

Review

Reviewed Work(s): *Blue Helmets and Black Markets: The Business of Survival in the Siege of Sarajevo* by Peter Andreas

Review by: Susan L. Woodward

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considerations. That Russia thinks in liberal hegemonic, rather than merely liberal, terms may have far-reaching consequences for the region and its members' future institutional choices.

The questions raised are not intended to detract from Darden's impressive scholarship, which greatly enhances our understanding of the Eurasian region and international economic institutions in general. Although the book does not provide a definitive judgment of the post-Soviet trajectories, it adds to our knowledge in a meaningful and profound way. The book teaches us not to overlook individual ideas and their role in economic policymaking and encourages us to deepen our investigation of the international decisions made by Russia and the other former Soviet states.

ANDREI TSYGANKOV
San Francisco State University

Blue Helmets and Black Markets: The Business of Survival in the Siege of Sarajevo. By Peter Andreas. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008. xv, 208 pp. Notes. Bibliography. Index. Illustrations. Photographs. \$25.00, hard bound.

The contemporary literature on civil war is reminiscent of the pre-1991 field of Soviet and eastern European studies when outsiders accused scholars of producing merely area studies and insiders criticized them for applying theories developed elsewhere that ran roughshod over the characteristics and theoretical import of the region. Serious scholarship is emerging through case studies, but the interpretive frameworks and research questions that get the most attention come from the policy world and its generalized templates for intervention.

In the past decade, the most popular of these frameworks has been civil war as crime—caused by the opportunity for illicit gain; prolonged through criminalized war economies of looting, trafficking, and smuggling; and perpetuated by a postwar trajectory obstructed by “warlords,” organized crime and corruption, and a criminalized state. The stimulus for what is now a policy preoccupation at the United Nations and among donors such as USAID was surely the World Bank research project on the Economics of Crime, Violence, and Civil War led by Paul Collier from 1996 to 2006 and the World Bank’s anticorruption office (still going strong under the current president, Robert Zoellick, and complemented by a new Rule of Law division at the United Nations peacekeeping department). Behind those initiatives, however, one can see a particular European and American literature from the 1990s on the African state (as “criminalized” or even run by warlords), a British literature on war economies, and another on the contribution (“famine crimes”) of humanitarian organizations, also concerned with Africa.

The popularity of *Blue Helmets and Black Markets* is thus easy to explain. The distant relation between its research question and framing, on the one hand, and the accumulated knowledge about the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1992–1995, on the other, also illustrates the tension with which this review begins. Reading Peter Andreas’s story is an additional journey of nostalgia for those of us who lived through the first year and a half of the Bosnian war and the international intervention that are its subject. The stereotype of the evil Serbs laying siege to Sarajevo, the anger at the United Nations for imposing an arms embargo and then only sending humanitarian aid (“sending peacekeepers where there was no peace to keep” was the common refrain in the “lift and strike” campaign—lift the arms embargo and bomb the Serbs), the heroism of the criminals whom

the Bosniac leadership under Alija Izetbegović released from jails to organize a defense of the city and to smuggle in arms, and the venality of the UNPROFOR soldiers accused of profiting as well from selling supplies and buying sex are all there as if it were still 1992–93.

It would be a mistake, however, to read this as a book about the war in Bosnia, even about the siege of Sarajevo. Andreas is clear. His aim is not to correct the literature on the Bosnian war but that on “clandestine trading, criminal combatants, and manipulation and diversion of humanitarian aid” (14) in general by showing “how and why internationalization of the siege [of Sarajevo], which aimed to end the conflict, paradoxically helped to perpetuate it by becoming incorporated into the war economy” (x).

Given this goal, Andreas has made some strange choices. Why Sarajevo instead of, for example, Mostar, if the subject is siege? His descriptions of the multiple ways the siege was actually circumvented and even broken by criminals and black-market profiteering and his comparison of the truly horrendous sieges by the armies of Germany on Leningrad, Russia on Grozny, and the United States on Falluja might legitimately raise doubts about whether there was a siege of Sarajevo at all. If his audience is those who decide how, when, and where to intervene in civil wars or humanitarian emergencies, then why only Sarajevo and not other areas of UNPROFOR and UNHCR operation throughout Bosnia? The choice of Sarajevo, after all, would seem to require mention of the ceasefire brokered by the United Nations in February 1994 that lasted the entire year and why negotiations failed elsewhere. It is difficult to see how the role of criminals and smuggling in lifting the siege, as Andreas argues in chapter 5, can be assessed without its context—the U.S. military strategy beginning in late 1993 in both Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina and the successful strategy in Bosnia in 1995 of UNPROFOR’s Bosnia commander, General Rupert Smith.

