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The Impact of Analogies on the Foreign Policies of the United States and Great Britain: the Case of Intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina provoked vivid debates among Western leaders about the most desirable actions, which needed to be undertaken in order to stop the bloodshed. Starting from the middle of 1992, mounting numbers of civilian victims and refugees raised the issue of some sort of military intervention by Western powers. Thus, during the whole period between 1992 and 1995, the debate of possible humanitarian intervention became intertwined with the question on the use of force. The language, which the policy-makers from Western Europe and the United States used to argue for the implementation or rejection of certain policies in connection with the situation in Bosnia, was seized by various analogies[1]. The images, which these analogies invoked, were powerful enough to determine the course of actions pursued by the Western political and military leaders towards Bosnia and Herzegovina. In general, this study aims at highlighting the importance of analogies in foreign policy-making, thus going beyond the explanations based, among others, on ideology[2], bureaucratic politics and organizational behavior[3] or the impact of public opinion[4]. More specifically, this paper wants to argue that particular analogies can plausibly account for certain decisions made by American and British policy makers and the military establishments in these two states in connection with the formulation of certain policies towards Bosnia and Herzegovina. This particular idea, connected with the role of analogies, has not been, as such, explored in a more comprehensive and detailed way in the literature connected with international involvement in the

Bosnian conflict[5]. The analogies, which the American and British policy makers and military establishments employed, were used to explain their understanding of the Bosnian situation. This understanding, in turn, did play an important role in a cautious and often “hands-off” approach towards the events in Bosnia employed by both American and British militaries and by the Bush and Major governments and in determining a multilateral approach pursued by the Clinton administration in the former Yugoslavia.

Additionally, this study will join a theoretical debate on the character of analogies. Are analogies used instrumentally by the decision-makers as a form of justification for already made decisions? Or do analogies constitute part of the policy-makers’ personal experience and understanding of specific events, which implies that analogies determine the very essence of their decisions? This debate was aptly summarized by Khong’s juxtaposition of the use of analogies for *analysis* of possible foreign policy choices with the application of analogies in *advocacy* for certain, already made, foreign policy decisions[6]. At one end, the writings by May, Jervis, Neustadt[7] and May[8] underline that “framers of foreign policy are often influenced by beliefs about what history teaches or portends”[9] and treat historical analogies as “certain powerful beliefs about recent history”[10], which “provide the statesman with a range of imaginable situations and allow him to detect patterns and casual links that can help him to understand his world”[11]. Thus, analogies are part of the “process by which knowledge is ‘created’” [12]. At the other end, analogies can be seen merely as “decorative figures of speech”[13]. Within this area of argumentation, some scholars claim that analogies are used only as tools to justify policy choices and to legitimize certain actions already made by the policy makers[14]. Thus, the studies of analogies usually accept a dichotomous approach and view the influence of the “trope” (analogy) *either* as being constitutive *or* justificatory in its nature.

This study, following Verzberger classification, will see analogies as performing simultaneously *dual* functions that of a justifier (instrumental function) and that of a determinant (constitutive function)[15]. More precisely, the aim of this paper is to show that

although the American and the British political and military establishments used certain analogies *instrumentally* other policies and military strategies were, indeed, very much *constituted* by the interpretations of the situations derived from the analogies such as Vietnam and Northern Ireland.

Having restricted access to governments' memoranda or even less to people directly involved, this study relies on the opinions expressed by the top political leaders and military establishment in interviews and other public pronouncements, which have been available from the various medias. Additionally, secondary sources such as literature on the Western policies towards war in Bosnia and bibliographies written by policy makers were used to enhance the accuracy and plausibility of argumentation.

The study will, first, present the shortcomings of bureaucratic and public opinion explanations of the American and British policies towards the Bosnian conflict and will proceed with the accounts of the different Bosnian policies formulated by the Bush and Clinton administrations in the context of the Vietnam analogy. Subsequently, the research will focus on the American military thinking and the institutionalization of analogies into the military "Weinberger-Powell" doctrine. Finally, the paper will analyze the formulation of the Bosnian policy by the British government headed by the Prime Minister John Major and the British military establishment in reference to the Northern Ireland analogy.

Weakness of other explanations

This research views bureaucratic and societal explanations of the Western actions or inactions towards Bosnia as being inadequate and failing to explain the behavior of the main actors. For example, the Allisonian model of bureaucratic politics and the notion of 'where you stand depends on where you sit', implied that the military establishment, while being motivated by the instrumental goals of expanding its turf and budget, would generally tend to support military intervention[16]. In this way, the model fails to account for the hesitancy and great reluctance on the part of the American and British defence departments and the militaries to undertake more decisive actions connected with any sort of, even

limited, intervention in Bosnia. The societal explanation, for its part, does not fully account why the American and British policy makers generally failed to take a more resolute stance on the issue of military involvement in the Bosnian conflict during the period 1992-1995. It is not to suggest that the leaders were completely unwilling to take a tougher position and intervene militarily (using air strikes) in Bosnia. Indeed, twice, in 1993 and 1994, the Western leaders were able to give an ultimatum to the Bosnian Serbs and finally in August 1995, followed by a May “pinprick” NATO air-strike, the Western powers carried out a sustain bombing campaign in Bosnia. However, these rare decisions to threaten and eventually conduct the air strikes were taken in extra-ordinary circumstances. Only after the leaders were faced with one-time traumatizing events, such as the siege of Sarajevo airport, which blocked humanitarian aid to the besieged city, appalling killings of civilians in Sarajevo market and the attacks on other UN “safe-heavens”, were the Western policy-makers, not without hesitancy, able to support limited military action. Apart from these few occasions of much tougher policies, the overall attitude of the Western (including American and British) leaders towards the situation in Bosnia was that of a prevailing reluctance and unwillingness to use any military force to get a settlement in the region.

