

CCC
CONTINUOUS CRISIS COMMITTEE
BACKGROUND GUIDE

AGENDA: THE BOSNIAN WAR
FREEZE DATE: 6TH APRIL 1992

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LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

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Greetings Delegates,

It is with immense pride and anticipation that we welcome you to the Bosnian War Crisis Committee. This committee stands as a testament to the enduring complexity of international relations, inviting you to immerse yourselves in one of the most harrowing and consequential conflicts of the late twentieth century.

The background guide you have received serves only as your starting point. It introduces the fractured federation, the competing nationalisms, and the failed diplomacy that brought Bosnia and Herzegovina to the edge of catastrophe. Yet, as the architects of history and the voices of nations, your research must reach far beyond these pages. Only through rigorous preparation and a nuanced understanding of your portfolio's objectives can you hope to navigate the unpredictable tides of this crisis.

Our agenda, "The Bosnian War," places us at 6 April 1992 the day the European Community formally recognised the independence of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, even as Serb paramilitary and JNA-backed forces tightened their positions around Sarajevo following a night of gunfire on peace demonstrators at Vrbanja Bridge. This moment is fraught with uncertainty: the federation is dead, the army that once bound six republics together is fracturing along ethnic lines, and the fate of a multi-ethnic republic of over four million people hangs in the balance.

This is not merely a historical simulation; it is a crucible where national aspirations, imperial legacies, and ethnic identities collide. As members of this committee, you will represent a diverse array of actors from the Bosnian government and the self-proclaimed Serb Republic to the Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosnia, the rump Yugoslav state, and the great powers and international institutions attempting to manage a collapse they scarcely understand.

Key Expectations from the Committee:

1. Historical Accuracy and Context: The freeze date of 6 April 1992 is critical. Grasp the constitutional, military, and social context of Bosnia and Herzegovina at this crossroads. Understand the grievances, alliances, and rivalries that have brought the republic to the brink of war.
2. Directives Drive Action: Every military manoeuvre, diplomatic initiative, or covert operation must be executed through written directives. Your strategic thinking and crisis management will be tested through these tools, demanding both bold vision and practical feasibility.
3. Navigate Complex Alliances: Bosnia in 1992 is a tapestry of shifting allegiances, external patrons, and deep-seated enmities. Your ability to forge alliances, manage rivalries, and anticipate the moves of both friends and foes will define your legacy in this committee.
4. Ethical and Political Complexity: Questions of national self-determination, minority protection, and the legitimacy of secession present moral and political dilemmas that defy simple solutions. This is a committee that will, by design, confront delegates with the darker edges of ethnic conflict; we expect maturity and historical seriousness in how these subjects are handled.

This crisis committee will challenge you to analyse intelligence, negotiate with adversaries, respond to sudden developments, and balance domestic pressures with international realities. Whether you seek to preserve a unified Bosnia, carve out an ethnic homeland, or advance great power interests, your decisions will echo through the annals of history.

We look forward to witnessing the strategies, alliances, and leadership you will bring to this defining moment.

Good luck, and may wisdom guide your deliberations.

Abbas Ahmed
Chairperson

Ansh Dutta
Vice Chairperson

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INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

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Directives

They are the most powerful crisis tool a delegate can use. Via a directive, a

delegate can take discreet action using all of their portfolio powers and influence almost any sector of an agenda. They are used for conducting real time actions with plausible motive (reason for the directive) and execution (ability to achieve said motive) within your jurisdiction (portfolio powers).

For example, as the Federal Secretary for National Defence of the SFRY, you could do a lot of things, such as order the redeployment of JNA garrisons, arrange a ceasefire conference, or authorise the transfer of heavy weaponry to loyal units. However, there would be no plausible way for you to unilaterally disband the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as it lies outside federal military jurisdiction. Similarly, while you could certainly attempt it, there would be no motive for the Bosnian Territorial Defence to launch an offensive into Vojvodina unless in direct response to a crisis update.

These bits of paperwork will set the direction of the committee and decide its ultimate success. Keeping that in mind, below you shall find a structure of the same to help you understand how to draft them and thus ensure maximum effectiveness. There are two types of directives - covert and overt.

The covert directive is there to help you take individual action based on the powers available to your portfolio.

An overt directive on the other hand is one which involves multiple delegates cooperating to chart out a plan of action.

If the directive is covert, only the Executive Board will be able to read the contents of the directive. Using their discretion, they will choose to either pass or fail the entire or certain parts of the directive. They will also choose whether or not to have it reflected in the crisis update and what effect it will have. If it is overt, the directive will be displayed in front of the entire committee and discussed, after which the committee shall vote on it, with a simple majority determining whether it passes or fails (or whether it goes to the Executive Board or not). While this does not guarantee passage, it can show the Executive Board that the action is strongly supported by a majority and increase chances of it passing.

Once you submit these directives, it will be the responsibility of the Executive Board to judge the feasibility of the proposed measures and incorporate it accordingly into the subsequent updates. While preparing either kind of update please keep in mind these six tenets - Who, What, Why, Where, When, and How. If you address these six points properly you shall have a good directive capable of swaying the outcome of the committee. Directives will be accepted only during the time where lines of communication are open and not at any other times, unless deemed fit by the Executive Board.

The directives can be broadly classified into:

- Covert operations (Covert directive)
- Joint ops (Joint Directive)
- Portfolio Request
- Understandings signed between factions/nations (Treaties, MOUs etc.)
- Presidential Statements
- Overt directives

All the above-mentioned types are self-explanatory. It is completely fine if Joint operations are intended to be of Covert nature. The Executive Board believes however that one of the types requires clarification and that would be the usage of Portfolio Requests. Portfolio requests are sent in when delegates require specific information that is crucial for their next course of action.

This ideally collaborates with them requesting their government agencies, party structures, or command staff to feed them the required information, by conducting certain actions. Only such covert directives can be termed as Portfolio requests. The EB will not entertain portfolio requests requesting random pieces of information that would not be viable to present as a response. Next, the operations themselves can be divided into intel ops and military or strategic ops, broadly. Sufficient understanding of the situation on ground is necessary to implement the right type at appropriate times.

