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**1.01 Izvorni naučni rad/Original scientific article**

UDK/UDC: 94:327(73:497.6)"1992/1995" (093)

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.52259/historijskipogledi.2024.7.11.358>

## **SENATOR RICHARD LUGAR AND THE BOSNIAN WAR<sup>1</sup>**

**Abstract:** *The 1992-1995 war in Bosnia generated a significant interest across the Atlantic. For three-and-a-half years, Bosnia was present in the American public life with continuous media reports of the war and the genocide being perpetrated in this part of the Balkans. American policymakers in the George H. W. Bush and the Bill Clinton Administrations grappled with formulating a response to the war. While the executive branch took hesitant steps in response to the war, a number of American legislators led the way in seeking an assertive US role in Bosnia.*

*Before the war broke out in Bosnia in spring 1992, several American legislators had taken an interest in the crisis in the rapidly dissolving Yugoslavia. Bob Dole, the Kansan Republican, was a leading voice calling for a tougher response. From 1992 onwards, Dole was joined by a number of other senators and congressmen on both sides of the aisle in advocating for air strikes and a lifting of the UN-imposed arms embargo on Bosnia. These congressional Bosnia hawks led a sustained campaign aimed at keeping the US focused on Bosnia and adopted landmark legislation in support of the newly independent state in Southeast Europe.*

*Senator Richard Lugar, an Indiana Republican and an influential voice on foreign affairs, did not belong to this core group of congressional Bosnia hawks. These hawks, including Senators Bob Dole and Joseph Lieberman, and Representative Frank McCloskey, along with a dozen other legislators, were at the forefront of congressional efforts to shape America's policy towards Bosnia.*

*Unlike these Bosnia hawks, Lugar did not lead the charge in seeking to steer US policy towards Bosnia. The Indiana Republican was neither a persistent advocate on Bosnia which was a characteristic of the congressional Bosnia hawks. But, he did weigh in on Bosnia starting in 1992 and advocated the use of American force in response to the war in Bosnia. Lugar also voted in favour of a series of legislative efforts aimed at supporting Bosnia from the Capitol Hill. This*

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<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Sara Stefani, Modern Political Papers Archivist at Indiana University Libraries in Bloomington, IN for making the Richard Lugar Senate Papers related to Bosnia available to me.

*moderate support was still significant for Bosnia as the state mounted a determined defense of its statehood and citizens from 1992 to 1995.*

*Lugar's Senate papers located at Indiana University Libraries in Bloomington, IN offer insights into how the veteran senator viewed Bosnia and the policies that he advocated. To date, no study of Lugar's policy towards Bosnia has been researched and his papers on Bosnia represent a first in-depth look at the senator's views on the war. Drawing on these original documents, this paper seeks to piece together the story of how Senator Lugar reacted to the Bosnian War. It is a story of his support for Bosnia but one which was neither persistent nor forceful compared to Bob Dole and other pro-Bosnia voices on Capitol Hill. Still, as an independent and internationalist Republican, Lugar left a mark on his nation's foreign policy including towards Bosnia. This paper, then, further seeks to contribute to the existing literature on the variety of America's responses to the Bosnian War but also to shed light on Senator Lugar's little-known effort to shape the US policy towards Bosnia in the early 1990s.*

**Key words:** Richard Lugar, Senate, Congress, Bosnia, Balkans.

## SENATOR RICHARD LUGAR I RAT U BOSNI I HERCEGOVINI

**Apstrakt:** *Rat u Bosni i Hercegovini, koji je trajao od 1992. do 1995. godine, proizveo je značajan interes na drugoj strani Atlantskog okeana. Tri i po godine je Bosna i Hercegovina bila prisutna u američkom javnom životu uz medijske izvještaje o ratu i genocide u ovom dijelu Balkana. Američki donosioci odluka u administracijama predsjednika George H. W. Busha i Billa Clintona bili su suočeni sa formuliranjem odgovora na rat u Bosni i Hercegovini. Dok je izvršna vlast donosila usporene i neodlučne odgovore na rat, niz američkih zakonodavaca je tražio odlučniju američku ulogu u Bosni i Hercegovini.*

*Čak i prije početka rata u Bosni i Hercegovini u proljeće 1992. godine, nekoliko američkih zakonodavaca je pratilo situaciju u Jugoslaviji. Bob Dole, Republikanac iz Kansasa, bio je ključni glas koji je tražio oštriji odgovor SAD-a. Od 1992. godine, Dole-u su se priključili i drugi senatori i kongresmeni iz obje stranke koji su zagovarali zračne udare i ukidanje embarga na oružje Bosne i Hercegovine koje je nametnuo UN. Ovi kongresni "jastrebovi" vodili su upornu kampanju s ciljem održavanje američkog fokusa na Bosnu i Hercegovinu i zahvaljujući njima je usvojena legislativa u Kongresu podržavajući novo-nezavisnu državu u Jugoistočnoj Evropi.*

