DISCOURSES OF WAR:
SECURITY AND THE CASE OF YUGOSLAVIA

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Introduction

The agonizing war in the former Yugoslavia, the interminable parlays about what to do, the innumerable threats made and peace plans offered, retracted and made again have all served to highlight the process by which Western decision-making elites have tried to redefine their own, and their countries', security in the post-cold war world. To the question: "What is to be done in Bosnia?" they have answered: "Almost nothing." To the question: "Why?" they have answered: "Because it does not threaten us." And, so, almost nothing has happened. In this paper, we argue that this policy response is directly related to conceptions of "security" and "threats" that have structured the debate on the causes of the war as well as its potential consequences. In turn, widespread acceptance of the dominant view of those causes has justified a policy of relative inaction, in the process virtually precluding future actions designed to prevent such carnage from becoming an accepted feature of global politics.

The literature on the war in the former Yugoslavia grows daily, in both quantity and quality. Much of it attempts to solve the puzzle of violence and bloodletting, unleashed with the complicity of Europe, the United States, the European Community, and Russia in what most people agree was once a vibrant multi-ethnic society. Few analyses, however, have explored the connection between widely accepted causal claims regarding the war and the policies pursued by the dominant powers. Nor have they examined how dominant explanations for the war serve to vindicate prevailing conceptions of specific security requirements. Such analysis is required to improve the level of debate, the effectiveness of policy, and our understanding of security in the post-cold-war world.

In this essay we explore those connections at two levels. In the first part of the paper, we examine the ways in which elite decision and opinion makers constructed an intersubjective understanding of the causes of war in the former Yugoslavia when the fighting broke out, relying on competing discourses of war. That story is essentially a chronological one. It shows how political forces in the West, rather than "objective" events on and beyond the battlefield, worked to undermine the initial interpretation of the conflict and replace it with an alternative one that required little or no active intervention. We make no claim here that the prevailing explanation is wrong in any positive sense. But we do argue that it is based upon a state-centric conception of Western security, not on a conception of state security in the region, and not on a preference for the security of individuals in what was once Yugoslavia. Given the assumptions upon which the interpretation is built, the prevailing explanation posits a narrow range of causal factors that might link Balkan violence to the security of Western European states and other states in the region. The conventional security assumption underlying all of these causal claims is that peace is *divisible* in the post-cold war world, and the causes of war in the former Yugoslavia will not lead to a widening of the conflict in ways that would impinge on the security of Western states. Therefore not much *needs* to be done. Bolstered by a belief that Serbian aggression, compounded by "centuries of hatred," was responsible for the initiation and continuation of the war, the policy response has become: "nothing *can* be done."

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In the second part of the paper, we challenge two of the prevailing assumptions that undergird the dominant explanation for the causes of *this* war: that of "centuries old hatreds" and the assumption about "divisible peace." Historical evidence shows that ethnic animosities in the region are relatively new. We interrogate the concept of "divisible peace" by shifting the analytic focus from Western states to individuals in the region. This shift in focus opens the way for an alternative explanation of the causes of war. We present one possible alternative—that the institutions of the federal Yugoslav state played a double-edged role in the evolution of the conflict: they nourished regional and ethnic identities and even resentments, but they initially created working relationships among the ethnically defined regions and removed the potential sources of collective violence. The weakening of those federal institutions increased the insecurity of individuals whom they protected. Policy implications that flow from this critique of the prevailing claims focus on more, not less intervention to restructure state institutions in areas threatened with similar conflicts in ways that might lead to peace and to more security for individuals.

Threats, Security & War

What does the term "security" mean? The answer, quite clearly, depends on the object to which the condition refers. In the case of a state, to be secure is conventionally thought to refer to threats that originate from outside of the border of the state and, if fulfilled, could undermine the stability and integrity of the state. Yet, it is clear on reflection that such threats can also originate from *within* the borders of the state, in the form of deliberate subversion or even the destabilizing of social arrangements as a result of the dissemination of new ideas, practices and technologies. How the leaders of a state define security, consequently, relies a great deal on how those leaders conceptualize the state and its place in the world, and how they explain processes inside and outside the state that might, conceivably, undermine the state.

How, then, might a war in a "faraway place" impact on the integrity and stability of states outside of that place? There are several possibilities, and each provides a somewhat different vision of the state, its political and social constitution and its internal coherence. One possible impact is enshrined in the venerable "domino theory," which posits the spillover of war across borders as an almost automatic process. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) is sometimes posited as the potential flashpoint of a Third Balkan War that could expand to engulf not only the former Yugoslav republics but also Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece, Albania, and Hungary, eventually, perhaps, drawing in the Western Europeans, Russia and the United States. The model for this causal process is, of course, World War I; the response is clear: stop the war before it gets out of hand, even it that means active intervention.

