

## Leaders negotiate peace for war-ravaged Bosnia

**OUR OPINION:** A new democracy could mean an end to the bloodshed

It's a good day when people lay down their weapons, for whatever reason, and stop killing one another. It will be an even better day when people stop hating each other.

In Bosnia earlier this week rival factions were able to momentarily look beyond some of the intense hatred they have for each other by agreeing to hold democratic elections sometime in the future. However, foreign ministers from Bosnia, Croatia and Serbian-dominated country fell short of ending their civil war when they rejected a U.S. proposed cease-fire agreement.

During a campaign of saturation bombings by NATO aircraft on Serbian-held positions, President Clinton dropped a top secret stealth weapon out of the blue and on top of Bosnia. The name of the bomb was U.S. peace envoy Richard Holbrooke.

Holbrooke's talent for deal-making and compromise virtually exploded all over the leaders of that region, practically blowing them all the way to the conference table. While Holbrooke and the White House understandably fell short of negotiating an outright cease-fire in Bosnia, the world should look at the recent "steps toward democracy" agreement with optimism.

The plan, one that will usher in an independent Bosnia, paves the way for open presidential elections, a parliament and a constitu-

tional government. These plans point the former Yugoslavia not so much in a direction that promises a lasting solution, as toward a direction with a goal to aim for in the bid for stabilization. As Clinton said, "There is no guarantee of success, but Tuesday's agreement moves us closer to the ultimate goal of a genuine peace."

Part of the agreement includes allowing the newly formed federal government to split Bosnia into two parts. This separation would give 51 percent control of the country to Bosnian Muslims and Croats, and the Bosnian Serbs 49 percent. This literal split, in a country torn apart by war, may serve more than one purpose in that it will give the different ethnicities not only voting rights in a specific jurisdiction, but they will be able to call a defined area of land their own.

This outlining of the land will be needed to sort out the mass numbers of refugees forced from their homes by the fighting. First the Bosnian Muslims and Croats were forced from their land, then the tables turned and the Bosnian Serbs found themselves homeless and hurting. The number of displaced is staggering. Hundreds of thousands of refugees, many of whom have lost friends, homes and entire families, have waited miserably in internment camps for their luck to change.

Change will be slow, but with Holbrooke and other leaders working through the sad mess that is Bosnia, it will come and will be welcomed with open arms.



### COMMENTARY

## Laptop requirement irritates law students

By Jen Solomon

Unlike my colleague Martin Fisher (*ODE*, Aug. 21), who has a two-year gain on me in legal education, I am frustrated by the School of Law's new computer requirement.

A requirement to own a computer is avant garde, and I was delighted to learn that I would be afforded the benefits and support that would come with everyone in my class taking the technological plunge together. But, the faculty at the law school has let our class down by not thinking this matter through and thereby turning us into guinea pigs. Our backpacks now weigh more than half of our body weight. Most of us relocated here and are adjusting to new houses and/or new roommates, and we live in terror of the Socratic method, wondering when the professors will make mincemeat out of us. As if that weren't not enough to send us directly to mental-health services during the first week, we have to deal with this baffling, computer requirement.

It's understandable that Dean O'Kelley wants to be a leader in the future of technology. But Apple computers? Let's get real.

The computer ordeal began back in spring 1995. In an April 28 letter from Director of Admissions Katherine Jernberg, we were informed that we would be required to buy "a computer." Okay, I could live with that. After all, I'd planned on buying a personal computer for the past year; a PC is the computer of choice among lawyers, and it is more easily upgraded than an Apple computer. We were also told that "full participation over the course of this class' three-year career here will be best achieved with a portable computer using a Macintosh operating system or one compatible to it." We were also told that the Office of Financial Aid would be assisting us in covering this additional expense.

A memorandum arrived two weeks later, telling us that we would have to buy our computers first and then present our receipts to Financial Aid in order to get another loan. In addition, we were told to hold off on any purchasing decisions until the School of Law made its decision on specific computer requirements.

Its decision arrived in a letter from Mitch Davis, director of information technology. Each student would "be expected to have Powerbook laptop computer and specified software."

Whoa! This was a far cry from Jernberg's letter informing us of the need for "a computer."

It is this last letter that has most of the students upset. When polled, the majority said they felt they had no choice but to buy a Powerbook. Others were told that their PCs would work, and the law school would support both Apple and PC users. Now it seemed the school had changed its tune. My last conversation with Davis was about getting my PC configured to the school system. I was told that all PC users would be on their own for getting themselves hooked-up online. If something didn't work, we would have to pay a consultant to get our computers configured.

I want to know how this lack of support is construed as fair when such a large portion of our class uses PCs. I have heard that 20 to 60 students who use PCs will be penalized because Apple cut a deal with the law school.

If I were seeing hundreds of faces with I-love-my-Powerbook smiles on them, maybe I wouldn't be so upset. Instead, one person who was told her computer was defective and that she needed to order another one; several people have had a difficult time getting their computers configured; two people canceled their orders at the last minute to buy PC notebooks. One person wanted to return his computer because he was unhappy with it and was told that he's stuck with it.

The faculty needs to get together with our class so we can discuss this situation. I am tired of being told by older students that a laptop is not needed. No one has told us why we need laptops in the first place. I can dial-in from home. I prefer to study at home, and I'm content writing my notes in class. Why require laptops when we can be looking 15-inch color monitors at home with a faster modems and CD-ROMs? Why weren't we polled on our computer preference? Apple computers are constantly being updated, and as a result, the Powerbook we are supposed to buy will most likely be antiquated in three years. I'm willing to guess that if we had been polled, most of us wouldn't have minded spending a few hundred dollars more for something that we'll be able to use for 10 instead of three years.

The least I can do is try to make the faculty aware of the situation in which they have put us and of how confused and upset we are. I hope a swift resolution will come about soon, where we will receive one concise answer instead of many mixed messages. I don't want to spend \$2,700 just to play solitaire in class.

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