*Senator Richard Lugar, Republikanac iz Indijane i utjecanja ličnost u oblasti vanjske politike, nije pripadao ovoj značajnoj grupi kongresmenih "jastrebova" o pitanju Bosne i Hercegovine. Ti "jastrebovi" su bili senatori Bob Dole i Joseph Lieberman, i kongresmen Frank McCloskey, niz drugih zakonodavaca koji su predvodili napore u Kongresu da se obliku američka politika podrške prema Bosni i Hercegovini.*

*Za razliku od ovih “jastrebova”, Lugar nije bio u vodstvu napora da se usmjerava politika SAD-a prema Bosni i Hercegovini. Ovaj Republikanac nije bio ni uporni zagovornik Bosne i Hercegovine što je bila karakteristika spomenutih “jastrebova.” Ali on se oglašavao o Bosni i Hercegovini počevši 1992. godine i tražeći upotrebu američke vojne sile kao odgovor na rat u Bosni i Hercegovini. Lugar je, također, glasao za niz legislativnih inicijativa s ciljem pružanja podrške Bosni i Hercegovini iz Kongresa. Njegova umjerena podrška je, ipak, bila značajna za Bosnu i Hercegovinu koja je branila svoju državnost i građane od 1992. do 1995. godine*

*Lugar-ova arhiva nalazi se na Univerzitetu Indiana u Bloomington-u i pruža uvide u to kako je ovaj senator percipirao Bosnu i Hercegovinu i politike koje je zagovarao. Do sada nije bilo obavljeno istraživanje o Lugar-ovom odnosu prema Bosni i Hercegovini te je, stoga, važno da njegova arhiva nudi uvid u njegove stavove o ratu. Ovaj rad, zasnovan na originalnim dokumentima iz SAD, nastoji da rekonstruiše stavove i zalaganje senatora Lugar-a za Bosnu i Hercegovinu. Ovo je priča o njegovoj podršci Bosni i Hercegovini ali podršci koja nije bila na nivou podrške koje je pružao Bob Dole i ostali pro-bosanski “jastrebovi.” Ipak, kao nezavisni i internacionalistički-opredjeljen Republikanac, Lugar je ostavio trag na vanjsku politiku SAD prema Bosni i Hercegovini. Stoga je važno analizirati Lugar-a i njegove stavove o Bosni i Hercegovini te doprinjeti postojećoj literaturi o oblicima američkih reakcija na rat u Bosni i Hercegovini. Pored toga, ovaj rad će biti i doprinos razumijevanju do sada nepoznate uloge senatora Lugar-a u oblikovanju američke politike prema Bosni i Hercegovini ranih 1990-ih.*

**Ključne riječi:** *Richard Lugar, Senat, Kongres, Bosna i Hercegovina, Balkan.*

## **Introduction**

Soon after Bosnia held its independence referendum on 29 February and 1 March 1992 and voted to chart its own future, rebel Bosnian Serb forces – aided and abetted by neighbouring Serbia – launched their campaign of genocide. The newly-independent state thus faced both aggression from Serbia and rebellion from Bosnian Serb forces in what was an existential threat to the state and its Bosniak population. The objective of the Serb leadership was to carve out a state of their own that would be ethnically pure. Bosniaks along the rivers Drina and Sava were to be wiped out.

The Bosnian government faced a host of daunting challenges. Organizing the resistance and defense was the primary objective. Sarajevo had to establish diplomatic relations, build alliances and garner support while mounting a defense. Compounding the challenges was a UN-imposed arms embargo that hampered the country's ability to defend itself. Originally imposed

in September 1991 on Yugoslavia, the arms embargo froze in place Serbia's military superiority while serving as an obstacle to Bosnia's self-defense. In fact, lifting the embargo was a major foreign policy objective of the Bosnian government.

Sarajevo reached out for support across Europe, the Middle East and even South and Southeast Asia. But, it was clear that making the case for Bosnia across the Atlantic would be the key to ending the war. Top Bosnian officials travelled to and met with American decision-makers in a bid to win support. On Capitol Hill, they largely found the much-needed support. In fact, a dozen legislators had been advocating an assertive US response to the war in Bosnia. Starting in 1992, a hawkish coalition in support of Bosnia – what may be termed congressional Bosnia hawks – pushed for US air strikes on Bosnian Serb military positions and a lifting of the embargo. Leading the charge in the Senate was Bob Dole along with Joseph Lieberman. Frank McCloskey's efforts in the House of Representatives, along with support from Tom Lantos, Christopher Smith and others, mirrored these. Combined, these congressional efforts helped steer a more forceful US policy towards Bosnia.

