the Gorazde safe area next and strangle Sarajevo, which would spark French and UNPROFOR withdrawal, leading to a NATO operation that would “represent a defeat for the UN and the Alliance.” Further, these events would “guarantee passage of unilateral lift by the Congress in a manner that will damage relations with our allies and make it impossible to sustain a Presidential veto.” The US would need to persuade the Bosnian government that it should maintain UNPROFOR on the ground, even if that meant sacrificing Srebrenica and Zepa to salvage Sarajevo and Central Bosnia. The US could enforce its commitment to securing Sarajevo and Central Bosnia with NATO air power under a single key. To avoid UNPROFOR withdrawal, the United States should press for a political settlement within the year. If diplomatic efforts failed, withdrawing UNPROFOR this year would be preferable “rather than having to implement a messy and protracted NATO withdrawal operation in the middle of the election campaign, when the parties will have an even greater incentive to embarrass us or draw us into the conflict.”

The Principals were split in their thoughts on Lake’s strategy paper. Albright favored the proposal, but the representatives from State and the Department of Defense—Christopher, Perry, and Shalikashvili—were worried about further American entanglement. President Clinton dropped by, noting that “We look weak,” and suggesting that “We have a war by CNN. Our position is unsustainable; it’s killing the U.S. position of strength in the world.” At the conclusion of the meeting, Lake tasked each agency with developing its own strategy paper. Lake recalls that in doing so, he was implicitly saying that “if you don’t have a paper, then you won’t have a position.”

537 “‘Bosnia Endgame Strategy’ contained in ‘Bosnia Strategy,’” July 17, 1995, 1, Special Collection, Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency, Document Number: 5235e80d993294098d51754c, CIA Historical Collections; Sandy Berger, “Bosnia Strategy,” July 20, 1995, Special Collection, Bosnia, Intelligence, and the Clinton Presidency, Document Number: 5235e80d993294098d51754c, CIA Historical Collections.
538 “‘Bosnia Endgame Strategy’ contained in ‘Bosnia Strategy,’” 1.
539 Ibid.
540 Ibid.
541 Ibid.
542 Ibid., 1–2.
546 Interview with Anthony Lake, 53.
The new papers would be presented to the President, and he could choose among them to develop a new strategy. An interagency group was established to track the different proposals. The group would meet nearly every day over the next two weeks. In the meantime, the United States would advocate for the defense of the safe area of Gorazde, using air power if necessary, and the removal of the dual key system.

President Clinton telephoned Chirac on July 19 to discuss the US position in advance of the July 21 London Conference. Now, Clinton was the one staking out the forceful position. Echoing Chirac’s bluster, he informed the French President that “the only thing that has made things better has been a clear and credible threat.” The United States was now prepared to warn the Bosnian Serbs that attacking Sarajevo or Gorazde would result in an air campaign.

And yet, in his conversation with Prime Minister John Major fifteen minutes later, the immediate focus was on the congressional and public pressure in the United States. The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations had discharged the Dole Bosnia Self-Defense Act just one day earlier, on July 18. Clinton discussed his strategy for securing a veto-proof majority with the Prime Minister, then noted the following:

We are being killed in the press. All the papers, not just in Washington and New York, but even the local paper in my hometown of Little Rock are saying “Why won’t the Americans help us defend ourselves.” The whole U.S. press is spinning like that. [...] We have to do more so I can prevail here.

Clinton also worried that though Chirac’s strength was to be commended, he was also “very French; he wants to make the grand gesture.” Perhaps memories of the G-7 meeting earlier that summer had made Clinton fearful of another Chirac embarrassment in London. Major and

548 Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 102.
549 Ibid.
552 Ibid., 2.
553 Ibid., 1.
554 S.21 Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Act of 1995.”
556 Ibid., 2.
557 Ibid.
Clinton agreed that even if defending Gorazde with an air campaign led to the withdrawal of UNPROFOR, the allies needed to take a stand on this safe area. Clinton argued “it is better to go out with a bang than with a whimper; otherwise we go out with our tail between our legs.”

Clinton asked Dole to postpone the vote on his bill until after the London Conference, promising that the London Conference would result in a more robust US response.

**LONDON CONFERENCE**

“We have tended to look down the road too many times over the past 3-4 years and have crossed our fingers like Dickens’ Mr. Micawber, hoping something good would come of it. But like Micawber’s benefactor, nothing turned up. Still we have done what we thought was right.”

*Prime Minister John Major 1995*

In the end, Britain, France, and the United States were able to create a unified front at the London Conference on July 21. The consensus plan included the following: commitment to keep UNPROFOR in Bosnia; resolve to defend Gorazde with NATO air power; the stabilization of Sarajevo; support for humanitarian initiatives; expressed support of the wish for a diplomatic solution; and minimizing dangers to UNPROFOR troops on the ground.

Following the conference, the allies issued an ultimatum warning of an air campaign in retaliation for Serb attacks on Gorazde. Notably, Srebrenica and Sarajevo were not mentioned in the ultimatum, and neither was the safe area of Zepa, which had been under attack. Bosnian President Izetbegovic had in fact pleaded with Clinton to defend Zepa in a phone conversation on July 20. Clinton had responded that they would do what they could. According to an

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558 Ibid., 4–6.
559 Ibid., 6.
560 Power, “*A Problem from Hell:* America and the Age of Genocide, 427.
564 Power, “*A Problem from Hell:* America and the Age of Genocide, 416.
567 Ibid., 2.
official State Department history of the events, the United States did try to extend protection to other safe areas, but they were blocked by British opposition.\textsuperscript{568}

American Ambassador to Croatia, Peter Galbraith, also pleaded with the United States to include Zepa in their sphere of protection in a message sent on July 25 after the London Conference.\textsuperscript{569} In the message, he noted that “many, if not most, of the 5,000 plus military age men” at Srebrenica had been massacred by Bosnian Serbs, and the same fate was likely to meet the people of Zepa if the United States did not extend protection to them.\textsuperscript{570} He ended his message with “Again, it is not too late to prevent a similar tragedy at Zepa […] They should not be abandoned.”\textsuperscript{571}

The same day that Galbraith sent his message, just days after the London Conference, the safe area of Zepa fell.\textsuperscript{572} The North Atlantic Council, NATO’s political committee, would eventually extend protection to all safe areas on August 1, but that would be too late for the approximately 16,000 people of the Zepa safe area.\textsuperscript{573}

In the days immediately following the London Conference, the North Atlantic Council continued to debate the implementation of the London agreements.\textsuperscript{574} The United States had been under the impression that the United States, United Kingdom, and France had all agreed in London to remove the dual key system and instead provide Admiral Leighton Smith, NATO air commander, and General Rupert Smith, UNPROFOR Force Commander in Bosnia, with the authority to launch airstrikes.\textsuperscript{575} Additionally, once the campaign had begun, the NATO

\begin{itemize}
\item Ibid.
\item Ibid., 3.
\item Chollet, “‘Dayton History Project Calendars’ in the Road to Dayton US Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process, May-December 1995.”
\item Daalder, \textit{Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy}, 79; Chollet, “‘Dayton History Project Calendars’ in the Road to Dayton US Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process, May-December 1995.”
\end{itemize}
commander would have sole authority to sustain strikes until the Serbs complied with demands to halt assaults on Gorazde.576

Yet, the North Atlantic Council still had to approve the change in plans, and European allies and the United Nations continued to disagree on the rearrangement of the key system.577 A piece of notepaper contained in Anthony Lake’s papers revealed some of US thinking at the time.578 Stapled to a note entitled, “Perry returning your call,” were the following handwritten messages: “Checked with Chirac. Still important point for them. Agree need to agree. No agree. in London on UN out of game;” and “We should unite; tell BBG that he must delegate the key to Janvier [UNPROFOR commander], and head off unraveling of London decision [underlining in document].”579 Indeed, UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali was particularly averse to giving up his control, though he eventually relented.580

Around this time in late July, Croatian forces launched an offensive against the Serb forces in order to protect the safe area of Bihac.581 The Federation Agreement (or Washington Agreement) of March 1994 had established cooperation between Bosnian Muslims and Croats.582 The Croatian advances were met with significant success, despite warnings by the Americans to hold back in the face of what the Americans perceived to be unlikely odds for victory.583 The Croatian offensive had helped change the balance on the ground by making the Serbs appear

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576 Lake, “Memorandum for the President, ‘Your Meeting with Christopher and Shalikashvili on the London Meeting on Bosnia,’” 1.
Lake, “Memorandum for the President, ‘Your Meeting with Christopher and Shalikashvili on the London Meeting on Bosnia,’” 1.
578 Although the note paper sheets are not dated themselves, they are stapled to a piece of paper dated 07/25/1995:
579 Ibid., 2–3.
weak and thereby lessening the chances of quagmire in the case of increased outside involvement.\textsuperscript{584}

Yet, the Croatian forces were not the only ones making advances in late July. Indeed, Dole’s fight for lifting the arms embargo was also gaining ground, as the Senate version of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Act went up for a vote in the US Senate.

\textbf{CONGRESS ACTS}

On July 26, 1995, one day after the fall of Zepa, the US Senate passed the Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Act in a 69-29 vote.\textsuperscript{585} The legislation was supported by almost all of the Senate Republicans and almost half of the Senate Democrats.\textsuperscript{586} As noted, it called on President Clinton to end the arms embargo of Bosnia and Herzegovina following a request from Bosnia to terminate the embargo and to end the UNPROFOR mission, or following a decision by the United States Security Council to withdraw UNPROFOR.\textsuperscript{587} The legislation further required Clinton to terminate the arms embargo no later than twelve weeks after a withdrawal request by the Bosnian government.\textsuperscript{588} This legislation was binding, “an open challenge to Clinton’s authority.”\textsuperscript{589} As administration officials had feared, the immense bipartisan support for the bill meant that Dole would have enough votes to override a presidential veto.\textsuperscript{590}

Days later, on August 1, the House followed the Senate and passed the bill 298-128.\textsuperscript{591} Republicans comprised 204 of the “Yea” votes; Democrats constituted 103 of the “Nay” votes.\textsuperscript{592} The Act had bipartisan support, but Republicans still made up the majority of support while Democrats made up the majority of dissenters. Marshall Harris, one of the State Department

\textsuperscript{584} Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 438; Ronayne, Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust, 133.
\textsuperscript{587} “S.21 Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Act of 1995.”
\textsuperscript{588} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{589} Woodward, The Choice: How Bill Clinton Won, 265.
\textsuperscript{590} Halberstam, War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals, 302–3; Ronayne, Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust, 132.
\textsuperscript{591} “S.21 Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Act of 1995”; “Final Vote Results for Roll Call 608, Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Act of 1995.”
\textsuperscript{592} “Final Vote Results for Roll Call 608, Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Act of 1995.”
officials who resigned and went on to work for Representative McCloskey, recalls that some Democrats were simply not willing to cross party lines on the Bosnia issue.\textsuperscript{593} Others could have been worried about appearing too concerned with foreign affairs. In fact, McCloskey's focus on Bosnia in the early years of Clinton's first term appears to have hurt him with his reelection campaign.\textsuperscript{594} In November 1994, McCloskey had lost his seat, 51-49.\textsuperscript{595} His opponent had criticized him for his supposed preoccupation with foreign affairs at the expense of the interests of his domestic constituents.\textsuperscript{596} Still, despite the political risks for either defecting from the democratic president or for appearing too focused on foreign affairs, Dole was able to obtain significant support for his legislation.

Dole was also helped in gaining widespread congressional approval by the activities of the Action Council on Peace in the Balkans.\textsuperscript{597} The Council had its origins in the State Department resignations of 1993. With the financial support of George Soros, Marshall Harris and Steve Walker, two of the officials who resigned, alongside Jim Hooper, John Menzies, Aryeh Neier, formerly of Human Rights Watch, and Morton Abramowitz, then president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, had formed the Council in February of 1994.\textsuperscript{598} The Council had lobbied extensively on the Hill in favor of Dole's bill.\textsuperscript{599} Through the Council, many of the resignees who were unable to co-opt senior officials to their causes within government had found a voice through the channel of congressional pressure.

**ENDGAME**

According to the official State Department history of the crisis, congressional approval of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Act had given the interagency initiative to develop strategy papers, first requested on July 17, "a new sense of urgency."\textsuperscript{600} The legislation nearly guaranteed the withdrawal of the UNPROFOR forces on the ground, and therefore, the introduction of US ground forces into Bosnia.\textsuperscript{601} Because Congress would be on recess until

\textsuperscript{593} Interview with Marshall Harris.
\textsuperscript{594} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{595} Ibid.; Power, "A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide", 325.
\textsuperscript{596} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{597} Power, "A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide", 428.
\textsuperscript{598} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{599} Ibid.; Interview with Marshall Harris.
\textsuperscript{601} On the likelihood of withdrawal: Ibid.
September, the administration felt as though they had a brief window in which to act to prevent the consequences of the legislation following the August 1 vote.\textsuperscript{602}

Fortunately, the interagency policy papers from the Department of Defense and the Joint Chiefs, the US Mission to the United Nations, the State Department, and the National Security Council were nearly complete.\textsuperscript{603} The papers were collectively submitted to Clinton on August 5, with discussion scheduled for August 7.\textsuperscript{604}

**Albright’s Paper**

Albright’s paper was sent to Lake on August 3.\textsuperscript{605} It was a revised version of her initial “Elements of a New Strategy” memorandum from that consequential June 21 meeting.\textsuperscript{606} In the paper, she argued that the United States needed to “put Bosnia in a larger political context” and understand that commitment to UNPROFOR’s survival was not in US interests any longer.\textsuperscript{607} Further, the United States should not wait for London and Paris to dictate the timing of UNPROFOR withdrawal.\textsuperscript{608} Clinton and his team needed to take control of events.\textsuperscript{609} Albright surmised, “If we agree that American troops will be in Bosnia sooner or later, why not do it on our terms and on our timetable?”\textsuperscript{610}

The strongly worded memorandum went on to argue that “muddle through” was no longer an option for a Bosnia strategy.\textsuperscript{611} Albright believed that the political consequences could be catastrophic, writing, “I fear Bosnia will overshadow our entire first term.”\textsuperscript{612} NATO and UN credibility had been damaged, as had US standing as a leader in the post-Cold War era.\textsuperscript{613} In addition, US-Islamic relations had deteriorated.\textsuperscript{614} Even Chirac made it into the strategy paper: the Ambassador noted that his remark that “‘there is no leader of the Atlantic Alliance’” had

\begin{footnotes}
\item \textsuperscript{602} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{603} Ibid., 38.
\item \textsuperscript{604} Ibid.; Daalder, *Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy*, 102.
\item \textsuperscript{605} “Memorandum for the National Security Advisor from Ambassador Albright.”
\item \textsuperscript{606} Daalder, *Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy*, 102–3.
\item \textsuperscript{607} “Memorandum for the National Security Advisor from Ambassador Albright,” 1.
\item \textsuperscript{608} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{609} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{610} Ibid., 2.
\item \textsuperscript{611} Ibid., 1.
\item \textsuperscript{612} Ibid., 2.
\item \textsuperscript{613} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{614} Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
been “chilling [her] bones for weeks.”® Regardless of other foreign policy successes, she wrote, the administration would ultimately be judged on how it handled Bosnia."®

Moving forward, the administration should use military pressure, particularly air power, to compel the Serbs into diplomatic negotiations.® If these measures failed, and if UNPROFOR had to be withdrawn, the United States should pursue a version of lift and strike.® Under this scenario, the United States should also offer a small ground force to train the Bosnian forces.® The United States would need to convey to the Bosnian government that US support for this course of action would depend on its promise not to pursue military advances beyond the Contact Group plan and to prevent the influence of radical Islamic groups in Bosnia.®

Albright warned that pursuing the status quo would inevitably lead to US forces on the ground, likely in the spring and summer of 1996, at the height of the presidential campaign for Clinton’s second term.® She added the following:

In addition to the obvious political risks for the Administration, an UNPROFOR withdrawal next year will enable the parties to exploit campaign developments, as they play the candidates off.® Her proposed strategy, on the other hand, allowed the United States “to decide when our commitment to extract UNPROFOR would be operative.”®

Lake Paper
The National Security Council paper was Anthony Lake’s Endgame strategy that he had previously presented and primed Clinton on in the weeks following Albright’s dissent.® The NSC paper likewise predicted that maintaining the status quo would lead to “renewed pressure to withdraw UNPROFOR just as the U.S. election campaign moves into high gear.”® Instead, the United States should vigorously pursue diplomatic negotiations, with the United States in a

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615 Ibid.
616 Ibid.
617 Ibid.
618 Ibid.
619 Ibid., 4–5.
620 Ibid., 6.
621 Ibid., 3.
622 Ibid., 4.
623 Ibid.
leadership role; and in parallel to Albright’s proposal, it should condition its support for Bosnia post UNPROFOR on Bosnian flexibility with the peace settlement, including considering less than fifty-one percent of the territorial distribution.\textsuperscript{626} If these initiatives failed, the United States should let UNPROFOR collapse, allow the Bosnians to defend themselves, and utilize US air power to protect Sarajevo and other safe areas.\textsuperscript{627} The arms embargo should be lifted multilaterally through the UN Security Council, and Milosevic should be given sanctions relief in exchange for Belgrade staying out of the conflict.\textsuperscript{628} They should aim for UNPROFOR withdrawal this year to avoid having to “carry out a messy and protracted NATO withdrawal operation [OPLAN 40104] in the middle of the election campaign, when the parties will have an even greater incentive to embarrass us or try to draw us into the conflict.”\textsuperscript{629}

Although the Elements paper and the Endgame paper were similar in their approaches, Jim O’Brien, a State Department official and Albright assistant, who worked on the Elements strategy, stresses that there was not any coordination between Albright and Lake.\textsuperscript{630} Ivo Daalder mentions in his book that Albright and Lake “met occasionally” after her June 21 dissent, but I do not find additional evidence to support any kind of coordinated effort, and Daalder downplays these sporadic Lake-Albright consultations, arguing that Lake’s plan came primarily from deliberations with his NSC staff.\textsuperscript{631}

**State Department Paper**

State’s paper was still centered on the Steinberg-Frasure plan and advocated for further negotiations with an increased US role.\textsuperscript{632} O’Brien recalls that State policy was highly complex and difficult to sort out, but in the end stressed negotiation.\textsuperscript{633} The favored diplomatic strategy had seven stages: 1) Milosevic agrees to suspension of sanctions and a Security Council

\textsuperscript{626} Ibid., 1–2; “‘Outline of a Modified Contact Group Plan’ contained in ‘Strategy for the Balkan Conflict.’”
\textsuperscript{627} “Strategy for the Balkan Conflict,” 1; 4.
\textsuperscript{628} Ibid., 3; 5.
\textsuperscript{629} Ibid., 3.
\textsuperscript{630} Interview with James O’Brien.
\textsuperscript{631} Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 93–94.
\textsuperscript{633} Interview with James O’Brien.
Resolution is introduced with implementation delayed until sufficient progress is made on the ground and there is “movement toward a negotiated settlement;” 2) Bosnian President Izetbegovic and Milosevic confirm a recognition agreement and support for the Contact Group plan; they also agree to a settlement “with two autonomous entities within a single state in existing borders, respect for Bosnia’s sovereignty, [and] protection of minority rights;” 3) Sarajevo proposes negotiations with Pale based on the Contact Group Plan; parties also agree to a ceasefire and bilateral negotiations; 4) Pale and Sarajevo begin their negotiations in conjunction with the start of the ceasefire; 5) the Security Council institutes the sanctions suspension; 6) Izetbegovic, Milosevic, and Tudjman meet and agree on recognition and a political settlement in Croatia that includes respect for human rights; [7]) bilateral negotiations begin with the ceasefire in place.635

In the case of UNPROFOR withdrawal, the State Department strategy paper noted that the Bosnian government would be unable to defend itself.636 In the event of withdrawal, the United States should therefore offer a sufficient assistance package, including military assets, to assist the Bosnians in defending themselves and to prevent them from seeking support from Islamic states, including Iran and Libya.637

Notably, the State paper did not advocate for the use of US military strikes.638 Indeed, in contrast to the Albright and Lake proposals, the strategy devoted significant attention to limiting US engagement. The paper stressed that “an open-ended commitment has substantial costs” and that the United States should take care to limit the scope of US assistance.639 Limiting measures would include the following: only supporting defensive operations; lifting the embargo multilaterally to “avoid Americanizing the conflict;” and not extending assistance to help Bosnians recover any territory now in Serbian control.640 State argued that this approach would

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635 Ibid., 1–2.
637 Ibid.
640 Ibid.
avoid antagonizing Russia, minimize the financial burden on the United States, reduce the possibility of US casualties, limit the amount of time for which the United States would be responsible for assisting Bosnia, and prevent the spread of the war. 641

**Defense Department Paper**

The Defense Department paper in general advocated for maintaining the status quo on US policy. 642 DOD sought to avoid quagmire and entanglement, as well as a long-term military commitment. 643 According to the official State Department history of these events, DOD’s “top priority” was to avoid a sustained military engagement. 644 They supported a de facto partition of Bosnia in the wake of UNPROFOR withdrawal. 645 The Department of Defense also cited political concerns, arguing that “the Administration’s central problem is to find a policy that will meet American goals and get the support of the American public; not that of the Bosnians.” 646

**Areas of Agreement and Divergence**

Although the papers diverged on several key issues, notably on the use of force, they conveyed agreement in other areas. For instance, in his summary for the President, Anthony Lake pointed out that all agencies agreed that a new push for diplomatic settlement would be required in the coming weeks and that this settlement should be consistent with the principles of the Contact Group plan and a more realistic map. 647 Further, all parties agreed that the United States should take on a leadership role in negotiations. 648 Additionally, everyone understood that if a political agreement could not be reached, UNPROFOR would need to be withdrawn, and the United States would need to fulfill its commitment to assist in the operation. 649 All felt that the Bosnian

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641 Ibid., 3.
644 Ibid.
648 Ibid.
649 Ibid.
government would require some degree of assistance, though the papers diverged on exactly
what kind of assistance the United States should provide. Finally, with the exception of
Albright, all felt that the United States should not deploy ground forces.

Still, the papers diverged in important ways on the specifics of diplomatic negotiations.
Of particular note, Lake pointed out that Madeleine and he were in agreement that serious efforts
should be made to adhere to the Contact Group plan, which consisted of a single state with the
Muslims and Croats in control of approximately half of the territory. Adhering to this plan
would prevent the perception that the United States was rewarding aggression and the possible
damage to US credibility and relations with the Muslim world. State and DOD, however,
favored “a more limited commitment,” arguing that the United States should simply support the
Bosnians in consolidating their current territorial possessions and that doing anything further
would be too costly, risking the alienation of Russia and other allies.

**Decision Point**

On August 7, the foreign policy team—including Lake, Albright, Perry, Deutch, Shalikashvili,
and Tarnoff in place of Christopher—met to review the strategy papers. During the meeting,
each principal in attendance was given an opportunity to defend his or her paper. Although he
was absent from the meeting, Christopher had called the President to convey that he did not
believe that the American public would support US troops in Bosnia and that the allies would not
support lifting the embargo and arming the Bosnian government.

In the end, the President favored Albright’s proposal, as well as elements from Lake’s plan.
He feared, as Albright and Lake had, that if the United States did not manage the crisis
now, it would be faced with the consequences of inaction “during the middle of the

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650 Ibid.
651 Ibid., 2.
652 Ibid.
653 Ibid.
654 Ibid.
657 Ibid., 106.
campaign. In accordance with the details of the NSC proposal, Clinton decided to send Anthony Lake to Europe to inform the allies of the President’s new plan to reach a political settlement within the year. Following Lake’s trip to Europe, the United States would launch “shuttle diplomacy” between the three Balkan capitals of Belgrade, Zagreb, and Sarajevo. Assistant Secretary of State for Europe, Richard Holbrooke, would lead these shuttle missions. Lake departed for Europe on August 9.

On August 11, Clinton put a temporary hold on the pressure from Congress by vetoing Dole’s Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Act. His message to the Senate noted that the Act would “undermine the chances for peace in Bosnia, lead to a wider war, and undercut the authority of the United Nations (U.N.) Security Council.” In the case of a unilateral lift of the embargo, the United States would be forced to partake in what Clinton described as “a costly NATO operation.” The veto would buy Clinton time until the Congress returned from its recess in September. For now at least, they could not respond to his veto.

ENDGAME IN ACTION

In Europe, the allies were receptive to Lake and the proposed new American strategy. On the suggestion of President Clinton, Lake reversed his initial ordering to instead lead with the diplomatic proposal and then detail the military plans. With Clinton’s new ordering, Lake could stress that the purpose of the new strategy was “to bring power to diplomacy.”

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662 Chollet, “‘Dayton History Project Calendars’ in the Road to Dayton US Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process, May-December 1995.”
663 Chollet, “‘Dayton History Project Calendars’ in the Road to Dayton US Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process, May-December 1995.”
666 Ibid.
667 Ibid.
669 Interview with Anthony Lake, 55.
670 Ibid.
Holbrooke took over for Lake on August 14 and began the shuttle diplomacy that week between London, Imotski, Split, Zagreb, Belgrade, Sarajevo, and Ramstein.671 He was joined by General Clark, Colonel Nelson Drew, Bob Frasure, and Joe Kruzel.672 Less than one week into Holbrooke’s shuttle on August 19, three of these men (Frasure, Kruzel, and Drew) died when their armored personnel carrier rolled off the edge of a cliff on Mt. Igman.673 The men were on their way to Sarajevo and had opted to drive through the torrential rain because the Bosnian Serbs said they could not assure their safety if arriving by air.674 Frasure had been an important part of the State Department’s Bosnia policy team, helping to shape the strategy papers of the summer.675 Kruzel was Secretary Perry’s lead on the Balkan region, and Drew had been integral to the NSC’s Endgame strategy.676

Ambassador Nicholas Burns recalls in an interview with this author that the deaths of colleagues serving America in the search for peace in Bosnia further affirmed the administration’s commitment to ending the crisis in these last weeks of August.677 Clinton had held an impromptu meeting when their remains were brought back to the United States, and attendees had voiced the need for the United States to take a leadership role.678 The significant effect of the accident on the administration has also been documented by Richard Holbrooke, Peter Ronayne, Ivo Daalder, and Samantha Power.679 Holbrooke noted in his book that “the loss of three friends on Mt. Igman carried a special weight; the war had, in effect, come home.”680

671 Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, xvi; Chollet, “‘Dayton History Project Calendars’ in the Road to Dayton US Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process, May-December 1995.”
673 Chollet, “‘Dayton History Project Calendars’ in the Road to Dayton US Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process, May-December 1995”; Interview with Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns; Ronayne, Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust, 133; Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 439; Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 116.
674 Interview with Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns; Ronayne, Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust, 133.
676 Ibid.
677 Interview with Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns.
678 Ibid.
679 Holbrooke, To End a War, 362; Ronayne, Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust, 133; Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 439; Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 116.
680 Holbrooke, To End a War, 362.
The opportunity to take on a lead role would come in just under two weeks’ time. The diplomatic team had begun their second round of the shuttle on August 27. The following day, a Serb attack on a Sarajevo marketplace killed thirty-seven and wounded between eighty-five and eighty-eight people. Five mortars had hit the marketplace at 11:10 A.M., while it was busy with shoppers. Holbrooke attempted to contact Washington, but at the end of August, the President, the Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Adviser were all on vacation. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott was available, however, and Holbrooke argued that the United States must now conduct its promised airstrikes. Although Talbott had expressed some concerns, the Department of Defense felt strongly that the United States had to act, and the decision to strike was eventually approved by the President later that evening. Lieutenant General Rupert Smith of UNPROFOR and Admiral Leighton Smith, NATO Allied Forces Southern Europe Commander, had agreed to turn their keys authorizing NATO strikes. NATO Representatives from the US, NATO, and UNPROFOR then worked to ensure that any UN troops in potential danger were moved to prevent a hostage situation. Bombing commenced early on the morning of August 30 in what would become known as Operation Deliberate Force.

