



## **Bosnia and Herzegovina: Failed State in the Heart of Europe**

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While the world focuses on violence throughout the Middle East, a dangerous crisis is unfolding within Europe. Bosnia and Herzegovina, once a poster child for international intervention and reconstruction, is today a failing state. The country is [disintegrating](#) and has been in constant political turmoil for over a decade. Amid perpetual political and economic dysfunction, security threats amplified by radical Islam, fading European and American interest, and the divisive foreign influence of Russia and Turkey, Bosnia and Herzegovina's future looks bleak. Together, these factors are contributing to a crisis that threatens to return the Balkans to the violence of the 1990s. Despite initial success, the 1995 Dayton peace architecture is unable to resolve the underlying problems responsible for Bosnia and Herzegovina's acute crisis. Only a refreshed, US-led and transatlantic diplomatic approach that replaces the outdated Dayton peace architecture with a new constitutional foundation can stem the country's and region's political fragmentation.

### **Constitutional Crisis**

The proximate catalyst for the country's current crisis centers on next year's national elections. Last December, BiH's Constitutional Court declared unconstitutional a [controversial law governing elections](#) in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (the bigger of BiH's two autonomous entities, the other being Republika Srpska, dominated by Orthodox Serbs). In a legal quirk, the Federation's numerically larger Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims) can elect designated Catholic Croat representatives to seats on the legislative House of Peoples, effectively disenfranchising them. In a February [resolution on Bosnia and Herzegovina](#), the Brussels-based European Parliament cited "the importance of the recent decision of the Constitutional Court on the principle of constituent status and equality of its three constitutive peoples to elect their own legitimate political representatives...in the House of Peoples." The Bosniak-dominated government in Sarajevo, however, [steadfastly refuses to implement](#) the Court's decision thus threatening the integrity of the election process. Unless the law is amended by year's end there will be no constitutional basis to hold elections and form the next Federation government. Worse, the central government would then be unable to form as its legislators are, in part, [selected from each Entities' parliaments](#).

The ensuing collapse of the state-level system would set the stage for the country's disintegration as the Republika Srpska entity, which has for years [pressed hard for independence](#), would find itself with the country's only functioning government with few realistic choices other than to escape the imploding morass by formally breaking with Sarajevo. This act, in turn, would spur the Croats to go their own way. Božo Ljubić, a prominent Bosnian Croat politician, warned that by



obstructing passage of the election law amendments, [Bosniak leaders were “crossing the Rubicon”](#) and would be held responsible for the country’s collapse. Such a breakdown in basic constitutional order is likely to provoke renewed conflict between all three constituent peoples, especially in mixed areas of population where internal administrative borders do not match ethnic ones, as the country’s Muslims would not passively concede BiH’s partition without a fight. Sectarian-based conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina would negatively affect neighboring states who suffer their own unresolved and volatile inter-ethnic struggles.

## **A Broken State?**

The election dispute, however, reflects a deeper and more enduring political crisis that is at the core of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s organic dysfunction, a country organized as one state, two autonomous entities, and three constituent nations. According to national surveys, relations between the three peoples are abysmal. Only 26% to 36% would be fine with a family member marrying a person from the other constituent group, while on a scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent), responders [rated relations between them a low 2.2 on average](#). The irreconcilability of competing visions of each of BiH’s respective peoples that precipitated war during the early 1990s were never resolved but simply placed on hold by the Dayton Accords of 1995. Dayton was intended first and foremost to end armed hostilities with the hope that, with peace, Bosnia and Herzegovina’s future could be eventually worked out through democratic processes backed by international aid. It hasn’t worked. According to the Brussels-based [International Crisis Group](#) the country’s “three communities’ conflicting goals and interests are a permanent source of crisis exacerbated by a Constitution that meets no group’s needs.” Armed hostilities that sought to determine by force the country’s ultimate future were simply transmuted into continuously contentious, albeit for now peaceful, political processes. Yet the [country remains stuck in time](#), structurally unable to move forward politically or economically.

