

Strategy Research Project International Fellow

Impact of the 20th Century War on Democratic Serbia Today

by

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United States Army War College
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IMPACT OF THE 20TH CENTURY WAR ON DEMOCRATIC SERBIA TODAY

by

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ABSTRACT

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IMPACT OF THE 20TH CENTURY WAR ON DEMOCRATIC SERBIA TODAY

You, oh comrades and brothers, lords and nobles, soldiers and dukes – great and small. You yourselves are witness and observers of the great goodness God has given us in this life. But if the sword, if wounds, or if darkness of death comes to us, we accept them sweetly for Christ and for the goodness of our homeland. It is better to die in battle than to live in shame. Better it is for us to accept death from the sword in battle than to offer our shoulders to the enemy. We have lived a long time for the world; in the end we seek to accept the martyr's struggle and to live forever in heaven. We call ourselves Christian soldiers, martyrs for godliness to be recorded in the book of life. We do not spare our bodies in fighting in order that we may accept the holy wreaths from the One who judges all accomplishments. Suffering beget glory and labors lead to peace.¹

—Tzar Lazar
June 28th, 1389, Battle of Kosovo

The Chinese sage Sun Tzu said, “The art of war is of vital importance to the state. It is a matter of life and death, a road either to safety or ruin. Hence it a subject of inquiry which can on no account be neglected.”² The art of avoiding war is more important for decision-makers than to wage one. I hope that “the secret of the success of the human species has been its ability to learn from experience and to adapt its behavior accordingly,”³ and that people in Serbia learned a lot from 20th century history.

The wars of the 20th century showed that war, its essence and characteristics, experienced more changes during this century than from the creation of man until the end of the 19th century. It probably coincides with the development of human society, which has also undergone significant changes. Defining war in general is almost impossible because war and the theory of war are in proportion with the historical development of mankind, society, and states.

All major theorists of war have had their own way of explaining war; they each have their own theory of war, trying to explain what happens when national interests collide. Sun Tzu, perhaps the most controversial of all the scholars, tells us precisely

how to wage war and how not to wage it. Thucydides tried to find the answer for why Athens was defeated in war and almost disappeared after war. He did not find what was wrong in the 30-year war: Athens' strategy and its allies.

Clausewitz is also controversial because it is not known what he wrote and what was published by his wife or the group of officers who published his manuscript.

Perhaps one of the reasons why Clausewitz himself did not publish his work is that during his career and life, war and the theory of warfare changed dramatically. He, as a contemporary of these changes, could not fully understand them because he did not have historical distance and could not predict its impact on the future.

One common thought for all of these theoreticians and practitioners of war is that war is of vital interest to the state (Sun Tzu), states appear and disappear because of war (Thucydides), and a human lifetime is not enough to fully and accurately define war (Clausewitz).

Serbia, a centuries old country in the Balkans, was born somewhere in the crossroad between the Eastern and Western Roman Empire. It was the first line of defense of Christianity against attacks from the Asian Muslims during the XIV century and an example of how small nations struggle for freedom from tyranny and exploitation during the XIX century. Serbia was an ally during the World Wars with multi-million losses from extermination during centuries when nobody cared about genocide. Today Serbia is struggling to regain its reputation in the world because it allowed itself to be an enemy in the history books.

The causes of this mistake are that Serbia was one of the founders of multinational Yugoslavia at the end of WW I. Serbia was also the joint state of all South

Slavs in the Balkans which was liberated from the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the West and the Ottoman Empire in the East. The centuries-long conflict between these two empires had led to the migration and dispersion of Serbian people outside of Serbia. In 1919, for the first time, Serbians found themselves together in one country, in Yugoslavia. The unity of the Serbs did not demand that the new homeland be called Serbia. It was important that they live in one state, whether it was the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, or Socialistic Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

National interests of the former Yugoslav republics were based on the goal of democracy during the late 1980s, and they blamed the Serbians and communist Slobodan Milošević for nationalism. Moreover, the Serbian desire to stop the disintegration of the state and a repetition of the horrific crimes against Serbs, were the main sparks that ignited the Balkans.

The actors in this war were known to each other from previous world wars. During the 1990's, the fireplace was well prepared for the spark.

Causes and Consequences of the Wars of the 20th Century

Serbia's 21st century security environment is based on the unsolved problems that arose before and after two Balkan wars, WW I, WW II, the Cold War, and the civil war in the former Yugoslavia. These problems are a result of the disagreement between communism and capitalism, totalitarianism and democracy, and conventional and nuclear war. If we add in terrorism, the proliferation of weapons for mass destruction, organized crime, and hybrid war, we see a VUCA environment in the fullest sense of the word - all of which form the background for Serbia's national interests and strategic goals today.

Conflict of Capitalism - Communism and Socialism - Democracy

In the period between the two world wars ideology was an important guiding principle. Not only was the outbreak of WW II seen as strife of great powers following their countries' goals, it was the question of conflict between opposite ideologies as well. Ideologies of the regimes such as the ones in Germany, Italy and Japan were inclined to military aggression and nationalism. Moreover, Marxist-Leninist ideas spread over the Soviet Union after the 1917 communist revolution and the "world-wide revolution" doctrine was installed. In contrast, there were free elections, capitalist economies, and foreign policies supporting peace in democratic nations like Britain, France and the USA.

Having the powers pursuing their ideologies in opposite directions, the balance between all those ideological variations was hard to maintain. A substantial contribution to the beginning of the WW II was made by ideology, bearing in mind that a key cause was the diplomatic inability to overcome the differences.⁴

The Marxist theory of war is based on competition in the economy, market and resources, thus all modern wars are likely to happen due to free market and class system. The theory includes the idea that wars would stop only if the free market and class system fail due to a world revolution. The theory of Rosa Luxembourgh says that capitalist countries in need of new markets produce imperialism. The boost of production can only occur if consumer demand has corresponding growth. Therefore, capitalist economies are in search of new markets and new consumers. This is the guideline of imperialism.⁵

Considering the conflict between capitalism and communism during the Cold War, we may say it was a clash of two ideologies, two regimes, and two different

worldviews. Capitalism saw communism as a threat to the world and the capitalistic system of values because of its revolutionary and militant approach to resolving problems. On the other hand, communism saw capitalism as an exploitative society for the working class, and hid behind democracy. If this mutual misunderstanding underlies a new balance of power, it leads to strained relations, to the arms race, and to the fear that the opposing sides have the ability to launch a first nuclear strike.

The National Interests, Strategic Plans, and Goals of the War

Serbia is the country in the center of the Balkan Peninsula, on the crossroads of constant struggle between good and evil, war and peace. Charles and Barbara Jelavich, Balkan historians, described that

the peninsula is the crossroads between Europe, Asia, and Africa. Here the peoples and cultures of three continents have met and mingled, or clashed and conquered. The major powers of each historical epoch have made their influence felt here and left their marks upon the peoples. The great imperial powers of the past-Greeks, Romans, Turks, Venetians, Austrians, Germans, French, British, and Russians-all in their turn have dominated or sought to dominate this area. Of greater importance than the numbers of peoples and powers that have moved through the area are the turmoil and violence that followed in their wake.⁶

Balkan wars 1912-1913. The rivalry between national groups in the Balkans drew the attention of Europe and great powers from 1912 to 1914. National groups were determined to break free from the Ottoman Empire, but there was the question which power would gain most from the death of the “sick man of Europe.” In 1879 a Balkan agreement was signed between Russia and Austria-Hungary preserving the balance of the powers in the region. The Turkish had the power over Macedonia and Albania, while Romania, Greece, and Montenegro were independent. In 1908 the Young Turk movement demanded reforms which caused turmoil in Turkey. Habsburg monarchy was

alarmed and thus the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina took place which exasperated Russia. The same year, Bulgaria declared freedom from Turkish rule.⁷

The final stage in setting the peninsula free of Turkey was Serbia, an energetic, independent power. In 1903, King Aleksandar and his wife Draga were assassinated thus King Petar Karadjordjević came into power with his dynasty's pro-Russian standpoints. His vision was to build a strong Balkan confederation and to free all Slavs from both Ottoman and Habsburg empires. After turning to Russia for assistance, a steadfast military alliance was signed in 1903. Once the Habsburg monarchy realized that Serbia was a major territorial threat in the Balkans, the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina followed in 1908 in order to stop its expansion. Under the Tsar's encouragement, the Balkan League was created in 1912 consisting Serbia, Bulgaria, Greece and Montenegro with the main goal to make Turks withdraw from the peninsula.⁸

In October 1912, the Balkan League declared war on Turkey which was later called the First Balkan War and the victory was unquestionable. Most of Balkan soil was liberated while the great European powers kept out of the fighting, but took a sharp interest in the negotiations for a peace settlement. The peace treaty was signed in London under the chairmanship of Sir Edward Grey (Secretary of the Foreign Office 1905-1914).⁹

What followed was disagreement over division of the territory between the members of the Balkan League. By the London agreement almost all the European territory, apart from Albania, was divided among Serbia, Bulgaria, and Greece. Serbia expected this part of the territory as the crucial element for its future economic growth

that would have enabled them access to an Adriatic port. Not only did Serbia feel cheated, Greece did as well. It did not gain the territory of Macedonia and Bulgaria, while the Bulgarian government had the opinion it got very little territory. Thus, this unstable coalition of the Balkan peoples broke down.¹⁰

In June 1913, Bulgaria attacked Serbia and the Second Balkan War broke out. As a reaction Greece, Romania, and Turkey declared war on Bulgaria which was defeated in a month. In 1913, the treaty was signed in Bucharest, known as The Treaty of Bucharest, thus Bulgaria relinquished a large part of Macedonia to Serbia, and again Serbia did not gain an Adriatic port, under the pressure of Austria and Germany.¹¹

The idea of Pan-Slav confederation did not stand any chances after the Balkan Wars while the Ottoman Empire was banished from most of its European territory. On the account of isolated and destabilized Bulgaria, the influence of Serbia and Greece greatly increased. Bosnia-Herzegovina was a weak spot of strategic position for Austria-Hungary, affected by the fact that Serbia was in alliance with Russia. Germany came into focus as the basis for Austro-Hungarian survival as an European power.¹²

World War One

Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the heir to the Habsburg throne and nephew of Austrian emperor Franz Josef I, made a decision to visit Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia in the summer of 1914. Sarajevo represented the core of the Serbian society and nationalists and therefore it was unsafe for a royal member of the family to visit it. Nevertheless, the Archduke chose the date of great significance for Serbs for visit. The date represented the anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo between Turks and Serbs in the year of 1389. It was the date of the beginning of almost 500-year-long Serbian suffering under Ottoman rule.¹³

Franz Ferdinand's visit to Bosnia started on June 25th, in order to supervise the Habsburg military maneuvers. On June 28th, he paraded through the Sarajevo streets in an open-topped car. From the crowded streets of Sarajevo, after hours of waiting a young man came forward from the crowd and killed the Archduke and his wife. The name of the young man was Gavrilo Princip, a member of a nationalist group called "Young Bosnia" whose plan was to force the Habsburgs to go away from Bosnia. A gun was obtained from the pro-Serb group known as the "Black Hand" responsible for assassinating King Aleksandar and his wife Draga in 1903. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand started the events that led to the WW I.¹⁴

Austria and its government categorically blamed Serbia without any proof and pointed out its involvement in the death of the Archduke. Kaiser Wilhelm received a letter from Franz Josef on July 4th, 1914, where he was asked to support elimination of Serbia in the Balkans. Franz Josef received a "blank cheque" from Kaiser Wilhelm that meant support in starting a war against Serbia. Their intention was to keep the war localized and what nobody expected was the outburst of war throughout all of Europe and Russian intervention. With the intention to make the victory over Serbia certain, Germany was already prepared to take that risk. Being issued an ultimatum by the Austrian government, Serbia was framed to provoke war while Austria-Hungary had already expected the involvement of the great powers.¹⁵

On the other side, the Russian and French governments met to discuss their positions in the upcoming situation, and the French president offered his full support to Russia against Austro-Hungarian threats. It was seen as the second "blank cheque" and Russia was encouraged to start a war against Austria-Hungary. Besides, the Russian

government was advised by the French not to do anything in the July Crisis and not to provoke Germany. The French support was meant to discourage Austria-Hungary; the Russian government had the task to negotiate in the crisis while the German support to Austria-Hungary was made to provoke. Those “blank cheques” issued in the July Crisis had basic differences, one issued to negotiate, the other to provoke.¹⁶

On July 23rd, 1914, Serbia was delivered the ultimatum by the Austrian government. There were ten demands in the ultimatum demanding Serbia to suppress the terrorist activities of the Serb nationalists, claiming Serbian involvement in the assassination. The demand which produced problems was to form a joint Habsburg-Serbian task group which would investigate all movements in Serbia that opposed Austria-Hungary. Even though most of the European governments thought that Serbia would decline the ultimatum, Serbia settled to most of the demands. However, the Serbian point of view was that any kind of investigation should follow international laws. To Austria-Hungary only immediate acceptance of the original ultimatum was satisfactory.¹⁷

Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia on July 28th, 1914. Although Austria-Hungary and Germany hoped to localize the war, it was impossible. The Russian government made it very clear that it would go to war to save Serbia, unless Austria-Hungary withdrew its troops. The following day, Russia started the mobilization of its troops which initiated German mobilization of its troops, while the Austrian tsar was aware of all activities. The British government started the negotiation process among Russia, Germany, Serbia and Austria-Hungary to calm matters down, but the governments of Austria-Hungary and Germany rejected the proposals.¹⁸

On July 30th, 1914, the Russian mobilization was announced, while the German plans for war emerged and were in progress. The following day, Russia received an ultimatum from Germany to stop all military activities or they would start war. The Russian response was that they had no aggressive plans and expressed their wishes for settlement in peace. Nevertheless, on August 1st, 1914, Germany sent a declaration of war to Russia. Moreover, Germany sent an ultimatum to the Belgian government on August 2nd, 1914, which caused the British government to respond and protest against the breach of neutrality which could result in the British declaration of war. However, Germany invaded Belgium the following day and furthermore declared war on France, although France had no genuine interests in the Balkans. The British declared war on Germany on August 4th, 1914, because of the German invasion on Belgium. It was considered that the Great War would end in short period of time, but it lasted for four agonizing years.¹⁹

Serbia. The Serbian army had been at war since October 1912. Its soldiers were experienced and tough, but the duration and intensity of the Balkan conflicts had eroded its strength and exhausted its material resources. The civilian population was also weary from two years of continuous warfare.