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THE FORMAT FOR DIRECTIVES

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Operation Name (Whatever you wish to call the intended action)

Status - (Whether it is covert or overt directive)

Primary Objective - (What your action intends to achieve immediately)

Secondary Objective - (What your action intends to achieve overall)

Mission Brief - (The details of the operation in a brief manner)

Plan of Action:

(This should be listed in the form of bullet points and should be detailed in nature so as to lay out the entire plan from start to finish. Ideally one should account for all possible exigencies and potential problems while drafting the points and address the same - this will help in creating a watertight plan and

increase its chances of success)

Personnel/Resources involved - (Who or what units and equipment shall be involved in the operation)

Operation date(s) - (The date and time during which your operation will commence though it is not mandatory to mention. If it is a time bound operation then the end date as well. If times are mentioned it should be in the military format, i.e., 1200 hours for 12 pm)

Signed - (Your portfolio name if this is a private directive, the portfolio names of whoever has drafted the directive in case it is joint).

Delegates need to note that updates will largely be based on the directives received, but not all directives will be converted into updates and displayed to the committee. Having said that, we'd like to clarify one extremely important concept for crisis committees:

Fog of War.

Fog of War, simply put, means that it is impossible to know the results of all action undertaken by a particular group/cabinet/faction immediately, as the success or failure will depend on a lot of factors, most importantly, the timing of these actions and the time that would be taken up for the actions to unfold. Therefore it is only practical that the delegates don't expect ALL their directives' statuses to be known throughout the course of committee. There will definitely be instances where your directives would pass, but won't be reflected as updates due to practical difficulties, and vice versa, where failed directives will make it to updates to let the people who have drafted it know about the consequences of their actions. The Executive Board hopes that these crisis committee actions are understood in its absolute entirety by the delegates, and this would eventually lead to easier and smoother functioning of the committee. Please feel absolutely free to contact any of the members of the Executive Board in case of queries.

Communiques

A communique is a tool used to talk to a portfolio not present in committee and obtain their assistance and support for your goals. It is framed as a letter and is simply formatted with From and To. It can be a part of a directive (to obtain certain resources for a directive) or a standalone communique for all future actions. All communiques are covert, i.e, secret in nature. They can be both individual and joint. When the Executive Board receives a communique, they take on the role of the recipient portfolio and assess it from their viewpoint. If

the offer being made and the request posed seems reasonably well phrased and profitable to the recipient, the communique passes. If it does not, however, then the communique fails. In the former case, information regarding the new resources the delegate has obtained will be sent to the delegate by the Executive Board and/or will be reflected in full/in part in the crisis update.

Press Releases

Press releases are used to share information with the entirety of the committee to announce foreign policy changes, major movements in discussion, ceasefire arrangements or discoveries achieved via covert directives that can be used to influence the committee. Sometimes agreements reached in informal debate can be put up as a press release from a bloc to enable it to be discussed in formal debate. While no questions can be asked unless especially permitted by the Executive Board on a press release, it can always be explored and cross questioned in other delegates' speeches. Press releases will be sent to the Executive Board, where we will either choose to read it out or have the delegate announce it to the entirety of the committee. It should be drafted using continuous writing unlike directives as it will have to be read out verbatim in committee.

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ABOUT THE AGENDA

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The recognition of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the European Community on 6 April 1992, occurring within hours of Serb gunfire on peace demonstrators in Sarajevo and the tightening of paramilitary positions around the city, represented the culmination of a decade-long process of Yugoslav federal collapse, competing nationalisms, and the failure of international crisis diplomacy. This conflict was not merely a regional civil war but a transformative event that fundamentally altered the post-Cold War European security order, produced the first judicial findings of genocide on European soil since Nuremberg, and reshaped the doctrine of humanitarian intervention for a generation.

I. The Death of Tito and the Unravelling of Yugoslav Federalism

By the early 1990s, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) had entered what historians term its "terminal constitutional crisis." The federation, forged in 1945 under Josip Broz Tito's Partisan movement and bound together by the ideology of "brotherhood and unity," rested on a fragile balance between six constituent republics - Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina,

Serbia, Montenegro, and Macedonia - and two autonomous provinces within Serbia, Kosovo and Vojvodina.

The 1974 Constitution had devolved extraordinary powers to the republics and provinces, creating a rotating collective state presidency and granting Kosovo and Vojvodina near-republic status within Serbia. This arrangement, intended to prevent any single republic from dominating the federation, instead created eight semi-sovereign units bound only by a weakening party apparatus. Tito's death on 4 May 1980 removed the final unifying authority capable of arbitrating between competing republican interests, leaving a rotating presidency ill-suited to crisis management and a federal economy sliding toward hyperinflation and regional disparity.

II. The Rise of Ethnic Nationalism: Memorandum Politics and the Anti-Bureaucratic Revolution

The diffusion of ethnic nationalism into a federation explicitly organised around national republics created powerful centrifugal forces that the League of Communists of Yugoslavia could no longer contain. The 1986 Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, though never formally adopted as policy, articulated grievances of alleged discrimination against Serbs within the federation and provided the intellectual scaffolding for a resurgent Serbian nationalism.

Slobodan Milosevic, having consolidated control over the League of Communists of Serbia, used the Kosovo question - and his April 1987 address to Kosovo Serbs promising that "no one should dare to beat you" - to position himself as the champion of Serbian national interests. Between 1988 and 1989, Milosevic orchestrated a series of mass rallies, termed the "anti-bureaucratic revolution," that toppled the governments of Vojvodina, Kosovo, and Montenegro and installed loyalists in their place. Constitutional amendments in March 1989 formally curtailed the autonomy of Kosovo and Vojvodina, giving Serbia effective control of four of the federation's eight collective presidency votes - a structural capture that alarmed Slovenia and Croatia and convinced their leaderships that continued federation under Belgrade's dominance was untenable.