In the context of American public support for the intervention in Bosnia in 1992-1995, Ole Holsti, commented:

Survey data revealed persisting and stable opinions on several points: a solid majority believed that solution of the Bosnia problem was a very important or somehow important foreign policy goal; an equally large proportion of the public asserted that Congress must approve any military involvement; and, although a few Americans believed that unilateral American intervention in Bosnia was either a moral obligation or in the national interest, there was moderately strong support for deploying troops as part of a United Nations peacekeeping force[17].

Additionally, Sobel, based on the various surveys, concluded that the American “public tended to disapprove more than approve (of the president’s handling the Bosnia situation) during times of inaction or vacillation in U.S. policy (...). Conversely, a large proportion of Americans typically approved more than disapproved of the president’s handling of the situation when he threatened or participated in allied action in Bosnia”[18]. These

opinions suggest that, in general, the US presidents (Bush and Clinton) were not under any direct public pressure to keep out of the Bosnia conflict. Additionally, because of the ambivalence of public sentiments about Bosnia, it was very much up to the presidents and the use of their leadership skills to make a significant majority of the public support intervention in Bosnia[19]. However, the Bush and Clinton administrations were generally unwilling to take any initiative.

Western European public opinion in such countries as Britain, Germany and France, for the most part of the conflict, also verged on a near majority that supported some sort of military intervention in Bosnia. For example, from 1992 onwards, the British public was not only supporting humanitarian aid delivered to Bosnia but it actually favored military intervention to impose peace on the warring fractions[20]. This suggests that generally “European publics have been more willing than their governments to act against Serbian misconduct”[21]. The above findings led Sobel to conclude that the Western policy makers have “been more mired in the post-Vietnam syndrome than the public”[22], which strengthens the initial claim of these studies that analogies might have played a significant role in the formulation of certain policies connected with the situation in Bosnia.

Focusing the study

The analogies used in connection with the policies towards Bosnia were voiced by various “agents”. This “analogymania” was not limited to national political and military officials but included media, independent experts from distinguished research institutes, (for example, Steinbruner, the director of international studies at Brookings Institution in Washington D.C. noted in connection with Bosnia: “This has all the earmarks of Northern Ireland”[23]) and the top officials of the international organization such as the United Nations, (for example, the UN Secretary General Butros Butros-Ghali, in public, expressed his worries that the UN intervention in Bosnia “would be a kind of Vietnam for the United Nations”[24]). This study, however, focuses on analogies employed by the people, who were directly responsible for the formulation and implementation of the policies towards Bosnia. Hence the focus is

on top officials from both political and military establishments of the United States and Great Britain.

The American presidency: the Bush and Clinton administrations

The Bush presidency entered the debate on Bosnia and possible intervention in this region in the first half of 1992, when the memories of a stunning victory in the Persian Gulf war were still fresh. After this war, George Bush announced that: “By God, we have kicked the Vietnam syndrome once and for all!”[\[25\]](#). However, the Vietnam analogy was quickly revived, once the Bush administration became preoccupied with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Richard Cheney, Defense Secretary in the Bush administration underlined that “One of the key considerations (...) is the fact that (Bosnia) is an internal civil war. It is different from the kind of situation that arose in the (Persian) Gulf”[\[26\]](#). In August 1992, when the images of the Serbs’ concentration camps stirred the public debate, President George Bush, relying on his previous experience and memory of the past conflicts, was quoted as saying “Before I’d commit American troops to battle, I want to know what’s the beginning, what’s the objective and how the objective is going to be achieved and what’s the end. I learned and I am old enough to remember Vietnam, I am old enough to remember World War Two having participated in it”[\[27\]](#). In the same month, Bush was telling the Americans that “I do not want to see the United States bogged down in any way into some guerrilla warfare. We lived through that once”[\[28\]](#) and later he added “I learned something from Vietnam. I am not going to commit US forces until I know what the mission is, until the military tells me that it can be completed, until I know how they can come out”[\[29\]](#). Members of the Bush administration followed the same path of analogies. During the CNN program “Newsmaker Saturday” the Secretary of State, James Baker, warned that “Germany had many, many divisions for a long, long time (during the Second World War) trying to suppress the situation in the mountains of Yugoslavia” and it did not work out, “so it is not a simple and easy situation” he concluded[\[30\]](#). His successor, Lawrence Eagleburger saw intervention in Bosnia as a possible quagmire, which could “get all of us into middle of another Lebanon or Vietnam. So this is

a very tough issue”[31]. On another occasion Eagleburger remarked: “I am not prepared to accept arguments that there must be something between the kind of involvement of Vietnam and doing nothing, that the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* keep blabbing about, that there must be some form in the middle. That’s again, what got us into Vietnam – do a little bit and it doesn’t work. What do you do next?”[32]. In 1993, the former Bush national security adviser, Brent Scowcroft, maintaining a familiar line of the argumentation of the former Bush administration, stated in connection with Bosnia: “It’s a very tough conflict. It’s very difficult to see how we can seriously affect it without getting involved in many ways that are akin to Vietnam”[33].

