



Policy Study No 139

# An Awful Warning

The war in ex-Yugoslavia

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### Biographical note

**Christopher Cviic** was born in Croatia and educated at the Universities of Zagreb, London and Oxford. He came to Britain in 1954 to work for the BBC's World Service and has been living here ever since. From 1969 to 1990 he was a leader-writer and correspondent specialising in East European and religious affairs on the staff of *The Economist* in London. He now edits *The World Today*, the monthly magazine of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) in London, and is an Associate Research Fellow of the Institute's European Programme. He is the author of *Remaking the Balkans* (London: Pinter, 1991; New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1991; Italian edition by Il Mulino publishers in 1993) and is currently writing a book on the background to the war in ex-Yugoslavia, with particular reference to Western policy towards that war. The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and should not be taken to represent those of the Royal Institute of International Affairs.

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## Contents

Introduction	5
1. The gathering storm	7
2. The West's myopia	13
3. International responses to the war	18
4. The Bosnia triangle	31
Epilogue	39
Notes and References	44

## Introduction

As the war in Bosnia slowly approaches its bloody and messy end, with a sort of peace in sight at long last, the acrimonious debate about the rights and wrongs of the part played by outside powers in the conflict has abated somewhat. But the West Europeans and the Americans, though working together in NATO and the UN, continue to bicker and snipe at each other. Both criticise Mr Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the UN's Secretary-General. He has been involved in so many bitter controversies with the commanders of UN peace-keeping forces in ex-Yugoslavia that it is by no means certain that his relatively smooth co-operation with the present UN commanders there, notably General Sir Michael Rose, will last. On the ground, in ex-Yugoslavia, innumerable feuds are taking place among the international agencies involved in humanitarian operations. The general tendency seems to be for everyone to mistrust and attack everyone else. It is easy to see why.

Victory – as Count Galeazzo Ciano, Mussolini's Foreign Minister and son-in-law, once confided in his diary – easily finds a hundred fathers while defeat is an orphan. Of course, not everybody subscribes to the view that the entire international involvement in the conflict in ex-Yugoslavia – first in Slovenia and in Croatia and subsequently in Bosnia and Macedonia – has been an unmitigated and humiliating failure. Ministers and senior officials in Britain, France and other European Union (EU) countries think this accusation is unfair and point to the positive role that the EU, in particular, has played (and is still playing) by making available a diplomatic machinery for negotiations among the warring parties in ex-Yugoslavia. They also point out that Europe has provided monitors on the ground, has financed a large proportion of the humanitarian aid and has taken in many refugees. Some defenders of the West's policy in ex-Yugoslavia readily concede that the operation has not been entirely successful but at the same time insist that, at the very least, everything has been done to mitigate the horrors of what Warren Christopher has referred to as this 'problem from hell'. These Western apologists also add, not unreasonably, that it is not

## AN AWFUL WARNING

the foreigners but the locals – the Croats, the Moslems and the Serbs – who have been doing the killing and the destroying in ex-Yugoslavia. So who and what is responsible for the ghastly tragedy in ex-Yugoslavia whose last chapter still remains to be written?

This essay does not try to apportion blame but, rather, to explore why Yugoslavia, a country that was for decades held up by its many admirers in the West as a highly successful society, suddenly blew up with a violence that has both surprised and shocked so many. So much so that there is a tendency to view the present tragedy in the Balkans as an outburst of atavistic (and utterly irrational) ethnic and religious hatreds, and, therefore, not open to the usual rational analysis of motives and interests. This 'Yugoagnostic' view is challenged here. An attempt is made to show that the main protagonists have been guided by rational (if not, necessarily, also reasonable) calculations of political and economic interest, which can be discerned and analysed – and should have been understood, realistically assessed and integrated into official Western policy calculations. The facts were there for those who wanted to know and make sense of them. That such information was not acted upon is the responsibility of the policy-makers, not the information-providers.

This essay examines the actual positions adopted by the main internal Yugoslav protagonists and by the foreign (especially EU) governments, arguing that the right time to act to avert war altogether or, once it had started, to stop it quickly was in the early stages of the conflict in 1991 and early 1992, on which the analysis concentrates – that is, before too much blood had been shed and too many people had been uprooted and displaced. The various options for international action then available are described and assessed, and the conclusion is drawn that the reason that none of these was taken up was not due to a lack of means, but of political will. Following a separate analysis of the outsiders' role in the Bosnian War, some tentative, more general lessons are drawn from the conflict in ex-Yugoslavia.

# 1

## The gathering storm

There had been no shortage of warning signals since the late 1980s about a coming political earthquake in Yugoslavia. In November 1990 a report by the CIA, leaked to the press, warned that a war in Yugoslavia leading to the country's disintegration, was likely within 18 months.<sup>1</sup> Similar gloomy forecasts had been in circulation in various Western countries as well as in Yugoslavia itself for months. And yet when the war broke out in June 1991, international opinion seemed surprised. It should not have been, for Yugoslavia's slow-motion dissolution had been in progress for a long time. The elements which had kept post-1945 Yugoslavia together, had dissolved during the 1980s:

- \* Tito, the charismatic leader and skillful political manipulator of (and arbiter among) all the different Yugoslav nationalities and interest groups, had died in 1980. His demise was followed a decade later by that of his Communist Party which formally disintegrated in early 1990.
- \* Yugoslavia's economic prosperity, based on massive Western external assistance in the 1950s and 1960s and, in the 1970s, on extensive external borrowing (with Tito acting as the country's credit card) had ended.
- \* The sense of external danger from the direction of the Soviet Union in the East that had helped maintain a sort of national unity since 1948 when Yugoslavia was expelled from the Soviet bloc by Stalin, had disappeared in the late 1980s. Quite suddenly it was possible for the peoples of Yugoslavia to start looking for other arrangements and alignments without fear of opening the door to the Red Army and the KGB.

The possibility that Yugoslavia might disintegrate was a particular cause of worry for the Yugoslav National Army (JNA), the last remaining Titoist institution in the country since the breakup of the Yugoslav Communist Party at its last, abortive congress in January–February 1990. The JNA's leaders and the bulk of its officer corps

## AN AWFUL WARNING

were from the start opposed to Yugoslavia's evolution into a loose confederation, still more strongly to it being split into smaller states. This could only deprive the army of its *raison d'être*, its legitimacy and its hitherto comfortable and secure financial base.

Of equal importance to the JNA's leaders (96 per cent of officers were Communist Party members) was the continuation of the socialist order in the country, which they saw threatened by the arrival in power in 1990 of non-Communist governments in Croatia and Slovenia (and the coalition ones in Bosnia and Hercegovina and Macedonia). The possibility that such a government could eventually arrive in power in Serbia, too, with a mandate to create new, non-Communist armed forces closely aligned with the West caused deep fears among the senior ranks of the Yugoslav army.

Serbia's Communist Party leadership shared the JNA's dedication to socialism, but it was primarily interested in maintaining power in Serbia and in as much of the rest of Yugoslavia as possible. The main item on its political agenda was rolling back Yugoslavia's federal system, as enshrined in its 1974 Constitution, which – according to many Serbs – deliberately weakened Serbia by splitting it into three parts: Serbia proper and the provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. Behind this objective lay the more ambitious aims of restoring Serbia to the kind of dominant role it had had in the pre-1941 monarchist Yugoslavia but had gradually lost under the post-1945 Tito federation. Dissatisfaction with Tito's brand of federalism had been rife in Serbia since 1968 when Kosovo, once a part of Serbia's medieval state but now a region with an ethnic Albanian majority, was for the first time given a significant degree of autonomy. This was further extended in 1974. In 1977 Draza Markovic, the then Party leader in Serbia, presented Tito with a 'Green Book' detailing the Serbs' grievances but made no headway.

It was only after Tito's death, under a new Party leader, Slobodan Milosevic, who took office in 1986 and assumed full power in the wake of a widespread purge in the autumn of 1987, that the Serb anti-federal backlash found effective political expression. In 1988–89 Milosevic's Serbian Communist Party broadened its political base by forging a new populist alliance with those Serb nationalists dreaming of a Greater Serbia.<sup>2</sup> With the other Yugoslav republics anxiously looking on, Serbia embarked on the re-annexation of the autonomous provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina. Kosovo, with a 90



## THE GATHERING STORM

per cent Albanian majority, and Vojvodina, with a Serb majority but also a large Hungarian and a smaller Croat minority, had been granted in the 1974 Constitution the status just below that of a full republic, which meant that each had its own courts, police and territorial defence and – perhaps even more important – an independent vote in Yugoslavia's collective presidency alongside the other six republics (Bosnia and Hercegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Slovenia and Serbia itself).

Serb nationalism was given a filip by a series of demonstrations in Kosovo in 1981, a year after Tito's death, in favour of the demand for the province being given full republican status on a par with Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia itself. Repression of Albanian dissenters followed. Meanwhile Serbians were fed a steady stream of (mostly exaggerated and utterly tendentious) reports in the officially-controlled Serb media of alleged maltreatment by the local Albanians of the Serb minority in Kosovo. By the late 1980s, partly as a result of the ethnic Albanians' high birth-rate and partly due to continuing Serb emigration, the Serbs' share in Kosovo's total population had dropped to below 10 per cent. This was a bitter blow to many Serbs for whom Kosovo had over the centuries become the centre-piece of the Serbian national myth: it was the Serbs' defeat by the Turks in Kosovo in 1389 that ushered in five centuries of life under the Ottoman Empire.