Andreas has a simple answer. Like the community of journalists in Sarajevo who kept the world’s attention on the city and regularly (and intentionally) crossed the line into advocacy for military intervention in support of the Bosnian Muslim/Bosniac government, his purpose is to bring the international role into the current policy preoccupation with criminality and corruption or, as he puts it, the “link [of] internal conflicts to the external world” (5). And “nowhere is this [interaction between “locals” and “internationals”] more powerfully illustrated” than Sarajevo (6). Unlike the Sarajevo-based journalists’ goal, and despite the book’s echo of the 1992–94 international debate, moreover, Andreas’s concern is the legacy for postwar Bosnian politics. “In general,” he concludes, “the more criminalized the conflict, the more criminalized will be the state, economy, and society that emerges from conflict” (163).

Until the U.S.-led invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan, no international conflict since 1990 has had more influence on U.S., European, and international policy and practice than the war in Bosnia. Its influence on the scholarly literatures on civil wars and on intervention has been far smaller, in part because it was so exceptional in the extent of international attention and resources it attracted and perhaps also, Andreas’s book suggests, because that attention shaped researchers’ questions and what received notice. But for those interested in research on the Bosnian case that could have theoretical consequence, three distortions in *Blue Helmets and Black Markets* are particularly promising.

The first is this intriguing proposition concerning the relation between wartime and postwar criminalization. How would one measure the extent of criminalization—in Bosnia as well as in general? Andreas’s evidence is anecdotal,

from interviews conducted in Sarajevo in 2001, 2002, 2006, and 2007 (and New York in 2004), which are cited with the highest anonymity imaginable and include no discussion of the possible biases in his sample (including memory). The chapter on the postwar period is notable for the absence of data, particularly in the face of astonishing claims. Studies of postwar corruption (including some he cites) have been definitively shown to be much exaggerated (e.g., Bosnia is very definitely not a “regional hub,” 118), while the methodologically rigorous work by Timothy Leggett at the U.N. Office of Drugs and Crime showing Bosnia with abnormally low levels of crime for Europe (and highly effective law enforcement) gets dismissed in European capitals for contradicting their prejudices. Bosnians have done some careful studies (especially the Bosnian office of Transparency International), but a researcher who wanted to code wartime criminality to test Andreas’s proposition would (and should eagerly) face fascinating conceptual challenges about the very nature of civil war.

The distinction between legal and illegal or criminal and moral, immoral, or amoral in wartime brings us to the second distortion: the issue of survival in the book’s misleading title. The book is about criminal entrepreneurs, not about how the people of Sarajevo ensured their own survival and that of their families and neighbors during the war, nor even about how the black market shaped their survival strategies or those along smuggling routes. The widespread scholarly reaction against the distorted view of civil wars created by the Collier research team has recently reached out to what one Congolese scholar, Musifiky Mwanasali, calls the view from below. What are the survival strategies of ordinary people trapped in a war? The influence of humanitarian assistance on postwar Bosnia, Paul Stubbs has shown, was not criminality but a “new feudalism”: a fragmented, localized, and category- rather than needs-based postwar welfare regime defined by international nongovernmental organizations whose control over the delivery of postwar development assistance as well as wartime relief has marginalized Bosnian government agencies and professionals.

The concept of strategy raises the third, and oddest, distortion—the portrait of the Sarajevo government. Throughout the book, the Bosnian Serb leaders are highly strategic, both “front stage” (the siege) and “backstage” (the “clandestine business” for profit) (8)—ironically, and against stereotype, Andreas also shows them to be almost religious in following the rules they agreed upon with the U.N. authorities. Izetbegović and his governing Party of Democratic Action (Stranka Demokratske Akcije), by contrast, are portrayed as unprepared for war, even naive, floundering, and stupid. While Andreas’s analysis of “the siege within” (chapter 4) shows Bosniac politicians equally capable of brutal competition, criminality, and corruption, given the opportunity, the idea that the siege of Sarajevo might have been Bosniac, not Serb, strategy—and even successful at that—is not considered. The same is true in the discussion of Srebrenica. It is here that the literature on civil war could benefit most, especially on civil war as crime, because Collier only focused on rebels, not governments. Analysis of the wartime strategy of the Bosniac leadership, such as that of Maja Catic, and of government strategies in civil wars more generally is badly needed.

Faculty teaching students to do research on civil wars and postwar transitions or to become practitioners in the world of humanitarian or peacebuilding interventions should find this book a pedagogical gold mine. If it provokes new research, all the better.

SUSAN L. WOODWARD

The Graduate Center, City University of New York