For the next three weeks, NATO conducted seven hundred fifty attack missions on fifty-six targets. The bombing campaign—alongside the aforementioned Croatian and Bosnian ground campaign successes—convinced the Bosnian Serbs to enter negotiations to end the conflict. In the end, Operation Deliberate Force required only 3500 sorties over the course of

681 Chollet, “‘Dayton History Project Calendars’ in the Road to Dayton US Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process, May-December 1995.”
682 Power says 88 were wounded: Power, “A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide, 439; Holbrooke, To End a War, 91; Ronayne, Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust, 133; Chollet says 85 were wounded: Chollet, “The Road to Dayton: US Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process, May to December 1995,” 68.
686 Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 130.
687 Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 130.
689 Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 440.
690 Ronayne, Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust, 133–34; Interview with Anthony Lake, 38; Daalder also mentions Milosevic’s role as a negotiator as a third key development: Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America’s Bosnia Policy, 119–27.
eleven days and no American loss of life.692 Peace negotiations would be held in Dayton, Ohio—a location chosen by the United States to facilitate US control of, and influence on, the peace talks.693 The agreement, reached in November of 1995, gave the Serbs forty-nine percent of the land, the Croats twenty-five percent, and the Muslims, the largest ethnic group in Bosnia, twenty-five percent.694 Following the settlement, 60,000 NATO troops, one third of which were American, were deployed to enforce the settlement on the ground.695 The United States had entered Bosnia, but on its own terms.

693 Interview with Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns.
694 Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 440.
695 Chollet and Goldgeier, America Between the Wars: From 11/9 to 9/11, 128.
DISCUSSION

As the previous section detailed, Albright’s dissent, coupled with increasing pressures from congressional legislation and from the embarrassment of Srebrenica and Chirac, had spurred a dramatic change in policy within the United States. The following section will provide a detailed discussion of the role of the three variables in the summer of 1995.

DISSENT

Under the Clinton administration, the dissent came first from Madeleine Albright in her “Elements of a New Strategy” memorandum on June 21, 1995. Her memorandum, highlighting the impending embarrassments for the Clinton administration, had sparked a widespread policy review. More importantly, it had motivated National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, who had frequently drummed his fingers on the table when Albright spoke, to come up with his own strategy.696 In the end, Lake’s secret mission to develop a new plan for Bosnia would produce a strategy highly similar to Albright’s initial plan. Their final August papers would chart the new course for the Clinton administration that ultimately led to the end of the conflict.

In parallel to the Henry Morgenthau Jr. dissent in the Holocaust case, Albright and Lake were inner-circle dissenters in Bosnia. They had the advantage, like Morgenthau, of proximity to the president.697 As National Security Adviser and US Ambassador to the United Nations, they attended all of the top foreign policy team meetings, and they were able to express their views directly to the president.

Also in parallel to the Holocaust case dissent of Morgenthau and the Treasury men, both Lake and Albright used political considerations in making their case for a change in policy. In the Holocaust case, the Treasury dissenters had believed that mounting congressional pressure and a potential scandal at State was their most significant leverage in convincing Roosevelt to change course. Lake similarly had told Clinton “the administration, in terms of foreign policy, would be judged first and foremost on Bosnia.”698 He noted in his strategy paper that without a change in course now, the United States could be facing UNPROFOR withdrawal at the height

697 Ambassador Nicholas Burns mentioned in an interview with this author that proximity to the president is crucial to having influence: Interview with Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns.
of the election. Albright had argued that the Bosnia policy was making Clinton look weak both domestically and internationally. She had warned that a failure in Bosnia could sour the entire first Clinton term, undermine US credibility, and lead to a loss in the 1996 presidential campaign.

Lake, whose dissent followed and was largely based on Albright’s plan, appears to have been motivated to dissent for personal and domestic political reasons. Although he did have a reputation for allowing his conscience to influence his policies—for instance he had previously resigned from the NSC in protest of Nixon’s decision to deploy troops to Cambodia—most evidence suggests that moral considerations did not affect his policy decisions on Bosnia. Indeed, the preponderance of evidence, particularly the timing of when he began his secret strategy meetings, suggests that it was Albright’s initial intervention for a change in policy that motivated Lake to act in the summer of 1995.

In addition to wanting to meet Albright’s initiative with his own, Lake also sought to dampen the domestic political pressures on the administration. He recalls that “We were getting killed on the Hill for almost everything, and we were getting it on Bosnia and I decided I just had to push more.” As mentioned, his strategy paper also focused on the domestic political consequences for not taking action.

Contradicting this evidence to some extent is another comment made by Lake in which he points out that although larger strategic considerations, such as NATO, were “part of the policy view of it all,” he “was mostly pushed by reactions to the people dying.” He added that “it [policy] is always a mix of the two [humanitarian and strategic].” There is little additional corroborating evidence, however, to demonstrate that Lake was motivated by moral considerations in this case.

On the other hand, Albright, like Morgenthau and the others at Treasury, appears to have been motivated by humanitarian considerations. Albright had “lobbied relentlessly” for action,

699 “Strategy for the Balkan Conflict,” 1; 3.
701 “Memorandum for the National Security Advisor from Ambassador Albright,” 2–3.
703 Interview with Anthony Lake, 30.
704 Ibid., 43.
705 Ibid.
using powerful words in public, such as extermination. In her own words, she recalls that Bosnia “looked like some pictures out of World War II. I couldn’t believe that this was happening.” She remembers feeling that “there was not enough happening on Bosnia [...] I went to the Principals meetings and it did not seem to me that we were where we should have been.” Initially, Albright had not learned how to present her thoughts in a manner that Lake would not dismiss as being too emotional, which, Albright notes, “is the best way to put a woman down.”

Yet, moral and humanitarian considerations were not the only factors on Albright’s mind during the crisis in Bosnia. Akin to members of Bush’s foreign policy team, Albright’s ideas were also shaped by her beliefs concerning America’s role in the world. Albright believed that the United States should generally be engaged globally:

[The United States was not there during Munich. The British, German, French, and Italians made a deal over the heads of the Czechoslovaks and the country was dismembered. Then the U.S.—I lived in London during the war—came into the war and everything changed. [...] We have so much power and we should use it.]

Her colleagues often did not take her or her suggestions on Bosnia seriously. As mentioned, the environment in Washington had eventually persuaded Albright to participate in several meetings electronically from New York, instead of being there in Washington. David Halberstam has previously written on the treatment of Albright among the foreign policy team:

Whether the limits imposed on Albright came from the innate sexism of the men around Clinton or whether, as some of them like to say off the record, they did not think she was up to their level intellectually, they acted as if she had been inflicted on them by an unnamed but nonetheless very real government affirmative action committee.

Yet, just as Roosevelt listened to his Jewish friend Henry Morgenthau in a time of heightened anti-Semitism, Clinton seems to have been the one high-level figure receptive to Albright. We do not find any evidence to suggest that President Clinton in anyway undervalued his UN Ambassador—the sole woman on the Principals Committee. Indeed, in the debates leading up

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706 Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 326.
707 Interview with Madeleine K. Albright, 63.
708 Ibid., 26–27.
709 Ibid., 27.
710 Ibid., 64.
712 Ibid.
713 Interview with Madeleine K. Albright, 26.
to the change in policy, he frequently pointed out that he liked her suggestions. Albright has written that “Where others were sometimes dismissive, [Clinton] was uniformly attentive and heard me out.” 714 She “got more respect from the President than [she] did from most members of the foreign policy team.” 715

Albright’s outsider-insider status (an insider in rank and access; an outsider in identity) may have contributed to her dissent. Although this dissertation does not theorize dissenter motivation across cases, prior research gives us some reason to believe that an individual who possesses these characteristics is more likely to speak up. For instance, Alexander George (1980) has written that highly cohesive groups often do not perform well precisely because group members seek to avoid interpersonal strife. 716 Members fear that they will become isolated if they disagree or dissent. 717 They worry that they might lose their status as valued group members. 718 Albright, like Morgenthau, already held outsider status among her peers within the inner-circle decision-making group. She did not need to fear losing access to this social circle because the circle itself never accepted her. And yet, she, like Morgenthau, had insider status with the president.

CONGRESS AND POLITICAL LIABILITY

The congressional pressure and the political liability variable merit concurrent discussion given that congressional pressure in part influenced political liability in this case and that events, including Srebrenica, which served to embarrass the administration also influenced the values on both congressional pressure and political liability.

In the summer of 1995, congressional pressure rose to its highest point during the Clinton administration. 719 Dole’s Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Act was gaining ground, and the National Security Adviser was warning him that he might not be able to sustain a veto. 720 European leaders had threatened to withdraw UNPROFOR in the event of American lift of the arms embargo, and Clinton had already committed to deploying US ground forces for a UN

714 Albright, Madam Secretary, 191.
715 Ibid.
716 George, Presidential Decisionmaking in Foreign Policy, 89; 95.
717 Ibid., 91.
718 Ibid.
719 Power, “A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide, 422.
withdrawal—an operation that his administration thought would be unpopular at home and would make the United States appear weak.\footnote{Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America's Bosnia Policy, xiii; “CIA Post-Meeting Memorandum for the Record, ‘Principals Committee Meeting on “Yugoslavia,”’ 3 February 1993,” 1.} Srebrenica further amplified congressional pressure and embarrassed the administration. The event also allowed Chirac to once again appear as the strongest Western leader. With UNPROFOR deteriorating, Congress poised to move, and the 1996 presidential election on the horizon, Clinton's political liability variable was firmly in the positive direction. Inaction at this juncture would lead to significant political consequences. He had a short window in August before the Congress returned from recess, and he acted.

Scholars and officials from the time have also cited elements of this confluence of political factors in describing the summer of 1995. For instance, David Halberstam names Srebrenica, Congress, and Chirac as important pressures on the administration that summer.\footnote{Halberstam, War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals, 302–5.} Ivo Daalder likewise argues that the collapse of UNPROFOR, OPLAN 40104, and congressional pressure were components of several factors leading to a change in policy.\footnote{Daalder, Getting to Dayton: The Making of America's Bosnia Policy, 163.} Jim O'Brien, an Albright aide, argued in an interview with this author that the failure of the UN mission and the likely need to withdraw the force, plus the horrific crimes in Srebrenica, were all critical factors contributing to a policy change in the summer of 1995.\footnote{Interview with James O'Brien.} Samantha Power likewise points to foreign and domestic pressures during that summer, noting that congressional pressure reached its highest point in the Dole arms embargo vote, while also citing the effects of pressure from the media, public, and activist communities and the embarrassment caused by more vocal European leadership.\footnote{Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 422–23.} Writer David Rieff recounts that it was only after Dole’s legislation, supported in the wake of Srebrenica, that the administration “began to act energetically.”\footnote{David Rieff, Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 256–57.} Thus, the importance provided here to political considerations and Congress is consistent with several accounts from officials serving at the time and from journalists and historians writing about the events.

My specific theoretical argument is that the political pressures faced by Clinton came through primarily two channels: the congressional pressure variable and the political liability variable. The congressional pressure variable was high in the summer of 1995 because Congress
had taken action to pass legislation to change policy. Political liability was positive because of
five specific causes: Srebrenica; Chirac; OPLAN 40104; the deterioration of UNPROFOR; and
the consequences of congressional legislation.

The pressure from Congress was particularly troublesome to the Clinton administration.
As mentioned, the administration feared that passage of the legislation would result in the
withdrawal of UNPROFOR and the consequent deployment of US ground troops. Clinton had
been fighting the legislation, hoping to defeat it and later vetoing the bill during the summer
recess in an attempt to buy time for his new strategy. Still, the Self-Defense Act passed that
summer with bipartisan support, 69-29 in the Senate and 298-128 in the House. Senator Dole
had secured a veto proof majority.

Congress acted in this case, despite the likely withdrawal of UNPROFOR and the
insertion of US ground forces. Clinton’s June 14 comment to Jacques Chirac that “This new
Congress is the most isolationist Congress since the 1930s” turned out to be somewhat
misguided. The Congress was in fact willing to take action that the Clinton administration had
said would lead to the insertion of US ground troops.

Several factors—Srebrenica, OPLAN 40104, the deterioration of UNPROFOR, and
Chirac—either amplified congressional pressure or contributed to movement on the political
liability variable toward a positive value (costs for inaction). Anthony Lake has noted the
following:

Sure, we got Dayton because of our brilliance and because we are the greatest diplomats
in the history of mankind and got our act together blah, blah blah. That’s all in quotes, if
you read some of the memoirs. But the real reason is, I think, that yes, we did push, and
I’m proud of it and by 1995 got Dayton, but that without Srebrenica, and without
[Jacques] Chirac, who did play a role in changing European opinion, and without the
coming of winter that they could see looming before them—

Lake was cut off by the interviewer but the implication from the text and additional commentary
is that without Chirac and Srebrenica, Dayton would have been less likely. These political
embarrassments for the administration were simply crucial to Clinton’s decision to change

728 “S.21 Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Act of 1995”; “Final Vote Results for Roll Call 608, Bosnia and
Herzegovina Self-Defense Act of 1995.”
729 “Memorandum of Conversation, Bilateral Meeting with President Jacques Chirac of France, June 14, 1995, 2:45
P.M.-3:37 P.M.,” 3.
730 Interview with Anthony Lake, 37.
course. With the 1996 election looming, Clinton was liable to suffer politically if he did not develop an adequate response to the conflict and avoid the embarrassment of UN withdrawal with American troops on the ground.

Srebrenica was the largest massacre in Europe since the Holocaust.\(^{731}\) It was a key event pushing Clinton's political liability variable toward a positive value.\(^{732}\) As detailed extensively above, the massacre served to embarrass the UN, NATO, and the United States. It provided motivation and support to Dole's advocacy efforts for his legislation to lift the embargo.\(^{733}\) Ambassador Nicholas Burns, who often accompanied Secretary Christopher to meetings, noted in an interview with this author that Srebrenica had contributed to an overwhelming sense of collective shame within the government.\(^{734}\) The United States and NATO appeared weak.\(^{735}\) As discussed, the media reaction was intense, describing Clinton's humiliations and praising the presidential candidacy of Dole.\(^{736}\)

The perceived weakness of President Clinton was exacerbated by the apparent strength of Chirac. Chirac had dominated the international press conferences.\(^{737}\) He had argued that the free world lacked a leader in what was rightly interpreted as an insult to President Clinton's handling of the Bosnia issue.\(^{738}\) Soderberg had believed that it was Chirac that triggered the angriest outburst of Clinton's entire administration, on that putting green in mid-July.\(^{739}\) For forty-five minutes Clinton talked not mainly about the atrocities in Bosnia, but about how his team had failed to give him appropriate options, how he was being hurt personally by the failure of his administration to show effective leadership on the Bosnia issue. Although the horrific events at Srebrenica may have been on his mind and may have contributed to his frustration, he voiced

\(^{731}\) Power, "A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide, 392; Ronayne, Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust, 131.

\(^{732}\) Ibid.

\(^{733}\) Power, "A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide, 425; Rieff, Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West, 256-57.

\(^{734}\) Interview with Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns.

\(^{735}\) Ibid.


\(^{738}\) I was unable to locate a copy of Chirac's speech, but the speech is quoted in: Halberstam, War in a Time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals, 305; Nathan, Soldiers, Statecraft, and History: Coercive Diplomacy and International Order, 164.

\(^{739}\) Interview with Nancy Soderberg, 55.
concerns about his own reputation, and members of his staff believed that this outburst was driven by humiliation and Chirac’s commanding presence on the international stage.

Amid the crises of Srebrenica and the embarrassment caused by Chirac’s needling, UNPROFOR continued to deteriorate, making Clinton’s promise to assist in a UN withdrawal through OPLAN 40104 increasingly likely. By the spring of 1995, the likelihood of a failed UNPROFOR mission was clear. As then Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor John Shattuck noted in an interview with this author, the administration knew that US ground forces would be in Bosnia one way or another. American ground forces would either be used in a humiliating evacuation of a failed UN operation, or US power could be used on US terms, in a mission to stop the violence by air, and later, to keep the peace following a settlement. Secretary Christopher had warned Clinton that OPLAN 40104 would represent failure, not success, and that it would likely spark criticism from Congress and the public.

Indeed, the administration anticipated widespread opposition to the use of US ground troops, and their insertion without a peace settlement would likely amplify American concerns. Clinton’s ratings had in fact plummeted after he had publicly mentioned the possibility of American ground troops being used to evacuate or strengthen UN forces. If American troops were going to be in Bosnia no matter what, deploying US ground forces to evacuate a failed UN force at the height of the presidential election was worse politically than an air campaign to reach a settlement. As George Stephanopoulos, former White House Director of Communications and Clinton adviser, recalls, “Bombing polled well; ground troops didn’t.”

Importantly, the administration had only a short window to act before it would be forced into the UNPROFOR withdrawal scenario. In the summer of 1995, Albright and Lake had both argued that unless the United States acted soon, UNPROFOR would likely be withdrawn with US ground forces at the height of the presidential campaign. By early August, given the overwhelming support of Dole’s Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Act, Clinton had only a

740 Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 422.
741 Interview with John Shattuck.
743 Morris, Behind the Oval Office: Winning the Presidency in the Nineties, 252–53.
744 As Lundestad argues, “Washington now decided that if it could be facing a serious risk anyway, it was better to do this for some constructive purpose.” Lundestad, The United States and Western Europe Since 1945, 252.
745 Stephanopoulos, All Too Human: A Political Education, 381.
short interval to prevent UNPROFOR’s withdrawal. Congress was on recess in August, allowing
Clinton to veto the legislation on August 11 without an immediate response. The administration
was buying time to implement a strategy before Clinton’s hand was forced by others.747 George
Stephanopoulos recounts the following in his memoir:

Senator Dole’s resolution to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia was about to pass the
Congress by a large margin; Clinton could sustain a veto and avoid a political defeat only
by forcing a peace in Bosnia now.748

Even pollster Dick Morris, Clinton’s personal political barometer, had changed his mind in 1995:
it was time for increased US engagement.749 He writes that Bosnia had become “a metaphor for
[Clinton’s] weakness in America’s mind.”750 The Clinton administration kept Morris’s role on
foreign policy quiet, but Morris and Stephanopoulos confirm that he had significant influence
with Clinton, meeting in private and never in the presence of a third party.751 Indeed,
Stephanopoulos remembers receiving a memorandum in July with a page and a half missing; the
removed section was Dick Morris’s recommendation to bomb the Serbs.752 By June of 1995,
Stephanopoulos argues, Dick Morris was in practice the White House chief of staff.753

In this environment, as National Security Adviser Anthony Lake has commented,
“clearly the President was more and more concerned with what this was doing to the
administration’s political image on foreign policy issues.”754 Marshall Harris commented to this
author that Clinton’s team was not thinking about national security interests in formulating its
policy.755 They were instead motivated by political self-interest.756 They wanted to keep the issue
out of the media.757 Harris notes that, in the end, the administration did the minimum necessary
to stop the fighting, and they had allowed the Serbs to keep an enormous amount of territory.758

748 Stephanopoulos, All Too Human: A Political Education, 383.
749 Morris, Behind the Oval Office: Winning the Presidency in the Nineties, 254–55; Power, “A Problem from Hell:”
America and the Age of Genocide, 437; Interview with Anthony Lake, 53.
750 Morris, Behind the Oval Office: Winning the Presidency in the Nineties, 252; Power, “A Problem from Hell:”
America and the Age of Genocide, 437.
751 Stephanopoulos, All Too Human: A Political Education, 380; Morris, Behind the Oval Office: Winning the
Presidency in the Nineties, 249.
752 Stephanopoulos, All Too Human: A Political Education, 380.
753 Ibid., 381.
754 Interview with Anthony Lake, 53.
755 Interview with Marshall Harris.
756 Ibid.
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758 Ibid.
To conclude, the political liability variable in the summer of 1995 was decidedly positive and congressional pressure was high. Clinton was facing political costs for continued inaction stemming from a variety of sources including Srebrenica, Jacques Chirac, OPLAN 40104, UNPROFOR's weakness, and the consequences of congressional action on the arms embargo. His advisers, including a personal political guru, were warning him of the costs for continued inaction. When the Clinton administration assumed power in 1993, they had focused on humanitarian aid delivery, deferring to European preferences and not taking actions that would have made an impact on the fighting itself. Policies to stop the fighting would only occur when they became a political necessity.
CONCLUDING COMMENTS

In summary, the Clinton administration’s policies toward Bosnia are consistent with the theoretical framework outlined in this dissertation. For the beginning years of Clinton’s first term, the administration largely continued the policies of its predecessor, focusing on humanitarian aid delivery and engaging in only sporadic and circumspect measures to address the killing. During this early period, congressional pressure was medium and political liability was negative. Dissent among the inner circle was muted by the focus on achieving consensus and to some degree by Colin Powell’s dominance in early discussions. During the early years, dissent did thrive at the lower levels of the administration, but these junior officials were unable to convince a senior member of the administration to channel their views to President Clinton. Crucially, the three variables did not all reach the threshold for a significant change in policy.

In 1995, however, the values on the three variables would reach the necessary levels for a change in policy. Congressional pressure peaked in Dole’s legislation to unilaterally lift the arms embargo. The political liability variable shifted from costs for action to costs for inaction, as Clinton faced embarrassment from Chirac, criticism in the aftermath of Srebrenica, and the prospect of deploying American ground forces at the height of the 1996 election. That summer, Madeleine Albright made a forceful dissent for a policy change, which sparked a widespread policy review and culminated in Clinton’s decision to launch Operation Deliberate Force.

In several ways, the Bosnia case for the Clinton administration mirrors the Holocaust case under President Roosevelt. Both cases witnessed ineffective and sporadic measures in the early years of the crisis, but both presidents eventually changed course dramatically when congressional attitudes shifted, when they anticipated political costs for continued inaction, and when a member of their inner circle dissented. Operation Deliberate Force, like the War Refugee Board, came too late for many of victims of the atrocities. Nevertheless, their origins demonstrate that consistently, whether the year is 1944 or 1995, political concerns, congressional pressure, and dissent are responsible for changing US policy on mass killing.
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CHAPTER 5: GENOCIDE IN RWANDA 1994

"[Clinton] used his presidency to do something about genocide. He deployed NATO to stop genocide, and yet, there it is, Rwanda. What can anybody say?" ¹

Strobe Talbott 2002

INTRODUCTION

The crisis in Bosnia was not the only case of mass killing confronting the Clinton administration in its first term. In fact, amid the frustrations of Bosnia, in the spring of 1994, the Hutu-led government of Rwanda launched a genocidal campaign against moderate Hutus and Tutsi civilians. The killing took place over the course of one hundred days, from early April until mid-July, with approximately 500,000 to 800,000 people murdered by the end of the genocide. ² The Clinton administration’s lack of responsiveness to this genocide has been thoroughly documented by Samantha Power, Alison Des Forges, Michael Barnett, Linda Melvern, former UN Force Commander in Rwanda, Roméo Dallaire, and others. ³ This chapter will attempt to explain why the US response was limited, with a particular focus on the three key variables that I argue are primarily responsible for shaping US policy: the level at which dissent occurs within the government; the value (positive or negative) on political liability; and the degree of congressional pressure.

I will argue that the available evidence suggests that low and negative values on the three key factors, in addition to the speed at which the genocide was occurring, led to policy stagnancy. In the Rwanda case, senior officials were preoccupied with other crises, and though some lower level officials had favored a more robust response, they did not channel these views effectively to the senior officials, and no one in the inner circle was advocating for significant

US engagement. The political liability variable was negative (costs for action) with the recent deaths of American soldiers in Somalia, the limited press coverage of Rwanda, and the administration’s attention focused on other crises, such as Bosnia and Haiti. Finally, the congressional pressure variable was low, with members of Congress expressing anti-peacekeeping sentiments at this period in time and opposing actions that could lead to a repeat of US failures in Somalia. In this environment, the United States did not mount a comprehensive response while the genocide was ongoing from April until mid-July.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, I summarize what my theory would predict in the case of Rwanda and detail the data constraints for this case. Second, I provide a brief overview of the history of Rwanda, the progression of the genocide, and the environment in the immediate aftermath of April 6, 1994, when the genocide began. Third, I detail the US policy response to the genocide in Rwanda. Because the policy of the United States has received extensive study, by government officials, human rights organizations, journalists, and scholars, this section will provide a summary overview of US policy, with further detail provided where there has been disagreement in the historical record and where newly released documents suggest a revising of the history. The fourth section will be devoted to the interpretation of US policy. This section details several components of the case: the intelligence available to the United States at the time; the roles of the dissent variable, the political liability variable, and the congressional pressure variable; and how the speed of the atrocities influenced values on all three variables. The chapter concludes with a summary of the main arguments.