In 1988–89 Milosevic brought Kosovo (by the use of brutal force against a resisting Albanian majority) and Vojvodina (mostly by political pressure and intimidation) under Belgrade's rule. At a huge rally in June 1989 held in Kosovo Polje, the scene of the 1389 battle whose 600th anniversary was being marked, Milosevic was able to tell his fellow-Serbs that the province, for so long severed from Mother-Serbia, had been restored. Meanwhile, his popularity had already benefitted from the fact that in January 1989, under his leadership, landlocked Serbia had extended its control over the tiny republic of Montenegro by means of a political coup. Montenegro, for centuries an independent mountainous principality ruled by Orthodox Christian prince-bishops, had been absorbed into the new state of Yugoslavia in 1918. The post-1945 Tito regime raised it to the status of a full republic, a fact welcomed by most Montenegrins, who had always regarded themselves as a part of the Serbian nation, if a separate and autonomous one. By the same token, the change in

## AN AWFUL WARNING

Montenegro's status was strongly resented by the Serbs. Political control over Montenegro gave the Serbian leadership Montenegro's vote in Yugoslavia's collective federal presidency.

In Bosnia, Milosevic's local political allies had begun as early as 1987 to organise the local Serb population (31 per cent of Bosnia's total population) against the tripartite (Croat–Moslem–Serb) Government in Sarajevo and to call on them to switch their loyalty to Serbia. Belgrade propaganda claimed that Bosnian Serbs faced the danger of being 'swamped' by the fast-reproducing Moslems and that Bosnia was heading for a 'fundamentalist' Moslem government and, therefore, needed arms to protect themselves. Such arms were provided secretly for pro-Milosevic groups by the JNA.

A similar campaign, led by Belgrade TV and actively aided by the Serbian Orthodox church, was launched among Croatia's 12 per cent-strong Serb minority. Croatia's Serbs were bombarded with propaganda material aimed at reviving memories of the genocide perpetrated against Croatian Serbs by the puppet *Ustasa* regime of Ante Pavelic during the 1941–45 period and convincing the local Serbs that, once again as in 1941–1942, they were confronted by the spectre of genocide.<sup>3</sup> In Croatia secret arming of pro-Milosevic elements among the Serbs began in 1987–1988. The highly organised media campaign drawing attention to the alleged threat of another genocide against them was undoubtedly an important element of the political mobilisation aimed at radicalising the Serbs (both those in Serbia and those in the other republics) in support of Milosevic's drive for the control of Yugoslavia – or as much of it as could be seized as part of Greater Serbia.

The rationale for replacing Yugoslavia with a Greater Serbia reaching as far west and south as possible was put forward in a memorandum prepared by a group of eminent Serbian economists, political scientists, demographers, historians and writers for the Serbian Academy of Sciences which was leaked to the press in 1986. The Memorandum was a modernised version of earlier plans for a Greater Serbia taking in also Bosnia, the bulk of Croatia, Macedonia and Montenegro. The main thesis of the Memorandum was that the Serbs, Yugoslavia's largest nation with a 36 per cent share of the total population, had been politically discriminated and economically disadvantaged in the post-1945 federation under Tito, a half-Croat and half-Slovene, and his Slovene deputy, Edvard Kardelj.

## THE GATHERING STORM

The Memorandum, which angered Yugoslavia's non-Serbs but attracted surprisingly little attention from Western observers when it first became public, set out a case for a de facto dismantling of the Yugoslav federation and the restoration of the hegemony enjoyed by the Serbs in the pre-1941 Kingdom of Yugoslavia. The Greater Serbia programme also had an economic dimension. Croatia loomed particularly large in those Great Serb plans because of its oil and gas in addition to its hard-currency tourist earnings. (Bosnia, though poorer than Croatia and Slovenia, was also important because of its natural resources and because much of Yugoslavia's huge arms industry was located on its territory.)<sup>4</sup>

This Serb campaign of reassertion alarmed Yugoslavia's non-Serb majority. Not without reason: by 1989 Milosevic's Serbia had gained three extra seats – those of Kosovo, Montenegro and Vojvodina – in addition to its own on the post-Tito eight-member collective state presidency of Yugoslavia. This was important because the presidency was the JNA's commander-in-chief and, perhaps even more significant, the body with the constitutional right to proclaim a state of emergency. Serbia protested all along that all it wanted was a 'functioning federation' but to the country's non-Serbs it looked as if Serbia was acquiring both the constitutional instruments and the military muscle needed to reimpose its old dominance. In this connection, Kosovo's, Vojvodina's and Montenegro's fate was seen in non-Serb parts of Yugoslavia as a portent of things to come. If 2 million ethnic Albanians could be placed under direct Belgrade rule, many non-Serbs reasoned, why not 2 million Slovenes, 2 million Bosnian Moslems or even 4.5 million Croats? Adding to the general alarm among the non-Serbs was the increasingly vocal backing given to Milosevic by the JNA, about 70 per cent of whose officers and NCOs were Serbs. The JNA's main organ, *Narodna Armija* (People's Army), regularly denounced 'separatist nationalism' and 'bourgeois liberalism'. This only fed pro-independence sentiment in Croatia and Slovenia, where in any case the JNA had increasingly come to be regarded as an alien institution, not least because of its insistence on the Serbian variant of Serbo-Croat as the language of military command throughout Yugoslavia.

Acting in response to public feelings the governments elected at the first multi-party elections in those two republics in the

## AN AWFUL WARNING

spring of 1990, embarked on a course that was eventually to lead to independence but for a while at least kept a door ajar for a possible accommodation with Serbia. However, consideration of joint Croat-Slovene proposals for a looser, confederal structure, preserving a broad Yugoslav framework but at the same time protecting the non-Serb republics from a Serb takeover, was twice blocked at the federal level by the Serbian voting bloc (Serbia proper, Kosovo, Vojvodina and Montenegro), with Bosnia and Macedonia poised uneasily in the middle. A serious additional blow to the waning confidence of non-Serb political and business leaders in the possibility of any sort of accommodation with Belgrade was dealt by the monetary 'coup' in December 1990, in which the Milosevic regime, using Serbia's own National Bank, helped itself to \$1.7 billion worth of money from the Yugoslav National Bank – the bulk of the fresh money supply earmarked for 1991. What lay behind the Serbian monetary raid was the need by the financially hard-pressed Milosevic regime to provide funding quickly for large wage increases awarded prior to the elections earlier that month that helped give Milosevic's Communists – under their new Socialist name – a huge victory.

At the time of the multi-party elections in Croatia and Slovenia in April–May 1990 the JNA showed its hand openly by disarming those two republics' territorial defence forces – though the Slovenes managed to retain part of their territorial forces, arms and equipment. Attempts by Croatia's and Slovenia's new, non-Communist Governments to acquire arms for their new security forces from Yugoslavia's own defence industry were rebuffed by the JNA's high command which made no secret of its total opposition to the new political trends.<sup>5</sup> The generals favoured the introduction of the state of emergency on the Polish 1981 model but realised that in a semi-confederal Yugoslavia this would not be easy to impose. That made them deeply frustrated and forced them to look for what they regarded as second-best solutions, all of them based on a state of emergency. In January 1991 disagreements about tactics among military chiefs and, even more important, fears of a possible negative Western reaction to such a move led to a last-minute cancellation of an army-backed coup in Croatia and Slovenia aimed at replacing the two republics' newly-elected leaders by old Communist 'trustees'. But the hardliners in Belgrade need not have worried: the West was moving in their direction.

## 2

### The West's myopia

When Croatia and Slovenia finally realised (Slovenia earlier than Croatia) that a peaceful divorce on the model of that between Norway and Sweden in 1905 would not be allowed by Serbia and its ally, the JNA, they began to move towards independence. These moves were backed by massive pro-independence referendums – Slovenia's in December 1990 and Croatia's in May 1991. The response of individual Western governments and of institutions such as the European Union was to appeal to all parties in Yugoslavia for a peaceful settlement, while leaning particularly heavily on would-be 'secessionists'. Croatia and Slovenia were asked to reconsider their intention to declare independence and told repeatedly by Western politicians that a cold welcome awaited them if they disregarded Western pleas not to leave Yugoslavia.

With the Croats and Slovenes evidently in mind, President Bush wrote in March 1991 to the Yugoslav Prime Minister, Ante Markovic, warning that the United States 'would not reward' those who split off from Yugoslavia without the agreement of the other parties. This warning was reiterated in even blunter terms by the American Secretary of State, James Baker, in June. During a brief visit to Belgrade en route to Tirana, he said that the United States would not recognise any unilateral declarations of independence by Croatia and Slovenia. Change could take place, he said, only through dialogue among all parties and a final agreement among them. He repeated that American policy supported a democratic, united Yugoslavia.<sup>6</sup>

The EU followed the same line. Britain's Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, placed Yugoslavia on the agenda of the EU ministerial council meeting in Dresden on 13 May 1991. At the meeting Britain proposed that Yugoslavia should be transformed into a 'loose confederation' but that outright independence for Croatia and Slovenia should be rejected. On the eve of the EU meeting, Austria's Foreign Minister, Alois Mock, suggested the setting up of a group of 'wise men', independent experts whose task would be to

## AN AWFUL WARNING

help the Yugoslav republics settle their problems. This proposal was rejected by the EU, as was that by Catherine Lalumière, the then Secretary-General of the Council of Europe, for a mediation group drawn from among the experts within the Council of Europe. EU ministers decided to dispatch a delegation to Yugoslavia consisting of Jacques Delors, President of the EU Commission, and Jacques Santer, Prime Minister of Luxembourg. They visited Yugoslavia at the end of May, carrying the same message. The EU was ready to offer aid and closer relations, including an association agreement, provided Yugoslavia remained together and solved its problems peacefully within the framework of:

1. a single market, a single currency and a central bank;
2. a single army;
3. a single joint policy-making mechanism;
4. a common system for the protection of human rights and ethnic minorities throughout Yugoslavia.

An important though symbolic part of the mission's message, principally dealing with the 'separatists' in Croatia and Slovenia, was its insistence on treating solely with the Federal Government in Belgrade. It was with that Government that the EU signed on 24 June 1991, the day before Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence, a five-year 807 million ECU loan agreement.

