



HSC Chair Report

Restoring Peace and Stability in the Balkans following the Yugoslav Wars (1991-2001).

Chair: Mai Le

Deputy Chair: David Muresan

Personal Statements

Chair – Mai Le

Dear Delegates, My name is Mai and I'm 17 years old. I live in Arnhem, The Netherlands and I have always loved MUN's. MUNISS will be my 10th conference, 2nd one to chair and I'm super excited to be chairing the Historical Security Council along with my co-chair Dave! For me, MUN's have always been great to meet new people and make new friends, as well as the interesting debating throughout the conference. HSC is a great committee to put your debating skills into practice and considering some countries also have Veto, it definitely is a perfect committee to picture yourself in the actual United Nations. Anyhow, I can't wait to meet everyone and listen to all the amazing debating!



Deputy Chair – David Muresan

Hello Delegates, my name is Dave and I am 17 years old. I was born in Târgu Mureș, Romania, but am now living in Hamburg, Germany. This year's MUNISS will be my first time chairing at a conference, and my fourth official conference overall. I am very excited to be your chair in the Historical Security Council. I find this committee especially great because it gives all of us a chance to better understand how past events were handled, and to come up with a solution based on our generation's modern thinking. I'm looking forward to hear what everyone comes up with, and what fruitful debate comes from it!



Introduction

The Kingdom of Yugoslavia (initially named the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes) was a nation that was established following the conclusion of the first World War, taking territories from the Kingdom of Serbia, the Kingdom of Montenegro, and territories of Austria-Hungary. Today, Yugoslavia's territory is now separated into Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia. Although often overshadowed by the fallout of the Soviet Union which had larger consequences than just the eastern European sphere, the fallout of Yugoslavia needs to be understood in order to understand current political relations between its former territories, with it still being relevant to political discussions such as Kosovo's validity as an independent state.



Figure 1: Map of the states that made up Yugoslavia¹;

The Yugoslav wars were a series of conflicts between 1991 and 2001 that established the independence of the many territorial components that previously made up Yugoslavia. In the wake of the falling out of the Soviet Union, as well as the death of the leader which kept the entire nation together - Josip Broz Tito, the situation was a result of many ethnic and political tensions. Nationalist feelings increased intensely from 1980 onwards, and these only aggravated feelings of aggression between the multiple ethnic and religious groups living in the area. These nationalist ideas ultimately culminated in the member territories heavily considering separation from the larger Yugoslav territory, which started with the Ten Day War in 1991.²

Following Slovenia's and Croatia's attempt and success to secede from Yugoslavia, other participants began to make efforts towards a disassociation with the Yugoslav territory, with the Republic of Macedonia's peaceful secession (1991), the Bosnian War (1992–1995), the Insurgency in Kosovo (1995–1998), the Kosovo War (1998–1999), the Insurgency in the Preševo Valley (1999–2001), and Insurgency in the Republic of Macedonia (2001)³ taking place within the next 10 years, ultimately ending the nation on both a political and geographical level.

¹ <https://yugotour.com/blog/yugoslavia-intro/>

² <https://www.zois-berlin.de/en/publications/ten-days-that-ended-yugoslavia-the-forgotten-war-in-slovenia-30-years-later>

³ <https://www.icty.org/en/about/what-former-yugoslavia/conflicts>

Glossary

Ten Day War (1991):

A war that was fought between Slovenian Territorial Defense, accompanied by the Slovene Police, and the Yugoslav People's Army at the border between the area of Slovenia and greater Yugoslavia for the sake of obtaining the country's independence from Yugoslavia. This war lasted ten days, between 27th of June and 7th of July, hence the name. Following this war, Slovenia and Croatia both were able to pass their acts of independence.

Republic of Macedonia's Peaceful Secession (1991):

After Slovenia's attempt and success to secede from Yugoslavia, Macedonia soon followed by attempting to peacefully secede as well. This was successful, as Macedonia had good relations with other members of Yugoslavia, most notably Serbia, as well as a Yugoslavian armed response being close to impossible as efforts were focused on tensions regarding Croatia and Bosnia.

The Bosnian War (1992-1995):

A war that took place between Bosnia and greater Yugoslavia between 1992 and 1995. This conflict culminated in the bombing of Yugoslavia's capital, Sarajevo, and the first large NATO intervention in history. This had the most bloodshed of the Yugoslav wars, as the Srebrenica genocide is one of the largest massacres in recent European history. It ultimately allowed for Bosnia to separate itself from Yugoslavia, according to the Dayton accords, written and accepted in accordance with the US.

Insurgency in Kosovo (1995-1998):

After the success of Bosnia with the Dayton Accords, in 1996, the Kosovo Liberation Army started to attack Serbian institution buildings and police stations in response to discrimination and political dissent facing Albanian Muslims in the area. This eventually escalated to a greater Kosovo war in 1998.

