

Raison d'état or Raison populaire? The Influence of Public Opinion on France's Bosnia Policy

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In its long history as a unified state, France has always maintained a strict separation between the state and the people. This traditional “raison d'état” allowed the state to develop and pursue foreign policies outside and independent of public opinion. Even today, compared to other countries considered to be advanced democracies, France has a reputation of having a political elite—especially in the realm of foreign policymaking—that is largely insulated from public pressures. Elections are held regularly, and government-commissioned public opinion polls taken frequently, but it is a common assumption that French public opinion has little effect on French foreign policy.

The issue of intervention in Bosnia poses a challenge to this shared assumption about the French elite's insulation from public opinion. This chapter will summarize how, in certain crucial ways during the time period in question—from the beginning of the war to the end of 1996—France's policy on Bosnia was influenced by the pressures of public opinion. We argue that public opinion worked in two ways: first, it provided general pressures over time that gradually influenced the direction of French policy; and second, usually in response to specific events on the ground that were captured by television cameras, it exerted intense pressure that contributed to the turning points in France's Bosnia policy. We show how the gap between French policy and public opinion, initially quite wide, gradually narrowed over time, as the government's policy shifted in the direction of public opinion.

This chapter consists of three main sections. First, we provide an overview of the five distinct phases of France's foreign policy toward the former Yugoslavia. Then we turn to our three indicators of French public opinion: general public opinion surveys, the intellectuals, and media coverage. The purpose of these first two major sections is descriptive—to establish an account of

the French case that is as accurate as possible. Finally, in the last section, we bring together the two previous empirical sections, by generating an analysis of the possible causal effect of public opinion on France's Bosnia policy.

OVERVIEW OF FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY ON THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

From the onset of the Yugoslav crisis to the present, there have been several basic changes in the French government's foreign policy regarding the conflict. In this section, we trace shifts in the political positions of the government, as demonstrated in statements, declarations, interviews, and speeches made by the president, the prime minister, and the minister of foreign affairs. We argue that French policy toward the former Yugoslavia passed through five distinct phases: (1) refusing to name an aggressor (1990–May 1992); (2) multilateral humanitarian diplomacy (June 1992–December 1994); (3) gradual turn toward the threat of force (January 1994–spring 1995); (4) Chirac's use of force (May 1995–summer 1995); and (5) France's retreat (late summer 1995–present). After describing each of these five phases, we briefly turn to the changing quantity of releases by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where we assess the numbers of statements, declarations, and communiqués against our argument of the phases.

Before getting into the specifics of the case study, it is worth mentioning briefly how foreign policy is made in the French political system. France has a presidential system, in which the president, who is elected directly, appoints the prime minister, who is then ratified by the parliament (*Assemblée Nationale*). If the president's party also controls the legislature, then policy-making is fairly straightforward, and the president and prime minister are in close coordination. If the opposition takes control of the legislature, however, the president is then forced to appoint a prime minister from an opposing party, thus leading to what is commonly known as "cohabitation," where the president and prime minister, however reluctantly, have to find a way to work together. During such periods of cohabitation, which have occurred three times since the 1980s, the tradition is that the president (referred to as the "head of state") oversees foreign policy, while the prime minister (the "head of government") looks after domestic issues. This distinction, however, is often blurred in reality, as the president still remains actively involved in domestic debates; moreover, since the prime minister appoints the foreign minister, the prime minister and his or her cabinet still remain closely involved with foreign affairs.

When discussing such a broad concept as foreign policy, it is important to point out that, in the contemporary political age, in which the production and control of "image" and "spin" often dominate the policymaking appara-

tus, it is difficult to track the implementation of policies over time. This is especially true for military policy, which sometimes operates separately from foreign policy, with its own norms, guidelines, and accountability.

In this chapter, we rely mostly on official public statements, rather than trying to monitor ground operations, for three reasons: first, actual military policy on the ground is inherently secretive and often unknowable, while the statements are public and openly available; second, even if they are laced with rhetoric that is not necessarily followed up by action on the ground, these statements are still significant, and changes in their type and quantity do represent genuine policy changes; third, since all of the French government's concrete actions (i.e., humanitarian interventions) were made through multilateral frameworks, it would be nearly impossible to disentangle French policy from those of the other intervening countries if we were to focus only on the multilateral interventions on the ground. Focusing on official policy statements made by the French government thus allows us to develop consistent categories (both qualitative and quantitative) to compare and evaluate how French policy changed over time.

Returning to the case of the former Yugoslavia, while some analysts have claimed that French foreign policy toward Bosnia has changed primarily according to changes in elected officials,¹ we suggest that elected official change does not always correspond with policy changes. Rather, in characterizing the shifts in policy, we look to both the situation in the former Yugoslavia itself and to the domestic French political climate.

Phase 1: Refusing to Name an Aggressor (1990–May 1992)

From early 1990, with the first Slovene and Croat moves toward splitting from Yugoslavia, to the summer of 1992, French foreign policy toward Yugoslavia contained three components: (1) gradually diminishing support for a united Yugoslavia; (2) unwillingness to single out the Serbs as aggressors; and (3) interest in playing a major political role, albeit multilateral and non-military, in negotiating a settlement to the crisis.

First, French support for a united Yugoslavia was a continuation of traditional policies dating as far back as World War I, with France's promotion of the unification of Yugoslavia. This political relationship was strengthened during and after World War I, when France and Yugoslavia were allied against Nazi Germany. For most of this century, and especially at the outbreak of the war in the former Yugoslavia, France's friendship with Yugoslavia often overlapped, or was confused, with a French-Serb friendship. Thus, it was not surprising that before the beginning of the war in Bosnia, France sought to support the Serb-led drives to keep Yugoslavia as one country.² This is demonstrated, for example, in statements by François Mitterrand, who said that "I believe it was wise, in the recent past, not to reopen

the issue of borders. We must push for new dialogues, and not provoke new disintegration. Peace is too fragile" (Interview in *Liberation*, November 23, 1988). Moreover, according to Mitterrand's close friend and advisor (and later French foreign minister in the Jospin government) Hubert Védrine, "Mitterrand thinks that the existence of a Yugoslav Federation is a good but fragile thing; that the ideal would be to preserve it while transforming it; that in any case, there is no good solution for replacing Yugoslavia, neither *a fortiori* for Bosnia, and especially not the breaking up into several states" (Vedrine 1966, 603). Again, in a November 19, 1990 meeting with Yugoslav Federal President Borisav Jovic, Mitterrand reaffirmed this position by stating that "We hope that Yugoslavia remains Yugoslavia. It is not desirable for existing countries to shatter into many pieces" (Vedrine 604).

As early as the summer of 1991, however, with the secession of Slovenia, it had become clear that the Yugoslav federation of six (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia) was no longer viable. At the same time, French policy had begun to shift from trying to keep the federation together, to facilitating its breakup. When the German government publicly announced in late November 1991 its intention to recognize Slovenia and Croatia,³ France tried unsuccessfully to oppose it, arguing that the decision to recognize the new countries should be made by a united Europe, and that early recognition by one European country might lead to furthering conflicts both in the Balkans and among the Europe of 12.⁴

Second, while France's gradual acceptance of a splintering Yugoslavia is important to explore, the most striking element of French policy toward Yugoslavia in this first phase was its refusal to designate an aggressor. This refusal was most notably evidenced in Mitterrand's statements in a November 29, 1991 interview, which was subsequently widely criticized by the French media and intellectuals. Despite numerous reports of Bosnian Serb aggression, in this interview, Mitterrand reaffirmed the French government's refusal to specify an aggressor, reminding the French and German publics that "Croatia, not Serbia, belonged to the Nazi bloc."⁵ For the next several months, Mitterrand continued to make references to this position; for example, in another interview on December 14, 1991 he stated: "You ask me who is the aggressor and who is aggressed? I am incapable of telling you" (Interview in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 29, 1991).

Finally, a third important element established in this first phase was France's interest in being a major actor in all of the humanitarian interventions and in negotiating an end to the conflict. From the summer of 1991 on, France continually offered to supply interposition forces in Croatia (through the Western European Union), and tried to help move the conflict toward non-militaristic political processes, such as sponsoring the well-intentioned but ill-fated EC-monitored elections in independent Bosnia-Herzegovina in March 1992. After this, France contributed more troops, civilian police, and military

observers to the United Nation's Protection Force (UNPROFOR) than any other country; it also remained a vociferous member of all multilateral negotiating bodies.⁶ This third element, France's prominent role in negotiations, in supplying ground troops to separate forces, and in delivering humanitarian aid, lasted until the end of what we call Phase 4, in the summer of 1995.