A second possible impact is internal. The chaos and disruption in the Balkans has displaced millions and will, in all likelihood, displace millions more, and these millions upon millions will all head toward more peaceful places. The burden of so many refugees, especially on societies that are already under serious economic strain, will inevitably disrupt internal stability, heighten social

conflict and, perhaps, even lead to violence. Hence, the threat is one that can be staunched either by closing borders, and turning away from the war, or intervening in the region. Closing borders is, politically, much easier than intervention, and this is the most recent response of the European Union to the chaos in the Balkans.

Finally, there is the possibility that the war is strictly local—a civil conflict, in effect—and has no spillover or other effects that merit a military response. To be sure, there is a refugee problem, but this is one that can be handled through appropriate administrative procedures. The war is unlikely to spread—no one has very much interest in the Balkans any more—and involvement, if necessary, should proceed through strictly diplomatic means. For the most part, however, peace is divisible.

We will argue later that, in fact, none of these three discourses provided an explanation of the conflict, but that a discourse of "social warfare," prosecuted at the level of individual, family and civil society, would be much more accurate. As we shall see, however, this type of war could not, and cannot, be handled through the existing practices and institutions of the state system.

Each of these interpretations rest upon a certain set of notions about war and its consequences; each is, under certain specific conditions, a plausible outcome, and each demands a different response. But plausibility—or probability—is not what is at issue here; politics is. The particular explanation that is advanced by political elites has to do with their estimation of what is politically possible inside and outside of their individual countries, and how to make the possible come true, not what is most likely to happen. Should they be proven wrong in their estimates, of course, the political cost could be quite high, and careers could be put on the line. But this is hardly news. What is news—and of some interest—is how these estimates change from one to another, through the course of a war, with all-too-real effects for those caught in the middle of the carnage.

Prevailing Images of War

By 1994, the prevailing explanation for the bloodshed in Yugoslavia could be characterized as "Serbian aggression compounded by ancient hatreds on all sides in the conflict." Conveniently, this explanation minimized the need for outsiders to become involved, since there is no way to change such ancient hatreds through diplomatic or other means. Such an explanation, however, was not the one initially promulgated during the first six months of the war. More strikingly, perhaps, this explanation evolved, not in response to events on the battlefield, but to parlays in conference rooms in Brussels and Washington, where envoys' definitions of the conflict became entwined with their own domestic political agendas. Indeed, the conventionally-accepted interpretation of the war's causes was "negotiated" through a series of meetings in the European Community, largely driven by Germany's unwavering pressure to recognize Croatia as an independent state, in the face of signs that this might lead to catastrophe. Recognition of Croatia demanded a justification, and the justification for it became Serbian aggression. Curiously, however, this interpretation was not the original one: When the war began in June 1991, there was a consensus among Western officials and

scholars alike that a "civil war" was underway, whose cessation could be negotiated through diplomatic means.

Below we trace the ways in which the competing discourses of war emerged in an authoritative fashion at the diplomatic level as a function of the political context within Europe, and came to blame Serbian aggression as the central causal factor, with its corollaries of "primordial hatreds" and "divisible peace." We then analyze what that particular constellation of interpretations implied in the European context for Western definitions of security and formulation of policy.

The Outbreak of Violence in the Former Yugoslavia

In the aftermath of the collapse of the Communist regimes in Eastern Europe in 1989, it appeared to the West that Yugoslavia was also on the brink of liberalizing its economic and political system. It quickly became clear, however, that the central issue was not liberalization at all, but the future of the Yugoslav federation itself. In the course of 1990 and 1991 presidents of the six Yugoslav republics met repeatedly to discuss that future. In those meetings, Slovenia proved uncompromising on the issue of independence.[1] Throughout the course of these negotiations—for that is really what they were—Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic declared that he would not accept the transformation of Yugoslavia into a loose association of sovereign states,[2] inasmuch as this would undermine the right of all Serbs, inside and outside of the Serbian Republic, to live in a single state. Tensions mounted as in Croatia the ultra-nationalist HDZ party won the 1990 elections and were further exacerbated as the new president, Franjo Tudjman, explicitly identified the Croatian state with the ethnic Croatian "nation," in spite of the large number of Serbs living within the state.