The Dayton architecture has failed to construct a permanent peace and the country is literally dying a slow death locked in interminable ethnic-based political tensions. Within the Federation entity, the Croats, the smallest of the three constituent peoples, have been politically marginalized with [40% of its population reduced](#) since 1991 (The normally reticent Vatican proclaims them as the “[most endangered part of the Church on the continent of Europe](#)”). Croats have been subjected to majoritarian domination by a larger Bosniak population, themselves in siege mode in the face of constant threats by Serbs to break away after the Bosniaks barely survived a genocidal campaign aimed against them by neighboring Serbia and its Bosnian Serb proxies. Yet, the decision by Bosniak leaders to [abuse the election law](#) in order to ensure a compliant Croat member of the Presidency in 2006 and then again in 2010, and form a Federal government without participation of any of the major Croat political parties in 2001 and 2011, leaves Croats as Europe’s only politically disenfranchised people. This basic breach in democratic legitimacy further fuels distrust between Croats and Bosniaks. As the Croat-Bosniak Federation flounders, Serb-majority



Republika Srpska takes [incremental but cumulative steps towards independence](#), credibly citing the chaos in the Federation as *prima facie* proof that independence is the only viable path towards longer term stability. Left to itself, the country is heading towards violent partition.

## **Internationalism Run Amok?**

Following the 9/11 attacks the US refocused much of its energies and resources on the Middle East and South Asia. Then, under the Obama Administration, the United States reduced its global commitments, including from Europe. While still engaged in the Balkans it did so at a modest diplomatic level while still maintaining important levels of development assistance to promote political and economic reforms in the country. Europe, however, was expected to take the lead role of completing Bosnia and Herzegovina's political transition. Despite initial optimism, it has not turned out as expected. Burdened by endemic debt crises, the influx of millions of mostly Muslim refugees, and rise of anti-establishment populism, today's Europe lacks the political bandwidth required to redesign on its own a post-Dayton architecture that could stabilize the country over the long haul. Instead, Europe has stuck to the [same moribund approach](#) that has gradually eroded the country's sovereignty and stability without making progress on integrating it into European institutions. For its part, Washington, DC must recognize the destabilizing dangers of global retrenchment and the necessity of its leadership role in the Balkans and elevate its diplomatic engagement.

In the absence of US-EU leadership, international officials have been exercising undemocratic oversight of the country for more than 20 years after the Dayton Accords were signed. An entire nation-building industry of career diplomats has morphed into an international constituency little interested in moving beyond Dayton while taking full advantage of its prized privileges (especially high salaries). Of the nine judges on BiH's Constitutional Court [three are noncitizens selected by the President of the European Court of Human Rights](#). The High Representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina does not represent BiH at all but is an unelected European official tasked with implementing an outdated accord. In past, this office [dismissed hundreds of elected officials, parliamentarians, and civil servants](#) with impunity and, in the process, delegitimized among the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina the underlying purpose of "free elections" and "democratic institutions." While its powers have been tempered, the High Representative remains politically influential and capable of ending political and academic careers of any citizen who dares to criticize it, the Dayton Accords, or has the temerity to call for Constitutional changes that threaten the failing status quo.

Another legacy of Dayton is the [unwieldy Peace Implementation Council](#), or PIC, originally set up to provide strategic support to the government in the implementation of the Dayton Accords but which today serves as a political platform for competing visions by its fifty members, notably Russia and Turkey. Its biannual meetings of diplomats in Sarajevo are a boon for local hotels but



it is virtually ignored by everyone else as no concrete proposals for reform ever emerge from them. Finally, there is the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the Hague-based court whose purpose was to restore justice to the victims of genocide and war crimes but whose work has been [politicized](#) by Sarajevo that misuses its indictment powers as proxies to fight domestic political battles. It will [finally close](#) at the end of this year, almost 25 years since its establishment. The advent of the Tribunal's closure begs the question of whether the other Dayton-era institutions should follow suit and allow Bosnia and Herzegovina the breathing space to become a more genuine sovereign and self-governing country.

