
PEACE PROSPECTS FOR YUGOSLAVIA

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The civil war in Yugoslavia has recently preoccupied the entire global community and especially Europe, the United States, and the United Nations. The manner in which the West has responded to this crisis reveals significant changes in the international security system and tendencies which may become lasting traits of the structures of the new world order.

As the gun smoke clears and the situation stabilizes, the diplomatic world will be seeking answers to a series of questions concerning the future of Yugoslavia and the belligerent republics. Two key questions are, What is the nature of the impediments to a viable solution to the Yugoslav conflict? and, Has the recognition of Slovenia and Croatia promoted the cause of peace? If so, should a similar policy be pursued vis-à-vis other republics which have declared their independence? Answering these questions is instrumental to addressing the central issue: the probability of a lasting and peaceful settlement to the Yugoslav crisis.

After the eruption of a bloody war between Serbs and Croats that has killed more than 10,000 people and driven another 600,000 out of their homes,¹ the European Community recognized Slovenian and Croatian independence on January 15, 1992,² and UN Special Envoy Cyrus Vance managed to extract agreement from both warring sides to a pacification plan. The plan calls for a complete withdrawal of the Yugoslav National Army from the protected areas in Croatia, the deployment of 13,000 UN peacekeepers in the area, and the disarmament of local Serb militia. Local self-government is to remain under Serbian control.³ The first peacekeeping forces were deployed on January 17,⁴ and after ousting Milan Babic, the self-proclaimed president of the Serb region,⁵ the last impediment to the deployment of UN troops in all the contested territory disappeared.

1. Blaine Harden, "Croatia Accused of Rights Violations," *Washington Post*, 15 February 1992, A24. Other estimates lower the numbers of dead and refugees to 5,000 and 500,000 respectively. See "Boldly to the Balkans," *Economist*, 22-28 February 1992, 13.

2. Marc Fisher, "Eastern Europe Swept by German Influence," *Washington Post*, 16 January 1992, A1.

3. Chuck Sudetic, "Yugoslavs Weigh Military Action," *The New York Times*, 4 February 1992, 5.

4. "U.N. Peace Keepers Deployed," *Washington Post*, 18 January 1992, A3.

5. "Yugoslavia: One Step Nearer," *Economist*, 15-21 February 1992, 57.

Analysis of Past Developments

The plethora of misconceptions and romanticized ideas nurtured by the Western press about the Serb-Croat conflict has prevented an accurate assessment of the Yugoslav situation. Press coverage reveals a biased portrayal of the events, a narrow understanding of Yugoslav realities, and a lack of sangfroid and critical consideration. Unfortunately, this approach characterizes the bias of not only journalists and analysts, but that of many Western policymakers as well.

Western public opinion has leaned toward the side of the Slovenes and Croats, mainly because they come closer to the model of Western democracy than do the Serbs. This predisposition in favor of the Slovenes and Croats is often used as a departing point for the "demonization" of Serbs.⁶ Western press has abounded with descriptions and speculations on Serbian crimes and stories of the sacking of Croatian cultural-artistic monuments.⁷ German press in particular has tended to present the conflict between Croats and Serbs as a battle of good versus evil. Western journalists have overplayed the differences of the two peoples in mentality and philosophies and dwell on cultural stereotypes that have repeatedly been proven wrong. For example, the subjection of Serbs to Ottoman rule has been overemphasized as if it proves by itself the cultural inferiority of the former. Analysts have also overemphasized the importance of the different churches with which Croats and Serbs are affiliated. The Orthodox Church, to which most Serbs belong, has been peculiarly characterized as eastern-oriented instead of just eastern, implying a connection with negative aspects of oriental cultural-political models such as despotism and submissiveness.⁸ Many unjustified and premature worries about the potential despotism of a "Greater Serbia" have also been expressed.⁹

As in most civil wars, while the political leadership of the warring parties may have different degrees of responsibility for the crisis in Yugoslavia, any attempt to present one party as more humane than its opponents is totally

6. See "Yugobias," *Economist*, 26 October 1991, 8.

7. See, for instance, "The Sacking of Croatia," *The New York Times*, 22 September 1991, A18.

8. See Stephen N. Sestanovich, "The Diplomatic Mistake That Made Yugoslavia," *Foreign Service Journal* (July 1991): 12. This underlying accusation against Orthodoxy is common among Western diplomats. In a banquet and speech in honor of Senator W. Fulbright, in Washington, D.C. on May 16, 1991, US Ambassador of Germany J. Ruhfus, referring to the Soviet Union, used repeatedly the term "Orthodox" to denote "fundamentalist."

9. See Gregor Vukasovic, "The Fate of Croatia," *Hoya*, 13 September 1991, 3. The author implies that a "Greater Serbia" may be a threat to peace on a global level. Similarly, Hungary has expressed worries about the fate of ethnic Hungarians in Serb-occupied Croatian territory. (See "Europe Gives Up on Yugoslavia," *The New York Times*, 21 September 1991, A16.) One should note that it is highly improbable that a "Greater Serbia" of any sort or size will be more dangerous than Yugoslavia was. All Balkan governments know that since the day of its inception Yugoslavia has been the major threat to peace and the greatest destabilizing factor in the Balkans, at times furthering territorial and other claims against Bulgaria, Greece, Albania, and Italy and spurring military pacts and political rapprochements between Greece, Bulgaria, and Albania. As far as the Hungarian minorities are concerned, no ill fate can befall them now that could not have befallen them more easily during four decades of iron Communist rule and discrimination against non-Slavic minorities.

unrealistic. From the beginning, the Dutch Foreign Minister admitted that "all sides seem to be guilty of cease-fire violations."¹⁰ Both Amnesty International and the human rights group Helsinki Watch have brought to light a series of war crimes perpetrated by the Croatian army and police and have accused the Croatian government of complicity in atrocities against civilians.¹¹ Moreover, the political leaders of both sides do not have complete control over all of the armed forces that fight for their respective causes, and events show that most of the hostilities have been conducted by irregular units.¹² The Serbs have retained much of their old sense of power and honor that derives from the belief in having paid in blood to liberate their enslaved brethren in World War I and therefore feel they deserve to be Yugoslavia's *Staatsvolk*. However, Serbian assertions that the Yugoslav union hindered the development of the Serbian economy more than that of Croatia are of doubtful validity. What is evident is that discussions of the past and a hunt for culprits will hardly solve the quandary of civil war.¹³

The Yugoslav conflict is not a struggle between democracy and totalitarianism nor is it, as often has been asserted, one between a young liberal democratic republic and an obstinate Marxist regime centered in Belgrade.