Meanwhile, during this period of escalating tension in Yugoslavia, U.S. and European leaders basked in the belief that the Cold War's end and the demise of Communism had ushered in a new era of peace in Europe; more specifically, they were preoccupied with the West's first post-cold war military confrontation in the Persian Gulf, with the result that they paid scant attention to developments in the Balkans. By January 1991, however, political elites in the EC could no longer ignore the fragmentation of established states on their borders. Soviet troops were putting down demonstrations for independence in Latvia and Lithuania; by March, referenda in Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia showed overwhelming support for independence. With much less international attention, these moves were mirrored in Yugoslavia: the Slovenian parliament voted to invalidate Yugoslav federal law in Slovenia, and the Croatian parliament asserted its own veto power over federal laws. Slovenia, moreover, made no secret of the fact that it was seeking complete and unconditional independence from Yugoslavia.

Despite early indications that President Tudjman might be willing to compromise on Croatia's position regarding a new Yugoslav federation, Slovenia's uncompromising stand on independence

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1.   Misha Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia: The Third Balkan War* (Penguin Books, 1992), p. 86.

2.   Glenny, *The Fall of Yugoslavia*, p.37.

had the effect of pushing Croatia in the same direction, and this pressure ignited open hostilities between Croats and Serbs. On June 6, 1991, a gun battle in Borovo Selo, a town in northwestern Croatia, left 12 Croatian policemen and 3 ethnic Serbs dead. In response, the Serb-dominated Yugoslav National Army (JNA) went on alert and began to call up reserves. Nineteen days later, on June 25, Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence. The JNA was mobilized to prevent the secession of the two states. Both resisted, and fighting broke out.

Which Interpretation?

At this point, the question of *how* to explain the war arrived at center stage: Was it a *civil* conflict, in which one or more of the involved parties was trying to alter the post-World War II borders legally-reified in the Helsinki accords? Was it an *international* conflict, in which one state was trying to conquer territory that legitimately belonged to another, legally-independent state? Or was it an *ethnic* conflict, rooted in ancient hatreds that no one could control but that were unlikely to spread outside of the region? Each explanation drew on different cultural and political tendencies within Europe, each implied different policy options to preserve the peace, and each suggested different conceptions of Western security in a post-cold war world.

   Defining the conflict as a civil war suggested that political mediation and negotiation could halt the hostilities and keep the Yugoslav state together. The policy response on the part of the EC and the United States would be to exert diplomatic pressure on the constituent republics in order to preserve Yugoslavia's territorial integrity in the wake of Communism's collapse. This view coincided with the more general Western conceptualization of security immediately following the East European revolutions of 1989: Post-communist states were actively participating in Europe-wide political and security institutions, and the disintegration of those states threatened to weaken and discredit those institutions. Particularly, since most post-communist states were moving toward democracy, self-determination via fragmentation would mean the loss of control over their territories by new democratizing governments, raising once again the specter of nationalism and nationalist rivalries in Europe.

   The second explanation of the conflict, and one that would take the European Community down a different path, was to frame it as an act of Yugoslav-Serbian aggression against a new nation-state exercising its justifiable claim to independence. With this interpretation, the policy response would involve recognition of Croatia and Slovenia's right to self-determination, grant them diplomatic recognition, and impose sanctions against Serbian aggression. Such a common Western policy on recognition would effectively internationalize the dispute, passing it to the United Nations. With this option, the focus of mediation and conflict resolution would move from the European Community to the UN and bring in the United States and NATO. Pursuit of this alternative would thus indicate a preference for international as opposed to independent regional practices of mediation and conflict resolution in a new and uncertain security environment for Western states;

as such this alternative would indicate continuity in the pursuit of transatlantic political and security cooperation and recognize the constraints of international law on external intervention.

The third interpretation, attributing war to primordialism and "ancient hatreds" represented an effort to "read the Balkans out of history" and turn it into a place with no relevance to Europe's future. This explanation hearkened back to the beginning of the 20th century, the first two Balkan Wars and the triggering of World War I in Sarajevo, events that were generally agreed to be outside of the realm of possibility (except for those favoring the ethnic "domino theory," who were, in any event, mostly Americans). More to the point, since most of Europe had long since passed the stage of ethnic hatred, the Balkans could be regarded as a place sufficiently removed to be of little or no importance to Europe proper and, therefore, meriting little, if any, outside involvement. Obviously, such a view provides a curious reading of European geography, but there is ample historical precedent for regarding the Balkans as a backward and largely irrelevant place.