Soldiers' lack of training and lack of modern military infrastructure was not compensated for in their attitudes. However, the Serbian defense war plan was nearly perfect, not only because it predicted the main attack from the only possible successful direction for the aggressor (from the north, across the rivers Sava and Danube), but it also predicted the less expected strategic direction, across the river Drina from the

west. The basic idea of the Serbian general staff was to “keep the defense until the political and military situation was cleared up and then act accordingly.”²⁰

The main forces stayed in the central part of Serbia, with nearby communications to the strategic direction of the expected attack. This provided the strategic concentration of the army with significant maneuvering capabilities in both directions, to the north (river Sava and Danube) and to the west (river Drina). This concentration of the army appeared to be very significant.²¹

Austria-Hungary. The fundamental war plan of Austria-Hungary was a punitive invasion of Serbia. Due to national diversity and ethnic complexity, Austria-Hungary started facing problems where soldiers’ co-nationals lived in surrounding countries, such as Italy, Romania, Serbia, Czech, Poland, and Ukraine. Many of the soldiers were inclined to the idea of Pan-Slavic cohesion with Russia where the Habsburg state interests would not compensate for their own national welfare. Thus, the army efficiency came into question even though the language of command was German.²²

Bearing in mind the problem of the potential enemies, Russia in the north and Serbia in the south, General Franz Conrad von Hotzendorf (1852-1925) designed a plan with division of forces into three groups: a group called Minimal Group Balkan was ordered to defend the area against Serbia, a group called A Staffel was placed to defend the Galician frontier against Russia, and a mobile group called B Staffel was to make available offensive support for either front. The whole system of combat groups depended on proper functioning of the railroads.²³

Even before the first combat, Conrad carried out plan B (simultaneous war against Russia, Serbia and Montenegro) against Serbia before Russia declared war.

When the news of war with Russia reached the Austrian General Staff, the troops had already been destined for the Balkans. General Conrad decided to turn around the troops and direct them to the Russian front, using a dual railroad system which caused chaos. Austrian-Hungarian troops were confused, exhausted, and disoriented and not able to undertake the offense when they reached their final destinations in Galicia, Croatia, and Bosnia during August 1914.²⁴

War. The capital of Belgrade had been bombarded from across the Danube since the declaration of war on July 28th as well as from the monitors in the Danube. Austrian-Hungarian troops initiated the invasion from the north and west under the command of General Oskar Potiorek (1853-1933) on August 11th. The attack was carried out as followed: one Austrian force crossed the Sava River and advanced towards Šabac, the other crossed the Drina River and moved towards Jadar Valley, and the last one crossed the upper Drina Valley. All included it counted more than 250,000 men. Even though the Serbs were slightly outnumbered, the Austrian aggression was repulsed at the Battle of Cer Mountain under the command of Vojvoda Radomir Putnik (1847-1917) thus accomplishing the first entente victory of WW I. Having defeated the Austrians by August 25th, Serbia was clear of any hostile forces.²⁵

Putnik arranged a counterattack despite the fact that the Serbian army suffered losses at the Battle of Cer Mountain, and not to mention the Balkan Wars. He ordered one group to cross the Sava River into Srem, while the other one moved into Bosnia thus reaching Sarajevo and taking Visegrad. Moreover, there were Montenegrin troops²⁶ that advanced into Herzegovina and northern Albania. However, these efforts

were not a long-term solution. Serbia was not equipped enough with ammunition and thus had problems in holding the enemy territory.²⁷

On October 8th, Austria started a new attack on Serbia which succeeded in defending the banks of the Drina River. That did not stop the Austrians. A more intense effort to enter Serbia began on November 10th, and they succeeded in crossing the west bank of the Sava River thus advancing east to Belgrade. On December 2nd, the capital was occupied and Austrian troops were heading south. It was an ephemeral triumph due to the counter-attack of the Serbian forces at the River Kolubara which forced the enemies to withdraw and the Serbs were back in Belgrade by December 15th.²⁸

This battle, known as Kolubara Battle, is a unique example of how a tactical move in the transition from defensive to offensive under difficult and adverse conditions, had a strategic importance for the completion of operations and the liberation of the homeland. In honor of this battle, the 16th, of November, which was the first day of the Kolubara Battle, has been commemorated as Serbian Army Day (Land Forces Day).²⁹

Serbia had not been defeated while Austria suffered massive losses. Serbian territory was clean of hostile Austrian-Hungarian forces. Vojvoda Radomir Putnik was personally congratulated by German emperor Wilhelm III on the victory. However, Serbia expected support from the Allies in 1915 while being weakened by the uncontrolled typhus epidemic in the winter, but the support never came.³⁰

Serbia was under attack again on October 5th, 1915, when one Austro-Hungarian and one German army, under the command of Field Marshal August von Mackensen (1849-1945), started an invasion from the north. These attacks overwhelmed the already exhausted Serbs, and Belgrade fell on October 10th to the Germans.³¹

Even though the conquerors had a new occupation plan, no matter how logical it was it did not take into account the capacity of the Serbs to sustain hardship. They soon realized it was impossible to force them into the corner. The Serbian troops started withdrawal over Montenegro and Albania to the sea. The passage through Montenegro could have only been survived by true mountaineers, many left their lives on the route. Only 140,000 out of 200,000 who set out survived the hardship of the Albanian and Montenegrin mountains in early December. Accompanied by civilians and 20,000 Austrian prisoners of war, the Serbian Army withdrew to the west through northern Albania. In spite of the heavy snow, disease, and hostility expected from the Albanians, the Adriatic Sea was reached. Finally, shelter and help was provided on the Greek island of Corfu, with the unenthusiastic help of the Italians.³²

The Serb survivors, after recruitment and medical aid on the island of Corfu, were sent to the newly constituted Thessalonica front. In the final months of the war they were called to action thanks to the fact that on the Thessalonica front the allied forces stayed undamaged. Serbian forces were eager to participate and could not wait to liberate their own country and to cause German collapse. Thus, in September 1918, they had to fight their way home, and consequently Belgrade was liberated in November.³³

The Causes of WW I

According to the famous “War Guilt Clause,” number 231, of the Versailles Treaty, the full blame for WW I was assigned to the Central Powers and served as the moral basis for the punitive character of the peace and the reparation assessments.³⁴

The Fischer Thesis. One of the causal theorists of WW I is Fischer's approach, who believed that the truth about German guilt or innocence could only be determined by the official documents. After access to unpublished documents in East Germany,

Fischer found that WW I was no preventative war, born of fear and desperation. The war was planned and launched by Germany in order to provide “living space” and to dominate in Europe.³⁵

Balance of Military Power. The July Crisis cannot be properly understood without knowledge about the balance of military power, military planning, military strategy, or strategic balance of military power. This balance of power in the Balkans was turning against Austria-Hungary and forced it into a “preventive war” to weaken Serbia. Germany was pessimistic about its strategic position because of the growing strength of the French and Russian armies in Europe, and believed that the balance of power was moving sharply away from Germany. This led them to think that it was better to start a war as soon as possible. Those strategic fears were linked to military aims and plans for mobilization. All European powers had developed detailed war plans in the expectation of war, and they strictly believed in a swift mobilization of forces and lightning offensives.³⁶

Nationalism and Self-Determination. The role of self-determination and nationalism has been another important area, because WW I grew out from a clash between “Slav nationalism” and the multi-ethnic Austro-Hungarian Empire. The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand offered the Austro-Hungarian government an ideal opportunity to rouse public opinion in support of a war which aimed to weaken the drive for self-determination in the Balkans. This presents the July Crisis as an attempt to solve the “Eastern Question,” and WW I as a war for the future of Central and Eastern Europe.³⁷

The key players were southern European nationalist groups. Russia wanted to profit from the Ottoman decline, but Austria-Hungary feared this Russian ambition and Slav nationalism. This fear led Austria-Hungary's military leaders to deal with Serbia and they persisted with a disastrous ultimatum and ignored all pleas for mediation. The level of this fear against Slavs and Serbia should not be underestimated. The growth of Serbia clearly threatened the future of the Habsburg Empire. The delivery of the Austrian ultimatum and the decision to attack Serbia were crucial points that led to the war.³⁸

According to the British historian John Leslie, Austria-Hungary can be held responsible for planning a local conflict, which was linked to its fears about Balkan nationalism. Germany was not interested in this quarrel, but used it as an opportunity to launch the European war which Austria-Hungary had never desired.³⁹

However, Serbia did not plan war against Austro-Hungary, because it was exhausted by the previous two Balkan wars, and wanted a period of stability and a peaceful settlement of the July Crisis. John Lowe perhaps puts the significance of the Austro-Serb quarrel into its proper context by stating that: "The crisis in the Balkans was the occasion, rather than the cause of the WW I."⁴⁰

Many theorists disagree about the causes of WW I. The fact is that the Sarajevo assassination was used as an excuse for war, but the real answer may be found in Clausewitz. Only he understood that war was changing drastically. At the beginning of the twentieth century, many politicians and leaders had studied Clausewitz, and it is obvious that no one understood him completely. Nobody understood that the war would reach a new dimension - a world dimension.

Serbia as a Founder of Yugoslavia between two World Wars

One of the consequences of WW I was the formation of Yugoslavia as a new country with all Slavs who wanted to (or forced to) live in one state. Formed on December 1st, 1918, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia ranged from the Western Balkans to Central Europe. It was created by integrating the independent Kingdom of Serbia and provinces of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs from the former Austrian-Hungarian Empire. Territories of Kosovo, Vojvodina and Macedonia had already been part of the Kingdom of Serbia, and unification with the Kingdoms of Montenegro occurred just five days before forming the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.⁴¹

The official name of the country was the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, whereas its colloquial name was already the Kingdom of Yugoslavia from the very beginning. Pan-Slav nationalists, as well as the Serbian ones, supported the creation of the state. From the Pan-Slavic point of view, all people who were South Slav (Yugoslav) were finally under one roof hoping to achieve cohesion and prevail over the past differences.⁴²

Optimists who celebrated the creation of the young country overlooked their different traditions and the fact that those nationality groups had never cohabitated and not to mention the significant religious aspect. Croats and Slovenes belonged to the Roman Catholic Church while the Serbs were Orthodox Christians. Moreover, there was Bosnia divided into Muslims, Orthodox Serbs, Croatian Catholics and Jews. On top of that, there were considerable ethnic minorities living in Macedonia, Serbia, Bosnia, and Croatia. From the mere beginning of the state's existence the issue connected to these differences followed the development of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes.⁴³

The Serbian radicals in Belgrade moved to form a strong central government, claiming that they represented six million people, the largest national group. During the 1920s, other national groups in fear of Serbian domination complained that the constitution did not consider the rights of non-Serbs since the constitution was an extended version of the Serbian constitution from 1903. Croatian leaders were the first to make complaints.⁴⁴

In the beginning, the Croatian Peasant Party demanded a republic or federal organization of the state. Eventually, the organization of monarchy was accepted by all, Croats, Slovenes, the democratic Serbs (mainly outside Serbia), and Bosnian Muslims although it tended towards autonomy. Tensions never stopped, political parties kept divisions at high level. When it was not possible to find a compromise, the constitution was suspended by the King and he introduced dictatorship in 1929. One of the first things he did was to rename the country into the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, considering it could unite nationality groups and help them bridge the gap. Yugoslav government in the next period tried to centralize Yugoslavia which appeared to be unpopular. Contrary to what was expected it produced fury against Serbian radical groups.⁴⁵

Considerable devastation in human lives was one of the most important consequences of the WW I. Especially, a high cost was paid by nations in the region. During the war, Yugoslavia suffered 1,900,000 deaths (all causes) in WW I according to the document from the Versailles Peace Conference. Nearly one half of the male population died (369,815 died out of 705,343 mobilized men) in Serbia during the war which was definitely a demographic disaster from which Serbia has never recuperated.⁴⁶

Balance of power was important after WW I. There were efforts to enable local stability by several regional arrangements, like Little Entente and Balkan Pact. In 1921 there was a trilateral agreement among Czechoslovakia-Romania-Yugoslavia with a link towards France by a series of individual agreements known as the Little Entente. It was actually little use against Germany. France only received true security value from Czechoslovakia, due to its long border with Germany, and its industrial prosperity, and its well-trained and equipped army, while Romania and Yugoslavia were not under any real security threats from Germany. However, their neighbors, Bulgaria and Hungary were countries that shared aspects of German ideology. Moreover, the Little Entente provided support to Romania against Soviet Russia while Italy was Yugoslavia's main antagonist and therefore France offered aid.⁴⁷

Actually, the real purpose of the Little Entente was to check Hungarian reforms. Considerable Hungarian minorities lived in all three country-members, and when put together the three countries could outweigh the Hungarian Armed Forces. Thanks to the coalition of the Little Entente the Habsburg dynasty was prevented from being restored to the throne in Hungary. The Little Entente could deal with Hungarian ambitions, on the other hand it could not do much against German, Soviet and Italian threats towards its members.⁴⁸

However, in 1934 in a joint operation orchestrated by Bulgaria, Hungary, and Italy, with the help of terrorist organization of Ustaša and Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO), on his visit to France, Yugoslav King Aleksandar was assassinated together with French Foreign Minister Louis Barthou (1862-1934) in Marseilles on October 9th. The actual assassin, a member of IMRO, was Vlada

Georgiev Chernozemski, known as Velicko Georgiev Kerin (1897-1934), was aided by Hungary and Italy. He was not alone in this endeavor but helped by three Ustaša men.⁴⁹

Ante Pavelić (1889-1959) founded in 1929-1930 and led the Ustaša movement, a Croatian extremist organization, whose members promoted the founding of the independent Croatia. Immediately after founding the movement, Pavelić had to flee Yugoslavia in order not to be arrested. He found protection in Italy where he was offered training facilities and other support. Terrorist acts and small uprisings were conducted by the Ustaša movement in Yugoslavia during the 1930s. Italians strictly controlled the Ustaša movement after King Aleksandar of Yugoslavia was assassinated.⁵⁰

In 1935, Romania, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey signed the Balkan Pact directed mainly against a Bulgarian tendency for territory. Bulgaria could be rewarded for its loyalty to the pact, but naturally, the Bulgarians opposed the status quo of the Balkan borders. Italy always had strong influence over affairs in Albania and therefore King Zog's Albania (1895-1961) was not asked to join the pact. A Balkan Pact, that included Bulgaria had the potential to become a stabilizing force in southeastern Europe. By the time it was signed, each country was under the influence of the flourishing German economy. Each country was looking forward to the opportunity to join their economy forces with the ones of the Third Reich.⁵¹

World War Two

The German invasion of Poland on September 1st, 1939, launched a conflict much more terrible and destructive than WW I. This war was more truly global, and heavy fighting took place in Africa, Asia, as well as Europe, and the people of every continent were involved to some degree. The battle casualties were enormous, even greater than the losses of the first, and the assault on civilians was unprecedented.