While recent research focused on some of these congressional Bosnia hawks<sup>2</sup>, the role and impact of a number of leading American legislators of the early 1990s and their views on Bosnia have not received scholarly attention. This article seeks to contribute to the literature on US policy towards Bosnia as well as to the literature on congressional foreign policy activism by studying the legacy of Senator Richard Lugar. Drawing on Lugar's Senate papers on Bosnia stored at the Indiana University Libraries in Bloomington, this article seeks to reconstruct the senator's views on and policy prescriptions for Bosnia from 1992 to 1995.

Richard G. Lugar (1932-2019) was an American politician who served in the US Senate from January 1977 to January 2013. Over a span of 36 years in the Senate, Lugar left an important mark on US foreign policy. A Republican from Indiana, Lugar was an influential voice in foreign affairs during his service on Capitol Hill. Lugar served twice as chairman of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee – from 1985 to 1987 and again from 2003 to 2007. In the Senate, Lugar was known for his bipartisanship in tackling some of America's pressing foreign policy issues. He was considered an internationalist, a view that did not sit well with some of his fellow Republicans.<sup>3</sup> In view of the currently polarized US domestic politics, the period of the early 1990s when senior Democrats and Republicans were willing to engage in a bipartisan spirit to formulate American foreign policy seems to belong to a distant era.

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<sup>2</sup> Hamza Karčić, Saving Bosnia on Capitol Hill: the case of Senator Bob Dole, *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2015; Hamza Karčić, An unlikely hawk: Congressman Frank McCloskey and the Bosnian war, *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, vol. 15, no.1, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Neil A. Lewis, "Richard Lugar, G.O.P. Senator and Foreign Policy Force, Dies at 87," *The New York Times*, April 28, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/28/obituaries/senator-richard-lugar-dead.html>.

## Supporting the Use of Force in Bosnia

The Lugar archive shows that the senator met with a Serbian-American diaspora activist named Michael Djordjevich in July 1991. In a letter to Lugar, Djordjevich thanked him for the meeting held on 15 July 1991 during which they discussed the situation in Yugoslavia. Peter Chelovich also attended the meeting.<sup>4</sup> This is the earliest record in the Lugar archive on the senator's meeting related to Yugoslavia.

After the war broke out in spring 1992, *The Tribune* reported in early June of that year that Lugar was among the first in Congress to call for military action in Yugoslavia. He urged the Bush Administration to lead an alliance similar to the one spearheaded against Iraq a year earlier to end the slaughter in Yugoslavia.<sup>5</sup> In a press release from 10 June 1992, Lugar called on the US to lead the UN and NATO in enforcing a cease-fire in Yugoslavia. He stated that "world leadership at the U.N. has pointed the finger at Serbian aggression and demanded an immediate and lasting cease-fire. Economic sanctions might influence the aggressors if the further threat of military force was credible, but it is not." Lugar added that "the U.N. should authorize nation states to use force. NATO should draw up plans for a comprehensive use of force as thorough as that formulated for air, sea and ground forces in Desert Storm."<sup>6</sup> These statements by Lugar were clear in their articulation of a "Serbian aggression" on Bosnia and were among the earliest calling for the use of force to end the war.

Several days later, on 15 June 1992, Lugar published an opinion in *Dallas Morning News* in which he wrote that "the United States should step forward now to lead the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization to stern enforcement of a cease-fire in Yugoslavia before it is too late." Referring to the war against Iraq in 1991, Lugar wrote that "NATO should draw up plans for a comprehensive use of force as thorough as that formulated for air, sea and ground forces in Desert Storm." He added: "If the Yugoslavian-Serbian government does not yield, it should face sufficient military force to ensure its certain and swift defeat. The United States should take leadership of the process immediately. We alone have the military and moral authority to lead and to help produce the international authority needed for peaceful settlement."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Letter from Michael Djordjevich to Senator Richard G. Lugar, 29 July 1991, SFRC Box 111, Country Files Yugoslavia, Folder 1 of 2, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>5</sup> Ken Hardin, "Lugar calls for military action," *The Tribune*, 10 June 1992, SFRC Box 111, Country Files Yugoslavia, Folder 1 of 2, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>6</sup> Media Release, Richard G. Lugar, 10 June 1992, Press Releases, Folder 1 of 2 1992, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>7</sup> Richard Lugar, "U.S. should take lead in ending Yugoslavian slaughter," *Dallas Morning News*, 15 June 1992, SFRC Box 111, Country Files Yugoslavia, Folder 2 of 2, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

In this op-ed, Lugar repeated most of the points he raised in the 10 June 1992 press release.