Phase 2: Multilateral Humanitarian Diplomacy (June 1992–December 1993)

During this summer, France made an abrupt about-face in its policy of impartiality, or unwillingness to designate an aggressor, marking the second phase of French foreign policy in Bosnia. Most elements, however, represent continuity with previous policies outlined above.

As the summer of 1992 progressed, reports began to emerge of Serb detention camps reminiscent of those run by the Nazis during World War II. The government's response was not to increase French humanitarian aid and troop contributions, but rather to encourage the UN to establish "safe havens" in towns such as Gorazde, Srebrenica, Tuzla, and Zepa. France, as demonstrated in Mitterrand's speeches, also stood firm on its commitments to action through international, multilateral organizations and humanitarian assistance that eschewed the use of force. Mitterrand explained that France would act only in line with its partners: "France will not wage war *alone* against Serbia" (cited by Védrine, 636); as for the use of force, "I resist the push for the use of force. . . . If a decision of the United Nations brings about a vast support and an international contribution, then things will change" (Interview in *Vendredi*, January 22, 1993).

While these two policies—multilateral action and avoidance of the use of force—were consistent with earlier French policy, the break came with France's shift away from neutrality to designating the Serbs as aggressors and the Muslims as people in need of protection. This change was initiated in late June 1992, and was manifest most distinctly in two of Mitterrand's actions: first, in his statement to the Council of Europe in Lisbon on June 27, where he declared, "Serbia is today the aggressor, even though the origins of the conflict come from much further back"; and second, in his unexpected trip to Sarajevo on June 28, where the airport was under siege by Bosnian Serbs. In a television interview on the same day, Minister of Foreign Affairs Roland Dumas summarized the goal of Mitterrand's visit: "to express solidarity in front of the suffering of these populations, to tell them 'we were with you a bit, even for a few hours—France, symbolized by the head of state, is here, present'" and moreover that "for the rest of the world, to prove that by political will and the spirit of decisiveness, we can still break this infernal circle" (*Antenne 2*, June 28, 1992). After one day, the French government and its partners managed to negotiate a cessation (at least temporarily) to the Sarajevo airport siege. As we develop later in the chapter, this surprising

change in France's foreign policy was very well received by French public opinion, the media, and the intellectuals.

Throughout the rest of 1992 and into 1993, French policy toward the former Yugoslavia did not change in any dramatic ways.⁷ While Edouard Balladur was elected to the office of prime minister on March 28, 1993, bringing with him Alain Juppé as minister of foreign affairs, this new "cohabitation" did not usher in new French policies toward intervention in the former Yugoslavia.⁸ Balladur and Juppé entered office calling for active war crimes tribunals (established before they came into office, on February 22, 1993, by UN Security Council Resolution 808), and greater joint action in the former Yugoslavia.⁹ All of these positions—advocating war crimes tribunals, multi-lateral action, and a slowly increasing French troop presence—are entirely consistent with pre-cohabitation policy toward the former Yugoslavia.

In sum, the summer of 1992 saw an about-face in the French government's stance toward the Serbs. While this signaled a significant change in French foreign policy toward the former Yugoslavia, the change in government almost one year later (in April 1993) did not usher in big policy changes as some might expect. Indeed, the next major policy change did not occur until nine months into cohabitation.

Phase 3: Gradual Turn toward the Threat of Force (January 1994–May 1995)

The insistence on multilateral action through international organizations, and reliance on diplomatic, rather than more forceful, means of negotiation, persisted until the winter of 1994. In January, before and during the NATO summit, the French began to call for a greater show of force against the Bosnian Serbs. On January 10, for example, Foreign Minister Alain Juppé declared "we are available for air-strikes." On January 10, 1994, he went on a special program called "Qui Peut Sauver Sarajevo?" ("Who Can Save Sarajevo?") to add that "we have tried, not all 16 together but at the initiative of France once again, and with our partners who have troops on the ground, to define more precisely the measures that we could take to restore the credibility of UNPROFOR."

Shortly thereafter, the tragic Sarajevo marketplace bombing in February, followed by the attack on Gorazde in March, corresponded with another change in France's foreign policy: France branched out from multilateral bargaining purely through well-established international organizations (the UN, the EU, the WEU), to actively helping to create an ad hoc "contact group."¹⁰ Then in April, with the support of the French, the UN ordered the first NATO air strikes against Bosnian Serb ground forces. At the end of this month, France also threatened to set a date to pull its troops out of UNPROFOR unilaterally, if the latest attempt at negotiations failed. While these negotiations did fail, France's troops remained in UNPROFOR.

It is important to note that while France gradually moved toward supporting the use of force, and toward acting outside of international organizations, its position on the UN-sponsored arms embargo on the region did not change. Throughout 1994 and early into 1995, there were many pressures on the French government—both internal to France, as discussed in the next section, and external, as manifest in U.S. congressional actions—to lift the arms embargo. Lifting the embargo was even discussed by the contact group in early September 1994, but rejected, especially at the behest of the French government.¹¹ For the remainder of 1994, and through the first months of 1995, France turned toward the threat of force through NATO air power, while leaving room for diplomatic maneuvering outside of the organizational framework of the UN

Phase 4: Chirac's Use of Force (May 1995–Summer 1995)

From the outset of the war up until the spring of 1995, there were gradual changes in French foreign policy toward intervention in Bosnia that did not necessarily correspond with the onset of cohabitation in 1993. That said, France's most vociferous policy shift did correspond with the election of Jacques Chirac to the presidency and his arrival at the *Élysée* in May 1995. As some scholars have explained, Chirac's foreign policy initiatives were designed to be "flashy" and, especially in the early months, demonstrated his "buccaneering" attempts at "neo-gaullism."¹² Chirac's ascendance to the presidency also corresponded with the third and largest UN hostage crisis. In the end of May 1995, French peacekeepers were taken hostage, handcuffed to their posts by Bosnian Serbs, and humiliated on world television for their "impotence." This led to a dramatic change in government policy, evidenced by the new Prime Minister Alain Juppé's June 6 statement: "Non-intervention was cowardly and was a stain on the original objective of the European Union that we are trying to build. We therefore intervened, France in the lead" (National Assembly debate, June 6, 1995).

Chirac's reaction was very firm and very personal, as he rapidly and single-handedly took the initiative in changing France's policy in the direction of greater use of force. In a June 27 declaration (European Council meeting in Cannes, June 27, 1995), Chirac stated "We want a policy in the former Yugoslavia that is both clear and firm," and he subsequently called for the establishment of a "rapid reaction force" (RRF) that would serve to protect the UN troops (who were themselves supposed to protect Bosnians). In short, the RRF was to have a wider mandate for the use of force, with the intention of lessening the humiliation of French peacekeepers. The RRF, however, was never deployed the way it was initially planned. By the time the RRF began its initial deployments, the United States and NATO stepped in with much more severe recourse to the use of force.

Phase 5: France's Retreat (Late Summer 1995–Present)

The summer of 1995 saw the major turning points in the war: the fall of the safe havens, heavy air strikes by NATO against the Bosnian Serbs, and the expulsion of the Croatian Serbs from Krajina. With the fall of the UN-sponsored safe havens in July and the subsequent massacre of thousands of Muslims by Bosnian Serbs, the UN's ability, legitimacy, and authority to lead peacekeeping operations in the former Yugoslavia had ended—and France's leadership role thereby diminished. In the end, on August 30, NATO planes and RRF artillery began massive bombardments of Serb positions mainly around Sarajevo, Pale, Gorazde, and Tuzla; the operation was called "Deliberate Force." The United States then stepped in (with Richard Holbrooke at the lead), to hammer through the Dayton accords, which designated NATO as the enforcer of the peace.

While France was not a member of the NATO military command, the French government was a strong supporter of the NATO interposition forces, and continued to increase its troop contributions, which had doubled (to almost 11,000) by September 1995. Although willing and able to contribute troops, politically and diplomatically, France was put on the back burner during the Dayton accords as the Russian-Serb, German-Croat, U.S.-Bosnian formula of external-internal support proved more effective. The accords were, however, signed in Paris in December 1995, as a gesture to the French government for its constant support of the peace process.

