

CHAPTER
11

SKILLBUILDER PRACTICE *Evaluating Alternative Courses of Action*

Section 1

At the end of 1995, President Clinton was compelled to send U.S. troops to the Balkans. The action brought with it specific questions about the U.S. role in the region. Read the passage about alternatives Clinton faced in 1995. Then evaluate those alternatives by filling in the chart. (See Skillbuilder Handbook, p. 918.)

The Bosnian Conflict During the 1990s, war raged between competing ethnic Serbian and Bosnian factions in the region of Bosnia-Herzegovina. In 1995, the various sides finally negotiated a peace agreement.

One aim of the peace effort was to achieve a more even military balance between the Serbs and the Bosnians and thus ensure that both sides would obey the terms of the peace accord. Throughout the war, Serbian forces had been better trained and better equipped than their Bosnian counterparts. To make the two sides more equal, Bosnian forces needed additional weapons and military training.

Clinton's Alternatives As President Clinton committed 20,000 U.S. soldiers in Bosnia, he had to decide whether to use them only as peacekeepers or to have them arm and train Bosnian troops.

Some of Clinton's advisors favored having U.S. soldiers support the Bosnian forces, claiming that the sooner there was a balance between Serbian and Bosnian power, the sooner American troops

could come home. In addition, this course of action would make President Clinton, who was running for reelection, look like a strong leader, unafraid to stand his ground despite political pressure to do otherwise.

Critics of this plan, including U.S. military leaders and European allies, pointed out that arming and training Bosnian forces would put the American troops in additional danger of Serb attack. They remembered other peace efforts when U.S. peacekeeping forces were perceived as siding with one faction over the other. This perception had often resulted tragically in American casualties.

Some advisors suggested that the United States could work through another country, such as Turkey, or through private individuals to arm and train Bosnian forces. With this approach the United States would appear neutral, which would help protect American soldiers. Others pointed out, however, that the world would recognize U.S. participation in the action, and so the risk to American soldiers would remain.

Alternatives

Pros +

Cons -

Your evaluation

Alternatives	Pros	Cons	Your evaluation