

humanitarian groups who do so, but also diplomats who make decisions without regard to the expressed wishes of those affected by them. Oberg noted that the professional diplomats were totally untrained in the arts of mediation and conflict resolution and seemed not to realize there is anything they need to learn in this field.

Yet the military and pacifist positions did not contrast as sharply as one might have expected. For one reason, the United Nations was the most prominent of the outside organizations that came in to perform humanitarian service — in this case to "keep" a peace that no longer existed. Unfortunately, UNPROFOR's mandate was so vague that General Lewis MacKenzie in Sarajevo had to invent a role for his troops²¹ — that of keeping the airport open for the delivery of medical supplies and to protect the humanitarian teams that distributed them.²²

Major David Last, the peacekeeping officer who spoke about protecting civilians, did not exemplify any tendency for the U.N. forces to impose solutions on unwilling citizens; quite the contrary. As an officer responsible for (but actually unable to provide) protection to civilians in zones that had been declared "safe," Last addressed the problem of maximizing the limited resources available in situations of intermediate level danger. His suggested approach is to develop "islands of supervision" which rely in part on civilian-based measures of defence and surveillance. This method uses nonviolent techniques that particularly emphasize support groups, solidarity, hotlines, and the building of community. If Major Last's intervention is a fair indication, it would be a mistake to contrast the policies of military people against those of peace activists. The two may — under proper circumstances — not contradict each other, working for peace as a two-pronged effort.

On the other hand, the areas of convergence between the military and the nonviolent approaches are limited to situations of medium danger in which civilians may be able to influence the situation. Such are not the conditions under which the military

makes its largest impact. Unfortunately, proponents of nonviolence cannot claim great success in preventing or limiting the war in Yugoslavia. If hundreds of thousands of foreign civilian monitors and humanitarian workers had been present in all the battle zones, there might have been a noticeable effect. In particular, the presence of film crews with video cameras tended to prevent atrocities from taking place; some observers have suggested that a corps of foreign witnesses wielding camcorders might have prevented many of the war crimes that took place.

But whatever might have worked in an ideal situation, one must admit that in reality peace workers failed to prevent this war, whereas military force (NATO and U.S. air power) did bring about a cease-fire when it was finally applied vigorously.²³ Whether it finally ended the war has yet to be established.

The Case for Early Military Intervention

There was surprisingly muted criticism during scheduled speeches concerning the failure of the international community (as the European Union, the United Nations, or the United States) to intervene militarily and stop the warfare before it cost so many lives. The great majority of writers on the Yugoslav wars regard this inaction as shameful²⁴ and we may assume that most of the participants shared that opinion, even if they were too tactful to say so in a debate with the conflict resolution specialists.

In any case, no one blamed the peacekeepers for their own paralysis. The UNPROFOR troops lacked any mandate to defend citizens with arms, and when given such a mandate, possessed inadequate resources to do the job. Deterrence does not work unless the intervening military force is impressive. "Go big or stay home," Major Last offered as one of the lessons of Yugoslavia. "If you go big, you don't have to use your force." With hindsight, most analysts are sure it would have been better to "go bigger and go earlier."²⁵ It may be true, as some

²¹Lewis MacKenzie, *Peacekeeper: The Road to Sarajevo* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1993).

²²Some humanitarian workers have since complained that by providing this support, the military did them no favor. In some cases, it had been safer for them to provide health care without the assistance of an organization that many local people regarded with great suspicion. See the interview by Metta Spencer, "A Doctor Without Borders: James Orbinski," *Peace Magazine* March-April 1997, pp. 20-23.

²³One dismal effect of this was that of helping the Croat and Muslim ethnic cleansing of about 400,000 Croatian and Bosnian Serbs, in effect employing NATO in the service of one side in the war.

²⁴See most conspicuously David Rieff, *Slaughterhouse: Bosnia and the Failure of the West* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1995).

²⁵See Warren Zimmerman's book, *Origins of a Catastrophe* (especially Chapter Eight) for a first-hand account of an American diplomat's mounting disapproval of his country's weak response to the Yugoslav crisis.