Before moving to an explanation of these shifts in France's Bosnia policy, we now briefly compare our qualitative explanation above to the quantity of statements, speeches, and declarations released by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs over time. Figure 4.1 provides a breakdown of the total num-

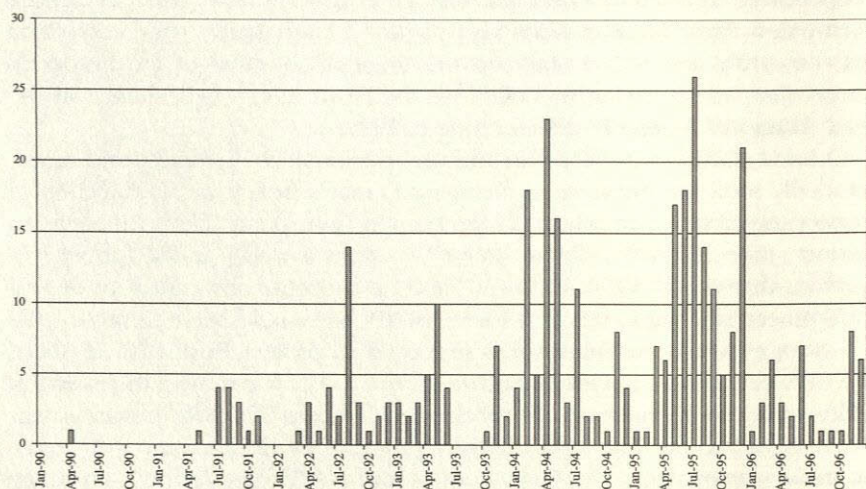


Figure 4.1. Number of French Policy Statements on (Ex-) Yugoslavia, 1990–1996

ber of releases by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs that include in their title one or more of the key words "Yugoslavia, former Yugoslavia, Bosnia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Sarajevo," for each month from 1990 to 1996.¹³ While it is difficult to evaluate what exactly these numbers in themselves mean in terms of the content of French policy,¹⁴ such a chronological perspective allows us to make tentative observations about the major changes that took place at specific points in time.

COMPARATIVE SURVEYS

As the figure shows, until the summer of 1992, the topic of Yugoslavia was relatively absent from the French statements. The enormous rise in August 1992, which basically corresponds with the beginning of our Phase 2, occurred after the discovery of Serb-controlled detention camps in Bosnia.¹⁵ Although it would appear from figure 4.1 that the second phase actually began in August, not—as argued above—in late June, we feel justified in including Mitterrand's two actions described above, for two main reasons: first, they were entirely consistent with the content of the flurry of French statements in August, and second, they truly represented major turning points in French policy.

After this change in French policy and the beginning of Phase 2, the number of statements remained consistently low for the next eight months, rising somewhat in May 1993, but mainly for domestic reasons—namely that the election of a new government led the new Prime Minister Edouard Balladur and Foreign Minister Alain Juppé to seek to make their presence felt on the Yugoslav issue. As argued above, however, this slight increase in the quantity of French statements did not represent a change in French policy, which remained consistent during that time.¹⁶

The next major jump in French statements occurred in February 1994, which corresponds to the Sarajevo marketplace bombing discussed above. We include the month of January as the beginning of our Phase 3, even though there were relatively few statements made, because of the change in content of the French government's policy. The next jump, in April-May 1994, corresponds with NATO responses to the attack on Gorazde and France's leading role in the establishment of the contact group. The rest of 1994 can be characterized by several ups and downs in the quantity of statements released.

From the beginning of 1995 through July, one can notice a gradual crescendo of releases, which corresponds with Chirac's rise to the presidency, as well as with major changes on the ground in the former Yugoslavia. The brief rise in December 1995 corresponds with the liberation of two French pilots and with the signing of the Dayton accords in Paris. Finally, in 1996 the number of statements remained consistently low.

In short, the qualitative analysis of France's foreign policy toward the former Yugoslavia shows several clear and significant changes over time. The quantitative element shown in the tables, and explained briefly above, for the most part bolsters these findings and depicts them visually. Now, having described French foreign policy on Yugoslavia over time, our next sections attempt to explain and analyze what may have influenced it.

OVERVIEW OF FRENCH PUBLIC OPINION ON THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

We turn now to French public opinion on intervention in the former Yugoslavia, which we break down into three distinct indicators: (1) the attitudes and opinions of the general public, as seen through public opinion surveys; (2) the role of the French intellectuals; and (3) media coverage.

It is standard to refer to public opinion surveys, and often to the media, as constituting public opinion, but we feel justified in incorporating the intellectuals for several reasons. Although the French intellectuals may not be representative of the general public, they are public figures whose messages can reach and influence a wide audience. Moreover, on the issue of French intervention in the former Yugoslavia, they were central to all aspects of the French national debate. As Védérine, who is himself rather critical of the intellectuals, points out, "The very French phenomenon of the 'intellectuals' gives public opinion, in our country, its own particular coloration" (Védérine 615). Finally, of our interviews with policymakers, intellectuals, and other scholars, there was not a single objection to our inclusion of intellectuals as one of the three components of public opinion.

Surveys of the Attitudes and Opinions of the General Public

Now we turn to our analysis of public opinion surveys of French attitudes on intervention in Bosnia, where we present and summarize the results of over twenty different surveys conducted between 1992 and 1996.¹⁷ When comparing different surveys over time, in addition to ensuring that each survey was conducted by professional and nonpartisan survey organizations that followed strict sampling and questioning methods, we must pay close attention to the timing of each survey¹⁸ and the precise wording of the questions.¹⁹

The Appendix presents a complete summary of all the available survey results on this issue. We have divided the long list of surveys into three categories: (a) *comparative surveys*, which show how the French results compare to those of other countries that were asked the same questions; (b) *time-series surveys*, where the same questions were asked at different points in time, thus allowing us to analyze trends in the results; and (c) *individual*

surveys, usually commissioned by newspapers and magazines, which were often conducted at times of heated national debate, and which rarely use the same question wording from one survey to another.²⁰

Comparative Surveys

Most of the comparative surveys were commissioned by Eurobarometer, the public opinion institute of the European Union. The results of Eurobarometer surveys conducted in June 1993 and September 1995, shown in the Appendix, illustrate that the French public was above the average for European countries on most questions relating to support for military intervention in Bosnia, but only slightly. In June 1993, for example, while the government was still firmly engaged in the second phase of "Multilateral Humanitarian Diplomacy," 58 percent of the French were for a military intervention, with 25 percent against and 17 percent unsure, compared to the European average of 55 percent for, 28 percent against, and 17 percent unsure. In September 1995, after "Chirac's Use of Force" and at the beginning of "France's Retreat" (our fourth and fifth phases), 57 percent of the French favored a military intervention "with additional capacity" (a rather vague concept), with 27 percent opposed, compared to the European average of 53 percent in favor and 38 percent opposed. While the European comparisons do not show great differences, the most striking comparison is to the United States, in a joint IFOP/Gallup survey conducted shortly after the NATO ultimatum following the Sarajevo marketplace bombing. The results show that 76 percent of French respondents favored air strikes if the ultimatum was not respected, with only 20 percent opposed, compared to 48 percent in favor and 43 percent opposed in the United States.

Overall, it is difficult to draw conclusions from these comparative surveys, other than the obvious observation that a majority of the French public appeared to be strongly in favor of military intervention, but only slightly more so than most European publics, and much more so than in the United States. This strong support for military intervention from the very beginning stands in sharp contrast to the early French policy of avoiding the use of force—a policy that eventually shifted over time in the direction of public opinion.

Time-Series Surveys

The two organizations that commissioned time-series surveys are Eurobarometer (which are also comparative) and SIRPA, the public relations institute of the French Defense Ministry. Although both sets of results are somewhat helpful, they also have extreme limitations. The main disadvantage of the Eurobarometer results is that they were conducted over a relatively short time-span (February 1994, March 1994, and June 1994—all within our third

phase of "Gradual Turn toward the Threat of Force"), which prevents us from generalizing these results to the entire period of the Yugoslav conflict. The advantage, however, is that they are also comparative, and they therefore contribute to the international comparative perspective mentioned above. The only striking result of these surveys is the response to the question about launching air strikes, which shows that the French public was consistently in favor of this solution, significantly more so than fellow Europeans.