This gesture demonstrated a serious misunderstanding of the political realities in Yugoslavia. By then it should have been clear to everybody who was sufficiently interested to find out that, in the deadly poker game between Milosevic and the leaders in Ljubljana and Zagreb, financial inducements offered by outsiders, however well-meaning, could not any longer play a role. To paraphrase Richard Nixon, you could do everything with the Yugoslav crisis except throw ECUs at it.

The West's stance was quite correctly interpreted by Serbian hardliners as a sign that the West would not stand in the way of their plans and, therefore, as the green light for their campaign of re-centralisation. It could hardly be otherwise in view of the fact that small-print Western appeals for a settlement of the crisis without the use of force did not spell out what the West would do to those who used force. As far as Croat and Slovene leaders were concerned, they felt trapped: they faced the choice between surrender to

## THE WEST'S MYOPIA

Belgrade on one side and a risky bid for independence on the other. They plumped for the latter – not least because pro-independence, anti-Belgrade opinion had become an important political factor which the political leadership had to take into account both in Croatia and in Slovenia. To Croats and Slovenes, backing down under pressure of threats from Belgrade was unthinkable. But Slobodan Milosevic and army generals in Belgrade were in a confident mood and not ready to accommodate Croatia and Slovenia. A serious confrontation was looming. All that should have been known to Western governments, so why did they lean on the ‘secessionists’ alone?

It certainly was not the old fear that if Yugoslavia became internally destabilised, the Soviet Union might move in and take control. That fear had ceased to be a factor in Western calculations since the collapse of Soviet power in Eastern and Central Europe in 1989–90. But there was still a reluctance to contemplate the inevitably messy and complicated breakup of a state into which so much Western money and effort had been poured in since its break with Moscow in 1948. The EU, which had extended to Yugoslavia a high degree of preferential treatment since the mid-1960s, had convinced itself that its protégé was, by and large, a success story and therefore a worthy candidate for early association and, eventually, membership. There was an understandable reluctance to face new costs involved in the setting up of the successor states which the European Union would likely have to bear.

Allied to this was the fear that the breakup of Yugoslavia would plunge the whole of South-Eastern Europe into a crisis by reopening a number of old territorial issues that had been settled in the post-1945 period, centering on Kosovo and Macedonia and involving most particularly Albania, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey. Beyond that there was the worry for the United States and Western Europe that Croatia’s and Slovenia’s secession could set a precedent for secessions elsewhere – in the Soviet Union with many attendant nuclear complications, but also in Western Europe (in France, Spain, Italy and of course Britain). In short, what was happening in 1990–91 was for the West, quite simply, the wrong crisis – one of disintegration in an integrating Europe – at the wrong time (when it had to cope with the aftermath of Germany’s unification and with dramatic changes in the Soviet Union and in the Middle East).

## AN AWFUL WARNING

Judged from a narrow Western viewpoint, the war also occurred in the wrong place – the Balkans which had ceased to be a region of high strategic importance. From that perspective, the *status quo* in Yugoslavia, however imperfect, looked vastly preferable to almost any alternatives – which was also the attitude of Yugoslavia's immediate neighbours – from Austria and Italy to Albania and Greece. Most of them had in the pre-1941 era harboured designs on Yugoslavia's territory but had since 1945 become reconciled to its existence and even come to see it as advantageous to themselves.<sup>7</sup> There was then a good case for hesitation on the part of the outsiders, but was the pro-*status quo* policy the right one for the Yugoslav challenge?

It was not, for the simple reason the old Titoist order in Yugoslavia had irretrievably broken down. Those in the West backing the *status quo* in Yugoslavia were chasing a phantom. Given the irreconcilable differences between Croatia and Slovenia on one side and Belgrade on the other, it must have been clear to anybody who knew the situation that Yugoslavia could no longer be kept together except by force under a government enjoying a strong outside political, diplomatic and economic support – such as Tito had enjoyed during the Cold War years. But Western governments were no longer sufficiently interested in Yugoslavia to pay a high price for its continued existence, whatever some in the West might have felt privately about the attractions of a 'Chile-in-the Balkans' solution – a 'transitional dictatorship' – while the free-market system was taking root. But General Veljko Kadijevic, Yugoslavia's Federal Defence Minister and Chief of Staff of the JNA, and his colleagues were Communists who very well understood the danger that a truly liberal economy would pose to their own position. They had welcomed generous aid received by Yugoslavia during the Tito years from capitalist Western governments but that had been given without domestic strings. Capitalism at home as an underpinning of non-Communist political pluralism was a different proposition and not at all acceptable. Like Slobodan Milosevic, Yugoslav generals quite correctly recognised a truly free-market economy as a threat to their own position. What they and Milosevic wanted was more, not less socialism and more, not less Yugoslavia as part of a centralist-Communist restoration.

It should have been clear to all in the West that, given the victory



of non-Communist forces in much of formerly Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe, and the fact that 1990 multi-party elections had eliminated the Communists from sole power in four out of Yugoslavia's six federal republics, such an anti-pluralist, centralist and Serb-led restoration could not succeed – certainly not without a good deal of bloodshed; and that, such success could only be temporary. The Yugoslav Humpty-Dumpty could perhaps be put together again but could not hold together – except by force and even then not for long.

But Western perceptions were clouded, partly as a result of the dubious political role played by Ante Markovic, the Federal Yugoslav Prime Minister, a Croat who had formerly been both Prime Minister and President of Croatia, and was one of the few remaining non-elected political figures in Yugoslavia appointed in 1989 under the old *nomenklatura* procedures. Markovic continued to hold out to his many Western backers the possibility of squaring all the conflicting interests under his leadership within the framework of a radical economic and financial reform. In effect, he proposed an economic solution to what were essentially deep-seated political problems. Not surprisingly, Markovic was unable to fulfil this promise. His greatest tactical error was to try to buy Serbia's support by allowing it to overshoot its spending targets as part of a large pre-election wage and salary increase; and the JNA's by exempting it from drastic military budget cuts already agreed among the country's political leaders. This lost him the trust of Croatia and Slovenia without gaining him the full backing of those he had done his utmost to appease: Serbia and the JNA. However, Western governments, particularly that of the United States, continued till the very end to display a seemingly blind confidence in Markovic, ignoring the evidence provided by the poor electoral showing of the Reformist Alliance, the party he had set up in 1990 in all the republics in which it put up candidates.

### 3

## International responses to the war

The JNA's intervention in Slovenia on 27 June 1991, immediately after the Slovene declaration of independence of 25 June was designed to seal Slovenia off from its Western neighbours, Austria and Italy and came as a shock for Europe and for the rest of the world. For European governments, in particular, the war in Europe – the first in the post-Cold War era – posed a serious dilemma. Was the conflict in Yugoslavia taking place within a sovereign state and, could it, therefore be regarded as that state's internal concern? Or was the conflict a matter of aggression by one state against another and, therefore, something that justified, even demanded a response under the UN Charter?

In legal terms, the issue was not simple and required careful analysis. Slovenia had declared its independence two days before the JNA's attack on it but, from an international point of view, nothing had changed: formally, Slovenia (as well as Croatia) still formed part of Yugoslavia, a sovereign state and a member of the United Nations and numerous other international bodies. But Slovenia and Croatia clearly regarded themselves already as sovereign states and looked to the international community both for diplomatic recognition and for support in their plight.

On the ground, the opposing sides justified their actions by reference to the 1974 Constitution. The JNA's high command claimed that, in intervening in Slovenia against the local territorial defence forces, it was doing no more than fulfilling its constitutional duty to protect Yugoslavia's unity and territorial integrity. It further claimed that its action had been authorised by the Yugoslav Federal Government at its meeting on 25 June 1991 following a demand by the Yugoslav Federal Assembly for the 'repossession' from the Slovenes of Yugoslavia's international borders.<sup>8</sup>

Slovenia claimed that, on the contrary, it was acting legally and constitutionally. It was the JNA, the Slovenes argued, that was impeding Slovenia in the exercise of its constitutional right, enshrined in the Yugoslav Constitution, to secede from the Yugoslav

## INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES TO THE WAR

federation in line with the democratically expressed decision of the clear majority of its population at a special referendum. Furthermore, the Slovenes argued that it was not they but the JNA which was acting unconstitutionally and without legal authority in intervening in Slovenia. Authority for such action could have been given to it only by Yugoslavia's eight-member collective presidency, in its capacity as the commander-in-chief of the country's armed forces. Only the presidency could order troop movements in any of the federal republics: for Yugoslavia's six constituent republics were not simply 'administrative units' but states (*drzave*), whose prior agreement in this matter had first to be obtained at the level of the presidency. But the presidency had, since May 1991, been paralysed by the Serbian voting bloc's refusal to allow the routine election of Stipe Mesic, a Croat member of the presidency, as its chairman for the May 1991–May 1992 period. Neither the Federal Assembly nor the Federal Government was empowered to supplant the collective presidency in this matter.<sup>9</sup>

The war in Slovenia in June 1991 set the alarm bells ringing. The ink on the Charter of Paris which had codified the norms of acceptable international behaviour in November 1990 was barely dry; it was impossible for governments simply to ignore the first war in Europe since 1945, especially one which had flared up when so many people were concluding that Europe had permanently banished the danger of war. Still, most governments did not act. A few did but the agenda they addressed turned out to have far more to do with their own preoccupations than with the situation on the ground.

