

*Farah Kabir*

## THE DISINTEGRATION OF YUGOSLAVIA : AN ASSESSMENT

---

---

### INTRODUCTION

The disintegration of Yugoslavia in the wake of unprecedented ethnopolitical conflict has drawn considerable academic and research interest. Joseph Broz Tito and the Communist Party of Yugoslavia had formed the federation joining the six republics, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro, under its rule. Tito had steered the nation towards 'democratic centralisation' -- a paradoxical combination. Yugoslavia became the most open and least repressive of the one party states of Central and Eastern Europe after the Second World War. There grew up a pluralistic and stratified society with a monolithic party control at the helm.

Ethnic heterogeneity - multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-religious composition of the Yugoslav society contributed to simmering irredentism. At the heart of political wrangling in Yugoslavia was the issue of federation versus confederation. The republics and autonomous provinces had been struggling for decentralisation, deregulation and market economy. In 1990 Slovenia and Croatia geared up their demand for an agreement to transform Yugoslavia into a confederation with each unit enjoying full political autonomy. Developments over the year led Macedonia and later Bosnia-Herzegovina join the race. Serbia on the other hand advocated greater

---

Farah Kabir, Research Associate, Europe and Americas Desk, BIISS.

centralisation, strengthening of the federal government and the role of a senior partner in the federation for itself. Moreover, Serbia's age old design of uniting all Serbs under one state, Greater Serbia, was taken up with renewed enthusiasm by the Serbian leader of the League of Communists in Yugoslavia (LCY) in Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic. This caused the rise of fear of Serbian domination among the republics and they engaged in nationalist movement afresh. The crisis that followed culminating in the disintegration of the country makes it pertinent to undertake a study on the factors behind the crisis and its implications.

This paper is an attempt in this direction. At the outset this paper provides the historical background of the formation and continuation of the Yugoslav federation and background to crisis. Then an attempt is made to analyze the factors leading to the current crisis. The focus is particularly on the in-built problems of nation-building. Politico-administrative structures and economic disparities. The conflict of authoritarianism and democratic centralism, and national/territorial autonomy has also been focused on. Moreover, the implications of the crisis for the international community have been discussed.

## I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Yugoslavia was a country of 24 million people, the eighth largest country in Europe in terms of population with "approximately 45% Serbs - (including 600,000 living in Croatia), 20% Croats, 14% Muslims, 9% Slovenians, 5% Macedonians and the rest of the population composed of at least 16 other nationalities."<sup>1</sup> To the East and South Yugoslavia borders Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece and Albania, and to the West and the North are Austria and Hungary. All these countries at one time or another have been intimately involved with the Yugoslav history.

The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes was formed in 1918 under the King of Serbia Alexander I. The Kingdom was said to be a "product of

---

1. Douglas Hartley, "The Yugoslav Powder Keg", *Defence and Diplomacy Journal*, August/September 1991, p. 30.

misunderstanding and need."<sup>2</sup> Being weak the Slovenes and Croats could not form a state of their own. Slovenia, the most homogenous of the republics in terms of culture and language, willingly joined the Kingdom. The psychology that worked behind this was probably the fear of Italy, Austria and Hungary taking over the country, though traditionally the Slovenes have been intimate with their stronger Italian and German speaking neighbours. The Slovenes, were nevertheless able to preserve their language and Slovenic identity. Although Slovenes were not happy with the Serbs they never developed any separatist tendencies, like the Croats, during the inter-war period. They were able to have a moderating influence on Yugoslav politics. Slovenia at this stage was for a pro-Yugoslav orientation.

Croats are also a largely Roman Catholic population with a culturally central European outlook. The nationalistic tendency of the Croatians goes back much further than the Slovenes in history. The Kingdom of Croatia was older than that of Hungary. But Croatia could not remain independent for long as it could not stand the pressure of its neighbours. Despite this Croatia was able to retain constitutional autonomy for centuries under the Hungarian state, the Habsburg Empire and the Dual Monarchy. Such tradition made it difficult for Croatia to accept the centralising tendencies of Belgrade.

In the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes Serbia had the most territory, the most population and was the most ambitious. Unhappy with five centuries of Ottoman rule in early nineteenth century the Serbs got involved in a series of revolts and wars against the Turks. The Serbs re-established their independence in 1878. They were able to extend their territories to the southern borders of present-day Macedonia by 1914. Partial responsibility of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand is laid on the nationalist Serbians. It led to the first World War and to the creation of the Kingdom. At first the Serbs may have wanted to form and continue with the Yugoslav state but later they were more interested to form a 'Greater Serbia' with all the areas where Serbs were living.

---

2. James Gow, "Deconstructing Yugoslavia", *Survival* Volume XXXIII, No. 4. July/August 1991, p. 292.

Therefore, in the first Yugoslav federation Slovenia and Croatia, considered Yugoslavia<sup>3</sup> as a framework for national self-determination. The Serbs considered it as an opportunity to unite people similar to them in an extended Serbia, that is greater Serbia.<sup>4</sup> This was contrary to the self-determinist dreams of other Yugoslavs. Thus from the onset Yugoslavia, the first one, was beset with national tension.

The second Yugoslav federation inherited and suffered from these national tensions as well. "Between 1941-5, national animosities were vented as a violent maelstrom engulfed the country."<sup>5</sup> Rival resistance movements had carried on guerrilla warfare against the Germans, one headed by General Draja Mihailovich,<sup>6</sup> and the other led by Josef Broz Tito.<sup>7</sup> Under pressure from Russia<sup>8</sup> the King appointed Tito Prime Minister, who with the acquiescence of the Western powers obtained complete control of the country, adding the two provinces Kosovo and Vojvodina.

In January 1946 Yugoslavia was proclaimed a Federal People's Republic. Based on the Soviet-type constitution Tito set up a communist regime over which he presided from 1946 till 1980. In these 35 years Tito tried to find a middle road for his country - develop a system that lay somewhere between capitalism and Soviet communism. But the room for wriggling was limited as Tito himself was "an avowed communist". He devised the principle of Worker's Self-Management<sup>9</sup>. Under this concept

3. The name Yugoslavia was officially adopted in 1929 when after the Serb-Croat dissension the King had to abrogate the constitution, form his own cabinet and rename the country. By this time Montenegro, which was allied before was included in the Kingdom. For detail see, *A General History of Europe 1880-1945*, by John Roberts, p. 307.

4. The euphoria of independence was short-lived as the Serbians moved to assert their domination by way of the Serbian royal family which following the assassination of the leader of the Croatian Peasant Party, established in 1931 a virtual dictatorship.