The time-series results from the surveys commissioned by SIRPA were published in their annual large-scale survey, *Baromètre: les français et la défense nationale*, which included one question on intervention in the former Yugoslavia, asked in May 1993, May 1994, June 1995, and June 1996. The problem here is with the question wording. From 1993 to 1995, the question asked was "do you approve or disapprove of the current intervention of France within the UN in the former Yugoslavia?" In 1996, the question asked was "do you approve or disapprove of the intervention of France within NATO in the former Yugoslavia?" The obvious difference is, of course, the change from the UN to NATO, which corresponds accurately to the changes on the ground, but the more subtle yet serious problem is in the first question wording, which mentions the word "current." This makes the question much more ambiguous: does it refer to one's support or opposition to French military action in general, or is it a request for a vote of confidence on the *current* government's concrete activity? As a result, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions from these time-series surveys, and impossible to provide any trustworthy graphics showing the evolution of French public opinion over time.

Individual Surveys

Now we turn to the numerous individual surveys, listed in chronological order in the Appendix, with the goal of characterizing French public opinion as accurately as possible within the limits of the surveys. The most basic yet important observation that can be made from these results is that a wide majority of the French public consistently supported French participation in a military intervention throughout the duration of the conflict. Although the question wordings were often very different, sometimes vague and/or even biased, the results showed high numbers of support for the intervention, usually between 55 percent and 70 percent.

Since a summary of all of the different question wordings would take up too much space (and since they are all available in the Appendix), we will highlight two themes that come out of the results. First, a result that seems surprising given the late-twentieth century military ethic of "zero death," the French public supported intervention even at the risk of French casualties (62 percent in December 1992 and 55 percent in February 1994—albeit with different question wordings). And we should point out that this opinion actually had a concrete basis, since sixty French soldiers died in the former Yugoslavia by

September 1996,²¹ which were all very widely publicized in the French media. The support for intervention, however, remained strong.²²

Second, at least according to the survey results, the French public's interest in the conflict was extremely high. Even before the marketplace bombing, the January 1994 BVA/SIRPA survey showed that 85 percent of the French were "concerned with the events taking place in the former Yugoslavia," and almost identical results came out of their February 1994 survey (86 percent were "concerned"). By June 1996, however, this interest had decreased significantly, although it still characterized a majority, where 55 percent were concerned, as opposed to 44 percent less concerned or unconcerned.

When interpreting such a wide array of comparative, time-series, and individual survey results, it is very important to exercise caution and skepticism, something the newspapers that commission them and publish the results seldom do. The fact is, however, that out of more than twenty major surveys, conducted by professional polling organizations following strict sampling methods, there is not a single survey result that shows less than a majority of the French public in favor of intervention in Bosnia. Significantly, while policymakers were often trying to emphasize either nonintervention or a "humanitarian" intervention, the type of intervention most frequently alluded to (whether directly or indirectly) in the survey questions was *military*. This distinction becomes especially important when we try to assess the causal impact of public opinion toward the end of this chapter.

The Role of the French Intellectuals

Although small when compared to the huge and often paralyzing public mobilization that takes place periodically in France, usually to protest domestic economic measures, French public mobilization on the issue of Bosnia was remarkable and unique. It was remarkable because of the quantity and density of networks, organizations, and associations that made the Yugoslav issue their *cause célèbre*, and it was unique in that the leaders and motivating force behind this mobilization was a small but vociferous group of Parisian intellectuals. This section briefly traces and summarizes the role of the French intellectuals on the Bosnian issue.

France has a long tradition of political engagement by diverse individuals and groups known as "the intellectuals." It is perhaps the only country where that term is used so commonly. Dating back to Emile Zola's activism in the Dreyfus Affair over a century ago and continuing well through the vibrant days of Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre, an eclectic set of Parisians has seen it as their duty, individually and collectively, to speak up at the slightest sign of injustice. This has created a testy, but still mutually beneficial, relationship between them and the politicians against whom their actions have usually been aimed. It is not uncommon, for example, for a French president, in an effort to placate them or to ingratiate himself with them, to invite

a group of intellectuals to lunch at the Elysée, or for other leading politicians to contact them to discuss policy matters.

While it seemed as if this tradition of intellectual resistance might have been waning since the heady days of the 1960s and 1970s, the reaction to the Yugoslav crisis proved the contrary. As early as the fall of 1991, with the Serb assaults on Dubrovnik and Vukovar, intellectuals such as André Glucksmann, Alain Finkielkraut, Bernard-Henri Lévy, Pierre Hassner, and many others started speaking out, both in written articles and then at intellectual gatherings and meetings. Although they had different theoretical assumptions, arguments, and objectives, they were united by their outrage at the atrocities that were taking place "two hours from Paris," while the French and European governments seemed to be looking the other way.²³ Although the reaction started slowly at first with individual articles, it developed into a crescendo that became even more intense with the Serb attack on Bosnia in the early spring of 1992. The flurry of articles and statements, which were extremely critical of the French government, and particularly against Mitterrand, continued unabated throughout 1993.

By early 1994, some of the intellectuals started to discuss the possibility of creating an electoral list for the European elections in May/June 1994 that would focus on Bosnia. After one or two false starts, they decided about a month before the elections to go ahead with the list, which they called "Europe Starts at Sarajevo," with the stated goal of putting Bosnia at the center of the French political debate on Europe. Their concrete goals were less clear—some in the list favored lifting the arms embargo on Bosnia, while others favored air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs. Their general idea, however, was that since these were *European* elections, this larger European issue should overtake the usual domestic ones.

In any case, the reaction to the announcement was sudden and overwhelming. Not only were the group's founders and leaders, especially Lévy and Glucksmann, instantly and incessantly interviewed on television, radio, and in newspapers and magazines,²⁴ but other politicians—from all parties—were then constantly asked to respond to the intellectuals. The intellectuals, meanwhile, organized large and enthusiastic meetings that sometimes even lasted through the night. Michel Rocard, the head of the Socialist list for the European elections, who was then considered a leading candidate for the French presidency after Mitterrand's term would expire the following year, attended many of their meetings, and he suddenly changed his position to one of opposing the arms embargo, thus directly challenging Mitterrand.²⁵

Only two weeks before the election, the magazine *Le Point* published a survey conducted by IPSOS showing that 12 percent of respondents indicated that they would vote for the list (a very high figure considering that the center-right UDF-RPR list had 27 percent and the Socialists only 18 percent). The survey result, which was widely publicized, shocked everyone, includ-

ing the intellectuals themselves. Suddenly, the intellectuals, whose stated aim was to force the other parties to address the Bosnian issue, not actually to win seats in the European Parliament, were faced with a difficult decision.

The story behind the end of the list is unclear. There was some infighting among the members, most importantly around the issue of whether or not to withdraw from the elections. In the end, they did withdraw, but only after a tight vote following an all-night meeting. Meanwhile, the ballots had already been printed with the list on them, meaning that the electorate could still vote for the list, even though it had officially been withdrawn—and the list barely received 1 percent. While this paltry electoral support may suggest that the list ended as a failure, it should not be forgotten that its organizers did succeed in their goal of bringing Bosnia to the forefront of the election campaign.²⁶

Media Coverage

It is widely acknowledged by academics and policymakers that the modern media has become an extremely influential actor—capable of placing issues on the agenda, pressuring influential elites, and especially shortening the time span within which official figures can react to incidents and crises. On the other hand, one should be careful not to grant too much power and autonomy to the media, since it is also frequently the subject of manipulation by those very same elites it supposedly influences. A grand theory of the effect of the media probably cannot be formulated, since so much depends upon the issue, subject, or event at hand.²⁷ By carefully examining the quantity and content of media coverage on a specific issue, however, researchers can come up with persuasive accounts and hypotheses about the relationship between the media and elite policy on that particular issue.