Croatian President Franjo Tudjman is also no less a nationalist than his Serbian counterpart, Slobodan Milosevic.¹⁴ Tudjman's party has called for a "Greater Croatia," and his latest book, as well as many of his recent remarks, reveal a strong anti-Semitism and an apologetic attitude toward National Socialism.¹⁵ A few Croats blame both Tudjman and Milosevic for the crisis.¹⁶

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10. *Washington Post*, 20 September 1991, A4.

11. "Explaining the Unthinkable," *Economist*, 1 February 1992, 51; "Observers Accuse Army of Intimidating Croats," *Washington Post*, 17 January 1992, A28; and Trevor Rowe, "Croats Accused of Atrocities," *Washington Post*, 6 February 1992, A24.

12. Alan Riding, "Yugoslavia's Army Opens Offensive Against a Croatian Stronghold," *The New York Times*, 1 October 1991, A1.

13. See, for example, Radovan D. Zivojinovich, "Yugoslavia: A Serbian View," *Hoya*, 29 October 1991, 5.

14. See V.P. Gagnon, Jr., "Yugoslavia," *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 70, No. 3 (1991): 23.

15. Michael Mennard, "Hands off in Yugoslavia," *Washington Post*, 21 January 1992, A20. During the recent war, too, the local Jewish community of Croatia reported attacks from Croat irregulars and other forms of harassment; Blaine Harden, "Croats Celebrate Their Independence," *Washington Post*, 16 January 1992, A21.

16. David Binder, "Ethnic Conflict in Yugoslavia Tearing Apart its Army, Too," *The New York Times*, 1 October 1991, A1.

republic and an obstinate Marxist regime centered in Belgrade. Such an emphasis elicits only Pavlovian anti-communist reactions by the Western public.¹⁷ In Yugoslavian politics, it always has been misleading to talk in terms of liberals and conservatives. It is more accurate to talk of centralists and decentralists; both of these groups are represented in the capital cities of Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana. Democracy has not really had enough time to be tested in any of the ex-socialist Eastern European countries and many political leaders are still new to the philosophy. Any other representation of ideology fails to account for the severe domestic criticisms targeted at both the Croatian and Slovenian presidents.

The assertion that "the Yugoslav Union was doomed from square one" or that Yugoslavia was just a "diplomatic mistake" is equally erroneous.¹⁸ It rests on a backward reading of history which tries to squeeze out of the past an interpretation of today's breakdown of the Yugoslav Federation. There are certainly many traditions and issues that have divided Croats and Serbs, but there have been many more unifying factors. Over the years, Croats have wavered between two lines of thought; one that envisioned them as part of a greater south-Slav political entity, and another of pure, uncompromised chauvinism.¹⁹ Any other explanation fails to explain the great "Illyrian" movement and the "Yugoslav Idea" of the 1830s. One of the reasons why Yugoslavia was held together for so long is that it was, if not the ideal, certainly the "least worse" solution. In this sense Yugoslavia was far from being a diplomatic accident or a simple reward to the Serbs for their participation in World War I on the side of the victors. The dimensions of this truth are being revealed as the world contemplates a viable structure to succeed Yugoslavia.

The European Community Reaction

Another factor that has endangered the cause of peace was the faulty handling of the crisis by the European Community, which set the pace of response to Yugoslav developments. On the whole, Western Europe has responded to the Yugoslav crisis with very unimaginative proposals, often generated not by a thorough and unbiased assessment of the crisis itself, but by the need to project Western European power and prestige internationally.

At the beginning of the crisis, the European Community favored the preservation of Yugoslavia. After the outbreak of the hostilities in July, the European public, appalled at the bloodshed which had been unequalled on the continent for over four decades, pressured the EC governments into rigorously intervening in Yugoslavia. In Germany and Austria in particular, due to historical, commercial and other ties, there was strong pressure on the governments to

17. See, for example, Robert Marquand, "Serbs Weigh Support for Civil War," *Christian Science Monitor*, 25 September 1991, 3.

18. Stephen N. Sestanovich, 11.

19. Paul Lendvai, "Yugoslavia Without Yugoslavs: The Roots of the Crisis," *International Affairs* Vol. 67, No. 2 (1991): 254.

defend Croatia and Slovenia.²⁰ Soon the Germans were urging their EC partners to recognize Croatian and Slovenian independence.²¹

On September 16, 1992, the Netherlands proposed the deployment to Yugoslavia of an armed peace-keeping force organized by the military branch of the European Community, the Western European Union (WEU). The Germans, French, and Italians adopted the idea immediately, but three days later the British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd persuaded the Community that it should not contemplate military involvement. Armed intervention in the Yugoslav conflict without the assent of both warring sides would have probably evolved into a bloody long-term commitment on the part of the European Community.

The WEU peace force would not be perceived as impartial by the majority of the Serbs, who see the armed forces of largely Catholic, Western countries as intervening to protect Croats. Underground rumors that Serbia and Yugoslavia are conspired against by the Vatican, Italy, Germany, the West, and international capitalism would have exacerbated the situation.²² Fortunately, all European governments finally agreed "that no armed force would be deployed unless an effective cease-fire was in place and all warring factions in Yugoslavia approved of the intervention."²³ Nevertheless, the plan has already undermined the Community's claim of being an impartial arbiter of European affairs.