Later that month, on 24 June 1992, Lugar sent a letter to Ohio Governor George V. Voinovich. The governor had enclosed a letter he had sent to President George Bush. Voinovich had written to the president that “a ‘military solution’ would be a temporary fix, at best, with grave consequences for stability in the Balkans, and the moral profile of the United States.” Voinovich asked Bush to consider supporting a Serbian-American entrepreneur Milan Panić and opening a channel of communication with him. Panić was set to take the place of Yugoslavia’s prime minister. Senator Lugar, in his reply to the Ohio Governor, shared his positive view of Panić.<sup>8</sup> In fact, Panić became Yugoslavia’s prime minister and went on to challenge Serbian leader Slobodan Milošević.

In a press release from 1 October 1992, Lugar expressed hope that elections to be held later that year in Serbia and Montenegro could bring to office new leaders and a change in the country’s foreign policy. He wrote approvingly of Yugoslav prime minister and Serbian-American Milan Panić and the prospect of change should Panić emerge victorious after the elections. Lugar concluded by calling for the US to provide assistance in support of a free and fair elections in Yugoslavia. The senator called for a modification to the international sanctions on Yugoslavia to this but added that sanctions should remain in place until “the root causes of the conflict in Bosnia” were eliminated.<sup>9</sup> In fact, Milošević outsmarted Panić and that was the end of the diaspora entrepreneur’s foray into Belgrade politics

On 7 December 1992, Lugar published an article in *Roll Call* on what the US policy towards Bosnia should be. Lugar pointed out that the crisis in Yugoslavia would be high on the agenda of the President-elect Bill Clinton. He pointed out that a “failure to deal with this foreign crisis will complicate his ability to succeed on the domestic front.” The senator laid out several objectives of US policy towards Bosnia. First, to provide food and shelter to Bosnians. Second, to end the war and try war crimes suspects. Third, to find a political solution. Fourth, to prevent a spill-over of the war to Kosovo and Sandžak. Fifth, to help with a democratic transition in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In a prescient observation, the senator called for the US to lead in such a response adding: “Progress toward resolving the Yugoslav crisis without US leadership is unlikely.”<sup>10</sup> Yet, the senator did not push for the use of force in ending the war in Bosnia.

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<sup>8</sup> Letter from Richard G. Lugar to George V. Voinovich, 24 June 1992, SFRC Box 111, Country Files Yugoslavia, Folder 2 of 2, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana

<sup>9</sup> Media Release, Richard G. Lugar, 1 October 1992, Press Releases, Folder 2 of 2 1992, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>10</sup> Richard Lugar, “What Are US Goals in Bosnia?” *Roll Call*, 7 December 1992, Senate Foreign Relations Committee Box 111, Country Files Yugoslavia, Folder 1 of 2, Richard G. Lugar



In early January 1993, Lugar called on the Clinton Administration to use force end the war in Bosnia. However, he expressed his doubts that Secretary of State had the resoluteness to advocate military force. He even expressed support for US troops to be deployed to Bosnia – not to fight but to prevent atrocities. “The troops would say, 'We're here. We don't want to fight. But we are not going to tolerate ethnic cleansing,'” Lugar was quoted as saying. He also floated the idea that US troops from Germany could be redeployed to Bosnia.<sup>11</sup>

The following month, on 10 February 1993, Lugar issued a statement after the Clinton Administration unveiled its plan for Bosnia. Lugar stated that “the United States and its NATO allies should not accept a pattern of ethnic cleansing in Europe. Bosnia is a test case in which the U.S. should lead the necessary diplomatic and military efforts to construct a solution.” He added that “Europe is an ethnic tinderbox, and Bosnia is now a brush fire that could be contained if we act promptly.”<sup>12</sup> As in 1992, Lugar continued speaking out against atrocities being committed in Bosnia. When Senator Dennis DeConcini introduced a resolution calling on the US to end the war in Bosnia and lift the arms embargo, Lugar co-sponsored this resolution.<sup>13</sup>

Three months later, from 1 to 5 May 1993, Lugar and Senator Sam Nunn led a Senate delegation to Italy, Croatia and Macedonia and discussed the options the situation in Bosnia. In a press release from 11 May 1993, Lugar’s office announced that the senator would meet President Bill Clinton that day to brief him on the visit.<sup>14</sup> After his return, Lugar was one of eight co-sponsors of a bill introduced by Senator Bob Dole which directed the president to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia. The bill further authorized the president to provide military assistance to this country.<sup>15</sup> Though it did not pass the Senate, it was still important as it kept the issue of the arms embargo alive on Capitol Hill. And, it placed Lugar and others on the record as supporting Bosnia’s right to self-defense.

