

7. It is a myth that what is happening today is merely an extension of a conflict that began several centuries ago. Those who argue the historical intractability of this conflict are hard pressed to provide examples of Serb-Croat fighting before the kingdom of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs was created in 1918. This is, in fact, a conflict with fairly recent origins, fuelled by a lack of respect for minority rights on all sides. A combination of circumstances in the late 1980's, not least the demise of the Soviet Union and the growing nationalism of Milosevic's supporters, led to the decision of Ljubljana and Zagreb to make the break with Yugoslavia, in full knowledge that this would be resisted by Belgrade.
8. The Slovenes were fortunate; their war lasted 10 days. The Croats were less so; their war continues to this day. In the resulting fighting, more than 10,000 Croats were killed and over 300,000 were displaced from their homes (out of a population of 4 million), and one-quarter of Croatian territory was occupied by the Serb minority that made up about five per cent of the population. This is what motivates Slovenes and Croats to resist any talk about a reconstituted Yugoslavia or any other idea that could put Serbs once more in a position of control over them. It is a fundamental issue for them, and one that they are prepared to sacrifice for and, if need be, to fight and die for.
9. Bosnians have an even greater motivation to resist Serb domination. Since their war began in April 92, more than 150,000 Bosnians have been killed, two million more have been displaced and the country is in ruins. "Doing a deal" with the Serbs, at a time when the Bosnian army is getting stronger and the Serbs are getting weaker, is not a realistic option for Sarajevo ...
10. These are the fundamentals that underlie the continuing conflicts in Bosnia and Croatia: the Serbs want to live together, taking with them some territory of both countries; the Croats are determined to keep all their territory; the Bosnians acknowledge they cannot have all their territory but want a more viable deal than has been offered by any of the peace plans.
11. In the middle of all of this is the United Nations. None of the parties respect the UN and all have tried to use it to serve their objectives. As we saw in Sector West, the presence of UN troops is not a deterrent to Croatian action when Zagreb believes the circumstances are right to move militarily. The Bosnian Government and the Bosnian Serbs also do not respect the presence of UN troops as they launch their offensives and counter-offensives. The UN does not have the capability to act without the consent of the parties, and will not have that capability even with the deployment of the rapid reaction force.
12. The UN Secretary-General has asked for clear decisions by the Security Council about the future role of UNPROFOR, but will not get them. He favours option D (traditional peacekeeping), but this is politically unacceptable to member states, particularly the abandonment of the safe areas and Sarajevo. They are not prepared to provide the level of troops needed to enforce peace, so UNPROFOR will be left to muddle along, albeit with a bit more firepower. If we accept that there is not likely to be negotiated settlement in the near future, this "reinforced muddle through" will simply postpone the need to make the difficult decision about whether to withdraw UNPROFOR to more defensible positions.