5. James Gow, "Deconstructing Yugoslavia", *Survival*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 4, p. 292.

6. He was loyal to the King Peter II and his government in exile at London. For details see, C.J.H. Hayes, *Contemporary Europe Since 1890*, Surjeet Publications, New Delhi.

7. A communist trained in Russia.

8. In 1944 Russia persuaded Great Britain and the U.S.A. to insist on a merger of the two movements, with the result that, following the final withdrawal of German troops the King was obliged to appoint Tito Prime Minister. For details see, C.J.H. Hayes, *Contemporary Europe Since 1870*, Surjeet Publications, New Delhi.

9. Edward Kardelj was Tito's chief theoretician who devised this principle.

individual enterprises could operate independently of the state if the workers (most of whom were Communist Party members) were represented in the board of directors.<sup>10</sup>

Tito led the transition of Yugoslavia from an underdeveloped rural economy to a 'middle-ranking' industrialised state with pockets of underdevelopment. There were tremendous progress in economic and social sectors during his early rule. On the external front, as the founder of the nonaligned movement Tito soon emerged as a great leader with considerable international respect and impact. In retrospect, however, all these successes were less than enough to cement the forces of disintegration which continued to bedevil the system of union he introduced for his country.

Tito had been able to win the support of different ethnic groups because he promised that the equality of nations would be respected. Over the years the different republics found this far from being practiced. Belgrade and Serbs were the influencing factor and pervasive in the management of the federation. Therefore, Croatia and Slovenia began objecting to the dominance of Belgrade and the predominance of Serbs in federal bureaucracies. Croatia and Slovenia thought that decentralisation would oppose this tendency and help achieve greater realization of the principle of self-management. By 1965 the pressure for decentralisation was so strong that it set into motion economic reforms. The reforms were considered a victory for Slovene and Croatian 'liberals' over conservative Serbs and Montenegrins. But Croats were not completely satisfied as they considered many of the old problems still unresolved.

The Croatian dissatisfaction was fueled by a feeling of cultural repression especially with regard to their language. Despite separate literary traditions the Croatian and Serbian language are almost identical. The principal language, Serbo-Croat, is spoken by Croats, Montenegrins, Serbs

---

10. The positive outcome of this system was Yugoslav companies became active in world market, they were also able to compete in Western market. The negative part was company heads, secure in their belief that the government would bail them out if "push came to shove, tended to opt for higher salaries and capital investment". It is said to be one of the causes for hyper inflation.

and Bosnian Muslims. Although it is a single spoken language Serb-Croat has two written forms Serbian (which uses Cyrillic script) and Croatian (written in the Roman alphabet). The tendency was to impose the use of the Serbian script. Cultural differences were sanctioned legally and politically by the Constitution. However, in practice Serbanization was on. Therefore, the Croats had enough cause for grievances. The Serbs for their part, could never forgive the Croats for the atrocities committed by the Croats during the World War II and imposed historical guilt on them. Combination of these factors brought about a reemergence of nationalist movement in Croatia culminating in 1970-71. Tito (a Croat himself) intervened personally and suppressed ruthlessly the movement. He also undertook the purging of the party, LCY, in particular of Croatian Party and 'liberals and technocrats' in the leadership of Serbia and Slovenia. However, this suppression was followed by the centre conceding more power to the republics as an act of appeasement. Appropriate amendments were made in the Constitution in 1974.<sup>11</sup> At the federal level the Constitution supported the independent development of the republic and autonomous provinces as well as their constituent parts the Municipalities and the local committees. This was supposed to provide each component of the federation maximum scope to solve local problems and develop local strength yet remain within the Union.

From 1974 onwards Yugoslavia allowed the republics and provinces to exercise greater autonomy. Except for defense, foreign affairs and some joint economic concerns, the republics were allowed to formulate their own policies and run the republic as autonomous entities which on the economic front was manifested in gradual emergence of competing economies with lesser and lesser link with each other.

There occurred a major shift of power away from the federal level to the republics and provinces. The autonomous provinces were created avowedly

---

11. For details consult, *The Europa Year Book 1986, A World Survey*. Europa Publications Limited, London, England, p. 3026.

12. Vojvodina has a large Hungarian minority and Kosovo has a majority of Albanian population. After decades of repression by Serbs the 1974 constitution had given Kosovo substantial autonomy.

to give a measure of self-rule to communities with significant non-Serb population.<sup>12</sup> In practice, however the Serbs retained greater control over the two provinces.

Tito instituted a system of collegial government, with the posts of the State President and Party Chief rotating annually among republican and provincial representatives.<sup>13</sup> Tito exercised his personal authority, however, over the republics and provinces as long as he lived. The unique governmental system appeared to work while Tito was alive. He would personally intervene and resolve disputes between the Serbs and other communities, republics, or provinces. That is why when he died in 1980 it was thought that this multinational, multi-lingual country would have difficulty holding together. Although Yugoslavia did not fall apart in the wake of Tito's death the problems were there and over the last ten years escalated. The main issue that became critical was the lack of real political authority at the centre. Economic problems compounded the political crisis and increased internal tension. As a fallout of economic mismanagement the poorer regions experienced economic and financial difficulties. This precipitated the growing social, political and ethnic tensions.<sup>14</sup> Yugoslavia's economic difficulties are inextricably entwined with relations among the country's various ethnic groups. Disagreement regarding economic inefficiency have been reflected in political arena, causing the rise of competing nationalism. Slovenia and Croatia claim the funds for development of southern regions have been used inefficiently, while Kosovo, Macedonia, and Montenegro complained that instead of eliminating economic inequalities the system generated uneven development reinforcing the 'north-south' disparity.

## II. PROBLEMS OF NATION BUILDING

In the wake of the World War II the Yugoslav Communist Party came to power being able to placate the differences among existing indigenous

13. This provision was adopted to address the problem of Tito's succession. This was a system in which a representative of one of the republics would annually in a pre-set sequence be the president.

14. In 1981 there was uprising in Kosovo, by the majority ethnic Albanian population demanding the status of full republic. The federal army suppressed it and imposed martial law.

groups giving a facade of unity. Tito's promise of respecting all nations was able to win widespread support for the communist party.