Generally, Bush and his political advisors saw Yugoslavia as “quagmire” reminding them of Vietnam or Lebanon[34], where the United States was dragged into prolonged conflicts, which were understood to be civil wars rather than intra-state wars. The analogies, which were often used by the members of the Bush administration, even after they left their offices, helped the policy makers to define the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina in terms of civil war. And since Bush and his aides “found it hard to conceptualize a military response outside of the Vietnam context”[35], meaning outside the context of a civil-war, the analogies and what they implicitly and explicitly implied, set limitations on the availability of other choices, while indicating only a one possible- diplomatic -way of solving the conflict. The use of Vietnam analogies by the Bush administration seemed to determine and at the same time strengthened the perception of the Bosnian conflict as a civil war, rather than, for example, an attack of one country (Serbia) on the other (Bosnia and Herzegovina). This, in turn, meant that, in the eyes of the members of the Bush team and Bush himself the situation in Bosnia could not be easily solved (if at all) as long as the parties continued to fight with one another. In such circumstances, military intervention was seen as being unnecessary and even counterproductive. Additionally, the explicit or implicit fears of gradual escalation, which were accompanying the Vietnam analogy, determined the US military choice, which became hardly an option, since any sort of military intervention, even a limited one, would, according to a prevailing

logic of incrementalism, eventually lead to a full-scale war. Thus, the analogy of Vietnam, which was the most often invoked, undermined the support for any military options, which were doomed to end with a full invasion if limited strikes failed. And these limited strikes were very likely to fail since that was what the Vietnam analogy implied. In the situation, already overshadowed by the Vietnam analogy, no one in the Bush administration was prepared to argue even in support of limited military involvement in Bosnia.

A few months before the Clinton administration took over the reins of the US foreign policies, in July 1992, Clinton remarked: “We do not want America to get into quagmire that is essentially a civil war”[\[36\]](#). He also used analogies of other conflicts. In May 1993, while expressing reservations towards the proposals of save havens, Clinton, already as the President of the United States, said “I don’t want to see the US get in a position where we’re creating Northern Ireland, Lebanon or Cyprus (...). We do not want our people in there basically in a shooting gallery”[\[37\]](#). After the killing of the US marines in Somalia, Holbrooke merged the Somalia and Vietnam analogies and stated that “The scars from the (Somalia) disaster would deeply affect our Bosnia policy. Combined with Vietnam, they had left what might be called a “Vietmalia syndrome” in Washington”[\[38\]](#). Although the rhetoric of analogies used by the Clinton administration sounded similar to the one applied by the previous Bush administration, there was, nevertheless, a qualitative difference in the understandings and the lessons, which certain analogies brought about.

Focusing on the Vietnam analogy, which Clinton and the members of his administration, invoked frequently, it becomes obvious that the conclusions, which Clinton derived from this analogy, were different from the ones, which were present in the thinking of the President Bush and his aides. The Vietnam analogy was not invoked in the way that it would suggest that Clinton wanted to refrain from any action, but rather on the contrary. In May 1993, Clinton underlined: “I’m trying to proceed in a very deliberate way to make sure that there is no Vietnam” and added “I don’t think that we can just turn away from this. Just because we don’t want to make the same mistakes we made in Vietnam doesn’t mean we

shouldn't be doing anything" [39]. Thus, the most important thing is that the Vietnam analogy was indeed used but the understanding, which Clinton drew from it, was different from the conclusions made by Bush. The knowledge "created" from the Vietnam analogy, which Clinton internalized, was related to destructive consequences of the unilateral use of force by the United States, which did not want to rely on any help from its European allies and did not take into consideration their warnings about Vietnam. During a radio interview in 1993, Clinton expressed his belief that one of the main mistakes committed by the United States in Vietnam was to go to war unilaterally rather than multilaterally [40]. Halverson commented that a "lack of allied willingness should have told Washington something (in Vietnam) – a lesson (Clinton) kept in mind when considering Yugoslavia" [41]. Also in 1993, while comparing American involvement in the Vietnam war to the possible intervention in Bosnia, Clinton noted: "I never advocated the United States *unilaterally* sending troops to Bosnia to fight on one side or the other of the civil war there (...). I think that the United Nations, the world community, can do more in that regard. That's quite a different thing from what happened in Vietnam, where the United States essentially got involved in what was a civil war, on one side" (my emphasis) [42]. He stressed "The United States, unlike (in) Vietnam, is not about to act alone and should not act alone" [43]. One year later, Clinton was still using the same language: "The United States cannot go over there (to Bosnia) *unilaterally*" (my emphasis) [44]. Thus, Clinton seemed to be, from the beginning of his presidency, strongly committed to multilateralism in connection with any action towards Bosnia. This commitment was derived from a specific understanding of the Vietnam analogy. One of the examples of the official commitment to multilateralism was the issue of lifting the embargo for the Bosnian government in Sarajevo. Despite the pressure from Congress, Clinton "remained rhetorically committed to the *multilateral* lifting of the embargo, but rejected efforts to end it unilaterally" (author's emphasis) [45]. The Clinton administration strongly objected to a bill introduced by Senate majority leader Bob Dole in January 1995, arguing that it would force the European allies to withdraw their peace-keeping troops from Bosnia and that the war would escalate. This was a rhetoric in

support of the President's commitment to multilateralism. In reality, Clinton himself was convinced that the embargo should be lifted to help the Bosnian government to defend itself and on one occasion he said that: "If there were other countries keeping us from defending ourselves, I'd be pissed as hell or goddamn resentful"[46]. However, despite being "frustrated by the constraints imposed by the allies reluctance to act"[47], Clinton did not want to break his multilateral approach to the crisis in Bosnia, which he believed was the way to avoid "another Vietnam". At the end, the bill lifting the embargo unilaterally by the United States passed both houses but then came August 1995 and the NATO bombing and the start of the negotiations leading to the Dayton Agreement. Fortunately for Clinton, he did not need to test his veto power, (which was likely to be defeated given the size of the majority in Congress supporting the bill), and thus, facing the end to his multilateral approach to Bosnia.

