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What Forms Have International Intervention Taken in Yugoslavia?

“ Rarely, if ever, in history has so much time, energy, manpower finance and diplomatic attention been applied to a conflict with so little reward” (Gow, 1997. p. 2)

Yugoslavia ¹ has, since the fall of the iron curtain, and the triumph of the free markets remained a troubled territory into which, nearly 20 years later, international actors continue to pour money and resources. This essay will describe the forms international intervention have taken in Yugoslavia, taking Bosnia, as a case study given the nature of the conflict, intervention and the formation of the state into a type of ‘ new Yugoslavia’ ² focusing on by beginning with a discussion of why and when international intervention took place. This will lead into an analysis of various strategies for international intervention and why many such strategies failed followed by a discussion of more recent forms of intervention and the changing strategy of NATO and in particular the EU in encouraging peace and stability in the Balkans.

The history of Yugoslavia has been fraught by inner tensions, most notably ethnic tensions which simmering under previous regimes erupted in the latter half of the 20th century. By 1991 the Yugoslav Federation was falling apart, nationalism replaced communism as the dominant force in the Balkans. ³ Bosnia, declared independence in 1992, only at the cost of conflict with Serbia, resulting in the Bosnian war.

The Serbs who lived there were determined to remain within Yugoslavia and to help build a greater Serbia. They received backing from extremist groups, and JNA in Belgrade. Muslims were driven from their homes in carefully planned operations, known as 'ethnic cleansing'. Bosnia's tensions and the ethnic cleansing programme, have ensured that the region, to this day, is associated with negative concepts, "Balkanisation" is a term used to refer to a chaotic, destructive and chauvinistic nation one which various forms of international intervention have attempted to end (Lake and Rothchild, 1998).

Post cold war International intervention arose in Bosnia in reaction to the ethnic cleansing and thus neglect for human rights seen in the region. The intervention took the forms of mediation/arbitration (*Shortly after Bosnia was founded, the governments of Bosnia and Croatia recognized the need for a dispute settlement mechanism the two parties could not settle themselves. In 1995 Christian Schwarz-Schilling, member of the German Parliament, Federation Mediator and Roberts Owen as Federation Arbitrator* (Backes, 2008) embargos, sanctions, early warning conflict prevention (Macedonia), peace plans (Vance-Owen) and military 'intimidation' aimed at discouraging Bosnian-Serbs, however the presence of the UN peacekeepers to contain the situation was famously ineffective, 'observers and truck drivers' (*Karadjis, 2000 p. 76.*)

It wasn't until NATO/American 'pressure' to end the war in 1995 led to the Dayton agreement of November 1995 that 'peace' in the region was achieved. Despite this, the region still suffers from violence/uprisings, the settlement's aims were to bring about the reintegration of Bosnia and to protect human rights but the agreement has been criticised for not reversing <https://assignbuster.com/history-essays-international-intervention-yugoslavia/>

the results of ethnic cleansing or settling the deep-rooted problems (*Burg, 1999p. 415*) Today a EU-led peacekeeping force, EUFOR Althea

- Yugoslavia consisted of three political entities, the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia existing in the Balkan Peninsula throughout much of the 20th century until 2003.
- Given its past of various foreign authoritarian regimes ruling by defacto, Bosnia consisting of the ethnic groups, Muslims, Serbs and Croats which made up the majority of the former Yugoslavia's population, given this there is the potential for history to repeat itself.
- IMF, Russia, Germany, July 7th '90 E. C Slovenian + Yugoslav ceasefire, case of early recognition? Badinter commission Oct ' 91 - Yugoslavia has ceased to exist. Western pre-occupation with other events around the world/domestically early on. pre-1991 situation to include the I. M. F > Collapse of Communism/trade and industry > Features of International Intervention, state bias, sovereign gain > Germany > Lack of will in International Intervention = fed the disintegration of Yugoslavia and Ethnic-Nationalism " it is not easy in contemporary times to get people to fight ethnic wars" (Kaufman p. 39) Any other suggestions, comments, improvements? For more information on the disintegration see Jovic, Dejan. ' The disintegration of Yugoslavia: a critical review of explanatory approaches' European Journal of Social Theory Vol. 4, No. 1. 2001, p. 101-120, Banac I., The national question in Yugoslavia: origins, history, politics., Cornell U. P., 1984

charged with implementing the military aspects of the peace agreement, primarily overseeing the separation of forces. On the civilian implementation of Dayton, the O. H. R. ¹

