



# **First Do No Harm: Humanitarian Intervention and the Destruction of Yugoslavia**

*David N. Gibbs*

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# First Do No Harm: Humanitarian Intervention and the Destruction of Yugoslavia

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In *First Do No Harm*, David Gibbs raises basic questions about the humanitarian interventions that have played a key role in U.S. foreign policy for the past twenty years. Using a wide range of sources, including government documents, transcripts of international war crimes trials, and memoirs, Gibbs shows how these interventions often heightened violence and increased human suffering.

The book focuses on the 1991--99 breakup of Yugoslavia, which helped forge the idea that the United States and its allies could stage humanitarian interventions that would end ethnic strife. It is widely believed that NATO bombing campaigns in Bosnia and Kosovo played a vital role in stopping Serb-directed aggression, and thus resolving the conflict.

Gibbs challenges this view, offering an extended critique of Samantha Power's Pulitzer Prize-winning book, *A Problem from Hell: America in the Age of Genocide*. He shows that intervention contributed to the initial breakup of Yugoslavia, and then helped spread the violence and destruction. Gibbs also explains how the motives for U.S. intervention were rooted in its struggle for continued hegemony in Europe.

*First Do No Harm* argues for a new, noninterventionist model for U.S. foreign policy, one that deploys nonmilitary methods for addressing ethnic violence.

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