Massive aerial bombardment of cities became common and concluded with the use of the new and terrifying atomic weapons against Japan in 1945. The cost of this world war in life and property was much greater than WW I.⁵²

World War II in Yugoslavia

In the beginning of WW II, Belgrade wanted to be neutral, but this region was too important for Nazi Germany because of non ferrous minerals and air corridors to the German expeditionary force in northern Africa. Berlin needed access to Thessalonica in Greece, to the oil resources of Romania and the Black Sea, and to protect them from British bombing raids. Hitler had plans for an invasion of the Soviet Union, and he was concerned that the Balkan region should remain outside the reach of allies.⁵³

Hitler decided to occupy the region as a prelude to his assault upon the USSR. Hungary and Romania were pressed to join the Tripartite Pact,⁵⁴ and to permit German occupation of their territory. On March 1st, 1941, threatened by a German offensive and lured by promises of control over Macedonia, Bulgaria joined the Pact. Yugoslavia was pressured to follow this trend, and in March 1941, the Cvetković-Maček government agreed to accede to the Pact. Some historians interpret this capitulation as “a diplomatic triumph” for Belgrade as it promised to preserve Yugoslav neutrality at minimal cost (no German troops and boots on the ground, only transport for war materials). However, it was not seen as a triumph by the Western democracies and by the citizens of Belgrade and Serbia.⁵⁵

The Cvetković-Maček government was overthrown on behalf of the new monarch King Peter II by popular mobilizations in the streets of Belgrade, with demonstrators famously chanting “bolje rat nego pakt” (better war than the pact) and “bolje grob nego rob” (better grave than slave). This putsch was noble, but it was also a spontaneous

response to a desperate situation. Yugoslavia was unprepared for war, and Hitler ordered an immediately assault.⁵⁶

War started with a massive air attack on Belgrade at dawn on April 6th, 1941, leaving nearly 3,000 dead in its wake. By April 10th, German forces had occupied Zagreb. On April 12th, they entered Belgrade by simultaneous attacks from Bulgaria, Romania, and Austria, and by April 17th, Yugoslavia had capitulated. Despite its own problems and victims of German aggression, Yugoslavia had the will to resist but resistance was unsuccessful. As Dr. R. Craig Nation pointed out “the first Yugoslavia was not undermined from within, as a result of uncontainable ethnic tension, but from without, by foreign invasion and occupation. It was only after the country had been dismantled, its leadership dispersed, its armed forces disbanded, and power placed in the hands of quislings, that the descent to civil war could begin.”⁵⁷

During WW II the Balkans was not primary theater of operations for Germany, because Yugoslavia was gone and was replaced by puppet states. But, the catastrophic impact of foreign occupation accompanied by an aggressive redrawing of frontiers provoked the rise of resistance. Parts of Slovenia were absorbed by Germany and Italy. Bulgaria took control of Macedonia up to Lake Ohrid, and small parts of Kosovo and eastern Serbia. Italy occupied a greater Albania, including Kosovo and western Macedonia, and the rump Montenegro became a protectorate. The major part of Yugoslavia was annexed by neighboring states, but other parts were under collaborationist administrations watched over by occupiers.⁵⁸

A rump Serbia, within boundaries before the Balkan wars, was under the German military command and the quisling regime of General Milan Nedić. On the other side, an

Independent State of Croatia, which included Croatia, Slavonia, Srem, a small part of Dalmatia, and all of Bosnia-Herzegovina, was in the hands of Ante Pavelić and his Ustaša regime. This leadership had survived politically as protégés of Mussolini, and it was in Zagreb that preparation for cultural assimilation, persecution and ethnic cleansing occurred.⁵⁹

Hitler did not want the Balkans as a new theater for hostile military operations, and he had no interest in creating a sustainable regional order. He only wanted to maintain access to strategic resources such as Romania's Ploesti oil fields. Pavelić's Independent State of Croatia, had a population that was barely 50 percent Croat, 30 percent were Serbs and 20 percent Bosnian Muslims. It was obvious that ethnic tensions would destabilize the region. The German policy for the Balkans was to make a "house of cards," and when the balance of power shifted, it would collapse.⁶⁰

The Independent State of Croatia⁶¹ launched a campaign of genocide directed against non-Croat minorities - Serbs, Jews, and Roma. On June 22nd, 1941, speaking in the town of Gospić, Pavelić's Minister of Education Mile Budak publicly declared that one-third of Croatia's nearly two million Serbs were to be deported, one-third forced to convert to Roman Catholicism, and one-third killed.⁶² As Dr. R. Craig Nation pointed out

the incidence of killing was particularly severe in the ethnically mixed regions of the old military frontier zone (Vojna Krajina) that had divided the Habsburg and Ottoman empires, and in Bosnia-Herzegovina, where wooden platforms were constructed in the squares of occupied villages to which adult males were led, while their families looked on, to have their throats cut. The Croat and Bosnian Jewish community of about 36,000 was almost totally destroyed. Over 200,000 Serbs were subjected to forced conversion to Catholicism, justified on the specious ground that the Serbs of Croatia were actually ethnic Croats who had been forcefully converted to Orthodoxy in centuries past. The Bosnian Muslims were declared to be "Croats of the Muslim Faith," and thereby spared extermination, but there were plenty of victims to go around.⁶³

These Ustaša crimes were colored by anti-Serb resentment cultivated after WW I, but the real source was the fanatic desire to create an ethnically clear fascistic Croatia. The impact of these crimes to future relations in Yugoslavia was disastrous. The Ustaša came to power in Croatia at the behest of foreign occupiers without a significant popular base - less than five percent of the population affiliated with the movement prior to the war. But the crimes of the movement, and the patterns of resistance that these crimes provoked, sowed the seeds of enduring inter- communal resentment.⁶⁴

The high level of terror drove all Yugoslav citizens of good will into the arms of the opposition. Serbian soldiers and officers from the Royal Yugoslav Army withdrew into isolated mountainous areas and rallied around the leadership of Colonel Draža Mihailović to form the Chetnik⁶⁵ movement, with strong ties to the Yugoslav government in exile in London. The Yugoslav communist party (KPJ) and its leader Josip Broz-Tito also declared a strategy of armed resistance, based on an ideology of national liberation and communist revolution. During the time, the rivalry between Tito's Partisans and Mihailović's Chetniks evolved into open civil war, waged simultaneously with the struggle against occupation forces. The barbarity of the Pavelić regime, the ideological division between Serbian nationalism and communist internationalism, and the harshness of the German occupation made Yugoslavia one of the greatest victims, calculated in war-related losses per capita, among other nations in WW II.⁶⁶

The Partisans' victory was the result of many factors and probably included Pan Slavism because it reached out to all Yugoslav nationalities. The Ustaša regime and the Chetniks movement were based on Croat and Serb nationalism. The resort to genocide

discredited Pavelić's movement, which remained dependent on the fortunes of its German and Italian masters. Mihailović's Chetniks made tactical choices that included occasional collaboration with German occupation forces or the partisans, whether to defend Serb communities from reprisals, or as a result of antipathy toward the communists.⁶⁷

The Partisans collaborated too, but they were disciplined and determined, their forces sought to root themselves in local communities, and the decision for resistance placed them on the side of history. Young peasants (75 percent of the Partisan army was 23 or younger) made up the bulk of recruits and provided a source capable of transcending nationalism. Success in the field against German troops and arrival of Fitzroy Maclean in Tito's headquarters as a British military liaison officer, shifted support of the allies from the Chetniks to the Partisans.⁶⁸

Not least, ideological affinity with Stalin and Soviet communism provided Soviet Red Army troops to participate alongside of Partisan units in the liberation of Belgrade in October 1944. Even more importantly, after having helped to secure the Yugoslav capital, Soviet forces went to Central Europe leaving Tito's Partisans in control of the area. This gesture of confidence was not known to other occupied Balkan states. From the outset, Tito wanted not only to win the war, but to initiate a revolution.⁶⁹

Consequences, Civil War, Genocide and Ethnic Cleansing 1941-1945

In order to support the "house of cards" policy for the Balkans, Germany planned to deport Slovenes from Lower Styria and Serbs from Croatia and Bosnia. Although the massive forced displacement did not occur because of the uprising, the Nazis deported 50,000 Slovenes, and another 200,000 Serbs and Slovenes moved just to avoid deportations. In Macedonia, Bulgarians deported Serbs and introduced Bulgarian

colonists. Hungarians expelled thousands of Serbs, Gypsies, and Jews from their occupied areas. In Croatia, Milovan Zanic, Minister of the Legislative Council of the Independent State of Croatia, declared in a note of instruction: "This country can only be a Croatian country, and there is no method we would hesitate to use in order to make it truly Croatian and cleanse it of Serbs, who have for centuries endangered us and who will endanger us again if they are given the opportunity."⁷⁰ Shortly after that, Serbs and Muslims came under reprisals with outright murders and massacres, and hundreds of thousands of them were forced to emigrate from their homelands in Croatia or to convert to Catholicism. Today, there is a current hot buzz word for this - ethnic cleansing.⁷¹

Serbs tried to protect themselves from Ustaši ethnic cleansing and went to Colonel Draža Mihailović and his Chetniks who had strong nationalistic, Greater Serbia, anti-Croatian, and anti-Communist beliefs. The Chetniks realized that Croatia and the Ustaši regime were a bigger threat for Serbs than German or Italian invaders. Moreover, Mihailović was unable to control separate Chetnik groups which acted as brigands and attacked whoever happened to be nearest.⁷²

During the same time, the Partisans started guerrilla operations against the Axis occupiers. In the beginning, Tito wanted to establish his forces in and around Zagreb, but Ustaša and German pressure forced him to move into Serbian territory, nearby Belgrade. This move brought Tito into conflict with Mihailović, and by November 1941, Chetniks and Partisans stood in opposition.⁷³

This situation was much more a result of tactical differences over how and when to fight against Germans than as ideological ones. The Germans carried out brutal reprisals against any actions and, because both groups operated predominantly from

Serbian territory, Serbs suffered reprisals. After German raids and the deaths of over 8,000-including hundreds of children in Kragujevac -Mihailović suspended operations against German forces. He wanted to avoid further reprisals and was focused on survival of his troops, so he waited for a proper strategic time for fighting.⁷⁴

However, Tito continued his operations and German reprisals against Serbian populations became even higher. These actions, combined with ideological and ethnic differences, resulted in active Chetnik cooperation with the Germans and Italians in anti-Partisan operations from November 1941. This was the beginning of a four way civil war among the Ustaši, Chetniks, Partisans, and rump Serbia under Nedić with unprecedented violence that lasted until the end of WW II.⁷⁵

The civil and ethnic war quickly spread beyond Croatian-Serbian warfare. Muslims later joined with Croats in reprisals against the Serbs, and enlisted in two SS divisions-the Albanian SS “Skanderbeg” Division and the Croatian/Bosnian SS “Handschar” (Scimitar) Division. All together, they participated in the German operations and carried out indiscriminate attacks against Partisans and civilians. In many ways it became difficult to separate the civil, ethnic and religious aspects of the war in the centuries old conflicts in this region.⁷⁶

The only new aspect was communist revolution and Tito who brought something more dangerous – fratricidal war. It was war within one ethnic group, within one religion, within one family. Moreover, the majority of Partisans, Chetniks and affected civilians were Serbs.

The costs of this war in human life were horrific. More than 300,000 Serbs were forcibly converted to Catholicism and between 200,000-600,000 Serbs died in Croatia,

alone. Serbs claim that between 500,000-700,000 Serbs may have perished in Croatian cleansing campaigns, but the minimum number may have been closer to 350,000.⁷⁷ The severity of this case and its effects on the Balkans situation was described in William T. Johnsen's monograph:

Total casualties came to approximately 1.7 million dead out of a population of 16 million. The numbers of wounded and maimed can only be guessed. Coupled with the massive losses sustained in WW I, two generations of Yugoslavs effectively had been wiped out. . . . More importantly, perhaps, were the scars left by the ideological civil war, with its intense ethnic and religious overtones, waged by communists, royalists, and ultranationalists that helped set the stage for the ongoing wars⁷⁸ in the former Yugoslavia.⁷⁹

The Cold War

The Cold War, the third phase of the 20th century European conflict began as WW II concluded and prevented a formal resolution of that war for some time.⁸⁰ During WW II, Soviet Russia suffered huge human and material losses. At least 25 million people died and territory from Leningrad, Moscow, and Stalingrad to the western borders was in ruins. The United States suffered around 300,000 dead, but its continent was almost without damage. This difference in losses and damage between the United States and Soviet Russia led Stalin to assume that the Americans would act on their advantage. Mutual suspicions and hostility between the two countries were a basic characteristic in their relations for 45 years, and Europe, as well as the European nations, were divided in two. This war was known as Cold War, and it never became "hot" probably because "mutual fear of nuclear holocaust limited the possibility of another world war. European conflict proceeded directly from the expenditure of millions of tons of ordnance into a confrontation in which military hardware was not fired."⁸¹

At the end of WW II, America had the greatest military forces in its history, its industrial power was unmatched in the world, and the atomic weapon was an American monopoly. In less than a year, America reduced military forces in Europe from 3-5 million to half a million. The speed of the withdrawal was the result of pressure to “get the boys home”⁸² but was fully in accord with American plans and peacetime goals. As Donald Kagan pointed out “these goals were the traditional ones of support for self-determination, autonomy, and democracy in the political area, free trade, freedom of the seas, no barriers to investment, and the “open door” in the economic sphere.”⁸³ These political and economic conditions agreed with American principles and served American interests. As the strongest, richest nation in the world, the one with the greatest industrial plant and the strongest currency, the United States would benefit handsomely.⁸⁴

From the Soviet perspective, the extension of its frontiers and domination in Eastern Europe were seen as compensation for the fearful losses suffered in the war, and were necessary for the security of the USSR. American misunderstanding of this perspective was seen as a threat to the Soviet's security. American objections over Poland and other states were seen as attempts to undermine regimes friendly to Russia and to encircle the Soviet Union with hostile neighbors. Such behavior could justify Russian attempts to overthrow regimes friendly to the United States in Europe and elsewhere. The important question was whether the conflict would take a diplomatic or a military form.⁸⁵

The Soviets felt less threatened by the American presence in Europe after their successful development of a nuclear bomb, which underwent final testing in August

1949. With their own nuclear weapon, the Soviets could respond to an American atomic attack with a short-range attack of their own. The equalization of nuclear capacity contributed toward the temporary stabilization of Europe.