III. The 1990 Multi-Party Elections and the Ascent of Nationalist Parties

The collapse of the Fourteenth Extraordinary Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia in January 1990, precipitated by the Slovenian and Croatian delegations walking out over Serbian proposals to end the party's federal structure, effectively ended single-party rule across the federation. The multi-party elections that followed in 1990 returned nationalist parties in

every republic: the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) under Franjo Tudjman in Croatia; a coalition of nationalist parties in Slovenia; the Party of Democratic Action (SDA) under Alija Izetbegovic, the Serb Democratic Party (SDS) under Radovan Karadzic, and the Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina (HDZ-BiH) in Bosnia; and Milosevic's Socialist Party of Serbia in Serbia itself.

In Bosnia, the November-December 1990 elections produced a tripartite governing coalition among the three national parties, reflecting the republic's 1991 census demographics of approximately 44 percent Bosniak (Muslim), 31 percent Serb, and 17 percent Croat. This coalition, from its inception, papered over irreconcilable visions for Bosnia's future: the SDA and most Bosniaks favoured a sovereign, unitary Bosnia; the SDS favoured continued union with a Serb-led rump Yugoslavia or, failing that, partition; and the HDZ-BiH was divided between delegates favouring a unified Bosnia and those, increasingly influential after February 1992, favouring union with Croatia or an autonomous Croat entity.

IV. The Slovenian and Croatian Secessions and the Ten-Day War

Slovenia and Croatia formally declared independence on 25 June 1991, triggering immediate federal military intervention. The Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) deployed against Slovenian Territorial Defence units in what became known as the Ten-Day War, a brief and largely bloodless conflict that ended with the Brioni Agreement of 7 July 1991, under which the JNA withdrew from Slovenia entirely. The federal leadership's rapid abandonment of Slovenia - ethnically near-homogeneous and of limited strategic value to Belgrade - signalled that the JNA's coercive priorities lay elsewhere: preserving Serb-populated territories within a reconstituted Yugoslav state.

V. The Croatian War of Independence and the Precedent of Krajina

Croatia's secession proved far more violent. Croatian Serbs, concentrated in the Krajina region and backed by JNA armour and Serbian paramilitary formations, had already begun the "log revolution" of August 1990 and proclaimed the Serbian Autonomous Oblast of Krajina. Full-scale war erupted through the autumn of 1991, culminating in the prolonged sieges of Vukovar - which fell on 18 November 1991 after a devastating three-month siege - and Dubrovnik. The United Nations Security Council responded on 25 September 1991 with Resolution 713, imposing a "general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Yugoslavia," an embargo that would later prove catastrophic for Bosnia's ability to defend itself, since it froze the existing military imbalance in which Bosnian Serb forces inherited the overwhelming bulk of JNA armament stationed within the republic.

For Bosnian leaders, the Croatian war offered an unambiguous and terrifying

preview: a rump Yugoslav army, ostensibly federal but functionally an instrument of Serbian national policy, prepared to use force in support of local Serb populations resisting a republic's secession. Reports of a secret March 1991 meeting at Karadjordjevo between Milosevic and Tudjman, at which the two presidents allegedly discussed the informal partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina between Serbia and Croatia, circulated widely and, whether or not the full extent of the accounts is accurate, profoundly shaped Bosniak threat perceptions going into 1992.

VI. Bosnia's Impossible Position: The Ethnic Mosaic and the Loss of Yugoslavia

Bosnia and Herzegovina's demographic intermixing - villages, towns, and even individual streets shared unevenly among Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats - meant that no plausible internal boundary could cleanly separate the republic's communities without mass displacement. This reality underlay every subsequent diplomatic effort to avert war and made partition proposals, however well-intentioned, inherently destabilising.

On 15 October 1991, the Bosnian parliament, with SDS deputies having walked out in protest, passed a "Memorandum on Sovereignty" asserting Bosnia's sovereignty and its right to determine its own relationship with the disintegrating federation. Karadzic's response from the parliamentary floor the previous evening - warning that the Bosniak nation risked leading itself into "hell" and warning of the potential disappearance of Bosniaks as a people should war come - has been widely cited by historians and international tribunals as an early and explicit signal of the SDS leadership's willingness to countenance large-scale violence. In direct response, Bosnian Serb deputies convened a rival "Assembly of the Serb People of Bosnia and Herzegovina" and, following a plebiscite held on 9-10 November 1991 in which Bosnian Serbs voted overwhelmingly to remain within a common Yugoslav state, proclaimed on 9 January 1992 the "Republic of the Serbian People of Bosnia and Herzegovina" - the entity that would be renamed Republika Srpska later that year.

VII. The Badinter Commission, the Referendum, and the Cutileiro Plan

Seeking to manage the federation's collapse through law rather than force, the European Community established the Arbitration Commission of the Conference on Yugoslavia, chaired by French jurist Robert Badinter, to render binding legal opinions on the requirements for recognition of the successor states. The Commission's Opinion No. 1 of 29 November 1991 found that the SFRY was "in the process of dissolution." Its Opinion No. 4 of 11 January 1992 held that Bosnia and Herzegovina's eligibility for recognition should be conditioned upon holding a popular referendum on independence, open to all citizens and conducted under international supervision.

The independence referendum was held on 29 February-1 March 1992. Overwhelmingly boycotted by ethnic Serbs on the instruction of SDS leadership, it nonetheless recorded a turnout of approximately 63-64 percent, with roughly 99.7 percent voting in favour of independence. On the referendum's final evening, a Serb wedding party in Sarajevo's old town was fired upon, killing the father of the groom - an incident that Bosnian Serb leaders invoked within hours to erect the first armed barricades across the city, briefly paralysing Sarajevo before a tense negotiation, brokered in part by Izetbegovic personally, secured their removal.

Parallel to the referendum, the European Community, through Portuguese diplomat Jose Cutileiro, had convened talks in Lisbon among Izetbegovic, Karadzic, and HDZ-BiH leader Mate Boban aimed at a negotiated cantonal settlement preserving a single Bosnian state divided into ethnically defined constituent units. On 18 March 1992, all three leaders initialled a Statement of Principles reflecting this cantonisation approach - the Cutileiro Plan, also known as the Lisbon Agreement. Izetbegovic withdrew his endorsement on 25 March 1992, following consultations that included the United States Ambassador Warren Zimmermann, on the grounds that cantonisation would entrench ethnic partition and undermine Bosnia's territorial and civic integrity. The collapse of the Cutileiro process is regarded by many historians as the last genuine diplomatic off-ramp before war.