The European Community has been striving to prove in the Yugoslavian crisis that it has political clout, but the Gulf war demonstrated that it has difficulties forging a coordinated foreign policy and acting as a major arbiter of international affairs.²⁴ In fact, EC officials have claimed Yugoslavia and the rest of Europe to be the Community's area of arbitration, shunning the United States and, indirectly, the United Nations from this process.²⁵ As 1992 approaches and

20. See "Europe Gives Up on Yugoslavia," *The New York Times*, 21 September 1991, A18; and "EC and Yugoslavia: Countdown to Recognition," *Economist*, 21 December 1992, 57.

21. Milovan Djilas, the famous Yugoslav politician and dissident, assessed the intentions of other European countries toward Yugoslavia as follows:

"It is definitely in the interests of the majority of other nations—for example the United States, Great Britain, the USSR—to support the unity of Yugoslavia...But I doubt that Yugoslavia's neighbors (Albania, Bulgaria, perhaps Hungary) are so well-intentioned. I also suspect that in some states, for example in Germany and Austria, there are influential groups, who would like to see Yugoslavia disintegrate—from traditional hatred, from expansionist tendencies, and vague, unrealistic desires of revenge."

It is interesting to note that Djilas made this statement in an interview, more than a year before the successions of Slovenia and Croatia and Germany's and Austria's urging for recognition of their independence. See Milovan Djilas, "The Legacy of Communism in Eastern Europe," *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs* Vol. 15, No. 1 (Winter 1991): 91.

22. V.P. Gagnon, Jr., "Yugoslavia," 25.

23. Alan Riding, "Yugoslavia's Army Opens Offensive Against A Croatian Stronghold," *The New York Times*, 1 October 1991, A8.

24. "The History of the Maastricht Summit," *Economist*, 30 November 1991, 47.

25. Europeans are often inconsistent in their demands on the United States. Germany, in particular, requests American aid for their rebuilding of Eastern European economies but is reluctant to welcome greater US political influence over those same countries, whose guidance it considers a prerogative of the European Community. See, for example, the speech of Saxony's Prime Minister Kurt Biedenkopf in Anne Dias, "Ex-GU Student Calls on U.S. Aid to Troubled East European Economies," *Hoya*, 13 September 1991, 1.

the challenges to the new world order multiply, a rising *Euroeuphoria* mixed with anxiety at all levels of society drives the European Community to assert a separate European identity at every opportunity.

Reaction of Other European Nations

The overall international climate has been very favorable lately to secessionist ventures, and in this sense it still represents a threat to peace in Yugoslavia. The Community and the Western world in general feel the obligation to respond to help the peoples whose expectations it has raised with its overambitious and at times bombastic promises of a new fair order. A few nations were led to believe that now is the time to materialize their nationalist aspirations and make their bid for sovereignty and that, if they conformed to the Western model of democracy, the Western powers would hasten to assist them.²⁶

The political changes in Eastern Europe, German reunification, the collapse of the Warsaw Pact, domestic developments in the Soviet Union, and the recognition of the independence of the Baltic states, all happened in too short a period for the world to react. These developments have set an example for peoples with unfulfilled national aspirations, such as Catalans, Basques, Slovaks, Albanians in Kosovo and Macedonia, Turkish Bulgarians, Welsh, and Scottish.²⁷ They perceive what no new system of international security can hide: the fact that our world is in a state of flux as it has never been since World War II. Weak and powerful countries alike are trying to take advantage of this unstable situation.

This instability has led certain European nations to adopt quasi-imperialist policies that are having a direct impact on the situation in Yugoslavia. France, Italy, and Germany, the prime movers of European intervention in Yugoslavia, are actively pursuing a redistribution of power and jurisdiction. In an effort to expand France's role in the United Nations, French President François Mitterrand recently stipulated that the Security Council should activate the moribund Military Staff Committee provided for in the UN Charter. This plan is aimed at bolstering the legitimacy of France and Britain as permanent Security Council members by reviving an institution that would give them a vital role in peace-keeping activities.²⁸

Italy is also reviving its traditional sphere of influence in the Balkans. Italy's dynamic Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis has made it clear in numerous recent interviews that his country does not wish to leave the Danube-Alpine-Adriatic region largely to German and Austrian interests. This policy has

26. Certain US diplomatic circles have contested that the EC is primarily responsible for this misleading perception on the part of small nations that are now in upheaval. See "A Diplomat Explains Yugoslavia," *Wall Street Journal*, 21 February 1992, 3; and Michael Mennard, "Hands Off Yugoslavia," *Washington Post*, 21 January 1992, A28.

27. "E ekklesia zetei na diakopoun oi diplomatikes skheseis tes khoras mas me to Vatikano," *Makedonia* (Thessaloniki, Greece), 5 February 1992, 6.

28. Paul Lewis, "France's U.N. Plan At Odds With U.S.," *The New York Times*, 2 February 1992, A5.

outraged the Serbian government, as well as the Greek government, which feels that Italy is seriously upsetting Greece's diplomatic relations with its Balkan neighbors.²⁹ De Michelis is using his personal connections and Italy's regional leverage to promote the independence of Macedonia; Vasil Toburkovski, the Macedonian representative in Yugoslavia's collective presidency, is a friend of the Italian foreign minister. Italy also is utilizing the Italian minority in Slovenia to promote economic and other ties between Italy and Slovenia, and it is considering building a major highway to Hungary via Slovenia.³⁰ A few Italian politicians have even laid claims on the Croatian peninsula of Istria, formerly under Italian rule.

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Germany, after being politically mute and powerless in the international arena for many years, is enjoying for the first time the respect and attention that economic power has granted it. The German government has been responding to pressure from within Germany and abroad to transform part of its economic prosperity to political-military power and to share global responsibilities. The Kohl government would be more than glad to oblige its allies. However, the German Constitution is a legal impediment to the undertaking of a more active military role. The debate over whether to change the constitution has created tension and division among the German politicians and society at large. On the whole, it seems that the majority of the German people oppose Germany's assuming greater political-military responsibilities, but public opinion could change.