Before getting into the specifics of French media coverage of the Bosnian conflict, it is important to explain the peculiar structure of the French media. The primary source from which most French people get their news is television; over 50 percent claim to watch the evening news (at 8 p.m.) regularly, on one of the two main channels. While newspapers are also widely read in France, the circulation of national newspapers is strikingly low when compared to other European countries. Indeed, part of the French peculiarity is that most people read regional newspapers—which also cover national and international news, although in much less detail. Within Paris, however, where the entire intellectual and policymaking apparatus is centralized, there are a variety of newspapers, which generally follow clearly defined partisan lines.²⁸

This uniquely French situation presents a host of problems for social scientists seeking to use any kind of content analysis to generate results that are accurate, representative, and significant. For this chapter, we have chosen to

focus primarily on television news, for several reasons: first, it is the form of news that reaches the broadest audience; second, its content is uniform throughout the country; third, our preliminary analysis of *Le Monde* coverage showed trends that were essentially similar to those of television news; and finally, we were able to benefit from and draw from a previously published study on French television coverage of the Yugoslav conflict.

Indeed, thanks to the extensive and impressive database and analysis conducted by Patrice Charaudeau, Guy Lochard, and Jean-Claude Soulages (1996), who studied the French television coverage of the war in the former Yugoslavia,²⁹ we can make several observations about both the quantity and content of French television on the Yugoslav crisis.

By doing searches of the key words "Yugoslavia, former Yugoslavia, Bosnia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Sarajevo," and then "cleaning up" the results by removing the small number of stories that were irrelevant to the topic (e.g., sports coverage, etc.), the authors were able to develop a consistent quantitative scale over time. Figure 4.2 shows the number of stories devoted to some aspect of the conflict that were broadcast on the evening news (8 p.m.) on the two major French TV channels, TF1 and Antenne 2, from 1990 to 1996.³⁰ The two most obvious and striking jumps in the amount of coverage came in August 1992, with the discovery of the camps, and then in February 1994, after the bombing of the Sarajevo marketplace. Also noteworthy is the vast amount of coverage of the French General Morillon's actions during the siege of Srebrenica in the spring of 1993, when he defied his government's orders to leave the area and return to France (Charaudeau et

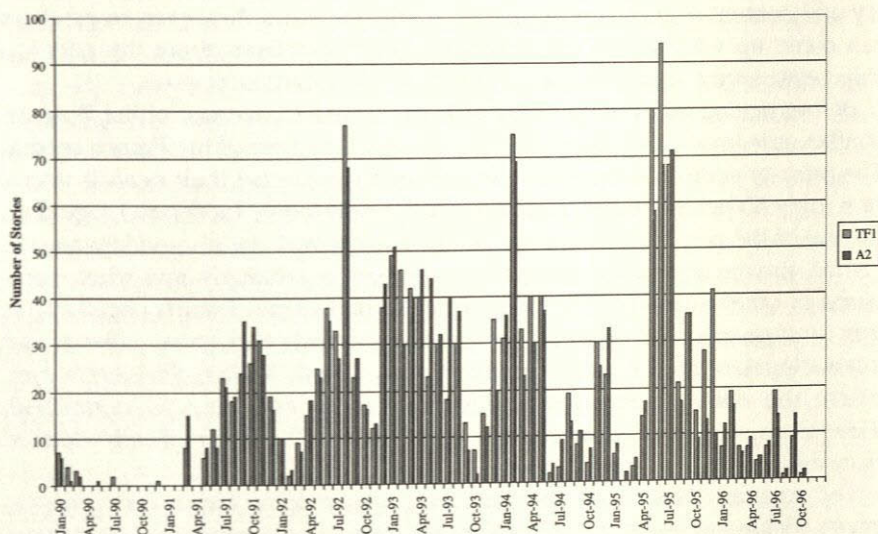


Figure 4.2. French TV Evening News Coverage of (Ex-) Yugoslavia, 1990-1996

al., 97). Charaudeau et al. also point out the increase in coverage on a daily (not just monthly) basis with the collapse of the Yugoslav Federation from June 26 to July 2, 1991, and then especially on June 28, 1992 with Mitterrand's surprise visit to Sarajevo.³¹

Charaudeau et al. go further in their analysis, as they also consider the thematic organization of the coverage of the conflict. They reach several conclusions, two of which are relevant here: (1) the French TV coverage of the Yugoslav conflict became "Frenchified" over time—namely, what was originally portrayed as a European problem increasingly became a "French" problem, as France became more involved in the conflict; (2) after dividing the coverage into several different categories, including "civilian," "armed conflict," "humanitarian," and "diplomatic," among others, the authors concluded that the priority of the French TV coverage, especially after 1992, was given to covering the civilian side, evoking the difficulties and losses of the civilian population, alongside the coverage of humanitarian assistance, particularly when conducted by French organizations (Charaudeau et al., 101).

This increasing emphasis on France's role in the conflict, alongside the stories and images of horrible violence and humanitarian disaster, often pressured the French government's policy, especially in the immediate aftermath of specific incidents and dramatic events on the ground.

THE INFLUENCE OF PUBLIC OPINION ON FRANCE'S BOSNIA POLICY

Having explained the different phases in the French government's foreign policy toward the former Yugoslavia, and then having described the three facets of French public opinion, we now turn to an analysis of the causal effect that the latter may have had on the former. We argue that public opinion can be influential in two different ways: first, in the form of broad and general pressures over time; and second, following specific events or incidents on the ground, where the political consensus was visibly, and sometimes significantly, shaken and adjusted.

The notion of "general pressures" is fairly straightforward. The idea behind it is that influential policymakers intentionally keep themselves abreast of public opinion; when their policies do not accord with public opinion, the latter exerts subtle yet potent pressure on them. This is a particularly modern feature of politics, given the technical capabilities of gauging public opinion, public debates, and large quantities of media coverage much more systematically and publicly. While these general pressures usually do not cause policymakers to change their policies, they certainly make them more aware of the risks they might be taking when certain policies are unpopular. Our notion of general pressures fits closely with the description of public

opinion put forth by Mitterrand's close advisor Hubert Védrine: "public opinion . . . is not strictly speaking an actor, but rather a force, and, in our mediated societies, a considerable force whose source nobody completely controls. It can be diffuse or concentrated, dormant or frenzied, spontaneous or provoked. In any case, it is always present" (Védrine, 59).

In addition to the general pressures exerted by public opinion on foreign policy over time, the occasional occurrence of specific events and incidents allows us to examine public opinion's effect more closely, relying on official documents, memoirs, and personal interviews as sources. The problem, however, is that any attempt at reconstructing the causality surrounding a specific incident becomes extremely complicated and indeterminate.

In this section, we go through our three indicators of public opinion to demonstrate that, at the key moments when French policy changed, public opinion did play a role, although not necessarily independent or direct.

Surveys of the General Public Opinion

Starting with public opinion surveys, the crucial question is whether the relative clarity and militancy of public opinion on the desirability of military intervention had any practical effect on French policy. To what extent were French policymakers aware of the opinions of the French population on this issue? Did they take them into account, and if so, how? Might the awareness of public opinion have exerted some influence on policymakers at those particular times when French policy changed?

These are particularly difficult questions to answer, especially since the crucial policymaking decisions are usually made behind closed doors, and not always for the reasons that are publicly proclaimed. Personal interviews with policymakers on this subject were not very helpful. Some responded with the predictable, but misleading, response that decisions are always made according to the "will of the people," while others proudly insisted that, on the contrary, decisions were based on the elite's special expertise and its moral conscience about what is best for the people. Both answers were vague, and neither was helpful.

There are moments, however, when more concrete evidence can be found of a government's consideration of public opinion. According to the research of Elisabeth Dupoirier, in the months leading up to the Gulf War in early 1991, for example, Mitterrand was very conscious of French public opinion on the issue, and during the month of January he ordered two surveys a week to follow the "mood" of the population.³² These surveys were sponsored by the Service d'Information du Gouvernement—a public institute linked to the prime minister, which occasionally commissions survey questions to private survey institutes—and the results were not made public.

For the case of the former Yugoslavia, we could find no such "smoking gun" to show direct government interest in the "mood" of public opinion. Relying on more general indicators, however, we found that public opinion did exert an influence on the French government's policy on Bosnia, although certainly not in the direct way in which many political behaviorists would expect. Larger geopolitical and strategic considerations, including the positions of the other European countries and especially the United States, certainly played a pivotal role as well, but public opinion should be included as a crucial factor. As pointed out in the previous section, the French general public was a strong and consistent supporter of military intervention in Bosnia from the very beginning. The French government, on the other hand, started with a noninterventionist stance during the first few years of the conflict,³³ but then gradually moved in the direction of public opinion: nonintervention soon gave way to humanitarian intervention, which eventually turned into military intervention. By the time of Chirac's use of force in the summer of 1995, the government had caught up to public opinion.

