



The U.S. power and authority are under strain all over the world, yet Secretary of State Hillary Clinton [is still unable to leave the Balkans well alone](#). She told Senators Wednesday the United States is committed to the integrity of Bosnia-Herzegovina ('we worry about that a lot'). There is "a lot of unfinished business there," she added, alluding - not for the first time - to the need to abolish the Bosnian Serb Republic (Republika Srpska, RS).

Mrs. Clinton continues to see the Balkans as the last geopolitically significant area where she and other liberal interventionists can assert their "credibility" by postulating a maximalist set of objectives as the only outcome acceptable to the United States, and duly insisting on their fulfillment. We have already seen this pattern with Kosovo, and we have seen its replay in Bosnia over the past year. There have been strong pressures from the West, ever since the signing of the [Dayton Peace Accords](#) 13 years ago, to reduce the authority of the Republika Srpska (RS), to question its legitimacy and to label it a "genocidal creation" unworthy of existence. Prime Minister Milorad Dodik was able to weather the latest storm—the attempt by Clinton's No. 2, James Steinberg, to impose the revision of Dayton at Butmir last fall—but the political momentum in Washington remains unfavorable for the Serbs in general and for the Republika Srpska in particular.

Now that intervention is ["an American tradition,"](#) Hillary Clinton wants to practice some more in the Balkans—as if her husband's contribution in the 1990s had not brought sufficient misery to the former Yugoslavia. She places the "unfinished business" in the region, and specifically Bosnia's "unification" based on a radical revision of the [Dayton framework](#), near the top of her list of foreign priorities.

Barack Obama's foreign policy and national security team includes a number of influential figures, and [notably](#) Vice-President-elect Joseph Biden, who are committed to the establishment of a centralized, unitary Bosnian state dominated by [Musli ms.](#)

Mrs. Clinton's commitment to that goal is of an altogether different order of magnitude, however. Her "framework for peace" in the Balkans is the same as her husband's, and that so doggedly applied by her

[friend and role-model,](#)

Dr. Albright: unqualified

[U.S. support](#)

for Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo against their Christian neighbors. The theme is so important

to her that during the primaries almost two years ago Mrs. Clinton listed a number of fact-free, Balkan-related foreign-policy “accomplishments” as proof of her bravery and experience. She repeatedly invoked some

[embellished memories](#)

of a “dangerous” trip to Bosnia in 1996, when she was supposedly threatened by Serb sniper fire at Tuzla airport – although the Bosnian war had ended six months earlier, and video footage shows smiling schoolchildren greeting her in Tuzla.

Mrs. Clinton’s exact reasons for wanting to abolish the Bosnian-Serb Republic and help Iran’s best friends in Sarajevo are deeply personal, and even psycho-pathological. They are therefore not amenable to rational discourse and costs-and-benefits analysis. Her motives are less important, however, than the fact that this is indeed what she wants.

A hint of what is to come [was provided shortly after the 2008 election](#) by the Clinton family confidante Richard Holbrooke (the man who is doing such a terrific job right now of keeping Pakistan jihad-free). Together with the former Bosnian “high representative” Paddy Ashdown, he authored an alarming article, “The Bosnian Powder Keg,” published in several influential daily newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic on October 22, 2008. Anticipating Obama’s victory, Holbrooke and Ashdown presented a plea that “the new US administration gets engaged” and renews its pledge “to Bosnia’s survival as a state, by maintaining an effective troop presence and ... finding ways to untie Bosnia’s constitutional knot.” This last phrase is a clear code word for the liquidation of the entities.

Holbrooke was the chief U.S. negotiator at Dayton in 1995. He [boasted](#) a year later: “We are re-engaged in the world, and Bosnia was the test.” This “we” meant the United States, not “the West” or “the international community.” The interventionists prevailed then, their narrative has dominated the public commentary ever since, and they came back to the White House a year ago.

Like a dog returning to lap up its own vomit, Mrs. Clinton just cannot let go of Bosnia. It is fortunate that there is little appetite in Western Europe (Britain always exempted, of course) for rekindling the Balkan powder keg. Several attempts by Washington to impose risky or even reckless strategies on its European partners have failed lately thanks to Germany’s, France’s and Italy’s prudence.

It is, indeed, absurd for the United States to wage a “war on terror,” and at the same time to [ret](#)

[urn to Bosnia](#)

three

[Algerian-born militants](#)

released from Guantanamo who are now "Bosnian citizens" thanks to

[their military service](#)

with the

[Mujahideen](#)

units of Izetbegovic's army in the early 1990s. Such people were supposed to be permanently removed from Bosnia, in accordance with the Dayton agreement and with the support of the U.S., over a decade ago.-

The fact is that the RS is an essential factor of stability in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Western Balkan region, and that those calling for its liquidation (under whatever name) are effectively aiding and abetting the [forces of global jihad](#) . All along, an old question remains unanswered by Mrs. Clinton and all other unitary Bosnia partisans: If Yugoslavia was untenable and eventually collapsed under the weight of the supposedly insurmountable differences among its constituent nations, how can Bosnia – the Yugoslav microcosm

*par excellence*

– develop and sustain the dynamics of a viable polity? Mrs. Clinton may go on pretending that if there is a "Bosnia" there must be a nation of "Bosnians," and she may even try to impose her vision on that long-suffering corner of the Balkans. That she will fail goes without saying. The only question concerns the price of that failure, and the identity of those footing the bill.

<http://www.balkanstudies.org/blog/hillarys-bosnian-obsession>