Moving a step further, on 27 May 1993, Lugar’s office issued a press release announcing that Lugar and Senator Bob Dole would introduce legislation to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia. According to this statement, the two senators had sent a letter to President Clinton on 21 May 1993 in which they wrote that

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Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>11</sup> Lars-Erik Nelson.

<sup>12</sup> Media Release, Richard G. Lugar, 10 February 1993, Press Releases Folder 1 of 2 1993, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>13</sup> S. Res.104 - A resolution relating to Bosnia-Herzegovina's right to self-defense, 103rd Congress (1993-1994).

<sup>14</sup> Media Release, Richard G. Lugar, 11 May 1993, Press Releases Folder 1 of 2 1993, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>15</sup> S. 1044 - Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Act of 1993, 103rd Congress (1993-1994).

“taking strong action against aggression in Bosnia-Hercegovina is in the interest of the United States.”<sup>16</sup>

The following month, on 15 June 1993, Lugar sent a letter to Secretary of State Warren Christopher. He urged the Clinton Administration to provide for a broadcasting of a Serbo-Croatian program of Radio Free Europe to the former Yugoslavia. The senator also informed the Secretary that he was considering introducing legislation that would enable the President to support democratic forces in Serbia. But, the senator wrote, this was a sensitive matter and he preferred to discuss it first with Secretary Christopher.<sup>17</sup> In fact, this cautious approach was emblematic of Lugar’s other efforts on Bosnia.

By June 1993, Lugar saw what many Clinton White House officials also worried: that Bosnia would affect the Clinton foreign policy legacy and ultimately his presidency. On 24 June 1993, a press release from Lugar’s office addressed to reporters, editors and producers stated that “in the end, Bosnia was treated as a Third World civil war, not a tragedy at the heart of the European continent...When it came to the crunch, it was the West that blinked, not Bosnian Serbs.” Lugar presciently added that “Crises in Europe could derail the Clinton presidency and his economic plan.”<sup>18</sup>

The next month, in early July 1993, Senator Lugar delivered an important speech on NATO. Lugar called for NATO to act in “out of area” operations and to enlarge to include states in Central and Southeast Europe. For Lugar, the war in Bosnia portended the spread of “destructive xenophobic nationalism” in Europe.<sup>19</sup> Again, this was a cautious approach and one which was characteristics of the Indiana senator.

His press office continued issuing statements on the senator’s views on Bosnia. In a press release from 7 September 1993, Lugar’s office announced that the senator would hold a press conference following his two-week trip to Central and Eastern Europe. With the war in Bosnia clearly on his mind, the press release quoted Lugar saying: “We must learn the sobering lessons of Bosnia and make plans now to forestall an unravelling of the stable Europe we have come to take for granted.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Media Release, Richard G. Lugar, 27 May 1993, Press Releases Folder 1 of 2 1993, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>17</sup> Letter from Richard G. Lugar to Warren Christopher, 15 June 1993, SFRC Box 111, Country Files Yugoslavia, Folder 2 of 2, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>18</sup> Media Release, Richard G. Lugar, 24 June 1993, Folder 1 of 2 1993, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>19</sup> Stephen S. Rosenfeld, “NATO’s Last Chance,” *The Washington Post*, 2 July 1993.

<sup>20</sup> Media Release, Richard G. Lugar, 7 September 1993, Folder 1 of 2 1993, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.



## A Call to End the Arms Embargo

On 10 September 1993, Lugar's office issued a press release on Bosnia following the visit to Washington, DC of Bosnia's President Alija Izetbegović. In the statement, Lugar stated that "the first and best option for the United States and for Bosnia ... is to terminate the United States arms embargo and to send small arms and anti-tank weapons to the armed forces led by the Bosnian President." Lugar's statement added that "No nation has ever been denied the right to defend itself by fellow members of the United Nations. Bosnians allowed to fight for their own country will make no request for armed forces from the United States on their soil." Lugar added that a second option was NATO air strikes to ease the pressure on Bosnian cities. He added: "A third, but unacceptable option, is for the Bosnian government to be forced into the current map presented by Lord Owen in Geneva...." Lugar warned that "Failure to arm the Bosnians or at minimum to conduct extensive air strikes to help end intolerable blocks to provision of humanitarian aid will lead to a request of the United States to provide thousands of peacekeepers in a virtually intolerable set of circumstances for their safety or any viable hope of Bosnian sovereignty." This statement was the most direct and clear support that Senator Lugar provided to Bosnia in 1993 at a time when the situation in Bosnia was dim and the prospects for the country's future bleak.