Multilateralism did not exclude the American leadership, which, in the end, proved to be a decisive factor in pushing for the Dayton Agreement. However, a commitment to multilateralism did determine Clinton's unwillingness to go against the Europeans (often the British and the French) and strike Bosnian Serb positions unilaterally, despite the fact that at home, during the period of 1993-1994, Clinton faced increasing pressure to disregard the European concerns and act in Bosnia unilaterally if necessary. Additionally, a commitment to multilateral diplomacy provided a plausible explanation for the Clinton administration's opposition towards Congress and lifting the embargo, although the President himself thought that this was the right thing to do. The reasons for a multilateral approach to the Bosnian conflict were traced back to a specific understanding of the Vietnam analogy and Clinton's own perception of the defeat in Vietnam. In other words, Clinton used the knowledge derived from the Vietnam analogy to comprehend the situation in Bosnia and saw a possible solution to the conflict only within the context of a multilateral approach. Thus, the support for multilateralism constrained the options of the American policy makers, who were constantly preoccupied with the allies' opinions and their agreement for a bolder stance against the Bosnian Serbs. This is not to suggest that Vietnam and other analogies (e.g. Somalia) were not used instrumentally to justify a

lack of greater involvement by the administration. However, the Vietnam analogy and its specific interpretation did explain particular choices the Clinton administration made in connection with the Bosnian conflict.

American military establishment

In the Bosnian case, the military establishment, at least till 1995, remained highly skeptical about any intervention in the former Yugoslavia, which would involve sending in ground troops. A senior Pentagon official, quoted by Inter Press Service in 1992, talked about Bosnia and referred to the difficulty the Nazis had in subduing Serb guerrillas during World War II: “The Serbs are a hardheaded people who historically have been prepared to take heavy casualties”[\[48\]](#). This and other analogies, which resonated in the United States were also used in a purely instrumental sense by the Serbs themselves. The Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic warned in 1992 that Serbs would fight an American intervention and that Bosnia would become “a sort of Vietnam” for the United States[\[49\]](#). Reluctance of the US military establishment towards any involvement in Bosnia was highlighted by the Secretary of State Warren Christopher: “Memories of Vietnam caused many, especially those in the military, to resist a commitment to a dangerous and uncertain mission in a confusing and complicated conflict”[\[50\]](#). Unwillingness of the military establishment to support intervention was clearly related to Vietnam and other similar traumas. Despite or rather because of the success in the Gulf War, which affirmed and reinforced, rather than got rid of the Vietnam syndrome[\[51\]](#), the military became strongly convinced about the correctness of “Weinberger-Powell” doctrine, which was first formulated by Reagan’s Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger in 1984, one year after the disastrous Beirut bombing in which 241 US marines were killed. This doctrine was subsequently “up-held” by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell after the war in the Persian Gulf. The doctrine advocated a use of military force only when vital interests of the nation or its allies were involved, when a clear commitment to victory existed, where political and military objectives were clear, a necessary size of the forces available and the support of Congress ensured. In other words, the doctrine was the antithesis

of everything, which was connected with Vietnam and Beirut and found its full realization in what the Persian Gulf War was all about. Thus, the consequences of Vietnam/Beirut/Persian-Gulf-War analogies were permanently institutionalized in the “Weinberger-Powell” doctrine, which set specific objectives, determining deployment of the US forces. In turn, the application of the “Weinberger-Powell” doctrine and indirectly the Vietnam/Beirut/Persian-Gulf-War analogies led the military to reject a comparison of the Yugoslavia war with the Persian Gulf war and to accept the view that Yugoslavia was “two parts Lebanon and one part Vietnam”[\[52\]](#). This, in turn, implied that the conditions for military intervention in Bosnia determined by the “Weinberger-Powell” doctrine and indirectly by the analogies of Vietnam, Beirut and Gulf War, were not successfully fulfilled. This is why, the military and the Pentagon were generally unwilling to support any intervention in Bosnia during both, Bush and Clinton administrations.

British government policy towards the Bosnian conflict

British statesmen and diplomats seemed to be hunted by their own ghosts, when one considers the Bosnian conflict. They “repeatedly invoked the lessons of the Northern Irish Troubles”[\[53\]](#). The Northern Ireland analogy was propagated in the Major government by Douglas Hurd, the Foreign Secretary, who in 1984-1985 was the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. The analogy of Northern Ireland was subsequently taken by the Prime Minister, John Major, who, as he openly admitted, was “relative novice in foreign affairs (and he was) fortunate in ... having Douglas Hurd ... and (later) Malcom Rifkind” to provide him the guidelines on Bosnian conflict, whose “roots were bewildering” for Major[\[54\]](#).