In his desire to settle the national question of the various ethnic groups and affirm the total equality with which he perceived the South Slav nations Tito took up reform programmes, apparently conceding powers to the republics. But in reality power was still concentrated in the hands of the LCY at the federal level. It made impossible the development of alternative political parties as well as functional organisations that were truly independent of LCY control. There were certain fundamental contradictions in the Yugoslav system - democracy and centralism - are paradoxical. When Croatia and Slovenia voiced discontent Tito tried to appease them with his philosophy of 'democratic centralisation'. He tried to implement this idea by increasing control of the republican parties. Hence, Yugoslavia "was not a genuine federation before 1974, and did not automatically become one after the constitution of that year."<sup>15</sup> The composition of the ruling elite in Belgrade as well as in the republics was multinational and centered around the personality of Tito. Instead of developing into a truly federal union the arrangements were in reality promoting the autonomy of the federal as well as various republican communist elites in Serbia, Croatia or Slovenia. "Republics, and provincial leaders created virtual fiefdoms where nationalism supplanted communism as the main sources of political legitimacy."<sup>16</sup> The local leaders were primarily interested in protecting republican interest. The communist party established a system of control where "the party exercised its leading role through direct and indirect control of all institutions."<sup>17</sup> Party's decision was final and with the 'ban on factionalism' no opposition to party decision was allowed. This legacy of the communist party strengthened the position of republican leaders.<sup>18</sup> They started to consider allegiance to 'nationalism' as their ticket to political power.

15. Svetozar Stojanovich, "Reflections on the Crisis of the Yugoslav Social and State System". *Mediterranean Quarterly*, 2, 2.(Spring) 1991, p. 94 as quoted by Sumantra Bose in "Yugoslavia: Crisis of Titoist State"; *Economic and Political Weekly*, May 2, 1992, p. 938.

16. James Gow "Deconstructing Yugoslavia". *Survival*, Volume XXXIII No. 4, July/August 1991.

17. They applied the doctrine of "democratic centralism" which meant that all levels of the party system were obliged to submit to decisions taken by the party.

18. Appointments to important post were controlled by the party.



After Tito's death Communist Party control operated mainly at the republican level. Thus the republican party leaders were able to establish strong position for themselves. They had the prerogative to use 'democratic centralisation' and thus control media, employment and exclude dissenters. In the meantime, Yugoslavia's built in factor of instability, "the strength of rival nationalism", was always present. Difference in religion, language, culture, tradition and economic development could no longer be overcome by communist ideology alone. During long years of experimentation of Yugoslav union the critical sense of unity was far from developed. The Serbs emphasized their Serbian identity, while the Croats remained Croats, and Muslims remained Muslims. The Albanians were first and foremost Albanians and then Yugoslavs. The self interest of various nationalities prevailed over that of the facade of federalism and the disintegration of the union soon became inevitable. The paradoxes of forcing central control over a republican facade gave birth to paradoxical situation further complicated with the amendments of the constitution in 1974 under which attempts were made to appease the republics with greater concessions.

All parties involved in Yugoslav federation were dissatisfied with the 1974 Constitution. Serbia was given the central role not to the comfort of the republics and provinces. But Serbia was not satisfied either with the role allotted to it. This dissatisfaction is considered as one of the contributing factors in the process that led to coming to power of Slobodan Milosevic in 1987. Two clearly defined poles - one more liberal, the other nationalist-conservative - led respectively by Stambelic and Milosevic,<sup>19</sup> emerged in the LCY in Serbia in 1987. Milosevic led a group of Serbian leaders who were emerging as a political force out of party control. Milosevic mounted a wholesale challenge to federal system. He started the measures in the interest of "admittedly oppressed Serbian minority in Kosovo"<sup>20</sup> where

---

19. Branka Magas, "Yugoslavia: The Spectre of Balkanization", *New left Review*, March-April, 1987, p.15.

20. IISS, *Strategic Survey 1990-1991*, p. 165.

the Albanians are a overwhelming majority. Between 1988 and 1990 a series of amendments took place in the constitution of Serbia, Kosovo and Vojvodina under which Kosovo and Vojvodina completely lost their autonomy.<sup>21</sup> Milosevic's reliance on Serbian national tradition as a means to stimulating Serbian support alienated the non-Serbs mainly in Slovenia, Croatia and Kosovo. The reformist leadership in Croatia and Slovenia considered Milosevic as "not only a dangerous nationalist but also as a neo-Bolshevik who would resist change".<sup>22</sup>

Slovenia initially protested against the unconstitutional methods that Milosevic adopted in Kosovo as these were inconsistent with its pluralistic policies. These policies were developed under the leadership of Milan Kucan. The Slovenian sympathy and support for Kosovo was short lived as Slovenia itself was soon engulfed with problems in its own republic.

In 1990 the one party system was replaced by a multi-party system in Slovenia which underwent political democratisation, with a host of political parties and organisations emerging since late 1989. The break from the League of Communists of Yugoslavia was finalised when the Slovenian delegation walked out of the emergency Congress of LCY in January 1990 after several of their reform proposals were rejected. The Slovenes renamed their party as the Party of Democratic Renewal (DEMOS). In the Parliamentary election of 8th April 1990 DEMOS won absolute majority with 55% votes.<sup>23</sup>

In the meantime, the multi-party system was also introduced in Croatia while the sharpest political divide manifested along ethnic lines. The main rival of the Communist Party in Croatia was Dr. Franjo Tudjman's HDZ, (Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica) the Croatian Democratic Union. The HDZ promoted the idea of the republic's natural frontiers which was interpreted as territorial claim on Bosnia-Herzegovina. HDZ was able to build up support for the part and create mass Croatian antipathy towards

---

21. *Ibid.*

22. In Autumn 1988 Milosevic intensified his campaigns to bring the two provinces under Serbia's control through radical changes in the Constitution. Literally under the barrel of a gun on March 24, 1989 Kosovo Assembly approved the change.

23. IISS, *Strategic Survey 1990-1991* p. 166.

Serbia and resentment against what was seen as the privileged position of the Serbian minority in the republic<sup>24</sup>. The HDZ won a landslide victory in 1990 by securing 205 of the 366 seats of the parliament<sup>25</sup>. The elections sealed the course of collision between Serbia on one front and Slovenia and Croatia on the other and confirmed the east-west divide in Yugoslavia.

### Administrative Factors

Tito had introduced an extraordinary system of government whereby each of the eight members of the state presidency representing the six republics and the autonomous provinces, served a year term as head of state in strict rotation and then reverted to being an ordinary member. The Presidency had a ninth member - the current president of LCY sitting *ex officio* - who was not affected by the annual rotation system. But under the amended constitution of 1987 the party was no longer officially represented in the presidency.