The Dayton Accord ended the brutal fighting in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but did not provide a workable roadmap to political stability. In a way, it did not seek to do so. The dark side of Dayton, and the original sin that bedevils Bosnia and Herzegovina to this day, is that it juridically codified ethnic cleansing. What is now Republika Srpska had been, before the war, an ethnically diverse territory. The war saw its large Bosniak and Croat population brutally expelled. In effect, Dayton legitimized it. Nevertheless, there was an operative assumption among Western officials, in retrospect a naïve one, that Bosnia and Herzegovina's deep-seated inter-ethnic tensions, the constitutional contradictions set forth by the Dayton Accords, and the ethnic cleansing it accepted, would be gradually overcome through Euro-Atlantic integration, specifically in the laws, regulations, and norms Bosnia and Herzegovina would have to adopt in order to qualify for membership into the European Union. They earnestly believed that an integrative process of dissolving internal borders and diminishing ethnic and national identities that were taking place within the European Union would eventually be mirrored by the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In fact, the opposite occurred. By ignoring at the onset Bosnia and Herzegovina's constitutional contradictions European officials unwittingly disabled the state's capacity to carry out the kinds of reforms only a stable state can adopt and, over time, reduced rather than improved its prospects for EU membership. In effect, the less democratically the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina acts, the more remote becomes its prospects for Euro-Atlantic integration. Moreover, as national identities and attendant calls for restoring internal borders reenter the political mainstream throughout Europe, the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina are less enthusiastic about surrendering their own national identities.

The resulting systemic absence of political stability, and the rampant corruption that flows from it, has negatively impacted the national economy which barely sputters along despite having received billions of dollars in security, economic, and other support from the [US](#) and [Europe](#) since the end of the war. Unemployment [hovers around 40%](#) with youth unemployment the highest among Europe [with more than two thirds of them without a job](#). BiH [ranks lowest among all European countries](#) on the World Bank's Index on the ease of doing business. Poverty is widespread, propelling the young and educated to [leave the country in record numbers](#) taking an



enormous demographic toll on the country's future economic development. Amidst poverty and idleness, youth have become increasingly susceptible to extreme nationalism and radical Islam.

## **Terrorism's Launching Pad into Europe**

Meanwhile, the terrorist threat in Bosnia and Herzegovina has become grave as ISIS fighters in the Middle East return home. BiH has [the highest number of ISIS fighters per capita in Europe](#), with a few hundred young Bosniaks who left to fight in Iraq and Syria. Unmolested by local authorities, returning ISIS fighters are given free rein to radicalize their peers, including open dissemination of [a local language ISIS publication](#). It is not uncommon to see [ISIS flags](#) waving in the countryside. ISIS recruitment is not the only jihadist problem. Twenty-five years of Saudi-sponsored Wahabi influence has become so strong that there are whole [Wahabi-run villages](#). Given that the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina can travel visa-free throughout the European Union, these home-grown terrorists can easily infiltrate Europe and launch attacks there. No surprise that Bosnian [weapons and ammunitions](#) found their way to the perpetrators of 2015 terror attack on Charlie Hebdo offices in Paris where 12 people were slain and 11 wounded.

Central European leaders have expressed serious concern about the growing terrorist threat stemming from the Balkans. A former Chief of Staff of the Czech Army, who served in the multinational peacekeeping mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, warned that terrorists can reach Europe within a few hours from the Balkans, pointing out that [the EU is ignoring the region's use as a safe haven](#). Croatian President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović recently warned that there are at least 5,000 extremist Wahhabis in Bosnia and Herzegovina and at least as many sympathizers, posing a security risk to her country and the region, echoing [reports](#) from the Croatian Security and Intelligence Agency. Austrian Foreign Minister (now Chancellor) Sebastian Kurz warned of the [growing influence of Saudi Arabia and Turkey](#) in the Western Balkans, linking it to a more intolerant version of Islam than what has been the historic norm in that part of the world. Highlighting the misuse of religion as a political weapon, Bosniak Member of the Presidency Bakir Izetbegović casually [dismissed the criticism](#) as Islamophobia.

A terrorist attack within BiH, would not only result in terror and loss of life, it could spark wider conflict between Croats, Serbs and Bosniaks. A terrorist attack taking place within such a climate of acute ethno-political distrust would be perceived by the Croat or Serb community as a sectarian-based attack. Croats and Serbs retain horrid memories of the 1990s when "Mujahedeen battalions," composed of hundreds of international fighters that flocked to BiH from Afghanistan and under the command of the Bosnian Muslim Army, [committed gruesome crimes in Central Bosnia, including ceremonial beheadings of civilians and war prisoners](#). After the war, hundreds of mujahedeen were granted Bosnian citizenship, and they established a [permanent training base for international terrorism](#) during the 1990s. Two of the 9/11 hijackers previously fought in Bosnia and Herzegovina as mujahedeen fighters, as did [9/11 mastermind Khalid Sheik Mohammed](#).