VIII. The Sarajevo Barricades and the Final Countdown

Through March 1992, Serb paramilitary formations, local Territorial Defence units under SDS control, and volunteer detachments including Zeljko Raznatovic's ("Arkan") Serbian Volunteer Guard began seizing municipal control in mixed and Serb-majority areas of eastern Bosnia, most notoriously in Bijeljina on 1-2 April 1992, where Arkan's forces killed dozens of Bosniak civilians in what would later be characterised by international tribunals as an early instance of a broader campaign of ethnic cleansing. Bosnian government authorities, lacking any organised army of their own - the republic's Territorial Defence stocks having been substantially removed or frozen by the JNA in the preceding months - ordered a general mobilisation of police reserves and Territorial Defence units on 4 April 1992, a largely symbolic gesture given existing force imbalances.

On 5 April 1992, tens of thousands of Sarajevans of all ethnicities marched in a mass demonstration for peace and a unified Bosnia. Gunfire from positions overlooking the Vrbanja Bridge and the Holiday Inn killed two demonstrators, Suada Dilberovic and Olga Sucic, widely regarded by historians as the first fatalities of what would become the Siege of Sarajevo. Serb paramilitary and

JNA-linked forces simultaneously moved to consolidate blocking positions on the high ground surrounding the city.

IX. The Path to Recognition, War, and Beyond

On 6 April 1992, the European Community formally extended diplomatic recognition to the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the United States following on 7 April. Rather than deterring further escalation, recognition coincided with an intensification of shelling and sniping directed at Sarajevo and the acceleration of paramilitary operations in eastern Bosnia. The following weeks would see the JNA's formal withdrawal from Bosnia in May 1992 - a withdrawal that left behind the overwhelming bulk of its Bosnia-based troops, officers, and heavy weaponry, which were simply reconstituted as the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) under General Ratko Mladic. What began as a series of localised confrontations metastasised, within days of the freeze date, into one of the most destructive conflicts in Europe since 1945.

The war's outcome would fundamentally alter the norms governing humanitarian intervention, sovereignty, and international criminal responsibility. Most ominously for delegates approaching this committee, the events of April 1992 demonstrate how quickly diplomatic recognition, military mobilisation, and paramilitary violence can compound one another beyond any single actor's control - a dynamic this committee is designed to place directly in your hands.

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TIMELINE OF EVENTS

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I. Foundational Period: Tito's Yugoslavia and the 1974 Constitution (1945-1980)

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was established in 1945 under Tito and the Communist Partisan movement, uniting six republics and two autonomous provinces under the doctrine of "brotherhood and unity." The 1974 Constitution radically decentralised the federation, granting republics and the two Serbian provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina quasi-state powers and establishing a rotating, collective state presidency intended to prevent domination by any single republic. Tito's death on 4 May 1980 removed the final unifying authority within the federal system, exposing the inherent fragility of government by consensus among competing republican elites.

II. The Decade of Crisis and Nationalist Mobilisation (1980-1990)

The 1980s saw mounting economic crisis, regional disparity, and the erosion of federal Communist Party authority. The 1986 SANU Memorandum articulated Serbian nationalist grievances that would be operationalised by Slobodan Milosevic following his rise within the League of Communists of Serbia. Milosevic's 1987 Kosovo Polje speech and the 1988-1989 "anti-bureaucratic revolution" delivered Serbia effective control of Vojvodina, Kosovo, and Montenegro's presidency votes, formalised through constitutional amendments in March 1989 stripping Kosovo and Vojvodina of their autonomous status. The Fourteenth Extraordinary Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia collapsed in January 1990 after the Slovenian and Croatian delegations walked out, effectively ending single-party rule across the federation.

III. Multi-Party Elections and the Slide Toward Dissolution (1990-1991)

Multi-party elections across 1990 returned nationalist governments in every republic. In Bosnia, the SDA, SDS, and HDZ-BiH formed a tripartite coalition government following elections in November-December 1990, reflecting the republic's roughly 44 percent Bosniak, 31 percent Serb, and 17 percent Croat population. Croatian Serbs proclaimed the Serbian Autonomous Oblast of Krajina following the August 1990 "log revolution." Reports of a secret March 1991 meeting between Milosevic and Tudjman at Karadjordjevo, allegedly discussing the partition of Bosnia, circulated and heightened Bosniak anxieties. Slovenia and Croatia declared independence on 25 June 1991.

IV. The Wars of Yugoslav Succession Begin (June-December 1991)

The Ten-Day War in Slovenia (27 June-7 July 1991) ended with the Brioni Agreement and full JNA withdrawal from Slovenia. The Croatian War of Independence escalated through the autumn, with the Battle of Vukovar concluding in a Serb and JNA victory on 18 November 1991 and the Siege of Dubrovnik drawing international condemnation. The UN Security Council imposed a comprehensive arms embargo on the whole of Yugoslavia via Resolution 713 on 25 September 1991. In Bosnia, the parliament's SDA/HDZ majority passed a Memorandum on Sovereignty on 15 October 1991 over SDS objections; Bosnian Serb deputies responded by convening a rival assembly and, following a 9-10 November plebiscite favouring continued union with Yugoslavia, proclaimed the "Republic of the Serbian People of Bosnia and Herzegovina" on 9 January 1992. The Badinter Arbitration Commission issued its foundational Opinion No. 1 on 29 November 1991, finding the SFRY to be in the process of dissolution.