For the rest of 1993, there were no significant statements by Senator Lugar on Bosnia. In fact, the next document related to Bosnia is from January 1994 when Representative Frank Wolf wrote to Lugar to send him a report from Wolf's most recent trip to Bosnia. The congressman visited the besieged city of Mostar.

In April 1994, Senator Bob Dole introduced a bill to lift the US arms embargo on Bosnia. Senator Lugar was one of 33 co-sponsors of the bill<sup>21</sup> and it was significant for congressional Bosnia hawks to have had the senator's support. Later that month, Lugar was quoted as saying that the Clinton White House allowed the war in Bosnia to be in "free fall" and that it posed the risk of spreading. Lugar told reporters it was time to withdraw the UN peacekeepers as their presence in Bosnia had turned into an obstacle to military action. Lugar also said he favoured arming the Bosnian Muslims and that the US could do it unilaterally if Europeans were not aboard.<sup>22</sup>

The next month, in a press release from 12 May 1994, Lugar stated: "I believe that the Dole Amendment presented solid advice to President Clinton. Sole passage of it would have been helpful to the President by clearly stating to our allies our belief that the Bosnian Muslims should be given the chance to defend themselves." Lugar called for stronger presidential leadership on

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<sup>21</sup> A bill to remove the United States arms embargo of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, S.2042 — 103rd Congress (1993-1994).

<sup>22</sup> John Dillin, "Lugar to Clinton: Change Bosnia Policy," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 21 April 1994.

Bosnia.<sup>23</sup> In August 1994, Lugar voted in support of an amendment introduced by Bob Dole providing for a US lifting of the arms embargo on Bosnia by 15 November 1994. This amendment was passed by 58-42 and was a significant victory for the supporters of Bosnia's right to defend themselves.<sup>24</sup> At the end of the year, on 9 December 1994, Lugar's office released a statement announcing that the senator would meet with British, French and German officials to discuss ending the war in Bosnia.<sup>25</sup>

For the first several months of 1995, there is remarkably little on Lugar's views on Bosnia. On 25 May 1995, Lugar called on the Clinton Administration to seek congressional authorisation for the deployment of US troops to Bosnia. A presidential candidate by this time, Lugar stated that both the Bush and the Clinton Administration made "missteps" on Bosnia. Lugar reiterated that US leadership in NATO was key to ending the war. He urged Clinton to his case to "the American public and Congress."<sup>26</sup>

On 1 June 1995, Lugar's office issued a statement saying that "the United States cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of Munich anymore than we can afford to repeat the mistakes of Vietnam. The history of this century has taught us than diplomatic attempts to appease renegade states run by dictators are not only an exercise in futility, they are fatal. The United States cannot permit the war in Bosnia to spread." His statement continued: "However easy and politically popular it may be, the United States cannot say that Bosnia is not our concern. We cannot stand by and watch another Holocaust." Lugar once again called for US leadership and the use of NATO force to end the war in Bosnia.<sup>27</sup> The next day, on 2 June 1995, Lugar issued a statement calling for the unconditional release of all UN hostages in Bosnia. Once again, he urged the President to seek congressional approval for the use of American force in Bosnia. Lugar ended his press release by stating: "President Clinton must show some leadership. He acts as if this is all a bad dream that he wishes would go away."<sup>28</sup>

Several days after Bosnian Serb forces captured Srebrenica on 11 July, Senator Bob Dole pushed for his legislation on lifting the arms embargo. In a press release from 18 July 1995, Lugar stated that NATO should have intervened early on in the war to end it. He expressed support for Senator Dole's legislation to lift the embargo but only after all UN troops were withdrawn from Bosnia.

<sup>23</sup> Media Release, Richard G. Lugar, 12 May 1994, Press Release, Folder 1 of 2 1994, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>24</sup> S.Amdt.2479 to H.R.4650, 103rd Congress (1993-1994).