***RWANDA CASE: THEORY AND METHODS NOTES***

I argue that high or positive values on inner-circle dissent, on congressional pressure, and on political liability (costs for inaction) are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for the United States to shift from limited measures toward a significant intensification of responsiveness. Because the Rwandan case does not exhibit significant movement toward more robust measures, this case study must argue persuasively that inner-circle dissent, high congressional pressure, and costs for inaction were not present during the Rwandan genocide.

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For the theory to be supported by the case, congressional pressure must have been low, political liability must have been neutral or negative (costs for action), and dissent must not have occurred among the inner circle. Evidence of a lack of advocacy within the executive branch, of Congress ignoring the crisis or advocating for restraint, and of likely political consequences to President Clinton for engaging further in Rwanda would support my theory. My theory would be undermined by evidence of trusted advisers pushing for a more intensive response during the atrocities, evidence of members of Congress passing legislation and resolutions for a more robust response, and evidence of President Clinton perceiving costs to his legacy or political agenda for inaction.

The case of Rwanda presents some data limitations. Although the Clinton Presidential Library has released some documentation relevant to Rwanda, many materials remain redacted or withdrawn. Further compounding the data limitations for this case is the fact that Rwanda simply was not discussed as extensively as other crises, including Bosnia. For instance, Anthony Lake’s papers at the Library of Congress reveal little about Rwanda because Lake appears to have been more consumed with other issues at this time. Chronicles of the Clinton administration, including Woodward’s *The Choice*, Drew’s *On the Edge*, Morris’s *Behind the Oval Office*, and Stephanopoulos’s *All Too Human*, devote considerable attention to Bosnia but do not even contain the word “Rwanda” in the index.5

Finally, it is important to note that my analysis of US policy concerns the time period from the start of the mass killing campaign on April 6, 1994, to the conclusion of the genocide in mid-July. The Rwandan Genocide is often referred to as a genocide of 100 days, placing the end date on July 15, 1994.6

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ORIGINS OF GENOCIDE

The Rwandan Genocide, which began in April of 1994, had its roots in a long history of changing power arrangements among Rwandan ethnic groups. Prior to Rwanda's independence, the Tutsi ethnic group, comprising only fifteen percent of the population, dominated the elite power positions in the country. After Rwanda obtained independence from Belgium in 1962, this power dynamic reversed itself with the Hutus, who made up the majority of the population, now wielding power over the Tutsi minority group. This post-colonial era of Hutu dominance witnessed discrimination against the Tutsi as well as ethnic cleansing. In 1990, the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), comprised of mainly Tutsis, launched a military campaign against Rwanda from the Ugandan border area. In 1993, peace talks resulted in the Arusha Accords, which led to a power-sharing agreement between Hutu and Tutsis and resulted in the deployment of United Nations (UN) peacekeepers as part of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR). More specifically, the Accords provided for a Hutu and Tutsi transitional government, multiparty elections in 1995, and the integration of the Rwandan Patriotic Front into a reduced military force.

Yet any progress toward peace vanished on April 6, 1994, when two missiles fired from just outside of the Kigali airport struck the airplane carrying Rwandan President Juvenal Habyarimana, a Hutu, and Burundian President Cyprien Ntaryamira, killing both. National Security Council documentation concluded that "The air crash that killed the Rwandan and Burundian Presidents was probably an assassination conducted by Hutu military hardliners." President Habyarimana had been a supporter of the reconciliation process in Rwanda, but Hutu hardliners within Rwanda were opposed the Arusha peace process. The Hutu Presidential

8 Ibid.; Des Forges, "Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda, 35.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.; Des Forges, "Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda, 49.
15 "The Rwandan Patriotic Front Offensive--Developments and [Omitted]," 1.
16 Ibid.
Guard, in particular, was angry about Tutsi participation in the military. Habyarimana's support for a process toward reconciliation ultimately cost him his life.

In the aftermath of the crash, hardline Hutu elements—the National Police, the Presidential Guard, paracommando and reconnaissance battalions—began systematic killings of Tutsis and moderate Hutus. Killings were “not spontaneous,” according to multiple US intelligence sources, “but [were] directed by high-level officials within the interim government.” The army had begun “genocide [...] to destroy the leadership of the Tutsi community.” Politicians, civilians, and militia would also join the efforts to slaughter Tutsi. Within days of the start of the genocide, 20,000 people were dead. Among the early casualties were ten Belgian soldiers and six Belgian civilians. The soldiers were killed by the Presidential Guard while they were attempting to protect the Prime Minister of Rwanda. The bodies of the soldiers were in such poor condition that Rwandans were hesitant to return them. In the early

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17 Ibid.
20 Ibid.
21 Des Forges, “Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda, 224; 226-231.
22 Ibid., 201; For an account of early days, see: Dallaire, Shake Hands with the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda, 221–62.
days of the crisis, Belgian women had also been raped and Belgian civilians and other foreigners, including French citizens, were under threat of further violence.²⁶

Just two days after the plane crash, the Rwandan Patriotic Front launched its own offensive in order to reinforce its battalion in the capital city of Kigali.²⁷ The mostly Tutsi force had not initially sought to operate alone.²⁸ Indeed, on April 9, the RPF had suggested a joint intervention force to halt the genocide, consisting of troops from UNAMIR, the RPF, and the Rwanda Government Forces (RGF), but the proposal was rejected by UNAMIR and the Rwandan army.²⁹ Operating alone, the RPF made rapid advances from their position in the northern region of the country, and by April 12, the force had taken most of the Mutara province and established a foothold in Kigali.³⁰ US intelligence indicated that civilians residing within territory captured by the RPF were spared from the genocide.³¹ Indeed, National Security Adviser Anthony Lake recalls mentioning to then National Security Council (NSC) staffer Susan Rice that “I think the best solution is for the patriotic front […] just to win.”³² Supporting the RPF, however, was not a practical official US policy, according to Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Prudence Bushnell.³³ By April 21 and April 27, about three weeks into the genocide, the RPF had respectively captured the province of Byumba in the northern region and Kibungo in the southeast.³⁴

²⁹Des Forges, “Leave None to Tell the Story:” Genocide in Rwanda, 697.
³⁴Des Forges, “Leave None to Tell the Story:” Genocide in Rwanda, 693.
Thus, immediately following the plane crash on April 6, the international community and the United States were faced with escalating massacres against Tutsis and moderate Hutus, the horrific slaughter of Belgian peacekeepers and assaults on civilians, and an offensive by the RPF that was gaining territory quickly in the first weeks following the start of the crisis. The Arusha Accords had crumbled, and UN forces and US citizens were on the ground, potentially in danger amid the escalating violence between the RPF and Rwandan government—parties with a history of violence and animosity. The situation would also appear ominously familiar to Clinton administration officials. On April 6, when the crisis in Rwanda began, the US military presence in another African country, Somalia, had just concluded. Clinton had vowed to withdraw all American forces from the country by March 31, 1994, following an October 1993 firefight that had resulted in the worst American military losses since the Vietnam War. US forces had been in Somalia in what had started as a humanitarian operation to deliver food aid, but had transformed into a mission to reestablish order in a country suffering from civil strife.
POLICY RESPONSE SUMMARY

During the genocide in Rwanda, the United States did not shift course to pursue increased American engagement in the crisis. The dependent variable was thus policy stagnancy with limited measures pursued. US policy during the crisis was largely that of ignore, not mustering significant resources into a response of any kind, with some minor deviations to humanitarian, diplomatic, and condemnation efforts. The following summary of the US policy response begins with a commentary on the rejection of intervention as a viable US policy. I then proceed mostly chronologically to detail US actions in the immediate aftermath of the crisis, the controversial period at the United Nations from mid-to late April, and US policy from late April until the end of the crisis.

INTERVENTION REJECTED

Multiple former administration officials confirm in separate interviews that a United States intervention policy was not seriously considered and that, as National Security Adviser Anthony Lake recalls, “nobody was for it.”38 Nancy Soderberg, who served as Deputy Assistant to the President for National Security, notes that “Nobody was saying ‘We have to go in and stop the genocide’—nobody.”39 Donald Steinberg, Senior Director for African Affairs on the National Security Council, likewise remembers that the question never came up.40 Former Secretary of Defense William Perry argues that “I can say for a fact that there was no serious consideration at that time of sending American troops to Rwanda.”41 As Michael Sheehan, former aide to UN Ambassador Madeleine Albright, recalls, “having remembered very clearly, there was no one within the United States political spectrum in that period that was calling for an American-led

39 Interview with Nancy Soderberg, 59.
40 Interview with Donald Steinberg.
intervention—no one in the Congress, no one in the executive branch, no one in the military, no one in the press." Documentary evidence further shows that, in the immediate aftermath of the plane crash, the United States even rejected German, French, and Belgian requests for help evacuating their citizens, noting that "we do not intend to introduce American forces into Rwanda."

Other scholars have examined the hypothetical scenario in which the United States had in fact seriously considered military options to determine if intervention could have been pursued successfully. Alan Kuperman analyzes the feasibility of three possible interventions: (1) a maximum military intervention throughout Rwanda, which he argues would have stopped the genocide between May 15 and May 25, required 15,000 troops, and saved 125,000 Tutsi lives; (2) a moderate intervention in areas free from the civil war, which he argues would have stopped the genocide by May 11, required 6,000 personnel, and saved 200,000 Tutsi; (3) and a minimal intervention, which he argues would have used airpower to coerce and intimidate perpetrators or provide safe passage, closed in theater on May 4, and saved approximately 75,000 Tutsi. In contrast to Kuperman's analysis, a 1998 Carnegie Commission Report concluded that 5,000 troops could have stopped the genocide if deployed between April 7 and April 21. Additionally, Alison Des Forges argued for the likely success of a decapitation mission in a lecture at the Harvard Kennedy School on October 14, 1998, asserting that it was in fact possible to kill or capture the leaders responsible for the genocide in the first week of the atrocities.

In the case of Rwanda, however, given that intervention was not considered as a possible response and that President Clinton did not in fact change course, the feasibility of military intervention has little bearing on the theoretical analysis. The relationship of feasibility to the theory advanced in this dissertation is outlined in detail in the theory chapter. In short, feasibility matters to the theory when the evidence suggests that more robust options are considered and

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42 Interview, Michael Sheehan (September 30 and October 1, 2003).
44 Kuperman, The Limits of Humanitarian Intervention: Genocide in Rwanda, 64–77.
46 Taylor Seybolt cites the following Des Forges talk. I have not been able to find a transcript of the Des Forges talk: Taylor Seybolt, “Could Genocide Have Been Stopped in Rwanda?” (MIT SSP Seminars, March 17, 1999), http://web.mit.edu/ssp/seminars/wed_archives99spring/seybolt.html.
ruled out because they are infeasible and when the feasibility of robust options increases at the same time that the president decides to pursue these options. The Rwandan case meets neither condition. Thus, although it is useful to think about what could have been done had intervention been considered within the United States government, the theory advanced here and the narrative focuses on options that were in fact seriously considered and on the historical events as they unfolded. In the Rwandan case, the evidence suggests that a shift toward more robust measures was not considered at all, options for increased responsiveness were not seriously reviewed, and the president never favored a policy change. Thus, in this case, the feasibility of options, including but not limited to military intervention, does not have bearing on the central theoretical question: why did the Clinton administration lack the so-called will to consider a shift toward increased responsiveness?

**Early April: Evacuation**

In the immediate aftermath of the plane crash, officials within the Clinton administration were intently focused on the evacuation of US citizens on the ground in Rwanda, with some attention diverted to locating Rwandan human rights activist Monique Mujawamariya. One of the first actions taken by the State Department was to establish a twenty-four-hour Rwanda Monitoring Group, directed by Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs Prudence Bushnell, on April 7. Creating such a taskforce was routine procedure. The Director of the National Security Archive, Tom Blanton, argues that State Department cables and logs of the Group demonstrate that eighty percent of the discussion concerned evacuating citizens. Bushnell’s notebooks, as reviewed by this author, are also mainly focused on the evacuation in the immediate aftermath of

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50 Blanton refers to “the taskforce group.” He presumably means the Rwanda Monitoring Group.

the plane crash. Indeed, on April 11, a memorandum for the Undersecretary of Defense by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Middle East, Africa recorded that “Because of the fluidity of the situation and the obvious requirement to focus on the NEO [noncombatant evacuation operation], State has not yet begun to look at its next steps re: U.S. Policy toward Rwanda and will not do so for a few days.” Bushnell has since commented that the focus on the evacuation was consistent with the duties of the US government, noting that “The first obligation of a government is to its citizens.” In the early days, the United States evacuated 258 Americans through a convoy to Burundi. By April 10, the American Embassy in Kigali was closed. Talking points prepared on April 14, note that the evacuation of Americans was complete and that the Clinton administration did not “anticipate a direct role for our troops in this effort [restoring peace].”

**MID-APRIL TO LATE APRIL: UNAMIR WITHDRAWAL**

From the outset of the crisis, the United Nations and the United States were involved in discussions about the withdrawal of UNAMIR troops. UN and US action during this period in mid-April has been a subject of controversy and debate: conventional understanding prior to 2015 attributed US support for UNAMIR reduction to a Belgian request for political cover for its withdrawal plans; yet, following the release of declassified government documents in the spring of 2015, the National Security Archive, and others, have asserted that the reduction was driven

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56 Ibid.
58 Interview with John Shattuck, interview by Amanda J. Rothschild, July 14, 2015.
by the United States.\footnote{For a summary of the debate, see: “1994 Rwanda Pullout Driven by Clinton White House, UN Equivocation,” April 16, 2015, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 511, National Security Archive, http://nsarchive.gwu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB511/; Colum Lynch, “Genocide Under Our Watch,” \textit{Foreign Policy}, April 16, 2015, http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/04/16/genocide-under-our-watch-rwanda-susan-rice-richard-clarke/.} I argue that the newly released documents indeed provide increased historical evidence that presents a more complete picture of policymaking during this early period. However, I claim that this more complete picture is highly complex, and hesitancy to bolster UNAMIR was shared by multiple parties, including the United Nations, Belgium, France, and the United States. While initial discussions in the immediate aftermath of the crisis were amenable to reinforcing UNAMIR, concerns about the ability of UN troops to execute a protective mission, the RPF’s opposition to foreign meddling, and the Belgian government’s decision to withdraw their troops ultimately led to a decision to reduce the UN presence in Rwanda.

At the very beginning of the crisis, in the first two days after the plane crash, Belgium was willing to consider an enlarged mandate for UNAMIR. The Belgian government, whose soldiers had been killed at the start of the crisis, in fact favored reinforcing UNAMIR with better equipment and weaponry.\footnote{“WGRW01: Belgian Council of Ministers Meets: Decides on Evacuation of Kigali for Air; Ask for US Support,” 1.} The Belgians were unwilling to provide further troops if UNAMIR were expanded, but the Belgian government communicated that it would “continue fulfilling its obligations towards the UN and will not withdraw its men from UNAMIR.”\footnote{Ibid., 2.} As of April 8, Belgium also favored altering UNAMIR’s mandate to allow for the protection of Rwandans.\footnote{“Claes Asks SYG for Change in UNAMIR Mandate; Asks for USG Views and Support,” April 8, 1994, 1–2, National Security Council, National Security Advisor, and Anthony Lake, “Declassified documents concerning Rwanda,” Clinton Digital Library, 2011-0268-M, William J. Clinton Presidential Library, http://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/47967.} At this point, United Nations officials had not yet considered evacuating UNAMIR and had informed Ambassador Albright that a request for an evacuation would need to be submitted by the UN Force Commander, Roméo Dallaire.\footnote{“UN’s Evacuation Plans For, and Statement to Security Council On, Rwanda,” April 8, 1994, 1, National Security Council, Staff Director, and Nancy Soderberg, “Declassified Documents concerning Rwanda,” Clinton Digital Library, 2011-0266-M, William J. Clinton Presidential Library, http://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/36617.} Prudence Bushnell had scribbled in her notebook around this time: “Sec Gen of UN open to idea of enlarging mandate.”\footnote{Bushnell and Willard, “Transcription of Notebook #3 of Prudence Bushnell, April 6, 1994-May 15, 1994,” 23.}
Yet, despite any perceived UN openness to invigorating UNAMIR on the part of Bushnell, UN officials were already expressing hesitancy about such a move, fearing for the safety of UN troops on the ground. Albright reported on April 8 that UN officials “are quite hesitant about expanding UNAMIR’s mandate from a Chapter VI to a Chapter VII, fearing that [...] UNAMIR does not have the capability on the ground to take aggressive measures [...] it does not have the ability to break through the roadblocks scattered throughout the city to reach foreign nationals [...] UNAMIR can only protect them if they are able to reach UNAMIR compounds.”65 UN officials were reporting that UNAMIR was not able to secure Kigali, to secure the weapons of warring parties, to provide surveillance, to secure the airport, or to protect members of the UN and expatriate community.66 UN officials also communicated that evacuating UNAMIR civilian staff would require sending two to three additional battalions to Rwanda.67 On April 10, the Rwanda Monitoring Group had logged that “UNAMIR can’t even resupply its forces.”68 The forces furthermore did not have “sufficient reserves in water, rations, fuel, ammunition, medical supplies, and so on to exist in a prolonged conflict scenario,” with some basic supplies likely to last just days.69

Ultimately, these concerns about the quality and effectiveness of the UN forces led the United States and Belgium to advocate for reducing the UN presence in Rwanda. The United States was concerned that the ill-equipped troops would not be able to defend themselves or anyone else, and thus could accomplish little in the way of protecting Rwandans and needed to be removed for their own protection.70 Jim Steinberg recalls that “there was a serious risk that

69 “SITREP on Rwanda from UNAMIR HQ,” 2.
any UN force, other than a massive one, would have also been subject to great violence.”71 As George Moose, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, recalls, no one could offer assurance that UN troops would not suffer the same fate as the murdered Belgian peacekeepers, a fact that “changed the entire calculation about what kind of situation we were in.”72

The threat to the UN peacekeepers was compounded by the RPF’s opposition to a foreign presence in Rwanda. Shortly after its initial request for a joint intervention at the very beginning of the crisis, the RPF communicated that foreign troops evacuating civilians who remained in Rwanda “longer than absolutely necessary for evacuation” would be considered hostile.73 The RPF was now “totally opposed to any change in the UNAMIR mandate which would involve it in a combat role. Any intervention by UNAMIR (or otherwise) in RPF movements would result in the forces being considered as hostile.”74 On April 10, Secretary of State Warren Christopher relayed the RPF’s position to several embassies, to the National Security Council, and to Joint Staff.75

By April 11, the United States had learned that the UN leadership and Force Commander on the ground intended to evacuate UNAMIR in order to protect the poorly equipped troops. The US Mission to the United Nations was reporting that “The UN is planning to pull out the UN peacekeeping force [...] the French are beginning to pull their force out.”76 A National Security Council document provided further details: “Apparently, the Commander on the ground says that the troops should be pulled out, as he is hard-pressed to see how his troops can support a mission that no longer exists. We will need to work out our position on this soon.”77 Indeed, a senior UN official had privately informed the United States, France, and Belgium that the Secretary-General had concluded that the poorly equipped 2500-strong UNAMIR force, having suffered sixteen

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73 “WGRWOL: UN SYG Letter to SC; RPF Threats; SC Informals; Provisional Govt Formed,” 3–4.
74 Ibid., 4.
77 Steinberg, “Rwanda - Update (11:00 A.M.),” 1.
deaths already, “must be evacuated unless there is an effective cease-fire. *It probably will continue to be attacked if it remains in Kigali after the evacuation* [their emphasis].” The document also noted that “*Neither Paris nor Brussels wants to be drawn into Rwanda’s civil war, and they probably will withdraw their troops as soon as the evacuation is complete* [their emphasis].” Notably, the French claimed that they were, however, hoping for a ceasefire, as “UNAMIR’s presence provided a degree of stability.”

Key decision makers within the United States shared the pessimism of UN officials. On April 9, Richard Clarke, a senior member of the National Security Council, had argued, “We make a lot of noise about terminating UN forces that aren’t working. Well, few could be as clearly not working. We should work with the Fre[nch] to gain a consensus to terminate the UN mission.” Albright likewise asserted that the United States might want to seize a window of opportunity to evacuate UNAMIR during the “relative calm” after the first week of the crisis when the airport was still under French and Belgian control, writing the following on April 12:

> [T]his might be a window of relative opportunity to evacuate UNAMIR forces; There is a real possibility that it might become more difficult to evacuate UNAMIR once the French and the Belgians leave. In this respect, it is worth considering taking the lead in the Security Council to authorize the evacuation of the bulk of UNAMIR, while leaving behind a skeletal staff that might be able to facilitate a cease-fire and any future political negotiations.

Around this time, the 12th of April, the Belgian government requested US support if they questioned the future of UNAMIR. US documentation recorded that the Belgians “[did] not want to be the sole voice in the UN questioning UNAMIR.” US officials also documented that the Belgians began “canvassing UN Representatives in New York seeking their support for

83 “Rwanda Monitoring Group,” 68; 69-70.
84 Ibid., 68.
Belgium to withdraw its forces from UNAMIR.” 85 Belgian leaders had told the United States that Rwanda was an increasingly important domestic issue in Belgium and that although the UN Secretary-General was completing a report recommending UNAMIR termination, the Secretary-General had nevertheless told the Belgian government that it needed to explicitly request termination, thus “putting the onus on the Belgians.” 86 George Moose, Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, argues that in light of what happened to American troops in Somalia, he favored supporting the Belgians fully and was counseling Secretary Warren Christopher to do so. 87

By April 12 and 13, the United States was directly pushing for UNAMIR withdrawal at the United Nations. On the afternoon of April 12, Assistant Secretary Doug Bennet had met with several assistant secretaries, including George Moose, and together they decided that the US Mission to the United Nations should communicate to the Secretary-General that “the US would support his recommendation that UNAMIR withdraw from Rwanda.” 88 Warren Christopher would relay to Boutros-Ghali that the United States strongly favored UNAMIR termination and withdrawal and that support for this course was not limited to the Belgians. 89 Talking points preparing Christopher for the phone conversation with Boutros-Ghali stressed that UNAMIR was unable to fulfill its mandate and that responsibility for withdrawal should not fall solely on the Belgian government. 90 During a peacekeeping core group meeting on April 13, the principals decided that the United States would introduce a draft resolution “calling for the complete withdrawal of UNAMIR and UNOMOR.” 91 Yet, at this juncture, the US Mission to the United

85 Ibid., 69-70.
87 Interview, George Moose.
88 “Rwanda Monitoring Group,” 70; George Moose may have expressed some reluctance about terminating UNAMIR. Prudence Bushnell’s notebook records that an unidentified “GW” or “GM” warned against termination. The National Security Archive was unable to confirm who this “GW” or “GM” referred to. They note that it could have been George Moose or an abbreviation for the Interagency Working Group (IWG) or an abbreviation for Genocide Watch: Bushnell and Willard, “Transcription of Notebook #3 of Prudence Bushnell, April 6, 1994-May 15, 1994,” 53.
90 Ibid., 2.
Nations still believed that the United States would not have sufficient votes on the Security Council to terminate the mission.92

On April 13, Boutros-Ghali informed the President of the Security Council that the Belgians would be withdrawing their UNAMIR contingent and that in light of Belgian withdrawal, “it is my assessment that it will be extremely difficult for UNAMIR to carry out its tasks effectively. The continued discharge by UNAMIR of its mandate will become untenable unless the Belgian contingent is replaced.”93 David Scheffer, an adviser to Albright at the time, recalls that this letter was one of two documents (the other being an RPF letter of April 30) that had a significant influence on US policy.94 It “provided a foundation for a very skeptical view of UNAMIR expansion by the Pentagon.”95

Yet, UN leadership subsequently stressed that they were not recommending the complete withdrawal of UNAMIR and proposed three options for the future of the UN force: first, UNAMIR, without the Belgian contingent, would relocate outside of the demilitarized zone and the warring Rwandan parties would be given three weeks to reach a ceasefire or UNAMIR would withdraw; second, the parties would be given five days to agree to a ceasefire or UNAMIR forces would be withdrawn; if a ceasefire were reached, the United Nations would maintain a political presence of 150 men to facilitate negotiations; third, the parties would have

three weeks to reach a settlement before UNAMIR was reduced to the 150-men political force.\textsuperscript{96} The Security Council would make a decision on the three options by April 15.\textsuperscript{97} In the meantime, on April 14, the Belgian Cabinet thanked the United States for its support, and requested that moving forward, the United States promote an “Angola Solution:” the withdrawal of all troops, but with “a commitment for a UN involvement in Rwanda.”\textsuperscript{98}

During the April 15 discussions on the future of UNAMIR, the United States initially planned to advocate for full withdrawal. Albright received instructions to convey this preference, and during informal Security Council discussions on the morning of April 15, the United States indeed argued for total withdrawal.\textsuperscript{99} Yet, Albright would soon recognize that the United States was, in her words, “on the wrong side of the issue.”\textsuperscript{100} She phoned Richard Clarke at the White House and asked for more flexibility.\textsuperscript{101} Albright recalls that she “actually screamed into the phone” that her instructions had to be changed.\textsuperscript{102} Michael Sheehan, an Albright aide, likewise remembers that he “never saw Ambassador Albright so angry.”\textsuperscript{103}

In the end, the United States would advocate for a plan proposed by the United Kingdom. The ambassadors from the United States, Nigeria, France, and the UK had met informally in between Security Council sessions and decided to support the UK plan, which consisted of “an immediate drawdown of troops” to approximately 250-300 military personnel.\textsuperscript{104} The Non-Aligned Members, however, opposed this proposal and instead argued for the Secretary-

\textsuperscript{97} Ibid., 2.
\textsuperscript{98} “Rwanda Monitoring Group,” 75–76.
\textsuperscript{100} Albright, Madam Secretary, 150; Interview, Madeleine Albright.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{102} Interview, Madeleine Albright.
\textsuperscript{103} Interview, Michael Sheehan (September 30 and October 1, 2003).
General’s plan to maintain UNAMIR’s presence for several weeks. Spain and China likewise favored maintaining UNAMIR in Rwanda, with China highlighting the fact that the largest contributors to UNAMIR, Ghana and Bangladesh, did not have plans to remove their troops. Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping, Iqbal Riza, argued that UNAMIR troops were presently “not under immediate threat” and that “the airport [was] relatively secure and quiet.” Further, the Secretariat worried that a speedy withdrawal would “place the forces in jeopardy.” Riza argued that achieving a ceasefire was necessary to ensuring a safe withdrawal. Force Commander Dallaire agreed, arguing that a hurried withdrawal would not be “feasible, advisable, or wise.” In the end, the Security Council decided to postpone a decision.