The German government, nevertheless, has tried to assume a leadership role in the Yugoslavia crises whenever the opportunity arises. Last summer, Germany urged the European Community to recognize Croatia and Slovenia. However, had the Dutch proposal of intervention in Yugoslavia been adopted by the WEU, its main proponent, Germany, would have to abstain from participating directly due to constitutional restrictions.³¹ Chancellor Kohl realizes that

29. See "O Nte Mikelis, O Ganef kai oi alloi," *Tahydromos* (Athens, Greece), 29 January 1992, 10. De Michelis and Greek Foreign Minister Antonis Samaras have repeatedly reproached each other recently. Protesting what they perceive as Italian expansionism, consumers in the sensitive northern provinces of Greece have, since January, boycotted Italian exports.

30. Patrick Moore, *Reuter News Agency*, 7 February 1992.

31. See Francine S. Kiefer, "Germans Find East-West Gap Tough to Close," *Christian Science Monitor*,

those restrictions undermine Germany's reliability among its partners as well as the country's bid for a leading role in the international arena, which the German conservative government is desperately trying to promote. This constitutional question was hotly debated in Germany when the Yugoslav civil war escalated in September. Bloodshed and chaos in Croatia, or anywhere in Europe, has been and still could be used by the German government to make a humanitarian case and turn public opinion in favor of constitutional modifications.

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By stubbornly pushing for Croatian recognition despite the objections of its EC partners, Germany rendered undue legitimacy to the Yugoslavian civil war.³² Croat irregulars continued fighting the fratricidal war, convinced that somebody agreed with and supported what they were doing.³³ German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher was finally embarrassed by Croatian intransigence after the conclusion of the January 3 ceasefire agreement mediated by UN Special Envoy Cyrus Vance.³⁴ Germany's assertive attitude in the past months and its determination to set the pace of EC foreign policy has led the Serbs to perceive the Community as a mere vehicle for German expansionism.³⁵

However, Germany is not necessarily following an expansionist policy but is perhaps groping to ascertain the limits of its newly elevated political power. In other words, political immaturity is the underlying cause of Germany's Yugoslav policy. As a well-known Munich publisher commented, "one should not be quick to attribute to conspiracy what one can attribute to incompetence."³⁶ Nevertheless, incompetence and immaturity are no excuses. When a country threatens peace in Europe through misguided policies, it should be stopped.

2 October 1991, 1.

32. "EC and Yugoslavia," 57.

33. "Balkan Barbarism," *Washington Post*, 27 January 1992, A26.

34. Blaine Harden, "Croats Celebrate Their Independence," *Washington Post*, 11 February 1992, A24. In Balkan diplomatic circles, it is maintained that Genscher's initial wish was to cause the complete disintegration of Yugoslavia, out of personal aversion for the Serbs. See also "O tetartos dromos," *Tahydromos*, 22 January 1992, 8.

35. Serbian officials are talking of a Fourth Reich extending from the Baltic to the Adriatic. See "Turning-point in Yugoslavia," *Economist*, 11 January 1992, 43. The Serb representative in Yugoslavia's collective presidency, S. Jovic, has gone so far as to claim on a television interview in last December that Germany plans to construct nuclear-waste dumping sites in Slovenia.

36. Stephen Englerberg, "With Some Misgivings, East Europe Snaps Up German Money," *The New York Times*, 23 January 1992, 18.

For the aforementioned reasons, the leading European nations have lost credibility as impartial mediators in Yugoslavia. Additionally, they are being accused by many of following policies of national aggrandizement both outside and within the borders of the European Community.³⁷ As the Yugoslav foreign minister said, "Europe is now on the side of the secessionists...led by a particularly aggressive Germany."³⁸ As flawed as it may be, the implications of such a perception for European stability, not just in Yugoslavia, are distressing.

Moreover, EC recognition of Croatia and Slovenia does not seem to have furthered the cause of peace. Cyrus Vance had warned against early recognition and urged the United States and other countries that have not already recognized the independence of Slovenia and Croatia to refrain from doing so until UN peacekeepers had been deployed.³⁹ The United States said it would not grant recognition until a peace settlement was in place,⁴⁰ while certain US diplomats rejected altogether the idea of mediation "from nations that have no earthly idea what the real problem is in Yugoslavia."⁴¹

Although German officials would like to think differently, it was the UN initiatives led by Cyrus Vance that brought about the first lasting ceasefire on January 4, 1992. EC recognition, which came ten days later, seems to have seriously endangered the ceasefire. After the Community announced its intention to recognize the northern republics, clashes between Croatian forces, Serbian militiamen, and the federal army were rekindled; the Croats were emboldened and their adversaries angered and eager to make advances before Western help for the Croats arrived.⁴² At the same time, Croatian President Tudjman retracted his unconditional support of the UN plan.⁴³ The Community's assumption that recognition would dispel the perception of Yugoslavia as a united country is in itself not a peace-promoting factor. The only concrete result of recognition seems to be that an independent Croatia is now able to procure weapons more easily, which should be viewed as an argument against recognition.

The sad but inescapable truth is that Serbs and Croats still have more reasons to start a new round of war than to stop killing each other.⁴⁴ The formidable number of casualties and refugees is more likely to drive both parties to revanchist tactics rather than to promote the pursuit of a peaceful settlement. None of the disputes involved has been even temporarily resolved and the conflict has by now, unfortunately, acquired many of the characteristics of a

37. "Turning-point in Yugoslavia," 48.