## History Fills the Vacuum

The Balkan chaos has predictably attracted external interference. Russian and Turkish regional influence has been on the rise in recent years. As mentioned, after 9/11 the US shifted its global focus to the Middle East, leaving to the European Union the task of consolidating peace and democracy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. After years of [failed reform attempts](#) and overwhelmed by its own internal governance problems, the EU [no longer prioritizes the region or takes seriously prospects of BiH's formal integration](#), leaving behind a power vacuum that Russia and Turkey have been more than pleased to fill, reinforcing ethnic political riptides that pull the country further apart. [Both Russia and Turkey are backing their historic allies](#) along confessional lines, Serbs and Bosniaks respectively, with Croats the sole orphans. Through strategic investments each has created a dependent political patronage system that feeds rather than moderates BiH's sectarianism – secessionism in the case of the Serbs and heavy-handed centralism in the case of the Bosniaks. Turkey has gone further by declaring Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the wider Balkan region, [strategically important to its national interests](#) as President Recep Tayyip Erdogan pursues his neo-Ottoman pretensions. Turkey [openly sides with Bosniak positions](#) through its membership on the Peace Implementation Council. It has [invested](#) in the transportation and banking sectors controlled by Bosniak officials thereby underwriting Sarajevo's vision of the country as a centralist state dominated by Bosniaks.

As part of Moscow's overall strategy to restore its strategic influence over Europe, [Russia actively supports](#) Republika Srpska's secessionist aspirations, openly lobbying for Serb interests at the Peace Implementation Council (Russia is a member) as well as investing heavily in its oil and gas industry. Last year, [Russia supported a Serb referendum](#) that sought to reinforce Republika Srpska's position against a constitutional court decision to deny them an official Serb statehood day, after defying Western warnings that the referendum would violate the Dayton agreement. Four days before the referendum, the president of Republika Srpska Milorad Dodik traveled to Moscow where he was warmly greeted by Russian President Vladimir Putin who [called the referendum "the will of the people."](#) This may be just one example of a wider Russian strategy to reverse the process of Euro-Atlantic integration and build political alliances with pro-Russian European leaders who oppose the European project, but in the Balkan context, Russia is adding fuel to Bosnia and Herzegovina's simmering sectarian flames.

Russia's most daring Balkan intervention though was against NATO's newest member Montenegro, which shares a border with Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Montenegro accused Russia of orchestrating [an attempted armed coup](#) last October on the eve of national elections in order to forestall its membership into NATO. A dozen armed Serbian military veterans led by two Russian operatives crossed into Montenegro with the intent to assassinate the country's pro-Western leader, Milo Đukanović. Montenegrin police apprehended the reputed assassins before they could act but the subsequent investigation revealed that the Russians, Eduard Shishmakov and Vladimir Popov, are [GRU agents](#) (Russian Military intelligence). It is not inconceivable to



imagine Putin exploiting BiH's 2018 constitutional crisis to support Republika Srpska's secession and gain another Balkan ally. Should violence subsequently erupt Putin might be tempted to unilaterally dispatch "peacekeepers to protect the Serbs" against Bosniak armed forces, replicating the Eastern Ukraine intervention hybrid model that would give Moscow justification to deploy its troops in the middle of Europe.

## What Next?

Bosnia and Herzegovina finds itself frozen in time, suffocating under an outdated peace accord that is not bringing it peace, stability or prosperity. Dayton's international institutions may have been originally well intentioned and deserve credit for ending the Balkan wars, but they are unable to extricate the country out of its structural conundrum. Meanwhile, Dayton's international backers have become stakeholders in their own rather than BiH's future, advocating either more of the same or forcibly hoisting a new trans-Bosnian identity upon a resistant population. Any such hyper-centralized solution that gives Bosniaks demographic and majoritarian control would spark open rebellion by the Serbs. For Croats, it would be their annihilation as a constituent people. As over twenty years have lapsed since Dayton was signed, past hopes that BiH's constitutional dysfunction would be subsumed and contained through integration into over-arching Euro-Atlantic institutions are no longer credible, offering citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina no realistic pathway in which to defuse their political and economic frustrations and replace them with an inspiring and hopeful future. Left untreated such communal-based despair is strengthening local forces of nationalist-populist appeal that is plaguing Europe, but which, in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina's present turmoil, risks turning violent. Most important, for its 3.5 million citizens life has become miserable with new generations leaving in greater and greater numbers.