On April 20, five days later, Albright would meet with the Secretary-General to discuss US preferences regarding the future of UNAMIR. She stressed that the United States was particularly concerned about the safety of UN troops currently in Rwanda. Boutros-Ghali argued that the United Nations might be able to “defuse tensions” and maintain peace if the parties agreed to a ceasefire. Albright reported back that the Secretary “would like to give the operation in Rwanda one last try.” If the withdrawal were to occur, he would feel responsible for fifty thousand additional deaths likely to follow.

That same day the Secretary-General provided the Security Council with a second set of three options: first, a significant reinforcement of UNAMIR with several thousand additional troops to ensure that forces could impose a ceasefire, restore order, and halt the massacres; second, reducing the troops to 270 with a mandate to work toward a ceasefire and ensure

106 “Security Council at Impasse on UNAMIR’s Future,” 3.
107 Ibid., 2.
108 Ibid., 1.
109 Ibid., 3.
110 Ibid., 2.
113 Albright, “SYG Reluctant to Withdraw from Rwanda,” 2.
114 Ibid.
115 Ibid.
116 Note that on April 17, Force Commander Dallaire had asked UN headquarters for 5,000 well-equipped troops and a mandate for expansive rules of engagement: John Shattuck, Freedom on Fire: Human Rights Wars and America’s Response (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 324.
humanitarian relief as feasible; third, complete withdrawal of UNAMIR. Albright argues that only the second of the three options was seriously considered by the Security Council. However, Colin Keating, who was then President of the United Nations Security Council, has suggested that the second option received the most traction because the 270 troop number was the only figure acceptable to the United States. On April 21, the Security Council approved the second option to withdraw troops to 270 personnel through Resolution 912; in the end, about 450-540 troops remained in Rwanda to provide security for relief workers and the displaced.

In between April 15 and April 21, the potential consequences of withdrawal and the severity of the massacres were brought directly to the administration’s attention by an NSC staffer and by Monique Mujawamariya, the Rwandan human rights activist whom the administration had been striving to locate in those early days. An NSC human rights specialist, Eric Schwartz, had written an email to Donald Steinberg and Rice on April 19, stating that he had just been informed by Human Rights Watch that 25,000 Rwandans were under UNAMIR protection, and if UNAMIR were to be reduced, these civilians would surely be massacred. Schwartz inquired if anyone could confirm this information, noting that if it were true, “shouldn’t it be a major factor informing high-level decision-making on this issue? Has it been?” Schwartz raised the issue again on April 20, writing “let me raise again the issue I

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118 Albright, Madam Secretary, 151.
124 Ibid.
raised in yesterday’s [e]mail—Human Rights Watch’s concern that withdrawal of UNAMIR now will lead to the slaughter of many thousands of Rwandans.”125 He argued that if they did not examine the issue, the visit of human rights activist Monique Mujawamariya “could turn into more of an embarrassment than an opportunity.”126 It is not clear what if any effect Schwartz’s inquiry had on the administration.

On April 20 and 21, Mujawamariya, who had met Clinton on Human Rights Day in December of 1993, had returned to Washington with other human rights activists, Holly Burkhalter and Alison Des Forges, to speak with leaders about the ongoing crisis in Rwanda.127 Anthony Lake recalls that the group did not ask for military intervention, but rather urged the United States to publicize the names of those responsible for the killings, which Lake subsequently did.128 This account is also confirmed by Des Forges.129 During the meeting, Anthony Lake reportedly told the advocates that they needed to “make more noise,” increase public interest, if they wanted to change US policy.130

To summarize, in the period leading up to the reduction in UN forces, the United Nations, the United States, and others doubted the capability of the UNAMIR forces on the ground to defend themselves, to complete basic tasks, and to defend anyone else. With the slaughter of Belgian soldiers and civilians in the early days of the crisis, and the fresh memories of Somalia, decision makers focused on removing peacekeepers unable to make a difference in the crisis and likely in danger of violence and death themselves. Given this mindset, the only other option during this period would have been to reinforce the troops on the ground to allow them to provide for their own defense and then explore their capability to save others’ lives, but for much of this period, such a course was not seriously considered. The options discussed on April 15 all entailed withdrawing UNAMIR if a ceasefire were not achieved. Two of the three options

126 Ibid.
128 Interview, Anthony Lake.
discussed on the 20th of April likewise involved a significant reduction in UN troops. The Security Council would eventually approve a plan originating in a group discussion with the United Kingdom, United States, Nigeria, and France. During this period, US officials were cognizant of the likely consequences of withdrawal for Rwandan civilians, but their fears for the safety of UN forces and their doubts about the efficacy of a force facing opposition from warring parties in a civil war led them to support withdrawal.

**Late April to Mid-July: US vs. UN Haggling, Limited Efforts**

**Summary**

From late April to the end of the genocide in mid-July, the United States continued to engage in negotiations at the United Nations over the future of UNAMIR while conducting limited private diplomatic, punishing, public condemnation, and humanitarian efforts. Following Resolution 912 of April 21 to reduce UNAMIR, the UN had suggested a proposal to reinsert troops into Kigali for a reinvigorated peacekeeping force. However, the United States did not believe that the mission could be effective and instead proposed the creation of safe havens along the Burundian border. The United States and the United Nations debated the issue for several weeks until May 17, when the Security Council approved a compromise plan for the reinforcement of UNAMIR in UN Security Council Resolution 918. And yet, following Resolution 918, bureaucratic and logistical issues prevented the immediate deployment of the force. In June, the French would launch their own humanitarian mission to establish safe zones while Rwanda waited on UN forces. This French action in late June, in combination with rapid RPF military gains, made the prospect of peace negotiations less likely and the future of UNAMIR less consequential. The genocide would come to an end on July 15, 1994, and the RPF would declare a unilateral ceasefire on the 20th.

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PART I: US VS. UN

Shortly after Resolution 912 of April 21 reduced the UNAMIR force, Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali requested on April 29 that the Security Council reevaluate its decision.\(^{133}\) Under the 912 mandate, the forces on the ground did not have the authority to stop the killings, and Boutros-Ghali wanted the Security Council to examine whether or not they should be given permission to stop the atrocities.\(^{134}\) At this stage, with the situation on the ground deteriorating and estimates indicating that approximately 200,000 people had already died, the Secretary-General had in fact considered removing the remaining UNAMIR troops in Rwanda to avoid the inevitable humiliation and criticism.\(^{135}\) Yet, the Secretary-General was spared from resorting to total withdrawal, as his call for reevaluation of UNAMIR was answered by two proposals: one from the United Nations Force Commander on the ground in Rwanda and the other from the United States.\(^{136}\)

The United Nations proposal, suggested by General Dallaire, entailed a Kigali-based operation.\(^{137}\) UN officials had argued that the Rwandans at most risk were 14,000 individuals currently under UN protection in Kigali.\(^{138}\) Forces involved in this mission, numbering approximately 5,000 to 8,000 troops, would thus be deployed into the capital city of Kigali, regardless of whether or not a ceasefire were in place, and subsequently assume responsibility for securing the airport, facilitating a ceasefire agreement, ensuring humanitarian aid delivery, and dispersing throughout Rwanda to create safe havens where populations were in danger.\(^{139}\) Troops would have the authority to use force only in cases of self-defense.\(^{140}\)


\(^{134}\) Hannay, “Rwanda [Secretary-General Deeply Concerned], Cable 1563,” 2–3.

\(^{135}\) Ibid., 1.


\(^{137}\) Ibid.


\(^{140}\) Albright, Madam Secretary, 152; Burkhalter, “The Question of Genocide,” 50.
The United States objected to this proposal, arguing that the Kigali-based operation placed UN peacekeeping troops in an insecure environment without the ability to accomplish their mission. The United States was worried about “basing a humanitarian operation in Kigali while a civil war and heavy fighting are raging in and around that city.” A Kigali-based operation would require obtaining control of the capital city, establishing communication lines, and sustaining the ability for mobility across the battlefield, all of which the United States argued was “beyond the likely capability” of the UN forces. Staging an operation out of an airport at the center of a civil war would be particularly problematic. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) had noted that the Kigali airport “has repeatedly been closed [...] by mortar fire.”

Further, senior US officials believed that a Kigali-based mission would necessitate a Chapter VII mandate, in light of the Rwandan government’s “lack of command and control over renegade army units and extremist militias.” The United States questioned why the United Nations was insisting that the operation would not be peace enforcement mission while at the same time acknowledging that a ceasefire would not be in place. In the words of Sean Darragh, Director for Global Issues and Multilateral Affairs for the National Security Council, Dallaire’s plan appeared “like a PK [Peacekeeping] operation under a non-PKO guise.” The CIA had determined that Dallaire’s proposal would “almost certainly be viewed in Rwanda as a pro-Tutsi operation,” meaning that the peacekeeping force would be faced with opposition from Hutu

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146 Ibid., 2.
militias directed by the Rwandan government and military. The CIA also stressed that “The Rwanda military and Hutu militias have already demonstrated that they will not hesitate to kill UN forces who stand in their way.” Further worrying US officials was the fact that, as of May 13, the Secretary-General’s Kigali-based mission met only three of nine conditions required for mission approval by the Security Council. Outstanding conditions included the following: a ceasefire in place; a commitment to the peace process on the part of the parties; defined political goals reflected in the force mandate; a well-defined mandate; and a budget and available resources for the operation. Additionally, internal US analysis had determined that in the absence of a ceasefire, a Chapter VII operation to pacify the entire country would require approximately 30,000 troops.

In addition to fearing likely opposition from Hutu government and militia forces, the United States also worried about opposition from those on the other side of the civil war: the RPF. In a letter on April 30, RPF representatives argued that they were “categorically opposed to the proposed U.N. intervention force and will not under any circumstance cooperate.” The letter stated that “The time for U.N. intervention is long past. The genocide is almost completed.

149 Ibid.; “Threats to Peacekeeping Forces” contained in ‘Rwanda PKO,’” 2; An analysis conducted in late June, 1994 conflicts somewhat with these earlier analyses. A June 20 US intelligence document would determine the following: “The lightly armed Rwandan factions have little capability to stand up to the French militarily.” The difference may be explained in the fact that the earlier analyses were analyzing UN forces, likely to be made up of African troops, and not the military of a powerful European state: “France-Rwanda: Possibility of Intervention,” June 20, 1994, 3, National Security Council et al., “Declassified Documents concerning Rwanda,” Clinton Digital Library, 2014-0295-M, William J. Clinton Presidential Library, http://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/36636.
152 It is not clear from which agency this analysis originated.
Most of the potential victims of the regime have either been killed or have since fled.”155 They argued that United Nations should instead focus on the humanitarian crisis.156 In the minds of the RPF, the proposed UN intervention was a “deliberate attempt to manipulate the U.N. process and machinery to protect and support the murderers who constitute the provisional government.”157 As George Moose summarized, the RPF was worried that “the practical effect of inserting a force into Rwanda would be to get in their way and, at the same time, not to be in a position to afford any meaningful assistance to the people who were being slaughtered.”158 The RPF did express a willingness to accept a combination United Nations-Organization of African Unity (OAU) intervention to protect refugees, but it nevertheless emphasized opposition to any international presence in Kigali and to any force that might aid the perpetrators of the genocide.159 The RPF believed that a ceasefire would only intensify the genocide and asserted that an end to the massacres had to precede any peace agreement.160

Evidence suggests that the RPF’s specific opposition to an intervention force in Kigali made a significant difference in US thinking on options for a reinforced UNAMIR.161 The RPF’s April 30 letter of opposition to the UN proposal was the second of two documents that David Scheffer, an Albright adviser, cited as having a disproportionate impact on US policy (the other being the April 13 Secretary-General letter noting Belgium’s decision to withdraw troops).162

155 Ibid.; For more on RPF stated opposition, see: “Rwanda: SC Wants Protection for Displaced Persons,” 2.
157 Ibid.
158 Interview, George Moose.
161 In addition to David Scheffer’s references below, Donald Steinberg had also discussed the fact that the civil war made the United States intent on having a permissive environment: Interview with Donald Steinberg.
According to David Scheffer, the RPF letter "provided a basis for cynical remarks at the policy table which do not always come through in the published documents."¹⁶³ Michael Sheehan, also an Albright aide, has noted that the RPF’s opposition was "crucial to our decision-making regarding whether a force would go in and whether it would go into Kigali."¹⁶⁴ If a military presence had to be inserted into the capital city of Kigali, it would need to be "a very heavy force."¹⁶⁵ Alison Des Forges has argued that it is "quite borne out by the evidence" that the RPF’s opposition to an intervention stalled Security Council discussions.¹⁶⁶

Thus, instead of pursuing the risky Kigali-based operation, for all of the reasons cited above, the United States instead proposed that an intervention force be deployed to the border region with Burundi in order to create safe zones along the border area.¹⁶⁷ In contrast to UN officials, the United States had concluded that the refugees in most danger were in this border region. Evidence of this belief can be found in a document noting that refugees near the border in Burundi were "in most immediate danger."¹⁶⁸ Likewise, a handwritten note by Susan Rice records, "Area in South, around Burundi=greatest area of need."¹⁶⁹ Prudence Bushnell similarly scribbled in her notebook around May 11, "Interagency met & agreed greatest need in South."¹⁷⁰ The South had the additional benefit of being home primarily to Hutu militia and not the better trained Rwandan army.¹⁷¹ Under the US plan, the UN force would not travel throughout Rwanda to bring refugees into the secure zone, but troops would be allowed to "use all means necessary"

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¹⁶⁴ Interview, Michael Sheehan (September 30 and October 1, 2003).
¹⁶⁵ Ibid.
¹⁶⁶ Interview, Alison des Forges.
¹⁶⁸ "Rwanda: Proposed Concept for UN Force," 1; On Dallaire’s position: Melvern, A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda’s Genocide, 199.
to defend themselves, the refugees, and the camps. Such an operation would also avoid inserting the force into the capital city, which the United States regarded as the “epicenter of the civil war.” A force based in neighboring countries would be acceptable to both parties in the Rwandan crisis, and was thus not as likely to encounter resistance. The plan assumed that the RPF and Rwandan military would agree to the intervention, and suggested that the UN deploy 6,000-6,500 troops per 100,000 refugees.

Although US officials judged that their plan had several advantages over the UN proposal, the US mission would still pose “a real danger to the troops involved,” who would need to “be equipped, capable and have the clear authority for conducting what could likely be an active protection operation requiring the use of lethal force.” The Joint Staff believed that safe havens on the Burundi border would be “right in the path of renegade Hutu forces that might be pursued by the RPF.” If Burundi were to destabilize, the peacekeeping mission would be “in the middle (land-locked and without air-evacuation options) between two civil wars.” Further, the Office of Management and Budget opposed all peacekeeping options in Rwanda, believing that other options should be explored and objecting to Vice President Al Gore’s discussions about the US proposal with the UN Secretary-General, the OAU Secretary-General, and the Tanzanian President.

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172 “Rwanda: Proposed Concept for UN Force,” 2.
174 “Rwanda: Requests for Immediate Assistance,” 1–2; “Rwanda: Proposed Concept for UN Force,” 2.
178 Harvin, “Rwanda Interagency Telecon,” 2.
179 “Vice President Meeting with UN SECGEN, OAU, SECGEN and Tanzanian President on Rwanda,” 1; Rice, “Memorandum for Ernest J. Wilson III, ‘Rwanda Talking Points,’” 2.
On May 13 and 15, instructions were relayed to Albright asking her to share the details of US plans with the Security Council and UN Secretariat. A vote in the Security Council on the UN proposal was delayed to allow for consideration of the US plan. Richard Clarke wrote to Sandy Berger, Deputy National Security Adviser, that the delay was motivated by two perceived problems: first, the Clinton administration was required by law to inform Congress five days in advance of a UN Security Council vote; second, US officials were concerned that the UN option, "a Somalia-styled operation," had consensus support over the US plan at the Security Council. According to a May 13 memorandum, US officials were also engaged in reviewing a third, new option for a Kigali-based humanitarian mission developed by US officials at the United Nations and described by them as being "a discrete, viable, humanitarian mission with an exit strategy [...] that better meets the conditions formulated by the [Security Council] and [Presidential Decision Directive 25] for approving an operation." Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD-25), which was released on May 3, issued new terms for US involvement in UN peacekeeping operations following US failures in Somalia. Despite the newness of the directive, there is significant evidence beyond the May 13 memorandum suggesting that the criteria set forth in PDD-25 were applied to the discussions about a new UNAMIR force in Rwanda.

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185 "Rwanda Options Paper,” 1–7; "‘Rwanda Options Paper' (with OSD/ Joint Staff Commentary) contained in ‘Memorandum for William H. Itoh, Executive Secretary, National Security Council, "Discussion Paper for the
On May 17, four days after Albright received instructions to advocate for the alternative US plan, the Security Council voted unanimously to approve a compromise between the US and UN proposals.\textsuperscript{186} Following ten hours of debate, and in Albright's words, "machinations and some theatrics," the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 918, which approved the expansion of UNAMIR to 5500 for a phased deployment with a mandate to protect displaced persons and the delivery of humanitarian aid, as well as defend themselves or protected groups when necessary.\textsuperscript{187} New Zealand, the Czech Republic, and Spain were the chief architects of the compromise resolution.\textsuperscript{188}

Although the reinforcement of UNAMIR had the potential to make a difference in the ongoing mass killings in Rwanda, by May 17, most of the genocide victims had already perished.\textsuperscript{189} In the words of John Shattuck, the resolution had come "too late."\textsuperscript{190} Yet, Ambassador Karl Inderfurth, US Representative for Special Political Affairs at the United Nations, argues that the delays in reaching an agreement on UNAMIR's future were necessary. He insisted at the time that the United States "went to extraordinary lengths" during debate on UNAMIR because the United States "wants the United Nations to succeed in Rwanda, and all its peacekeeping operations."\textsuperscript{191} To achieve this goal, they needed "to bring the ends and means of the Council's resolutions into balance."\textsuperscript{192} Additionally, the United States supported the May 3 UN guidelines for evaluating mission viability.\textsuperscript{193} In these remarks, Inderfurth had also suggested


that the United States was interested in a solution to the Rwandan crisis because the “sheer magnitude of the humanitarian disaster […] demand[ed] action.”

Further, these early May deliberations were not in fact the source of the longest delay in reinforcing UNAMIR. Indeed, the half-month discussions in early May pale in comparison to the length of time it took to deploy the force following the May 17 agreement. UNAMIR reinforcements would not reach Rwanda for over a month after the resolution. The OAU had announced in mid-May that it would not put together a force, and African countries were reluctant to offer troops. By May 25, only Ghana, Senegal, and Ethiopia had publicly agreed to offer troops. Internal US analysis had in fact predicted on May 9 that it would be difficult to convince African countries to contribute to a peacekeeping mission in Rwanda:

It is unclear […] how much enthusiasm OAU members remote from the crisis have for participating in a Rwanda operation. […]

Differing interests among Rwanda’s neighbors, together with the depth of animosities between Hutus and Tutsis in both Rwanda and Burundi, will complicate any UN or OAU-led intervention […] Readying African contingents for transport and deployment could prove time-consuming as demonstrated by the experience of moving battalion-sized forces from Tanzania and Uganda to Liberia to assist West African peacekeepers already in place.

Possible troop contributors were also likely hesitant to devote forces to a mission expected to encounter resistance and with lukewarm support from the United States. US analysts continued to warn that the UN force was liable to face opposition from both the RPF and the Rwanda government, as “[e]ach side suspects the UN of supporting the other.” Analysts also believed that the landlocked and mountainous nature of Rwanda made supply lines “highly vulnerable to

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195 Shattuck, Freedom on Fire: Human Rights Wars and America’s Response, 325; Albright, Madam Secretary, 153.
They concluded that in this environment, “Many potential contributors to UNAMIR are likely to remain reluctant to provide troops for the force until they are convinced Washington will take a leading role.” Yet, even when countries had agreed to provide troops, they made what the United States regarded as unreasonable equipment requests, further delaying deployment.

**PART II: DIPLOMATIC, HUMANITARIAN, PUNISHING, AND CONDEMNATION ACTIVITIES**

While the negotiations with the United Nations were ongoing throughout this period, the United States did pursue limited *private diplomatic, punishing, humanitarian,* and *public condemnation* policies in response to the crisis in Rwanda. The United States pursued these policies with the goal of stopping the massacres, reaching a ceasefire agreement, resuming negotiations between the warring parties, containing the violence, and delivering humanitarian relief. During her May 4 testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Committee Subcommittee on Africa, Prudence Bushnell noted that these goals had constituted the US approach “since the crisis began.”

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200 Ibid., 1; 3-4.
201 Ibid., 6.
204 “Testimony of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Prudence Bushnell Before the House Subcommittee on Africa,” 1.
Diplomatic

On the diplomatic front, the United States worked with allies and warring parties to attempt to reach a ceasefire agreement and to communicate that perpetrators of mass killings would be held accountable. The Clinton administration, in conjunction with France and Belgium, worked in particular with countries neighboring Rwanda, including Tanzania and Uganda, to try to negotiate an agreement between the RPF and the Rwandan army and renew the Arusha Accords. Assistant Secretary of State John Shattuck traveled to the region in early May to urge the Organization of African Unity and bordering countries to assist in peace negotiations, to assess whether or not African countries might support an expanded UNAMIR using their troops, to investigate the refugee situation, and to recommend action on the atrocities, such as possible accountability measures. Shattuck’s trip, from May 3 to May 9, was designated as a presidential mission, which gave him high status in arranging meetings with African leaders, including the Secretary-General of the OAU Ahmed Salim. He also visited Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi, and Ethiopia. Shattuck found that regional leaders were willing to contribute to a new peacekeeping mission, but they would need US logistical assistance. Unfortunately, Shattuck lacked authority to commit the United States to providing this support. In fact, throughout the trip, he “didn’t feel very strongly backed by [his]

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207 Interview, John Shattuck; Shattuck, Freedom on Fire: Human Rights Wars and America’s Response, 325.

208 Interview, John Shattuck; Shattuck, Freedom on Fire: Human Rights Wars and America’s Response, 48–49; 325.

209 Interview with John Shattuck; Interview, John Shattuck.

210 Interview with John Shattuck.
government.”  Prudence Bushnell had informed him that the Pentagon and White House were not willing to increase US engagement. On May 3, the first day of Shattuck’s trip, Prudence Bushnell had scribbled the following in her notebook:

    PKO Mtg.
    - JCS & OSD back pedaled-
    Didn’t think they were signing off on “forces” -
    - O-I sent out to Shattuck warning him.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) and Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) opposed “signing up for open-ended missions that could lead to UN troops being in life-threatening situations without proper arms or [rules of engagement].” Shattuck further understood that the United States would support intervention only in a permissive environment, after a ceasefire had been implemented.

Shattuck’s diplomatic mission to the region was largely unsuccessful. After the trip, he did publicly assert that acts of genocide and crimes against humanity were occurring, and he called for a special session of the UN Human Rights Commission to investigate the atrocities, offering support for UN Human Rights High Commissioner Jose Ayala Lasso’s visit to Rwanda. However, on the more consequential matter of obtaining African support for a new UNAMIR force, Shattuck had come up empty. Upon his return, he reported that African leaders would be willing to offer troops for a reinforcement of UNAMIR, but they were not likely to follow through on their commitments in the absence of clear US backing for a new mission.

Yet, Shattuck found that Washington had little interest in his findings or recommendations, as Christopher was “totally preoccupied” with China and the Middle East; Lake and Strobe Talbott were engaged with Haiti; Sandy Berger was beginning to doubt the efficacy of peacekeeping; and Secretary of Defense William Perry and Deputy Secretary Walt Slocombe “adamantly opposed” new UN peacekeeping missions. Further, in the days just

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211 Interview, John Shattuck.
212 Interview with John Shattuck; Interview, John Shattuck.
213 Bushnell and Willard, “Transcription of Notebook #3 of Prudence Bushnell, April 6, 1994-May 15, 1994,” 95; Shattuck confirms that this was the type of warning he received: Interview with John Shattuck.
216 Ibid., 49–50.
217 Interview, John Shattuck; Shattuck, Freedom on Fire: Human Rights Wars and America’s Response, 52.
218 Interview, John Shattuck; Shattuck, Freedom on Fire: Human Rights Wars and America’s Response, 51.
following Shattuck’s return, the United Nations would authorize a different, new mission to Rwanda through Resolution 918.219

In addition to working with allies and regional players to find a solution the crisis, the United States also communicated directly with the leadership of the RPF and the Rwandan government. US preferences for an end to the killings, a ceasefire agreement, and a return to the Arusha Accords were relayed to officials representing the Government of Rwanda and the RPF around the world.220 The United States also reached out directly to Rwandan leaders to urge them to stop the violence, to condemn violence against civilians, and to assure them that they would be held accountable if massacres continued.221

Unfortunately, these diplomatic efforts were also largely ineffective. Diplomatic overtures to the Rwandan government did not result in an end to the massacres, and the RPF, for its part, resented US calls for a ceasefire. Charles Murigande, the Rwandan Patriotic Front’s

219 Shattuck suggests in this interview that the resolution was passed on May 21, but he was likely referring to the May 17 resolution: Interview, John Shattuck.

Washington representative, argues that the United States "did not give us any support whatsoever." When the RPF would argue that it would not agree to a ceasefire until the Rwandan government-sponsored atrocities had ended, the United States simply responded that such a demand—that resuming a war was necessary to stopping violence—was contradictory and that the Rwandan government could likewise assert that the RPF had to stop fighting before a ceasefire.