The Kosovo War (1998-1999):

A conflict that resulted from the escalation of the KLA's attacks on Serbia. The war culminated in UN and NATO intervention by once again deploying air strikes on Sarajevo until Yugoslav forces evacuated Kosovo and establishing a UN peacekeeping mission in Kosovo

Insurgency in the Preševo Valley (1999-2000):

A series of short skirmishes and small-scale conflicts between Yugoslav forces and Albanian separatists of the Liberation Army of Preševo, Medveđa and Bujanovac that took place in the safe zone between Kosovo and Albania following the Kosovo war.

Insurgency in the Republic of Macedonia (2001):



This was a conflict between the Republic of Macedonia and the Albanian National Liberation Army in attempts to give more rights to Albanian ethnic groups in the country. This was ultimately successful and was the last conflict from the Yugoslav wars.

Issue Explanation:

The Yugoslav wars had both short-term and long-term effects on relations within the Balkan area, as well as the wider international community as NATO and UN involvement were a large part in halting the conflicts. The wars in total are estimated to have a death toll of approximately 140,000, and over 4 million people from all nations were displaced from their homes.⁴ The main concerns with solving the issue of maintaining peace in the Balkans following the conflicts in Yugoslavia are ensuring that another armed conflict does not take place, as well as attempting to resolve the ethnic tensions in the area which are still present to this day.

The most noticeable way in which the ex-Yugoslav states suffered as an effect of the Yugoslav Wars is economically. The war resulted in a large amount of key infrastructure being destroyed on all fronts, including key institutions such as hospitals. Furthermore, many of the people who fled their homes often settled in other ex-Yugoslav states - one that they better identified with. Accommodating these refugees on top of the already large death toll and infrastructure issues made the economic impact of the wars on these states both very large and still apparent in modern times, as the states took many loans from the IMF to help solve their financial issues. They are still among the poorest countries in Europe except for Serbia and Slovenia, which have the highest GDP out of them⁵, and this is almost exclusively attributed to the long-term consequences of the Yugoslav wars.

What's also important to consider when looking at the effects of the Yugoslav wars is a large-scale humanitarian crisis among ex-Yugoslav states. As stated previously, over 4 million were displaced from their homes, most fleeing to other ex-Yugoslav states, causing not only an economic crisis, but also contributed heavily to the humanitarian issues that plagued the area. Most notably, Croatia took the most refugees, suffering a housing crisis soon after. Furthermore, the effect of the many war crimes that were conducted throughout the wars, especially the Srebrenica genocide is still felt throughout eastern Europe as a whole. The responsibility of these war crimes were discussed avidly through the means of the International Court of Justice and International Criminal Court, and ultimately resulted in many leaders being charged as recently as 2018 for their actions during the wars.

An international issue which was brought upon by the Yugoslav wars was the question of determining borders based on distribution of population. The Balkans are still an

⁴ <https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-FormerYugoslavia-Justice-Facts-2009-English.pdf>

⁵ <https://tradingeconomics.com/country-list/gdp?continent=europe>



area of contention between ethnic groups, with multiple political conflicts, most notably the uncertainty around Kosovo after its declaration of independence in 2008, that have yet to be resolved to this day. There have been proposals for redefining the borders between the ex-Yugoslav states, but these plans never fully passed through UN resolution⁶. Considering that the wars were ethno-politically charged to begin with, there are still chances of a potential modern Balkan war taking place, and the UN needs to account for this possibility that ensuring any disagreement is discussed in a peaceful and diplomatic manner.

Some issues exist around the states' membership in the EU, as only Slovenia and Croatia have been registered as member states. This is another important decision placed on the international community, as it is important to facilitate international participation of all states. However, these states also have a history with corruption and democratic backsliding following the war, which is what barred them entry from the EU to begin with, so reaching a final judgment on where these countries should be is also extremely important to be had.

History of the Topic

Yugoslavia was a state that was founded following the first World War's conclusion in 1918, although ideas of its existence have existed long before. Even before World War 1, the Balkans had been notorious for being very vaguely representative of its demographic, with the populations tending to be split among multiple ethnic groups belonging to the entire geographical area. As such, considering how nationalism had begun to be a prominent sentiment that permeated throughout the world, especially Europe, it was important for these ethnic groups, now all living under the country, to not have any tensions between each other. The leaders of Yugoslavia throughout its short-lived history were very well aware of this, and as nationalist movements grew in the latter half of the 20th century, so did the resistance of leaders. The leader who was most effective at keeping these tensions at bay, as well as somebody who was considered to be keeping the whole country together, was Josip Broz Tito. Although he often went as far as to use force to suppress nationalism, his efforts to do so were nothing less than effective, even having a 10-year plan ready in case he passed away. However, when his death came in 1985, his 10-year plan was thrown off by a large event that happened outside of its ambitions: the fall of communism.