Within Western Europe, there was initially widespread consensual agreement on the first explanation. Francois Mitterand and John Major argued that "the territorial integrity of a single Yugoslavia must take precedence. . . over the aims of Croatian and Slovenian nationalists." In February 1991, Helmut Kohl wrote to the Prime Minister of the Yugoslav Federation, Ante Markovic, that the "unity of the country and the ability of its peoples to live together could only be assured through a peaceful dialogue based on the principles of democracy, respect for human rights, and the rights of minorities."[3] The European Community initially agreed on the first interpretation of the conflict, regarding it as a civil war. The EC took the position that the Yugoslav state should be held together, but that a looser federation, retaining the same name, should be negotiated among the six republics. To this end, the EC would take the lead in mediating the conflict.

The substantive argument made on behalf of the second explanation of the war was that the right of self-determination had historically implied the creation of local and responsive government as a counter to totalitarian domination and control. Indeed, this, the right of self-determination of the East German people, was precisely the argument used by Kohl in both internal debates over German unification and in the 2 plus 4 negotiations that brought external recognition of a unified Germany.[4] This particular argument was not initially popular in either Washington or Brussels; eventually, however, it would come to take on an aura of truth as a result of German political pressure.

The third argument had no currency when war first broke out in Yugoslavia. It was only after the failure of various initiatives, such as the Owens-Vance partition plan, that some observers began

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3. Deutsche Presse Agenteur, February 13, 1991.

4. On the use of the "self-determination card" in the 2 plus 4 talks see Stephen F. Szabo, *The Diplomacy of German Unification* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992). On the effective use of this concept by the CDU to win the internal political debate over German unification see Gregg O. Kvistad, "Challenges to the Party State in Unified Germany," paper prepared for the symposium on "Reconstruction and 'Wiederaufbau' in Germany and the United States in Comparative perspective: 1865, 1945, and 1990," Krefeld, Germany, May 20-23, 1993.

to regard the situation as hopeless. This was the basis for Warren Christopher's gloomy view and for President Clinton's reluctance to commit U.S. troops to peacekeeping in Bosnia. It was also, in essence, the basis for the solution offered by realists such as John Mearsheimer, who argued that Serbs, Croats, Bosnian Muslims, et al. would never get along, and that is was better that they be separated, armed and allowed to keep the peace through a Balkan-wide balance of power.

Why was the "civil war" interpretation and policy response initially chosen? Two explanations are plausible. First, it could be argued that the EC foreign ministers wished to use the conflict as an opportunity to build a common "European" foreign and security policy, since Yugoslavia was viewed as part of Europe and, in view of the impending Single Market, the European Community was attempting to strengthen its regional security institutions. Second, within the EC itself, a number of separatist movements had called upon the principle of self-determination to justify their own claims for varying degrees of autonomy. Consequently, granting recognition—particularly of Croatia as a constituent republic of a multiethnic federal state—- on the basis of self-determination was a sensitive issue for the constituent states of the EC. Catalonia had asserted its independence within Europe, and France and Belgium were facing similar problems with regions that had pressed for more independence. Further, it was widely believed that recognizing the right of self-determination without securing the protection of minority rights was imprudent and unjustifiable. Finally, the granting of collective rights and autonomy to any minority group ran counter to the dominant liberal principle protecting *individual* rights enshrined in EC law. In early meetings of the European Council of Ministers, opposition to the right of self-determination was voiced most vociferously by the Foreign Minister of Spain.[5]

During the following six months, Western states pursued policies in line with the civil war interpretation of the conflict. Publically, EC officials insisted that the principles of the CSCE with regard to borders, minority rights, and political pluralism would guide its approach toward resolution of the conflict, and the issue of aggression was not raised. The European Community insisted that Croatia and Slovenia suspend for three months any further steps toward independence to allow a negotiated revision of the 1974 Yugoslav constitution, and it threatened to withdraw $1 billion in aid to the Federation unless a peaceful resolution of the crisis were negotiated.

In Germany, however, forces were at work to alter the EC's course by changing the dominant explanation for the war. The German press and, in particular, the influential *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* [FAZ], considered to be the German newspaper of record, began to propogate new images of the parties to the Yugoslav conflict. Croatia was portrayed as a committed to "European" values, while Serbs where charicatured as being hardly European at all. The FAZ editorialized that the people of Croatia and Slovenia had voted democratically to secede, and were being prevented from doing so by the violent response of Serbia's Communist government. After the revolutions of 1989 for self-determination and freedom from communist rule, one editorial argued, how could

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5.   These two reasons for agreement on the first option were given by four senior EC officials interviewed for this project, Brussels, May 17-19, 1993.

democratic peoples possibly continue to support centralized communist regimes? The campaign proved influential: One by one, the leaders of the German political parties voiced their agreement with this view, with growing pressure on Kohl and Foreign Minister Genscher to adopt this view and change EC policy.