**The United Nations**, the body equipped with the right kind of international legitimacy and instruments and, therefore, best suited for action in that crisis, was one of those that stood aside initially. Was the conflict there an internal one or was it aggression by one state against another? The UN's official contact began in November 1991 when the then UN Secretary-General, Xavier Pérez de Cuéllar, appointed Cyrus Vance, President Carter's Secretary of State, as his special envoy to the mediation mechanism for Yugoslavia set up by the EU and placed under Lord Carrington, former British Foreign Secretary. The UN's direct and active involvement came in February 1992, when the Security Council decided to send a UN force with a narrow peacekeeping mandate to Croatia.<sup>10</sup>

## AN AWFUL WARNING

By that time, however, the war in Croatia had already reached a stalemate; a ceasefire had been negotiated; and most of the radical options that might have allowed the tackling of the root causes of the problem were no longer available.

NATO was precluded, by its own rules, from participating in what was for it an 'out-of-area' conflict. True, but perhaps all too conveniently so: NATO's members conspicuously failed to investigate whether, in spite of that, any other possibilities existed for NATO to play a constructive role. It has to be said, in fairness, that NATO gave its permission for its members' navies to take part in joint maritime patrols with **Western European Union (WEU)** off the Adriatic coast to monitor the arms embargo that had been routinely imposed by the UN shortly after the outbreak of the armed conflict. Later, the Allied navies undertook the monitoring of the enforcement of economic sanctions imposed on the rump Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) in May 1992. In the Bosnian conflict NATO was brought into the discussion about possible air-strikes and other actions to enforce the UN's ban on unauthorised military flights, to support the UN troops in Bosnia and to protect humanitarian convoys as well as the Serb-besieged Moslem enclaves set up in May 1993. But actual requests for action came only in early 1994, mainly owing to disagreements among the governments and the UN both about the aims to be achieved and about the most suitable tactics.

**The Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE)** had in the late 1980s increasingly come to be regarded as a putative pan-European security system but the Yugoslav conflict demonstrated its severe limitations. The June 1991 meeting of CSCE's Foreign Ministers in Berlin, held on the eve of the war in Slovenia, expressed concern about the situation in Yugoslavia – the first time the 35 countries had issued an opinion on a member state. But once war had begun there was little the organisation could do. Its conflict-prevention centre in Vienna, set up by the CSCE summit in Paris in November 1990, with the task of promoting confidence- and security-building measures, had been overtaken by the war. The CSCE's second available instrument, the emergency mechanism, was invoked by Austria and a meeting was held in Prague, a few days after the war's outbreak. The meeting issued a call for a cease-fire and endorsed an EU-arranged monitoring mission to

Yugoslavia. After thus additionally easing and legitimising the EU's formal entry into the Yugoslav crisis, the CSCE receded into the background as the EU took the lead.

For the **European Union**, the crisis in Yugoslavia was a headache but also an opportunity. The EU was in the middle of a debate about its future development which centred on the subject of a common EU defence and foreign policy. There was much talk of a common foreign policy but this usually meant in practice that, in the interests of unity, joint foreign policy initiatives were reduced to the lowest common denominator. Debate about a separate European defence identity was aggravated by disagreements as to whether the aim was at all desirable – in view of the possible impact on NATO.

In late July 1991, shortly after the outbreak of the war, France proposed military intervention to stop the war. This was to be undertaken by the WEU, a 12-member body that had been dormant since its inception in 1948 but had become more important in the late 1980s because many saw it as a possible defence arm for the EU. There were however serious disagreements between the 'Atlanticists' (Britain, Holland and Portugal) who saw the WEU simply as a handy 'European pillar' of the Atlantic Alliance and others, particularly, France, who wanted to make it into a distinctive European defence organisation. The French July 1991 initiative came to nothing but in September 1991, as cease-fire after cease-fire in Croatia broke down, the possibility of sending EU states' troops wearing WEU hats into Yugoslavia was raised again.

The renewed French proposal was this time supported by Germany, Holland and Italy, but Britain opposed it. After an argument between those like France who wanted to send in a force to establish the conditions of peace and those like Britain who (with Northern Ireland in mind) argued that it would be irresponsible to send such a force into a country where there was no peace to be kept, the non-interventionists won. They were helped by two factors: the entirely predictable absence of an invitation for a WEU force from Serbia, and the British determination to nip in the bud a Franco-German idea for a Euro-army to which Britain would likely end up being the main contributor.<sup>11</sup> Here, as on subsequent occasions, questions of more immediate political concern to EU members squeezed the situation on the ground in Yugoslavia lower down the list.

Having failed to stop armed conflict in Yugoslavia, the EU was

## AN AWFUL WARNING

reduced to managing it. This happened in two ways: through arranging cease-fires on the ground and through the Peace Conference on Yugoslavia at The Hague. Both efforts failed. The only cease-fire successfully brokered by the beginning of 1992 was that by Cyrus Vance on behalf of the UN. The Peace Conference, hurriedly convened in September 1991 under Lord Carrington, proved to be little more than a talking-shop. It brought together the Yugoslav federal presidency, the Federal Government and the presidents of the six republics, but when Carrington suggested the establishment of sovereign and independent republics for those who wished it, Serbia rejected his proposal. The conference collapsed in November 1991 and the UN was brought in.

By then, an arbitration commission, set up with a French constitutional lawyer, Judge Robert Badinter, at its head, had reported back. Its main conclusions were that Yugoslavia was in a 'state of dissolution'; that self-determination must not involve changes to existing republican borders at the time of independence (except where the parties concerned agreed otherwise); that the Serbs of Croatia and Bosnia were entitled to all the rights accorded to minorities under international law; and that Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia should be given diplomatic recognition. Bosnia could also be recognised if the majority of its population voted for independence at a referendum. The EU acted on Badinter's proposals, but by then the main role in handling the conflict in Yugoslavia had passed to the UN.

Of course, as an organisation the EU faced formidable problems in dealing with the Yugoslav conflict. In the first place, it had no experience of dealing with such situations: trade and finance had been its proper *métier*. It lacked a permanent body for dealing with conflict resolution. Its presidency changed every six months. It did enjoy enormous prestige as a successful economic organisation and, therefore, possessed influence in the economic sphere. But that hardly mattered once the political conflict in Yugoslavia had escalated into a war. So what made the EU so eager to get involved in the Yugoslav crisis?

The United States had criticised the EU for its disunity and hesitancy during the Gulf War. The EU therefore wished to demonstrate that the Twelve were capable of a cohesive foreign policy. The fact that the crisis was in Yugoslavia, a long-standing protégé of the

## INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES TO THE WAR

EU, made it difficult to resist the temptation of telling the Americans that this particular 'spot of bother' could be dealt with by the Europeans alone.

But the EU's involvement suffered from a fatal flaw: it had convinced itself that all that was wanted was diplomatic mediation overlooking the fundamental truth that no diplomatic effort could hope to succeed without leverage, including particularly the threat to use force. The EU's abandonment at the very start of the crisis – largely at British insistence – of any serious consideration of the use of force had much to do with what had then been happening in Eastern and Central Europe. The reluctance of Mikhail Gorbachev to use force to preserve the Soviet sphere of control had fed the fatal Western illusion that everybody had come to share its belief in the effectiveness of peaceful multilateral diplomacy.

The attribution of Western values to those not sharing them had bedevilled the EU's (as well as later the UN's) peacemaking in the Balkans from the beginning. Those concerned with the peace process – from the early EU ministerial *troikas* to Lord Carrington and Cyrus Vance and, finally, Lord Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg – had presumed that sooner or later, given the right diplomatic framework, the 'warring factions' would sit down with each other and negotiate a settlement. What this attitude, born of the years of successful nuclear deterrence in the East-West conflict, completely left out of consideration was the fact that in the Yugoslav conflict the stronger side – the army and the Serbs – was confident that it could get away with what it was doing. It had no incentive to pull back in response to moral exhortation that was not backed by an explicit (or at least implied) threat of retaliatory action in case warnings against the use of force were ignored. Instead, Slobodan Milosevic and the generals in Belgrade heard constantly from senior Western government figures (particularly British) that the use of force had been ruled out.

Since Western governments had in any case no intention of intervening militarily, it could be argued that such statements were doing no more than accurately reflecting existing attitudes and that for Western politicians to do otherwise was an invitation to somebody to call their bluff. Even so, Western insistence that no force would be used provided Belgrade with an additional and most welcome source of reassurance that it had absolutely nothing to fear

## AN AWFUL WARNING

from the West. But the continued high-profile Western (especially EU) diplomatic involvement in the crisis, coupled with repeated condemnations of Serbia's aggression and assurances that aggression would not be allowed to be seen to pay, misled the weaker sides in the conflict – Croatia in 1991 and the Bosnian Moslems after April 1992 – into entertaining unrealistic hopes of eventual Western armed assistance and continuing to fight rather than admitting defeat and agreeing to a settlement, however unfavourable. But was there anything else the West could have done and, if so, what was it?

Pessimists who currently dominate Western discussions about the war in ex-Yugoslavia argue that, given that the locals were determined not to compromise, war in Yugoslavia was inevitable. Any idea of an agreed solution leading to a looser Yugoslavia or to its peaceful dissolution like that of the Swedish–Norwegian kingdom in 1905 (or, in our own day, that of the Soviet Union at the end of 1991 and that of Czechoslovakia at the end of 1992), was an illusion. According to this view, the conflict in Yugoslavia could not have even been stopped with outside help: having started, it had to run its course, had to 'burn itself out' allowing for a solution based on the facts of the battlefield to emerge.

It is hard to disagree with the first proposition – that, left to themselves, the protagonists of the crisis in Yugoslavia would have drifted into war. The second proposition – that outsiders were powerless to stop the tragedy – while of course it cannot be disproved, needs challenging. The fatalistic approach – the belief that what happened was inevitable – ignores the very real possibilities open to Western governments to influence the Yugoslav conflict in a constructive way – and to do so without embarking on a massive military intervention involving Western ground troops.

