opinion

Hope Disappears in Sarajevo Winter

Column by Daniel C. Stevenson

A week before Christmas, Kemal Kuspa- 
hic, editor in chief of the Sarajevo newspa-
per Oslobodjenje, spoke at MIT about his 
country's and his city's struggle against Ser-
bian and Croatian forces. Kuspahic's paper, 
the name of which translates into Liberation,
has been published continuously throughout 
the war, despite a destroyed office building, 
constant sniper attacks, and a strict embargo 
place on Sarajevo. 
Kuspahic did more than reiterate the 
mobbing facts of centuries-old violence and 
genocide in the former Yugoslavia; he dem-
strated to the feeling the Bosnians have of apathetic 
or even apathetic global abandonment, the 
anguish of empty promises, and the rising 
helplessness of the citizens of Sarajevo. 
Just a few days after Kuspahic's talk, a 
Christmas ceasefire was brokered — and then 
violated — adding one more layer to the list of 
failed truces and unfulfilled expectations. 
And on Monday, on the eve of the first 
peace talks of the new year in Vienna, 15 peo-
ple were killed in heavy shelling in Sarajevo, 
including six members of one family. Day 
after day for almost two years, truces are made 
and then violated, innocent civilians are killed, 
and the rest of the world forgets. 

In my first column in The Tech last fall, I 
advocated strong, forceful global intervention 
in Bosnia-Herzegovina to prevent another 
20th-century genocide. While I am from Sarajevo myself, I believe the United States 
and the international community risks built 
that virtually nothing has been done at 
all to resolve the conflict; fruitless negotia-
tions continue, proposed settlements still favor 
the Serbs, people are still being killed, and a 
sound winter has passed — a season usually 
filled with celebrations of peace, love, and 
hope in most of the world, but marked by war, 
hatred, and broken promises in Sarajevo. 

Despite widespread concern about the 
Bosnian situation, countries approach for inter-
vention, and continuing death and destruction, 
the predication of the Bosnians has only 
weakened, and the apparent strength of brutal-
ly violent nationalism has encouraged its 
spread beyond the former Yugoslavia — wit-
ness the recent advances made by ultranation-
alist Vladimir Zhirinovsky in Russia. 

Now more than ever before, armed inter-
vention is necessary in Bosnia. Kuspahic's 
talk made the urgency of the situation abun-
dantly clear: Sarajevans have lost their homes, 
their offices, their food, their friends, and their 
relatives. They still retain their hope, but it is 
slowly waning in the face of continued world-
wide apathy. Appeasement and ignorance, 
however attractive they might be in the short 
term, have horrific long term consequences. 
We must act now, swiftly and strongly, if not to save 
the Bosnians, then to save those who 
will fall victim to ultranationalist genocide in the 
future. 

The most important purpose of interven-
tion is to send a message — that violent, 
genocidal aggression will not be tolerated 
by the global community. Kuspahic sug-
gested in his talk that the message include sur-
gest weapons; an increase in sanctions against Ser-
bia, and the creation of an effective war 
troubles. These actions have always 
been well within the reach of America and 
European countries — faced with the growing 
human rights crisis in decades, the "free 
world" must act now. 

And armed intervention does not have to 
involve foreign troops — if the arms embargo 
is lifted and Bosnia is finally allowed to 
defend itself, there are plenty of Bosnians 
will fight for their homeland, according to 
Kuspahic. 

In the earlier column, I compared the situa-
tion in Bosnia to Nazi Germany in the late 1930s and early '40s, specifically the fact that 
both conflicts extend the extermination of 
people solely on the basis of their ethnicity. 
Kuspahic made the same comparison with the 
Nazi's in his talk. He stated that "this was the 
century when 'Never again!' was pro-
claimed" — yet the same actions supposedly 
stopped forever are being carried out again. 
Fortunately for the Bosnians, the Serbs are not 
advocating strong, forceful global intervention. 

A chilling conclusion to Kuspahic's talk was the assertion by one audience member that the |Serajevans were "doomed to die" and 

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