38. Harden, "Croats Celebrate Their Independence," A21.

39. Paul Lewis, "Prospects for Yugoslav Accord Improve," *The New York Times*, 7 February 1992, A3.

40. Harden, "Croats Celebrate Their Independence," A1.

41. Mennard, A28.

42. Chuck Studetic, "Yugoslav Fighting Threatens to Keep the U.N. Out," *The New York Times*, 19 January 1992, A14.

43. Trevor Rowe, "U.N. Delays Yugoslav Peace Force," *Washington Post*, 6 February 1992, A24.

44. Indeed, Cyrus Vance and other diplomats have expressed fears that the ceasefire could be just a winter break for Serbs and Croats. See "A Diplomat Explains Yugoslavia," 3; and "The Sense of a Senseless War," *Economist*, 23 November 1991, 53.

Totalkrieg.⁴⁵

Although not so at its inception, the conflict has become a religious one as well,⁴⁶ inviting more international involvement which may also prove detrimental to peace. Pope John Paul II's Christmas message of solidarity with the Croats arguably has helped to justify Croatia's pursuit of the war. The Orthodox Church has responded to what it sees as a Catholic offensive on its domains. The Archbishop of Greece has expressed solidarity to the Church of Serbia, while the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece has requested the termination of diplomatic relations between Greece and the Vatican as well as the deportation of the papal nuncio.⁴⁷ In March, the leaders of all the Orthodox Churches met at the Patriarchate of Constantinople in Istanbul to discuss an Orthodox strategy vis-à-vis the Roman Catholic Church. The Croatian-Serbian conflict held a very prominent place in the discussions.⁴⁸

The main obstacle to peace is the status of the Serbian minority in Croatia. The Croatian national assembly has already passed legislation drastically limiting the rights of the 600,000 Serbs in Croatia.⁴⁹ Even after EC recognition, the Serbian minority in Croatia received no guarantee of respect of their rights.⁵⁰ In fact, they are still being harassed in places outside of Serbian or UN control such as Zagreb.⁵¹ Serbs are truly afraid of genocide at the hands of Croats. The recent bloodshed has revived memories of World War II massacres, for which the Croats never officially apologized.⁵² During the current war, it was the Serb minority population that first took up arms to man militias and that have committed most of the acts of violence and terrorism against their fellow Croatian citizens.⁵³

The fact that neither the Serb nor the Croat political leadership are in full control of the pro-Serb or pro-Croat forces further complicates the matter. Tudjman and Milosevic could potentially be swayed by "hardliners" in their camps or by acts of provocation to renewed aggression.⁵⁴ On the Serbian side,

45. "Boldly to the Balkans," 13.

46. Numerous Croat and Serb irregulars have recently claimed in interviews that they fight first and foremost for their religion, and certain Serbs have maintained that Serbia is being squeezed between Catholicism and Islam (referring to the Muslims of Bosnia). See "O polemos Servias-Kroatis einai kai threskeutikos," *Tahydromos*, 19 February 1992, 6.

47. "E ekklesia zetei na diakopoun," 11; "E ekklesia emmenei ste dialope ton skheseon Hellasdos-Vatikanou," *Makedonia*, 6 February 1992, 1.

48. "O polemos," 6-7.

49. "Croats Accused of Atrocities," *Washington Post*, 6 February 1992, A24; and Zivojinovic, "Yugoslavia: A Serbian View," 5.

50. "On the Edge in Yugoslavia," *Washington Post*, 4 February 1992, A24.

51. Blaine Harden, "Croatia Accused of Right Violations," *Washington Post*, 15 February 1992, A3.

52. The Croat puppet state had lent full support to the Nazi policy on the Jews and tried to imitate it by pursuing the extermination of one third of its two million Serbs, the deportation of another third, and the conversion of the rest to Catholicism. See Mennard, A28; "O polemos," 6-7; and "Explaining the Unthinkable," *Economist*, 1 February 1992, 103. For this reason, Hitler had characterized the Croats as "genuine converts to National Socialism," H.R. Trevor-Roper(ed.), *Hitler's Table Talk, 1941-1944* (London: Weidenseld and Nicolson, 1953), 95.

53. V.P. Gagnon, Jr., "Yugoslavia," 29.

54. Many generals on both sides never agreed on the UN plan. See "Explaining the Unthinkable," 51.

it is not even possible to talk of a clearly unified leadership, as there are three distinct groups, each with its own agenda: Milosevic, the National Army, and the Serb irregulars and militias in Croatia.⁵⁵ Furthermore, there is always the possibility of provocation by warmongering rogue officers, such as those who shot down a helicopter carrying an EC observation team in December.⁵⁶

If war breaks out anew, it will certainly be more murderous and destructive than it already has been. The Croats are much better armed presently than in the fall; in February Croatia founded an Air Force Command, a clear indication that it is expecting to have or already has warplanes.⁵⁷ For the same reason, the Serbs are more likely to fight much more ruthlessly and unyieldingly. If the battle becomes more "equal," Serbia may deem it fair to unleash its full military potential and conduct the all-out war that it has resisted thus far.⁵⁸ Furthermore, if Belgrade and other towns within Serbia are bombed, the war will probably regain the support that it now lacks among large segments of the Serb populace. In such a case, the UN troops could do little more than defend themselves or simply wait until the belligerent parties are exhausted. An offensive role for the UN peacemakers would be technically and logistically weak, but more importantly, it would lack a clearly defined objective. For instance, could there be a discussion of a "march to Belgrade or Zagreb"⁵⁹ in such an event?

Aside from the doubtful validity of EC mediation and the generous but precarious UN peacekeeping intervention, Serbia and Croatia have only one good reason to quit fighting: the destruction of lives and material assets that the war has caused, compounded by the deplorable state of their economies.

It is further distressing that the war could easily be expanded to other Yugoslav republics such as Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia. Until March 1, when a major riot occurred in Sarajevo and Serbs set up barricades for several hours at the center of the city, it seemed likely that the ethnically divided republic of Bosnia would be spared the fate of Croatia. Unlike the insulting and provocative way in which the Croats treated the Federal Army while it was stationed there, the Bosnian government had managed through more dexterous maneuvering to convince the officers serving in Bosnia that independence for

55. "The Sense of a Senseless War," 53.