The following counter-argument is necessarily speculative and rests on certain pre-conditions being met. First, from the start, the West would have had an open-minded attitude: ruling out no solution – not even Yugoslavia's demise – instead of clinging far too long to an untenable *status quo*. Second, it would have had to possess the political will to mediate a settlement and then to enforce its implementation in an effective and credible way. As it was, neither of those pre-conditions was met. The West stuck much too long to the fiction – for that was what it was – that the conflict in



## INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES TO THE WAR

Yugoslavia was a civil war within a sovereign state. As a consequence Serbia and the JNA were given the chance of presenting themselves as defenders of legality and constitutionality, which they most emphatically were not, and of presenting Croatia and Slovenia as law-breaking 'secessionists' – a term that has negative connotations everywhere and in the United States, in particular. By offering diplomatic mediation on that basis – instead of immediately de-recognising Yugoslavia – the West gave Serbia valuable extra time to extend and consolidate its conquests in Croatia.

Worse than that, by imposing an arms embargo on the whole region of Yugoslavia, EU governments (and later the United Nations) handed a huge advantage to the stronger side in the war – the JNA and its Serb paramilitary allies. They had no need of foreign imports, relying on Yugoslavia's own large arms industry, most of it situated in Serbia and Bosnia. To an extent, the Serbian-JNA's advantage was offset in Slovenia by the Slovenes' success in keeping some of their territorial defence weapons but the same was not true in Croatia (or, later, of Bosnia whose multi-ethnic territorial defence force was also disarmed while Bosnian Serb supporters of Belgrade were handed the arms by the JNA).

There *was* a way which might have made Slobodan Milosevic and his generals pause. Western governments (particularly the US Government whose credibility had risen to unprecedented heights in the wake of the victory in the Gulf War) could have called for an immediate cessation of hostilities. This appeal should have been coupled with the announcement that diplomatic recognition would be given to all those republics seeking it and that requests from those republics for arms to defend themselves would be considered sympathetically. Those who ignored calls for the cessation of the use of force would risk international retaliation in the form of air strikes against military targets and others of military significance such as bridges, fuel depots and power stations. Such a warning would have been particularly effective at the very start of the conflicts in Slovenia and Croatia.

Memories of the awesome American might displayed in the Gulf war – in which air power finally came of age – were still fresh and its credibility at an all-time high. Both the political leaders and the generals in Belgrade were deeply anxious about the West's reaction to what they were planning to do, as can clearly be seen from

## AN AWFUL WARNING

General Veljko Kadijevic's book about Yugoslavia's disintegration<sup>12</sup>. Kadijevic and his colleagues had been very worried even by the extremely mild British and American *démarches* of the 'I-shouldn't-do-it-if-I-were-you-old-boy' variety on the eve of their planned coup in Croatia and Slovenia in January 1991. Those warnings seemed to them to confirm their worst fears, i.e. that Western governments would not shrink from using force. The JNA generals, in particular, had despite their contacts with the West over many years always disbelieved – wrongly, as it turned out – Western protestations of support for Yugoslavia's unity and integrity. Again wrongly, they suspected Western governments of plotting Yugoslavia's stage-by-stage destruction as part of their overall world game plan for the 'liquidation of socialism'. And so Kadijevic & Co. could scarcely believe their good fortune when, instead of being branded as aggressors and threatened with air strikes and other punishments they received only disapproving noises and verbal condemnations from the West on attacking Slovenia and, later, Croatia in the summer of 1991.

There is a good reason for thinking that a tough Western warning to Milosevic and Kadijevic, followed if necessary by air strikes and offers of supplies of arms and equipment to the victims of aggression, would have worked. This is that the JNA was extremely vulnerable in the early stages of the conflict. Though well-armed and equipped (partly by the West), the JNA had not really been prepared and trained for the sort of war it ended up having to fight, i.e., putting down the domestic enemy rather than repelling foreign invaders. It seems pretty clear now that the JNA generals calculated that, given the overwhelming superiority of the forces facing them, the Slovenes and the Croats could be easily intimidated and made to surrender without a fight. But intimidation did not work and the JNA found itself in the end obliged to fight a war it had not reckoned with having to fight. Its probably most vulnerable period was in July–August 1991 when its tanks, artillery and other heavy equipment were being re-deployed, following the cease-fire in Slovenia, via Croatia to Bosnia and (to a lesser extent) Serbia. The generals need not have worried: Western governments, though disappointed in the previously well-thought-of 'banker' Milosevic, continued to treat the JNA gently and respectfully as if it was a disinterested professional force standing above the political fray.<sup>13</sup>

## INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES TO THE WAR

It is argued by some that an intervention would not only have been hard to legitimate, given the legal and constitutional complexities, but that it would also have helped re-ignite old rivalries over the Balkans among the European powers, not unlike those that helped spark off the war in 1914. It is true, of course, that international legitimisation of an action of the kind advocated above would, both in legal and in political terms, have presented some problems. But they would almost certainly not have been greater than those encountered – and successfully overcome – by the brilliant American diplomacy in the run-up to the Gulf War. In any case, Western powers have rarely, if ever, been deterred in the post-1945 period from interventions they considered important to their interests. The real problem with the conflict in ex-Yugoslavia has been that neither Europe nor the US has been prepared to take responsibility for finding a solution. Leadership, particularly American leadership, has remained conspicuous by its absence. The reasons for this situation have already been touched upon, but to these must be added the American political élite's intense preoccupation throughout most of 1991 and the whole of 1992 with one of the most-domestically oriented presidential election campaigns this century.

As to the second objection – the fear of robust action in ex-Yugoslavia re-igniting old European rivalries between Russia and the West and within the West itself – if there ever was a period during which the West did not have to worry about Russia in the Balkans it was Russia's intensely 'Atlanticist' pro-reform period of 1991 to 1993. As for Western Europe, it is true that the unification of Germany in 1990 did re-awaken some old fears and jealousies in Western Europe but, ironically, forceful action in pursuit of a principled policy in ex-Yugoslavia could have proved more of a unifying factor than the opportunistic lowest-common-denominator stance adopted by the EU.

This is perfectly illustrated by the way EU governments allowed themselves to become bogged down in the sterile and divisive debate about first steps – the diplomatic recognition of those Yugoslav republics which sought it. All in all, the EU took more than six months to recognise Croatia and Slovenia, another three months to recognise Bosnia and another year and a half to do the same for Macedonia. Conventional wisdom in Britain, France and some other Western states claims that, even so, the recognition of

## AN AWFUL WARNING

Croatia and Slovenia by the EU in January 1992, advocated by Germany and opposed by Britain and France in particular, had been 'premature'; that the Germans were wrong to press for it; and that it would have been wiser to wait for the resolution of all the outstanding problems (including that of the protection of the minorities) as Lord Carrington had demanded. It is of course impossible to say now how long it would have taken Lord Carrington to produce a complete package with all the loose ends of the Yugoslav problem neatly tied up. Or whether, indeed, a 'Yugoslav' solution for which Lord Carrington and most Western governments were clearly then still hoping for was at that stage still possible. Probably, it was not. What is sure, however, is that while the talking was going on at The Hague and in Brussels under the EU's auspices, the JNA and Serbian paramilitaries were waging war on Croatia, occupying its territory and destroying its cities and its infrastructure. Croatia could have been asked to wait for diplomatic recognition, but only by those who were ready, pending such recognition, to protect it from the Serbian aggression, then in full swing. But Western governments offered no such help (not even the relatively easily arranged naval protection for the city of Dubrovnik while it was being shelled by the besieging Serbian forces in October and November 1991). They offered only diplomacy.

The controversy over recognition will go on but it is now accepted even by those, like the Germans, who supported early recognition that it did not stop the war in Croatia. Recognition was important in that it sent a warning signal to the JNA and Milosevic that they could no longer reckon with international support for, or even acquiescence in an attempt to put Yugoslavia together by force. Recognition also signalled to the aggressors that the victims of their aggression would be entitled to ask for outside help if they were attacked again. But none of that brought the war in Croatia to an end. That war ended because the JNA and its allies, the Serb paramilitaries, having occupied nearly a third of Croatia, had run out of steam and needed a breathing space to consolidate their gains and, meanwhile, prepare for the next stage of their campaign against next-door Bosnia. They calculated (quite correctly, as it turned out) that the stationing of UN troops in Croatia which followed the cease-fire of January 1992 would help 'freeze' the existing situation – at least for the foreseeable future – as it had done

## INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES TO THE WAR

in Cyprus after the Turkish intervention in 1974. The Croats, in a sense, had no choice: they were aware of the traps and the pitfalls of the cease-fire arrangements and the possible harm to Croatia's territorial integrity from the presence of UNPROFOR. Nevertheless they were glad to see a halt to the fighting which had left their country devastated and exhausted.

The Serb minority issue, which figured prominently in the EU's discussions about Croatia's recognition, was resolved by Germany acting on behalf of the EU to persuade Zagreb to enlarge the scope of Serbian autonomy in the Croat constitution. This was duly done but the sincerity of the (sometimes crassly insensitive) Tudjman government in Croatia was never put to the test. It could not be tested because a minority of Croatia's 600,000-strong Serb population had taken up arms against Croatia as early as the summer of 1990, without waiting to discuss their status and rights. That rebellion, guided from Belgrade and aided by the JNA in Croatia, made the future position of the Serbs in Croatia more, not less difficult because it convinced many Croats that it was they who needed protecting from the aggressive Serb minority, not the other way round.

Actually, tensions in the EU over the recognition issue had less to do with the virtuousness or otherwise of Croatia and its suitability for recognition than with the mistrust felt by some EU members against the reunited Germany. Its pressure for the recognition of Croatia was interpreted as an example of its readiness to throw its weight about and a pointer to its future hegemonial ambitions in a new *Kleinmitteleuropa* in South-Eastern Europe made up of the mainly Roman Catholic states like Austria, Croatia, Czechoslovakia (as it then still was), Hungary and Slovenia.