Punishing

The United States also engaged in several limited punishing measures throughout this period, while rejecting the most robust punishing policies. The May 17 UN Security Council Resolution 918 that expanded the UNAMIR force also implemented an arms embargo on Rwanda and called for an investigation into the massacres, both initiatives favored and supported by the Clinton administration. As previously detailed in the chapter, the United States specifically supported an investigation into the killings by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. US officials seem to have placed a particularly high value on the Commissioner’s inquiries into the crisis. A cable from the Secretary of State’s office on May 1 reveals, “this visit [of international team from the UNHCR] seems to be the most swift and effective means available to deter continuing violence against innocent people.” On June 11, the UN Commission on Human Rights special envoy indeed traveled to the region to investigate the atrocities, and eventually released a report at the end of June indicating that genocide had occurred. However, it is not

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223 Christopher, “Department Tells RPF to Stop the Fighting Now, Cable 104015,” 3–4.
225 Steinberg, “**Urgent for Rice** **Rwanda TPS,” 2; “Testimony of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Prudence Bushnell Before the House Subcommittee on Africa,” 5; “Background on Rwanda Crisis,” 5.
226 “RPF General Kagame Sees UNHCR Team Visit as Fastest Means to End Massacres,” 5.
clear what deterrent effect, if any, this report had on the atrocities, given that most of the victims had already perished by this point and that the RPF was just weeks away from victory.\textsuperscript{228} What is clear is that the arms embargo was not predicted to have a significant effect on the conflict. The Defense Department had indicated as much in early May, noting that the primary weapons used in the atrocities were machetes and knives.\textsuperscript{229}

In addition to these measures, the United States took some limited action to punish the Rwandan government diplomatically, but still stopped short of removing Rwanda from the UN Security Council and continued to recognize the Government of Rwanda for the duration of the crisis. Prudence Bushnell had explained in a May 4 meeting with Des Forges and Mujawamariya that although the United States had denied visas to Washington to members of the Rwandan government, the United States could not prevent them from participating at the United Nations.\textsuperscript{230} Throughout the crisis, Rwanda was thus able to keep its seat on the Security Council.\textsuperscript{231} John Shattuck reports that there was some thought that it might be beneficial for diplomatic negotiations to have Rwandan leaders represented at the United Nations.\textsuperscript{232} The Clinton administration would not cease recognition of the Government of Rwanda until the end of the genocide on July 15, when all Rwandan representatives in Washington were asked to depart the United States within a week.\textsuperscript{233} At this point, all Government of Rwanda financial assets within the United States were also frozen.\textsuperscript{234}

The United States also considered and rejected proposals for more intensive \textit{punishing} actions: economic sanctions and jamming the radio broadcasts. The possibility of economic sanctions was considered and rejected unanimously in a meeting in late April, though it is not

\begin{itemize}
  \item Kuperman, \textit{The Limits of Humanitarian Intervention: Genocide in Rwanda}, 20–21.
  \item Christopher, \textit{“Human Rights Watch Call for Action on Rwanda,”} 3; For more on rejection of Rwandan leaders (Foreign Minister), see: Moose, \textit{“Memorandum for The Acting Secretary, ‘Update on US Response to Crisis in Rwanda,'”} 2.
  \item Ronayne, \textit{Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust}, 180–81; Power, \textit{“A Problem from Hell: ” America and the Age of Genocide}, 369.
  \item Interview with John Shattuck.
  \item Ibid.
\end{itemize}
clear why. An operation to jam the radio broadcasts was rejected “for technical and financial reasons.” On May 4, Anthony Lake had asked Secretary Perry about the possibility of jamming the radio broadcasts. The Department of Defense (DOD) had reported back that “We have looked at options to stop the broadcasts within the Pentagon, discussed them interagency and concluded jamming is an ineffective and expensive mechanism that will not accomplish the objective the NSC Advisor seeks.” Defense cited particular constraints imposed by international law, the mountainous terrain, potential threats to jamming aircraft, and the cost of $8500 per flight hour. The State Department had also questioned the legality of a jamming mission. A handwritten note from Susan Rice in late August suggests that jamming the radio may have also required a ground presence, making such an operation a highly robust punishing action. She recorded, “If we want to knock off, must put USG + people + equip. on ground—either jam or replace by override. No other country has capacity to jam w/in frequency spectrum needed […] relatively easy to do.” In late July, it seems someone was in fact successful in temporarily jamming the broadcasts. An internal email notes that “[redacted] have successfully jammed the radio station” and that the radio station had subsequently been moved to Zaire.

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238 Ibid.

239 Ibid.


Condemnation

The United States did condemn the atrocities publicly during the genocide. The Clinton administration issued several statements that condemned the violence and urged parties to reach a ceasefire and begin peace negotiations. On April 22, Anthony Lake had called on Rwandan military leaders to stop the massacres. The United States also supported the UN Security Council Presidential Statement of April 30, which asked all parties to prevent violence against civilians and warned of possible crimes under international law. That same day, President Clinton issued a one-minute radio broadcast over Voice of America, the British Broadcasting Corporation, Radio France, and Radio Belge, calling on parties to agree to a ceasefire.

In issuing statements on the killings, the United States was reluctant to use the word genocide. Officials appeared to be concerned with the political ramifications of using the word genocide and not acting, even if the Genocide Convention did not require a response under international law. On May 1, a discussion paper on Rwanda noted in relation to possible findings of breaches of the 1948 United Nations Genocide Convention, which requires contracting parties to prevent and punish genocide, “Be Careful. Legal at State was worried about this yesterday—Genocide finding could commit USG to actually ‘do something.’”


May 26, Legal Adviser to the National Security Council, Alan J. Kreczko, emailed Donald Steinberg to inform him that while a genocide finding did not require action under international law, it could create political pressures to act, writing, “concluding that genocide has occurred/is occurring in Rwanda does not create a legal obligation to take particular action [...] Of course, making such a determination will incr[e]ase political pressure to do something [about it].”249 Steinberg sent a note to Lake the following day that “We have check with all the lawyers, and they agree that the President can use the word, 'genocide.'”250 However, Lake scribbled on the note, “No: Raises stakes even further beyond possible remedies.”251 George Moose recounted why the administration did not use the word genocide:

Because of this tortured debate, first and foremost, over the facts, and secondly, over what obligations might flow [from there]. There was concern. It is ludicrous, in retrospect, that the discussion was about how might we be viewed if we declared that there is genocide and then we are not in a position—not ready, or willing, or able—to do anything about it.252

Tony Marley, a State Department Political Military Adviser, similarly recalls preoccupations with the political consequences of calling the atrocities genocide, remembering that in April of 1994, Susan Rice, an NSC staffer working for Richard Clarke, “asked the question at a teleconference as to what possible impact there might be on the Congressional elections scheduled for later that year were the government to acknowledge that genocide was taking place in Rwanda, and yet the administration be seen as doing nothing about it.”253

On May 21, the United States had settled on using the phrase “acts of genocide,” despite the fact that the State Department determined that genocide was occurring on May 16 when Joan

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251 Ibid.

252 Interview, George Moose.

Donoghue of State had transmitted a legal analysis on the question to Secretary Christopher. She had determined that the atrocities in Rwanda satisfied all three criteria comprising the definition of genocide in the Genocide Convention. A day earlier, the United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Ghali had in fact referred to the atrocities as genocide. Yet, on May 21, a compromise memorandum authorizing only “acts of genocide” as the official terminology had been signed by Shattuck, Moose, Legal Adviser Conrad Harper, and Assistant Secretary for International Organizations Douglas Bennett. The memorandum stated that “Although lacking in legal consequences, a clear statement that the USG believes that acts of genocide have occurred could increase pressure for USG activism in response to the crisis in Rwanda. We believe, however, [...] If we do not [...] use the genocide label to condemn events in Rwanda, our credibility will be undermined with human rights groups and the general public.” Secretary Christopher subsequently informed the American delegation to a meeting of the UN Human Rights Commission that they were authorized to agree to resolutions using the term “acts of genocide,” and that they could suggest that a portion of the killings occurring in Rwanda were genocide, but they were not permitted to characterize a specific incident or all of the killings as genocide.

The use of “acts of genocide” instead of “genocide” did haunt the administration in the weeks following the compromise memorandum. Human rights groups, lawmakers, and the media

258 Moose et al., “Memorandum for the Secretary, ‘Has Genocide Occurred in Rwanda?,’ ” 3 (listed as 1 on memo, but page 3 of document); Shattuck, Freedom on Fire: Human Rights Wars and America's Response, 55.
had been critical of the seemingly softened terminology of “acts of genocide.” Most famously, State Department spokesperson Christine Shelly was unable to explain the difference between “acts of genocide” and “genocide” when pressed by a reporter on June 10, 1994. Later that day, Christopher would tepidly call the atrocities genocide. He explained in the following statement quoted in a document from the Clinton Library:

[The acts in Rwanda] certainly are acts of genocide. I think that is the operative term that is used from a legal standpoint. If there is any particular magic in calling it genocide, I have no hesitancy in saying that. But it is a legal standard that brings into operation various legal strictures [...] One group is wreaking a terrible kind of vengeance on another group because of their different tribal or ethnic characteristics. It is the classic definition of acts of genocide.

Just four days later, on June 14, Donald Steinberg of the NSC wrote that “we should state that genocide has occurred, as defined in the 1948 convention [...] we shouldn’t get caught up in the semantics, [especially] since it is our view that acknowledging that this is genocide does not impose a responsibility on our part to act beyond what we are doing.” Steinberg had been tasked with developing talking points for President Clinton’s upcoming meeting with members of Congress. The question arose as to whether or not the President should use “acts of genocide” or “genocide” in the meeting. Steinberg had argued, “I think it would do the President well to stand up himself and say that genocide has occurred in Rwanda. Period. He is in the unique position to break through the goobledy-gook that the rest of us are required to

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262 Ibid., 364; Steinberg, “US to Supply 60 Vehicles For UN Troops in Rwanda.”


264 The word especially is mistyped in the memorandum as “espeically.”


267 Ibid., 1–2.
The next day, Steinberg would cite Christopher’s June 10 statement and continue to argue, “Having gone this far, and hearing from all our lawyers that there are no legal obligations, shouldn’t we now say, simply and on the record, ‘Genocide has occurred in Rwanda.’”? By June 28, administration talking points would read, “What’s going on in Rwanda is genocide, as defined under the 1948 convention […] (If asked) The Genocide Convention does not impose a responsibility on governments to take specific actions.”

To summarize, the Clinton administration did issue several public statements condemning the violence in Rwanda throughout the crisis, but it was hesitant to use the word “genocide” to describe the atrocities. Although internal analysis had determined that the killings in Rwanda constituted genocide on May 16, and although legal analysts believed that this determination did not impose a legal obligation to change policy, administration officials cited potential political concerns as reason to avoid the g-word. On May 26, the NSC’s Legal Adviser had warned that using the word genocide would undoubtedly increase political pressures to change policy. Lake had told Steinberg that even though President Clinton could use the word genocide, it would raise the stakes beyond what the United States could provide as a solution. The administration settled on “acts of genocide” and only changed course when faced with significant outside pressure. Thus, even the public condemnation efforts during this period were limited and circumspect.

**Humanitarian**

From the start of the crisis, the United States also pursued humanitarian policies. In the immediate wake of the crisis, the Clinton administration allocated 15 million in relief. The administration also asked its representatives in the embassy in Tanzania to assess the humanitarian situation and make recommendations for US action. In late May, the United States also sent representatives from the US Office of Food and Disaster Assistance and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) to the region to assess the humanitarian

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268 Ibid., 1.
269 Steinberg, “Memorandum for Wilma G. Hall and Neal S. Wolin, ‘Rwanda--Genocide.’”
271 “Background on Rwanda Crisis,” 4; Steinberg, “**Urgent for Rice** Rwanda TPS,” 2.
272 Steinberg, “Additional Actions on Rwanda,” 1.
situation and to bring attention to the crisis. The USAID delegation also included representatives from the State Department, Congress, and Private Volunteer Organizations. At the United Nations, US humanitarian efforts included asking the UN to collaborate with the OAU to help refugees and supporting the Human Rights Commissioner’s engagement in the crisis. By the end of the crisis, the United States had given about 108.8 million in total assistance to the victims of the genocide. Assistance during this period included a Department of Defense airlift of food from Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania to Bujumbura, Rwanda.

PART III: THE GENOCIDE ENDS

In the final months of the genocide, following the May 17 resolution and as the United Nations and the United States continued to debate the future of UNAMIR, the RPF made significant military advances in their campaign and the French launched their own intervention. These two factors would make the final decision between the UN and the United States on the reinforcement of UNAMIR less consequential, and the genocide would come to an end in mid-July without a major change in US policy.

RPF Advances

From late May until mid-July, the RPF made rapid gains throughout Rwanda. Their advances gave them decreased incentive to engage in peace negotiations. As early as May 5, about a month into the killings, Albright reported that “the RPF does not want to be robbed of its victory,

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274 Ibid., 5.

275 Steinberg, "**Urgent for Rice** Rwanda TPS,” 2; “Testimony of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Prudence Bushnell Before the House Subcommittee on Africa,” 5; “Background on Rwanda Crisis,” 5.


277 Ibid.

which it says is very close." Just weeks later, a May 31 handwritten note from Susan Rice records, "RPF delaying political negotiations [...] Increasingly recalcitrant—little incentive to negotiation (about to seize Kigali + Gitarama)." By May 22, the RPF forces controlled the Kigali airport and maintained dominance over the north and eastern parts of Rwanda. On July 4, the RPF had capture Kigali and Butare, declaring that it would create a new government based on the Arusha Accords. Just a few weeks later, on July 20, the RPF issued a unilateral ceasefire.

**French Intervention**

Meanwhile, the French had decided to launch their own intervention in the crisis while the debates continued at the United Nations. On June 17, France announced its plan to send 1,000 to 2,000 troops to Rwanda. The French claimed that they were launching the intervention, known as Operation Turquoise, because the massacres in Rwanda were ongoing and a force needed to deploy in the interim before UNAMIR could arrive. The United States provided immediate backing for the French mission. On June 22, the United Nations Security Council authorized

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281 Ibid., 8.

282 Ibid., 11.

283 Ibid., 7.

284 Ibid., 7.


287 Ibid., 8.

288 Ibid., 7.
the deployment of 2500 French forces. Two days later, French forces had been deployed into Rwanda by way of eastern Zaire. By July 5, the French had successfully created a safe zone consisting of the prefectures of Gikongoro, Cyangugu, and Kibuye. By this point, however, the genocide was nearing its conclusion. It would end just ten days later.


289 Ibid., 8–9.
WHY INACTION

"We were so preoccupied with Bosnia, with the memory of Somalia just six months old, and with opposition in Congress to military deployments in faraway places not vital to our national interests that neither I nor anyone on my foreign policy team adequately focused on sending troops to stop the slaughter. "^290

Bill Clinton 2004

The previous section outlined US policy during the atrocities in Rwanda in 1994 from the beginning of the crisis in April to the end of the genocide in mid-July. This section will elucidate why the United States did not respond more forcefully. In this section, I will argue that the three key variables that are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for policy change were not present: an inner-circle dissent; high congressional pressure and attention; and political costs to President Clinton for inaction. I will also outline other factors contributing to policy stagnation—notably, the speed of the genocide and the resulting complications with intelligence and the development of dissent, congressional pressure, and public advocacy. Levels on dissent, congressional pressure, and political liability were largely shaped by the memory of the tragedies in Somalia and by distraction with competing global issues at the time.

SPEED

The speed of the genocide in Rwanda complicated US policy in several ways. First, the rapid progression of atrocities meant that the consequences of a slow-moving US and UN bureaucracy were more profound. Second, I argue that the rate of the killing likely impeded the emergence of dissent and pressures from the Congress, the public, or the media. Third, the speed meant that US officials understood the severity and scale of the atrocities too late for many of the victims. This third consequence, relating to intelligence, will be detailed in the section following this one.

INCREASED CONSEQUENCES OF BUREAUCRACY

The killings in Rwanda, claiming the lives of hundreds of thousands in just a few short months, occurred at a rate three times faster than the rate at which the Nazis massacred during World War

^290 Bill Clinton, My Life (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004), 593.
It is estimated that approximately 250,000 Tutsi were killed prior to April 21, with the most severe massacres ending in April. Assistant Secretary John Shattuck recalls that “Nobody could believe how quickly this genocide engulfed the country.”

The rate at which the killings occurred meant that the United States would have had to have responded nearly immediately to have made a significant difference in halting the killings. And yet, Nancy Soderberg explains the following:

It took us two and a half years to be willing to send troops to Bosnia [...] and there’s no way the U.S. government is going to mobilize in a month to stop a genocide in a country we’ve had no engagement in, no particular interest in, and with no pre-set plan to do it. It’s just not going to happen.

In short, the normal rate at which the government developed and implemented policy was inadequate to effectively address the crisis. The speed of the killings was exacerbating the consequences of bureaucratic inertia. As David Rawson, Ambassador to Rwanda at the time, explains, “We were all working frenetically [...] The problem is that we weren’t being able to move the bureaucracy.”

In defense of his comments on the slow bureaucracy, Rawson cites the delays in obtaining troop commitments and in equipment deliveries. Indeed, the United States has been criticized for a particularly slow delivery of armored personnel carriers (APCs) to UN forces during the crisis, even though the request was in fact processed faster than usual. The UN request for fifty tracked APCs occurred on May 19. Data on price and availability was conveyed to the State Department on May 23, four days later, though this process normally takes two to three weeks. On May 26, US officials tried without success to convince the UN of the need for

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293 Interview, John Shattuck.
294 Interview with Nancy Soderberg, 60.
296 Ibid.
298 Ibid.
wheeled APCs instead of the requested tracked APCs. The United States had argued that wheeled vehicles could be put into operation more quickly, would not harm the roads in Rwanda in the way that tracked vehicles would, were easier to operate, and were less expensive. The United States argued that reducing training time was particularly critical, given that it would take a minimum of five weeks from the point of lease to prepare and transport the vehicles. Additionally, wheeled vehicles would provide “the same level of protection” as tracked vehicles and would be faster moving in theater.

Yet, the UN insisted on the tracked vehicles. From May 27 until June 3, the Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSAA) developed a draft contract for the United Nations, cutting the normal time for contract development from three to four weeks to about one week. During this period, on May 30, the United States asked the United Nations to convince Egypt to begin training the Ghanaian troops on how to operate the vehicles. At this point, talking points again stressed that it could take five to six weeks following the signing of a lease agreement to “identify, refurbish and ship the APC’s to Rwanda.” Because of the likely delays, US officials noted “it is vital that the Ghanaian troops receive the requisite operational and maintenance training now.” On June 7, the United Nations reported back that they required further details on the support package before they would sign the lease agreement. Three days later, DSAA relayed the support package. The lease was approved on June 14.

With the lease agreement signed, focus shifted to vehicle delivery. Documents show that “shipping the APC’s immediately” and “ASAP” was a topic of discussion at a meeting with

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301 Ibid., 3.
302 Ibid., 2.
303 “White House Press Briefing, 1000 16 June, Issue: APCs for Rwanda.”
305 APCs spelled with apostrophe in this quote: Ibid., 2.
306 Ibid.
307 “White House Press Briefing, 1000 16 June, Issue: APCs for Rwanda.”
308 Ibid.
309 Ibid.
Lake, Christopher, and Perry on June 15 and during a phone conversation between Lake and Perry around the same time.\(^{310}\) At this point, a schedule for transferring the vehicles to Kampala, Uganda was agreed upon.\(^{311}\) In a memorandum on June 15, Steinberg noted, “It would be possible to finish the deployment [of APCs] a few days quicker if the President declared this our top military priority, but since the U.N. has said they cannot use them before next Friday in any case, and given the current situations in North Korea, Haiti, Bosnia, etc., we think it makes sense to stick to this schedule.”\(^{312}\)

A few days later, on June 19, the first APCs arrived on schedule at the Entebbe Airport in Uganda.\(^{313}\) Yet, further security and logistical issues would continue to hinder the APC transfer for several weeks. On June 24, a handwritten note by Susan Rice records, “APCs are coming through. 8 in Uganda; 16 by tomorrow—UN has refused to accept APCs. No security [provided by UN]\(^{314}\) Sitting on runway unprotected. Cable to UN. Tell them get off their asses [her emphasis].”\(^{315}\) A June 27 note by Rice on the APCs, “security resolved,” suggests the security problems were quickly remedied.\(^{316}\) However, at this point, she also noted that the APCs did not have radios, which were two to four weeks away, or adequate ammunition.\(^{317}\) A second delay occurred when General Brie, Military Adviser to the UN Secretary-General, communicated on June 16 that he did not have the capacity to “setup to control, secure, maintain, or handle the 50


\(^{311}\) Steinberg, “Memorandum for Susan E. Rice and MacArthur DeShazer, ‘E-Mail to Tony on Rwanda,’” 1.

\(^{312}\) Ibid.; Prudence Bushnell also records in her notebook around June 13 that a three-week window could be shortened to 10 days or two weeks if President Clinton intervened: “Entry –6/13/94,” n.d., Prudence Bushnell Notebook No. 4—May 31, 1994 to August 11, 1994, National Security Archive.

\(^{313}\) “White House Press Briefing, 1000 16 June, Issue: APCs for Rwanda.”

\(^{314}\) The handwriting in this bracketed section is difficult to discern.


\(^{317}\) Ibid.; For general account of this event, see: Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 380; Melvern, A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda’s Genocide, 196.
APC’s.” He wanted to avoid a backup, and was already overwhelmed by ten APCs arriving from Somalia. All fifty APCs would not arrive in Kampala until July 1. The United Nations would not able to transport the vehicles to Rwanda until the end of July and early August.

In sum, the speed of the genocide meant that the consequences of normal bureaucratic stagnation were amplified. The slowed delivery of APCs to Rwanda exemplifies the logistical factors hindering an adequate response to the killing. Even though the Clinton administration did speed the process of delivery, the APCs did not arrive until after the genocide had largely concluded.

Some have argued that the United States simply should have made the process move faster. James Woods, Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs at Defense, believes that the delivery may have occurred more rapidly if the Department of Defense had wanted to proceed at a faster pace. George Moose likewise argues that the APC process “was allowed to go on far longer than it should have or needed to before getting resolved.” Journalist Michael Gordon suggested that the United States could have started preparing the vehicles before the lease was signed if the White House had simply waived the regulation stipulating that contracts could not be acted upon prior to the signing of the lease. Samantha Power similarly asserts that it was only the intervention of the White House in mid-June that propelled the deployment of the vehicles.

We may never know precisely what could have happened had the United States changed its normal procedure for delivery of these vehicles, or pressured the United Nations even harder.

318 APCs spelled with apostrophe in this quote: MacArthur Deshazer, “Memorandum for Donald K. Steinberg, ‘Conversation with COL Clotz,’” June 16, 1994, 1, FOIA 2006-0218-F, Records on Donald Steinberg and Rwanda, Box 3, Folder: A1-Record (Jan 93-Sept 94) [Steinberg + Rwanda] [06/15/1994-09/22/1994] [OA/ID 570000], William J. Clinton Presidential Library.

319 Ibid.; For more on shipments from Somalia see: Steinberg, “Memorandum for Susan E. Rice and MacArthur DeShazer; ‘E-Mail to Tony on Rwanda,’” 1.


321 Burkhalter, “The Question of Genocide,” 50; Melvern, A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda’s Genocide, 196; Power, “A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide, 380; Ronayne, Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust, 171.


324 Interview, George Moose.


to accept the wheeled vehicles instead of the tracked vehicles. What we do know from the documentary evidence is that to have sped delivery even further than the administration did at the time, putting aside the important question of the UN’s ability to accept the vehicles, the United States would have had to have changed its normal procedures during a period of only one month, from May 19 to June 19.

**Variables for Policy Change Cannot Emerge**

The speed of the genocide also impeded a response from the United States, as the three variables necessary for a change in policy typically take time, often years, to emerge. In the Holocaust case, the Treasury team of dissenters haggled with the State Department for half a year before they approached President Roosevelt, and when they did, it was January of 1944, six years after Kristallnacht, and well after the Nazis had introduced killing centers. Likewise, congressional pressure in the Holocaust case did not emerge in force until late 1943. In the Bosnia case, Clinton’s inner-circle dissent from Madeleine Albright came in the summer of 1995, two years into the administration’s tenure. Similarly, congressional pressure did not peak until the summer of 1995. Given this pattern, one could infer that these pressures, from within the government, from other government branches, and, in the case of political liability, often from extra-governmental sources, need time to build and fester. In the case of Rwanda, with early attention paid to the evacuation of American citizens from a hostile situation, and with the media, the public, and Congress largely focused on other regions of the world, the three key variables did not have time to develop.

**Intelligence**

Finally, the speed of the genocide also affected the ability of US officials to comprehend and process the tragedy of Rwanda quickly enough to respond effectively. Although the United States had accurate intelligence in the immediate aftermath of the plane crash, government officials did not fully understand or process the significance of the intelligence until about two weeks into the killings. In light of the controversies surrounding what the United States knew and when, the next section will be devoted solely to the question of US knowledge of the atrocities.
INTELLIGENCE

The United States did have information on the mass killings in Rwanda in the immediate aftermath of the plane crash; however, some policymakers argue that they did not fully understand the scale of these atrocities, or comprehend that they represented something different from the massacres that had plagued the region in the years prior, until a few weeks into the genocide. I conclude that most evidence suggests that the recollections of the policymakers are likely accurate.

In the immediate aftermath of the plane crash, the United States did have intelligence that systematic massacres of Tutsi civilians and moderate Hutus were occurring. The United States anticipated that there would be significant bloodshed and violence as early as April 6, before the genocide reached full strength.327 The Department of Defense was predicting “a massive (hundreds of thousands of deaths) bloodbath.”328 Joyce Leader, Deputy Chief of Mission at the American Embassy in Rwanda, argues that she had “a very good sense of what was taking place” following the crash.329 She notes that “It was clear that a systematic killing of Tutsi was taking place.”330 Washington was also receiving information about the killings from the State Department’s Rwanda Monitoring Group, established on April 7, which kept open telephone lines with the American Embassy in Kigali.331 On April 8, for instance, the Monitoring Group reported that all tall girls (a trait associated with Tutsi)332 attending the Adventist University of Central Africa in Ruhengeri had been executed by uniformed and non-uniformed men.333 In addition, the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) had intercepted orders for the killings by April 7, obtaining photographs of mass graves shortly thereafter.334 Early daily intelligence estimates

327 Ibid., 350; Bushnell Prudence, “Memorandum for The Secretary, ‘Death of Rwandan and Burundi Presidents in Plane Crash,’” April 6, 1994, 2, FOIA 2006-0218-F, Records on Donald Steinberg and Rwanda, Box 1, Folder: Steinberg, Donald African Affairs, Rwanda, Jan.-July 1994 [10] [OA/ID 633], William J. Clinton Presidential Library.
330 Ibid.
331 Ibid.
332 Prunier, The Rwanda Crisis, 5; Des Forges, “Leave None to Tell the Story: “ Genocide in Rwanda, 33.
were also reporting Hutu targeting of Tutsi civilians. On April 11, Arlene Render, Director of Central African Affairs at State, summarized that “the Presidential guard, other elements of the GOR [Government of Rwanda] mili[...] Hutu extremist militia members massacred Tutsis and executed moderate Hutu opposition leaders.” In sum, the United States had accurate intelligence from the outset of the crisis that Tutsis were being targeted and killed and that increased violence was likely to ensue.

