

JUNIOR MODEL UNITED NATIONS
Historical Security Council

Expert's Report

Agenda: The Yugoslav Crisis, 1991

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Introduction to the United Nations Historical Security Council

The United Nations Security Council was one of the six organs established by the United Nations Charter. According to the document, the Council has the primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security and responding to acts that pose threat to global peace. Unlike other organs of the United Nations, this entity is entitled to make decisions, which are obligatory for Member States to implement. Thus, resolutions passed by the Council entail recommendations if adopted under Chapter VI of the Charter or binding measures if adopted under Chapter VII.

The Council consists of 15 members, five being permanent and the other ten being elected for two-year terms by the General Assembly. During the modelled meetings, the list of permanent members included the People's Republic of China, the French Republic, the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom of Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. A State that is a Member of the United Nations but not of the Security Council may also participate (without a vote) in its discussions when the Council considers that country's interests are affected. Both Members and non-members of the United Nations, if they are parties to a dispute being considered by the Council, may be invited to take part (again without a vote) in the Council's discussions.

Each member of the Council possesses one vote. As a result, its decisions on procedural matters require an affirmative vote of nine members. The situation is different, however, when substantial matters (e.g. adoption of the resolution) are considered. In that case, an affirmative vote of nine members is to include the concurring votes of the permanent members. The matter will not pass if a single permanent member votes against, i.e. vetoes. Abstentions are not counted as veto.

Beside these essentials, the delegates are to pay special attention to the fact that the modelled UN Security Council is Historical. It means that the meetings are bound to a specific moment, which is December 1991 in this particular case, and any references further beyond this date are prohibited. Nevertheless, this Council being Historical allows the delegates to emulate diplomatic conduct in a way that reflects not only the realities of the period and policy of the country represented. The committee are welcome to put their knowledge of history to good use and attempt to re-write it. The final aim is to adopt a comprehensive resolution that covers all aspects of the agenda and looks forward to dealing with them effectively.

Introduction

The breakup of Yugoslavia occurred because of a series of political upheavals and conflicts during the early 1990s. After a period of political crisis in the 1980s, constituent republics of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia split apart.

At the end of the 20th century the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was divided into Greater Yugoslavia (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia) and Small (Serbia and Montenegro). In addition to national strife within the country and the desire of the republics for independence, there was a tangle of political, economic, national factors.

The dissolution of multinational communist federations and the ensuing armed conflicts that have emerged with their transformation into independent nation-states have returned the 'national question' (i.e., the relationship of a national or ethnic group to a state that includes multiple ethnic groups within its territory) to the forefront of debates over international politics, law, and theory. The breakup of Yugoslavia, in particular, demonstrates the inability of the international community to rely on any solid legal principles, guidelines, or established mechanisms to avoid such chaos and mass suffering when constituent parts of these types of multinational states decide to go their own way.

Causes and premises

National issues in Yugoslavia were considered a relic of the past. However, tension between different ethnic groups has become one of the most serious internal problems. The North-Western republics, Slovenia and Croatia, were flourishing, while the standard of living of the South - Eastern republics left much to be desired. There was a growing mass outrage in the country - a sign that the Yugoslavians did not consider themselves a single nation, despite 60 years of existence within one country.

The economic crisis, in which Yugoslavia was involved in the second half of the 1970s, intensified in the early 1980s, after the death of Tito. The dynamic of the crisis was impressive. The growth rate of social production slowed sharply (from 7% in 1979 to 2.3–0.7% in 1980-1983), and then from 1983 began to decline. After a long period when the standard of living of the population only grew, it began to fall – by 7.5% in 1980 and by 30% over the next four years.

The country was hit by a huge debt problem, which was aggravated by the oil crisis in the world market and the increasing prices of energy carrier (1979-1980). The energy crisis was unexpected for the Yugoslav leadership, and the state was completely dependent on energy suppliers. And although only for the import of oil Yugoslavia had to pay more than 7 billion us dollars, "investment mania" (the process in 1970s, when the republics that received the right to take foreign loans without the permission of the Union government did not fail to take advantage of it) has not stopped.

By the end of 1985, the unemployment was 15 %, inflation was 100%, external debt was approaching 21 billion us dollars (in 1985 Yugoslavia's GDP was equal to 44 billion us dollars), so the economic situation only ignited internal contradictions.