But this was to misunderstand the real reasons for Germany's advocacy from July 1991 of Croatia's and Slovenia's recognition. The principal motive behind it was humanitarian: the German Government was responding to the intense pressure on it by the German domestic opinion for something to be done to stop the slaughter. There is no evidence to suggest that Germany was engaged in a new version of the old pre-1914 Wilhelminian *Drang nach dem Süden*. The focus of today's Germany's economic and diplomatic interest of course is Central Europe and the successor states of the former Soviet Union, not the Balkans. The critics of the

## AN AWFUL WARNING

German position did have a point in one respect, at least. The logical follow-up to Croatia's recognition could have been Croatia's demand, as a sovereign state, for assistance against external aggression. Since Germany's 1949 constitution severely limits its scope for military action abroad except strictly in self-defence, the burden of response to such a demand would have fallen on the shoulders of its allies. In other words, Germany was calling for others to be ready to do what it knew it could not reasonably be asked to do itself (especially in view of the local memories of the German role in the Balkans in the Second World War). The recognition debate within the EU provided further confirmation of the proposition that on this occasion, as on others, the agenda being addressed by the EU had little or nothing to do with the situation on the ground, but much to do with new intra-European relationships in the wake of Germany's unification.

## The Bosnia triangle

The EU's hesitant record over Croatia in 1991 made it more difficult for it to act constructively when Bosnia arrived on its agenda in early 1992.<sup>14</sup> By its failure to act early and decisively to stop the war in Croatia, the West as a whole – including the United States – had lost in the Balkans much of the credibility acquired during the Cold War and reinforced in the Gulf. Britain was no longer seen as the country that had recently, under Mrs Thatcher's leadership, rolled back the Argentine aggressor in the Falklands and helped topple Argentina's corrupt military regime, but merely as another Western 'paper tiger' ready to appease aggressors. Historical parallels are, of course, rarely exact and often misleading, but that between Western appeasement of Slobodan Milosevic and his generals since 1991 and Britain's and France's appeasement of Hitler in the 1930s was widely seen in the Balkans as justified: the cap seemed to fit. Many people in the region were deeply disappointed by the Western governments' failure to live up to their oft-repeated solemn statements of support for the principle that the aggressor must be punished, but they never completely abandoned hope that the essentially decent men and women in charge of Western governments could at least be shamed into supporting the victims of aggression. This hope sustained the Bosnian Moslems throughout the course of the war.

But the clear-sighted and pragmatic Serb/JNA leadership in Belgrade took the opposite view. Encouraged by the earlier (and entirely convincing) display of Western unwillingness to get involved, it concluded that it had nothing to fear provided Western governments were from time to time handed convenient excuses for not intervening. It is not yet quite clear which of those readings of the Western mindset will have proved closer to the truth. The course of the war in ex-Yugoslavia so far has provided ample backing for the Serb version, though it is possible that the notorious unpredictability of the Western democracies, may yet prove the Serbs wrong, just as it confounded the hopes of other aggressors.

## AN AWFUL WARNING

Bosnia was recognised as an independent state by the EU on 6 April 1992 and by the United States shortly thereafter. It became a member of the United Nations, together with Croatia and Slovenia, on 22 May. Bosnia's recognition was the last stage of a process which had begun at the end of 1992 with an EU request to the Bosnian Government that it should hold a referendum on independence as a precondition of diplomatic recognition. The referendum, held on 29 February and 1 March 1992, was boycotted by most of Bosnia's Serbs at the urging of Radovan Karadzic, leader of the main Serbian party (*SDS*) and an ally of Slobodan Milosevic, though thousands of Serbs in the big cities ignored the call to boycott. Of the 64 per cent of the registered voters who took part in the referendum, 99 per cent voted in favour of independence.

What followed was not, as is claimed by Serbian propaganda, a spontaneous uprising of the Bosnian Serbs (31–33 per cent of the total population) against the threat of anti-Serbian Moslem fundamentalist rule under a devout Moslem believer, President Alija Izetbegovic, supported in his anti-Serbianism by Croat *Ustasas*. It was, as in Croatia in 1990–91, a minutely prepared and ruthlessly executed plan of territorial conquest in pursuit of Greater Serbia carried out jointly by the JNA and the Serb paramilitaries. Planning for it had begun a long time ago – in the autumn of 1991. Artillery positions were established around major Bosnian cities, including Sarajevo in the winter of 1991–92. JNA units with artillery and heavy armour were transferred, with the UN's approval, into Bosnia from Croatia early in 1992 after the cease-fire there. Bosnian territorial forces were disarmed while Karadzic's SDS supporters were simultaneously being armed. The culmination of this process, begun with the proclamation of Serb 'autonomous regions' in Bosnia in May 1991 and a 'parliament' in October 1991, was Karadzic's SDS's withdrawal from Sarajevo and its proclamation of a Bosnian Serb republic on 27 March.

On 30 March, following a series of incidents in various Bosnian cities including Sarajevo, General Blagoje Adzic, the JNA's chief, declared that his troops were ready to 'protect' the Serbs of Bosnia.<sup>15</sup> In early April Serb paramilitaries brought over from Serbia by the notorious Zeljko Raznjatovic-Arkan, a former bank robber and Yugoslav secret police killer whose force had committed many atrocities in Croatia (notably in Vukovar after its capture by



## THE BOSNIA TRIANGLE

the JNA), carried out a series of well-publicised massacres in the predominantly Moslem town of Bijeljina in eastern Bosnia. This raid, followed by one on Zvornik, also in Eastern Bosnia, which had previously been 'softened' by JNA artillery, led to a mass flight of Moslems from Eastern Bosnia close to the Serb-Bosnian border. Fighting soon spread to other parts of Bosnia, with the JNA and the paramilitaries trying to secure important communications centres, arms factories and so on, though not with equal success everywhere. The Croats in the south as well as those in the north in the region of the Sava River, the historic border between Croatia and Bosnia, fought back successfully in alliance with some of the Moslems. But the majority of Moslems, too long encouraged by their leader, President Alija Izetbegovic, to believe that the JNA and Belgrade could be bought off provided that the Moslems did not rock the boat, were still too stunned and disoriented to fight back. The Croat-Moslem alliance did not last long, however. It was undermined by President Tudjman, whose opportunistic but naive approach to developments allowed Milosevic to trick him into discussing Bosnia's dismemberment by Croatia and Serbia, a fatal move which sowed mistrust and eventually helped lead to bitter armed conflict between Bosnia's Croats and Moslems.

When the fighting broke out in Bosnia in April 1992, Belgrade authorities repeatedly stated – as they had done in Croatia in 1991 – that the JNA was only acting as a peacekeeping force separating local factions and that no JNA units were crossing from Serbia into Bosnia.<sup>16</sup> Those Serb claims were untrue, as Western eye-witnesses regularly testified. In truth, Serbia was conducting a war of aggression against a neighbouring state which had just received diplomatic recognition from the EU. But the West's response was muted. Frantic efforts were being made by the EU to re-start negotiations conducted by Lord Carrington for a 'cantonal' organisation of Bosnia. That had first been accepted by all three sides in March and then rejected as unfair by the Croats followed by the Moslems. Not surprisingly: for example, under the plan the Croats were offered 17 per cent of the territory (in line with its population share) but 59 per cent of Bosnia's Croats were left in non-Croat cantons. The Moslems, with 43–44 per cent of the total population, would have been similarly disadvantaged.

The Serb attack rendered these political discussions academic.

## AN AWFUL WARNING

But the reality of what was happening was quite deliberately obfuscated by the proclamation on 27 April of the new Yugoslav federal state comprising Serbia and Montenegro; and the announcement in early May that those JNA soldiers serving in Bosnia who were Bosnian Serbs would be transferred with their weapons to the new Serb republic in Bosnia while the rest would withdraw across the border into Serbia and Montenegro. General Ratko Mladic, commander of the JNA in Knin during the war in Croatia in 1991, was appointed head of the Bosnian Serb army.

This purely cosmetic exercise had an immediate and, from the Serb point of view, highly gratifying effect. Western politicians, desperately anxious to avoid involvement in yet another Yugoslav conflict, immediately started calling the conflict in Bosnia a 'civil war' and when referring to 'warring factions', disregarding the fact that one of those 'factions' was the legal, internationally recognised government in Sarajevo. They publicly deplored the violence in Bosnia and called for an end to it but felt excused from any obligation to intervene by the fiction that what was going on was a 'civil war'. The United States and Britain were both preoccupied with their domestic politics: America was heading for its presidential election in November and Britain had just had one in April. The UN had just started setting up in Sarajevo the headquarters for its peacekeeping operations in Croatia when the fighting in Bosnia started. At the beginning of May the UN troops already in Sarajevo were withdrawn at the order of Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the UN's Secretary-General. Later that month he argued against the American proposal, opposed by the British and French governments, to impose sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro. Sanctions were in the end imposed on 30 May but, judged as a means of stopping Serbia's aggression in Bosnia, proved largely ineffective.

Having introduced economic sanctions, Western governments failed to produce any policy framework for Bosnia into which sanctions or any other future measures could have been fitted. Instead they adopted – as in the case of a Croatia a year earlier – a policy of short-term improvisation. What was needed was a clear long-term alternative to, in effect, abandoning most of Bosnia to Slobodan Milosevic and his local client, Radovan Karadzic, and leaving the opportunistic Franjo Tudjman to lay claim to the Croat-populated parts. This could only result in forcing the Moslems to

choose between surrender (and eventual assimilation) and a bitter, bloody struggle with an uncertain outcome.