And yet, policymakers, distracted with other global crises and consumed with the evacuation of Americans from Rwanda, argue that the scale and nature was not clear to them for two or three weeks. Madeleine Albright, then UN Ambassador, argues that Rwanda was not receiving a lot of attention prior to the outbreak of the genocide: “At the time, there were clashes or extreme tensions in Bosnia, Somalia, Haiti, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Angola, Liberia, Mozambique, Sudan, Cambodia, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan, as well as ongoing defiance of Security Council resolutions by Saddam Hussein in Iraq.” As a result, she explains, “It would be weeks” before most officials fully comprehended the scale of atrocities. She specifically pinpoints the last ten days of April as the window in which she realized the full severity of the atrocities, helped in large part by press reports, information from Monique Mujawamariya, and International Committee of the Red Cross death toll estimates. Donald Steinberg, Senior Director for African Affairs at the National Security Council, similarly argues that the administration did not fully understand that genocide was occurring for the first two or three weeks. He cited distraction with the evacuation of Americans in the early days, in addition to the fact that the massacres in Rwanda looked similar to atrocities that frequently characterized

336 The document is unfortunately cut off here.  
338 Albright, Madam Secretary, 148.  
339 Ibid., 149.  
340 Ibid., 151; Note that there is some disagreement about Albright and Mujawamariya’s interaction. Mujawamariya argues that Albright “would not meet me” and was cold when confronted in a hallway. Albright, however, sent a cable recounting a meeting where she was more sympathetic to Mujawamariya’s concerns: “Rwandan Human Rights Defender Mujawamariya Calls on Ambassador Albright, Urges Continuation of UNAMIR Presence in Rwanda, USUN Cable 0169,” April 22, 1994, 1–8, National Security Archive, https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/1501854-footnote-211-usun-01696.html; “International Decision-Making in the Age of Genocide: Rwanda 1990-1994, June 2: Failure to Protect, Session 4 - ‘Lessons from Rwanda,’” 2–63.  
341 Interview with Donald Steinberg.
the region, including those in Burundi in 1993 when 50,000 civilians were killed without a US response.\footnote{Ibid.; On Burundi death toll: Power, "A Problem from Hell:" America and the Age of Genocide, 347; On the Burundi situation, see also: Interview with Nancy Soderberg, 58.} James Woods, Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs at DOD, similarly notes that "a common-sense understanding of what was going on [developed] within two weeks [10 to 14 days, April 15 to April 20] of the crash of the plane."\footnote{Interview, James Woods; Melvern, A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda's Genocide, 230.} Nancy Soderberg also recounts that she fully understood the genocide during the week of April 20.\footnote{Interview with Nancy Soderberg, 58.} By that point, the United States had successfully evacuated the American Embassy, though in doing so, it lost some of its eyes and ears on the ground for gathering intelligence on the situation.\footnote{145 Albright, Madam Secretary, 149; Interview with Warren Christopher and Strobe Talbott, 57–58.}

The accounts of these officials are supported to some degree by the timeline of American newspapers’ reporting on the events. Early reports tended to depict the killings as civil war, and not systematic genocide. For instance, a Washington Post article from April 9 led with "Rwanda today appeared to be gripped by full-scale civil war and Somalia-style anarchy."\footnote{Keith B. Richburg, "Slayings Put Rwanda In Chaos," Washington Post, April 9, 1994, A1.} A New York Times article from the same day emphasized the tribal aspects of the conflict in Rwanda.\footnote{William E. Schmidt, “Terror Convulses Rwandan Capital as Tribes Battle,” New York Times, April 9, 1994, 1; 6.} By April 23, however, the focus would change, with the New York Times running an editorial noting, “What looks very much like genocide has been taking place in Rwanda [...] Everywhere in Rwanda, the Tutsi are now being targeted.”\footnote{"Cold Choices in Rwanda," New York Times, April 23, 1994, http://www.nytimes.com/1994/04/23/opinion/cold-choices-in-rwanda.html.}

United States was aware that perpetrators in Rwanda were “being ordered to kill by high-level officials in Rwanda.” By the end of April, Prudence Bushnell would also be using the word “genocide” in her notes on the crisis.

Textual evidence continuing into May describes a more nuanced situation characterized both by civil war and by acts of genocide against Tutsis. US officials noted that “The situation combines ethnic civil war and hardline Hutus killing Tutsis and ‘sympathetic’ Hutus behind Government lines.” A written copy of Prudence Bushnell’s May 4 testimony before the House Subcommittee on Africa similarly outlines that violence is occurring on two levels: first, the “Hutu-dominated Rwandan military,” party militias, and Hutu gangs were massacring moderate Hutus and Tutsi leaders and civilians; second, a civil war was raging between the Rwandan government and the Rwandan Patriotic Front. By mid-May internal analysis determined that “There can be little question that the specific listed acts [of genocide] have taken place in Rwanda.” US officials also determined that the atrocities were largely being committed by Rwandan government forces and Hutu militias, with analysis arguing that the RPF “does not appear to have committed Geneva Convention defined genocidal atrocities.” In general, analysts concluded, the RPF was protecting Hutu within its territory while Tutsis in government-controlled areas were massacred.

In sum, evidence suggests that the United States did have intelligence on the systematic execution of Tutsis and moderate Hutus in the immediate aftermath of the plane crash; however, several officials, distracted by managing the outbreak violence and the evacuation, would not fully process the information until about two weeks into the conflict. Newspaper records and documentary evidence appears to support the recollections of policymakers.

353 Steinberg, “**Urgent for Rice** Rwanda TPS,” 1.
DISSENT

A dissent simply did not arise during the Rwandan genocide. As mentioned, the option of intervention was not seriously discussed, but a voice for other robust nonmilitary measures did not emerge either. As Michael Sheehan, then an aide to Albright, recalls, “in terms of the serious political leadership within the executive branch or in the Congress, there was no big advocates for taking U.S. forces that were basically steaming out of the port of Mogadishu at that same time and reinserting them into central Africa in a very, very unstable situation.” Anthony Lake has argued, “if you’re thinking about an intervention in a Rwanda, you were really going against the conventional wisdom in the context and you had no allies on the outside—it would take a president or a national security adviser to push it through.” In his own words, General Shalikashvili was “very much against going into Rwanda […] I could just see if you brought back one soldier who had been hacked up with a machete what they outcry would be.” John Shattuck asserts that “it was in nobody’s interest, really, to be a champion” of US engagement in Rwanda. In reflecting on her active role in Balkans crisis, as compared to Rwanda, Albright notes that “Rwanda was so quick, that I am not sure there was time for a major voice in it.” As Samantha Power has argued, a significant response in the case of Rwanda likely would have required some degree of “high-level ownership,” and yet, in this case, “nobody owned it.”

Some within the administration did favor increased responsiveness, but these officials had limited access and tended to be lower in the hierarchy of their respective bureaucracies. Officials who have been named as having favored more robust measures in some capacity include the following people from State and the NSC: Tim Wirth (Undersecretary for Global Affairs); John Shattuck (Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor); Phyllis Oakley (Assistant Secretary for Refugee Affairs); George Moose (Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs); Prudence Bushnell (Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs); Joyce Leader (Ambassador Rawson’s Deputy); Kevin Aiston (Rwanda Desk Officer);

358 Interview, Michael Sheehan (September 30 and October 1, 2003).
359 Interview, Anthony Lake.
361 Interview, John Shattuck.
362 Interview, Madeleine Albright.
Don Steinberg (Senior Director for African Affairs); and Eric Schwartz (Staff Specialist for Human Rights). And yet, Leader was directed to avoid contact with her sources in Kigali and was seldom consulted on US policy toward the crisis. Assistant Secretary John Shattuck likewise notes that he had limited access during this period because he was associated with controversies related to Haiti and China. Prudence Bushnell, who had at the time expressed her frustration that the United States could not do “something concrete” to stop the killings, argues that the hierarchy within State kept her from exerting increased influence: “a deputy assistant secretary […] doesn’t get on the telephone to [give] her opinion to the secretary of state or the director of the NSC.”

The views of these officials, from State and the NSC, furthermore did not reflect a consensus within the State Department or the National Security Council. The Bureau of International Organization and Affairs within State did not support a robust UN presence as the crisis unfolded. Richard Clarke, who was responsible for peacekeeping on the NSC staff, believed that a failed UN mission in Rwanda would irreparably sour the relationship between the US Congress and the United Nations. Alison Des Forges has similarly argued that, in general, the officials from the international organization community were preoccupied with maintaining a strong relationship with the UN. For anyone hoping to maintain the future of peacekeeping, involvement in Rwanda was “an enormous risk.”

In sum, an inner-circle dissent, a necessary factor for policy change, did not emerge in the rapidly unfolding Rwandan case. Some officials appear to have favored more robust responsiveness, but they did not attempt to change US policy through the use of institutionalized dissent channels or other informal channels, and they were isolated from the key decision making groups at the time. In the Rwandan case, there was no Morgenthau, no George Kenney, Jon Western, Marshall Harris, or Steve Walker.

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366 Interview, John Shattuck.
367 Christopher, “Human Rights Watch Call for Action on Rwanda,” 2; 5; Interview, Prudence Bushnell.
369 Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 364.
370 Interview, Alison des Forges.
371 Ibid.
POLITICAL LIABILITY

During the crisis in Rwanda, the political liability variable was negative. In fact, this factor was so strongly negative that the United States did not even meet to consider a more robust response. The political environment, in large part as a result of the memory of Somalia, was not conducive to action for further US engagement in Rwanda, and government officials were preoccupied with other crises with more political salience in the United States.

POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT: COSTS FOR INACTION

During the genocide in Rwanda, the political liability variable was negative: costs for action. The United States had just been embarrassed by a peacekeeping failure in Somalia, and the public and the media appeared largely disinterested in significant US engagement in the Rwandan crisis. In this environment, Clinton was liable to suffer political costs for more significant action or a robust presence in Rwanda.

The recent US peacekeeping failures in Somalia had a lasting effect on both the Clinton administration and the American public. In Somalia, the world watched as American soldiers were held hostage and dragged through Mogadishu streets in October of 1993. Soldiers had initially been deployed to Somalia to distribute food aid, but on October 3, eighteen Americans were killed and eighty-four were wounded conducting a raid on lieutenants aligned with General Mohamed Farah Aideed of the Somali National Alliance. Clinton subsequently withdrew American troops. The Department of Defense was deeply affected by the incident. The Secretary of Defense at the time, Les Aspin, had in fact been fired over Somalia.

372 Interview with Anthony Lake, 78.
373 Interview, John Shattuck; Lyons and Samatar, Somalia: State Collapse, Multilateral Intervention, and Strategies for Political Reconstruction, 59.
374 Lyons and Samatar, Somalia: State Collapse, Multilateral Intervention, and Strategies for Political Reconstruction, 39; 59.
375 Ibid., 59.
376 Interview with John Shattuck; Interview, James Woods; Interview with Warren Christopher and Strobe Talbott, 56.
been the first use of tactical military force for humanitarian purposes in the post-Cold War world, and it had failed.378

Somalia, “a traumatic experience for the new Clinton administration,” made both Clinton and his aides hesitant to rapidly respond to another crisis.379 Memories of Somalia were vivified when Rwandan Hutu forces killed and skinned Belgian peacekeepers in the early days of the crisis.380 Several administration officials note that this unfortunate timing had a profound effect on US policy.381 Anthony Lake argues that Somalia “helped establish a context in which the questions [regarding a response] didn’t even arise.”382 Though Lake had scribbled “can’t be paralyzed by Somalia” on a notecard in July of 1994, he explains that “Somalia helped to reinforce our view […] that we need to be more coherent […] we had to be able to demonstrate that we were doing [peacekeeping] in a careful, effective, practical way.”383 Nancy Soderberg recalls a more forceful effect of the memory of Somalia, noting, “The whole idea of putting more troops into a very volatile situation just sounded nuts at the time […] You’re just going to get them killed, Somalia redux.”384 John Shattuck recalls that several administration officials said the “principal focus” had to be “‘No more Somalias,’” and the issue was consequently managed more than it was addressed.385 Albright argues that events in Somalia “undermined the whole [peacekeeping] concept.”386 She also recalls being “mindful of [her] conversations with the parents of Americans killed in Somalia,” fearing that ill-equipped peacekeepers might suffer the same fate.387 US Ambassador to Rwanda David Rawson was quoted in the New York Times on April 21, arguing that Rwanda could turn into Somalia with “a stalemate and trench warfare […] anarchy in the countryside.”388

378 Interview with John Shattuck.
379 Interview with Donald Steinberg; Quote regarding traumatic experience: Interview, John Shattuck; Riley, Interview with James Steinberg, 22.
380 Interview with Donald Steinberg.
381 Ibid.; Interview, Michael Sheehan (September 30 and October 1, 2003); Lorch, “Last of the US Troops Leave Somalia; What Began as a Mission of Mercy Closes With Little Ceremony”; Interview with John Shattuck.
382 Interview with Anthony Lake, 77.
383 Interview, Anthony Lake; “Anthony Lake Notecard, ‘P/Mtg with Foreign Policy Team,’ 9:00 A.M., Friday, July 29, Oval Ofc.,” July 29, 1994, 3, Anthony Lake Papers, Box 45, Library of Congress.
385 Interview, John Shattuck; Interview with John Shattuck.
386 Interview with Madeleine K. Albright, 40.
387 Albright, Madam Secretary, 150.
The American editorial press, also recalling lessons of Somalia, did not support significant US engagement. *The New Republic*, which had advocated for a forceful response to atrocities in Bosnia, argued against US engagement in Rwanda. Its editorial on May 16 opined, “The tragedy of the American experience in the Horn of Africa is that our too-ambitious efforts arguably compounded Somalia’s political problems even as we alleviated the starvation.” The *New York Times* supported the withdrawal of UNAMIR forces, arguing that “It is legally if not morally easy to justify pulling out since the unevenly trained U.N. force was meant to police a peace, not take sides in a civil war.” The editorial further cited the memory of Somalia and argued that absent the creation of a quick-response UN force to handle such crises, “the world has little choice but to stand aside.” Later, the *New York Times* would argue that the administration “rightly resisted a clamor for instantly expanding a minuscule United Nations peacekeeping force.” Other editorials called for increased UN engagement or UN peacekeeping reforms, but did no advocate for significant US action. More broadly, the media was largely disinterested in the crisis in Rwanda. State Department spokesman, Mike McCurry, was asked only one question about Rwanda from April 15 to April 22, and the question concerned the safety of the peacekeepers. Although print news media did cover the ongoing massacres, most evidence suggests that the press on the whole did not push for robust US action.

The Clinton administration also had reason to believe that the American public, which had also witnessed the disappointments of US involvement in Somalia, would oppose a significant US presence in Rwanda. The failures of Somalia had received a large degree of press coverage, and in the aftermath of the crisis, the administration’s approval ratings on foreign

392 “Cold Choices in Rwanda.”
policy had declined.\textsuperscript{397} Disapproval rates rose from thirty-two percent to fifty-two percent.\textsuperscript{398} Michael Sheehan, an aide to Albright, recalls that Somalia had “a searing effect on the American public.”\textsuperscript{399} The \textit{New York Times} reported on April 15 that “There will be no political cost” for Clinton in limiting US engagement in Rwanda.\textsuperscript{400}

Indeed, the American public did not advocate for increased responsiveness throughout the crisis. John Shattuck argues that there was simply little political interest in the massacres.\textsuperscript{401} He further explains that President Clinton, concerned about his healthcare proposals and the upcoming midterm elections, “was determined to try to keep the US out of any major engagements overseas which is why there was an ambivalence about the peacekeeping operations.”\textsuperscript{402} Nancy Soderberg recalls, “There was no domestic pressure to focus on this.”\textsuperscript{403} As noted, Anthony Lake famously told representatives from Human Rights Watch concerned about Rwanda that they would need to focus on changing public opinion and “make more noise.”\textsuperscript{404} Donald Steinberg, having recognized the lack of public attention to the crisis at the time, had even written an email on April 20 suggesting, “We need to do everything we can to keep the tragedy in the public eye.”\textsuperscript{405}

Officials in the White House recall that pressures from constituencies that may have been concerned with Rwanda were focused elsewhere. Lake and Steinberg argue that the non-governmental organization community was not attempting to mobilize public opinion for action


\textsuperscript{399} Interview, Michael Sheehan (September 30 and October 1, 2003).


\textsuperscript{401} Interview with John Shattuck.


\textsuperscript{403} Interview with Nancy Soderberg, 61.

\textsuperscript{404} Power, “\textit{A Problem from Hell:}” \textit{America and the Age of Genocide}, 377; Ronayne, \textit{Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust}, 173–74; Interview, Alison des Forges; Des Forges, “Leave None to Tell the Story.” \textit{Genocide in Rwanda}, 624–25.

on Rwanda. Lake further recalls that the civil rights community, which may have otherwise drawn attention to Rwanda, was focused on Haiti. Randall Robinson’s boycott of the White House Conference on Africa, which brought 160 experts on Africa together from June 26 to June 27, provides an example. Attendees at the conference included African-American members of Congress, representatives from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), Jesse Jackson, Andrew Young, and David Dinkins, among others. Robinson, the head of TransAfrica, refused to attend because of objections to US policy in Haiti, not Rwanda. Referring to Robinson’s hunger strike to protest US policy toward Haitian boat refugees, Nancy Soderberg similarly recalls that “There wasn’t a constituency [for Rwanda]. The irony of this whole thing is Randall Robinson was chaining himself to the front gates about Haiti, not Rwanda; he never even mentioned Rwanda.”

In sum, the domestic political environment in the United States was not conducive to robust action in response to the Rwandan genocide. In fact, the political liability variable was negative (costs for action). President Clinton had suffered politically in the wake of Somalia, and the press and the public did not demonstrate an interest in increased US responsiveness. Notably, the Clinton administration had also taken some steps to avoid sparking any advocacy in favor of engagement in Rwanda—such as not calling the atrocities genocide—precisely because officials did not want to raise political pressure to act.

**Low Priority for Administration**

In the absence of political pressure for action, the Clinton administration was also able to become distracted by other consuming crises at the time: elections in South Africa and the subsequent

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406 Interview with Donald Steinberg; Interview with Anthony Lake, 76.

407 Interview with Anthony Lake, 78.


inauguration of Nelson Mandela; crises in Bosnia, Somalia, and Haiti; and the fact that North Korea was leaving the Non-Proliferation Treaty.412

Emblematic of the low priority given to the Rwandan crisis was the fact that the genocide received little attention at the highest levels of government. Prudence Bushnell, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in the Bureau of African Affairs, notes that “I was way down the totem pole and I had responsibility for the Rwanda portfolio. That shows you how important it was in the US government.”413 Strobe Talbott confirms Bushnell’s assessment, remarking that African experts “don’t tend to be treated as inhabiting the first tier, the second tier or even the third tier of those working on vital American interests […] the American historical experience of Africa has also tended to be rather on the fringes of our overall national experience.”414 Don Steinberg argues that African issues in general did not elicit formal National Security Council meetings on a regular basis.415 On the other hand, there were several meetings on Bosnia, Haiti, and North Korea.416 Secretary of State Warren Christopher allegedly told Willie Claes, Belgian Foreign Minister, that “I have other responsibilities” when asked about Rwanda.417 The National Security Archive has previously reported that the highest level interest on Rwanda came when Rwanda received fifteen minutes of discussion during a Deputies Committee meeting on Somalia on April 29.418 However, a White House document from May 12 reveals that Rwanda was also discussed in a meeting with the Vice President, President, Secretary Perry, Acting Secretary

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412 Interview with Donald Steinberg; Clinton, My Life, 593; On fact that Rwanda did not provoke public interest and could thus be avoided unlike other issues: Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 366.
414 Interview with Warren Christopher and Strobe Talbott, 58.
415 Interview with Donald Steinberg.
416 Ibid.
417 Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 352.
Talbott, White House Chief of Staff Thomas McLarty, and Anthony Lake in mid-May.\textsuperscript{419} Still, these two meetings seem to be the full extent of high-level involvement on the crisis. Evidence suggests that President Clinton was highly disengaged from policymaking on the issue. In fact, he had scribbled “is this true?” in the margins of a 1999 \textit{New Yorker} article arguing that the United States had “led the charge on the Security Council to abandon Rwanda.”\textsuperscript{420}

The administration was further distracted by other crises at the time, which had consumed more public attention. As Sandy Berger explains, “Rwanda was a kind of error of omission rather than commission;” the crisis did not get the attention of the Clinton administration.\textsuperscript{421} Lake likewise separately comments that “It was an error of omission.”\textsuperscript{422} John Shattuck notes that Rwanda occurred during “a time of preoccupation with many other issues,” including Haiti, which directly affected the United States and the public, as thousands of refugees arrived on US shores, as well as human rights crises in China and Bosnia.\textsuperscript{423} Warren Christopher was consumed by China, and Lake and Talbott were preoccupied with Haiti.\textsuperscript{424} In his own words, Lake recalls, “I was obsessed with Haiti and Bosnia during that period, so Rwanda was, in journalist William Shawcross’s words, a ‘sideshow,’ but not even a sideshow—a no-show.”\textsuperscript{425} George Moose argues that even Bushnell was “not deeply engaged” on Rwanda.\textsuperscript{426} Eric Schwartz, human rights specialist on the NSC staff, had written Donald Steinberg on April 24 to apologize for being distracted from Rwanda during the past week—a critical period of the genocide—noting “the

\textsuperscript{420} The judgment that this handwriting belongs to Bill Clinton was made because of the handwriting’s resemblance to Clinton’s penmanship, as well as the fact that this article with his markings is contained in a stack of articles with margin commentary signed “BC:” Philip Gourevitch, “A War up in the Air,” \textit{The New Yorker}, April 12, 1999, 21, FOIA 2006-0646-F, Records concerning the Genocide in Rwanda in 1994, Box 3, Folder: Multilateral and Humanitarian Affairs, Schwarz, Eric, Rwanda I, 1994 [1] [OA/ID 4016] #137, William J. Clinton Presidential Library.
\textsuperscript{422} Interview, Anthony Lake.
\textsuperscript{425} Lake as quoted in Power: Power, “A Problem from Hell:” \textit{America and the Age of Genocide}, 364.
\textsuperscript{426} Interview, George Moose.
Haitian ship landing off the coast of Miami was a full-time job for me—I pulled my first all-nighter since college on Thursday."  

In sum, the memory of Somalia made the Clinton administration, the press, and the public reluctant to support quick engagement in another African country suffering from violent conflict. In this environment, the Clinton administration did not face significant political pressure for action in Rwanda, and avoided any actions that might provoke such pressures. Lacking pressure to act, the Clinton administration did not give the Rwandan crisis significant attention at the highest levels of government and instead focused on other pressing issues at the time with much more salience for the American public.

**CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE**

During the Rwandan Genocide, the congressional pressure variable was low. A significant constituency within the Congress was highly critical of UN peacekeeping, and few members of Congress advocated for increased engagement.

When the genocide in Rwanda began, congressional views of UN peacekeeping were negative. The crisis in Somalia had contributed to a significant amount of congressional aversion to peacekeeping. George Moose recalls that “everybody was very conscious of the fact that there was serious aversion—not only in the administration, but in the Congress—to what they saw as our growing, uncontrolled, unrestrained involvement in all kinds of things, all over the place.”

James Woods, Deputy Assistant Secretary for African Affairs at the Department of Defense, notes that in the wake of Somalia, the Clinton administration was “afraid of bad congressional reaction, which there certainly would have been.” William Perry likewise argues that “There would have been an explosion in Congress had the President decided he was

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428 For more on congressional hostility to UN: Ronayne, Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust, 172.


430 Interview, George Moose.

431 Interview, James Woods.
going to send a battalion of troops to Rwanda, I’m quite confident.” Lake similarly asserts that “there was no chance that the Congress would ever have authorized funds to send American troops into Rwanda. Indeed, we were struggling to get the funds for our relief operations.”

In this anti-peacekeeping environment, Congress did not pay significant attention to the Rwandan Genocide, and some members of Congress explicitly argued against US engagement. Senator Bob Dole (R-KS), who had been a strong proponent of US engagement in Bosnia, argued on *Face the Nation* that the United States lacked a national interest in Rwanda, asserting, “I hope we don’t get involved there. I don’t think we will. The Americans are out. As far as I’m concerned in Rwanda, that ought to be the end of it.” Congressman Lee Hamilton (R-IN), Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, likewise voiced his objections to significant US engagement in Rwanda. At one point, President Clinton would ask his staff if the Congressional Black Caucus had in fact been active on the Rwanda issue. He was told that they had not been highly concerned with the crisis. During her meeting with Anthony Lake, human rights activist Monique Mujawamariya recalls Lake saying, “Monique, we do not have free reins to take decisions. You must work on the level of Congress.” As she remembers, “He said if you go to Congress, the Congress could force us to decide.” She subsequently met with a few members of Congress, including Senators Ted Kennedy (D-MA) and Paul Simon (D-IL). At a meeting with the Congressional Black Caucus, Chairman Kweisi Mfume (D-MD), though sympathetic, told her, “Americans do not have friends, Americans have interests, and there are no interests in Rwanda that could justify coffins full of Marines as we saw in Somalia.”