Twelve European and North American countries established the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) on April 4th, 1949, as a new military alliance. The purpose of this endeavor was “to keep the Americans in, the Russians out, and the Germans down.”⁸⁶ NATO committed the United States to the defense of Western Europe, and it was the military basis for the containment policy. It also ensured that the German issue would be managed within a framework that included the western Europeans and the Americans.⁸⁷

The Soviets did not respond immediately, but imposed reciprocal military relations with each of their eastern European satellites. After the establishment of a West German military force and the admission of West Germany to NATO, the Soviets and their allies formed an eastern European military alliance-the Warsaw Pact, on May 15th, 1955.⁸⁸

Relations between the two pacts, as well as between the Americans and the Soviets, were relatively good. The exception was the Cuban Missile Crisis, when these Cold War adversaries came close to direct fighting with nuclear weapons in 1962. However, the peaceful resolution of that crisis helped the United States to decide to reduce the number of missiles located on the south shore of the Black Sea in Turkey, aimed at Soviet Russia.⁸⁹

The fall of the Berlin wall in November 1989, the unification of Germany during 1990, and the dissolution of the USSR and the Warsaw Pact marked the end of the Cold War.

Yugoslavia during the Cold War

Yugoslavia became a Soviet partner in Eastern Europe after the victory of the Partisans against foreign and domestic enemies in the WW II. In order to evade nationalist conflicts that marked the period between two wars, Tito established the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. There were six federal states established by the 1946 Constitution: Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovenia and Serbia with two autonomous regions of Kosovo and Vojvodina.⁹⁰

In the beginning, Tito's initial policies were ambitious. Tito requested the Adriatic port of Trieste and southern Carinthia regions in addition to the already obtained territories of Istria peninsula, Zara and a few more Adriatic islands. Furthermore, he attempted to establish a Balkan federation including Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia which seemed achievable at the time.⁹¹

In addition, Stalin was infuriated at the possibility of establishing a Balkan federation as well as the rejection of the Soviet establishments in Yugoslavia. It was the growing tension between Tito and Stalin which escalated on June 28th, 1948, when the relations between the Soviets and Yugoslavia ended. Stalin was enraged and often said that if he moved his little finger Tito would be eliminated, which did not happen. Moreover, any Soviet move against Yugoslavia also risked Cold War complications. Soviet military action against the country was impossible due to the consequence of Western intrusion into Yugoslavia.⁹²

The retaliation for launching no attack on Tito, was fierce, for the leaders of the other Eastern European countries under Soviet protection. Leaders suspected of “Titoist” tendencies were harshly prosecuted, executed, or imprisoned in each country, like Koci Xoxe (1911-1949) in Albania, Traicho Kostov (1897-1949) in Bulgaria, Vladimir Klementis (1902-1952) in Czechoslovakia, and Laszlo Rajk (1909-1949) in Hungary who were executed. Wladyslaw Gomulka (1905-1982) in Poland and Vasile Luca (1898-1954) in Romania were imprisoned. These actions made the regimes in those countries connected even tighter to the Soviet system.⁹³

Undoubtedly, Tito was in a certain way defended by the Americans while the Soviets were not willing to engage in a war over that territory. However, Yugoslavia started receiving military and economic help from the USA. The conflict over Trieste was settled when Yugoslavia got the suburb with its mostly Slovene population while Italy kept the old city center. The Balkan Pact, known as the Treaty of Bled, was signed by Yugoslavia in 1954 along with Greece and Turkey, although the Pact soon failed due to the conflict over the island of Cyprus. Even though the relations between Yugoslavia and the USSR improved after the collapse of the Balkan Pact, Tito was never again asked to accept Soviet proposals after 1948 and he kept his sovereign authority.⁹⁴

After Stalin's death, Khrushchev was the head of the country and his first task was to secure the control of the Soviet Union by undertaking new endeavors. In order to resolve the split between the two countries, he visited Tito in Belgrade in 1955. Hoping that Tito would join the eastern bloc, Khrushchev's attitude during the visit was pleasant and friendly. Relations between the two countries improved dramatically but Tito was cautious enough to maintain his independence.⁹⁵

Interior of Yugoslav State. After WW II, the Balkans and Eastern European communist regimes were established with an anti-national bent, which generally dampened ethnic conflict throughout the region. According to the Yugoslav Constitution of 1946, internal borders were established on national or historical bases, but the substantial intermingling of ethnic groups made it impossible to draw lines strictly on an ethnic basis. To compensate for this problem, republic borders were defined as sovereign homelands of sovereign nations. However, borders were designed to protect ethnic minorities in other republics, and this also meant that minorities living within one republic became part of their respective nation. Serbs in Croatia were still part of the Serbian nation, and such a solution could justify inter-republic interference in the internal affairs of neighboring republics to protect ethnic minorities. Serbia's actions in Croatia and Bosnia during the 1990s can be traced directly to this Constitutional right.⁹⁶

Through a series of constitutional changes (1953, 1962), Tito tried to restrain ethnic and nationalist passions by providing greater local autonomy; the most dramatic instance being the Constitution of 1974. Tito also periodically purged republic parties that demonstrated too much nationalism, most notably his purge of the Croatian, Serbian, and Slovenian branches of the party in 1970-74. But Tito only succeeded in temporarily capping ethnic animosities.⁹⁷

Rise of Nationalism after Tito's Death

Given the ethnic groups within the former Yugoslavia that have close ties with neighboring states, the possibility of the conflict spreading throughout the Balkans ran and still runs high. This potential for expansion is what the policymakers of today must endure. In developing policy options, decision-makers must understand the depths of

the ethnic animosities that exist within the Balkans and the second and third order consequences that might result from policy initiatives.⁹⁸

Tito died in 1980 and Yugoslavia started its demise. Republic leaders were strictly focused on local and republic issues. Ethnic Kosovo Albanians started with riots and protests on April 1981, and these demonstrations took on an anti-Serb tone. As rumors spread of supposed Albanian atrocities, Serbian nationalism steadily grew until March 1986 when the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences declared Serbs to be the oppressed minority in Yugoslavia.⁹⁹

Slobodan Milošević entered the Serbian political scene during this period, and professed a simple platform: “unrestrained Serbian nationalism that sought to overturn the existing system and restore Serbs and Serbia to their rightful place.”¹⁰⁰ He took control over the Serbian Communist Party and eliminated his rivals within Serbia. Moreover, he gained the support of the Yugoslav Army. In short order, Milošević replaced Kosovo and Vojvodina governments with loyal supporters. In February 1989, Milošević eliminated the constitutional provisions for Kosovo and Vojvodina secession, and reincorporated them into Serbia. These events had considerable consequences for Yugoslavia and relations between republics.¹⁰¹

The Yugoslav Constitution of 1974 granted a semi-federal status for all six republics and two autonomous regions, and grounds for important changes and reforms were already established. In this way, relationships between the different national components were improved, as well as the capacity to represent their own particular interests outside the context of the Federation. But the federal decision-

making system remained much too rigid compared with the greater flexibility achieved by individual federal units.¹⁰²

National Interests and the Breakup of Yugoslavia during the 1990s

Former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright claimed that “Democracy is the key to our strategy throughout southeastern Europe. Democratic governments are more stable internally, more likely to encourage ethnic tolerance and more interested in establishing closer economic and political ties with their neighbors and the West.”¹⁰³

Unfortunately, this statement cannot be fully applied in the Balkans in the 1990s, because democratic elections increased ethnic tensions and the potential for violence. This was true in the Yugoslav case during the 1990s, “where elections held at the wrong time or under the wrong circumstances often derailed democratic transitions instead of advancing them. Thus, the former Yugoslavia's first democratic elections in 1990 brought to power all of the nationalist leaders the West has so frequently criticized.”¹⁰⁴

Democratic elections were held in all republics during 1990, and communists who converted to nationalism won the presidential elections. Former communist Milan Kučan was elected president of Slovenia, Franjo Tudjman, a former communist general was elected president of Croatia, and Slobodan Milošević, with rumors of election fraud, was elected president of Serbia.¹⁰⁵ Only Alija Izetbegović in Bosnia, leader of the Muslim Party of Democratic Action was not communist. He was a former communist prisoner accused of Muslim extremism because he wanted an ethnically pure Muslim Bosnia during 1970s.¹⁰⁶

Election campaigns in Serbia, Slovenia, and Croatia were highlighted by strong nationalist rhetoric, which worked to poison relations between the republics. In Slovenia,

meetings were punctuated by the traditional chant, “Hang Serbs from willow trees!”¹⁰⁷ In Croatia, similar slogans were uttered. In addition, Tudjman’s campaign slogan, “a Croatia for Croats only,” made the Serbs of Croatia understandably anxious.¹⁰⁸ However, Milošević insisted that Serbia was on the defensive and sought to identify Serbia with Yugoslavia. He accused Tudjman of resuscitating the spirit of the Ustaše era. Tudjman, in turn, unwittingly played into Milošević’s hands by publicly downplaying the abuses of the Ustaše during WW II.¹⁰⁹

While playing the role of Serbs as victims in public, Milošević wanted Slovenia and Croatia out of the federation, but Serb-populated areas of Croatia in the federation used the JNA,¹¹⁰ to “defend the right of those who wished to remain together.”¹¹¹ There may have been hope for the survival of the Yugoslav union had Serbia agreed to Croat and Slovene requests to transform Yugoslavia into a looser confederation. The Bosnian Muslims were also interested. Since Bosnia-Herzegovina was almost evenly split between Serbs, Croats, and Muslims, Izetbegović promoted confederation as a favorable alternative to the collapse of the Yugoslav state. Macedonian president Kiro Gligorov shared this view because Albanians constituted at least 21% of the population of Macedonia.¹¹²

Civil wars and Responsibility to Protect

Self-determination, ethnic tensions and nationalism within and between Yugoslav republics with new democratic governments were basic factors and causes that led to civil war.

Slovenia. Slovenia and Croatia started to transform their Territorial Defense Forces into their own armies. Slovenia left the Yugoslav federation and proclaimed independence on June 25th, 1991, while Croatia followed Slovenia’s example even

though it was not prepared. While the JNA was trying to secure the borders of the republic, the Slovene militia, being well-equipped and motivated, stopped the JNA in a few severe conflicts. The European Community enabled the JNA to evacuate from Slovenia and arranged signing the Brioni Agreement on July 7th, 1991, by which Slovenia established its independence.¹¹³ Milošević did not have interests in waging a war in Slovenia from the mere fact that Serbs were not a significant minority in this republic, therefore it was conflict that lasted 10 days. Slovenia was independent and without any hostilities by October 1991.¹¹⁴

Croatia. Croatia was not in the same position as Slovenia due to the mere fact that Serbs represented a substantial minority with 12% of Croatia's population. During the second half of 1991, the fights and conflicts were intense across Croatia. Tudjman's nationalist propaganda conveyed the idea of not being submitted to Serb control. While on the other hand Milošević explained that the JNA was Serb-dominated in order to defend "a defenseless Serb people against reemergence of Croat fascism."¹¹⁵ However, Tudjman created a strict nationalist regime insisting on Croatian language and the revival of the Ustaše thus isolating the Serbian minority.