V. Bosnia on the Brink (January-March 1992)

The Badinter Commission's Opinion No. 4 of 11 January 1992 conditioned Bosnia's recognition on a popular independence referendum. EC-mediated talks

under Jose Cutileiro produced a Statement of Principles on cantonisation, initialled by Izetbegovic, Karadzic, and Boban on 18 March 1992 in Lisbon; Izetbegovic withdrew Bosnian government support for the plan on 25 March 1992. The independence referendum of 29 February-1 March 1992 recorded roughly 64 percent turnout and 99.7 percent support for independence, boycotted almost entirely by Bosnian Serbs. A shooting at a Serb wedding party in Sarajevo's old town on 1 March 1992 triggered the first Serb-erected barricades across the capital, defused after tense negotiation. Izetbegovic formally proclaimed Bosnia's independence on 3 March 1992. Through late March and early April, Serb paramilitary formations and Territorial Defence units under SDS direction began seizing municipal control across eastern Bosnia, most notoriously in Bijeljina on 1-2 April 1992.

VI. Freeze Date: April 6, 1992

The Bosnian government ordered general mobilisation of police reserves and Territorial Defence units on 4 April 1992. On 5 April 1992, tens of thousands marched for peace in Sarajevo; gunfire from positions near the Holiday Inn and Vrbanja Bridge killed demonstrators Suada Dilberovic and Olga Sucic, an event widely regarded as marking the beginning of the Siege of Sarajevo, while Serb paramilitary and JNA-linked forces moved to consolidate blocking positions on the high ground overlooking the city. On 6 April 1992, at the committee's freeze point, the European Community formally recognised the independence of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina even as shelling and sniping directed at Sarajevo intensified and paramilitary consolidation continued across eastern Bosnia. This moment represents the culmination of over a decade of federal disintegration, competing nationalisms, and failed diplomacy, setting the stage for a conflict that would reshape the doctrine of humanitarian intervention and the law of international criminal responsibility.

VII. Post-Freeze Historical Context (For Committee Reference Only)

DISCLAIMER: The following events occurred in actual history after the committee's freeze date and are provided solely for contextual understanding. These events have not occurred in the committee's timeline and may develop differently based on delegate actions.

The United States extended recognition to Bosnia and Herzegovina on 7 April 1992. Through April and May 1992, Serb forces consolidated a siege ring around Sarajevo and conducted coordinated campaigns of ethnic cleansing across eastern Bosnia, including in Zvornik, Foca, and Visegrad. The JNA formally withdrew from Bosnian territory in May 1992, leaving behind the great majority of its Bosnia-based personnel and equipment, which were reconstituted as the Army of Republika Srpska under General Ratko Mladic. Bosnia and Herzegovina

was admitted to United Nations membership on 22 May 1992. The existence of detention camps at Omarska, Keraterm, and Trnopolje was revealed to the world in August 1992. Successive international peace efforts, including the Vance-Owen Plan of January 1993 and the Owen-Stoltenberg Plan, failed to end the fighting. The siege of Sarajevo would continue for nearly four years, becoming the longest siege of a capital city in the history of modern warfare. In July 1995, Bosnian Serb forces under General Mladic overran the UN "safe area" of Srebrenica and killed more than 8,000 Bosniak men and boys, an act subsequently found to constitute genocide by both the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and the International Court of Justice. NATO's Operation Deliberate Force in August-September 1995 helped bring the warring parties to the negotiating table, culminating in the Dayton Peace Agreement, initialled in November and formally signed in Paris in December 1995, which ended the war and established Bosnia and Herzegovina as a single state comprising two entities, the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska.

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STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

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Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina & Government Forces

Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Alija Izetbegovic, Ejup Ganic, Haris Silajdzic, Sefer Halilovic, Jovan Divjak)

Izetbegovic's leadership pursued recognition of a sovereign, territorially unified, multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina, resisting cantonisation proposals he viewed as a prelude to partition. His government's central constraint was military: the republic possessed no standing army of its own, relying on poorly-armed Territorial Defence units and police reserves against a JNA-equipped adversary. Silajdzic's diplomatic efforts focused on securing international recognition and appealing for the lifting of the UN arms embargo, while Divjak, an ethnic Serb loyal to the Bosnian government, symbolised the multi-ethnic character the Sarajevo leadership sought to preserve. Halilovic's Territorial Defence command faced acute shortages of heavy weapons, ammunition, and trained officers as war approached.

Bosnian Croat Community loyal to Sarajevo (Stjepan Kljuic)

Kljuic, the original HDZ-BiH leader, favoured cooperation with the SDA and a unified Bosnian state, aligning many Bosnian Croats with the government through early 1992. His marginalisation within HDZ-BiH in favour of Mate Boban in February 1992, encouraged by Zagreb, signalled a decisive shift of organised Bosnian Croat military and political power away from Sarajevo and toward an

autonomous, Croatia-aligned entity.

Bosnian Serb Leadership, Republika Srpska & Patron States

Serb Democratic Party & the Republic of the Serbian People of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Radovan Karadzic, Momcilo Krajisnik, Biljana Plavsic, Nikola Koljevic)

Karadzic's leadership pursued the consolidation of Serb-majority and mixed territories into a separate political entity bound to a rump Yugoslavia, with the proclamation of the Republic of the Serbian People of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 9 January 1992 as its cornerstone. The SDS leveraged Territorial Defence stockpiles and paramilitary formations, coordinated with JNA logistical support, to establish facts on the ground in eastern Bosnia ahead of full-scale conflict. Constraints included the need to maintain the appearance of defensive legitimacy internationally while conducting increasingly aggressive municipal takeovers, and dependence on Belgrade for continued arms and political cover.

Yugoslav People's Army & the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Slobodan Milosevic, Borisav Jovic, Veljko Kadijevic, General Blagoje Adzic, General Ratko Mladic, General Milutin Kukanjac)

Milosevic's Serbia sought to preserve a Serb-dominated federal structure and, failing that, to secure the unification of Serb-populated territories outside Serbia proper into a common state. The JNA under Kadijevic and Chief of the General Staff Adzic provided the decisive military asymmetry underlying Serb territorial gains, transferring equipment and personnel to Bosnian Serb forces even as the army nominally maintained a nonpartisan federal posture. Kukanjac commanded JNA forces in the Sarajevo garrison as the crisis reached its peak. Constraints included the arms embargo imposed by UNSC Resolution 713, mounting international isolation, and internal desertion of non-Serb JNA officers and conscripts as the army's partisan character became undeniable.