Legislative activity during this period was muted. The only Senate resolution related to Rwanda that passed during the genocide was S.Res.207 of April 26, which condemned the

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432 Interview with William Perry, 19.
433 Interview, Anthony Lake.
434 Quoted in NYT article: Sciolino, “For West, Rwanda Is Not Worth the Political Candle.”
436 Ronayne, Never Again?: The United States and the Prevention and Punishment of Genocide since the Holocaust, 173; Des Forges, “Leave None to Tell the Story:” Genocide in Rwanda, 624.
437 Ibid.
439 Ibid., 2-65.
440 Ibid., 2-64-2-65.
441 Ibid.
massacres of civilians sympathetic to the political opposition in Rwanda, urged international parties to work toward a ceasefire agreement, and called on all parties to end the violence and allow for the delivery of humanitarian aid.\(^{442}\) It also commended President Clinton for “his swift condemnation of and response to this crisis” and asked only that he continue diplomatic initiatives to address the situation.\(^{443}\) The only other notable congressional action consisted of two amendments: first, S.Amdt.2217 of July 1, which asked President Clinton to recognize that acts of genocide had occurred, urged Clinton to support investigation into breaches of international humanitarian law, implored Clinton to hasten the deployment of new UNAMIR forces, and pressed Clinton to accelerate aid delivery; and, second, S.Amdt.2356 of July 22, which provided funding for humanitarian aid in Rwanda.\(^{444}\) The only congressional hearing on Rwanda during the genocide occurred on May 4, before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa.\(^{445}\) Representatives’ statements before the hearing condemned the violence, but urged the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations, not the United States, to handle an intervention.\(^{446}\) Chairman Harry Johnston (D-FL) also noted that he was “encouraged by the level of attention given to the crisis in Rwanda by the Clinton


\(^{443}\) “S.Res.207 - A Resolution Expressing the Sense of the Senate Regarding the Tragic Humanitarian and Political Catastrophe in Rwanda.”


Suggestions for US action during the hearing included the following proposals: letting perpetrators know that they would be held accountable and denouncing their actions; telling all parties that a government in Rwanda established by force will not be recognized; denying visas to those responsible for slaughtering civilians; keeping the United Nations engaged; and considering air drops of humanitarian supplies.448

Some members of Congress did write to President Clinton to highlight their concerns and urge the administration to address the crisis, but these largely isolated, private written voices were easily ignored by the executive branch.449 On April 20, members of the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa wrote to the President to encourage the administration to inform perpetrators that they would be held accountable and to tell all of the warring factions that a government established by force would not be recognized.450 President Clinton responded on May 25 with an explanation of US measures taken thus far toward the crisis.451 Senators Paul Simon (D-IL) and Jim Jeffords (R-VT) of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa also urged the administration to take the following action in a letter on May 13: communicate to all parties that the United States would not support a government engaging in violence and massacre; attempt to halt arms transfers into Rwanda; and urge the United Nations to approve an UNAMIR troop increase.452 After failing to hear a response ten days later, Paul Simon called the

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452 “Letter from Senators Paul Simon and Jim Jeffords to President Clinton,” May 13, 1994, 1–2, The US and the Genocide in Rwanda: Information, Intelligence and the US Response, National Security Archive, http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB117/RW48.pdf; Wertheim argues that the letter argued for “military intervention.” It should be noted that at no point in the letter do the senators argue for US military intervention. They support sending more troops to bolster the UN force and giving the UN forces a mandate to stop the massacres:
White House and was told the following by an official: “We don’t feel there is a base of public support for taking any action [apparently including UN action] in Rwanda.” On May 4, Representatives Kweisi Mfume (D-MD) and Donald Payne (D-NJ) wrote on behalf of the Congressional Black Caucus urging the United States to finance UN efforts for troop reinforcements and to provide military logistical support. The Congressional Black Caucus had also threatened to formally boycott the White House Conference on Africa in late June of 1994, and most skipped the conference, viewing it as primarily a public relations ploy and because members had not received formal invitations or consultation. The Caucus had also objected to US policy toward people of color in Haiti and Rwanda. On June 1, Senator Edward Kennedy (D-MA) had written to Secretary Warren Christopher, copying Secretary Perry and Anthony Lake, to request that the administration undertake steps alongside UN allies to jam the Rwandan radio broadcasts. He did not receive a response for eight weeks, after the genocide’s conclusion. On June 8, Senator Dave Durenberger (R-MN) wrote to Clinton urging US support for a regional force, humanitarian assistance, diplomatic negotiations, public condemnations and accountability for the perpetrators of the atrocities, and restraint on the part of the RPF. Senator Daniel P. Moynihan also voiced his concern in a June 22 letter about Rwanda and asked President Clinton to encourage UN forces to stop the massacres. Moynihan


further advised the administration to call the atrocities genocide and to multilaterally “pre­vent and punish those who are even now committing this crime.”461 Some evidence suggests that his pressure may have contributed to the administration’s decision to publicly refer to the atrocities as genocide for the first time on June 26, 1994.462 Representative Tony Hall (D-OH) telephoned the White House on June 10 to express his concerns about the speed of humanitarian aid delivery, peacekeeper deployment, and the administration’s failure to call the atrocities genocide.463 That same day, members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee sent a letter to President Clinton arguing that “the ongoing genocide in Rwanda justifies—indeed, requires—an urgent response pursuant to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.”464 They specifically recommended that the United States call the atrocities genocide, consider whether the government of Rwanda deserved a seat on the UN Security Council, and address the “looming crisis of refugees from Rwanda.”465 Clinton responded on July 26, 1994, after the genocide’s conclusion, in a letter highlighting US policies to address the crisis, including the administration’s support for the French operation, its closing of the Rwandan Embassy, its encouragement of investigations into breaches of international law, and its


464 Dashes as they appear in the document: “Letter from Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Members to President Clinton,” 1; “Letter from Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Members to President Clinton (2),” 1.

465 “Letter from Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Members to President Clinton,” 1–2; “Letter from Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Members to President Clinton (2),” 1–2.
participation in discussions with other Security Council members to consider removing Rwanda from the Council.\textsuperscript{466}

In sum, for the duration of the genocide, from April to July of 1994, congressional activity was limited. Congress, still reeling from failures in Somalia, had developed an aversion to peacekeeping. Several members of Congress supported limited US engagement in Rwanda, and successful congressional legislative action directly related to the crisis was restricted to a single senate resolution and two amendments. Several members of Congress did write to President Clinton to express their concerns about the atrocities. However, these letters were largely isolated voices, and their private nature allowed the Clinton administration to ignore them for weeks, even months. Congress, in short, did not exert a significant degree of pressure on the Clinton administration for a change in policy toward more robust measures. Indeed, administration officials feared an outcry from Congress if they did increase US engagement.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The genocide in Rwanda occurred over the course of just one hundred days in the spring and summer months of 1994. During this period, none of the three variables that are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for significant policy change toward more robust action emerged. Part of the reason for their failure to emerge lies in the memory of Somalia, which had a lasting effect both on the American public and on Congress, as well as the sheer speed of the genocide, which likely impeded the emergence of a dissent as well as congressional and public pressure. Throughout the crisis, the United States thus pursed a stagnant policy consisting of limited private diplomatic, public condemnation, humanitarian, and punishing efforts. Many of these circumspect policies failed to make a difference in the genocide. The policy response of intervention was not considered.

In the case narrative, we see several instances where US officials appear to be taking deliberate steps to avoid engagement—for example, the administration does not use the word genocide, fearing it will incite public pressure to react strongly. In other instances, the United States is so consumed with worries of another UN peacekeeping failure—and not unduly given the then-capabilities of UNAMIR—that it engages in a series of slow-moving negotiations with UN officials, seemingly unaware of the precious time passing and missed opportunities to save lives. At still other times, bureaucratic obstacles—the unwillingness of the UN to accept the wheeled APCs—further delays the international response. Officials further cite simple distraction with other international issues that held more political salience in American politics.

Is the Rwandan case a story of a US administration doing all it can to avoid engagement? Or, is it mainly a story of distraction, fog, and bureaucratic obstacles to responsiveness? When the evidence is viewed in its totality, the case appears to be a mix of both. We know the following to be true: the Clinton administration did not favor a high degree of US engagement in the crisis; the administration feared political consequences for significant engagement; the administration actively sought to avoid another African peacekeeping failure; high-level officials busied themselves with other crises; the genocide was not given high priority in the government; and all the while, frustratingly slow bureaucratic deliberations further impeded an international response to a genocide that was over in just one hundred days. Deliberate avoidance and fog can be linked, and are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Fog and distraction may have more of an effect when an administration lacks an interest in addressing the issue at hand.
More broadly, the case of Rwanda, like Bosnia under George H.W. Bush and the early years of both the Holocaust and Clinton Bosnia cases, demonstrates how policy remains limited and largely unchanging in the absence of an inner-circle dissent, a positive value on political liability (costs for inaction), and a high degree of congressional pressure. In order to have seen significant policy change toward increased responsiveness during the Rwandan crisis, all three of these variables needed to have been present at high levels. These variables, I argue, are able to awaken presidents and their administrations from periods of stagnancy—caused by any number of sources, including distraction, fog, and indeed, fears of political costs for action. Yet, in the Rwandan case, the three individually necessary and jointly sufficient variables were not present in high levels, and thus unsurprisingly, policy did not shift toward increased engagement.
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CHAPTER 6: UNDERSTANDING DISSENT: ARMENIA AND BANGLADESH

INTRODUCTION

One of the most interesting findings of the dissertation is the consistent presence and importance of dissent in the United States government during cases of mass killing. The evidence demonstrates that, historically, inner-circle dissent is an individually necessary and jointly sufficient factor for policy change. During the Holocaust, Henry Morgenthau Jr., an inner-circle dissenter, and his team at the Treasury were able to dramatically alter US policy and create the War Refugee Board. Inner-circle dissenter Madeleine Albright likewise sparked an intensive internal policy review and ultimately persuaded President Clinton to alter his approach to the crisis in Bosnia. Yet, throughout the case studies, we also see that lower or mid-level dissenters, or those without access to the president, do not have as much success in changing policy. The mid-level dissenters in the Bosnia cases, for instance, were forced to use ineffective official channels or to resign in order to convey their opposition to US policy. Lacking routine and informal access to the president, these dissenters were unable to exert the same degree of influence as the inner-circle dissenters.

The stories of two American dissenters during two as yet undiscussed cases of mass killing emphasize the importance of the position of the dissenter in determining the effectiveness of the dissent. During the Armenian Genocide of the First World War, Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire Henry Morgenthau Sr. had warned the United States about the massacres of Armenians and had even interjected himself into domestic Ottoman affairs to advocate on their behalf. President Woodrow Wilson, who had hoped to remain neutral during the war and whose administration rejected Morgenthau’s policy recommendations, nevertheless praised Morgenthau’s efforts upon his return to the United States. In 1971, Archer Blood was serving as the Consul General in Dacca, East Pakistan, in a position not dissimilar from Morgenthau’s. When the Pakistani government launched a mass killing campaign in the East, Blood warned the Nixon administration about what he called genocide, and the consulate in Dacca sent the first
dissent cable in the history of the Foreign Service. In contrast to Morgenthau, Blood was recalled from his position, and several of his colleagues in the consulate were fired.

The following discussion provides a short narrative detailing the stories of Morgenthau and Blood. The description here further illustrates the importance of the position of the dissenter. We see that Morgenthau’s status as a political appointee and longtime associate of President Wilson’s allows him to provide a dissent without reprisal while Blood, a career civil servant, is easily cast aside. Notably, both of these men dissented in cases that lacked the confluence of inner-circle dissent, high congressional pressure, and a positive value on political liability, so neither case exhibited a significant policy change.

ARCHER BLOOD AND BANGLADESH

Archer Blood had entered the Foreign Service in 1947, serving in various posts around the world before arriving in East Pakistan, first as a political officer in 1960, then later in 1970 as Consul General of the United States in Dacca, East Pakistan. In 1971, while Blood was posted in Dacca, years of oppression of East Pakistan culminated in a mass killing campaign in the East that resulted in the deaths of approximately three million people. Blood and several of his subordinates would offer a dissent, arguing that the United States should do more to stop the atrocities. In response, President Nixon and National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger would attempt to destroy Blood’s career and punished several of his subordinates.

THE KILLINGS, DISSENT, AND RESPONSE

The massacres in East Pakistan in 1971 had their origins in decades of West Pakistani oppression of the East: all major government institutions were located in the West; most economic investment occurred in West Pakistan; and the Pakistani elite frequently undermined Bengali culture and language, believing that Bengalis were too influenced by Hindu practices. Yet, in December of 1970, the Pakistani government, under General Yahya Khan, agreed to hold

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2 Ibid., 15-16; 17-18.


democratic elections, the first of their kind in Pakistan. The election resulted in victory for the Bengali nationalist party, the Awami League, which secured control over their province, a national majority, and the ability to form the federal government. General Khan subsequently attempted to prevent the Awami League from taking control of Pakistan, which in turn spurred nonviolent protests by Bengalis and the start of negotiations between the League and Khan. On March 25, however, Khan unexpectedly ended the negotiations and launched military operations against the city of Dacca, the capital of East Pakistan, as well as Chittagong, Comilla, Khulna, and others. The killings would continue for nine months and witnessed the deliberate targeting of Hindus, though Muslim Bengalis comprised most of the victims.

When the atrocities began, Blood and his staff had immediately sent information on the crisis back to Washington; however, these reports went unanswered. On March 28, frustrated by the unresponsiveness from Washington, Blood sent a telegram entitled “Selective Genocide.” In the cable, he noted that the Pakistani military and Martial Law Administrators were “systematically eliminating” supporters of the Awami League and that there was widespread killings of Bengalis and Hindus. Blood asserted that “full horror of PAK military atrocities will come to light sooner or later. I, therefore, question continued advisability of present USG posture of pretending to believe GOP [Government of Pakistan] [...] We should be

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8 Ibid., 298.
9 Ibid., 298; 302.
expressing our shock." In his telegram, he had also briefly mentioned that “many Bengalis have sought refuge in homes of Americans.”

State Department officials responded to his “Selective Genocide” telegram by limiting the distribution of the message and by informing Blood that he should tell any Americans hiding East Pakistanis that they should stop doing so. The White House likewise ignored Blood’s reports. President Nixon judged that it was best not to speak out against the atrocities.

Nevertheless, Blood continued to send Washington information on the atrocities and on the specific targeting of Hindus. Increasingly alarmed by the degree of violence, he recommended an evacuation of American citizens in non-official positions. On the last day of the evacuation on April 6, Blood’s colleagues showed him a dissent letter that they had composed on US policy toward East Pakistan and requested that he send it along to the State Department, to other consular posts in Pakistan, and to the American Embassy. The cable was signed by twenty officers, among them the Provincial Agency for International Development Mission Director, the Public Affairs Officer, Blood’s deputy, and the economic, consular, and administration section heads. The dissent, the first formal dissent cable in Foreign Service history, stated the following:

[With the conviction that U.S. policy related to recent developments in East Pakistan serves neither our moral interests broadly defined nor our national interests narrowly]  

17 Ibid., 64.  
defined, numerous officers of AMCONGEN Dacca, USAID [United States Agency for International Development] Dacca and USIS [United States Information Service] Dacca consider it their duty to register strong dissent with fundamental aspects of this policy. Our government has failed to denounce the suppression of democracy. Our government has failed to denounce atrocities. Our government has failed to take forceful measures to protect its citizens while at the same time bending over backwards to placate the West Pak dominated government and to lessen likely and deservedly negative international public relations impact against them.\(^{23}\)

Blood agreed to transmit the message and decided to add his own commentary in lieu of placing his signature alongside the other twenty officials.\(^{24}\) In his commentary, Blood conveyed that he supported the right of the signatories to express their dissent and noted that they were “among the finest US officials in East Pakistan.”\(^{25}\) He explained his name’s omission from the list of signatories by writing the following: “I also subscribe to these views but I do not think it appropriate for me to sign their statement as long as I am principal officer at this post.”\(^{26}\) When the State Department received the cable, nine other officers sent a note to Secretary of State William Rogers expressing their agreement with the dissent.\(^{27}\)

With the exception of the nine additional dissenters in the State Department, the dissent cable and Archer Blood’s actions more generally were met with resistance in Washington. Blood argues that their dissent “certainly made no dent in the Nixon-Kissinger stance toward events in East Pakistan.”\(^{28}\) Following the transmission of the April 6 cable, the Ambassador in Pakistan, Joseph Farland, ordered officials in Karachi, Lahore, and Peshawar to destroy the message.\(^{29}\) Both Kissinger and Secretary of State Rogers were enraged by the dissent.\(^{30}\) The State Department’s official reply to the cable noted that the events in East Pakistan were an internal issue for the Pakistani Government.\(^{31}\) When the dissent was raised in a meeting in the Oval


\(^{26}\) Ibid., 3.


\(^{29}\) Ibid., 246.


Office, Nixon argued that because the administration had done nothing for victims of the conflict in Biafra, and because Biafra was in his opinion worse than what was occurring in Pakistan, they could not now do something to help those in East Pakistan. Kissinger meanwhile worried about upsetting the West Pakistani government and reiterated that the administration should not take sides in the conflict.

Policy thus did not change as a result of the dissent cable. The State Department did stop large shipments of military supplies to Pakistan and did take action to restrict economic aid when the atrocities began, both without approval from the White House, but other military supplies nevertheless continued to reach Pakistan. Though the Nixon administration noted “concern” about the use of US arms, it did not request that Pakistan stop employing US weaponry in carrying out the atrocities and in fact affirmed to the Pakistani government that the military agreements “imposed no bar on [the] use of such arms for internal security.” American officials did not condemn the killings beyond isolated remarks by Ambassador Farland well into the massacres and other limited State Department suggestions and expressions of an American desire for peace and its concern about abuses. For instance, on April 6, Assistant Secretary Joseph Sisco told Pakistani Ambassador Agha Hilaly that “there was increasing concern” in the US government, but at the same time, he explained that the United States recognized that this was an internal matter for Pakistan and the United States only wished to be helpful. Similarly, in June, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Christopher Van Hollen, noted US concern about human rights abuses, but added that the United States “was not passing judgment” and that they had seen reports of human rights violations by both the Martial Law authorities and the Bengalis. The State Department, in its own formulation, sought to

33 Ibid., 86–87.
38 “Human Rights in East Pakistan,” June 8, 1971, 1, RG 59 General Records of the Department of State, Subject Numeric Files, 1970-73 Social, SOC 13 PAK-SOC 11-5 PAR, Box 3089, Folder: SOC 13 PAK 1/1/70, National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
propose suggestions “in [the] context [of] our friendly relations with Pakistan […] we recognize
[the] decision is one for Pakistan itself to make.” 39

In April, consistent with routine procedure, Kissinger requested that the State Department
furnish policy options for President Nixon. 40 Based on a range of possibilities proposed by
State, 41 Kissinger decided that the United States should continue with the unapproved State
action to stop large military shipments, while allowing smaller and nonlethal items through in
addition to items from any preexisting equipment licenses. 42 He also proposed that the United
States use economic aid to promote political concessions in order to end the war and provide for
a transition to autonomy for East Pakistan. 43 On May 2, Nixon approved Kissinger’s proposal,
with an added handwritten note: “To all hands. Don’t squeeze Yahya at this time.” 44

In addition to avoiding any significant action that might pressure Pakistan, Nixon and
Kissinger decided to punish the dissenters. From the start, Kissinger had regarded Blood’s
dissent as an indication of the Consul General’s cowardice and weakness. 45 In April, around the
time that Nixon and Kissinger finalized US policy toward the crisis and shortly after the dissent
cable was transmitted, it was decided that Blood would be removed from his position in Dacca. 46
For the six years following his time as Consul General, Archer Blood was in, as he described,
“professional exile,” kept from working on any subjects related to foreign policy. 47 He retired
from the Foreign Service in 1982, having been unable to resurrect his career within the State
Department. 48 US Information Service officer Brian Bell and development officer Eric Griffel,

40 Kissinger, White House Years, 855.
41 Kissinger reflects in his memoir that the State Department had presented its preferred option between two other
options that were so extreme as to not serve as viable choices. For instance, one of the alternatives was complete
support for the Pakistani government: Ibid., 855–56.
42 Ibid., 855–856; 858–859; Eventually, Kissinger supported a State proposal to stop the 3–4 million in the military
pipeline for Pakistan with the understanding that doing so would facilitate economic assistance; the plan was
finalized in November, 1971: Ibid., 865; It is estimated that between March 25 and the end of September, 1971,
Pakistan received approximately 3.8 million in US munitions: Bass, The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a
Forgotten Genocide, 206; Nixon and Kissinger would also approve the illegal transfer of arms to Pakistan during the
crisis: Ibid., 293–301.
43 Kissinger, White House Years, 855–56; The United States also took action later on to prevent famine in East
Pakistan and ensure relief aid; for more, see: Bass, The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten
Genocide, 245–46; On refugee aid, see: Ibid., 248–49; Also: Kissinger, White House Years, 870–71.
44 Kissinger, White House Years, 856; Bass, The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide,
114–16.
46 Ibid., 117.
both dissent cable signatories, were also removed from their positions.\textsuperscript{49} Policy had not changed as a result of the dissent, and Blood and his associates had been punished.

**WHY THE DISSENT WAS INEFFECTIVE**

Nixon and Kissinger’s aversion to the dissenters and to their policy recommendations is unsurprising, given the value on political liability at the time. In this case, the political liability variable was negative (costs for action) as a result of Nixon’s desire to use Pakistan as a conduit innormalizing relations with China and the administration’s desire to balance against Soviet influence in the region. General Khan had initially volunteered to be an intermediary between the United States and China in October of 1970.\textsuperscript{50} In April of 1971, the first message from Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai to Nixon would come through Yahya Khan, just as the crisis in the East was beginning to unfold.\textsuperscript{51} Yahya Khan’s ability to transmit this historic communication solidified his position as the United States’ sole channel to China—other options, in Bucharest, Warsaw, and Paris, were now discarded.\textsuperscript{52} Sustaining this channel of communication moving forward required cooperation from Pakistan.\textsuperscript{53}

The importance of the channel to China in shaping US policy toward Pakistan is supported by the comments of several former officials. Archer Blood cites the outreach to China as the driving force behind the Nixon administration’s unwillingness to criticize the Pakistani government.\textsuperscript{54} Kissinger writes in his memoir that they had “every incentive to maintain Pakistan’s goodwill. It was our crucial link to Peking.”\textsuperscript{55} He further argued that because Pakistan had become “our sole channel to China; once it was closed off it would take months to make alternative arrangements.”\textsuperscript{56} Harold Saunders, a senior White House aide, likewise argues that the opening to China was “the governing factor” in determining US relations with Pakistan.\textsuperscript{57} Christopher Van Hollen has written that the opening to China was “the most important factor”

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid., 211.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid., 103.
\textsuperscript{51} Ibid., 113–14.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., 147–48.
\textsuperscript{55} Kissinger, *White House Years*, 853.
\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 854; 913; For more on this, see: Blood, *The Cruel Birth of Bangladesh: Memoirs of an American Diplomat*, 256–57.
\textsuperscript{57} Saunders as quoted in Bass, *The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide*, 204.
influencing Nixon and Kissinger’s response to the crisis. Still, as noted, Yahya Khan did not finally solidify his role as the sole channel to China until April of 1971. Gary Bass, Archer Blood, and Van Hollen have consequently highlighted that, at the very beginning of the massacres, Nixon and Kissinger could have employed other potential intermediaries. Other options were also available several months later. On July 16, a channel through Paris was established following the announcement of Kissinger’s secret trip to China.

Yet, Kissinger and other administration officials stress that the channel itself, though vital, was not their only concern. A related desire to balance against Soviet influence in the region also contributed to US accommodation of Pakistan during this time. Indeed, Winston Lord, an aide to Kissinger on China at the time, argues that the rationale for US policy toward Pakistan during the crisis was fueled by geopolitical considerations: India had the support of Russia, so the United States should support Pakistan. Kissinger likewise alluded to the need to maintain balance in Asia, noting in his memoir that the China initiative itself was “of fundamental importance to the global balance of power.” Consistent with Lord’s assessment, Kissinger further writes that India—which eventually intervened in the conflict—was a partner of the Soviet Union, and a failure to stand up to what Kissinger described as India’s “naked recourse to force” would have undermined US standing in the world and set “a most dangerous precedent for Soviet behavior.”

Containing Soviet influence in the region had in fact been a longstanding component of US foreign policy. A 1967 White House document from the Johnson administration outlining US arms sales to India and Pakistan notes the following:

Nobody disputes the objectives of our arms supply policy on the subcontinent. We want to (1) support the legitimate security needs of both India and Pakistan while avoiding anything which might encourage them to fight each other; (2) induce them to keep their

58 Van Hollen notes that it was important to Nixon and Kissinger, but he lays out a case for why Nixon and Kissinger’s assumptions about the frailty of the channel were incorrect: Van Hollen, “The Tilt Policy Revisited: Nixon-Kissinger Geopolitics and South Asia,” 340.
61 Others have also pointed to the potential influence of Nixon’s good personal relations with Pakistani leadership and relatively poor relations with leaders in India: Ibid., 341; See also: Bass, The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide, 6–7.
63 Kissinger, White House Years, 913.
64 Ibid., 913–14.
defense spending to the minimum really necessary for security [...] (3) avoid driving either country to the Soviets or the Chicoms as sole or main arms suppliers; and (4) keep our bilateral relations with both in reasonable repair [emphasis added].

Under the Johnson administration, in the years just prior to the crisis in 1971, India had in fact been drifting closer to the Soviet Union. In March of 1968, shortly before the Nixon administration took control, US Ambassador to India, Chester Bowles, met with Indian Defense Minister Swaran Singh. According to a summary of the meeting prepared for Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Singh had noted that he was “concerned about the current lack of rapport between USG [the United States] and GOI [India].” He went on to argue that the United States had a “lack of appreciation” for India’s concerns about a Chinese threat. Because the United States had been unwilling to assist India in preparing defenses against China, he continued, India had to turn to the Soviet Union.

US officials also worried about Pakistani drift toward the Soviet Union in the years leading up to 1971. Ambassador to Pakistan Benjamin Oehlert argued in 1968 that “US economic aid to Pakistan is vital anchor to windward serving as mainstay of resistance to pressures for further policy drift toward China and USSR.” Oehlert later wrote the following: “I seriously doubt that we can stem the tide here of drift toward reliance on the communist world [...] without the encouragement of a few tanks.” US military aid to the region was thus inextricably linked toward maintaining a balance of power, and maintaining a balance entailed

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66 Bass, The Blood Telegram: Nixon, Kissinger, and a Forgotten Genocide, 5-6; 42.
68 Ibid., 2.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid., 3.
limiting Soviet influence. When India began improving relations with the Soviet Union in the years leading up to 1971, US support of Pakistan became even more important.