In the highly fluid political situation of Yugoslavia with the ruling party unable to function as a united body at the apex, the state presidency had assumed an ever greater significance. The Presidency nominates a candidate for President of the Federal Executive Council, it promulgates federal laws, and proposes the election of the President and judges of the Constitutional Court of Yugoslavia<sup>26</sup>. It became "the supreme body in charge of the administration and command of the armed forces and foreign policy." It enjoyed the power to introduce a state of emergency, a very important prerogative. But under the newly amended constitution, members of the state Presidency were no longer allowed to sit in the Yugoslav party's central committee. Amendment IV of 1981, altered the relevant Constitutional provision, so that instead of President of the LCY a member of the SFRY Presidency shall by virtue of office, be President of LCY organ as established by the LCY Statute.<sup>27</sup>

24. Christopher Civic, "Yugoslavia", *The Europe Review* 1990, Hunter Publishing Incorporated, New Jersey, 1990, p.188.

25. In the republics of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia centre-right parties with nationalist programmes were victorious. However in Serbia and its satellite Montenegro the communist won clear victories.

26. *World Mark Encyclopedia of the Nations*, Vol. 5, World Mark Press Ltd., New York, 1976, p. 329.

27. *The Europa Year Book 1986, A World Survey*, Europa Publications Ltd., London, England, p. 3029.

The republics suspected that Serbia wanted to recentralise the federation under its leadership by first capturing the control of the party organs at the Congress, then using the Congress as a mandate for sweeping changes of the federal system. That would severely reduce the powers of the republics and autonomous provinces in favour of Belgrade, the federal centre. Serbia's attempt to change the weighted system of representation at the Congress which was functioning on the basis of one member one vote system confirmed the suspicions of the republics and autonomous provinces. It would give Serbia, the largest republic with most party members, a significant predominance over the others. In 1989 there were 2 million members in LCY of which Belgrade party organisation had 200,000 (10%).<sup>28</sup>

In the meantime, the drift between the republics and Serbia came to the brink. Serbia stressed from the start its view that what was needed was a stronger, more united and, by implication, a more centralised Yugoslavia. Behind this lay the even stronger wish for the re-integration of the provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina into Serbia proper. Under the 1974 constitution, the two had become de facto mini-republics in line with the Tito policy of giving more scope to the Albanians in Kosovo (90% of the total population) and the Hungarians and the other non-Serbs in Vojvodina (46% of the total population). Right from the start of the process of constitutional revision in 1987, therefore, there was a difference: for most Serbs a stronger Serbia within a more centralised Yugoslavia was the main demand with everything else to follow; for most non-Serbs the retention of the existing federal structure guaranteeing the equality of all, Serbs and non-Serbs, was imperative. In the end, the constitutional reforms resolved nothing, instead made matters even worse.

### **Economic Factors**

Economic disparity existing among the republics played significant role in sharpening the north-south divide - in 1988 only 2% Slovenes were out

---

28. Bogomil Ferfila, "The Future of Yugoslavia" *Problems of Communism*, July/August 1991, p. 20.

of jobs, but 28% Kosovo Albanians were unemployed. Kosovo generates 1.8% of GNP and 1.0% of Yugoslavia's export volume; the GNP per capita in Kosovo is \$ 1520. In contrast, Slovenia generates 18% of Yugoslavia's GNP, 21% of its industrial production and 29% of its export volume. Its GNP per capita is about \$ 12520.<sup>29</sup> Over the years the relative position of 'backward' republics (Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro and to certain extent Serbia) declined in comparison to the advanced ones (Slovenia and Croatia). Croatia and Slovenia were obliged to contribute a somewhat disproportionate share of the federal budget theirs being the prosperous economies. In 1988 Slovenia paid over 404 billion dinars and in 1989, 696 billion dinars to the Federal Fund for Assistance to the less Developed Republics and the Autonomous Province of Kosovo. Croatia contributed 527.3 billion dinars in 1988 and 800.1 billion dinars in 1989 towards this fund.<sup>30</sup>

**Table No. 1 :** Selected Economic Indicators of Yugoslav Republics and Autonomous Provinces

	% of Yugoslavia's Exports.	GNP per Capita in \$	Average monthly wage in \$
Slovenia	29.0%	12,520	533
Croatia	21%	7,110	512
Vojvodina	8%	6,790	440
Serbia	21%	4,950	423
Bosnia and Herzegovina	14%	3,590	365
Macedonia	4%	3,330	300
Kosovo	1%	1,520	254
Montenegro	2%	3,970	371

Source : *Time*, July 15, 1991.

29. Bogomil Ferfila, *Toward a New Economic System for Yugoslav Society*, Ljubljana, Publishing House 1990, p. 339-45.

30. Bogomil Ferfila, "Yugoslavia: Confederation or Disintegration", *Problems of Communism*, July/August 1991, p. 23.

After the 1974 constitutional amendments the republics and even the municipalities began to develop as independent economies without link to each other. Political relations within the country were influenced by the disintegration of the economy, expensive and unproductive processes, and the autarchic and polycentric 'etatism'<sup>31</sup> on the part of the republics all of which stimulated the forces of disintegration.

During the second half of the 1980s economic policies pursued by the republics prevented the economic integration process. There was no flow of capital among the republics apart from the mandatory support for less developed republics and provinces. In addition to the Federal Central Bank each republic and the two provinces created their own central bank. However, this central bank was subordinate to the federal Central Bank. All commercial banking was undertaken at the republic level.

Inter-republic market exchange decreased during this period. Moreover, each republic pursued its own distinct policies on technological development, tax and price regulation. Most of the time these policies were neither coordinated with the Federation nor with the other republics.

The trend that emerged as a result was a greater isolation of markets within individual republics. Thus factors promoting the integration of the all Yugoslav market became weaker. Instead, sub-republic or municipal markets came into being. The transfer of technology, capital and labour between individual republics and foreign investors became more frequent than between the republics.<sup>32</sup>

As a result of the economies of the republics and provinces going independent without links to each other an extraordinary degree of economic irrationality throughout the Yugoslav economy was evident. There was unnecessary duplication of production capacities,<sup>33</sup> as well as uncoordinated export and import system.

---

31. Yugoslavia had in the 1970s and 1980s, five oil refineries, 21 sugar factories, 45 calculator manufactures and 8 robot manufactures. For details see Bogomil Ferfila, "The future of Yugoslavia". *Problems of Communism*, July/August 1991, p. 20.

32. *Ibid.*

33. *Ibid.*

The rate of economic growth which began to slow down in late 70s, further plummeted creating balance of payment deficits and foreign debt repayment problems. Therefore, resources were allocated for repayment which resulted in consumer goods shortage and rationing of many items. The stabilization programme adopted in the early 1980s provided for the tightening of credit policies, price adjustments of some basic commodities and services and devaluation of the dinar. The federal government was unable to implement these reforms as it lacked power and authority to carry them out in the face of popular discontent. In fact, Brancko Mikulic became the first Yugoslav Prime Minister to resign in the face of agitation by the workers. During 1987-88 close to a million workers took part in strikes<sup>34</sup>. Declining living standards caused a significant rise in worker militancy. Slobodan Milosevic's supporters were partially responsible in inciting the workers. Mikulic's austerity measures were taken at a time of deteriorating economic conditions. Therefore Mikulic became unpopular and was caught up in an unprecedented wave of labour unrest throughout the country. The government, fearing social reaction made concessions to disaffected workers. This complicated the reform efforts further. He came under severe criticism for failure to curb inflation. The Federal Assembly refused to approve his proposal to limit public spending which led to his resignation.

