

THE DISSOLUTION OF YUGOSLAVIA AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE POLITICS OF EASTERN EUROPE

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Abstract

Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has been broken into six new states in the bloody war in the nineties and in the twentieth century. There is no doubt that Tito through his political engagement did a lot on the creation and strengthening of Yugoslav state and Yugoslav nation, which were supposed to be one of the pillars for building the supranational state. The Yugoslav constitution from 1974, which many have described as the basis for the beginning of Yugoslav breakup, was adopted while Tito was still alive. In addition to national tensions that were skillfully suppressed by the communist party, the economic factor also did not go in favor of the proponent of the Yugoslav state. The causes that led to the dissolution of Yugoslavia as well as the effects it generated will be the subject of further research and scientific debate.

Introduction

In this chapter, we shall be taking a closely look at the following:

Geographical profile, Ethnic composition, Religion, government and foreign relations, economy.

Former Yugoslavia was situated in the Balkan peninsular, in south Eastern Europe. It comprises six countries which include Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Macedonia, Slovenia, Croatia, and Montenegro. We shall be looking at the geographical profile of each of these republics that make up former Yugoslavia.

Serbia is largely mountainous. It borders Croatia on the northwest, Hungary on the north, Romania on the northeast, Bulgaria on the east, Macedonia on the south, and Albania, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina on the west, and it is a landlocked country. It has a population of 7.5 million people (*Republic of Serbia Statistical Bureau. 2016*).

This is situated in south Eastern Europe between the Adriatic and Serbia. Border countries include Albania 172 km, Bosnia and Herzegovina 225 km, Croatia 25 km, Kosovo 79 km, Serbia 124 km, has a population of about 620,029 (Statistical yearbook, 2001). Croatia is located in central and south east Europe, a part of the Balkans. Bordered by Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia in the east, Slovenia in the west, Hungary in the north

and Montenegro and the Adriatic Sea in the south. As of 1 January 2015, the population of Croatia was estimated to be 4 257 878 people (Croatia Bureau of Statistics, 2011).

Bosnia Herzegovina is located in south Eastern Europe on the Balkan Peninsula. It is bordered by Croatia to the north, Serbia to the east, and Montenegro to the south east. It has a population of 3,871,000 people, and its capital is Sarajevo (World fact book 2015).

Slovenia is situated in Central Europe touching the Alps and bordering the Mediterranean. Slovenia occupies an area about the size of the state of Massachusetts. Slovenia has a population of two million people (Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia, 2010), and its capital is Ljubljana

Macedonia is a landlocked state in the heart of the Balkans. Situated in south Eastern Europe, bordering Kosovo and Serbia to the north, Bulgaria to the east, Greece to the south, and Albania to the west. According to statistical office of Macedonia (2012), its population is about 2 062 294 people.

Statement of the Problem

The structural arrangement of Yugoslavia was one major problem that led to the dissolution of the country (Deutsch & Coleman, 2000). The Yugoslav constitution from 1974, contributed to Yugoslav breakup. In addition to national tensions that were skillfully suppressed by the communist party, the economic factor also did not go in favor of the proponent of the Yugoslav state

Objectives of Study

The main objectives of this study are as follows:

- i. To examine the dissolution of Yugoslavia.
- ii. To examine its implications for Eastern Europe.

Theoretical Framework

Emotion Theory

The term emotion theory refers to the argument that ethnic violence is motivated by emotion rather than rationality.

Emotion theory argues that ethnic groups are led to violence based on emotion regardless of the nature of the ethnic ties themselves.

The primary advocate of emotion theory is Roger Petersen (2002). He takes an emotion based approach to ethnic conflict because convincing theories of ethnic conflict must provide some answers to the puzzling question of why any individual would go out and beat, humiliate, or discriminate against another human being. First and foremost, according to Petersen, an emotion raises the saliency of one's desire/concern over others; in other words, emotion helps select among competing desires. An emotion heightens both cognitive and physical capabilities necessary to respond to the situational challenges.

Petersen presents four primary emotions: fear, hatred, resentment, and rage. The first three he categorizes as instrumental, meaning that they motivate a person to act in a way which directly meets a pressing concern. "Fear prepares the individual to satisfy safety concerns; hatred prepares the individual to act on historical grievances; resentment prepares the individual to address status/self-esteem discrepancies..." Rage, on the other hand, "often produces cognitive distortions that can lead to irrelevant or counterproductive actions (such as searching for scapegoats).

Religion in Former Yugoslavia

Religious affiliation in Yugoslavia was closely linked with ethnicity; centuries-old animosities among the country's three main religions, Eastern Orthodoxy in Serbia, Roman Catholicism in Croatia, and Islam in Bosnia, remained a divisive factor (Kaldor, 2007).