The 'Yugoslavian war of disillusion' thus came to involve all those major states and organisations with a stake in European security as well as many outside this framework. It was only after four years of individual and collective behaviour had failed that the war stopped. (*Gow, 1997p. 30*). The characteristics of the diplomatic dereliction were: bad timing, bad judgement, and absence of unity and most importantly a lack of political will particularly with regards the use of force, which it was eventually, found was necessary in bringing peace to this disintegrated nation (*Gow, 1997p. 320*).

Bosnian is particularly pertinent since it tested the new, post cold war, global order and the effectiveness of its intervention, prevention particularly under unforeseen conditions such as those in Yugoslavia where the collapse of communism, and with it the collapse of the remaining multinational states of Eastern Europe was not followed by the victory of the liberal democracy and the legitimisation of new civil states. But then again it didn't in Western Europe so why would it Yugoslavia?(*Kenney, 2006p. 46*).

Instead older historical identities: religion, ethnicity, national identity and even region achieved greater status interacting with the situation of the day, crumbling infrastructure creating fear, uncertainty, grievance exploited by leaders looking to appear populist, in control, for scapegoats, easy answers to complex problems- hence the re-emergence as a base for political mobilisation and clashing with the state in almost all those areas where the

state/emerging state didn't correspond to the identities of the mobilising group (*Bunce, 1999p. 234*). Producing conflict between the international norms of state sovereignty and territorial integrity on the one hand, and the power, fear generating and violence of appeals of ethnicity as a basis for state formation in the other.

At the time there were no clear standards for state policies towards diversity, the international community lacked the instruments of conflict prevention/management. Much of the history of Bosnia/Yugoslavia is the story of how the international community attempted, but failed, to reconcile conflict between these mutually exclusive principles of state formation, they intervened but failed numerous times to make a decisive impact (*Bunce, 1999p. 233*). Today, Bosnia is an independent assumed sovereign state effectively ruled by international authorities, suffering ethnic friction and economic semi-paralysis the rest of this essay will discuss various forms of international intervention, both successful and unsuccessful, resulting in present day Bosnia.

There were two areas of international intervention in Yugoslavia presenting acute strategic dilemmas and both related to the Bosnian crisis, where due to the severity of the crimes against humanity committed, the majority of intervention was focused. First, the international communities part in setting up the State. Dayton created a complex, experimental constitutional engineering of ethnic conflict. (*Lund, 2000p. 333*). Implementation of the model under the responsibility of NATO has, as previously mentioned, was challenging, the constitutional structures to poorly performing,

1. Office of the High Representative.

destructively perceived as a 'talking shop' (*Bose, 2002 p. 63*). The international community has been taking an increasingly aggressive role in order to implement the Dayton Agreement in the face of obstruction by the ethnic elites. In recent times, it has resorted to experiments with various forms of limited international trusteeship - yet still the effects are limited. '(Cox, 1998) Second, regards how the international community deals with ethnic separatism. The international community espoused to make its priority the reversal of ethnic cleansing through repatriating refugees/minorities to their homes/regions (*Siani-Davies, 2005 p. 69*). Though initially there was no sign of a movement towards re-integration, the strategic intervention by the international community had remained relatively ineffective with previous warlords now leaders of freedom in Bosnia (*Burg, 1999 p. 387*) International organisations also didn't want the responsibility of running the 'Balkan population exchange commission' (*Bose, 2002 p. 173*) Only after International involvement in the situation in 1999 by the O. H. R did the situation progress, doubling the previous years repatriation in 2000.

