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### Shrink Bosnia to Save It

By John J. Mearsheimer; *John J. Mearsheimer, professor of political science at the University of Chicago, is a visiting scholar at Harvard's Olin Institute for Strategic Studies.*

The Vance-Owen plan for peace in the former Yugoslavia is already a failure. The Bosnian Muslims dislike it and have accepted it grudgingly. The Serbians thumb their noses at it: their response is expressed in the horrors they are inflicting in Srebrenica and the rest of eastern Bosnia. Only the Croats have endorsed the plan with any enthusiasm.

Yet the need for peace is more urgent than ever. Without it, the murder of Bosnia's Muslims will continue and the war will likely spread back to Croatia and onward to Kosovo. This carries with it the threat of escalation beyond Yugoslavia's borders.

The best hope for peace is a more ambitious plan, backed by the U.S. and, it is hoped, the United Nations. The plan should be based on three main considerations:

First, ethnically homogeneous states must be created. Who can seriously believe, after all the inter-communal slaughter, that Vance-Owen's Bosnian state of 10 multi-ethnic but semi-autonomous provinces would be stable? We should create instead a Bosnian state peopled almost exclusively by Muslims, a Croatian state for Croats and a Serbian state made up mainly of Serbians.

Creating homogeneous states would require drawing new borders and transferring populations. Croats, Muslims and Serbians would have to concede territory and move people. For example, the Serbians might acquire Krajina in a final settlement but cede Kosovo to Albania.

Furthermore, a new Muslim state about a third the size of the present Bosnia must be created by concentrating Muslims now scattered across the region into central Bosnia. Remaining Bosnian territory should be given to Croatia and Serbia. Perhaps one million people -- approximately 600,000 Muslims, 300,000 Serbs and 100,000 Croats -- will have to move. Many others have already relocated.

Critics will say that altering borders is a bad precedent and that in many instances it rewards Serbian aggression. The unpleasant truth is that some borders are untenable and preserving them causes conflict, not peace. Moreover, whether we like it or not, borders in the Balkans are going to change. Serbian military power has seen to that. Wouldn't it make good practical and moral sense to organize and plan the border changes rather than to allow the chaos of war to decide them? Wouldn't it make better sense to move

populations peacefully rather than at the end of a rifle barrel?

Second, a comprehensive settlement must address problems across the Balkans. The Vance-Owen plan focuses on Bosnia while ignoring the conflicts in Croatia and Kosovo. But settling conflicts one at a time will not facilitate peace; instead it will probably encourage Serbian aggression. The Serbians prefer to operate in one region at a time. They do not want a multifront war. Stopping the fighting in Bosnia will only make it easier for them to turn to Kosovo. After all, the January 1992 cease-fire with Croatia gave them a free hand in Bosnia in April 1992.

Third, the U.S. and its allies must threaten to use force to get the Serbians to go beyond Vance-Owen and to settle on this ambitious plan. The goal should be to make the Serbians, as well as the other ethnic groups, understand that the alternative to a peaceful settlement is a long and bloody war with no winners.

If Serbia does not accept a settlement, the U.S. should bypass the U.N. arms embargo and send weapons and ammunition to the Bosnian Muslims, the Croatians and perhaps the Albanians. This strategy would cost America few lives and little money. It would also turn up the heat on Serbia, putting it in the position of having to fight a three-front war. This circumstance alone should create a powerful incentive for peace. If not, at least it would allow the Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo to defend themselves.

The threat of U.S. air power against the Serbian Army should be held in abeyance. The emphasis should be on letting Serbia's enemies balance the Serbians. Under no circumstances should the U.S. send ground forces to the Balkans, even as part of a NATO peacekeeping force.

Of course, incentives will be needed to gain a settlement. The U.S. and its allies might accept the principle of a greater Serbia and help create it with border changes and population transfers. They should also promise to lift economic sanctions and perhaps even to help rebuild the Serbian economy.

But as we have learned after almost two painful years, incentives alone will not do the trick. Regrettably, lives can be saved in the Balkans only by threatening to take lives.