<sup>25</sup> Media Release, 9 December 1994, Press Release, Folder 2 of 2 1994, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>26</sup> Media Release, 29 May 1995, Press Release, Folder 2 of 4 1995, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>27</sup> Media Release, 1 June 1995, Press Release, Folder 2 of 4 1995, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>28</sup> Media Release, 2 June 1995, Press Release, Folder 2 of 4 1995, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

Lugar than asked: "If the U.S. lifts the embargo unilaterally and the Bosnian government we have armed is on the brink of collapse, are we prepared to stand by idly? This looks all too reminiscent of U.S. policy in Vietnam after 1973?" In fact, this is a rather misplaced historical parallel for the collapse of the Bosnian government was not an issue in summer 1995. Then, in a change from his previous views, Lugar said: "Ultimately, the President himself will have to make a decision to terminate the arms embargo. Congress cannot compel a President to give or sell arms if he is opposed to this course. Without the President's assent, arms will not flow to Bosnia – no matter how many resolutions the Congress passes." He once again called for presidential leadership and the use of NATO to end the war.<sup>29</sup>

On 25 July 1995, the Action Council for Peace in the Balkans – a pro-Bosnian advocacy outfit – wrote to Senator Lugar urging him to support the Dole-Lieberman legislation to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia. The letter was signed by a number of American luminaries including Zbigniew Brzezinski, Frank C. Carlucci, Jeane J. Kirkpatrick and others.<sup>30</sup>

What was particularly perplexing was that Lugar did not co-sponsor Bob Dole's Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Act of 1995. This was the most consequential act passed by the Senate on Bosnia and one which sought to steer US policy towards Bosnia. Lifting the arms embargo was a key objective of this bill. Lugar did, however, vote in support of this bill on 26 July 1995.<sup>31</sup>

On 12 September 1995, President Clinton wrote to Senator Lugar. Clinton thanked Lugar for his letter relating to Bosnian Muslim men and boys captured by Bosnian Serb forces. Clinton underscored that the US have insisted to Slobodan Milošević that he press Pale to release all the detainees. Clinton also reiterated that the US had been gathering evidence of war crimes in the former Yugoslavia.<sup>32</sup>

Lugar was an influential voice that other reached out to. On 12 October 1995, Richard Armitage wrote to Senator Lugar that "If it is true that the Department of Defense contemplates a combined mission of neutral peacekeeping and training the Bosnian armed forces, I fear that a costly blunder is in the making... We have made this mistake 12 years ago in Lebanon."<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Media Release, 18 July 1995, Press Releases, Folder 3 of 4 1995, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>30</sup> Letter to Richard Lugar, 25 July 1995, Action Council for Peace in the Balkans, SFRC Box 62, Country Files Bosnia July-December 1995, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>31</sup> S.21 - Bosnia and Herzegovina Self-Defense Act of 1995, 104th Congress (1995-1996).

<sup>32</sup> Letter from Bill Clinton to Richard Lugar, 12 September 1995, SFRC Box 62, Country Files Bosnia July-December 1995, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>33</sup> Letter from Richard Armitage to Richard Lugar, 12 October 1995, SFRC Box 62, Country Files Bosnia July-December 1995, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

As the Dayton peace talks concluded, Lugar stated in a press release from 21 November 1995, that the President must consult Congress before deploying US troops to Bosnia. He laid out five questions that the President needed to answer to specify the nature of the US-led mission to implement peace in Bosnia. Lugar asked who was responsible for keeping Bosnia “whole and multi-ethnic,” what was the policy towards war crimes suspects, how Bosnian Muslim military strength would be enhanced or Bosnian Serb military strength diminished, the role of NATO and who would finance the mission.<sup>34</sup> In this case, the senator sought to clarify the nature of the US involvement in Bosnia and to reassert the role of Congress in making such important foreign policy decisions.

As US-led international troops prepared to deploy to Bosnia, Lugar stated in a press release from 13 December 1995 that “American leadership of the NATO peacekeeping force is essential to implementing the Dayton peace agreement and to helping ensure the stability and security of Europe... The future of NATO would be jeopardized by our failure to send American troops to Bosnia.” Lugar stated that US credibility was on the line now that President Clinton had “unilaterally took the lead in Dayton and committed the U.S. to participate in the NATO implementation force.” Lugar added that European stability was an American interest and that American domestic growth was linked to stability on the continent. He presciently stated that the IFOR mission may not be accomplished in 12 months and this would turn out to be true as IFOR was transformed into SFOR. Lastly, Lugar stated that “Arming Bosnia-Croat federation forces while disarming other armed forces in Bosnia poses dangers to U.S. troops and undermines the arms control provision of the Dayton accords.” This last statement is puzzling; why the senator came to this conclusion is unclear. In fact, there were no hostile fire casualties in the NATO-led implementation of the Dayton agreement.<sup>35</sup>

## Summary

Senator Lugar’s papers show a significant paper-flow over the war in Bosnia and potential US responses to it. Though nowhere near as forceful or as persistent as congressional Bosnia hawks, Lugar’s views on Bosnia still carried weight given his prominence as a leading voice on foreign affairs. The Indiana Republican may not have steered US policy towards Bosnia like Dole and Lieberman, but his views and policy prescriptions were significant. There are several cases where his views stood out in support of Bosnia.