If Yugoslavia was to be broken into pieces along national lines, the Serbian minority asked for their right to remain within the borders of the country along with their compatriots. It was simple, Serbs of Croatia desired to stay with other Serbs. In March 1991, the skirmishes between Serbian militias and Croatian government forces started while the JNA was helping the people with armament.¹¹⁶

Croatia's independence was supported in a referendum in May 1991, and independence was declared on June 25th, 1991.¹¹⁷ As it was expected, Serbian Krajina

and Eastern Slavonia desired to stay within Yugoslavia. Tudjman disregarded the desires of the Serbian minority and committed violent actions against them. A response to Tudjman's action came rapidly in banishing many Croats from the region of Krajina and Slavonia.¹¹⁸

The Croatian military started ethnic suppression by force and retaliation. Tudjman's brutal campaign was a response to actions in Krajina and Slavonia. The undying Balkan nationalist fear continued feeding the conflicts. The prospects of life as a minority in an ethnic state were impossible. The Serbs realized that Serbs living in Bosnia would suffer the same consequences and punishments as Serbs in Krajina and therefore began the war that would keep Croatia in Yugoslavia under Serbian dominance.¹¹⁹ By the end of the year, Serbs were in control of one-third of the territory, while Croatia was unprepared for the military control of the country.¹²⁰

The European Community (EC) was unable to settle the two opposing sides as well as to stop the country from falling apart. Soon after, in 1991 and in 1992, Serbia suffered economic sanctions. The United Nations (UN) decided to intervene in the fall of 1992 and introduced 14,000 monitors from UN Protection Force (UNPROFOR) which brought truce in the region. Both sides were satisfied: Milošević with Serbian population in one-third of the country monitored by the UN and on the opposite side the Croats with a cease-fire which gave them time to prepare a military counterattack against the Serbs.¹²¹

In August 1995, Krajina Serbs suffered a major offensive named Operation Storm by the Croatian Army which was prepared and equipped by the United States. The Serb civilians, 200,000 of them, left the region that was their homeland for more

than three centuries with very little resistance. Many of those who did not want to leave were forced to do so.¹²² Krajina was ethnically cleansed after five years of struggle. Moreover, Milošević's character was recognized and fixed as the true champion and fighter for the Serbian national interest.¹²³

Bosnia. Bosnia-Herzegovina was the following minefield in the civil war. The population of Bosnia consisted of 4.4 million people where Bosnian Muslims represented 43.7 percent of the population, Serbs 31.4 percent, and Croats 17.3 percent, which was the most diverse of all Yugoslav republics. The parties that came into the first three positions on the elections corresponded to the percentage of the population: Izetbegović's Muslim Party of Democratic Action in the first place, then Serbian Democratic Party led by psychiatrist Radovan Karadžić and the Croatian party HDZ. In order to keep Bosnia intact the parties should have agreed on it, but the Serbs and Croats supported the idea of getting united with their "mother country."¹²⁴

Alija Izetbegović, the Bosnian President, was more careful in making decisions. The events in Croatia made him realize that it could be tiresome to confront Serbia after unilateral separation. Being aware of the fact that Serbs lived on about half the territory and represented one-third of the republic's population, he knew that more attention would be paid to Bosnia. Moreover, Serb-controlled areas of Croatia could be accessed through Bosnia and it was not as militarily equipped as Croatia. Besides which JNA moved troops from Slovenia and Croatia into Bosnia. Accordingly, Izetbegović negotiated with Belgrade over how to transform Yugoslavia into a confederation and when his idea and plan was rejected he did not rush into unilateral separation.¹²⁵

Under German pressure, the international community became involved in Yugoslav matters. Only if Yugoslavia's republics met certain criteria should the declaration of independence be considered, as suggested by the European Commission's Badinter panel. Many believed, as it was guaranteed by the UN Charter, that recognition of a republic carried the obligation to defend its independence. This had happened the year earlier in Kuwait when a UN military coalition defended the independence of Kuwait against aggression from outside. It was called by President George H. W. Bush a "new world order."¹²⁶ What was expected from Bosnia was the holding of a referendum on independence after which it would qualify for the EC acknowledgement. It sounded like a green light for Muslim leaders and they organized a referendum at the end of February 1992. The Muslims and Croats were exhilarated to have the referendum, while the Serbs refused to vote. Leaders of the Bosnian Serbs warned that if Bosnia separated from Yugoslavia the final borders would be regulated by war as it was in Croatia.¹²⁷

The referendum was held in early March of 1992, where Bosnian Muslims and Croats chose independence from Yugoslavia. Having witnessed what had happened in Croatia in the most recent war, Karadžić's nationalists recalled the memories of Ustaša's action against Muslim and Serbian inhabitants in WW II. Being afraid they would be cut off from Yugoslavia, Bosnian Serbs declared their own independence and republic – The Republika Srpska whose territory was geographically dispersed but it was controlled by the federal army.¹²⁸ Again, the inability to diplomatically resolve the issues meant war broke out with both sides at war.

Izetbegović's government was recognized by the UN on May 22nd, 1992.

Yugoslavia was found guilty of being the aggressor and sanctions were introduced against it. From April 1992 until March 1993 was the first phase of combat, after which the Serbs controlled eastern and northern Bosnia while being physically linked to the Serbian Krajina and Serbia. UNPROFOR transferred its troops to Bosnia from Croatia in November 1992, creating a barrier between the opposing sides. However, there could be little done to break the conflict.¹²⁹

In January 1993, there was a proposition of dividing the republic into ten cantons (regions) made by Cyrus Vance from the United States and David Owen from the United Kingdom. Each ethnic group would get three cantons and there would be a common canton of Sarajevo. It was a Switzerland scheme applied to Bosnia, called the Vance-Owen Plan. Although the Croats gladly accepted the plan, it was not supported by the Muslims and the Serbs refused it because at that point they had a major part of the territory.¹³⁰

When the Vance-Owen Plan failed, fighting continued until March 1994, when the Bosnian government started falling apart. A northern enclave around Bihać was under the rule of warlord Fikret Abdić without any influence of the government. Between Bosniaks and Croats there was brutal fighting that erupted since the Croats wanted more territory to be connected to mother Croatia. The falling apart of the Bosnian government resulted in a Sarajevo government composed of mainly Bosniaks. The Serbs were constantly bombarding Sarajevo, and on February 1994, a mortar attack on a Sarajevo marketplace killed sixty-eight people. Pictures of the victims and false Serb

allegations that the Sarajevo government had fired on its own people produced outrage around the world.¹³¹

With U.S. military and political mediation another phase of the Bosnian war started. In March 1994, a peace agreement was introduced upon the Croats and the Sarajevo government and was signed in Washington, D.C. It established a federation in Bosnia of the Muslims and Croats. The United States was equipping Croatia and Bosnia with armament; moreover it started training the Croatian and Bosnian troops. The patrolling over the Bosnian sky was raised to a higher level and NATO carried out these activities. Four Serbian super-Galeb aircraft were shot down over the skies of Bosnia, on February 28th, 1994, by four NATO F-16s. NATO for the first time in its history shed blood.¹³² And it was Serbian blood.

The first thing the Serbs could do was to show defiance to the American intervention. In order to avoid NATO air attacks, the Serbs took UNPROFOR troops as hostages a few times. This kind of attitude continued through 1994 and 1995. An American fighter was shot down by the Serbs in June 1995 and in the summer the attacks on the Bosniaks in the enclave of Bihać were intensified from Bosnia with support from Krajina.¹³³

Dayton Accords. The military situation in Bosnia changed and it was now in favor of the Croats and Muslims. Izetbegović, Milošević, and Tudjman agreed to have dialogues and talks took place in Dayton, Ohio, in October 1995. The settlement, named the Dayton Accords, divided Bosnia-Herzegovina. The result was a Bosniak-Croat federation and a Serbian republic which together formed a federal structured country. At the same time the Dayton Accords called for eastern Slavonia, including

Vukovar, to be returned to Croatia. Along with NATO troops, Russian troops arrived to Bosnia in order to implement the accords. The agreement stopped the fighting but it was obvious that the America intervention was important for ending the conflict.¹³⁴

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). Macedonia decided to be independent in January 1992, but it stumbled upon problems from the neighboring country of Greece. Greece had a northern province named Macedonia, and it caused fear that if a country was named Macedonia it would claim rights to that region as well. Soon after, the borders were closed by the Greeks causing economic problems to the country. In 1995, the countries came into agreement and FYROM was internationally recognized. FYROM with its recognition had to accept a UN force which included 300 U.S. troops in order to administer the sanctions against Serbia. The NATO troops were deployed to this area to secure the EU monitors in Kosovo during and after the operations in Kosovo. However, they remained in this place as support for the FYROM government.¹³⁵

A large part of its population consists of Albanians, between one-fourth and one-third in total. The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) from Kosovo encouraged the Albanians in FYROM to create an armed Albanian movement in the Albanian populated region in the northwest. The FYROM government did not show determination in calming down the minority, and its political and education proposals were not satisfactory to them. The military branch was in reality like the KLA, and was known as the National Liberation Army (NLA). They claimed their goals were to achieve greater rights for Macedonian Albanians but their true goal was to establish Greater Albania, which would include Albania, Kosovo and northwest part of FYROM. In the area of Tetovo, serious fighting

between the FYROM government and the NLA occurred in 2001. In summer 2001, the Ohrid settlement was produced after NATO was summoned by the Macedonians to help them end the fighting. Albanian as the official language in the northwest was accepted by the agreement; other terms of agreement were the training of additional Albanian police and sending additional NATO forces to the country.¹³⁶

Montenegro. The smallest Yugoslav republic resolved its status in 2006. It was a member of the Yugoslav federation together with Serbia. Milo Djukanović has been the leader of Montenegro since 1998 and he himself advocated for independence. Being Milošević's opponent he was encouraged and aided by Western Europe and the United States. On May 21st, 2006, Montenegro voted its independence with a plurality of 55.4 percent.¹³⁷

Self-Determination Principle. The international community produced various contradictory goals and policies when the issues of self-determination, demands, ethnic rights, and territorial integrity rose in the former Yugoslavia. It seemed ambiguous from the viewpoint of impartiality and fairness that Slovenes, Croatian, Bosnian Muslims, and Macedonians could be granted a right to secede from Yugoslavia, whereas the Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia could not be granted the same right. It would not be a problem for Kosovo Albanians to demand the same right if the Serbs were granted this right too. Generally speaking, any minority that would demand separation must be granted secession as the new norm of the world today proclaims. Otherwise, it must be logically explained why the right to secede was applied to Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and why it has not been granted to some other ethnic groups elsewhere in the world.¹³⁸

The criteria of recognizing the states were discriminatory and arbitrary. Obviously, Germany, Austria and the Vatican were inclined to recognize Slovenia and Croatia because the Catholic regions of Yugoslavia were favored. The United States wanted to have a government under control in this unstable region and therefore the world was under pressure to recognize the independence of Bosnia-Herzegovina before it became a working state at all.¹³⁹

The Serbs, Croats, Muslims, and Albanians could not cohabitate and that seemed the reason for Yugoslavia falling apart in the 1990s. Nevertheless, what is expected today from the same ethnic groups is to live together in Bosnia and Kosovo by the West. Wolfgang Petrutsch propagated in his writing in 2001 that Bosnia should be multiethnic consisting of Serbs, Croats, and Muslims because it is normal nowadays in Europe. These consequences were not considered during the period 1990 and 1991 when Germany, Austria, and the Vatican rushed to recognize Slovenia and Croatia as individual countries. Croats voted in the February 1992 referendum in Bosnia, in order to create a monoethnic Greater Croatia. The United States did not recognize this was why Croats joined Muslims. If the ethnic groups of Serbs, Croats and Muslims, who are of the same race, speak the same language, who shared one life and one ideology until they were given the ideas of secession and separation, could not live under one roof when there was no cruelty why do they insist now on living together in Bosnia after years of bloodshed and aggressiveness? If they felt that the gap between them was far too large to be bridged why do they demand now to be bridged?¹⁴⁰

It was never the question of what the Serbs did but the Western powers: “namely, the violation of Yugoslavia's territorial sovereignty, the rush to advance the

principle of self-determination, and the reckless use of massive force in violation of the UN Charter on humanitarian grounds.”¹⁴¹ Widespread bloodshed and ethnic cleansing in former Yugoslavia were initiated only by the mere promise of recognition. To confront Serbia and Serbian-domination of the federal authorities in Belgrade, Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia declared independence without any prior bloodshed. External support for independence of Kosovo stimulated the Albanians to provoke Serbian security forces into committing human rights violations, which initiated NATO military intervention.¹⁴²

The War on the Territory of Kosovo and Metohija 1998 - 1999

Unfortunately, when something started to go wrong, it was never stopped. Serbia's wrong politics regarding Kosovo and Metohija caused insurgency and terroristic acts led by the Albanian majority against the Serbian minority. Serbia's responsibility to protect its own people in that province caused counterinsurgency and counterterrorist operations. From the Western perspective, the excessive use of force and problems with refugees caused the intervention of NATO forces during 1999. The media all over the world presented Serbia as a threat against democracy and peace and produced the ugliest picture of Serbia and its people that had ever existed. That intervention was the beginning of the end of Milošević's regime and his wrong politics for solving the problem of Kosovo and Serbia.

Counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations. For centuries, the Serbs and Albanians were restlessly struggling over the region of Kosovo. In the beginning of the 20th century, the population was divided into two halves, Albanians and Serbs, but since then the Albanians have become more dominant. Tito's idea was to motivate Albania to become part of the Yugoslav federation and therefore he was generous to

Kosovo Albanians. In the 1960s, the increase in local control was to favor the more numerous Albanians. It culminated in the granting of considerable autonomy in 1974 which led to a potential right to get the status of a republic. According to the 1974 constitution, a republic could proclaim self-determination and separation. Then it was obvious that Kosovo was more likely to join Albania, than it was possible for Albania to join Yugoslavia.¹⁴³

Kosovo was becoming populated by Albanians from Albania, who had a high fertility rate while Serbs emigrated due to economic reasons and because of hostility that was imposed against them by the Albanians. The demographic trend moved sharply toward Albanians. Kosovo's population had only a 10 percent Serbian population by the late 1980's, and this small portion was harassed by the Albanian extremists. Their goal was to gain an ethnically clean province, secession and finally to unite with Albania.¹⁴⁴

Slobodan Milošević gained power by protecting Kosovo's Serbs from the Albanian harassment. Kosovo did not try to secede from Yugoslavia, such as Croatia and Bosnia, and therefore there was no ethnic cleansing or genocide against ethnic Albanians. Violent secession was excluded simply because of two factors: firstly, the independence of Kosovo could not be recognized through the Badinter guidelines, therefore the Albanians could not expect international community assistance against Milošević. Secondly, the leader of the Albanians was Ibrahim Rugova, a person who tried to avoid bloodshed, who through civil disobedience pursued independence. While boycotting the elections, taxes, schools, and health care, they established their own parallel institutions claiming that they would prevail one day thanks to demographic

changes which would lead to independence. In 1992, when he rejected calls for uprising, he explained that “the Serbs only wait for a pretext to attack the Albanian population and wipe it out. We believe it is better to do nothing and stay alive than to be massacred.”¹⁴⁵

Terrorism. According to the *Orange County Register* on April 21st, 1999, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) or in Albanian Ushtria Clirimtare e Kosoves (UCK) was a branch of the Popular Movement for Kosovo which changed its orientation radically by assassinating their three leaders in 1993.¹⁴⁶ Most KLA members were Enverists, or followers of the late Albanian dictator Enver Hoxha, with Marxist-Leninist references as well as former Yugoslav communists. In the issue of *Foreign Affairs* from May 1999 there was an article by Chris Hedges that described the KLA inside Kosovo and said it was “led by the sons and grandsons of rightist Albanian fighters”¹⁴⁷ who were Skanderbeg volunteers of the SS division made by Nazis, or they were the off spring of the right-winged Albanian Kacak rebels who fought against the Serbs 80 years ago. As time went by, the KLA joined narco-mafia, mercenaries and other speculators. However, they did not quit pursuing Greater Albania in Islamic terms.