International involvement in the Bosnian war was patchy reluctant, full of uncertainty, and disputes among the actors of the international community, it is for this reason that whatever the form of intervention in Yugoslavia it has remained relatively unsuccessful (*Bunce, 1999p. 233*). Fragmentation of Yugoslavia threatened European stability post-Cold War for the first time, thus European nations and states outside the continent, particularly the USA

were extremely concerned by the implications of the collapse of the Yugoslav federation, and determined to resist any further fragmentation below the level of the former Republics' (Cox, 1998) They feared a new post communist threat that of the spread of ethnic nationalism, separatism, 'ethnic conflicts' (*Lake and Rothchild 1998*)

To begin with the conflict however looked as if the fighting, refugee migration could be contained within Yugoslavian borders. The lack of immediate threat to security, the complex, regionality discouraged close international engagement (*Burg, 1999 p. 80.*) British minister Douglas Hogg expressed that it was a 'civil war, none of their business', it was 'historic and ethnic' (*Karadjis, 2000 p. 85.*) This ambivalence forced gradually increasing international involvement, through successive unsuccessful peace plans and humanitarian aid protection.

Tension between the United States and Europe, and the failure of the common European foreign and security policy, made consensus very difficult to obtain, while the cumbersome United Nations-NATO 'dual key' command over international forces hampered strategic planning - very little concise intervention was thus achieved - particularly on the military front. ' Ultimately, The U. S. seems to have been forced into action almost inadvertently, through its commitment to provide US forces supporting UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Force) evacuation .

Faced with that grim prospect, taking over diplomatic and military leadership in order to bring about the end of the war was the more palatable alternative (Cox, 1998) This rather confused mixture of security, humanitarian and

regulatory considerations set the tone for the subsequent international involvement in Bosnia after the cease-fire took effect. The form of intervention which first took place in Yugoslavia therefore was fragmented, indecisive and lacked majority backing and effort.

The US initiatives, first in creating an alliance between the Croat and Muslim parties, and then negotiating an overall cease-fire at Dayton, were an extraordinary achievement in all the circumstances, and have successfully maintained order in the region against considerable odds (*Ramet, 2005p. 187*). What in retrospect appears less convincing is the attempt to use the fragile consensus at Dayton to create an entire constitutional structure for the new State. It is now clear that the Bosnian war was not so much concluded as suppressed, with the underlying issues left unresolved.

The Dayton agreement created a loose federation with an extremely weak central government, leaving each ethnic group substantially autonomous within its own territory. This formula may have been essential to achieving a cease-fire, but it has proved to be a very weak foundation for a peace process (*Lund, 2000p. 206*). The three war-time regimes remain intact, and the ideology of ethnic separatism remains the dominant political force. The parties have consistently obstructed the creation of the State institutions, preferring to preserve their own autonomy and extra-constitutional power structures.

The impetus for State-building has therefore come almost solely from the international community, through a massive military and civilian implementation operation. In this environment, it is proving extremely

difficult to initiate a self-sustaining peace process or to engineer political and social changes that will outlast the period of international involvement, the situation thus remains incredibly unstable, reversal of the ethnic cleansing has not been achieved and peace is propped-up by a large military and political presence of international interventionists. Which has created “Bosniasation”, as it was called by an OSCE representative, in replacement of the process of Balkanisation which international involvement was meant to help (*Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of Europe, 1998.*)

The most difficult challenge for the international community in Bosnia is dealing with the results of ethnic cleansing. The military, political campaigns of nationalist leaders were extremely effective in separating the populations into the three principal ethnic groups, and Bosnian society remains overwhelmingly divided along ethnic lines, international intervention was able to secure peace but not reverse that which first attracted its attention ethnic segregation.

International revulsion towards the goals and methods of the war has given the intervention in Bosnia a moral element, with the international community determined to reverse ethnic cleansing through the return of refugees. Not only is the impetus behind this form of intervention humanitarian but political, western countries fear the spread of this “ ethnic conflict” so much so that President Clinton backed the NATO peace keeping process by assuring his public that “ without us peace would be lost, the war would resume, the slaughter of the innocent would begin again and the conflict that already has claimed so many people could spread like poison to the entire region” (*Lake and Rothchild, 1998*)

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Progress in doing so, had been limited, The goal of reversing ethnic cleansing proving difficult to reconcile with the basic structure of Dayton, with its underlying pragmatic acceptance of ethnic separation mentioned above. Many of the local authorities now being pressured into accepting the return of minorities are the same war-time leaders responsible for ethnic cleansing, now strengthened and legitimated through internationally sponsored elections (*Lake and Rothchild, 1998*).