Slovenia. The first republic, which decided to declare its independence from Yugoslavia, was Slovenia. This country had to win its sovereignty in a short military conflict with the JNA, known as the Weekend War. The position of national bureaucracy ("ethnocracy") in the country has sharply strengthened. There was a concept of "national economy" (designed to replace the "Treaty"), according to which Slovenia produced everything necessary for itself. Moreover, the republic has begun to introduce special measures to protect their enterprises from competition with other Yugoslav enterprises. It is important to note that the Slovenian technocrats, who dreamed about replacing the current

political elite with scientific and technical specialists, were particularly popular. Moreover, the "the Ljubljana Four" trial of 1987 played a huge role in the development of the crisis in Yugoslavia in the 1980 and in the Slovenian road to independence. In all probability, chief military leaders instigated it as a warning to the Yugoslav dissidents. Three distinguished Slovene dissidents, who had published some articles concerning the possibility of a military coup in Yugoslavia in a popular local magazine «Mladina» and had tried to prove it with some military documents, became the targets for the trial. The military persons decided to accuse those dissidents and their source in military establishment of disclosing classified information. They preferred to consider the case by military court, because such politically motivated cases could be dismissed by civilian courts, as it had happened before. Probably, the instigators of the trial intended to send a strong-worded message to all opposition forces in the country, but severely miscalculated and made some grave errors, such as arranging the trial in the Slovenian capital in Serbo-Croatian but not Slovene language, prohibiting the accused to have civil defense lawyers and completely losing information war during the trial. The Slovenian dissidents, from their side, demonstrated considerable capability of using direct and indirect actions, both in Yugoslavia and abroad, in order to achieve their goals. The «Ljubljana Four» were jailed, but military efforts backfired: instead of silencing critical voices, the trial aroused a strong response of the society, cemented the opinion against military leaders and made many Slovenes to move from centrist political position to anti-establishment and later separatist sentiments.

Croatia. Unlike Slovenia, Croatia was home to a large Serbian minority (580,000 or 12,2% of this total population, according to the pre-war census of 1991). Croatian president Franjo Tudman actively strived for Croatian independence from Yugoslavia, much to the discontent of this Serbian

minority. The Serbian population of Croatia was dissatisfied with the new government. The leaders of the Croatian Serbs gathered at the Congress in July 1990 and adopted their Declaration on the sovereignty and autonomy of the Serbian people. The Serbian Council and the Serbian national Assembly were formed. The situation became more heated.

In December 1990, the new Croatian Constitution recognized Serbs as a national minority. As a protest, the Serbs in Konin proclaimed the creation of the Serbian Autonomous region of Krajina and refused to join Croatia. Serbia supported their decisions. President Tudjman's attempts to negotiate with Serbia were unsuccessful.

In December, at the height of the war, the independent Republika Srpska Krajina was proclaimed. Croatian territorial defence troops blocked two garrisons of the Yugoslav army in the city. On 3 September, the Yugoslav Army launched an operation to liberate the blocked garrisons, which grew into a siege of the city and protracted fighting. The operation was carried out by units of the Yugoslav Army with the support of Serbian paramilitary volunteer units (for example, the Serbian volunteer guard under the command of Zeljko Ražnatović "Arkan") and lasted from 3 September to 18 November 1991 while the city was completely surrounded. Parts of the Croatian National Guard and Croatian volunteers defended the city. Some of the armed conflicts in the city broke out intermittently since may 1991, even before the Declaration of independence by Croatia. The regular siege of Vukovar began on September 3. Despite multiple advantage attacking in manpower and equipment, Vukovar's defenders successfully resisted for nearly three months. The city fell on 18 November 1991 and was almost completely destroyed by street fighting, bombing and rocket attacks.

Serbia. In the struggle for the preservation of a single state Serbia (not counting the small Montenegro) remained more and more

alone. Its leadership was motivated by the fact that, while other governments of the former Yugoslavia formed their national States when the Federation collapsed, the Serbs were, on the contrary, divided. A third of the Serbs would remain outside the Republic of Serbia.

The situation has been further complicated by the new deterioration of the situation in the Autonomous province of Kosovo, the weakest link in Serbia and the entire Yugoslav Federation. In the period from 1931 to 1961, Serbs and Montenegrins accounted for about 27% of the population of the region, by 1981 this figure had decreased to 13.2 %. The Slavic population of the province, which was under the pressure from the Albanians, continued to leave Kosovo on an increasing scale. At the same time, the Albanian population of Kosovo also felt disadvantaged compared to the other peoples of Yugoslavia. The number of Albanians ranked third in the country after the Serbs and Croats, but did not have their own Republic. All these interethnic conflicts increasingly fueled the desire of the people to secede.

In May 1985, the Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences (SANU) formed a working group of 23 members to prepare a Memorandum document on the economic and political situation in Yugoslavia. In parallel with the Sani Memorandum, changes took place in the Serbian political leadership, which then had a huge impact on the fate of the whole of Yugoslavia: Slobodan Milosevic began the ascent of the Serbian political Olympus. Milosevic was the most outspoken critic of decentralization in Serbia and Yugoslavia. In all Yugoslav republics, as elsewhere in Eastern Europe, nationalism has become a means of fighting communism. Only Serbia was the exception. Its leader S. Milosevic, with the help of nationalism, tried to preserve communism in his country. This has had the saddest consequences for the Serbs.

Finally, the Yugoslav republics parted at the XIV extraordinary Congress of the SKU,

which began work in January 1990. The Slovenian delegation after rejecting its demands for the reorganization of the party on Confederate principles left the Congress. Without Slovenes, deputies from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina did not want to continue their work. At the Congress, a break was announced, which turned out to be indefinite.