While Bosnia and Herzegovina's crisis does indeed pale in comparison to others in Europe's near abroad – Syria and Libya most notably - the fact remains that it contains within it the seeds of a regional fragmentation that can quickly devolve from a regional nuisance into a strategic threat that would again require an enormous amount of political, economic and security investment that taxes an already overtaxed Euro-Atlantic response system. *The threat of future terrorist attacks linked to ISIS camps in Bosniak controlled territories, widening communal violence that engulfs multiple Balkan states, unchecked migration, Russian military adventurism in Republika Srpska on a pretext of "peacekeeping," merit renewed high level attention and resolution.*

As Europe is unable to assume this responsibility on its own, there is simply no alternative to American leadership. There is no doubting the European Union's high end ability to play a critical diplomatic role in crafting global policy towards global challenges – its response towards Russian aggression against Ukraine being most notable – but as a union of sovereign states it does so only as a partner to strong American engagement. Conversely, US leadership without equal partnership with Europe, and its accompanying panoply of political, economic and security institutions, is a



nonstarter. Both are needed. To date, as it pertains to the Balkans, the US has played the role of junior partner and this diplomatic formula has failed.

Peppered with regional crises in multiple strategic theatres, the last thing Washington DC needs is regional implosion in the heart of Europe. Either deal with it now while it remains manageable or deal with it later at far higher cost. Ironically, *the advent of a new American Administration, one openly disdainful of nation-building internationalism and therefore not beholden to Dayton, is uniquely positioned to provide a new diplomatic team and a refreshed and more realistic approach to resolving the mess of Bosnia and Herzegovina.* Absent an official change by the Administration in US policy the State Department will – as their European counterparts - continue to robotically stick to Dayton era positions. But what would a refreshed, post-Dayton US-led approach look like?

1. First, and most urgently, the Trump Administration, at the level of US Assistant Secretary for Europe and Eurasia, must, in concert with our European allies, press Sarajevo to abide by BiH's Constitutional Court ruling on amending the Federation's law on voting for designated Croat seats on the legislative House of Peoples. To date, the US Government has assigned diplomatic relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina to a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, a diplomatic level that conveys rather than formulates US foreign policy. Dispatching a new political appointee at a more senior level would send a positive message to Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats alike that Washington, DC is retaking the global lead. Breaking this short-term impasse resolves the immediate Constitutional logjam and permits already scheduled general elections to take place, offering needed breathing space for a refreshed and more systematic approach to stabilizing the country over the longer term.
2. A refreshed US-led transatlantic approach requires several key elements. Foremost is to retire Dayton's outdated and ineffective institutions, many of which, such as the Office of High Representative and the Peace Implementation Council, have already seen most of their past authorities diminished. The closure of the ICTY provides a clear precedent. If we want Bosnia and Herzegovina to act the part of a mature and sovereign state, then we need to end what is in effect shared sovereignty with the international community. That is not a state, it is a fake protectorate. Everyone knows that these institutions serve as placeholders until a revitalized global effort emerges to push for a more effective constitutional architecture. Similarly, we need to promptly dismiss the three non-citizen judges sitting on BiH's Constitutional Court. The most dangerous threat to democratic legitimacy is when citizens no longer believe free elections and governing institutions reflect "the will of the people" and simply stop participating, leaving the political space uncontested for extremist elements to seize it. Restoring full sovereignty would give citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina new and reinvigorated reason to participate in next year's elections.