Yugoslavia was a communist state, and the disintegration of the Communist League of Yugoslavia which connected all of the different territories made the economic state of the entire country extremely unstable as time went on. This conflict was amplified as Serbia started to try and keep Yugoslavia unified by force, as new elected governments in most Yugoslav territories began to consider a potential breakup of the state.

Croatia's newly found independent party leadership was a concern for many Serbs both inside and outside the territory. The last time Croatia was independent from

⁶ <https://www.europenowjournal.org/2020/06/02/the-lasting-impact-of-the-breakup-of-yugoslavia/>



Yugoslavia, it was under an ultranationalist movement which contributed to the Nazi killings of Serbians in World War 2, and with Croatia now having an extremely high density of Serbian communities in certain areas, concern arose and ultimately culminated in a series of riots which would end up beginning the series of Yugoslav wars. These riots sought to block essential streets and roads throughout the country, although this quickly escalated as the Yugoslav army members began to help these riots, in an effort to keep the state together under Serbia's will. Ultimately, this culminated on the 25th of June 1991, when Croatia and Slovenia declared independence from Yugoslavia, which began the break-up of the state and the Yugoslav wars.

Any Previous Attempts

Maintaining peace in the Balkan area following the Yugoslav wars has been a priority of the international community, as it was the largest conflict in Europe during that time, which made it a priority. The main method of responding to the effects of the Yugoslav wars and its subsequent worries about maintaining peace were through giving monetary compensation towards most parties involved in the conflict. Although it unfortunately did not cover all facets of the conflict, the international community tried its hardest to make economic reparation in ex-Yugoslavia, in order to put its financially struggling members back on track⁷. Furthermore, respects were payed toward the victims of the wars' many humanitarian crimes, as most of the parties involved in causing these tragedies were persecuted, as well as multiple memorials for many of the great disasters of the conflict such as the Srebrenica genocide were built⁸.

The problems with these responses was that they did not directly address the ethnic troubles of the region, which were the primary reason for the conflicts. As stated earlier, there were conversations about the re-evaluation or borders, but there was no true progress in solving these issues, which perhaps needs to be evaluated further. Furthermore, the continued support of ex-Yugoslav states must be more carefully considered, as current times can prove that the vulnerability of these states following the Yugoslav wars made way for both corruption and economic issues that are still present today.

⁷ https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/migrated_files/What-We-Do/docs/Reparations-for-Wartime-Victimes-in-the-Former-Yugoslavia-In-Search-of-the-Way-Forward.pdf

⁸ <https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-FormerYugoslavia-Justice-Facts-2009-English.pdf>



Media Contribution

When it comes to local media within Yugoslav states, Serbia and Croatia were particular cases where it was tampered with significantly. In the case of Croatia, this was a very short lived effort to push ideas of an independent Croat state, and to motivate people fighting for that cause, which was especially strong leading up to the Ten Day War in 1991. As for Serbian manipulation of media, this was primarily used to paint Bosnia's army in as negative a light as possible throughout the Bosnian war, in order to seek aggression from within the Serbian community. This was also partially true in Bosnia itself as well, as the ethnic division between its population resulted in anti-Bosnian propaganda being produced there as well⁹. All of these cases, as well as smaller scaled cases of Yugoslavia-related propaganda were documented and judged by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

The Yugoslav wars were one of the first conflicts to take place after television became an easy-to-access commodity, which changed media coverage drastically. Most notably, this was one of the first times where journalists took their equipment, and recorded evidence of the conflict at hand. This had two primary impacts: this brought about new possibilities of looking at a conflict more objectively, taking direct footage as evidence, as well as bringing journalist safety to the spotlight for the first time in history. The way this conflict was documented throughout its climax would shape how modern journalism does it today, which solidifies its importance.

Considering that NATO and the UN had an essential role within this conflict, the Yugoslav Wars were also extensively documented in western states, as it held specific importance as NATO's first operation. The position of these countries varied - most notably, in the case of the largest conflict of the wars - the Bosnian War, the media actually was quite split on what position to take, as Bosnia's importance was often stated, but there were seldom claims of support being shown by most Western countries other than the American ones, who ultimately ended up contributing to the signing of the Dayton Accords in 1995¹⁰.

⁹Jowett, Garth S.; O'Donnell, Victoria (2018). Propaganda & Persuasion (7th ed.). SAGE Publications.

¹⁰ https://ciaotest.cc.columbia.edu/olj/tjir/v2n1/tjir_v2n1mas01.pdf





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