56. "Turning Point in Yugoslavia," 43.

57. Blaine Harden, "Croatia Acquiring Warplanes from European Countries, Air Force Chief Says," *Washington Post*, 11 February 1992, A5.

58. "The Futility of War," *Economist*, 18 January 1992.

59. "A Diplomat Explains," 3.

the republic would not mean unemployment for them.⁶⁰ However, ethnic hatred between the Serbian and Croatian minorities, as well as their common dislike for the Muslim majority, offer the background for a major conflagration. Radical Croat and Serb groups, receiving orders from Zagreb and Belgrade, have not missed any opportunities to threaten each other. Bosnian television has shown Croatian propaganda on the righteousness of fighting Serbia, while the Croatian government had earlier threatened with invasion of Bosnia if the status of the Croatian minority came in peril.⁶¹

Aside from the doubtful validity of EC mediation and the generous but precarious UN peacekeeping intervention, Serbia and Croatia have only one good reason to quit fighting: the destruction of lives and material assets that the war has caused, compounded by the deplorable state of their economies.⁶² The cancellation of Serbia's trade privileges by the European Community was one of the major influences on its government's decision to stop the war.⁶³ Neither Croatia nor Serbia have the funds to remedy the damage done to infrastructure, and even if peace ensues, the two republics will have difficulties cooperating economically, despite the fact that their economies were closely intertwined for so long and still depend on each other.⁶⁴

Although the ceasefire and the agreement of the beleaguered republics to participate in peace negotiations in Brussels were definitely positive developments, the most essential preconditions for achieving a permanent and mutually satisfactory settlement are still lacking.⁶⁵ For this reason, the situation in Yugoslavia could still evolve in many different ways, but some possibilities are more probable than others.

Four Scenarios of War and Peace in Yugoslavia

In situations such as the Yugoslavian crisis, it is always difficult to come up with a solution that will satisfy all parties. Even if a formula for peace is found, certain stipulations will be unattractive to one or more of the negotiators, and all sides will have to yield at some points. In the end, it is the legitimacy of the settlement that will determine whether peace will last. If the mediating powers attempt to enforce a settlement which is not considered legitimate by those involved, it will be overturned and annulled by whatever party is powerful enough to do so. Alternatively, if a settlement is painful but not totally unac-

60. Blaine Harden, "Bosnia-Herzegovina on the Brink," *Washington Post*, 15 January 1992, A17.

61. *Ibid.*; and Milan Andrejevich, "Bosnia and Herzegovina: A Precarious Peace," *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 1, No. 9, 28 February 1992: 6-14.

62. None of the republics, not even Slovenia, is prosperous or productive enough to be independently viable. Separated, they will probably slide backwards, just like prosperous Estonia did after it seceded from the USSR, see "A Diplomat Explains," 3. This is the delusion of every mini-state or nation concerning its place in the world. They cannot all become Monacos.

63. Chuck Sudetic, "Serbia's Economy Collapsing From Costs of Civil War with Croatia," *The New York Times*, 9 February 1992, A5.

64. "A Diplomat Explains," 3; and "Trading Misery," *Economist*, 22 February 1992, 14.

65. "Yugoslavs Weigh Military Actions," A5.

ceptable, it has a better chance of lasting success.

The bleakest of all scenarios is the rekindling and escalation of war. This possibility is made more likely primarily through the Bosnian and Macedonian declarations of independence. Macedonia was recognized by Bulgaria and Turkey in January 1992.⁶⁶ Greece has managed to block EC recognition of Macedonia on the grounds that clauses of the latter's constitution imply expansionist ambitions over the Greek territory that bears the same name.⁶⁷ Provocative acts of Yugoslav Macedonians in the capital of Greek Macedonia, Thessaloniki, as well as Greek sentiment for their historic region, almost preclude any change of policy on the part of Greece.⁶⁸ The international community has treated Macedonia as a separate entity, despite its lack of a cohesive historical past, and a separate Macedonia nation has not been recognized by its neighbors, namely the Greeks, the Albanians, and the Serbs.⁶⁹

After a series of referenda were organized by both Macedonia's government and by various ethnic groups, acute divisions surfaced. It is now known that large minorities of Albanians, Gypsies, Turks, Serbs, and Vlachs are living among the two million people in the small republic.⁷⁰ Ethnic Albanians, constituting over 30 percent of Macedonia's inhabitants, Vlachs, who have Greek national identity and account for another 10 percent, and the Serb minority with 7 to 8 percent, all have stated their intention to pursue unification with their respective "mother-countries" or, in the case of ethnic Albanians, wide autonomy.⁷¹ The remaining 50 percent of "Macedonians" are really ethnic Bulgarians.⁷² The Serbian, Bulgarian, and Greek armies have been on alert since December, and Albania and Greece have expressed their intent to claim sections of Macedonia territory if the latter's borders undergo any alterations. The possibility of military action against Macedonia by Serbia or Greece in case of extreme provocation can not be excluded.⁷³ At the same time, ethnic Albanians seeking refuge from Kosovo in Albania have been pressuring the Albanian government to undertake vigorously the cause of national unification.

Another possible outcome of the present crisis is the creation of a "third"

66. "Ekklesia zetei," 1; and "O Tetartos dromos," 9. Turkey also has recognized Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Turkey traditionally has played on the sympathies of all the Yugoslavian Muslims, and the President of Bosnia has said that if his country is threatened, a request of military help from Turkey could not be excluded.

67. David Binder, "Yugoslav Republic Expects Recognition Soon," *The New York Times*, 30 January 1992, A9.

68. Marlise Simons, "As Republic Flexes, Greeks Tense Up," *Washington Post*, 3 February 1992, A3; Susanne Crow et al., "Macedonian Independence Moves," *RSE/RL Research Report*, 86.