Such a policy could have included, and still could include, an international trusteeship to guarantee the integrity and the smooth functioning of a decentralised Bosnian state within the historic borders confirmed in Tito's federal Yugoslavia and again when Bosnia was recognised and admitted to the United Nations in 1992. Instead, there was – as in the case of Croatia before – hesitation and confusion which undermined even the positive actions that were taken. There was nothing wrong with the perfectly proper and legal recognition by the EU, followed by the United States and most of the rest of the world, of Bosnia as a sovereign state – except that it was backed by no serious international guarantee. There was a historical precedent for such an international solution for Bosnia. At the Congress of Berlin in 1878, it was decided to place Bosnia under Austro-Hungary's rule while leaving it formally under Turkish sovereignty. Subsequent history proved this to have been a wise, statesmanlike decision which, at least for a few decades, gave Bosnia excellent government and at the same time helped avert international rivalry and possibly even war.

A determined Western push early in 1992 for such a solution, backed by a firm offer to dispatch an international force to implement it, would have found a lot of support among members of all three groups in Bosnia – not just the Moslems and the Croats but also among many Serbs. An international trusteeship formula for Bosnia would have been popular in a multicultural, multiethnic society such as Bosnia then was. It would have helped isolate both Serb and Croat extremists who had been agitating for partition. It would also have neutralised the influence of the relatively small number of fanatical Moslems favouring a centralised, Islam-dominated state. Along that path the disastrous Croat-Moslem conflict, in itself a by-product of the Serb aggression, could also have been avoided. A clear Western stand might well have made the essentially opportunistic Milosevic pause and perhaps even abandon as too risky for his own power in Serbia – always a main concern – the plan to capture Bosnia.

But there was no need for second thoughts or restraint by Belgrade. Once again, as in Croatia, Western governments ignored the danger signs and failed to devise sensible ways of dealing with an

extremely dangerous and volatile situation. Instead, they simply crossed their fingers and hoped for the best, relying on Slobodan Milosevic's repeated promises to Western ambassadors in Belgrade that Serbia would not 'invade' Bosnia. These were promises that he formally kept: when Bosnia was invaded in April 1992, it was by Arkan's and other paramilitary 'volunteers' from Serbia and Montenegro, not formally linked to the Belgrade Government or to the JNA – though of course, as everyone in the region knew, they were trained, fed, watered, supplied and commanded from Belgrade. At the same time, the renaming of the JNA in Bosnia as the army of the Bosnian Serb Republic (*Vojska Republike Srpske* or *VRS*) also cleverly 'domesticated' that force. When the fighting began in April 1992, the proposal to station UN observers on the bridges over the Drina River, the border between Serbia and Bosnia, was reportedly rejected by Cyrus Vance, the American co-chairman (with Lord Carrington) of the Yugoslav Peace Conference, because he feared that such a move would upset Slobodan Milosevic and make him 'less co-operative' in Croatia.

The discovery in August 1992 by Western journalists and television reporters of a Serb detention camp in Bosnia for mainly Moslem civilian prisoners revealed to the whole world what international agencies and other observers had been reporting for over two months: that in areas of Bosnia under Serb control Moslem, as well as Croat, civilians – men, women and children – were being rounded up, detained, beaten up, tortured and, in some cases, also murdered. Moslem women and girls were being systematically raped. The reaction of most Western governments – including the British – was one of horror and dismay but also of continuing opposition both to any form of Western armed intervention (including air strikes to help the weaker side) or to the request of the Bosnian Government for the lifting of the arms embargo which still, absurdly, applied both to the well-armed Serbs forces and the poorly-armed Moslem and Croat forces opposing them (then still fighting side by side). Proposals by Western commentators and leading public figures such as Lady Thatcher for a combination of air strikes against Serb military targets and the lifting of the arms embargo were dismissed by British Ministers out of hand as unrealistic and even unhelpful.

What the British Government did do was to convene, in its capacity as holder of the six-month rotating EU presidency, a joint

## THE BOSNIA TRIANGLE

EU-UN conference in London in August 1992. The conference obtained a promise from Serbian leaders to lift the sieges of Bosnian towns including Sarajevo and to withdraw their heavy weapons under UN supervision; declared a no-fly zone over Bosnia; decided on a tightening of UN sanctions against Serbia; and replaced Lord Carrington with Lord Owen as one of the chairmen of the EU and UN-sponsored conference on the former Yugoslavia in Geneva. But the London conference did not lead to an improvement of the situation on the ground. The Serb sieges in Bosnia continued. The no-fly zone continued to be openly flouted by the Serbs, the only party with an air force. There was no significant improvement in the enforcement of sanctions against Serbia – not surprisingly in view of the lack of provision for specific measures to implement them accompanied by precise timetables. In short, the London conference revealed the full extent of the impotent passivity of Western policy towards the Bosnian conflict. Humanitarian efforts by governments and international agencies grew and helped relieve local suffering, but the dispatch of UN peacekeeping troops made no change to the situation on the ground except for making outside intervention less likely due to the possibility that UN troops might, as a result, become hostages.

In October 1992 Lord Owen and Cyrus Vance produced the first draft of what eventually, by January 1993, grew into a set of proposals for dividing Bosnia into a number of autonomous provinces – the Vance-Owen plan. The plan insisted on the return of refugees to their homes throughout Bosnia and set the boundaries of the proposed provinces in such a way that the Serb-held territories could not be made into a single whole and joined to Serbia. But by virtue of basing the proposed cantons on ethnic boundaries (though not exclusively so) the final version of the Vance-Owen plan provoked a scramble which soon grew into open fighting for territory between the Croats and the Moslems, both by then squeezed into less than 30 per cent of Bosnia's territory. Under strong international pressure, the plan was accepted by the Croats and, much more reluctantly, by the Moslems, but was rejected by the Serbs in May 1993. On 22 May at a conference in Washington attended by the foreign ministers of Britain, France, Russia, Spain and the United States the Vance-Owen plan was *de facto* buried and replaced by the proposal to create five or more 'safe areas' (to

## AN AWFUL WARNING

include Sarajevo) for Bosnia's 2 million Moslems – a Moslem Bantustan, as the Serbs mockingly called it – guarded by UN troops whose mandate, however, would only give them authority to shoot back if they, not the Moslems, were attacked. The Government in Sarajevo, though under considerable Western pressure to submit, rejected the Washington plan – truly the nadir of Western appeasement in Bosnia – and ordered its troops to continue to fight.

## Epilogue

Although all attempts to end the war in Bosnia by diplomacy had come to a dead end by the winter of 1993, prospects for peace had improved by early summer 1994. This was for two main reasons: the better military performance of the Bosnian Government troops and the belated entry of the United States into the diplomatic scene in ex-Yugoslavia. The American-sponsored Croat-Moslem cease-fire, followed by an agreement to set up a Croat-Moslem Federation loosely linked to Croatia, transformed the political and military scene. The leaders of Herceg-Bosna, a Croat territorial unit in the south set up in July 1992 in response to the proclamation of the separate Serb unit, abandoned their tactical alliance with the Bosnian Serbs which had been forged during the period of Croat-Moslem fighting. Bosnian Serbs thus suddenly found themselves in a new and unfamiliarly unfavourable situation. Instead of facing two adversaries destroying each other, as they had done since early 1993, the Serbs had to consider the possibility that the two might once again combine against them. That prompted the Serb leadership to press for an immediate cease-fire in the obvious hope that it would freeze the existing and – for them – extremely favourable situation, leaving them in possession of some 70 per cent of Bosnia's territory.

Another potentially unwelcome development from the Bosnian Serbian point of view was the American engagement in Croatia. With useful Russian diplomatic help, the Americans negotiated at talks in Zagreb between the Croat Government and the rebel Serbs an agreement on a degree of military disengagement between the two sides as a possible first step towards an eventual re-integration of Serb-held territories into Croatia. Such an outcome would seriously threaten the Bosnian Serbs' hopes of being the central pillar of a 'union of Serb republics' including, in addition to themselves, the Serb-controlled territories in Croatia and the rump Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Last but by no means least, there was NATO's readiness, however hesitant, since February 1994 to use force in Bosnia in

## AN AWFUL WARNING

support of UN Security Council resolutions. This was first demonstrated in February 1994 in the wake of the mortar bomb explosion on the Sarajevo market which killed 65 people and injured more than 200. Following a strongly-worded UN ultimatum Serb forces ceased their bombardment of the city and pulled back their heavy weapons from an exclusion zone around it. The Serbs also had an unpleasant shock when NATO's jets on patrol over Bosnia on 19 February for the first time enforced the no-fly ban by shooting down four Serb aircraft that had been bombing Moslem installations in Central Bosnia; and when in mid-April NATO planes bombed Serb forces trying to capture Gorazde, an important strategic town in eastern Bosnia and designated in Washington in 1993 as one of the UN-protected 'safe areas'. These developments improved the outlook for the survival of a Bosnian state, de-centralised but still within its historic borders, though it has to be said that the decisive change was brought about – again as in Croatia in 1991 – by the success of the local forces in at least partially repelling the invader.

The success of NATO's resort to even minimal use of force in Bosnia in the first half of 1994 illustrated the short-sightedness of the Western governments' original decision, back in 1991, to rule out the use of force in ex-Yugoslavia. That decision deprived them of any leverage in the matter and actually encouraged the aggressor, Serbia, in thinking that it could press ahead with its war of conquest with impunity. Economic sanctions were imposed by the UN in May 1992. In the long run they could help enforce an eventual settlement but were not the right measures to stop the aggression.

Maintenance of the arms embargo on the grounds that more arms would mean more violence is still harder to justify in retrospect even for the most determined defender of Western policy. It is true that first the Croats in 1991 and then the Bosnians since 1992 managed to lay their hands on some arms – by making them, by capturing them from the enemy and by buying them on the international black market in breach of the UN embargo. But for those defending themselves against aggressors the embargo has also been a deeply demoralising expression of Western moral equidistance towards all the combatants. By operating the arms embargo, Western governments actually helped the aggression in former Yugoslavia to succeed.