International programs to promote minority return have been consistently obstructed throughout the country. The lack of progress posed the international community with an ethical and strategic dilemma of considerable difficulty: should ethnic separatism be opposed at all cost, or is it necessary to tolerate existing levels of ethnic separation for the time being in order to achieve a self-sustaining peace process? There is no consensus among the international community on this question (*Gow, 1997p. 44*). In 1999, the High Commissioner accelerated these efforts with the Reconstruction and Return Task Force action plan and the implementation of new property laws. Resulting in minority return increases. In 2000, returns doubled, but since have been limited. The system was effective because it created a system of monitoring returnees. ¹

Intervention in Yugoslavia has thus been fraught with disagreement, a lack of concisive action and the backing of a united political will, all parties involved have a variety of interests, and these, sometimes opposing interests throughout the Bosnian war have been reflected in a rather incoherent institutional structure in the post-war phase.

Early proposals for an international presence powerful enough to take control over reconstruction and institution building proved unfeasible and thus never occurred. Mistrust between American and European policy makers made it impossible to bring the intervention within a single institutional structure. Troop-contributing countries would not accept a single chain of command over the military, nor place their forces under civilian control. Policy coherence has not been achieved in the provision of international aid, where the major actors – the World Bank and the European Commission, lead agencies on humanitarian assistance, and the major bilateral donors – also have their own interests and responsibilities.

The future of the Balkans therefore remains extremely uncertain; politically and economically it remains extremely weak and continues propped up by various forms of western aid/intervention. Between 1996-2000 Western governments and institutions poured \$5. 1 billion into Bosnia “ in an effort to breathe life into this comatose state” (*Bose, 2002p. CHAPTER*).

This is the largest per capita reconstruction effort in history, still cheaper than a lengthy war economically/security/skills/people wise. Deadlines for such diminution/cessation of aid were in the Dayton Accords, but continuously pushed back, the norm in international efforts. Without foreign grants/aid, governmental salaries couldn't be paid, and the whole state structure crumbles (*Ramet, 2005p. 194*).

After more than six years of UN tutelage, the Bosnian economy is still flat. The problems of administration consume a disproportionate share of time, money, and energy. There is massive unemployment, very low average per

capita incomes, and widespread bankruptcy. There is very little the high representative or the UN can do to change things, since they have invested so heavily in the current structure. Subsidies will continue in the hope that in a more peaceful and cooperative environment the economy will grow (Bose, 2002p.)

Since 1996, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been the site of a remarkable project of political engineering. A complex consortium of international agencies backed by Western governments have been transforming a

¹ *Under the Property Law Implementation Plan (PLIP), the OHR moved aggressively to accelerate returns: “[o]fficials were dismissed who refused to implement the new property laws. The Property Implementation Plan provided for an international officer to monitor implementation of the law and to encourage local authorities to resolve outstanding cases in each of Bosnia’s municipalities. The International Police Task Force (IPTF) exercised its supervisory powers over local police forces to ensure that evictions took place as ordered.” (Jenne, 2007)*

devastated, ethnically partitioned, post-war territory into a multiethnic, democratic and economically viable state. Despite an enormous investment of personnel and resources, the post-Yugoslav future remains tenuous. The “hard” “military” backed action which was taken pre-1995 has slowly given way to the “invisible European hand” form of international action in a post-modern paradigm whereby peace, prosperity and democracy are encouraged in the Balkan region through the promise of European

membership. As yet continuing problems prevented membership: poverty, corruption, chauvinism persist however post-

Yugoslavian states are beginning to see the benefits of overhauling their system, aligning with a more western model for society and politics, the prosperity and security offered by EU membership become achievable. The future of the post-Yugoslavian states remains unsure, however the E. U. achieved historic reconciliation between France and Germany, helped consolidate the democracy of Greece in S. E. Europe after authoritarianism. But has not been equipped to solve internal conflict within the members e. g. Basque. The E. U. faces one of its most difficult challenges yet but with concise, united "soft" intervention the persuasive transformatory effect of membership, success might be possible, promising International investment, trade, lower unemployment, impacting on institutional design/stability, domestic policies/laws and socialization of the Former Yugoslav states easing deep-rooted problems ethnic-conflicts can feed on.

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