

**Andjelic, Neven. *Bosnia-Herzegovina: The End of a Legacy*.
London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003.**

Michael A. Innes

Volume 25, Number 1, Summer 2005

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/jcs25_1br03

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

The University of New Brunswick

ISSN

1198-8614 (print)

1715-5673 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Innes, M. A. (2005). Review of [Andjelic, Neven. *Bosnia-Herzegovina: The End of a Legacy*. London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003.] *Journal of Conflict Studies*, 25(1), 187–188.

Andjelic, Neven. *Bosnia-Herzegovina: The End of a Legacy*. London: Frank Cass Publishers, 2003.

Political legacies, particularly those linked to troubling patterns of war crimes and ethnic cleansing, can be vexing issues for scholars. They can be readily exploited resources, most often twisted and manipulated by opportunistic politicians to ends that sometimes bear only slight resemblance to popular or ethnic sentiment. With a little scholarly rigor, attention to local nuance, and appropriate periodization, legacies can be distinguished from the instrumentalization of collective mindsets. In this, former Yugoslav journalist turned academic, Neven Andjelic, breaks new ground in his exploration of Yugoslavia's disintegration. More specifically, Andjelic looks to the historical and political character of Bosnia-Herzegovina, one of Tito's most faithfully pluralist republics, during the critically important period of economic collapse between the late 1980s and the region's descent into war in late 1991.

Andjelic's accomplishment distinguishes itself from previous interpretations in a number of ways. Bosnia's post-war existence has most often been debated in the context of its competing neighbors' efforts to reacquire sections of their respective irredenta. Andjelic contests this view of Bosnia as a territorial and ideological parenthetical, taking it seriously and breathing life into a story often dismissed as an accident of modern history. He also offers *The End of a Legacy* as a conscious antidote to metaracial perspectives of the "ancient hatred" variety. Andjelic's core argument is that the legacy of Titoist ethnic accommodation was most strongly embodied in Bosnia's carefully balanced mix of peoples. This approach, Andjelic argues, did not survive the conditions of economic collapse that birthed the cynically nationalist policies of Tudjman and Milosevic. For Bosnia, prominent scandals after 1987 linked the power elite to the financial engines of the state, rooting the violent internecine clashes that would ultimately follow in patterns of official corruption that facilitated their collapse. Anyone familiar with contemporary problems of good governance and rule of law in the region will understand the salience of the argument.

Where this book is less compelling is in its superficial treatment of causal lynchpins. Legalistic in tone, with far too many "thus," "therefore," and "proves" sprinkled amid Andjelic's prose to make this an easy read, it treats Bosnian history rationally and in measured tones. But it is precisely this rational measuring of elements in *The End of a Legacy* that undermines its overall impact. Rather than weaving together a multicausal narrative of conditions leading from ethnic accommodation to ethnic war, Andjelic appears intent on addressing as many possible facts and interpretations as possible. The result is an awkward aggregate of variables. Where the book might have benefited from a deep historiographical survey of the rather extensive literature on Bosnia and the Balkans in its opening pages, Andjelic only touches on a few select volumes, not all of which deal

explicitly with Bosnia-Herzegovina. Andjelic perhaps misses out in his passing discussion of the impact of a provincial *illiterati*. The cohering role of a cosmopolitan urban elite is its understated corollary, but neither is explored in sufficient depth to make them more than awkward asides. None of these criticisms is truly the point. Rather, the role of future elites is, and they are only explored in a very narrow window, their trajectories artificially bracketed into a pre-war historical box. Where Andjelic's overall discussion of events addresses, quite rightly, the economic and political elements of collapse, it lacks a narrative backbone that logically extends into the war years and beyond. For students of Bosnian history, this book will be an invaluable reference. For those interested in transitional politics, it is not the last word on the subject.

Michael A. Innes is a Senior Analyst with the NATO Stabilization Force Headquarters in Sarajevo.

Hentz, James J., ed. *Obligation of Empire: United States' Grand Strategy For A New Century*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2004.

As an insightful guide for US foreign policy analysis, *Obligation of Empire* takes on the daunting challenge of measuring proposed grand strategy options for the US in the context of its current hegemonic status. More than mere foreign policy, grand strategy is considered here to reflect the strategy a nation adopts for employing all of its military, economic, financial, social, and cultural resources in pursuit of an established set of objectives abroad. A justification for each of the competing options is artfully pursued using a mix of US foreign policy tradition, world history, and international relations theory. While discourse on the subject has generated a wide array of ideas, this text correctly focuses on the four primary grand strategy options that are at the center of the current debate on this issue.

Obligation of Empire offers a creative perspective for assessing these differing policy approaches, and understanding this perspective is made easy by its simple-to-follow organization. In Part One, a detailed understanding of each of the four strategy options is provided. Neo-Isolationism endorses a significant degree of withdrawal from active engagement in World affairs; selective engagement suggests that the US should only involve itself in situations and endeavors of strategic interest; cooperative security favors active participation in the shaping of world affairs through multilateral cooperation with other great powers; and primacy urges the US to capitalize on its current hegemonic power and shape the world to its advantage, unilaterally if deemed necessary. In Part Two of the book, the focus shifts to considering five areas of the world of greater strategic impor-