Bosnia. By December 1991, Bosnia and Herzegovina has already declared its sovereignty but formally remained a part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The end of the year is marked by the first acts of armed violence between militias in Mostar.

Before the crisis, Bosnia and Herzegovina used to be a centre of Yugoslav metal and pulp industries accounting for a significant amount of production in respective branches of economy. However, a highly developed industry was still to collapse in the situation of an economic downfall on a federal scale.

It was in Bosnia and Herzegovina that the policy of austerity, which federal authorities had to implement previously (in the first half of the 1980-s), were met with sharp public discontent at the turn of the decade. The country was the first to have numerous business irregularities, misuse, bribery, corruption and inappropriate use of funds exposed by the media. Consequently, the conflict between officials' luxurious lifestyles and civilians' austerity became most evident. An exemplary event in this regard was the Agrokomerc Affair (August 1987).

Although it remained a socialist republic, i.e. a constituent federal unit, Bosnia and Herzegovina underwent political change. The fall of the communist regime and its doctrine of tolerance resulted in the rise of political nationalism throughout the federation, which happened to be particularly visible in Bosnian political developments. The first multi-party elections (November 1990) brought about the coalition government consisting of Bosniak

Party of Democratic Action, the Serbian Democratic Party and the Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Each of the three parties promoted interests of respective ethnic lines: Bosniak, Bosnian Serb and Bosnian Croat.

The Serbian and Croatian minorities each accounted for a significant percentage of the population that led to various assumptions. The media raised concerns about the possibility of the country being partitioned with the direct involvement of its largest neighbours, Croatia and Serbia. Although no official statements were made, the rumours of 'Greater Serbia' and 'Greater Croatia' did take place, especially after the Karadordevo meeting between Franjo Tudman of Croatia and Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia which was held on March 25, 1991.

The decentralizing tendencies propelled in the course of the year with Croatian Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina proclaiming the existence of Croatian Community of Herzeg-Bosnia as an autonomous entity within the country on November 18, 1991. The acts were declared illegal.

Currently, the country is experiencing severe political turbulence.

Macedonia. The country endorsed its independence on September 8, 1991. The secession from the federation underwent peacefully, however, the act posed a number of risks to Macedonian economy.

Attributing to the smallest percentage of Yugoslavia's gross domestic product (approx. 5%) at the turn of the 1980-s, Macedonian economy was underdeveloped and heavily depended on Serbia, the latter possessing key protected markets for the country, as well as providing largest transfer payments.

The authorities which came to power after the first multi-party elections of November and December, 1990 looked forward to a

democratic solution to the question of secession. It is evident, however, that their motivation was primarily political and based on willingness to evade further political instability and to protect national interests. The ethnic structure with a Macedonian majority prevented the country from disputes on an ethnic base.

Explicitly rejecting the communist past, Macedonian constitution saw the removal of the word 'Socialist' from the country's official name on April 16, 1991. Despite effectively declaring independence, Macedonia has not yet been recognised as an independent state by the international community.

Previous UN activities and bloc positions

The United Nations, Security Council in particular, did address the Yugoslav crisis the same year, starting with definitive measures. The key documents that were both adopted unanimously are the UNSC Resolution 713 (S/RES/713) and UNSC Resolution 721 (S/RES/721).

The first resolution (713) was adopted on September 25, 1991 and imposed a general and complete embargo on all deliveries of weapons and military equipment to Yugoslavia until the Security Council decided otherwise upon consultation between the Secretary-General and the Government of Yugoslavia. The document also commended the efforts of the European community in the region, urged all parties to abide by the ceasefire agreements of September 17 and September 22, 1991, as well as inviting the Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar to immediately consult with Yugoslav authorities. The violations of the ceasefire were also noted and deemed alarming.

The second resolution (721) was adopted on November 27, 1991. Strong support of the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy's efforts in establishing a peacekeeping

mission was expressed in regards to his letter addressed on November 24 (S/23239). However, the Council also stated that the deployment of the mission could not proceed unless the parties involved complied with the ceasefire agreements, the latest having been signed in Geneva on November 23, 1991.

Thus, by December 1991 the United Nations have undertaken certain measures on the issue but further developments require taking a more active stance as the ceasefire is still being violated and the parties involved fail to reach an omnilateral agreement.

The European Community has attempted to mediate between the opposing political groups which effectively resulted in the ceasefire agreements being signed. However, the Community's influence on the on-going processes is not strong because it only focuses on fostering dialogue between the parties engaged in the conflict. The West as a whole refrains from any type of intervention, despite numerous concerns being raised.

The East has had a similar position with reasons varying between different countries. The Soviet Union is on the verge of being ultimately terminated as a subject of international law. At the same time, China which is still undergoing 'reform and opening-up' has strong economic interests in Yugoslavia as its partner. Although no acts of violence towards larger ethnic and religious groups have been registered, the Muslim states are likely to express solidarity with Islam-affiliated parties.