In the EC meeting at Hague in September 1991, where the French idea of sending military force to Croatia was considered, Douglas Hurd invoked powerful images: “We have experience of fighting from village to village and street to street. We have been in Northern Ireland for 22 years”[\[55\]](#). Similar comments, were expressed by the British delegation during the EC Summit in Lisbon in June 1992, when the EC leaders discussed the use of force to pressure Bosnian Serbs to lift the three-month old siege of

Sarajevo's airport in order to open the way for delivery of international humanitarian aid to the capital. Britain cited "its difficulties in Northern Ireland (...) as an example of what can happen when outside forces become involved in sniper and ambush warfare"[56]. One Dutch official, attending the summit, was quoted: "We are still too divided among ourselves to provide the necessary leadership. Even if French and Italians want to use military force, the British are still traumatized by their experience in Northern Ireland (...)"[57]. The day before the summit, the French newspaper *Le Monde*, published an interview with John Major, in which the British Prime Minister highlighted difficulties in intervening in Bosnia to ease the blockade of Sarajevo's airport and said: "Have you seen where the airport is? It's awfully like Dien Bien Phu"[58]. The analogy of Dien Bien Phu, in this specific context, should be viewed as being used for purely instrumental purposes. This analogy was directed to the French audience and the French government, which was much more willing than the British government to support military intervention aiming at easing the siege of Sarajevo's airport[59]. Still, Northern Ireland remained the most often invoked analogy by the British policy makers. In 1993, Douglas Hurd, while referring to war in Bosnia stressed that: "The only thing, which could have guaranteed peace with justice would have been an expeditionary force, creating if you like a new Northern Ireland, being there for how many years?"[60].

The analogy of Northern Ireland, contrary to the analogy of Dien Bien Phu, seemed to constitute a part of the thinking of the British government and particularly of Douglas Hurd, who was the main architect of the British policy towards Bosnia. In his 1998 book, *The Search For Peace*, Hurd, this time as a private person, again showed how much he internalized Northern Ireland image, while thinking about Bosnia. While referring to the Bosnian conflict, he wrote:

The parallels with Ireland are worth a closer glance. During the years of turmoil in Bosnia I was often reminded of a big sheet which used to hang in my office in Stormont Castle when I was Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in 1984-1985. It was a street plan of the city of Belfast mapped out in a confusion of Orange and Green. It looked like one of those modern paintings which consists of two pots of paint thrown at a canvas... No withdrawing of the map would produce a neat line

combining geography and politics, with each community living in tribal purity within its own boundaries[61].

The significance of this statement should not be underestimated. It shows that Hurd's juxtaposition of Bosnia with Northern Ireland was not a coincidence or an instrumental practice employed, while Hurd was a top policy maker in the Major government. This comparison seems to originate from Hurd's own personal experience of being involved in the Northern Ireland "troubles" and constitutes part of his belief and internal conviction. And since it was Douglas Hurd, who was mainly responsible for the British foreign policy towards Bosnia from the beginning of the conflict until 1995, when he resigned from the office, it explains why Northern Ireland analogy became an integral part of the British policy in Bosnia and determined its direction.

The British military

British military, similarly to the British policy makers, seemed to accept the Northern Ireland analogy and used other analogies, whose images strengthened the Northern Ireland argument. Thus, in August 1992, a British defence attaché justified Major's government decision to help with the humanitarian aid and the rejection of a more radical push for military intervention, in the following words: "We had to take under consideration all (...) aspects. We have stuck to humanitarian effort because we are afraid of ending up in a Vietnam or Beirut situation"[62].

Since, the British military's experience came only from Northern Ireland, others analogies related to Vietnam or Beirut were used rather in an instrumental form to reinforce the argument about the complex situation in Bosnia. However, Northern Ireland had the same constitutive effect on the British military thinking as Vietnam on its American counterpart. British troops were initially welcomed in Northern Ireland but soon their started to be perceived by the Catholic majority as supporting Protestants and thus, as an occupying rather than peace-keeping force. Therefore, there was a fear in the British military establishment that "any force sent to Bosnia, which went beyond the provision of humanitarian aid, would become embroiled in interminable

disputes with the different warring factions”[63]. Additionally, the forces, which were eventually sent to Bosnia to supervise humanitarian efforts, were mostly composed of the military officers, who gained their experience serving in Northern Ireland. Their views were captured by the US Gen. Wesley Clark, who later became the NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe and led the NATO war in Kosovo: “We’re Brits, we’re cynical, we’ve been around for a long time. You young naïve Americans just don’t understand. This is like Ireland (...) and these little peoples will keep fighting each other, and we’re just here to do the best we can given their ancient hatred”[64]. Clark gave also his own account of the impact of Northern Ireland on the British military thinking: “(...) the British army (was) an army very experienced in dealing with Northern Ireland (where it had) seemingly comparable groups of people who stubbornly refused to get along and persistently killed each other (...). Each soldier was taught (...) that these two groups are both tomfools and neither side is right and the whole thing is to stop violence, basically. And when they transposed that into Bosnian terms what happened at least over a period of time, was the UN didn’t want to take sides”[65].

Northern Ireland was invoked by the British military officials to stress certain difficulties of the Bosnian situation. At the same time, the analogy did constitute the thinking of the British military officers about the role of peacekeeping missions and was *informally* (in contrast to the *formal* “Vietnamization” of the US military thinking via the “Weinberger-Powell” doctrine) institutionalized into the British military teaching and understanding of the peacekeeping activities in general and of the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia in particular.

Conclusions

While pointing out the fact that analogies used in reference to the Bosnian situation have been left relatively under-researched, this study made a claim that certain policies of the United States and Great Britain in connection with the Bosnian conflict can be fully understood only if one attempts to comprehend the formulation of these policies via the prism of prevailing analogies and their interpretations by the policy makers and military officials.

This research followed Verzberger distinction and specified the roles of the analogy-“trope” as having both justificatory and constitutive effects on decisions made by policy makers. Based on the public and more confidential pronouncements of the American and British political and military leaders, this paper argued that the American and the British political and military establishments, on one hand, used certain analogies in certain moments instrumentally but, on the other hand, some of their decisions and strategies were very much constituted by specific understandings and interpretations of the situations, which were derived from particular analogies.