The claim, therefore, that everything that could be done to stop the war and that nothing else was possible simply does not stand up.



## EPILOGUE

History will pass its own verdict but our own age will have to live with the consequences – not only the continuing and extremely damaging turbulence in South-Eastern Europe (watch the next trouble spots: Kosovo, Sandzak, and Macedonia) but also the deeper and less quantifiable effect on public morale of the policy of appeasing the aggressors, even if they are only pocket-size imperialists like Slobodan Milosevic. Some at least of the present and growing backlash in the West against the political class and, more dangerously, the present representative institutions must surely be due to the all-too-evident display by the leading Western politicians of unprincipled readiness not only to appease aggressors but also to lean on the victims to surrender – just as Chamberlain and his French colleague, Daladier, leaned on the Czechs in 1938.

The war in ex-Yugoslavia has thrown up a number of new questions that need addressing. One of them is how to deal in the post-Cold War era with small, admittedly unpleasant aggressors who do not, however, seem to pose a direct threat to individual Western and other countries' national interests as, for example, Stalin's post-1945 Soviet Union and Hitler's Germany once did. The difference in terms of the present argument is that after 1945 Western Europe and the United States did not appease Stalin – not for long anyway – while Chamberlain and Daladier did appease Hitler, with disastrous results. It would be absurd to claim, for example, that Slobodan Milosevic's Serbia poses the same threat to British security interests that Hitler's Germany did in the 1930s. What British interest, if any, is at stake in the Balkans today?

In 1848 when Britain was the world's superpower, Lord Palmerston gave in the debate on the Treaty of Adrianople a classic definition of the British position: 'We have no eternal allies and we have no eternal enemies. Our interests are eternal and perpetual and those interests it is our duty to follow'. Nearly a century and a half later, in a speech at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, on 27 January 1993, Douglas Hurd defined today's British interests as follows: 'We defend our own soil. We also defend those for whom we are responsible . . . We join with allies in contributing to the collective security upon which we also depend. There is a British interest, shared with our allies, European partners and many others, in a safer and more decent world . . . We are not going to achieve a total new order, by ourselves or with others. But an effort

## AN AWFUL WARNING

comparable to those of 1815, 1919, and the years after 1945 is needed if the international community is to avert a continuing slide into disorder.<sup>7</sup>

As still pre-eminently a trading nation, Britain has as much interest today as it had in Palmerston's time in free trade, the international rule of law and the freedom of travel – in other words, in the maintenance of stability and order throughout the world, most especially in continental Europe. Any serious pollution of the international environment in Europe represents a direct threat to British interests. In the case of the war in former Yugoslavia, the most obvious short-term threat takes the form of the influx of refugees into Western Europe, creating not only extra financial burdens for countries taking them in but also internal political tensions manifesting themselves in an anti-foreign backlash. There is also the attendant risk of terrorism arising out of the existence of large, deeply aggrieved displaced populations – in the case of most Bosnian refugees not sharing the mainstream Christian religion of the host countries.

Continuing unrest and strife in the Balkans poses a more long-term political and economic threat to the stability and order in the whole of Europe – Britain only marginally less than, for example, Italy, France, Germany and other states which are geographically closer to the focus of trouble. For better or worse, interdependence in Europe is even greater in today's Europe than it was in Palmerston's.

Beyond that lies the highly sensitive issue of national prestige. As a country with a permanent seat on the Security Council, Britain cannot afford to be seen to be backing off from challenges such as that in ex-Yugoslavia. This is a question not only of how others see Britain and assess its credibility as a partner or foe but also one of national morale, of how the British see themselves and assess their own country. Put crudely, it is a question of what the British want to be seen to stand for in the world. But this is only the general argument against British isolationism and for British involvement, not a precise prescription for a policy to follow. However, the clear lesson to be drawn from what happened in and over Yugoslavia is that a middle-sized power like Britain, if it wants to retain international credibility, cannot be seen to be backing away from its international responsibilities. The main argument of this essay is

## EPILOGUE

that in Croatia in 1991 and in Bosnia subsequently Britain has done just that: offering humanitarian aid aimed at curing the symptoms as a substitute for appropriate action (air and naval strikes, lifting the arms embargo) aimed at dealing with the root cause of the trouble – Serbian/JNA aggression. Ironically, the policy of non-intervention, of equidistance from all the protagonists in the Balkans, in which Britain has played a leading and even decisive part, has saved those who pursued it neither treasure nor peace of mind. In fact, an essentially opportunistic policy of appeasing the aggressor has not even bought a dishonourable peace so far but has objectively contributed to the growth of local and broader European disorder. To that extent, it can and should be seen as a failure in terms of the correct pursuit of national interest defined in Palmerstonian terms.

The war in ex-Yugoslavia and since then the violent episodes in Somalia, Haiti and Rwanda have opened a wider debate – reminiscent in some ways of that which preceded controversial international action in the nineteenth century to abolish the slave trade – about ‘purely’ ‘humanitarian’ wars in pursuit of principle. It remains to be seen how far international norms of thought and behaviour have changed under the cumulative impact of the Second World War (the Holocaust, in particular), and the more recent tragedies of our own decade to allow for this new category to be built into the concept of national interest – as, for example, international humanitarian disaster aid has been.

The debate is only just beginning. More immediately, confused international behaviour over the war in ex-Yugoslavia underlines the need for hard and urgent thinking about the reasons for the inability to understand what really happened there and why – an intellectual fiasco of the first order. The responsibility for that fiasco is shared by Western diplomatic political and academic establishments alike, a serious and costly failure that should and could have been avoided. This is one of the numerous Awful Warnings – not unlike those in Victorian paintings that cautioned against the effects of drinking, profligacy and other vices – from the sad tragedy in former Yugoslavia.

## Notes and References

1. *The International Herald Tribune*, 29 November 1990.
2. The nature of the nationalist-Communist alliance forged by the Milosevic leadership in Serbia is ably analysed by Nebojsa Popov in a special supplement called *Srpski populizam. Od marginalne do dominantne pojave* (*Serbian Populism. From a Marginal to a Dominant Phenomenon*) to the Belgrade opposition weekly *Vreme* on May 24 1993.
3. The complex and controversial issue of the number of casualties – Serbian, Croat, Moslem, Jewish and others – on the territory of the occupied and dismembered Yugoslavia in the 1941–45 period is dealt with soberly and objectively in two recent works, one by a Serb and one by a Croat. *Zrtve drugog svetskog rata u Jugoslaviji* (*Victims of the Second World War in Yugoslavia*), by Bogoljub Kocovic, a Serbian scholar, was published in 1985 by Nase Delo, the publishing house of *Nasa Rec*, the Serbian opposition monthly in London. *Gubici stanovnistva Jugoslavije u drugom svjetskom ratu* (*Yugoslavia's Population Losses in the Second World War*), by Vladimir Zerjavic, a Croat population expert living in Croatia, was published by the Yugoslav Victimological Society in Zagreb in 1989. (Since then, Zerjavic has amplified his 1989 analysis and placed it in a global context in a further work called *Jugoslavija – manipulacije zrtvama drugog svetskog rata* (*Yugoslavia – Manipulations with the Victims of the Second World War*) and published in Zagreb in 1993. For many years after 1945 the most frequently quoted official figure for Yugoslavia's total casualties during the war was 1.7 million. However, according to Kocovic's calculations (which closely overlap with Zerjavic's), Yugoslavia lost between 1941 and 1945 1,014,000 people (5.9 per cent of the total population). Serb losses were 487,000 (6.9 per cent), Croat 207,000 (5.4 per cent), Moslem 86,000 (6.8 per cent), Jewish 60,000 (77.9 per cent) and Gypsy 27,000 (31.4 per cent).
4. The full text of the Serbian Academy's Memorandum was first published in Zagreb by the magazine *Nase Teme*, Nos 1–2/1989.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES

In the summer of 1993 it was announced in Belgrade that a critical condition of the 1986 Memorandum was in preparation and that it would be published soon.

5. For details of the JNA's attitudes and policies, see the extremely interesting and revealing account by General Veljko Kadijevic, Yugoslavia's Defence Minister and Chief of Staff of the JNA from May 1988 to January 1992: *Moje vidjenje raspada* (My View of the Disintegration) by Veljko Kadijevic (Belgrade: *Politika*, 1993).
6. *Borba* (Belgrade), June 22–23 1991, p.5.
7. See, for example, Franz-Lothar Altmann's article 'Ex-Yugoslavia's neighbours: who wants what?' in *The World Today*, August–September 1992, pp. 163–165.
8. See Veljko Kadijevic, *op. cit.*, p. 117.
9. For a perceptive political analysis of the collapse of the post-1945 Yugoslav federal system, see Branka Magas's *The Destruction of Yugoslavia. Tracking the Break-Up 1980–92* (London: Verso, 1993).
10. On 21 February 1992 the UN Security Council under its Resolution 743 set up a body called the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) which was in due course dispatched to the so-called UN-Protected Areas (UNPAs) – mainly areas under Serb control at the time of the cease-fire. UNPROFOR was given a mandate of an 'interim nature' that included the following main tasks:
  1. to consolidate the cease-fire throughout the UNPAs;
  2. to de-militarise the UNPAs;
  3. to protect the local population against the threat or use of force;
  4. to assist the displaced persons who wished to do so to return to their homes.

The UN's peacekeeping mission in Croatia was, clearly, not aimed – as was indeed confirmed by the UN – at 'rolling back' or even containing aggression but strictly at 'freezing' the situation on the ground at the time of the January 1992 cease-fire pending a final political settlement – rather as happened in Cyprus after the Turkish intervention there in 1974. However, even this limited mandate has not been fulfilled by UNPROFOR to date – except for the first item but only in the sense that a new, full-