The Intellectuals

As stated earlier, the general pressure exerted by the French intellectuals was consistent and significant. In addition to the barrage of articles and opinion pieces denouncing French government policy, the intellectuals organized many gatherings and meetings on the Yugoslav issue. They also provided nearly unrelenting pressure in support of airstrikes, as well as the lifting of the embargo on the Muslims.

In the immediate aftermath of the specific incidents and events mentioned above, the role of the French intellectuals—filtered through the media—was particularly strident, and probably somewhat influential, especially following the Sarajevo marketplace bombing. This is difficult to determine, however, given the multiplicity of factors and causes going on at the same time. It is also impossible to demonstrate quantitatively or visually, as presented in the figures above.

One incident, however, provides us with a clearer picture of how the intellectuals did have a significant and concrete impact, leading to the change from Phase 1 to Phase 2, as outlined above. The occasion was Mitterrand's June 27, 1992 speech at the Council of Europe meeting, followed by his surprise visit to the besieged Sarajevo the next day. For this event, the memoirs of some of his close confidants are quite helpful. Roland Dumas, then foreign minister, recalls that Mitterrand first told him on June 24 that he wanted to go to Belgrade or Sarajevo. Dumas' advice, which Mitterrand heeded, was to go to Sarajevo, as he told the president that "you cannot start with Belgrade. . . . The criticisms will explode. We will go visit the red tyrant, the butcher of Sarajevo. . . . I can read certain editorials even before they are written" (Dumas 1996, 365).

While on the plane to Sarajevo, according to Bernard Kouchner—then Mitterrand's special appointee for the humanitarian crisis, although also a vocal critic of Mitterrand's Bosnian policy—Kouchner asked Mitterrand, "I have often spoken to you about this appeal of the residents of Sarajevo, but what made you decide?" Mitterrand replied, "The slowness of Europe, the immobility of the Council, and the appeal from President Izetbegovic transmitted to me by Bernard-Henry Lévy" (Kouchner 1995, 39). Indeed, not long before this turning point, Mitterrand had met with Lévy, one of Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic's clearest and loudest supporters. Might that explain the sudden change in Mitterrand's speeches, and his words at the Council of Europe meeting, where he said for the first time, "Serbia is today the aggressor, even though the origins of the conflict come from much further back"? At the very least, it played an important role. As further support for this claim, Mitterrand's visit to Sarajevo provided him with an enormous boost in popularity, something that certainly did not go unnoticed. The media, the intellectuals, and the general public alike praised his personal courage and conviction.

The election and arrival of Chirac to the Elysée provides another example of the influence of the French intellectuals, resulting in the change from Phase 3 to Phase 4. Perhaps especially because his actions coincided with the traditional "honeymoon period" of politicians taking office, Chirac benefited from an extremely high popularity and support from the general public on his handling of the hostage crisis. The French intellectuals also responded positively, as almost all of the published opinion pieces that had previously been unwaveringly critical of the French government were now hailing Chirac's *tour de force*. The result was a peculiar alliance between the gaullist Chirac and a diverse group of intellectuals, many of whom were far on the left. Chirac even met with a group of intellectuals at the Elysée shortly after taking over as president, specifically to talk about the Yugoslav crisis.³⁴

We should be careful not to overstate the capacity of the French intellectuals to influence their government's Bosnia policy. Despite their pressure on Mitterrand to lift the arms embargo on the Muslims, Mitterrand never did change his position. That said, although this does indicate a weaker influence on this issue, we should not forget the aforementioned change by Michel Rocard—who at the time was a leading presidential contender—to supporting the embargo in May/June 1994, after participating in the meetings of the *Liste de Sarajevo*.

The relative influence of the intellectuals can best be explained by another role they play in French society, namely maintaining and using elite networks. Indeed, another peculiarity of French politics and society, which is no secret to anyone familiar with the centralized French system, is the importance of the networks between political elites in various positions around the center of power. Since many of these intellectuals went to the same schools, shared common experiences, and belong to a similar social status

group, as the policymaking elite, it should come as no surprise that they have the ability to influence policy.

This is not to say that the intellectuals are quietly orchestrating the policies of the French government; quite the contrary, in the "normal" times of everyday politics, they are often ignored or at least not heard, since the voices are multiple and disparate, and the policy recommendations tend to be cacophonous and contradictory. In times of major crises and national debate, however, the tradition of turning to the intellectuals as "experts" still remains strong. In the case of the Yugoslav issue, the mobilization of the intellectuals was remarkable because of their relative unity—in opposition to the French government, and especially against François Mitterrand himself. Although they often had different theoretical assumptions, different ideological backgrounds, and different visions of Bosnia, Europe, and the role of France, they were unified by their outrage that the French government seemed unwilling to intervene in the horrors taking place "two hours from Paris." Because of the unity and strength of their message, and also because of their privileged positions and their personal contacts, this time their voices were heard.

The Media

According to the findings of Natalie La Balme, a French scholar who has been studying the influence of public opinion on French foreign policy—and who has conducted nearly fifty interviews with French elites surrounding the presidents, prime ministers, and foreign ministers—the French policymaking elite is extremely sensitive to the media. La Balme reports that the overwhelming answer to the question "For you, what is public opinion?" is "the media" (LaBalme 1998). She also points out that Mitterrand read the national press very closely and every morning listened to political commentaries on the radio. Moreover, the press service of the Elysée provided him with daily summaries of the national and regional press, as well as the television news. Even in "normal" times (i.e., not times of political crisis or upheaval), French politicians keep a careful eye on public opinion, and particularly the media.

Aside from specific events and incidents, the media also played an important role in the day-to-day monitoring of the Yugoslav crisis, and in many ways set the agenda for potential changes in French policy. A publication issued by the French Parliament (*Assemblée Nationale*), for example, mentions that "one has to recognize the decisive influence of the media . . . as much in the decision to plan an intervention as in the way in which to carry it out."³⁵ This point was also confirmed repeatedly in all of our own interviews.

The most important role played by the media, however, was with three clearly identifiable specific events and incidents: first, the discovery of the camps in August 1992, which occurred soon after Mitterrand's visit to Sarajevo, and which confirmed the change in French policy from Phase 1 to Phase 2, with

the recognition of the Serbs as the aggressors; second, the Sarajevo marketplace bombing in February 1994, which solidified the change from Phase 2 to Phase 3, with the gradual turn toward the threat of force; and third, the French hostage crisis in May 1995, which coincided with Chirac's inauguration as well as the use of force that characterizes the change from Phase 3 to Phase 4. After all three incidents, which were not necessarily unique in and of themselves, but rather because they happened to be filmed up close by television cameras, the policymaking establishment was shaken and France's policy was changed.

For the first incident, the television depiction of immediate and horrifying images of human misery and suffering, especially given the obvious historical significance of "concentration camps" that were "only two hours from Paris," provided an intense pressure on French policymakers to "do something" to oppose the Serb aggression. In fact, it was widely believed that Mitterrand and other Western leaders were informed of the existence of camps several months earlier, but they reacted only *after* journalist Roy Gutman's discovery and the subsequent massive media mobilization. For the second incident, the images of sixty-eight dead and over 200 injured people in a public marketplace on a Saturday morning, especially after the repeated Serb violations of the safety zone around Sarajevo, provoked a rapid and forceful reaction in the form of the NATO ultimatum against the Bosnian-Serbs with the threat of force in case of noncompliance.³⁶ For the third incident, the television images of French peacekeepers—showing them handcuffed to lampposts, with Bosnian Serb soldiers mocking and taunting them, in the name of publicly humiliating France—provided the spark that compelled the newly inaugurated Jacques Chirac's swift decision to create the RRF and to take decisive anti-Serb actions.³⁷

What about a broader perspective on the impact of the television media on policymaking over time? Figure 4.3 presents a combination chart that compares the number of French policy statements (from figure 4.1) and the average number of television news stories (from figure 4.2).³⁸ Although caution should be used when interpreting combination charts that use two axes and categories, figure 4.3 does allow us to reach some tentative conclusions about the effect of the media on France's Yugoslav policy.³⁹ For all three of the events described earlier, which produced major turning points in French foreign policy, there seems to have been an earlier increase in television attention. Before the first major increase in policy statements in August 1992, for example, there was a noticeable increase in the TV news coverage of the issue in May, June, and July. Moreover, the rise in policy statements in May 1993 was preceded by high levels of TV coverage in January-April. Also, the upsurge in policy statements in February 1994 followed a slight rise in TV stories in December and January. Finally, the big jump in policy statements in July 1995 was slightly preceded by a higher increase in TV stories in May and June of that year. The last rise of policy statements, in December 1995—