Ante Markovic, who replaced Mikulic, was a staunch supporter of market-oriented economy. He was determined to implement reforms which would make it possible for Yugoslavia to become a part of the integration going on in Western Europe. In June 1989 Markovic presented his economic plan to the Federal Assembly. These plans aimed at the promotion of the private sector, encourage foreign investments, greater independence of the banks and diverse forms of property ownership. Markovic created a new legal system targeted to free the economy from 'local political tutelage', provide greater incentives to promote the private sector and encourage foreign investments.<sup>35</sup> Markovic's programme generated lukewarm support. Inflation was the main obstacle and he was accused of being insensitive to the social difficulties that rose due to inflation.

---

34. Elez Biberaj, "Yugoslavia. A Continuing Crisis" *Conflict Studies*, October 1989, p.3.

35. *Ibid.*

The transition to market-oriented economy from the centrally planned economy that Yugoslavia had for over 40 years was challenging. Although Markovic had established a legal framework by enacting new laws to facilitate the change in the intermediate phase was accompanied with significant dislocation and serious social and political consequences. Adjustments are usually painful more so for less-developed regions and that is exactly what happened in Yugoslavia. Slovenia and Croatia benefited from the changes, these regions were prospering even under the old system. Serbia and especially Montenegro, Macedonia, Kosovo and Vojvodina were hard hit. The Serbs gave it a political colour and accused the Federal Government of deliberately pursuing policies aimed at "impoverishing Serbia and undermining Milosevic's authority". Milosevic did not support the unprecedented deregulation of the economy proposed by Markovic for Milosevic advocated authoritarian centralism. Such central control made it possible for politicians to bail out sick enterprises and thus keep their constituencies happy. This was opposed to every reform Markovic proposed and thus started the power struggle between the two. Milosevic capitalised on popular dissatisfaction and "demagogic postures" for market economic reform and consolidated his power as well as Serbia's influence.

The disintegration process that was eventually set in was, thus the lack of mutual political and economic accommodation between the republics of the Yugoslav federation. For too long the richer part of the country had been bailing out the poorer parts of the country while the poorer partners have had the upper hand in terms of political power. Slovenes have long been unhappy that state funds squandered by the Serb dominated federal government, for example, to suppress the Albanians in Kosovo in 1989. Slovenia's anger also centered around the rejection by the Serbian leadership of reform programs aimed at the introduction of free market system in the republics.



## Two Tier Composition Of The Yugoslav Army

The system of two tier army in Yugoslavia is also one of the factors that played an important role in the intensification of nationalist movements in the republics.

The Yugoslav armed forces were constitutionally set up in two tiers. The first consisted of the YPA which would be the first line of defense in the event of external threat. In the second tier was the territorial forces which would mobilize 85% of the population if there was any need for local resistance force. Alarmed by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, Tito formed the territorial defense forces. These were lightly armed units which could be used to slow the progress of approaching armored columns. The army was the responsibility of the Federal Secretariat for National Defence while the Republican Secretaries for Defence were in charge of territorial forces.

Tito had developed the YPA from among the guerrillas who fought during the Second World War. It developed into an obedient instrument of the party more so of Tito whose personality cult it assiduously upheld. The army was genuinely pan-Yugoslav institution with an ardent communist orientation.

The army had enjoyed the political spoils from the leadership in the state specially from those in Belgrade. They were pampered with all sorts of facilities. They consumed the maximum portion of the federal budget or some 5% of the GNP<sup>36</sup>. In 1989 the spending on defense stood at \$4.41 billion.<sup>37</sup> Croatia and Slovenia had been voicing their discontent over this as they contributed the maximum amount to the budget.

The pan-Yugoslav identity of the Yugoslav army was at stake with the setting up of republican armies. As the debate on Yugoslavia's future became heated, the federal army strongly supported Serbia and the integration of Yugoslavia. 60% of the officers in the YPA are Serbs and majority in the army are die-hard communists.

36. *Adelphi, Paper 270*, IISS, 1992, p. 41.

37. *Ibid.*

**Table No. 2 : Yugoslav Peoples Army : National Composition of officer Corps**

Nationality	Percentage of	
	Officer Corps	Yugoslav population
Serbs	60.0	36.0
Croats	12.6	19.8
Macedonians	6.3	6.0
Montenegrins	6.2	2.6
Slovenes	2.8	7.8
Muslims	2.4	8.9
Yugoslavs	6.7	5.4
Albanians	0.6	7.7
Hungarians	0.7	1.9
Others	1.6	3.6

Source : Revija Obramba, April 1991 quoted in James Gow, "Deconstructing Yugoslavia," *Survival*, XXXIII, No. 4

The Serbian leaders shared this attachment to communism. There developed a natural alliance based on mutual interest and reinforced by the fact that both were the product of the communist system. The main source of affinity between the army officers and Serbian leadership was the desire to preserve the Yugoslav federation. With a view to strengthening its commitments to communism the army with a number of prominent serving and retired Generals formed a new League of Communist Movement in November 1990.

On the other hand, the armed forces, both federal and territorial, were affected by the socio-political developments of 1980s. Both were caught in nationalist strains. Upcoming political pluralism and liberalization in some units of the federation left the army nervous. The republics also began to give emphasis on the strengthening of the local army. Croatia and Slovenia built republican armed forces around the existing structures while at the same time the republics were also intending to change the YPA in keeping with their confederal platform. This meant the formation of republican armies some of which could be attached to confederal units. The Croatian parliament declared that the republic should have command over the

republican units attached to confederal forces stationed in the republics.<sup>38</sup> The Slovenians and Croatians proceeded in their creation of republican armies in this line.

In October 1990 the YPA impounded weapons designated for the territorial forces in Slovenia and Croatia. The same measure was applied in all the other republics excluding Serbia. The objective was to partially disable republican territorial forces so that they do not grow into republican armies capable of threatening the YPA.