KLA was not a liberation army like anywhere else in the world. They had neither real leadership nor a spokesperson until 1998. On January 21st, 1999, the French *Liberation* newspaper reported that the KLA was “opaque in its structures and totalitarian in its methods...its commanders have remained largely true to the Maoist origins of its founders.”¹⁴⁸ They recruited by saying that militancy was necessary for a Greater Albania in Islamic terms, which was based on Enverism rather than on Maoism. According to Theodoros Pangalos, the former Greek foreign minister, who met the KLA

in Tirana, "With great civility and calm they said that at the moment they were involved in Kosovo but that they intended to become later involved with the Albanians in Macedonia and Greece."¹⁴⁹

In 1994, three Western military experts were hired to train 200-300 members for the purposes of guerrilla warfare by the KLA leaders. The supply of the weapons came from radical Muslim countries. The ones who were trained in Albania, Iran, and Pakistan, who participated in the war in Bosnia were the mercenaries who took part in the core of the KLA. In 1995, KLA began with the attacks on the Serbian police and they increased dramatically in 1997. In April 1996, the EU recognized the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) which caused fury among the Kosovo Albanian leaders. While refugee camps for the people who escaped from Croatia and Bosnia were located in Kosovo, the KLA retaliated against the EU recognition by bombing these camps, killing eight people. Six Serbs were killed by the KLA just a day after a Serb shot an Albanian student, whereas a great number were wounded after a gunman started a series of attacks in the region of Metohija, and in the cities of Dečani and Peć. In the Dečani Café the targets of the killings were civilians, while in other regions policemen. Collaborators with the Serbian government were executed as well, like Quamil Gashi who was murdered in November 1997. He was the Albanian chairperson of the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS) for Kosovo.¹⁵⁰

The Albanian mafia was the main pipeline for Turkish heroin into Europe, and since the KLA did not have financing it soon became bonded with the mafia. Although the heroin money was used for armament purchases, the KLA was not armed enough until the moment of the Albanian anarchy of 1997, when an unlimited source of

weapons overflowed from Albania into Kosovo from the Albanian army arsenals. The KLA itself stated that only strict police measures could stop this open warfare. The United Nations / NATO always blamed the Serbian government of repression whenever they tried to fight the harassment and thus they had an excuse for war against Yugoslavia.¹⁵¹

The United States opened a U.S. Information Office in Priština,¹⁵² which was supposed to send the message to Belgrade that the “outer wall” of sanctions would not be lifted unless substantial progress in solving the Kosovo problem could be demonstrated. The Albanians were delighted while the Serbs saw it as another undermining of Milošević’s authority. During the period 1991-1998, there were more than 2,000 terrorist attacks committed by the KLA. Its strategy consisted of three main components: 1) elimination of the Muslims who did not collaborate, 2) Serbian police elimination, and 3) terror against Orthodox Christians. The KLA had killed 300 civilians, police officers, and soldiers by the end of 1998, while there were 500 wounded and 80 abducted. It has remained unknown what happened to 128 people.¹⁵³

After signing the Milošević-Holbrooke agreement, the period October 13th through November 30th, 1998, was supposed to be a cease-fire, but the KLA performed 310 terrorist attacks. Nine police officers were murdered from ambushes while 30 officers were wounded; 87 attacks were aimed at civilians, including 43 Serbs, 42 Albanians, as well as at the members of Romany and Slavic Muslim ethnic groups. 282 people were also abducted. Its further activities included attacking whole villages of Serbians and Montenegrins to intimidate them and thus make them leave Kosovo. It was the assessment of the U.S. that the group consisted of 5,000-15,000 men. It could

not be used for advertising Albanian independence. Its members were infamous for their killings, muggings, abductions, and assassinations of the “collaborators.” Fear and terror was spread with their name. The KLA actions resembled other terrorist organizations such as Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Not only did it abduct the Serbs, it also eliminated prominent Albanians from Kosovo for “collaboration with the occupier.”¹⁵⁴

One dramatic example was the elimination of a close associate of Rugova, Enver Maloku, who was the director of the Kosovo Information Center (KIC) on January 11th, 1999. It had already been attempted once before in July 1998, in front of his apartment when he was shot but he survived. Even though the attackers were unidentified, the KLA claimed responsibility for the attack.¹⁵⁵

The U.S. president’s special representative for the Balkans, Robert Gelbard, said on February 23rd, 1998, “We condemn very strongly terrorist actions in Kosovo. The UCK is, without any question, a terrorist group.”¹⁵⁶ However, the U.S. government never legally listed the KLA as a terrorist organization.

Jihad in Kosovo. Several hundred foreign mercenaries, called mujahedeen, attacked Yugoslav Army border guards near Geravici Mountain from Albania on the night of July 18-19, 1998. The unexpected attack was successfully repulsed and they suffered heavy casualties, including six mercenaries from Yemen, five from Saudi Arabia, and four from Macedonia, while the Yugoslav Army confiscated 10 tons of weapons and 100,000 rounds of ammunition. Weapons were various and included 300 assault rifles, 60 heavy machine guns, 10 recoilless cannons and 10 heavy mortars. One person killed on the border crossing was Alija Rabie whose documents showed

that he was escorting 50 mujahedeen intended to start jihad against Orthodox Christians. A Yemeni and 16 Saudis were included in the group, all of whom had passports with Macedonian-Albanian names. Others who were killed had on them Bosnian Muslim Federation papers. These illegal crossings were common and between January and July of 1998, 374 crossings were prevented by the Yugoslav border patrols.¹⁵⁷

A lieutenant colonel from the Iraqi Army, Nuri Salim Muhamed was arrested by the Yugoslav authorities while he was entering Yugoslavia from Bulgaria. He was an Iraqi officer, who spoke perfect Serbian, and was on his way to command the July 18-19 terrorist attack from Albania. Nothing was reported to the Western press about the incident until Bob Djurdjevic's *Washington Times* article:

There is no doubt that bin Laden's people have been in Kosovo helping to arm, equip, and train the KLA...There is a monster being created here, but in important ways it's a monster of our own making. Hardly a day goes by without a terrorism alert at some U.S. embassy that has been targeted by bin Laden's people, and the administration's policy in Kosovo is to help bin Laden, through the KLA, extend his reach in Europe. It almost seems as if the Clinton administration's policy is to guarantee more terrorism.¹⁵⁸

Retired U.S. Army Colonel Harry G. Summers wrote that in Bosnia and Kosovo, "We find ourselves championing the very Islamic fundamentalist terrorist groups."¹⁵⁹

Iran was actively arming and supporting the KLA as Defense and Foreign Affairs Strategic Policy reported. Moreover the KLA had contacts residing in Italy, and Iran had extended their terrorist reach into Italy as well. Kosovo Albanians were reinforced by hundreds of Iranian mujahedeen as it was reported in an article in the *Jerusalem Post* on September 14th, 1998. The KLA members were trained in Bosnia and their training was done by the Iranian revolutionary guards. Those Iranians who fought the wars in Bosnia were now trainers and fighters in Kosovo for the KLA. However, it was not only

that the Iranians were included, but also Afghans, Algerians, Chechens, and Egyptians. Bosnian women were married to 7,000 of them according to intelligence reports.¹⁶⁰

The NATO Intervention. Several Serbian policemen were shot by the rebels and Belgrade decided to intensify the counterinsurgency activities, which caused the massacre of an extended family connected to the rebels in March 1998. The suppression had an unexpected turn for the rebels among Kosovo's Albanians as well as for the international observers. Madeleine Albright, the U.S. Secretary of State immediately stated, "We are not going to stand by and watch the Serbian authorities do in Kosovo what they can no longer get away with doing in Bosnia."¹⁶¹ In June 1998, in order to discourage Milošević from further cruelties, NATO started staging practice bombing in Albania and Macedonia. It was not documented, but it was possible that it actually deterred Milošević from a strategy of mass expulsion. On the other hand, the Western threats upon the Yugoslav government made the rebels' offensiveness escalate which made Serbian forces crackdown on the insurgents even in a more rigid way. Kosovo's Albanians believed they needed NATO to intervene in the escalation although NATO frequently stated that they were not the KLA's air force.¹⁶²

International human rights monitors were inserted into Kosovo, the fighting stopped temporarily, and the return of the displaced Albanians was permitted. Nevertheless, the fighting continued which was the reason for the West to convene an international conference in Rambouillet in France, in order to settle the conflict. An agreement was drafted by American officials, largely favoring the Albanians which demanded passage for NATO troops through the whole of Yugoslavia and a referendum on independence for Kosovo in three years' time. The agreement was

presented as an ultimatum, under the threat of bombing if Milošević caused the negotiations to fail. The threats came through when Milošević rejected the ultimatum, and on March 23rd, 1999, NATO started bombing to make Milošević accept their offer. What nobody expected was the massive expulsion campaign of half the Albanian population, and the murdering of thousands of rebels.¹⁶³

Milošević agreed to what seemed to be a less demanding peace agreement after having hundreds of civilians killed, billions of dollars of economic damage and eleven weeks of constant NATO bombing. The Albanians were allowed to return home where they took revenge on the Serb civilians thus compelling them to leave the province. Today, there are only a few Serbian enclaves in the north; the rest is an ethnically clean Albanian province. A goal expected in the long run by the Albanian extremists.¹⁶⁴

NATO stopped bombing after 78 days and 23,000 bombs. The Serbian police withdrew from the province of Kosovo and 650,000 Albanian refugees returned to their homes. The result of NATO action can still be felt in the whole region. Putting aside questions of sovereignty, humanitarian intervention, and self-determination, there are issues of the economic cost of destroyed homes, and infrastructure, and what is more important, the cost of human capital and displacement of people. Only in Serbia, NATO bombing destroyed industries and infrastructure resulting in another blow to the economy of Serbia. Different sources give different estimations of the magnitude of the damage, but it is estimated at \$4 billion. Moreover, the biggest refugee population was formed in Serbia due to the flow of 100,000 Serbs and 80,000 Romany from Kosovo who arrived in Central Serbia, all added to some 700,000 to a million refugees who were already there from Croatia and Bosnia.¹⁶⁵

What was more hypocritical was the inability of the West to accept the historical and strategic complexities of the conflict, and instead reducing the problem to the workings of one individual. On one occasion, NATO Secretary-General Lord George Robertson claimed that “The 19 democratic nations of the Alliance did not commit an act of aggression against the Yugoslavian people. We did not have anything against them. We acted against Milošević.”¹⁶⁶

There was nobody who tried to engage in painstaking diplomacy which was necessary to prevent an escalation, as had been the American approach to the conflicts in the Middle East or Northern Ireland. The American policy-makers chose a different path - a “peace plan” that would be rejected by the FRY. Take into account, for example, Appendix B, Paragraph 8, of the Rambouillet Accords, “NATO personnel shall enjoy, together with their vehicles, vessels, aircraft, and equipment, free and unrestricted passage and unimpeded access throughout the FRY including associated airspace and territorial waters. This shall include, but not be limited to the right of bivouac, maneuver, billet, and utilization of any areas or facilities as required for support, training, and operation.”¹⁶⁷

Apparently, there was no sovereign country that could accept this clause, it was a deal breaker. As Barry R. Posen noted, “Serb agreement to such a clause would have essentially been an abdication of sovereignty to NATO. NATO officials could have exploited this unconstrained military access to pursue Serb officials accused of war crimes, and to assist other potential secessionist movements in Serbia.”¹⁶⁸ Moreover, it was admitted in public by the former Clinton Administration officials that negotiations in Rambouillet never had the objective to produce an agreement on the Kosovo conflict.

Former Assistant Secretary of State Jamie Rubin finally revealed, “Our internal goal was not to get a peace agreement at Rambouillet. It was never intended to be another Dayton.”¹⁶⁹ Some could conclude that the Austro-Hungary ultimatum from 1914 was less demanding for Serbia, than this Rambouillet Accords.

The magnitude of fighting between the Albanians and Serbs was nothing in comparison to the NATO bombing campaign. Misha Glenny noted, “Instead of preventing a humanitarian catastrophe, NATO’s decision contributed to a flood of biblical proportions.”¹⁷⁰ As it was anticipated, NATO did nothing to defend the Albanian civilian population banished from their homes and villages, and nothing to protect them from the predictable military reaction. As Douglas Macgregor notes, “Faced with a population that concealed and supported the KLA, the Yugoslav forces did exactly what U.S., French, and British forces have done in counterinsurgency operations: they expelled the population and removed the insurgency’s base of support.”¹⁷¹

Moreover, after June 1999, NATO troops allowed the most comprehensive ethnic cleansing in the Balkans to happen. While NATO was monitoring the area, over 250,000 people – Serbs, Roma, Turks, Gorani, Bosniacs, Croats and the Jews of Priština, were banished from their homes in the largest ethnic cleansing of Kosovo in the middle of the KLA campaign of murder, arson, and intimidation.¹⁷²

In the first five months in Kosovo under the UN’s UNMIK (United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo)¹⁷³ more than 400 murders were committed, however there were only four people brought to trial. The opposing views on ethnic cleansing could be seen through the statements made by the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan who called it “orchestrated” while the top U.S. officials marked it as “systematic.” Carla

Del Ponte, the chief prosecutor at the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY),¹⁷⁴ has recently made a statement where she criticized NATO's efforts, "What is currently happening (in the Serbian province) is as serious as what happened there before" NATO intervention.¹⁷⁵ Meaning, what happened during the activities in NATO's Kosovo is as bad as the activities that happened during Milošević's regime in Kosovo. The NATO-monitored ethnic cleansing of Kosovo was a contradictory situation and its effort in facilitating the return of the Albanians was nulled by the fact that before NATO even started its bombing campaign many Albanians had already been in their homes.¹⁷⁶

It was obvious that after events in Bosnia where many of the participants in Kosovo fought earlier, many moderate elements in Kosovo would be shifted in order to provoke Yugoslav authorities into a rough response. NATO actions needed a justification to act and that was the meeting in Rambouillet.¹⁷⁷

It is beyond any doubt that Yugoslavia would never agree on NATO troops stationing in Serbia, not to mention the secession of Kosovo. The Vienna Convention on the Law of International Treaties was violated at Rambouillet. Furthermore, all international norms - including the UN Charter and NATO's Charter - were violated by the NATO missile and air attacks. Furthermore, electronic and print media were used by the Western leaders to demonize Milošević and the Serbs over the alleged atrocities which gave substantial meaning to the theory of humanitarian intervention.¹⁷⁸

These humanitarian interventions, just like the meeting at Rambouillet, were a farce. NATO strikes caused more casualties in Kosovo and Yugoslavia than any action of the Serbian security forces. Nowadays, we are the witnesses of the true facts that are

being put forth indicating there were no genocide or mass killings. The irony is that many Serbs were actually buried in those mass graves that were presented in the beginning as the act of the Serbs.¹⁷⁹

There is hardly any doubt that the NATO missile and air strikes were political rather than military decisions. Milošević's capitulation was expected from the NATO point of view within a couple of days of strikes. However, the merciless strikes lasted 78 days and led the NATO Alliance to desperation in finding a way out. Chernomyrdin's manipulation persuaded the Yugoslavs into final agreement. However, very soon the terms of agreement were disregarded and the killing of the Serbs in Kosovo started, as well as their banishment from their native land. NATO forces did not do anything to prevent it. The borders with Albania were not guarded by the Yugoslav Army any longer.¹⁸⁰

In 2008, Kosovo unilaterally declared its independence. Now the moves for a Greater Albania may happen due to the fact that they already have influence in FYROM, and Greece is next in the chain of events. Of course, there will be some trials towards Greater Serbia and Greater Croatia. Having everything considered, there will be more violence.¹⁸¹

The Democratic Changes in Serbia after Democratic Elections in 2000

Democratic Elections and Milošević's Attempt to Cover Up the Results. In July 2000, Milošević called early elections not being aware of the public resentment towards the regime. Even though Milošević's term as the President would last until June 2001, a year earlier, on July 27th, 2000, the authorities proclaimed that early elections would be

held on September 24th, 2000. They would include the elections for the upper house of the federal parliament, the Council of Citizens, and local elections on the same date.