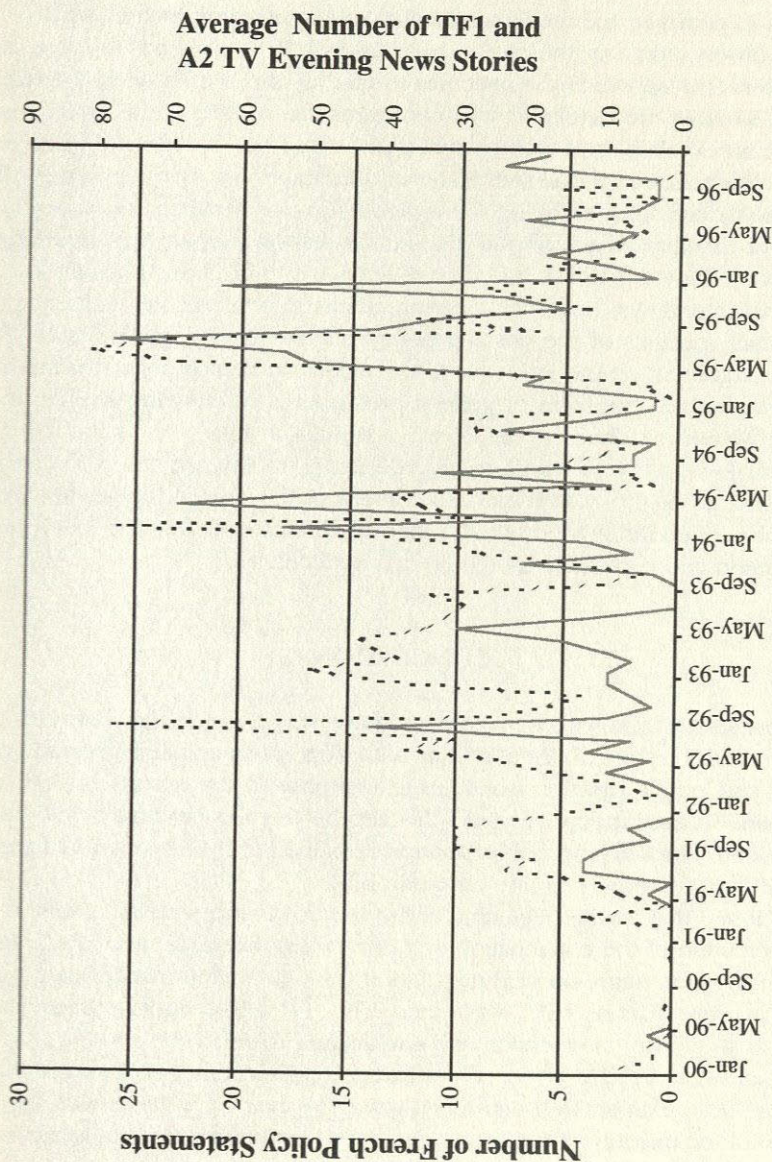


Figure 4.3. Comparison of French Policy Statements and TV News Coverage of (Ex-) Yugoslavia

corresponding with the signing of the Dayton agreement in Paris—however, was neither preceded nor accompanied by a concomitant increase in TV coverage.

In other words, although the data do not allow us to affirm definite causality, the quantitative evidence from figure 4.3 does suggest that the media was “leading” France’s policy more than the other way around. This finding supports and complements our more qualitative analysis about the changes in France’s policy and in particular the media’s influential role in effecting such change.

The observation that the media, particularly television, tends to force policymakers to respond and sometimes to take action, leaves open the question of whether the media actually influences the *content* of the policy reaction. In an excellent and well-balanced assessment of the effect of television on foreign policy in the United States and England, Nik Gowing argues that television does frequently *set the agenda* for policymakers, by creating a sense of urgency whereby politicians must respond rapidly and seemingly effectively (Gowing 1994). Based on extensive empirical documentation and personal interviews, however, Gowing claims that television’s influence on the actual specifics of the ensuing policy is quite limited and indirect. This fits our argument on the influence of the media on French policy toward Yugoslavia, both in the form of general pressures and following specific incidents. We believe that the media was essential in terms of compelling the policymakers to take a stand, reach a decision, and sometimes even change their policies on Bosnia. The actual content of the policy change, however, was more often influenced by our other two indicators, namely general public opinion and especially by the French intellectuals.

CONCLUSION

At the outset of the Yugoslav conflict, there was a disjuncture between the French state’s historical ties of affinity with Yugoslavia and Serbia, on the one hand, and public opinion’s outrage in response to the reports of Serb aggression, on the other. Over time, this gap between policy and public opinion closed. Throughout, public opinion remained fairly stable, while foreign policy changed slowly to line up with opinion.

We found that, at the beginning of the conflict, France’s policy consisted of: (1) promotion of the continuation of a united Yugoslavia; (2) neutrality, rather than naming an aggressor; (3) negotiation through well-institutionalized international organizations (EU, WEU, and UN); (4) advocacy for humanitarian rather than military intervention and a reluctance to use force; and (5) a desire to have France at the forefront of all efforts to end to conflict. Over time, the first four of these elements eroded to give way to their opposites, mirroring the wishes of the majority of the French public, while the fifth element was consis-

tent with public opinion since the beginning of the conflict.

We therefore return to our original question about the influence of public opinion on foreign policy. In terms of the role that public opinion plays, we suppose that much of the time, it is *not* one of the main determinants of policy. Foreign policy is more likely to shift with changes in elected and appointed officials, or with changes in the larger international context. In the case of French foreign policy in the former Yugoslavia, however, while these two factors were certainly important, public opinion appears to have been especially influential, by means of its general pressure over time, along with intense pressure following specific mediatized incidents. Whether or not this finding signals a new era of French foreign policymaking in which public opinion plays an increasingly important and autonomous role remains an open question. In any case, the findings of our case study show that the combined forces of public opinion polls, the intellectuals, and the media did significantly influence the direction and content of French foreign policy on intervention in Bosnia.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Alex Macleod and Stéphane Roussel, 1996, *Interêt National et Responsabilités Internationales: Six Etats Face au conflit en Ex-Yougoslavie*, 38, who divide French policy toward the Yugoslav conflict into three phases corresponding to precohabitation, cohabitation, and the change of president in 1995.

2. Some observers have also noted that France was interested in keeping Yugoslavia together because of its penchant for central state control. See, for example, *Unfinished Peace: Report of the International Commission on the Balkans*, 1996, 61.

3. See Beverly Crawford, "Explaining defection from international cooperation: Germany's unilateral recognition of Croatia," *World Politics* 48, no. 4 (July 1996).

4. See, for example, David Owen's *Balkan Odyssey* (1995) on this point.

5. Interview in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 29, 1991.

6. See the French Ministry of Defense document, "Nombres de militaires français dans les conflits," October 24, 1996.

7. In March of 1993, the French General Morillon became a "voluntary prisoner" in the besieged town of Srebrenica (see his *Croire et Oser*, Paris, 1993). His action was in protest against the French government's policy toward Bosnia, but did not illicit any dramatic shifts in French policy. In 1993 reports of Muslims fighting Muslims, and Croat-Muslim fighting, coupled with Serb, Muslim, and Croat refusals to sign peace agreements, complicated policymaking. The apparent response of the French government was to refrain from making changes in its policy.

8. According to Védérine, foreign policy was always mutually agreed upon between Mitterrand, Balladur, and Juppé. See Védérine, *op. cit.*, 648-49, 651, 661.

9. For example, as Balladur stated in one address: "The effort led since April 1993 has consisted of better organizing our military engagement, bringing the international community to a higher degree of coherence in its political action, namely affirming what it really wants." See Balladur, *Deux ans à Matignon*.

10. The contact group, made up of France, the United States, Russia, Britain, and Germany, was formally established on April 24, 1994.

11. The United States, however, did end enforcement of the sea ban in October, and in January 1995, the U.S. Congress voted to lift the arms embargo, which was later vetoed by Clinton.