**Table No. 3 : Opposing Forces**

Yugoslav Federal Forces	Army troops	In Croatia	In Slovenia
130,000		55,000	20,000
Republican Militia			
	a) Troops	40,000	35,000
	b) Armed police	30,000	8,000

**Source :** The *Military Balance* as quoted in *Time*, July 15, 1991.

The YPA was able to impound 40% of the equipment from Slovenian territorial forces, that included heavy artillery equipment as well.<sup>39</sup> Slovene territorial force had 60% equipment left to them on which to build its republican army. Unfortunate for Croats, the federal army seized major portion of their military equipment. Therefore, Croatia had to depend on its police force for defense. The police units were trained for combat and by 1990 they were designated "Combat Organisation". Some 50,000 reservists were mobilized. These units were called 'Special's'. They were equipped with small arms and light armoured vehicles.

### III. DISINTEGRATION OF YUGOSLAVIA

In September 1989 a number of constitutional amendments, considered controversial, were adopted by Slovenia which asserted republican sovereignty and by early July 1990 Slovenia moved towards full sovereignty. Its parliament decided that the federal constitution would only

38. It was reported by Vladimir Seks in, *Politika*, 6 July, 1991, and quoted by James Gow in "Deconstructing Yugoslavia", *Survival*, July/August 1991, Volume XXXIII, Number 4.

39. As quoted by James Gow in *ibid*, p. 300.

apply in Slovenia if it did not conflict with the republic's constitution. Slovenia further proposed to develop its own foreign and defense policies. This was difficult for Serbia to accept. Constitutional debates began between Serbia, and Slovenia and Croatia. These discussions centered around federalism and confederalism. A new federation was proposed by Serbia which wanted a single state administered from Belgrade. The federal Constitution, though still in operation, had failed but Serbia wanted to make it reworkable. Serbian proposals were designed to optimize the control of the centre.<sup>40</sup>

Slovenia and Croatia propounded confederalism. In October 1990 they presented a 'Model of Confederation in Yugoslavia,' in which they proposed an alliance of sovereign states, functioning as an international organisation, Serbia insisted on the continuation of the federal system. Thus no agreement could be reached. In the early part of 1991 the Yugoslav republics were still negotiating the future of the country.<sup>41</sup> The talks were destined to be deadlocked as there were irreconcilable ideological differences between Serbia on the one hand and Slovenia and Croatia on the other. At the same time developments surrounding the Serbs in Croatia clearly confirmed that the Serbs were unwilling to live in an independent Croatia, democratic or not, confederal or as an independent state. The new Croatian Constitution made no mention of Serbs. This became another cause for Serb grievance. The Serbs of Croatia held a referendum on 'cultural autonomy' in August 1990.<sup>42</sup> They overwhelmingly endorsed it. By October 1990 they declared

---

40. One of its proposal would, if accepted, have overridden republican sovereignty by giving federal documents and laws an 'obligatory aspect' everywhere in Yugoslavia. See, *ibid.*

41. Yugoslavia's eight member collective federal presidency, and Prime Minister Markovic, and the six republican presidents were all involved in the discussions. It is said that the inclusion of republican presidents underscored the authority of the republics themselves, and reflected the reality that without the agreement between the republican authorities the federal leadership was impotent.

42. In Croatia the Serb minority decided to hold a referendum on cultural autonomy. Serbs set up road blocs and prevented the Croatian police from interfering. The Croatian leadership rejected the referendum as unconstitutional and designed by Belgrade to deal out a severe blow to Croatia's independence aspirations. This was also considered a severe blow as the Croatian leadership did not take stern action in the event that it may escalate the conflict further. These developments underlined the Serbo-Croat conflict which would determine the future relationship between the centre and the republic.

regional autonomy at a time when Croatia was still trying for a confederal system. In this backdrop the attempts of Croatia had very negligible prospects of success.

Once the majority in Slovenia and Croatia voted 'yes' in another referendum the parliaments of these republics felt confident to declare independence. By the second quarter of 1991 when the nationalist government of Croatia asserted its sovereignty, ethnic Serbs living in Croatia formed para-military units around police units manned by Serbs which managed to cut off Serb populated areas from rest of Croatia.<sup>43</sup> Later when Croatia seceded local Serbs broke away and seized a third of the territory. These groups of Serbs were supported by Serbs in Serbia. Milosevic added fuel to fire when he declared Serbia to be sovereign and that all Serbs would live in one state. Serbia's behaviour reinforced Slovenia's and Croatia's conviction that there was no more scope for accommodation with the Serbian leadership. They should go their own way.

Once the clashes broke out in the first week of July hundreds of soldiers mostly Slovenes and Croatians - deserted the federal defense service and some joined the republican forces. The Slovene republicans/forces were beset with numerous problems such as weak air power, rudimentary communication capabilities and limited mobility. This is probably because the territorial force, under the old system, was not expected to move more than 20 kilometers from their home base.<sup>44</sup> When the war itself broke out the Slovenes put up a resistance fiercer than expected. Instead of intimidating the Slovenes into quick submission and freeing themselves for the harder task of subduing bigger Croatia YPA units found themselves cut off and surrounded in humiliating circumstances in various parts of the Slovene country-side. The war in Slovenia lasted only 12 days.

---

43. It is said that these moves were taken because the Serbs were reminded of the atrocities committed by Croats during the World War II. They were also galvanized by the coming to power of the nationalist party in Croatia.

44. *Ibid.*

The Croatian war was different. The fighting went on for months. Over a dozen cease-fires initiated and mediated by the EC failed. The minority Serbs in Croatia supported the army, while the army refused to withdraw insisting that if it were to withdraw from Croatia then the 600,000 Serbs would be persecuted. Croatia felt Serbia was using the minority issue to seize territory as Yugoslavia was disintegrating.

The Croatians benefited from a fall in the army's morale. As many soldiers were conscripts from different republics they felt that this was not their war. The number of non-Serb conscripts soon diminished. Bosnia followed Slovenia, Croatia and Macedonia in refusing to provide recruits in September, 1991. There was an increase in the rate of desertion. Moreover, conscripts who were kept on behind their normal period of service were said to have mutinied.

First Macedonia in September 1991, and then Bosnia-Herzegovina in December 1991, joined the race for independence. Serbinaization of Macedonian Slavs failed and they aspired for a separate identity.<sup>45</sup> There are, however, certain problems for Macedonia to go independent. It's neighbours, Bulgaria, Greece, Turkey and Albania have interest in Macedonia. Macedonia strongly needs to retain ties with other republics for its own interest. Recognition of Macedonia is tied with Greece's dispute over its name. Greece objects and insists that Macedonia should replace its Hellenic name when it becomes an independent state. EC has shown grudging support for Greece's position and have not recognised Macedonia yet. US is waiting for EC to take the first step. Russia, Turkey and Bulgaria have formally recognised Macedonia. The Macedonia government is trying to mobilise support for recognition for it fears its bloodless secession may now escalate into a bloody ethnic civil war.