The use of analogies such as Lebanon, Dien Bien Phu or, in some circumstances, Vietnam and Northern Ireland served to strengthen the arguments about the complexity of the situation in Bosnia and to justify the decision not to pursue more aggressive (meaning military) policies and solutions to the Bosnian problem. However, the use of analogies, particularly that of Vietnam and Northern Ireland in connection with specific policies, tended to go well beyond justificatory functions and could be seen as determining the understanding of the Bosnian problem and defined the Western policies, respectively.

The Vietnam analogies in the American political and military establishment seemed to determine rather than justify specific policies towards Bosnia. Almost a total “hands-off” approach of the Bush administration to Bosnia and Clinton’s commitment to multilateralism, which was determined by different interpretation of the Vietnam analogy[66], were the example of the powerful influence of the Vietnam war. Since the understanding of the consequences of the Vietnam analogy differed between the two administrations, we see also different emphases; one on perceiving the Bosnian conflict as a civil war, the other one on looking for a solution to the Bosnian conflict via a multilateral approach. In both cases, the effect of the Vietnam analogy on the American policies was almost the same: hesitancy and reluctance to intervene. However, in the case of the Clinton administration, because of different use of the Vietnam analogy, which shifted emphasis from a civil war image to a multilateral cooperation, it became eventually easier to advocate intervention once certain

circumstances changed (e.g. the support of the allies for more aggressive policy was secured).

The importance of Vietnam and Northern Ireland analogies used by the American (particularly the Bush administration) and the British policy makers and military leaders should not be overlooked. They determined the perception of the conflict in the former Yugoslavian republic as just another civil war, where peace can be only established if the warring parties voluntarily agree upon it. However, if the conflict in Bosnia had not been defined as a civil war as a result of prevailing understandings created by Northern Ireland and Vietnam analogies, but as an interstate conflict involving also Serbia, the events could have been different as was proven in 1995. By this time, the US and other Western powers became convinced that the Bosnian conflict should no longer be treated as a clear example of a civil war but more as an act of aggression on the part of one belligerent side. This, in turn, led to the bombardment of the Bosnian Serbs positions and eventually to the Dayton Agreement.

FOOTNOTES

[1] In this paper, an analogy will be understood as a comparison derived from the process of linking specific current events and situations with the events and situations from the past, which are drawn from the same realm of experience. Thus, this study makes a distinction between analogies and metaphors, which are “comparisons between things from very different realms” and focuses just on analogies. For more on the distinction between analogies and metaphors see Keith Shimko, *Foreign Policy Metaphors: Falling “Dominoes” and Drug “Wars”* in Laura Neack, Jeanne A. K. Hey and Patrick J. Haney, *Foreign Policy Analysis. Continuity and Change in Its Second Generation*, Prentice Hall (New Jersey 1995): 73-74.

Due to space limits, the author of this study narrowed down the focus of the research to the use of analogies in the formulation of policies of certain Western countries towards Bosnia. It is not to say that metaphors (next to analogies) were not used or did not play a role. On the contrary, the American policy makers in the Clinton administration have applied the metaphor of “falling domino” in order to define the American national interest in Bosnia and to justify more interventionist policies in the Bosnian conflict. For example, US President Bill Clinton stressed that “it is in the United States’ national interest to keep this conflict from spilling over into a lot of other countries, which could drag the United States into something with NATO that we don’t want”. And he specified this further by saying: “We want to try to confine that conflict so it doesn’t spread into other

countries like Albania, Greece and Turkey”. See Tom Raum, Clinton: Much We Can Do in Bosnia Without Repeating Vietnam, The Associated Press, 11 May, 1993 and Barry Schweid, Clinton Sees ‘No Vietnam’ in Bosnia, The Associated Press, 12 May 1993. US Vice-President Al Gore followed the same line of argumentation: “There is a significant risk of conflict in the Balkans spreading to involve other countries like Greece and Turkey”. Quoted in Terence Hunt, Clinton Wants Tougher Action on Bosnia Despite Hill and Military Qualms, The Associated Press, 28 April 1993. Thus, while focusing on analogies, this study leaves the door open for further research on the role of metaphors in the formulation of Western policies towards Bosnia.

[2] Taylor and Rourke reject analogical reasoning in favor of ideology and partisanship, which, according to the authors determine policy choices of the members of Congress. See Andrew J. Taylor and John T. Rourke, Historical Analogies in the Congressional Foreign Policy Process, *The Journal of Politics*, vol.7, no.2, (May 1995). Since the specific Bosnian policies were largely formulated in the executive branches of the government, this study will focus on the top policy-makers rather than on the law-makers in Congress or the British parliament.

[3] Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision. Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 2nd ed., Longman (New York 1999).

[4] For example, Philip P. Everts and Pierangelo Isernia, eds., *Public Opinion and the International Use of Force*, Routledge (London 2001).

[5] One can come across detail accounts of the American and European policies towards Bosnia. However, analogies used by the Western leaders are treated, if at all, as a background to the main story and little attention is paid to their role and impact. Some studies do look at the role of analogies in the American and European policies in Bosnia but their scope is very limited. See, for example, Wayne Bert, who, among the few, focuses on the application of analogies by Western policy-makers during the Bosnian conflict. However, he does it in the context of their “misuse” and devotes to it only 3 pages (sic) out of 296. Wayne Bert, *The Reluctant Superpower. Untied States’ Policy in Bosnia, 1991-95*, Macmillan Press (London 1997): particularly 113-116. Other writings on Bosnia refer to analogies and the formulation of the Western policies in even more superfluously way, see Almond Mark, *Europe’s Backyard War. The War in the Balkans*, Mandarin Paperbacks, (London 1994): 254 and 324, Steven L. Burg and Paul Shoup S., *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Ethnic Conflict and International Intervention*, M.E. Sharpe (London 1999): 210 or James Gow, *Triumph of the Lack of Will. International Diplomacy and the Yugoslav War*, Hurst & Company (London 1997): 176 and 306.