Eighteen opposition parties in Serbia joined and formed a coalition called the Democratic Opposition of Serbia (DOS). They were a unified opposition and Vojislav Koštunica was the opponent to Milošević. This was the main battle of the elections. It is important to say that they were not the only leaders who were candidates for the position of the President. Two other major opposition parties and their candidates participated as well, the Serbian Radical Party with Tomislav Nikolić, and the Serbian Renewal Movement with Vojislav Mihajlović. Many incidents, accusations of treason, media shutdowns, and even murders were a part of the extremely tense election campaign that lasted two months. Ivan Stambolić, former president of Serbia, an associate of Milošević who became a DOS supporter, was kidnapped and murdered on August 25th, 2000. The deed was executed by the officers of the Interim Special Operations Unit. Later, in 2005 it was found in court that the assassination orders for Stambolić came directly from Milošević.

On September 24th, 2000, after the vote the DOS coalition stated that Vojislav Koštunica won the elections, with over half of the votes. The Federal Electoral Committee claimed that the second round of the elections was going to take place since there was no candidate who won more than 50% of the votes, and the next round would be between Milošević and Koštunica. Since the elections were boycotted in Montenegro and Kosovo by Albanians, officially Milošević won in those parts of the country by a landslide. A great number of accusations were made of systematic election fraud based

on these inconsistencies as well as numerous irregularities which DOS recognized as a way to topple the regime in a peaceful protest.

October the Fifth and Fall of the Communist Regime. Milošević was reinforced by the patriotic eagerness of the people against the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999, but a few months after the bombing, a student movement named Otpor (in Serbian “resistance”) started an offensive campaign against him. To sustain the fight, Otpor realized after analyzing the mistakes in 1996-97, that they were in need of better organization, planning, strategy, and recruiting. Everything started with the infamous laws that placed universities under political control, and then there was the suppression and harassment of media many of which were shut down. The Otpor called up students to confront the Milošević regime, to establish democracy and the rule of law. Fearlessly asking for Milošević’s removal, Otpor pointed in the direction where the discontent was the toughest, in the heart of Serbia. Ridicule and rock concerts were the ideas that gathered people, and they were supported by the Internet and e-mails, slogans printed in spray paint, and finally a willingness to be arrested. In the sea of organizations and groups supporting human rights, democracy, women, and peace, the students of Otpor were the ones who shocked all around them especially with their slogan – He’s finished!

Mohandas Gandhi and the American civil rights movements among others were the guiding lines for the students of Otpor, giving them the ideas of nonviolent strategies. It appeared to be the way how the ideas could be used against the non-democratic regimes in the whole world. Some of the principles are the same for nonviolent conflict and for warfare. As Col. Robert Helvey said in an interview the objective must be clear, at a decisive point forces must be united, actors cannot be

defensive and must take the offense. However, there is a difference in the weapons used. For nonviolent struggle there are weapons of psychological, social, economic, and political power. People in nonviolent conflict may refuse to do their usual duties usually obligated by the law or they may perform acts usually forbidden by the law. It can be argued that nonviolent conflict is passive but it is actually disruptive whereas the action itself is nonviolent.¹⁸²

In October 2000, despite what many had predicted, Milošević was removed from power by this nonviolent strategy, without the use of force of arms, by a dedicated strategy of massive disobedience. The strikers who started the protest were the miners of the Kolubara mines, the electricity power point of Serbia. On October 5th, 2000, the protest reached its peak. Belgrade was the place of summons for protesters from all over Serbia, actually for several hundred thousands of them. In contrast to the other, previous, protests there was no police suppression, the house of parliament was entered by the people and partially burned during the protests.

After all the commotion after the elections and protests, Milošević stated that he would resign in June of the next year when the term of his presidency expired. Under pressure from the protests, Milošević resigned on October 7th, 2000. On April 1st, 2001, he was arrested and extradited to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in The Hague for a trial against humanity. It started on February 12th, 2002. On March 11th, 2006, he was found dead after having suffered a heart attack in his cell in the UN war crimes tribunal's detention center, situated in the Scheveningen section of The Hague. The truth about him remained secret including his acts and atrocities as well as his death.¹⁸³

Serbia in the XXI Century

Today Serbia is a democratic country with clear strategic interests and goals, with a clear will to be part of European and other world organizations. One of the biggest challenges for Serbia is how to cooperate and participate in relationships with the EU, the United States and NATO on one side, and Russia and China on the other side. Both sides have their own interests, and Serbia is in the middle, again. This problem is not Serbia's only, but a new challenge for democracy.

National Values and Interests. The Republic of Serbia considers its basic national values to be independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, freedom, equality, and peacekeeping. Rule of law, democracy, social justice, human rights, racial and religious equality, gender equality, inviolability of property, and environmental protections are Serbia's leitmotiv. The national interests, including all areas of social life in harmony with the universal values and aspirations of the modern world and democratic societies and finally achieving those boost the national values. The general purpose of the national security system is to protect the national interest which the Republic of Serbia defined as the requirement to protect its national values in respect to other countries in the region and the world. The main obligation is to cultivate and promote good neighborly relations, to participate actively in the protection of the common values it shares with other countries of the modern world. To protect its national interests the Republic of Serbia is determined to use all obtainable capacities and resources.¹⁸⁴

Response to the Challenges, Risks and Threats to National Values. The biggest challenge for democratic government is terrorism and insurgency, and how to respond

to these threats. The new democratic Serbian government had its first challenge during 2000-2001, with an insurgent group in the Preševo Valley.

The operational roots of the insurgency in the Preševo Valley region of Serbia were in the peace agreement that ended NATO air operations against Serbia over Kosovo. Some NATO officials showed their concern at the end of Operation Allied Force and the beginning of the KFOR mission that KLA could start some cross-border operations. Demilitarization agreement, Paragraph 15, determined the range of KLA activities, forbidding them the movement of armed bodies into neighboring countries, as well as the carrying of weapons by KLA members within two kilometers of the external borders of Kosovo. It eventually led to KLA disarmament thanks to similar restrictions on weapons.¹⁸⁵

Nevertheless, the restrictions also included the Serbian forces across the border from Kosovo. Within a five-kilometer zone of the Serbian side of the border, any type of Serbian security forces, military and internal security units, were prohibited with the exception of lightly armed police. The Ground Safety Zone (GSZ) was the label for the area. Even though the desire was to create the area as a buffer to avoid potential border conflicts, it created a “no man’s land” with the possibility of its use by groups with criminal and intrusive desires. Such groups did not need long time to form.¹⁸⁶

In January 2000, an insurgent group appeared in the Preševo Valley. The name it gave itself was the Liberation Army of Preševeo, Medvedja, and Bujanovac (LAPMB), after three towns in Serbia, along the Kosovo-Serbia border where the majority of the people were Albanians. The idea it was supporting was the unification of this area with Kosovo. Several villages in the region of Preševo in the GSZ were seized as well as

several attacks were carried out because the group used GSZ as a safe area. The mere Preševo Valley suffered 196 terrorist attacks and intrusions in the period between June 21st, 1999, and November 21st, 2000, having as a toll the lives of five policemen and six children. A high number of the attacks occurred before January.¹⁸⁷

The instability in Belgrade, and Milošević's fall from power in October 2000, made room for the LAPMB to launch an offense on November 22nd, thus killing four policemen. Immediately, with clear justifications, Belgrade argued that the GSZ provided a "safe haven" for the LAPMB insurgents. The military was prohibited from operating in this area. The Yugoslav government initiated a primal counterinsurgency "campaign" which meant persuading NATO governments to permit the military back in to the GSZ. The negotiations between Belgrade and NATO about redeployment of the troops were carefully done with little posturing as well as threats of Serbia's unilateral actions.¹⁸⁸

On March 8th, 2001, the agreement on a framework of the reduction of the GSZ in phases was completed between NATO and Serbia. The Čović Plan, named after Deputy Prime Minister Nebojša Čović, which was the Serbian proposal, called for: "the elimination of all kinds of threats against the constitutional legal order ... of the Republic of Serbia;" "the establishment of full personal and property security of all citizens ... by the disbanding and disarmament of the terrorists and by the demilitarization of the region; the development of a multiethnic and multiconfessional society;" and "rapid economic and social development of those municipalities with international financial assistance." After assuring the NATO officials of the improved rights for Serbian

Albanians and of the critical security situation in Preševo, NATO agreed that Serbian security forces would be redeployed into the area of GSZ.¹⁸⁹

Naturally, the LAPMB continued its attacks after the agreement but on May 14th, 2001, Serbian forces were allowed into the so-called Sector B of the GSZ, which as NATO stated was the strongest position of the LAPMB. A general amnesty for insurgents was announced as a statement for those who laid down their arms. Albanian guerrillas were allowed to enter Kosovo if they were unarmed; moreover the KFOR troops registered and photographed everyone, only after the movement of Serbian troops into Sector B. KFOR reported the registration of about 500 insurgents. EU officials and independent observers closely monitored the Serbian troops' movement into the area. "Professional and correct" were the words of the observers to describe the Serbian forces behavior.¹⁹⁰

On May 21st, NATO officials were promised by the LAPMB commander that his forces would be demobilized, while Serbian forces completed their reestablishment of control over the area on May 31st. After the Serbian redeployment, a significantly greater level of steadiness was returned to the Preševo region, but it was impossible to completely stop a number of small-scale attacks. The killing of two policemen and the wounding of two others by a gunman was the most serious event, on August 3rd, 2001. A group calling itself the Albanian National Army (ANA) claimed responsibility even though it was an unfamiliar group, but the gunman was not captured.¹⁹¹

Strategic Solutions of Democratic Serbia

Preševo Valley was the first, but not the last challenge. Today, after the self-proclaimed declaration of Kosovo independence, the problems of the Serbian population who live in the northern part of Kosovo but who want to live in Serbia, pose a

challenge for the Serbian democratic government. Serbia has the responsibility to protect, again.

The question is, whether the Republic of Serbia and the self-proclaimed independent Kosovo should continue national policy as determined by the Serbian Constitution and Ahtisari's plan for Kosovo, or to continue dialogue and find a peaceful agreement, especially for the parts with a Serbian majority. The Republic of Serbia is determined to use all available human and material resources to protect its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security. Serbia is determined to consistently comply with the constitutional provision specifying that the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija is an inalienable part of Serbia, as it is determined to respect Resolution 1244. On the other side, the self-proclaimed independent Kosovo is on its way to becoming a recognized independent country outside of Serbian borders. The Serbian majority in the northern part of Kosovo does not want to recognize the new independent country and is trying to make itself a part of Serbia. This problem opens a new page in national policy for both Serbia and Kosovo. Both of them have to change national policy and to adapt it to the new challenges. Dialogue must go on, or a new war is inevitable.

According to the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, the region of Kosovo and Metohija is an integral part of Serbian geography, history, and culture. Today, Serbia as an independent and democratic country wages diplomatic war to secure its sanctuary – Kosovo and Metohija within recognized Serbian borders.

In spite of the presence of KFOR and of UNMIK the wretched legacy of the Kosovo affair is that forms of ethnic cleansing have replaced one another. There are neither real limits on the international mandate's extension nor the possibilities to expect

a lasting peace in Kosovo. Independence is still desired by the Kosovar Albanians, but to Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro, and Greece which have large Albanian minorities in reality this remain unacceptable.

Democratic Serbia as a Member of International Organizations

In accordance with the United Nations Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Republic of Serbia has one of its priorities to respect, protect, and promote human rights both at national and international levels. The highest international human rights standards have been accepted by the Republic of Serbia when speaking about major international and regional treaties and protocols in the field of human and minority rights, international humanitarian law, and refugee law.

In 2009, Serbia formally applied for its accession to the EU, even though socioeconomic challenges in the country itself are serious. Being a European nation, Serbia is not left with any other reasonable alternative but to treasure its relationship with the EU, implement the necessary EU mandated domestic socioeconomic reforms, and to have the primary goal of becoming a full member of the EU. Serbia's own national security interests could be better protected although it has limited means, whereas the relationship with EU provides the necessary flexibility. Considering the fact that Serbia's application was not opposed, the United States could support Serbia's entry into the EU politically as it has supported the case of Turkey.