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<sup>34</sup> Media Release, 21 November 1995, Press Releases, Folder 4 of 4 1995, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

<sup>35</sup> Media Release, 13 December 1995, Press Releases, Folder 4 of 4 1995, Richard G. Lugar Senatorial Papers, *Modern Political Papers Collection*, Indiana University Libraries, Bloomington, Indiana.

As early as June 1992, Lugar referred to a “Serbian aggression” on Bosnia. This was an important statement in view of dubious euphemisms such as “ethnic cleansing” in vogue among journalists and policymakers at the time. In December 1992, Lugar presciently observed that the war in Bosnia would not likely be stopped without US leadership. This was proven right three-and-a-half years later.

In early 1993, Lugar floated the idea of deploying US troops to stop the atrocities. In 1993, he supported legislation in Congress to allow Bosnia to arm itself. The senator showed a cautious approach and one by which he did not want to upstage the president or usurp presidential foreign policy making authority.

In September 1993, Lugar called for an end to the arms embargo and the supply of defensive weapons to the Bosnian government. In April 1994, Lugar stated that he favoured the arming of Bosnian Muslims to defend themselves. In 1995, as in 1992, he continued calling for the US and NATO to intervene in Bosnia.

However, on several occasions Lugar showed indecisiveness or perhaps caution as he ran for the Republican nomination for the 1996 elections. For instance, in July 1995, Lugar vacillated on the issue of arms embargo-lifting. He supported Dole but conceded that the decision was ultimately the president’s.

In sum, Senator Lugar played an important but generally little-known role in the US debate over Bosnia. While overshadowed by the more famous and forceful Bosnia hawks, Senator Lugar’s impact should not be understated.

## **Zaključak**

Senator Lugarovi dokumenti pokazuju značajan tok papira o ratu u Bosni i potencijalnim američkim odgovorima na njega. Iako ni približno snažni ili uporni kao kongresni orlovi Bosne, Lugarova gledišta o Bosni ipak su imala težinu s obzirom na njegovu istaknutost kao vodećeg glasa u vanjskim poslovima. Republikanac iz Indiane možda nije usmjeravao američku politiku prema Bosni poput Dola i Liebermana, ali su njegova gledišta i politički recepti bili značajni. Postoje slučajevi u kojima su njegova gledišta podržavala Bosnu.

Već u junu 1992, Lugar je govorio o “srpskoj agresiji” na Bosnu. To je bila važna izjava s obzirom na sumnjive eufemizme poput “etničkog čišćenja” koji su bili u modi među novinarima i donositeljima političkih odluka u to vrijeme. U decembru 1992, Lugar je pronicljivo primijetio da se rat u Bosni vjerovatno neće zaustaviti bez vođstva SAD-a. To se pokazalo tačnim tri i po godine kasnije.

Početakom 1993, Lugar je iznio ideju o slanju američkih trupa kako bi se zaustavile strahote. 1993. godine podržao je zakonodavstvo u Kongresu koje bi omogućilo Bosni da se naoruža. Senator je pokazao oprezan pristup, ne želeći preuzeti predsjednika ili usurpirati ovlaštenja predsjednika u donošenju vanjske politike.

U septembru 1993, Lugar je pozvao na okončanje embarga na oružje i opskrbu odbrambenim oružjem bosanskoj vladi. U aprilu 1994, Lugar je izjavio da podržava naoružavanje bosanskih muslimana kako bi se obranili. 1995. godine, kao i 1992, nastavio je pozivati na intervenciju SAD-a i NATO-a u Bosni.

Međutim, u nekoliko navrata Lugar je pokazao neodlučnost ili možda oprez dok je tražio republikansku nominaciju za predsjedničke izbore 1996. Na primjer, u julu 1995, Lugar je kolebao po pitanju ukidanja embarga na oružje. Podržao je Dola, ali je priznao da je konačna odluka predsjednikov.

Sve u svemu, senator Lugar igrao je važnu, ali uglavnom malo poznatu ulogu u američkoj raspravi o Bosni. Iako zasjenjen od strane poznatijih i snažnijih zagovornika Bosne, uticaj senatora Lugara ne bi trebao biti potcijenjen.

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