Bosnian Croat Leadership, Herzeg-Bosnia & Patron States

Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina & Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosnia (Mate Boban, Dario Kordic)

Boban's ascent to HDZ-BiH leadership in February 1992 marked a shift toward organising Bosnian Croats, particularly in Herzegovina and central Bosnia, into an autonomous political-military structure aligned with Zagreb. Constraints included the community's demographic dispersion, dependence on Croatian military and political support, and the unresolved question of whether Herzeg-Bosnia's long-term future lay within a unified Bosnia, in confederation with Croatia, or in eventual conflict with the very Bosnian government it currently stood alongside against Serb forces.

Republic of Croatia (Franjo Tudjman, Gojko Susak)

Tudjman's government provided covert arms, training, and political backing to Bosnian Croat forces, motivated by both solidarity with a co-ethnic population and a strategic interest in securing Croatia's exposed southern flank along the Dalmatian coast. Susak, a Herzegovinian Croat and Croatian Defence Minister, maintained direct channels to Boban's leadership. Croatia's own ongoing war of independence against Serb forces in Krajina constrained the resources it could commit to Bosnia.

Great Powers & International Institutions

European Community (Lord Peter Carrington, Jose Cutileiro, Robert Badinter, Hans van den Broek)

The EC pursued a negotiated, legally structured dissolution of Yugoslavia through the Conference on Yugoslavia and the Badinter Arbitration Commission, while separately mediating cantonisation talks under Cutileiro. Its recognition of Bosnia on 6 April 1992, taken to prevent further Serb territorial consolidation and to reward the referendum result, arrived without any accompanying enforcement mechanism or peacekeeping commitment, a mismatch between diplomatic recognition and material capacity that would define the EC's - and later the UN's - approach to the war.

United Nations (Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Cyrus Vance)

The UN's initial engagement centred on Vance's mediation of the Croatian conflict and the establishment of UNPROFOR under Security Council Resolution 743 of 21 February 1992, formally deployed to oversee the Croatian ceasefire rather than Bosnia. The organisation's institutional caution, and Boutros-Ghali's reluctance to commit peacekeepers to an active war zone without a ceasefire to monitor, left Bosnia largely outside the UN's operational focus as the freeze date approached.

United States (Warren Zimmermann, Secretary of State James Baker)

Washington's ambassador to Belgrade, Zimmermann, engaged directly with Izetbegovic in the days before the Bosnian government's withdrawal from the Cutileiro Plan. US policy through early 1992 emphasised support for Yugoslavia's territorial integrity before shifting, alongside the EC, toward recognition of the seceding republics; Washington would extend recognition to Bosnia on 7 April 1992, one day after the EC.

Russian Federation (Boris Yeltsin, Andrei Kozyrev)

The newly independent Russian Federation, preoccupied with its own post-Soviet transition, maintained traditional ties of Orthodox and Slavic solidarity with Serbia while broadly aligning with Western recognition policy

in the UN Security Council during this period, a posture that would grow more independent and more sympathetic to Belgrade as the war progressed.

Non-State Actors

Serbian Volunteer Guard "Arkan's Tigers" (Zeljko Raznatovic)

Raznatovic's paramilitary formation, operating with tacit Serbian state backing, conducted early and notorious operations against non-Serb civilian populations in eastern Bosnia, including the Bijeljina takeover of 1-2 April 1992. Its actions provided both a template and a vanguard force for the wider campaign of ethnic cleansing that would follow the freeze date.

Serbian Radical Party & White Eagles (Vojislav Seselj)

Seselj's ultranationalist party and affiliated paramilitary formations promoted the vision of a "Greater Serbia" incorporating Serb-populated territories of Bosnia and Croatia, supplying additional irregular manpower that operated alongside, and at times independently of, JNA and Bosnian Serb command structures.

International Committee of the Red Cross & Humanitarian Organisations

The ICRC and affiliated humanitarian bodies monitored the treatment of civilians and prisoners as violence spread across Bosnia, providing early documentation of population displacement and detention practices that would later underpin international legal proceedings.

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LEGAL FRAMEWORKS

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The legal framework governing the Bosnian War of 1992-1995 represents a critical juncture in the evolution of international law, occurring at the intersection of the law of state succession, the law of armed conflict, and the emerging doctrine of individual criminal responsibility for atrocity crimes. This comprehensive analysis examines the applicable legal norms, doctrines, and precedents that shaped the conduct and consequences of the conflict, providing essential context for understanding the legal dimensions of the crisis.

The Foundational Constitutional Framework and the SFRY System

The 1974 Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia constituted the fundamental legal instrument governing relations among the republics prior to dissolution. The Constitution's preamble recognised the

"right of every nation to self-determination, including the right to secession," a provision whose ambiguous scope - whether the right belonged to the constituent "nations" (narodi) such as Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes regardless of republican boundaries, or to the republics themselves as territorial units - became the central legal battleground of the Yugoslav dissolution. Bosnian Serb leaders would invoke the former reading to justify a right of separate self-determination within Bosnia and Herzegovina's borders; the Bosnian government and the Badinter Commission would ultimately adopt the latter, republic-based reading.

The Constitution's decentralisation of federal competences to the republics, combined with its rotating collective presidency, embodied the principle of consensual federalism. However, the absence of any binding constitutional procedure for orderly secession, and the ambiguity surrounding the JNA's constitutional role as guarantor of "the unity, territorial integrity...and the socialist self-managing democratic order" of the SFRY as a whole, created a legal vacuum that both Belgrade and the seceding republics exploited: the JNA claimed constitutional authority to intervene against secession, while the republics claimed a constitutional right to secede.

Customary International Law, State Dissolution and the Badinter Commission

The Arbitration Commission of the Conference on Yugoslavia, established by the European Community and chaired by Robert Badinter, issued a series of legal opinions that would shape the entire framework of recognition and succession. Opinion No. 1 of 29 November 1991 held that the SFRY was "in the process of dissolution," a legally significant characterisation that treated the emergence of new states as dissolution rather than secession from a continuing state - with important consequences for succession to treaties, assets, and UN membership.