[6] Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War. Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and The Vietnam Decision of 1965*, Princeton University Press, (Princeton, New Jersey 1992).

[7] Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May, *Thinking in Time. The use of History for Decision-Makers*, The Free Press (New York 1986).

[8] Ernest R. May, "Lessons" of the Past. *The Use and Misuse of History in American Foreign Policy*, Oxford University Press, (Oxford 1973).

[9] *Ibid.*, IX.

[10] Neustadt and May (1986): 35.

[11] Robert Jervis, *Perception and Misperception in International Politics*, Princeton University Press (Princeton 1976): 217.

[12] Keith Shimko, *Foreign Policy Metaphors: Falling "Dominoes" and Drug "Wars"* in Laura Neack, Jeanne A. K. Hey and Patrick J. Haney, *Foreign Policy Analysis. Continuity and Change in Its Second Generation*, Prentice Hall (New Jersey 1995): 74.

[13] Gareth Morgan, *More on Metaphor: Why we Cannot Control Tropes in Administrative Science*, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, vol.28 (1983):602.

[14] Bruce Kuklick, *Tradition and Diplomatic Talent: The Case of the Cold Warriors and Herbert Butterfield*, *History and Human Relations* quoted by Khong (1992):8, footnote 25.

[15] Yaacov Y. I. Vertzberger, *Foreign Policy Decisionmakers as Practical-Intuitive Historians: Applied History and Its Shortcomings*, *International Studies Quarterly*, vol.30 (1986): particularly 225.

[16] On bureaucratic (organizational) politics model of decision making see Graham Allison and Philip Zelikow, *Essence of Decision. Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, Longman (London 1999): 255-324.

[17] Ole R. Holsti, *Public Opinion and American Foreign Policy*, The University of Michigan Press, (Michigan 1999): 92.

[18] Richard Sobel, *Trends: United States Intervention in Bosnia*, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Vol. 62, Issue 2 (Summer 1998): 253.

[19] This opinion is also confirmed by the Sobel's remark: „Because approval for U.S. intervention in Bosnia was often near to majority levels and responsive to presidential leadership, had the United States become more directly involved militarily, the public would likely have rallied around the president (...)"Richard Sobel, *U.S. and European Attitudes Toward Intervention in the Former Yugoslavia*, in Richard H. Ullman, *The World and Yugoslavia's Wars*, *A Council on Foreign Relations Book* (New York 1996):150.

[20] Philip Towle, *The British Debate About Intervention in European Conflicts*, in Lawrence Freedman, *Military Intervention in European Conflicts*, Blackwell Publishers (Oxford 1994): 99. See also Sobel in Ullman (1996): 152-153.

[21] Sobel in Ullman (1996): 152.

[22] *Ibid*, 151. In the context of Vietnam and Bosnia and the public attitude Sobel noted that in 1993, 49% of Americans saw intervention in Bosnia as being comparable to that which “brought swift victory in the Gulf War, whereas (only) 43% thought it would end in slow defeat, as in Vietnam”, Sobel in Ullman (1996): 146.

[23] Quoted by George J. Church, *Saving Bosnia- at What Price?* *Time*, 13 July 1992.

[24] Quoted in Lenard J. Cohen, *Broken Bonds. The Disintegration of Yugoslavia*, Westview Press, (Oxford 1993): 242.

[25] Quoted in Mark Danner, *How the Foreign Policy Machine Broke Down*, *The New York Times*, 7 March 1993.

[26] Quoted in Barton Gellman, *U.S. is Prepared to Commit Combat Forces*, *Washington Post*, 1 July, 1992.

[27] Quoted in Mark Almond, *Europe’s Backyard War. The War in the Balkans*, Mandarin Paperbacks, (London 1994): 255.

[28] George Bush quoted by Barry Schweid, *Bush Resists Calls for Force in Bosnia*, *Washington Today*, 7 August, 1992.

[29] Quoted in Bert (1997): 116.

[30] Quoted in Norman Kempster, *Baker Considers Bosnia Air Raids*, *Los Angeles Times*, 21 June 1992

[31] Quoted in Tom Raum, *Bush Summons National Security Advisers to Kennebunkport on Yugoslavia*, *The Associated Press*, 8 August, 1992.

[32] Bert (1997): 163.

[33] Quoted in Tom Raum, *Washington Today: Balkan Dilemma Has Echoes of Lebanon*, *The Associated Press*, 5 May, 1993.

[34] Craig R. Whitney, *Bosnia; Where Titans Fear to Tread*, *The New York Times*, 16 July 1992.

[35] Bert (1997): 163.

[36] Quoted in Brendan Simms, *Unfinest Hour. Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia*, The Penguin Press (London 2001):56.

[37] Quoted in Jurek Martin, *Clinton Has Reservations on UN Safe Havens in Bosnia*, *The Financial Times*, 22 May 1993.

[38] Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War*, The Modern Library (New York 1999): 217.

[39] See Barry Schweid, *Clinton Sees 'No Vietnam' in Bosnia*, *The Associated Press*, 12 May 1993.