Bosnia-Herzegovina has turned into a humanitarian nightmare. Bosnia-Herzegovina, the most ethnically mixed up republic of Yugoslavia finds its balance perilously close to collapse. Its 4.3 million people are divided between Muslims (44%), Serbs (33%) and Croats (17%).<sup>46</sup> Bosnia-Herzegovina

---

45. *International Herald Tribune*, November 19, 1991.

46. James Gow, 'Deconstructing Yugoslavia'. *Survival* XXXIII, No. 4, p. 289.

pursued a middle path for some time. At one stage it decided to side with the federal authorities and YPA. This helped to ignite an already tense condition that prevailed in Bosnia. The Serbian leadership in their desire to create a "greater Serbia" considered Bosnia-Herzegovina along with Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia a part of the new state. The Serbs in Bosnia in a referendum voted for a rump Yugoslavia. But the Muslims and Croats disagreed. It is the Serbs and Croats of Bosnia-Herzegovina who have the decisive political voice for they are supported by their ethnic groups elsewhere in the federation. The developments in Slovenia and Croatia in 1991 caused fear among the different ethnic groups of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Their identity came under threat particularly those of the Muslims. At the behest of EC in February 1992 a referendum was held. Muslims and Croats together, 61% of the population, opted for independence. Though the Croats looked towards Zagreb and radical Croats were looking forward to being governed by Zagreb realizing the extent of threat Serbia posed the Croats formed a make-shift alliance with the Muslims. The Muslims found the concept of greater Serbia unpalatable and, therefore, joined hands with the Croats overlooking any mistrust prevailing for the moment. The alliance has failed to be effective.

Bosnia-Herzegovina did not meet the standards set by EC on human rights and, therefore, did not receive favourable response initially from EC. Macedonia and Bosnia does not have the German leverage that significantly aided Croatia and Slovenia in getting recognition from EC. However, by April 1992, both the European Commission and US recognised Bosnia-Herzegovina as an independent state and it became a UN member in May 1992. The conflict, however, remained far from resolved.

#### IV. THE IMPLICATION OF THE YUGOSLAV CRISIS

The Yugoslav crisis was bound to be followed with close interest by countries in Europe and beyond, particularly by those having ethno-national and religious minorities. The process of disintegration in Yugoslavia coincided with the European Community's march towards a united Europe and on their way to building what is widely coined as a supra-nation. Hence for EC the events in Yugoslavia were of special relevance.

During the Cold War Yugoslavia was of strategic importance to US and USSR. It lost some of this importance, there being no USSR any more which caused a decline of the interest that super powers displayed for its neutrality in relation to the blocs. However, Yugoslavia did not lose all its importance. The EC countries, particularly Germany, had a stake in preventing the lebanization and balkanization of Yugoslavia, mainly because of the possible unfavourable effect on the pace of integration of EC and stability of Europe in general. The other major concern was the prospect of floods of refugees into neighbouring EC countries-Italy, Greece, Germany, and so on.

The European Community had a key role to play in the Yugoslav crisis also because of its importance as the major economic partner. In 1990, it accounted for 40% of Yugoslavia's external trade.<sup>47</sup> Yugoslavia wanted to be a member of EC for quite some time. The conditions Yugoslavia had to fulfill to become a member of EC were the introduction of market economy, multi-party system and full, legally codified guarantees of human rights. With the developments of 1990 in Yugoslavia the EC added one more precondition, the continuation as a united single state.

This condition was misinterpreted by the federal government in Yugoslavia. All over the country the slogan of 1990 was "Europe Now". This was the campaigning slogan of the communists in Slovenia in 1990. Croatia realising the advantage of EC membership was also interested to be integrated in the community. The Serbian authority had always favoured the association. From then on even the army saw the integration with Europe as a "foreign-policy priority". As all the parties were eager for association with EC the Serbs in the centre along with the federal army projected this as the justification to assert themselves and intimidate Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia. The EC may have insisted on a single federation but not in exchange for Serbia's domination. EC's policy of favouring a single state nevertheless militated Serbs against republics which were trying to achieve independence.

---

47. Bogomil Ferfila, "The Future of Yugoslavia", *Problems of Communism*, July/August 1991, p. 20.



When the intentions of the YPA and federal government became clear to EC it found itself in a dilemma. Eventually there was a major shift in its policy. It condemned the federal government and threatened to impose economic sanctions.<sup>48</sup> EC brokered 14 cease-fires between Croatia and Serbia all of which were violated. None of the cease-fires negotiated between YPA and Bosnia-Herzegovina leadership has succeeded either. Lord Carrington, EC emissary to Yugoslavia, has not been able to negotiate any effective commitments from either party. However the efforts continue and attempts were again made to bring the warring factions in Bosnia-Herzegovina to the negotiation table in the London Conference held in August of 1992. The three warring parties have met but to no effect. The peace makers offered to split Bosnia into ten provinces with three each for the three rival groups and Sarejevo left to be administered by a neutral government comprising of Muslims, Croats and Serbs. The plan has yet to be accepted by all the actors in the conflict and is awaiting decision of the US. The US announced that it would use force to ensure peace but it would not impose the peace plan on any party unwilling to accept it in its present form. The US feels that the plan leaves the Muslims in Bosnia at a disadvantage. Attempts to reach a negotiated settlement continues.

However much EC would have liked to remain impartial they reached a stage where they had to take sides recognising the blatant violation by Serbia of democratic practices. Serbia and Montenegro were alone among the republics in not accepting the EC peace plan. The plan proposed that Yugoslavia should be a loose association of sovereign republics with a currency union, that there should be no international border changes except by mutual agreement; that disputed areas where ethnic minorities live should be demilitarized under international peace-keepers; and Kosovo and Vojvodina, now under Serbian control, should be returned to their previous status as autonomous provinces<sup>49</sup>. However, the Serbs suggested that ethnic minorities, notably their own minorities outside Serbia, should be able to

---

48. *The Daily Star*, December 18, 1991. Also *The Statesman*, January 29, 1992.

49. *The Economist*, November 9, 1991, p.62.

vote to switch the region where they live from one republic to another. Such a measure would result in Serb-populated regions in Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina going to Serbia which is already a dominant republic of Yugoslavia. But then it is also a minority issue and how does one deal with it? The Serbs are minorities in these republics.

Unable to resolve the crisis through dialogue EC and USA resorted to sanctions which have been far from effective. The arms embargo imposed in September 1991, except for adding a moral pressure has been able to achieve little.