69. Paul Lendvai, "Yugoslavia Without Yugoslavs: The Roots of the Crisis," *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 67, No. 2 (1991): 259.

70. Marlise Simons, "As Republic Flexes," A3; and Marlise Simons, "Europeans Put Off Macedonia Issue," *The New York Times*, 25 February 1992, A3.

71. "Ta pseudeon Skopion xeskepozontai," *Makedonia*, 20 December 1992, 9.

72. The controversy over Macedonia is too large and significant to be delved into here. Suffice to say that the concoction of the "Macedonian" nation was one of Tito's many ways to keep Yugoslavia together and to fend off Bulgarian expansionism. Most of Macedonia's history as a distinct nation consists of gross falsifications.

73. "European Put Off Macedonia Issue," A3.

Yugoslavia, including all of the former Yugoslav republics except Slovenia and Croatia. If one examines the Serb stance throughout the war and after the ceasefire, it is evident that the Serbian government gave up on its claims to Slovenia and Croatia as late as last summer. The National Army effectively forfeited Slovenia when it withdrew from the area in July 1991. The National Army high command debated for some time whether it should seek the incorporation only of the ethnically Serbian territory of Croatia into a third Yugoslavia, or whether it should press for the whole of Croatia. Now the military, the government, and the Serbian public seemed to have dropped the idea of preserving a Yugoslavia that would include the Croats.⁷⁴

The borders of the republics were not carved in stone and they do not, and never did, reflect the real territorial distribution of the Yugoslav nations.

The notion of a third Yugoslavia has become very popular with the Serbian government. Milosevic, after meeting in Ahrid with Macedonian President Kiro Gligorev, appeared to have negotiated an agreement on Macedonia's participation in a new Yugoslavia. Soon, however, the Macedonians began to back-pedal when Germany and Italy encouraged the secession of Bosnia and Macedonia.⁷⁵ Serbia and Greece, both of whose national interests would be harmed by an independent Macedonian state, hastily constructed a temporary Belgrade-Athens axis.⁷⁶ Greek Prime Minister Konstantinos Mitsotakis visited Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti and German Foreign Minister Genscher in late December and convinced them to drop their objection to the creation of a third Yugoslavia, arguing that any different development could start a chain-reaction with potentially apocalyptic results.⁷⁷ The way for a third Yugoslavia seemed open, and in January 1992, rumors spread in Belgrade that the constitution of the new federation was almost ready.⁷⁸ By that time, however, the aspirations of the Bosnian and Macedonian governments had been raised too much for them to retract their declarations of independence. Still, if Bosnia and Macedonia are unable to secure outside help, they can offer little resistance to becoming part of a third Yugoslavia. For this reason, this scenario is a very probable one.

Even if a smaller Yugoslavia is formed, there remains the question of whether it would include any of Croatia's territory. This question compels an examina-

74. See, for example, Zivoinovich, "Yugoslavia: A Serbian View," 5; and Marquand, "Serbs Weigh Support for Civil War," 3.

75. It is known that Genscher has pressured Bosnia's Muslim president not to be part of a new federation. See "O tetartos dromos," 8-9.

76. *Makedonia*, 30 December 1991, 1; "O tetartos dromos," 6.

77. *Makedonia*, 29 December 1992, 1; "O tetartos dromos," 6-7.

78. *Borba* (Belgrade), 18 January 1992, 1; and "O tetartos dromos," 8-9.

tion of how legitimate any redrawing of the borders of the republics would be. The present borders, carved out on November 29, 1943 by Croat Tito's triumphant Yugoslav Communist Party, were intended to dilute the power that sheer numerical superiority gave to the Serbs.⁷⁹ At the same time, Croats were put on a sort of "probation" as a republic, because of their alignment with the Axis and the massacre of hundreds of thousands Serbs. The borders of the republics were not carved in stone and they do not, and never did, reflect the real territorial distribution of the Yugoslav nations.

Any change in borders would have to be in favor Serbia and at the expense of Croatia and possibly Bosnia, if war breaks out in the latter. Serbs constitute 12 percent of the population of Croatia and at least 31 percent of the population of Bosnia.⁸⁰ In Yugoslavia as a whole, according to the 1981 census, Serbs were 36 percent of the population, and if one adds the percentages of Montenegrins, Bosnian Serbs, Serbs in Macedonia, as well as those who declare themselves Yugoslavs who, experts agree, are overwhelmingly ethnic Serbian, the percentages of the first nationality in Yugoslavia may well come to 45 percent or more.⁸¹ Serbs are dispersed in five of the six Yugoslav republics, and three million of them live outside of Serbia. With Slovenia and Croatia out of Yugoslavia, what remains is very much a de facto Greater Serbia. In addition, Serbs control almost 35 percent of the territory of the Croatian republic.⁸²

Since the foundation of Yugoslavia, most republics have been mosaics of different peoples. Re-carving the existing—albeit artificial—borders could prove an unmasterable task. The European Community was, at first, against the idea of border alterations altogether; later it rejected only forcible changes of borders.⁸³ However, there is no willingness on the part of the opponent nations to discuss any border changes from which they would not benefit. Croatian President Tudjman has insisted that he would not contemplate territorial concessions in the quest for peace and would fight against them.⁸⁴ While Serbs have an unquestionable claim to Croatian territory by virtue of the sizable Serb minority there, Croatia's right to secede is guaranteed by the principle of self-determination. Naturally, Serbs have provided the counterargument that the same freedom applies to the Serbs of Krajina and other Serbian enclaves in Croatia. The Serb-led Yugoslav government also has maintained that the recognition of the breakaway republics by the European Community constitutes a violation of international law.⁸⁵ Giving up Croatian territory is completely out of the question for the Croatian government, not only because it would be an unpopular move, but because ceding even a little land could expose the precar-

79. "A Diplomat Explains," 5.

80. A comparison of past censuses supports the assertion that the Muslims, who were first acknowledged as a separate nation in 1971, are of Serbian ethnic origin.