Serbia's relations with the United States and NATO are held back due to the lack of a permanent resolution of the Kosovo issue. Good political and economic relations between Serbia and Russia also present a challenge to any ideas of Serbia's approaching the Euro-Atlantic alliance which also include an application to join NATO. Vice President Joseph Biden visited Belgrade in May 2009 thus upgrading Serbia's

relationship with the United States in the first year of the administration of President Barack Obama. Vice President Biden, along with the Serbian political leader, made a realistic assessment that the U.S. and Serbia can “continue to agree to disagree” on the issue of Kosovo. However, Serbian-U.S. bilateral relations should progress on a continuous basis.

On December 14th, 2006, Serbia became a member of Partnership for Peace, when Boris Tadić, the President, signed the Framework Document in NATO's headquarters in Brussels. Partnership for Peace promotes the country's national security, strengthens and accelerates its political and economic alterations. Creating a stable environment and promoting cooperation and ties in the region contributes to Serbia and its future partners being able to fulfill common interests in order to achieve lasting peace in the Euro-Atlantic area. Reform of the defense and security sector will be accelerated by the membership that will enable harmonization with the principles of democratic control of the armed forces. Moreover, the country's readiness to respond will strengthen concerning contemporary security challenges and threats in the neighborhood. For future growth of Serbia – NATO relations, this is a major political stepping stone.

Serbia joined the South-East Europe Cooperation Process at the Skopje Summit in October 2000. Stability, security, cooperation, and good relations in South-Eastern Europe are the main goals of this organization. For the period June 2011 - June 2012 the Chairmanship of the Initiative has been taken over by Serbia.

From June 1st, the Republic of Serbia is presiding over the Adriatic Ionian Initiative, whereas the first meeting of the Committee of Senior Officials of the Adriatic

Ionian Initiative, organized during the Serbian Presidency, was held on June 21st, 2011, in Belgrade. The Council of Foreign Ministers is the highest body of the Adriatic Ionian Initiative which meets annually. All activities are considered within four roundtables: tourism, culture and inter-university cooperation; transport and maritime cooperation; environment and fire protection; and small and medium-sized enterprises cooperation.

In the region of Central and South-Eastern Europe, the Central European Initiative (CEI) is the oldest regional initiative. The “quadrilateral cooperation” between Italy, Austria, Yugoslavia, and Hungary in 1989 was formed to accelerate Yugoslav and Hungarian European integrations through taking advantage of political and economic cooperation with developed neighboring partners. Today, CEI has 18 members, and an equal number of EU member and non-member states. The initiative is suitable for sharing experiences related to European integration. During 2011, the Republic of Serbia presided over the Initiative.

The United States started the South-East Europe Cooperative Initiative (SECI) and Serbia is a member of this regional initiative that started as a support to the implementation of the Dayton Accords. SECI was established in December 1996, at the inaugural session in Geneva on the basis of the “Final Points of Common EU-USA Understanding.” The purpose of the initiative is the development of sustainable economic strategy in the region. The fields of interests of SECI initiative are infrastructure development, trade and traffic issues, security, energy, environment, development of the private sector and the trans-border cooperation programs and projects.¹⁹²

Since 2000, after having installed democratic leadership, the relations between Serbia and the European Union have developed and expanded. Since the relations evolved, Serbia has found its largest trade partner in the European Union in the last decade. More than 50% of overall exports go to the EU, while on the other hand Europe has invested in Serbia more than two billion Euros since 2000. Financial support for political and economic reforms in Serbia made the EU one of the greatest contributors to Serbia.

On October 12th, 2011, the European Commission recommended Serbia to become a candidate country of the EU on the condition it makes progress in dialogue with Priština. Almost three months after a Croatian Serb wartime leader Goran Hadžić was arrested and extradited to the ICTY, the European Commission's recommendation came. Furthermore, former Bosnian Serb military commander Ratko Mladić, the most wanted ICTY fugitive, was arrested on May 26th, and extradited to the ICTY.

The substantial progress Serbia has made towards fulfilling the political criteria was noted by the heads of state or government of the EU Member States, at their last summit on December 9th, 2011. The criteria were set by the European Council and the Stabilization and Association Process requirements in order to reach a fully satisfactory level of co-operation with ICTY. Serbia got candidate status on March 2nd, 2012, after the European Council had finally made the decision.

Simultaneously with Serbia's membership application, the ratification process of the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA), signed by the EU Member States and Serbia on April 29th, 2011, in Luxembourg, is also under way. Between late October

and late November 2011, the Stabilization and Association Agreement with Serbia was ratified by France and Finland.¹⁹³

Conclusion (Lessons Learned)

Serbian history is full of instances of how to be victorious during war but defeated after war, via diplomacy and peace agreements. For the first time, during the communist regime, Serbia was recognized as a threat by other nations and countries. For the first time, Serbia was accused of war crimes and genocide, of that it suffered itself during history. It was too much for one nation and the communist regime had to disappear.

Civil war in the former Yugoslavia was caused because of the unsolved “national question”¹⁹⁴ and the will of all nations to live in their own national, but democratic country. Former Yugoslavia’s leadership, instead of promoting peace as its main characteristic after WWII and multinational and cosmopolitan coexistence, decided to wage war. Unfortunately, it seems that states born in war must disappear in war. The only republic that did not correspond to the disintegration of Yugoslavia was Serbia, because Serbians lived in all of the republics. Many of them recognized the new national countries as a threat because of war crimes committed against Serbs during WWI and WWII. Slobodan Milošević believed he had a responsibility to protect Serbians in those countries, and started to advocate against the new self-proclaimed countries. He had the JNA on his side because of its duty to protect the state of Yugoslavia. But he did not have the decisive weapon in his hand, democracy. Serbia in the beginning of the 1990s and Slobodan Milošević carried on their shoulders the sign of communism, which was not acceptable at the beginning of the post-Cold War era.

Maybe the ends and means were good, but the ways were not. Political and national objectives were properly determined. The idea was to live in one country,

without borders, boundaries, and any other barriers. To travel wherever and whenever you want, to be free, and let others be free. To believe in your own religion without fear that someone will hate you. To produce goods and to buy them, to provide free trade. In that sense, the former Yugoslavia was a precursor of the European Union. The former Yugoslavia perhaps was a state example of how to prevent wicked problems such as the problem with the Palestinians in the Near East. Both the Balkans and the Near East have similar problems. During history in both regions, people, religions, and countries waged wars, and committed genocide against each other. In Yugoslavia they found a way to live together and forgive each other, but in the Near East they still have only one problem - they cannot live together.

On the other hand, there is nothing more important for one country than to protect its own people, especially if they ask for protection. Then the responsibility to protect makes full sense. With those ends, means, and responsibilities, maybe there is no other way than to wage war. But, there was only one missing link in the chain - the support of the international community. This support was absent due to the communist leadership and political system. This problem was a strategic question for Serbia and Serbian president. Unfortunately, the president decided to wage war, probably because he had strong and respected armed forces.

Too much blood was spilled, economic sanctions were introduced against Serbia, and Serbians outside of Serbia were left alone. So, the war, or the inability to end the war, caused more problems than expected in bringing peace to the new countries. This is one of the problems that no one leader and strategist may solve. If a decision-maker does not know how to finish a war, or what to do after war, he must not

begin one. Even if ends, ways and means are clear, it may happen that the state fails in war. Those statements are clear to anyone who has had the opportunity to read Thucydides, Clausewitz, Sun Tzu, or another strategist.

The Preševo insurgency and the Serbian response was a unique example and proof that the new democratic country had learned lessons from the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo. It prevented the excessive use of force and stopped the rebellion with the help of the international community. The events in FYRO Macedonia in the summer of 2001 were just a continuation of the Preševo insurgency, the destabilization of the Balkans and the goals of Greater Albanian nationalism.

The students of Otpor and the majority of the Serbian people adopted a nonviolent strategy that traces its roots to Mohandas Gandhi and the American Civil Rights Movement during the democratic transition. They provide an example of how these ideas might be used against the world's remaining non-democratic regimes.

Lessons learned are not only for Serbia but for all countries and nations with totalitarian regimes. This or a similar strategy against communism and totalitarian regimes was used during the Arab Spring, too. The democratic world does not want to tolerate leaders like Slobodan Milošević, Saddam Hussein, Muammar Gaddafi, and Osama bin Laden any more. Waging war today is acceptable only in the name of democracy and against the biggest threat - terrorism. All other problems for countries and nations must be solved diplomatically, through open talks and dialogues about the problems and misunderstandings.

Peaceful resolution of the problem of demarcation and recognition of independence is of vital importance for democratic Serbia, Kosovo, and peace in the

region. Both sides need to reconsider their national interests and values and to adapt them to the demands of the peaceful settlement of disputes in the region and the requirements of international organizations. In the past, this region was proof that it is possible to live in a multinational environment. Let it now be an example of how to peacefully solve problems when nations can no longer live together.

Because of wars, caused by the collision of national interests during the communist regime, the former Yugoslavia does not exist anymore. Serbs do not live in one country, and the problem with Kosovo is bigger than ever. The main question is whether all this could have been avoided?

Leaders must be aware of the dangers behind the idea of “responsibility to protect.” Moreover, learning how to prevent war and defeat an enemy without waging war is the best strategy for nations and countries in the 21st century.

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¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹¹⁰ JNA – *Jugoslovenska narodna armija*-, or Yugoslav people armed forces.

¹¹¹ Morton, Nation, Forage, and Bianchini, *Reflections of the Balkan Wars: Ten Years After the Break Up of Yugoslavia*, 9.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 9.

¹¹³ Hall, *Consumed by War: European Conflict in the 20th Century*, 233.

¹¹⁴ Morton, Nation, Forage, and Bianchini, *Reflections of the Balkan Wars: Ten Years After the Break Up of Yugoslavia*, 10.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹¹⁶ Hall, *Consumed by War: European Conflict in the 20th Century*, 234.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 234.

¹¹⁸ Fisk F. Kelly, Lieutenant Colonel, *Failed Intervention: The United States In The Balkans* (Carlisle Barrack, PA: U.S. Army War College, March 2002), 13.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹²⁰ Morton, Nation, Forage, and Bianchini, *Reflections of the Balkan Wars: Ten Years After the Break Up of Yugoslavia*, 11

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹²² Hall, *Consumed by War: European Conflict in the 20th Century*, 238.

¹²³ Kelly, *Failed Intervention: The United States In The Balkans*, 13.

¹²⁴ Morton, Nation, Forage, and Bianchini, *Reflections of the Balkan Wars: Ten Years After the Break Up of Yugoslavia*, 11-12.

¹²⁵ Raju, *Yugoslavia Unraveled: Sovereignty, Self-Determination, Intervention*, 61.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

- ¹²⁸ Kelly, *Failed Intervention: The United States In The Balkans*, 13.
- ¹²⁹ Hall, *Consumed by War: European Conflict in the 20th Century*, 236.
- ¹³⁰ Ibid., 237.
- ¹³¹ Ibid., 237.
- ¹³² Ibid., 238.
- ¹³³ Ibid., 238.
- ¹³⁴ Ibid., 238.
- ¹³⁵ Ibid., 240.
- ¹³⁶ Ibid., 240.
- ¹³⁷ Ibid., 241.
- ¹³⁸ Raju, *Yugoslavia Unraveled: Sovereignty, Self-Determination, Intervention*, 33-34.
- ¹³⁹ Ibid., 34.
- ¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 34.
- ¹⁴¹ Ibid., 34.
- ¹⁴² Ibid., 34.
- ¹⁴³ Raju, *Yugoslavia Unraveled: Sovereignty, Self-Determination, Intervention*, 65.
- ¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 65.
- ¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 65.
- ¹⁴⁶ Vojin Joksimovich, Ph.D., *Kosovo Crisis: A Study in Foreign Policy Mismanagement* (Los Angeles, CA: Graphics Management Press Los Angeles, 1999), 62.
- ¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 62.
- ¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 62.
- ¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 62.
- ¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 63.
- ¹⁵¹ Ibid., 63.
- ¹⁵² Ibid., 63.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 64.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid., 64.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 64.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 64.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 67.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 67.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 67.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 67.

¹⁶¹ Raju, *Yugoslavia Unraveled: Sovereignty, Self-Determination, Intervention*, 66.

¹⁶² Ibid., 66.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 66

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 66.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 125.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 149.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 149.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 149.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 149.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 150.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 150.

¹⁷² Ibid., 150.

¹⁷³ *The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo Home Page*, <http://www.unmikonline.org/pages/default.aspx> (accessed January 11, 2012). The Mission is mandated to help ensure conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants of Kosovo and advance regional stability in the western Balkans. The Mission is headed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, who enjoys civilian executive power as vested in him by the Security Council in resolution 1244 (1999).

¹⁷⁴ *The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) Home Page*, <http://www.icty.org/> (accessed February 11, 2012). ICTY is a United Nations court of law dealing with war crimes that took place during the conflicts in the Balkans in the 1990's. Since its

establishment in 1993 it has irreversibly changed the landscape of international humanitarian law and provided victims an opportunity to voice the horrors they witnessed and experienced.

¹⁷⁵ Raju, *Yugoslavia Unraveled: Sovereignty, Self-Determination, Intervention*, 150.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 150.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 357.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 358.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 358.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 358.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 358.

¹⁸² *A Force More Powerful Home Page, Bringing Down a Dictator*, <http://www.aforcemorepowerful.org/> (accessed January 08, 2012).

¹⁸³ *Nova Srpska Politicka Misao Home Page*, <http://www.nspm.rs/> (accessed March 15, 2012).

¹⁸⁴ Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, part III.

¹⁸⁵ Morton, Nation, Forage, and Bianchini, *Reflections of the Balkan Wars: Ten Years After the Break Up of Yugoslavia*, 56.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 57.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 57.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 57.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 58.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 58.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 58.

¹⁹² *The Republic of Serbia Ministry of Foreign Affairs Home Page*, http://www.mfa.gov.rs/Policy/Priorities/results_priorities_e.html (accessed February 03, 2012).

¹⁹³ *The Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia Home Page*, <http://www.europa.rs/en/srbija/Eu.html> (accessed February 23, 2012).

¹⁹⁴ “National question” in former Yugoslavia is a term used to explain national desire and will to live in one country with name given after nation. This problem was cause of almost all wars waged in the Balkan.