The question that may be raised is whether the EC could intervene militarily? The decision to intervene militarily is a difficult and sensitive one even for the UN to take. The United Nations Security Council stepped up its efforts to end the war in Yugoslavia by committing to send in 'blue helmeted' peace keeping force of maximum 10,000. In doing so the Council had to overcome the reservations of many of its non-aligned members which considered that it was setting a precedence whereby the UN could intervene in any domestic conflict. Led by India some Security Council members found this decision hard to accept.<sup>50</sup> This touches a sensitive nerve in many developing countries. They have seen the United Nations become increasingly involved, at the request of the Western members, in what is considered their internal affairs.

The members of EC tried to put up a joint front on the Yugoslav situation. However there was discord among the members over whether to recognise Croatia and Slovenia or not. The German-Croatian relationship is fairly old and it influenced Germany's decision in favour of recognising the two republics. The Germans not only helped the Croats during the World War II against the Serbs, even today the relationship between Croatia and Germany is strong. Of the total number of Yugoslav guest workers in Germany majority, 400,000,<sup>51</sup> are Croats. The Serbs or federal authority

50. *The Gaurdian Weekly*, January 19, 1992.

51. Under the Nickles Amendment US would withdraw US aid to Yugoslavia and US backing for Yugoslavia in international institutions.

interpreted the German keenness to recognize as a design to create the "Fourth Reich," a concern even in the minds of other EC members, specially France.

Internal political conditions within Germany called for recognition of Slovenia and Croatia. Chancellor Kohl was under pressure from both the opposition Social Democrats and, Christian Social Union, the Bavarian partner of Kohl's Christian Democratic Union in the Bonn coalition government. He depends on Catholic votes in Rhineland and the Bavarians are Catholics. They sympathize with the Croats and Slovenes so they strengthened the support for Croats and Slovenes outnumbering any support for the orthodox Serbs. The support is not purely out of religious considerations. The Croats keep billions of Marks in West German banks and are most assimilable of all foreign workers.<sup>52</sup> Germany being a member of EC did not consider it wise to go alone on this initially and tried to woo the other members of EC in favour. Subsequently, however, Germany became more assertive and declared that at any cost it would recognise the two republics by Christmas 1991, leaving little option to the other members of EC. Croatia and Slovenia gained EC recognition on January 15, 1992.

The role played by the United States was also an important factor in Yugoslav crisis. The US gave Slobodan Milosevic its outright support during the first two years that he rose to power in Serbia with the hope that a new leader may take charge of Yugoslav politics like Tito. The U.S. support helped Milosevic assert Serbian authority over other communities. However, the US policy began to change with Milosevic's handling of the Kosovo uprising in 1989, which he crushed with the imposition of martial law. The US threatened to impose the Nickles Amendment<sup>53</sup> if significant improvement was not achieved in the practice of human rights. Under the Amendment US would withdraw aid to Yugoslavia and US backing for Yugoslavia in International institutions.

52. *The Statesman*, January 29, 1992.

53. This was Stated by Lawrence Eagleberger in an interview with CNN television on June 30, 1991.

The Amendment was eventually invoked and the withdrawal of support for the federal government was welcomed by the Slovenes and Croatians. They read this as positive development leading to the recognition of the two republics. However, the US had time and again made it clear that it did not intend to recognise Slovenia and Croatia.

The US had not changed its original position concerning the recognition of the republics as independent states even when the members of EC followed Germany's suit. The US was for a 'comprehensive solution' to the problem and felt that recognition might aggravate the situation. It also would give birth to "dilemmas concerning the cases of Bosnia- Herzegovina and Macedonia as well as of other regions in Yugoslavia"<sup>54</sup> - the US Defense Minister, Dick Cheney, was reported to have said. But when the federal army cracked down on Slovenia and Croatia there was change visible in US policy. The US Deputy Secretary of State, a former US Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Lawrence Eagleberger, Stated that US "supported sovereign republics and the idea of Yugoslavia confederation."<sup>55</sup> The US, however continued to refuse to recognise Slovenia and Croatia. President Bush stating US position said "we want to see a peaceful evolution, we have been strongly supportive of the EC and the UN".<sup>56</sup> The US view was that recognition may not ensure democracy and human rights. Croatia and Slovenia do not have a clean bill in this context to the extent that Croatian government has been labeled as "neo-fascist."<sup>57</sup> Eventually the Germans nudged the Americans into recognising.

The war in Bosnia-Herzegovina continues as does the flow of refugees to different corners of Europe. Bosnia is a challenge for the world community which is yet to lay the foundation of the architecture of the international system and its security structure. Till date the international

54. *International Herald Tribune*, December 6, 1991.

55. *Ibid.*

56. *The Guardian Weekly*, January 19, 1992.

57. *Ibid.*

community has been improvising as they have faced one problem after another that is emerging with the end of the cold war. The pressure is on for a decision as to which situations qualify as human tragedy and, therefore, qualify for interventions. In the meantime, the cost of the war in terms of both material and human loss is mounting.

## CONCLUSION

The separatist tendencies in Yugoslavia were in large measure a consequence of the long years of domination of the largest nation over smaller nations. The Yugoslav experiment, built on historic animosities and cemented by Tito and his communist rule, was unable to hold the federation together in his absence. He offered a great deal of political and economic power to the republics in relation to the federal authority since 1974. At the same time, there remained the ethnic issues and differences, dispersed minorities, overlapping economic interests and the LCY's and YPA's domination. The YPA as an instrument of the LCY, over the years lost its neutrality and objectivity. The authoritarianism of the political super structure (LCY) came into conflict with the self-managed disposition of the rest of the system. Economic disparity among the republics, 'north-south' divide, and lack of political accommodation contributed to the fracture and ultimate split of the Yugoslav federation.

Unfortunately the option of compromise and political give-and-take failed to draw much favour with the historically antagonised political leaders and the Serbian led YPA. To them the idea of settling amicably for something less than their maximum demand did not appeal which is why EC or UN negotiations also failed. Initially a first step towards a peaceful settlement could have been to check the military's excess, then try and bring all parties to the negotiation table. The key to resolving the Yugoslav crisis may have been to get the army out of politics.

Religious chauvinism undermined the process of bringing together culturally and socially discrete groups and the establishment of a national identity. Societal and governmental structures failed to adapt to and

accommodate the needs of ethnic groups for the sustaining of the federal structure. The lack of political flexibility and adjustment by the majority in responding to the needs and aspirations of that minority contributed to the failure in the creation of congenial atmosphere for the continuation of the union. Economic disparity on the other hand accounted for the mounting of ethnic unrest which led to the collapse of the facade of a common ideological bond. The use of force in the end sounded the death knell of the federation confirming that there are no simple military solutions to complex political problems.