In sum, in 1971, the political liability variable for Nixon was decidedly negative (costs for action). Nixon and Kissinger were concerned about the global balance of power in the region and wanted to contain Soviet influence in keeping with longstanding US foreign policy. India’s increasing friendship with the Soviet Union made US support of Pakistan appear necessary to maintaining the balance. The other critical and related factor for Nixon and Kissinger was the opening to China. Pakistan had solidified its role as the sole conduit to China in April of 1971, shortly after the start of the crisis in East Pakistan. Given Pakistan’s key role in the most important foreign policy initiative of their administration, Nixon and Kissinger were wary of exerting any undue pressure on Yahya Khan, fearing that it might compromise their China initiative.

The final factor responsible for provoking robust policy, congressional pressure, was in fact present in this case, but was not strong enough to force a more active policy. During the crisis, democrats in particular criticized the administration’s handling of the conflict. 73 Unknown State Department officials were leaking some information on the situation to members of Congress. 74 Senator Ted Kennedy (D-MA), a likely Nixon rival in the upcoming 1972 presidential race, was a recipient of leaked cables and used the information to criticize the administration publicly. 75 Congressman Cornelius Gallagher (D-NJ) likewise spoke out on the dire situation in the East. 76 Other members of Congress voiced a desire for the United States to pressure Pakistan to show restraint in dealing with Awami League leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and supported Indian intervention in the crisis. 77 In October of 1971, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in fact approved a cut of all military and economic aid to Pakistan. 78 Still, these congressional pressures were not sufficient to counteract the negative value on political liability and the absence of inner-circle support for pressuring Pakistan. With

76 Kissinger, White House Years, 858.
77 Ibid., 868–869; 875.
78 Ibid., 875.
Nixon and Kissinger intent on maintaining good relations with Pakistan, Blood and his dissent had been dismissed.

**HENRY MORGENTHAU SR. AND ARMENIA**

Henry Morgenthau Sr. had been appointed Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire by President Woodrow Wilson in 1913. During his service, the Ottoman Empire, led by the oppressive Young Turks, launched a genocidal campaign against Armenian Christians residing within the eastern and southern provinces of the Empire. In response, Morgenthau repeatedly intervened on behalf of the Armenians and voiced an unofficial dissent arguing for increased US action to halt the massacres. In contrast to Archer Blood, Morgenthau’s dissenting actions, though also unsuccessful, were met with praise by President Wilson, Secretary of State Robert Lansing, and others.

**THE KILLINGS, DISSENT, AND RESPONSE**

The massacres of Armenians began in the spring of 1915 with the execution of Armenian soldiers in the Ottoman army, the murder of able-bodied men, and the deportation of all remaining Armenians. The Turkish leadership claimed that the deportations of Armenians were a response to revolutionary elements within the Armenian population, though in fact, only a small portion of Armenians had previously engaged in violence. Armenians died in killing stations along deportation routes, from disease and starvation, from hangings, and in some instances, from deliberate asphyxiation. The deportations themselves were in essence death marches, with guards prodding anyone who slowed with bayonets and executing those who stopped moving altogether. Some women were pushed into the Euphrates River and shot if

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81 Melson, Revolution and Genocide: On the Origins of the Armenian Genocide and the Holocaust, 143-44, note that in Bitlis, Moush, and Sassoun, the entire population was targeted for massacre; Peter Balakian, The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America’s Response (New York: Perennial, 2003), 175.
84 Morgenthau, Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story, 1918, 315-16.
they tried to swim. Guards would also notify Kurdish tribes of an advancing caravan, allowing the Kurds to attack the Armenians. These Kurdish tribes would rob the Armenians, abduct the young women, and engage in their own massacres. In total, the Armenian Genocide witnessed the deaths of approximately 500,000 to 1.5 million Armenians from 1915 to 1918.

Appalled by Ottoman actions against Armenians, Ambassador Morgenthau repeatedly intervened on behalf of the Armenians with Ottoman authorities and other world leaders, despite norms for respecting the sovereignty of other states at the time. In his own words, he had “repeatedly spoken to the Grand Vizier [Said Halim] and pleaded earnestly with Minister of the Interior [Talaat Pasha] and Minister of War [Enver Pasha] to stop this persecution.” Morgenthau writes in his book that “Technically, of course, I had no right to interfere. According to the cold-blooded legalities of the situation, the treatment of Turkish subjects by the Turkish Government was purely a domestic affair.” Indeed, the Turks had informed him as much. Still, Morgenthau assured Talaat Pasha that “Our people will never forget these massacres. They will always resent the wholesale destruction of Christians in Turkey.” In a letter to Secretary of State Robert Lansing on August 11, Morgenthau wrote, “I earnestly beg the Department to give this matter urgent and exhaustive consideration […] It is difficult for me to restrain myself from doing something to stop this attempt to exterminate a race, but I realize that I am here as Ambassador and must abide by the principles of non-interference.” In his letter, Morgenthau

85 Ibid., 317.
86 Ibid., 315-16.
87 Ibid.
89 Power, A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide, 6-7; See in particular: Morgenthau, Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story, 1918, 329-63; Morgenthau’s first indication that the deportations constituted more than a population transfer came in a report on July 10, 1915: Simon Payaslian, United States Policy toward the Armenian Question and the Armenian Genocide (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 84–85.
91 Morgenthau, Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story, 1918, 328-29.
92 Morgenthau, “‘American Ambassador Constantinople to Secretary of State, 841, July 10’ contained in ‘Documents: The State Department File,’” 79; Morgenthau, Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story, 1918, 329.
93 Morgenthau, Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story, 1918, 335.
94 “The Ambassador in Turkey (Morgenthau) to the Secretary of State, Constantinople, August 11, 1915.,” August 11, 1915, 985–86, 1913-1921, Woodrow Wilson, 1915 World War Supplement (1928), File No. 867.4016/90, Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), note that the FRUS version is slightly different than the version contained in Sarafian and in the original documents in Woodrow Wilson’s papers at the Library of Congress. For instance, the latter two copies do not contained the phrase “I earnestly beg […] consideration”; Ara Sarafian, ed., “Henry Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Constantinople, 11 August 1915,” in United States Official Records on the
also proposed three suggestions for policy change: (1) the United States “on behalf of humanity urgently request the Turkish Government to cease the present campaign;” (2) the United States make an appeal to Germany to convince its ally to stop the massacres; (3) the United States make “a vigorous official demand without delay for granting of every facility to Americans and others to visit and render pecuniary and other assistance they may desire to Armenians.” Morgenthau noted that the third option “might prove the most acceptable under the circumstances and […] imply our protesting attitude.”

Yet, the Wilson administration, seeking to maintain neutrality in the war, did not heed Morgenthau’s requests for increased American engagement. Secretary of State Robert Lansing did approve of Morgenthau’s entreaties to the Turkish Minister of the Interior and the Minister of War. Further, Lansing in fact attempted to persuade the Germans to try to halt the massacres through their influence with Turkey, and the State Department did facilitate relief efforts indirectly. However, Washington stopped short of confronting the Turks directly on aid.

_Armenian Genocide 1915-1917_ (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute, 2004), 78, Original Citation Provided: The Internal Affairs of Turkey 1910-1929, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, National Archives, NA/RG59/867.4016/90; For another copy, see: “Henry Morgenthau to Secretary of State, August 11, 1915,” August 11, 1915, 3, Woodrow Wilson Papers, Reel 527, Series 12, Library of Congress; I was able to trace the original citation in Foreign Relations of the United States thanks to: Menno T. Kamminga, _Inter-State Accountability for Violations of Human Rights_ (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1992), 16; See also: Keith Pomakoy, _Helping Humanity: American Policy and Genocide Rescue_ (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2011), 82–83; See also: Payaslian, _United States Policy toward the Armenian Question and the Armenian Genocide_, 87.

95 “The Ambassador in Turkey (Morgenthau) to the Secretary of State, Constantinople, August 11, 1915.,” 986–87; Sarafian, “Henry Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Constantinople, 11 August 1915,” 78; For brief summary see: Power, “A Problem from Hell: “ America and the Age of Genocide, 10.

96 Sarafian, “Henry Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Constantinople, 11 August 1915,” 78; “The Ambassador in Turkey (Morgenthau) to the Secretary of State, Constantinople, August 11, 1915.,” 987; Payaslian, _United States Policy toward the Armenian Question and the Armenian Genocide_, 87.


delivery or interfering to stop the massacres. Indeed, in the official reply to Morgenthau’s August 11 suggestions, the State Department’s Division of Near East Affairs had argued that “however much we may deplore the suffering of the Armenians, we cannot take any active steps to come to their assistance at the present time.” Secretary Lansing for his part believed that the United States should not interfere in the domestic affairs of Turkey, and he was somewhat sympathetic to the idea that national security concerns, on the part of the Ottomans, trumped humanitarian considerations. The Wilson administration refrained from forcefully condemning the massacres, implementing sanctions, warning of intervention, or cutting off diplomatic ties with the Ottoman Empire. The United States declared war only on Germany in 1917, not on Turkey.

Provided: The Internal Affairs of Turkey 1910-1929, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, National Archives, NA/RG59/867.4016/299; Ara Sarafian, ed., “Henry Morgenthau to Secretary of State, Constantinople, 12 August 1915,” in United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917 (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute, 2004), 81, Original Citation Provided: The Internal Affairs of Turkey 1910-1929, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, National Archives, NA/RG59/867.4016/91; Ara Sarafian, ed., “Secretary of State Lansing to Constantinople Embassy, Washington DC, 18 August 1915,” in United States Official Records on the Armenian Genocide 1915-1917 (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute, 2004), 82, Original Citation Provided: The Internal Affairs of Turkey 1910-1929, Record Group 59, General Records of the Department of State, National Archives, NA/RG59/867.4016/91; German Ambassador Baron Hans von Wangenheim does seem to have resisted Morgenthau’s efforts to convince him to use his influence to help Armenians. For more on this and additional German objections to assisting Armenians: Henry Morgenthau, Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story, ed. Peter Balakian (1918; reis., Detroit, MI: Wayne State University, 2003), 250–63; Roger W. Smith, “Introduction,” in Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story, ed. Peter Balakian (1918; reis., Detroit, MI: Wayne State University, 2003), xxix; Morgenthau, Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story, 1918, 364–84; On the topic of Germany’s position, see also: Payaslian, United States Policy toward the Armenian Question and the Armenian Genocide, 88; 96-97; For more discussion of Germany’s role, see: Armen Hairapetian, “‘Race Problems’ and the Armenian Genocide: The State Department File,” Armenian Review 37, no. 1 (Spring 1984): 43–44; On State Department action to facilitate relief: Balakian, The Burning Tigris: The Armenian Genocide and America’s Response, 290–91; Further on State and relief: Pomakoy, Helping Humanity: American Policy and Genocide Rescue, 86–87.

Lansing’s reply is quoted in Smith without a citation to a specific letter. A search of Morgenthau’s original memoir did not find the original letter either. Power does not provide an original citation, but instead cites a 2000 edition of Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story from Taderon Press: Smith, “Introduction,” xxxi; Power, “A Problem from Hell:” America and the Age of Genocide, 10.

Payaslian, United States Policy toward the Armenian Question and the Armenian Genocide, 76–77.


President Wilson had other political objectives that would have suffered if he were to increase American responsiveness to the massacres, namely the following: maintaining American neutrality to ensure Wilson’s ability to broker a peace; safeguarding Wilson’s reelection campaign; protecting US missionaries, Jews, and Christians from any retaliatory measures; and maintaining American commercial and educational interests within the Empire. Lansing was particularly worried that any harm to American missionaries could force the United States to intervene militarily and consequently harm Wilson’s reelection prospects. Congressional pressure was also relatively low, with the most notable congressional action in response to the key period of deportation being support for Henry Cabot Lodge’s (R-MA) concurrent resolution, S.Con.Res.12, which asked President Wilson to designate a day on which Americans could contribute funds to Armenian relief.

Morgenthau would leave his post voluntarily in 1916 due to frustration with his inability to halt the massacres as well as his desire to assist in Wilson’s reelection campaign. He also believed that a return home would offer an opportunity to provide Wilson and the State Department with a firsthand account on the current situation in Europe. In correspondence with Wilson from the time, Morgenthau stressed the second of these concerns: assisting in Wilson’s reelection campaign. In January of 1916, Morgenthau had written to Wilson arguing, “I really believe that you can more readily find someone who can completely replace me here [in Constantinople] than you can find a person that can render the service at home which I would

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108 Morgenthau, *Ambassador Morgenthau’s Story*, 1918, 386.
like to perform.”110 He went on to detail his concerns about Wilson’s campaign, to note his desire to assist the President, and to ask Wilson to have Lansing provide him with permission to visit the United States to discuss these issues.111 Morgenthau subsequently returned to the United States, and it was during this leave of absence that he, in his own words, decided to give up his position in Constantinople in order to “devote [himself] to the task of rousing the Democrats from their lethargy.”112

In contrast to Archer Blood, overwhelming evidence demonstrates that Morgenthau was met with praise from President Wilson and Secretary Lansing following his service and his voluntary exit from it. In her book, A Problem From Hell, Samantha Power surprisingly implies that Morgenthau was not received warmly upon his return by stressing that he had “earned a reputation as a loose cannon” and arguing that he did not receive another appointment in the administration following his time in Constantinople.113 Yet, this commentary is highly misleading. Firstly, Morgenthau did receive another appointment in the Wilson administration.114 Correspondence between Wilson and Morgenthau shows that Morgenthau had in fact asked Wilson to be appointed as Ambassador to Mexico in February of 1920, and Wilson immediately agreed.115 However, the Senate subsequently decided that conditions in Mexico were too dangerous to send an American representative to the country.116 Morgenthau did move on to serve as head of a refugee commission at the League of Nations in 1923.117 Thus, while it is true that Morgenthau did not actually serve as an appointed official, President Wilson had immediately nominated him for the position of his choice upon Morgenthau’s request—hardly

111 Ibid., 2-4.
Correspondence between Morgenthau and administration officials further demonstrates the positive reception for Morgenthau and the strong personal ties between him and President Wilson. While Morgenthau was still serving in October of 1915 after the atrocities had begun, Wilson had written him the following note:

This is just a line to let you know that I am thinking of you and that I deeply and sincerely admire the way in which you are fulfilling the very trying obligations and duties of your present post. I have nothing special to write about: this is only a personal message to let you know that we are thinking of you constantly and that your labors are not passing unnoticed, but that we are very grateful.119

In December of 1915, Wilson would again write to Morgenthau in a letter noting “the absorbing and distressing duties you have been (so admirably) performing” and reflecting Wilson’s desire to talk with Morgenthau directly.120 Secretary of State Robert Lansing had also written to Morgenthau to express his thanks for Morgenthau’s sending him information about conditions in Turkey, adding that this information “[gave him] a better insight into what has occurred than anything I have had the opportunity to see.”121 Lansing continued, “I wish to take this opportunity to assure you how general, throughout the country, is the praise which your service is receiving. I have never heard a word of criticism as to the conduct of American affairs at Constantinople, which, under present conditions is the best tribute to you.”122

The goodwill among Morgenthau and administration officials, particularly Wilson, continued after his resignation. In accepting his resignation, Wilson wrote him a letter expressing only praise and gratitude for his action in Turkey:

I need not tell you with what regret I accept your resignation […] Your services there have been of a most unusual sort and entitle you to the genuine gratitude of all Americans, not only, but of the many people of many nationalities whom you were able generously to serve while at your post in Constantinople. […]

118 “Woodrow Wilson to Henry Morgenthau, March 6, 1918,” March 6, 1918, The Papers of Henry Morgenthau, Sr. Conts 7-9 Reel No. 8 of 41 Shelf No. 18, 915, Container 8, Folder: January-June 1918, Library of Congress.
122 Ibid., 1–2.
May I not add an expression of my warm personal appreciation, regard and best wishes?  

When Morgenthau conveyed his desire to write a book about his experiences abroad, including witnessing “the greatest crime of all ages, the horrible massacre of the helpless Armenians and Syrians,” Wilson responded the next day with the following: “I hope you will undertake to write and publish the book you speak of.” When Morgenthau did complete the book, he dedicated it to Wilson. The President appears to have enjoyed reading the book, though he advised Morgenthau not to turn it into a motion picture. In November of 1917, Morgenthau would write to Wilson that “I am prouder of my share in your re-election than any other service I have ever rendered.”

Other administration officials likewise praised Morgenthau in the aftermath of his service. Then Secretary of the Navy Franklin Roosevelt wrote to Morgenthau on November 14, 1918 in a letter that thanked Morgenthau for sending him a copy of the book and joked that Enver and Talaat may soon turn up in New York as fugitives. Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long, who would later be exposed for wrongdoing during the Holocaust by Morgenthau’s son, wrote to Morgenthau praising the book as “a literary accomplishment, of which you should be very proud and of which your friends are proud.” In short, Morgenthau’s

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129 “Breckinridge Long to Henry Morgenthau, September 27, 1918,” September 27, 1918, The Papers of Henry Morgenthau Sr. Conts 7-9 Reel No. 8 of 41 Shelf No. 18, 915, Container 8, Folder: July-October 1918, Library of Congress.
efforts on behalf of the Armenians were met with widespread praise throughout the administration.
CONCLUDING COMMENTS

To summarize, Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, in a very similar position to Archer Blood, argued against current US policy for increased American engagement to protect Armenians. Though 1915 was more than half a century prior to the creation of the State Department Dissent Channel, Morgenthau’s August 11 letter paralleled Blood’s “Selective Genocide” and dissent message in that they both outlined the extent of the hostilities and urged the US government to take action in deviation from the current administration policy. In the wake of his efforts on behalf of Armenians, Morgenthau was showered with praise from Wilson, Lansing, and other administration officials. The personal letters between these men suggest mutual admiration, and in some cases, friendship and affection. Wilson moreover immediately approved of Morgenthau’s request to serve as Ambassador to Mexico when he asked to be appointed to the position. Morgenthau—a close political ally who had been involved in Wilson’s initial efforts to win the nomination in 1912, in Franklin Roosevelt’s words “an original Wilson man,”—had been protected by his status as an important member of Wilson’s inner circle, both personally and politically.130 His son would have the same protection during his dissent in 1944, when he confronted his father’s old friend with the news about the State Department.

Archer Blood, on the other hand, was a career civil servant. He was not one of Nixon’s trusted political advisers, or even a political appointee. Nixon did not have a personal relationship with Blood and was unlikely to ever encounter him again socially or even professionally. Blood and his subordinates were thus forced to use the impersonal Dissent Channel and were subsequently cast aside and easily ignored by a president who wanted to silence dissenting voices. Nixon and Kissinger derailed Blood’s career and inflicted lasting consequences on his professional life. He was a dissenter outside of the inner circle, and he paid the price.

To conclude, the difference in how these two dissenters were treated demonstrates the importance of the position of the dissenter. An inner-circle dissenter has increased access to the president, is often able to dissent quietly and privately, is more likely to be effective, and is less likely to be punished. An outer-circle dissenter lacks access to top officials, is forced to dissent publicly through resignation or through formal dissent channels, is less likely to be effective, and

130 “Franklin Roosevelt to Henry Morgenthau, November 14, 1918.”
is more likely to be punished. Further research is required to determine definitively whether it is the privacy of the inner-circle dissent or the relationship of the president to the inner-circle dissenter, or some combination of both, that ultimately leads to the success of inner-circle dissent. For now, we can imagine that had Wilson’s political liability variable been positive (costs for inaction) and had the Congress been more receptive to a stronger American response to the atrocities, Wilson would have heeded Morgenthau’s advice. Blood, on the other hand, would not have been successful even if Nixon had perceived costs for inaction alongside a high degree of pressure from Congress.
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CONCLUSION

This dissertation proposed a novel theory explaining when and why the United States shifts from its modal response to mass killings—responding with only limited resources—to address the killings with more intensive efforts. The theory suggests that three variables are responsible for changing policy: the level at which dissent occurs within the administration; the degree of congressional pressure; and the direction of the political liability variable, which measures the degree to which the case of mass killing presents political costs for the president. When dissent occurs within the president’s inner-circle, when congressional pressure for policy change is high, and when the president perceives political costs for continued inaction, policy changes toward more robust responsiveness. Inner-circle dissent, a high degree of congressional pressure for change, and costs for inaction are thus individually necessary and jointly sufficient factors for change.

The dissertation illustrated the theory by examining the policies of several presidential administrations in response to five major cases of mass killing over the course of the twentieth century. Chapter 2, “From One of Two of a Kind,” detailed US responsiveness to the Holocaust and the events leading up to the creation of the War Refugee Board. In this case, Henry Morgenthau Jr., alongside his subordinates at the Department of the Treasury and informants from the State Department, convinced President Roosevelt to change course amid mounting pressures from Congress and the threat of political scandal.

Chapter 3, “Reluctant Dragons,” detailed the George H.W. Bush administration’s response to the atrocities in Bosnia in 1992, arguing that the three variables that are individually necessary and jointly sufficient for change did not emerge and that policy was mostly stagnant with only limited measures pursued.

Chapter 4, “A Decisive Summer,” covered the William Clinton administration’s response to Bosnia, arguing that Clinton’s decision to change strategy in the summer of 1995 and launch Operation Deliberate Force was motivated by the confluence of an inner-circle dissent from...
Madeleine Albright, a high degree of congressional pressure, and a positive value on political liability (costs for inaction).

Chapter 5, “The 100-Day Genocide,” detailed the Clinton administration’s response to the 1994 Rwandan Genocide. In this chapter, I argued that policy remained stagnant, and I marshalled evidence to show that the three variables required for policy change were not present.

Chapter 6, “Understanding Dissent,” detailed the stories of two dissenters—one inner-circle, one not—who offered dissents with starkly different outcomes. Henry Morgenthau Sr., a close political ally of President Wilson’s, received widespread praise from his superiors and colleagues, while Archer Blood had his career destroyed.

Demonstrating that three variables have been consistently responsible for policy change over the course of a century has several implications. First, the analysis reveals why a swift US reaction to mass killing is atypical. The three variables that force change together encapsulate three kinds of distinct pressures on the president: pressures from within the administration; pressures between government branches; and pressures aimed directly at the president. As we see in the case studies, these variables can take a significant amount of time to develop. The variables moreover collectively demonstrate that when presidents do react, they are typically responding to political incentives, and not to broader human rights concerns. In short, the thesis shows that unless presidents are under fire from several sources within and outside of government, they are apt to ignore or overlook the crisis. In addition, the study is, to this author’s knowledge, the first to identify the critical role of dissent in shaping US responsiveness to mass killing throughout history. Finally, the theory suggests that domestic variables have a key role in shaping foreign policy on mass killing, and potentially in shaping policy on other human rights issues. Inner-circle dissent, congressional pressure, and political liability are typically driven in large part by domestic-level dynamics.

The dissertation makes several contributions to the historical record. The Holocaust case tells the story of the Treasury dissenters in more depth—and drawing on more primary sources—than in previous case narratives. For the first time, readers will have the opportunity to be exposed in great detail to characters in the narrative beyond just Josiah DuBois, and to explore an in-depth accounting of Treasury conversations and deliberations. This new telling thus brings us much closer to understanding the full extent of these dissenters’ actions. The Bosnia-Bush case shows for the first time that President Bush was not as aloof from policymaking on Bosnia
as previous accounts have suggested. He was a driving force behind the first ever UN resolution authorizing the use of force for humanitarian aid delivery—an accounting of which is at times completely omitted from previous narratives. The Clinton-Bosnia case likewise draws on underutilized primary sources to highlight the importance of Albright’s dissenting actions in contributing to policy change. The Rwanda case employs newly released documentary evidence to offer an updated narrative of US policy and a new historical interpretation of policymakers’ actions. Finally, the Armenia-Bangladesh analysis draws on a series of letters I collected among key policymakers to correct a prior assertion in the literature that Morgenthau Sr.’s dissent was met with disdain in Washington.

To conclude, this dissertation moves us much farther beyond the simplistic explanation that “lack of will” for action drives US unresponsiveness to mass killing. These cases together show that will can be defined as a complex of political costs and pressures. Will for action depends on the president’s perception that he will incur political losses for inaction—amid significant congressional and within-government advocacy. Without internal pressures, without inter-branch pressures, and in an environment in which political concerns dictate restraint, presidents do not change policy. Presidents, in sum, act to halt mass killing primarily because of political calculation and necessity, and not because of commitments to humanitarian values or causes. Although presidents may have personally felt sympathetic to the victims and may have wanted to do more to halt the human suffering in each case, the evidence suggests that they are driven to action only when their own political future is at stake, or appears to be at stake. Historically, they are not willing to risk their political futures, or what they believe are other important political initiatives—maintaining broader cooperation from Congress or sustaining a conduit to China—to increase US responsiveness to mass killing.

However, the story told here is not just one of purely self-interested actors. Indeed, the dissertation is equally as much about the opposite phenomenon: people who risked their professional and personal well-being to advocate for strangers. This pattern is perhaps most apparent in the case of the Holocaust, with the story of Treasury’s dissent. From the State Department’s dirty tricks, to fears of phone lines being tapped, to cars not arriving as planned, the dissenters in this case truly acted courageously for the sake of others. However, we also see such courage in the other cases: in the Bosnia case, where dissenters gave up their careers to protest what they believed was ineffective US policy; in the Armenia case, where Henry
Morgenthau Sr. repeatedly intervenes on behalf of the Armenians, breaching diplomatic protocol in a humanitarian appeal ahead of his time; and in the Bangladesh case, where Archer Blood and his subordinates paid an immense professional price for dissenting. Indeed, throughout this dissertation, the reader is confronted with the juxtaposition of what many perceive to be the best and the worst aspects of public service: self-interested politicians structuring foreign policy based on their political fortunes on the one hand; and altruistic civil servants putting what they perceive to be a better, and undoubtedly more humane, American foreign policy ahead of their own interests on the other. Henry Morgenthau Jr. had said it best when describing the kind of people that he needed involved in the dissent in 1944. He had wanted those with “courage first,” people like Josiah DuBois, John Pehle, Randolph Paul, Ansel Luxford, Donald Hiss, Bernard Meltzer, Harry Dexter White, Henrietta Stein Klotz, Sumner Welles, Henry Morgenthau Sr., Archer Blood, George Kenney, Jon Western, Steve Walker, and Marshall Harris.³ And it seems most appropriate to end the analysis with the words for which the dissertation is named, and the positive side of the dual themes that emerge out of this project. After all, as the list of names here conveys, there are more to count among the altruistic than the other.

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