Opinion No. 2, also issued in January 1992, addressed the claim of Serb populations in Croatia and Bosnia to a separate right of self-determination. The Commission held that the Serb population, while entitled under international law to the full range of minority and human rights, did not constitute a "people" possessing an independent right to external self-determination or secession within the borders of Croatia or Bosnia and Herzegovina. This opinion relied upon the customary principle of *uti possidetis juris* - that the internal administrative boundaries of a dissolving federal state become the international frontiers of the successor states - previously applied primarily in the context of decolonisation and here extended, controversially, to the dissolution of a federal socialist state in Europe.

Opinion No. 4 of 11 January 1992 addressed Bosnia and Herzegovina specifically, finding that the will of the republic's population regarding independence had not yet been "fully established" and recommending that recognition be conditioned upon a referendum, conducted under international supervision and open to all citizens of the republic. The Bosnian government's compliance through the 29 February-1 March 1992 referendum, and the EC's subsequent recognition on 6 April 1992, represented an attempt - ultimately unsuccessful in preventing war - to root the birth of the new state in a clear expression of popular sovereignty rather than unilateral proclamation.

The Hague Conventions and the Laws of War

The Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, though drafted for inter-state warfare, remained relevant as sources of customary international humanitarian law applicable to the Bosnian conflict, particularly insofar as the war involved regular JNA forces operating alongside irregular formations. Hague Convention IV of 1907, with its annexed Regulations, provided baseline rules on the treatment of combatants and the protection of civilian populations that would later be read by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia as embodying binding customary law applicable regardless of the conflict's characterisation as international or internal - a jurisdictional question that would itself become one of the more contested legal issues of the war, since Bosnian Serb forces' close operational and logistical ties to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia raised the question of whether the conflict was, in substance, an international armed conflict between two states.

The Geneva Conventions and Humanitarian Protections

The four Geneva Conventions of 1949, to which the SFRY was a party and whose obligations passed to its successor states, established binding protections for the wounded and sick, prisoners of war, and civilians in time of armed conflict. Common Article 3, applicable "in the case of armed conflict not of an international character," prohibited violence to life and person, the taking of hostages, outrages upon personal dignity, and the passing of sentences without due process - provisions of direct relevance to the detention camps and municipal takeovers that characterised the opening phase of the Bosnian war. The Fourth Geneva Convention's protections for civilians under occupation, and Additional Protocol II of 1977 governing non-international armed conflicts, would later underpin much of the case law developed by international tribunals addressing crimes committed during this conflict, particularly regarding the forcible displacement of civilian populations - what came to be termed, in the vocabulary that emerged directly from this war, "ethnic cleansing."

Territorial Sovereignty, Uti Possidetis and the Principle of Self-Determination

The Bosnian crisis occurred at a critical moment in the evolution of international legal principles regarding territorial sovereignty and national self-determination. The traditional doctrine of *uti possidetis juris*, freezing colonial or federal administrative boundaries at the moment of independence, was applied by the Badinter Commission to the former Yugoslav republics specifically in order to prevent an open-ended redrawing of borders along ethnic lines - a redrawing that Bosnian Serb and, to a lesser extent, Bosnian Croat leaderships actively sought.

The tension between this territorial approach and the SDS's invocation of Serb "national" self-determination created what international legal scholars term competing sovereignty claims of a particularly acute kind: the Bosnian government asserted a civic, republic-wide right to self-determination exercised through the referendum; the SDS asserted an ethnic, nation-wide right to self-determination exercisable by Bosnian Serbs as a distinct people regardless of republican boundaries. The absence of any settled hierarchy between these two conceptions of self-determination in customary international law as it stood in 1992 left the legal question genuinely unresolved at the moment of the committee's freeze date, even as the Badinter Commission had, as a matter of EC recognition policy, come down firmly on the side of the republic-based approach.

The Doctrine of Humanitarian Intervention

The concept of humanitarian intervention, not yet formally codified in international law and further constrained in 1992 by the continued primacy of Article 2(4) of the UN Charter's prohibition on the use of force and the requirement of Security Council authorisation under Chapter VII for enforcement action, provided at best an inchoate legal basis for external military action to protect Bosnia's civilian population. Reports of systematic persecution compiled by journalists, the ICRC, and international monitors through the early weeks of the war would, over the following years, gradually build the evidentiary and normative foundation for more assertive Security Council engagement - including the establishment of "safe areas" under Resolution 819 in 1993 - but as of the freeze date, no such authorisation existed, and intervention on humanitarian grounds alone remained legally contested.

Neutrality Law, the Arms Embargo and Great Power Obligations

United Nations Security Council Resolution 713 of 25 September 1991 imposed a

"general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Yugoslavia," binding on all UN member states under Chapter VII. Applied uniformly across all the successor republics regardless of their starkly unequal starting positions in inherited JNA weaponry, the embargo became one of the most legally and morally contested instruments of the entire conflict: while formally neutral, its practical effect was to lock in the overwhelming military advantage already possessed by Bosnian Serb forces, who inherited the lion's share of JNA equipment stationed within the republic, relative to a Bosnian government that possessed almost no standing military capacity of its own. The tension between the embargo's formal neutrality and its substantively unequal effects would generate sustained legal and political controversy, including later proposals - ultimately not adopted by the Security Council - to "lift and strike," exempting Bosnia from the embargo while threatening airstrikes against violators.

The Genocide Convention and the Evolution of International Criminal Responsibility

The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948 defined genocide as specified acts "committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such." As of the freeze date, the Convention's applicability to the unfolding Bosnian crisis remained a matter of documentation and characterisation rather than adjudicated fact. Over the following years, the systematic and coordinated nature of population expulsions, detention camp practices, and, ultimately, the July 1995 killings at Srebrenica would lead both the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia - established by the Security Council under Resolution 827 in 1993, the first international war crimes tribunal since Nuremberg and Tokyo - and subsequently the International Court of Justice to find that genocide had been committed during the war, decisions that fundamentally advanced the doctrine of individual criminal responsibility for atrocity crimes and the principle that state officials, including heads of state, enjoy no immunity from prosecution for such offences.