3. Simultaneously, replace the Dayton architecture with a Tripartite Group of the United States, European Union, and NATO. Such a group would bring both institutional heft to the table, sideline ill-intentioned actors Turkey and Russia, and restore confidence among all groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina that Europe and the United States are once again jointly taking their future seriously. The Tripartite Group would smooth the transition away from Dayton's sterile institutions towards more accountable and responsive governing institutions, integrate the country more directly into NATO's security mechanisms, facilitate access to Europe's economic support programs, and count on US power to broker and shepherd through political agreements. Most notably, the Tripartite Group would bring the diplomatic credibility and expertise to assist BiH's leaderships to harmonize constitutional relations between its constituent nations on a more grounded and equitable foundation and simplify a governance structure that is too big, unwieldy, and expensive.
4. What is this new foundation? Here is the crux of BiH's dysfunction. It is time for Europe, the United States and the country's leaders to come clean on the fundamental core of the country's demise and recognize that a government based on one state, two entities, and three constituent peoples is as unrealistic as it sounds. Continued platitudes about maintaining the unity of Bosnia and Herzegovina under such an illogical foundation is absurd and does its people a gross disservice, relegating them to decades of hopeless and forced "togetherness." Within a framework of a revitalized and fairer constitutional arrangement – one federal state and a unitary entity for each of its three constituent nations within Bosnia and Herzegovina, the typical political horse trading that takes place in normal democracies can finally take root there. Moreover, it would cut the country's bloated public administration, making it financially sustainable, and reduce the scope for government corruption.

In fact, reforming Bosnia and Herzegovina as a stable, three entity federal system is not a new idea but one previously proposed in 2014 by the State Department-funded International Crisis Group which in its final report on the country [suggested establishing a Third Entity](#) in which the Federation "would be split into two entities, with a Bosnian and Croat majority respectively." The ICG cited internal political obstacles to its formation, but also touted it as a pathway out of the current morass:

*There is nothing inherently wrong with a Croat entity. It would solve many problems: there would be no further need for cantons, and relations between state and entity, and between entity and municipality, could be consistent throughout Bosnia. Instead of a tangled federation of entities and peoples, the country would be a normal federation of territorial units, a design with many successful European examples. Ethnic quotas could be replaced by regional representation and protection of fundamental human rights.*



Without explicitly saying so, the Europeans agree. The same [European Parliamentary resolution](#) we cited earlier also called for transforming BiH “into a fully effective, inclusive and functional state based on the rule of law, guaranteeing equality and democratic representation of all its constituent peoples...” and on “the principles of federalism, decentralization, and legitimate representation...” The two entity structure cannot provide for this. The three entity solution could. With real political equality and real political representation for all three constituent peoples the constitutional dynamics that the ICG blamed for fueling ethnic-based discord and existential fears of the other dissolves.

As fears of violent fragmentation subside, Bosnian and Herzegovinian citizens would demand from their elected leaders more good governance and competent public service delivery. Existential fears that today drive ethnic-based divisions would give way to more standard citizen-based demands placed on their elected leaders. Serbs and Croats that currently look to their mother countries Serbia and Croatia as leverage points to conduct their domestic political battles would, instead, turn inwards to focus their energies and resources on the business of domestic governance.

With internal normalization, Bosnia and Herzegovina can become a more sovereign, stable and confident candidate to meet the demanding requirements for gradual integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions. Incorporation into NATO’s Membership Action Plan, which Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats agree on, for example, is just one of a myriad of quick win opportunities that becomes available to this fragile state. For the Bosniaks, the loss of a counter-productive system of domination of a resistant entity partner, are rewarded with their own entity plus the credible prospect of Euro-Atlantic integration and the prosperity *and political acceptance* that comes with it. Importantly, it would free Bosniaks to focus their energies and resources on building their own distinct culture and evolving identity instead of circling the wagons against the other communities, treating them as existential threats.

Malign actors – both internal and external – would be denied the opportunities of chaos to promote their parasitic agendas. Secessionist pressures would actually subside as leaders of each entity could no longer justify to their voters or to the international community separation due to insuperable constitutional dysfunctionality. Absent international recognition, any departing entity would be blocked from access to private and global credit markets, notably the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, making separation financially untenable. But should any of their respective citizens want for any reason to peacefully opt out eventually they could do so along the nonviolent model of Czechoslovakia’s Velvet Divorce rather than replicate the brutal dissolution of former Yugoslavia.

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