The Economy of Yugoslavia

The Yugoslavian economy was quite different from the then Soviet Union and other eastern European countries. The occupation and liberation struggle in World War II left Yugoslavia's infrastructure devastated. Even the most developed parts of the country were largely rural and the little industry the country had was largely damaged or destroyed. The first postwar years saw implementation of Soviet-style five-year plans and reconstruction through massive voluntary work. The countryside was electrified and heavy industry was developed. The economy was organized as a mixture of planned socialist economy and a market socialist economy: factories were nationalized, and workers were entitled to a certain share of their profits (CIA Fact book, 2010). In the 1950s socialist self-management was introduced, which reduced the state management of enterprises. Managers of socially owned companies were supervised by worker councils, which were made up of all employees, with one vote each. The worker councils also appointed the management, often by secret ballot. The Communist Party was organized in all companies and most influential employees were likely to be members of the party, so the managers were often, but not always, appointed only with the consent of the party. Although GDP is not technically applicable or designed to measure planned economies, Yugoslavia's GDP ranked twenty-second in Europe (Boughton, 2001).

In the 1970s, the economy was reorganized according to Edward Kardelj's theory of associated labor, in which the right to decision making and a share in profits of socially owned companies is based on the investment of labor (Teichova, and Matis, 2003).

The Origins of Yugoslavia War and others

The origin of the Yugoslavia war could be traced to the battle at Kosovo in 1389 in which prince Lazar of Serbia was defeated by Ottoman Turks. This led to the control of the much of the Balkans and is often seen as the first phase of the conflict between the Muslim Albanians and the Serbs (Rourke, 2007). Initially the Albanians were then Christians, most of them fought with the Serbs against the invading Ottoman Turks. With time however most Albanians converted to Islam and also a significant number of Serbs and other Slavs becoming what we now called Bosniaks. The conversion from Islam to Christianity was as a result of the benefit derived from being a Muslim such as freedom of taxation, and is against the Quran for a Muslim to be heavily taxed and oppressed by fellow Muslims (Haus, 2001).

Joseph Tito led Yugoslavia from 1945 to 1980, held the country together and after his death, long ethnic resentment boiled over (www.britannica.com/josip-tito). Nationalism could also be negative which is an unhealthy form of nationalism which teaches contempt for other nations and seeks to advance the well-being of one's own nation at the expense of others.

It is interesting to know that xenophobia and exceptionalism are products of negative nationalism. These two factors led to the breakup of Yugoslavia. (Rourke, 2006). After the breakup, the republics of Serbia and Montenegro formed a reduced federation, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), which aspired to the status of sole legal successor to the SFRY, but those claims were opposed by the other former republics. Eventually, Serbia and Montenegro accepted the opinion of the Badinter Arbitration Committee about

shared succession (*Yugoslav Agreement on Succession Issues, 2001*). Serbia and Montenegro themselves broke up in 2006 and became independent states, while Kosovo proclaimed independence in 2008.

The Role of Nato

NATO involvement in the Bosnian War and the Yugoslav Wars in general began in February 1992, when the alliance issued a statement urging all the belligerents in the conflict to allow the deployment of United Nations peacekeepers. While primarily symbolic, this statement paved the way for later NATO actions. (Holbrooke, 1999).

Socio-Political and Economic Implications of the War

The collapse of Yugoslavia affected political boundaries in central and south-eastern Europe. It also had political and socio-economic implications on the disintegrated states and its neighbors in south Eastern Europe. The involvement of other Slavic countries Serbia, Croatia, Slavic fighters in Bosnia Herzegovina internationalized the war.

The collapse of former Yugoslavia can be seen as one of the major political geographical changes in post-bipolar Europe. Civil war, the rapid and turbulent changes of borders, mass migration and large scale devastation characterized the process as a result of which seven successor states had emerged by the first decade of 21st century (Remenyi, 1998).

Moreover, the conflict has had serious and wide range economic implications for other countries in Europe especially for those countries which are neighbors of Yugoslavia.

Conclusion

The war that took place in Yugoslavia was an international conflict that took place between 1992 and 1995. The belligerents were the forces of self-proclaimed Bosnia Serbs known as Republika Srpska, the Croats and the Bosniaks. Slovenia, Macedonia seceded from Yugoslavia without much bloody war against the Yugoslav army. This was largely due to insignificant number of Serbs in those republics. But the war of secession in Bosnia Herzegovina and Croatia was very bloody and deadly largely due to the presence of a substantial amount of Serbs in those republics. The Serbs in Croatia were about ten percent of the population of Croatia, while in Bosnia the inhabitants were mainly Bosniaks (44%), orthodox Serbs (31%), Croats who were Catholics were (11%). When a referendum was passed for the independence of Yugoslavia, it was vehemently rejected by the Bosnian Serb political representatives.

The involvement of neighboring countries in the war of secession in Yugoslavia internationalized the war. Taking a closely look at the war in Yugoslavia especially the one that took place in Bosnia Herzegovina, we can infer that the root cause of the war was both nationalistic and religious.

Recommendation

Scholars of International relations emphasized on the need of conflict prevention and conflict management. Preventive actions are designed to resolve, manage, or contain disputes before they become violent. Conflict management, in turn, means the limitation, mitigation and containment of conflict. The notion of conflict prevention includes numerous activities such as conflict avoidance and conflict resolution, with techniques such as mediation, peace-keeping, peacemaking, confidence-building measures, and track-two diplomacy.

In final analysis, to prevent such a bloody war that engulf the Balkan state of Yugoslavia, preventive diplomacy should be adopted as it is less economic in preventing a war than resolving an ongoing war through conflict resolution.

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