[40] Thomas Halverson, *International Perspectives on the Yugoslav Conflict*, in Alex Danchev and Thomas Halverson eds., *International Perspectives on the Yugoslav Conflict*, St Antony's College, (Oxford 1996):25, footnote 17.

[41] *Ibid.*

[42] Quoted in Tom Raum, *Clinton: Much We Can Do in Bosnia Without Repeating Vietnam*, *The Associated Press*, 11 May, 1993.

[43] During the interview with radio station WFAN, cited in Barry Schweid, *Clinton Sees 'No Vietnam' in Bosnia*, *The Associated Press*, 12 May 1993.

[44] Interview with MTV cited in Donald M. Rotherberg, *The U.S. in Bosnia: Limits of Power or Limits of Will*, *The Associated Press*, 19 April 1994.

[45] Ivo H. Daalder, *Getting to Dayton. The Making of America's Bosnia Policy*, Brookings Institution Press (Washington D.C. 2000): 61. One should add that, although officially Clinton administration supported embargo on all Bosnian warring parties, but, at least, it did not specifically object to military assistance provided to the Bosnian Muslims by some Muslim countries (e.g. Iran). See, for example, Holbrooke (1999):51, footnote *.

[46] Bert (1997): 200.

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] Jim Lobe, *Yugoslavia: Surprise Resignation Highlights U.S. Policy Divisions*, *Inter Press Service*, 27 August, 1992.

[49] Interview with Karadzic on the private Channel 4 television station quoted by *Agence France Presse*, 1 July 1992.

[50] Warren Christopher, *In the Stream of History. Shaping Foreign Policy for a New Era*, Stanford University Press, (Stanford, California 1998):347. A military reluctance to intervene in Bosnia, even as a peace-keeping force, was very well illustrated by Richard Holbrooke in his book, *To End a War*. One day after signing the Dayton Agreement in 1995, a worth noting conversation took place in a closed group of policy-makers in the White House. After underlining the significance of the Dayton Agreement, Vice President Gore, looking at the Defense representatives present in the room, said: “I want to make an important practical point regarding the Joint Chief of Staff and the Pentagon. I’ve had lots of conversations with the Congress. They have told me that our military representatives on the Hill usually leave their audience more uncomfortable than when they arrived. I am not say they are trying to undercut our policy, but they are losing us votes up there”. Then President Clinton stepped in and while referring to Gen Shalikashvili, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said: “(...) We can’t get congressional support without Defence and the military fully behind (Dayton Agreement). (...) Your people have body language. It’s not a question of being dishonest, but we can’t close the deal without the Pentagon’s support”. I know that there has been ambivalence among some of (military) people (...) about Bosnia, but that is all in the past. I want everyone here to get behind the agreement”. Holbrooke (1998): 316.

[51] Kenneth Cambell, *Once Burned, Twice Cautious: Explaining the Weinberger-Powell Doctrine*, *Armed Forces & Society*, vol.24, no.3 (Spring 1998):361.

[52] U.S. Army colonel quoted in Barton Gellman, *Defense Planners Making Case Against Intervention in Yugoslavia*, *The Washington Post*, 13 June, 1992.

[53] Simms (2001):9.

[54] From John Major’s memoirs, quoted in Brendan Simms, *Unfinest Hour. Britain and the Destruction of Bosnia*, *The Penguin Press* (London 2001):16-17.

[55] Quoted in Simms (2001):10.

[56] See William Drozdiak, *EC Endorses Use of Force In Sarajevo*, *The Washington Post*, 28 June 1992.

[57] In William Drozdiak, *EC Leaders Debate Tougher Yugoslav Policy*, *The Washington Post*, 27 June 1992.

[58] In John Holland, *Outside Force Cannot Bring Bosnia Peace, Says Major*, *The Times*, 26 June, 1992.

[59] The American military planners, while discussing humanitarian relief operation, which was supposed to be delivered via the Sarajevo’s airport, also discovered that the airport was situated “like Dien Bien Phu”, surrounded by the

mountains, from where the Serbs could shell the airport with great accuracy. U.S. intelligence analyst quoted in Barton Gellman, *Defense Planners Making Case Against Intervention in Yugoslavia*, *The Washington Post*, 13 June, 1992. Senior official in Pentagon was quoted as saying: “The view here (in Pentagon) is it (Sarajevo’s airport) would be a quagmire”. See Barton Gellman, *Defense Planners Making Case Against Intervention in Yugoslavia*, *The Washington Post*, 13 June, 1992.

[60] Quoted in James Gow, *Triumph of the Lack of Will. International Diplomacy and the Yugoslav War*, Hurst & Company (London 1997):305.

[61] Quoted in Simms (2001):10.

[62] Quoted by Judy Dempsey, *UK Takes Cautious Troops Decision*, *Financial Times*, 19 August 1992.

[63] Philip Towle, *The British Debate About Intervention in European Conflicts*, in Lawrence Freedman, *Military Intervention in European Conflicts*, Balckwell Publishers (Oxford 1994): 103.

[64] Quoted in Simms (2001):181.

[65] *Ibid.*

[66] This difference, in having two various understandings of the Vietnam analogy, could be a result of Clinton’s and Bush’s different personalities and their different experience (one was a war veteran, another purposefully avoided conscription). However, in order to prove it, one would need to embark on completely new and separate studies. The only thing, which should be underlined here is the fact that, although analogies and metaphors could be understood differently because of various reasons, in no way it contradicts the main argument of this paper on the constitutive and justificatory roles performed by analogies and metaphors.

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