12. See George Ross, "Chirac and France: Prisoners of the Past?" *Current History* 96 (March 1997): 100, and Ronald Tiersky, "Mitterrand's Legacies" *Foreign Affairs* (January/February 1995): 116; also see Thierry Tardy, "Le président Chirac et la Bosnie-Herzégovine: les limites d'une politique," *Relations internationales et stratégiques* 25 (1997), and Dominique Moïsi, "De Mitterrand à Chirac," *Politique Etrangère* 4 (1995–1996).

13. These documents are published in *Politique Etrangère de la France*, and most are also available on the internet site of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, at www.diplomatie.fr.

14. This quantitative listing is at best a rough and imperfect measurement, but it has the advantage of being able to show visually when these changes took place and how striking they were compared to the months before.

15. Since most of France is on vacation in August, this sudden flurry of statements is all the more extraordinary.

16. Unfortunately the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not include titles on its releases during the period from June 28, 1993 to October 18, 1993, which explains why the number of statements appears on Figure 1 during July, August, and September appears to be zero. Most likely the numbers would be between two and seven. In any case, although the quantitative standard of comparison is unfortunately lost for these three months, the important point here is that the *content* of French foreign policy toward Bosnia did not change significantly.

17. For a sophisticated discussion of the role of French public opinion in a broader context, see *L'Opinion, l'humanitaire et la guerre*, Samy Cohen, ed. (Paris: FED, 1996), especially the chapter "Ni bellicistes, ni pacifistes: les Français et l'intervention militaire extérieure," by Samy Cohen, with Natalie La Balme and Patrick Bruneteaux, 13–45. Also see Natalie La Balme, "L'influence de l'opinion publique dans la gestion des crises," in *Mitterrand et la Sortie de la Guerre Froide*, Samy Cohen, ed. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1998); and Samy Cohen, "Diplomatie et démocratie," *Le Debat* (janvier-fevrier 1996).

18. For example, we should expect that a survey conducted three days after the Sarajevo marketplace bombing will produce different results than one carried out in the middle of one of the lengthy peace negotiation processes, at a point when it appeared that all sides were showing good will. Although it is nearly impossible to determine the effect of the timing of a survey, we should still take it into consideration, and exercise caution when generalizing from those results.

19. It should be obvious that variations in question wording can radically sway the results, often rendering comparisons across different surveys meaningless. On this point, see, for example, Richard Sobel, "Polling on Foreign Policy Crises: Creating a Standard Set of Questions," *The Public Perspective* (February/March 1996): 13. Sobel writes, "Generally low consistency and comparability within and between survey organizations often hinder the understanding of the complexities of events or trends over time."

20. The Appendix is organized in chronological order within each of the three categories (comparative, time-series, and individual). For easier reference, the title of each survey is indicated by the date and the institute that carried out the survey.

21. SIRPA, "Pertes Françaises en Ex-Yougoslavie," September 18, 1996.

22. For further support of the French public's support for intervention despite the risk of casualties, see Samy Cohen, with Natalie La Balme and Patrick Bruneteaux, "Ni bellicistes, ni pacifistes: les Français et l'intervention militaire extérieure," in Samy Cohen, ed., *L'Opinion, l'humanitaire et la guerre*, *op cit.*, 35–37.

23. The different positions may be broken down as follows: (1) *pro-Bosnian Muslim*, with the hope of saving the multicultural Bosnian dream (this position was epitomized by Bernard-Henri Lévy); (2) *pro-Croat*, with the view that Croatia belongs to the European civilization (Alain Finkielkraut); (3) *anti-Serb*, not based on a theoretical vision, but rather on the horror of Serbian war crimes (Jacques Julliard, editor of *Le Nouvel Observateur*); and (4) *anti-totalitarian* and *anti-fascist*, based more on humane and democratic principles than on an affinity for or against one particular side—although still predominantly anti-Serb (André Glucksmann, Pierre Hassner). This division is simplistic, as there were many different nuances within each position and also considerable overlap among the different positions. Despite these differences, what brought all of these positions together was their unity in opposition to a French policy that they saw as complacent, and specifically to Mitterrand's unwillingness to single out the aggressor and to enforce anti-Serb policies. It was this surprising unity that gave the intellectual opposition its strength.

24. For this reason, many policymakers have criticized the intellectuals (or at least the most visible and vocal ones) for being obsessed with media coverage. Védrine, for example, frequently refers to them as "les intellectuels médiatiques" (*op. cit.*, 637, among others). This critical view was echoed in several personal interviews with policymakers.

25. See "L'histoire secrète de la liste Sarajevo," *Globe-Hebdo*, no. 68 (May 25–31, 1994): 10–11.

26. Whenever the subject of the list came up in personal interviews with policymakers, they often pointed out quickly that the list was "ridiculous" and barely received any votes. After we reminded them of the details of the campaign and the excitement the list generated, however, the policymakers usually admitted that the list was actually very influential *during its time*.

27. For a good general account of the influence of the media, see Shanto Iyengar and Donald R. Kinder, *News That Matters* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

28. The three most respected and widely recognized French daily newspapers are *Le Monde* (on the center-left), *Le Figaro* (on the center-right), and *Liberation* (on the left).

29. Charaudeau, Patrice, Guy Lochard, and Jean-Claude Soulages. "La construction thématique du conflit en Ex-Yougoslavie par les journaux télévisés français (1990–1994)," *Mots* 47 (June 1996). Also see the other articles in this special issue devoted to media coverage of Yugoslavia.

30. Although their article only covered media coverage through the end of 1994, they have since been updating their research to cover up to 1996. We thank especially Jean-Claude Soulages, who kindly provided us with the 1995 and 1996 results.

31. Note that since their analysis in the published article stops with 1994, they could not cover the hostage taking in May 1995, which certainly produced an enormous jump in coverage, as shown in the Appendix.

32. See Elisabeth Dupoirier, "De la crise à la guerre du Golfe: un exemple de mobilisation de l'opinion," in Sofres, *L'Etat de l'opinion*, présenté par O. Duhamel et J. Jaffré. Paris, Ed. du Seuil, 1992.

33. Even Védrine writes about the "divorce" between general public and its political leaders (*op. cit.*, 612).

34. This was mentioned and confirmed in several personal interviews with French intellectuals.

35. See Rapport d'information n. 1950 de l'Assemblée Nationale, *La Politique d'intervention dans les conflits: éléments de doctrine pour la France*, 1995, 21 (cited by La Balme, *op. cit.*, 417).

36. In a *Good Morning America* interview on February 10, 1994, Zlatko Dizdarevic, the editor of the Sarajevo newspaper *Oslobodenje*, exclaimed "Why is there all this fuss in the West about one incident?" Indeed, for him and others in Bosnia, such deadly mortar bombings were nothing out of the "ordinary" that had grown accustomed to. The answer to Dizdarevic's question is that the reason for the fuss, in addition to the fact that this one bombing was one of the deadliest, was because the television cameras were there, instantly transmitting the gory details of it all back to their publics at home. Cited by Nik Gowing, "Real-Time Television Coverage of Armed Conflicts and Diplomatic Crises: Does it Pressure or Distort Foreign Policy Decisions," John F. Kennedy School of Government, Working Paper 94-1 (1994), 35.

37. Although several stations hesitated at first to show these images, which were actually filmed and given to them by Bosnian Serb television, the incident very quickly monopolized the news coverage for over a week. For an excellent report on how the hostage crisis came about, see Mark Danner, "Bosnia: Breaking the Machine," in the *New York Review of Books*, February 19, 1998. Note that there had been two previous hostage crises, but neither of them had this kind of television coverage, and hence did not elicit a dramatic and public French reaction.

38. Please note that since this chart has a double axis, with "Number of French Policy Statements" on the left axis (ranging from 0 to 30) and "Average Number of TF1 and A2 TV News Stories" on the right axis (ranging from 0 to 90), the graphics represented in Figure 3 should be interpreted carefully. The jumps and drops are not directly comparable in terms of actual numbers of stories, but rather in terms of the proportional increase and decrease within each of the two categories.

39. Moreover, there is some degree of intercorrelation between these two categories, since some television interviews given by leading French policymakers (e.g., president, minister of foreign affairs) are counted for both. However, as the figure makes evident, on occasion there are still significant differences in terms of the amount of attention the Yugoslav issue was given in the Foreign Ministry or in the television media.