Implications for Modern International Law

The legal framework governing the Bosnian War established precedents that continue to shape contemporary international law. The Badinter Commission's opinions remain a foundational reference point for the law of state succession and the application of *uti possidetis* beyond the colonial context. The establishment of the ICTY catalysed the modern system of international criminal justice, directly informing the creation of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and, ultimately, the permanent

International Criminal Court. The war's civilian toll, and the international community's documented hesitation to intervene despite mounting evidence of atrocity, would become the central case study animating the subsequent development of the "Responsibility to Protect" doctrine adopted by the United Nations in 2005. The conflict's legacy continues to influence contemporary debates on humanitarian intervention, the limits of neutral arms embargoes, and the proper legal treatment of competing claims to self-determination within multi-ethnic states.

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THE WAY FORWARD

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SETTING STANDARDS FOR THE COMMITTEE

The Bosnian War represents one of the most consequential and, at points, harrowing episodes in the recent history of European international relations, marking the final collapse of Yugoslav federalism and establishing legal and institutional precedents that continue to shape the international system. Your performance in this committee will be measured not only by your diplomatic skill but by your ability to navigate the complex intersection of nationalist aspirations, great power interests, and the emerging principles of international law that defined this pivotal crisis.

Historical Mastery and Research Excellence: This crisis demands comprehensive understanding of the constitutional structure of the SFRY, the mechanics of its collapse, the demographic realities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the sequence of diplomatic failures - from Karadjordjevo to the Cutileiro Plan - that preceded the outbreak of war. You must grasp not only your portfolio's stated objectives but the underlying historical grievances, command structures, and strategic calculations that drove decision-making in the weeks before the freeze date.

Legal and Diplomatic Sophistication: This simulation requires sophisticated understanding of the law of state dissolution, the Badinter Commission's opinions, the UN arms embargo, and the emerging tension between territorial integrity and claims of ethnic self-determination. Your directives must reflect awareness of these frameworks and of the laws of armed conflict that would govern any military operations you order. Unlike purely military-focused committees, this crisis demands appreciation for how legal precedent and diplomatic recognition decisions shape long-term outcomes.

Strategic Vision and Alliance Management: The success of your objectives

depends on your ability to build and maintain coalitions while managing competing interests within your own faction. The Bosnian government's multi-ethnic coalition was fragile from its inception; the Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat leaderships each depended on external patrons whose interests did not always align neatly with their own. Great powers faced the challenge of managing recognition, embargo, and intervention policy without triggering wider escalation. Your strategies must balance immediate tactical gains with long-term strategic positioning.

Historical Responsibility and Consequence: This is, above all, a committee about the human costs of political failure. Your decisions will shape not only the immediate military balance in Bosnia but the broader questions of civilian protection, displacement, and accountability that would come to define the actual war. We expect delegates to engage with these themes seriously, avoiding gratuitous or exploitative treatment of civilian suffering while still confronting, honestly, the strategic logic that drove historical actors to the choices they made.

Embrace Complexity and Moral Ambiguity: This committee offers no simple solutions or clear moral choices for every actor at the table, even as the historical record is unambiguous about the responsibility borne by those who orchestrated campaigns of ethnic cleansing. National self-determination competed with territorial integrity, humanitarian concerns clashed with strategic interests, and coalition unity conflicted with irreconcilable long-term visions for Bosnia's future. Your strategies must acknowledge these complexities rather than seeking simplistic solutions.

Crisis Management and Escalation Control: The rapid escalation from constitutional crisis to general war demonstrates how quickly diplomatic recognition, mobilisation, and paramilitary violence can compound beyond any single actor's control. Your ability to manage crisis dynamics, control escalation, and find - or deliberately withhold - face-saving compromises will determine the trajectory this committee takes from the freeze date forward.

The world watches as you grapple with questions that continue to shape international relations today: When does the principle of national self-determination justify the use of force? How should great powers balance diplomatic recognition with the material capacity to enforce it? What obligations do international institutions bear to protect civilian populations caught between competing national projects? How can competing claims to self-determination be resolved when historical precedent, demographic reality, and strategic necessity point in different directions?

Your deliberations will determine whether Bosnia and Herzegovina's collapse proceeds through managed negotiation or catastrophic war, whether the principle of territorial integrity holds against ethnic partition, and whether international institutions can adapt to the demands of a crisis unfolding faster than their machinery can respond. The decisions you make regarding recognition, military mobilisation, humanitarian access, and alliance relationships will establish precedents that will influence European and international diplomacy for a generation.

This background guide represents the culmination of extensive research into one of the most significant and difficult international crises of the modern era. While it provides essential context and analysis, your success depends on continuing research, strategic thinking, and diplomatic skill. The future of Bosnia and Herzegovina rests in your hands.

Congratulations, delegate!

If you've made it this far in the background guide, you're already a cut above the rest - or at least you have the patience to read through pages of context and suggestions. That's half the battle won. Now, let's talk about what we expect from you in this committee.

First, research is your best weapon. We expect thorough preparation, nuanced arguments, and an ability to engage in intellectual sparring that's both sharp and respectful. This isn't just another MUN where you throw around big words to sound diplomatic; this is your stage to shine as a delegate who's done their homework. Healthy competition is encouraged, so long as it stays grounded in the seriousness this agenda deserves.

Second, use your tools intelligently. Use the internet, use AI where it helps you sharpen your research and your directives, but feed it garbage and you'll get garbage back. No amount of AI assistance can substitute for genuine engagement with the sources, the timeline, and the legal frameworks in this guide. We see everything in committee, trust us, we do.

Third, this is a heavier agenda than most, and we say that deliberately. The Bosnian War is not a backdrop for spectacle; it is recent, well-documented history whose consequences are still being litigated and still shape the politics of the region today. We want fierce, well-researched debate and sharp strategic play, exercised with an awareness of what this history actually represents.

Finally, let this be your reminder: standards in this committee are high, and so is the potential for genuine learning. Whether you leave with awards or

just a sharper understanding of how federations collapse and wars begin, what matters is how much you learn and grow here. So come prepared, stay curious, and treat the material with the seriousness it deserves.

-- END OF BACKGROUND GUIDE --