81. For the figures of the 1981 census see Lendvai, "Yugoslavia without Yugoslavs," 253.

82. Riding, "Yugoslavia's Army Opens Offensive Against A Croatian Stronghold," A1.

83. *Washington Post*, 19 October 1991, 12.

84. Alan Cowell, "Yugoslavs Said to Agree to Halt Spread of Fighting," *The New York Times*, 27 September 1991, A6.

85. *Washington Post*, 16 January 1992, A16.

ious viability of some of the former Yugoslav republics which have not been independent political entities for centuries.

While such an alteration of borders would indeed never be accepted by the Croats, it is useful to examine the notion of "forcible alteration of borders." To whom does the exercise of force refer? The correct answer, based on the principle of self-determination, is that it refers neither to the Croatian nor to the Serbian government, but to the inhabitants of the area currently under UN control. They should be given the choice to decide on their future. So far the world has known only one institution that guarantees the genuine and unalloyed application of the principle of self-determination: the plebiscite. The United Nations does not have the moral right to force Tudjman to accept the mutilation of Croatia, but it does have the right to force his government to consent to a plebiscite concerning the fate of the disputed territories.

Many doubt the feasibility of a plebiscite. Nevertheless, if considered seriously, the idea could materialize. Certain preconditions have to exist for the successful realization of such a project, including the following:

- The plebiscite should be carried out under the closest possible supervision of the United Nations.
- UN troops must police the area well enough to ensure that extremists on both sides cannot hinder the free expression of the popular will. By stipulating the disbanding of militias, the United Nations has already made a step in this direction.⁸⁶ Otherwise, irregular units could easily depopulate or modify the ethnic composition of certain areas.
- To decide who can participate in the plebiscite, the United Nations can and should avail itself of the immatriculation records in local villages and towns of the area and try to affect the return of all refugees to their homes, something that Cyrus Vance has been urging since the deployment of UN forces.⁸⁷ This would exclude inhabitants who were not properly registered in the place of their residence and would be the best way to approximate the composition of the population before the war started.
- The Croatian and Serbian governments should be officially bound *a priori* to comply with the outcome of the plebiscite.
- The results of the plebiscite should not decide the fate of the entire territory in a comprehensive way, but rather should be broken down into smaller areas, so as to serve as a guide for the most accurate and fair redrawing of borders.

It is probable that in such an ethnically mixed area, the redrawing of borders may have to be accompanied by voluntary population exchanges. Unflattering as it may be for Balkan peoples, it is true that some of the most stabilizing results in the diplomatic history of the peninsula have been attained through voluntary or mandatory exchange of populations, such as those negotiated between

86. William Drozdiak, "Twelve West European Countries Recognize Croatia, Slovenia," *The New York Times*, 16 February 1992, 4.

87. "Turning-point in Yugoslavia," 44.

Bulgaria and Greece in 1919 and between Greece and Turkey in 1923. The humanitarian aims of the new world order would make such a solution hard to sell. In any case, if the last precondition is observed, the numbers of people opting for relocation may be minimized. Naturally, an orderly and well-administered population exchange that guarantees the rights of communities and individuals is much preferred to an unofficial and forced one that may be occurring in Croatia at this very moment. The Yugoslav Army has reportedly been conducting a systematic depopulation of Croatian regions, while more recently some UN observers hinted at a Serbo-Croatian understanding to resettle refugees in a way that will facilitate a redrawing of frontiers. Only an open, democratic procedure such as a plebiscite, sanctioned by wide international approval, could render an otherwise undesirable settlement the necessary *legitimacy* to dispel revisionist tendencies on both sides.

Since the foundation of Yugoslavia, most republics have been mosaics of different peoples. Recarving the existing—albeit artificial—borders could prove an unmasterable task.

The last scenario connected with the deployment of UN troops would involve a temporary solution similar to what took place in Cyprus, where the UN troops created a dividing line between warring ethnic rivals. In Cyprus, however, what was initially intended to be a temporary situation became an almost permanent settlement. The Croats already have expressed their fear of this option and have stated that they would not tolerate such a development.⁸⁸ Furthermore, the case of Yugoslavia is not comparable to Cyprus because in Cyprus there were many outsiders who deemed it absolutely necessary to prevent a Greco-Turkish war. Nevertheless, a "Cypriotization" of the Croatian territories might be the most accommodating solution for both governments, since it would allow the Serbs to keep control of the areas they consider to be Serbian, and at the same time it would spare Croatia and its government the humiliating task of officially relinquishing territory.

Which of the above scenarios becomes reality will ultimately depend on many other factors that are not presented in this analysis. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the most essential precondition for the success of any mediation is guaranteeing the impartiality of peacemaking forces. Maximum pressure should also be exerted on both parties to persuade them to be more cooperative. In this respect, the damage to infrastructure and trade

88. Harden, "Croats Celebrate Their Independence," A21; "Broad Approval Greets U.N. Force for Yugoslavia," *The New York Times*, 14 February 1992, A3.

relations should be emphasized since, as we have seen, economic stability is the best reason the Yugoslavs have not to renew the bloodshed. Mature leadership, common sense, and coordination of efforts between the Serbs and Croats are also essential. The United States, whose cautious stance on the Yugoslavian crisis has proven that it is still the only power in the world that can provide the necessary leadership, should probably reconsider its recently lowered profile in Europe.

Nevertheless, the United Nations remains the only institution that can provide a fair, dependable, and *legitimate* framework for the administration and the improvement of the international system.⁸⁹ Its first task should be to oversee and conquer the current political changes in order to promote the establishment of true and lasting stability, not only in Yugoslavia, but in the rest of the world.

89. Alan K. Henrikson in "How Can the Vision of a 'New World Order' Be Realized," *The Fletcher Forum Of World Affairs* Vol. 16, No. 1 (Winter 1992): 63-79. This article offers excellent suggestions concerning the practical means for the enhancement of the administrative and policing abilities of the United Nations.