Toward the end of August and the beginning of September 1991, events in the Soviet Union also began to undercut one of the principle reasons for the EC's interpretation of the conflict as a "civil war" and its insistence on continued recognition of federal Yugoslavia. In the wake of the August coup attempt, the republics of the Soviet Union began to declare their independence, a course to which virtually no one in the West voiced any objection. The EC, following the principle of self-determination, began to recognize the independence of these republics and, with this, its rationale for *not* recognizing the independence of Croatia and Slovenia began to weaken. The significance of this process was not lost on the leaders of the Yugoslav republics, especially Croatia's President Tudjman.

On September 2, 1991, the *New York Times* reported that Croatian officials thought their drive for European support was boosted by the collapse of the Soviet coup, the willingness of the republics to defect from the Soviet Union, and West European recognition of the right to independence of the Baltic republics. The report further suggested that Tudjman was trying to convince Croatian radicals that they could portray themselves as the victims of Serbian aggression, and thus gain the support of both Europe and the United States. Serbian victory in the field, he argued, might be translated into defeat at the negotiating table.[6]

Throughout the next three months, ceasefires between Croatia and the JNA (now representing Serb interests) were repeatedly negotiated and just as quickly broken. The Yugoslav army attacked Dubrovnik, on the Dalmatian coast, demanding the city's surrender and forcing EC peace monitors to leave the city. The JNA attacked and held Vukovar, leading Croatian officials to plead with the International Red Cross for help for the city's besieged citizens. The JNA's planes bombed militia positions on the outskirts of Zagreb.

The Croatians did not appear innocent amidst all of this: Amnesty International accused both Serbians and Croatians of committing atrocities against civilians,[7] and the Tudjman government's refusal to disavow the Croatian fascists who had ruled a puppet state in league with the Nazis in the 1940s proved disturbing to some European officials. German Foreign Minister Genscher went so far as to admit that Tudjman was "no ideal democrat."[8] And while the aims of the peace conference were attacked by the warring parties themselves, Germany's insistence on EC recognition of Croatia weakened the process from the inside, too. As long as the Western powers disagreed among

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6. Anne McElvoy, "Events Lead Genscher Astray," Times Newspapers Limited - *The Times*, September 7, 1991.

7. "EC to Recognize Breakaway Yugoslav Republics," *Facts on File - World News Digest*, December 19, 1991, p.957 F1.

8. Interview, Bonn, May 26, 1993.

themselves, there was little chance that they could bring pressure to bear on either Serbian President Milosovic or Tudjman to end the conflict.

By December 1991, the German effort was rewarded with success, as the EC's position on the conflict began to shift publicly. Increasingly, Serbia came to be seen as the aggressor by both European political elites and the German public at large. German officials began to announce that the country would grant diplomatic recognition to Croatia, and Genscher put increasing pressure on the European Community to change its position. On December 2, 1991 the EC made official this shift by lifting trade sanctions against all of the ex-Yugoslav republics except Serbia and Montenegro. At the same time, Germany severed all of its transport links with Serbia and the Yugoslav government.[9]

Important voices continued to be raised, however, against this shift in interpretation and policy. Lord Carrington, the EC's chief negotiator at the peace conference, complained to Hans van der Broek, the Dutch foreign minister who held the EC's rotating presidency, that German recognition would destroy the Hague peace conference. It would prompt Serbia to leave the negotiations and cause Croatia and Slovenia to lose interest in the proceedings. As if to confirm Carrington's concern, Milosovic threatened that recognition of Croatia would lead the JNA, which already occupied one-third of Croatian territory, to undertake further military action.[10]

France, Britain, and the United States made it clear that they would support recognition only as part of a larger peace settlement[11] and, so, throughout December 1991, the Western powers and the UN tried to convince Germany *not* to grant diplomatic recognition to Slovenia and Croatia. UN Scretary General Perez de Cuellar officially requested that Germany refrain from recognizing the two republics "in a selective and uncoordinated manner." He cited pleas from Bosnia & Herzegovina that unconditional recognition might lead to the spread of the conflict into other parts of Yugoslavia. Indeed, the president of Bosnia visited Genscher in November to plead against recognition, arguing that it could only lead to a move for Bosnian independence and, thus, invite Serbian and Croatian aggression against Bosnia.

Officials in the Dutch government were clearly convinced that the recognition threat would goad Serbia to seize as much territory as it could and tempt Croatia to provoke skirmishes in the hope of drawing foreign intervention on its behalf. While Croatian officials had stated publicly that recognition would intensify attacks and although, to this point, all peace negotiations had been futile, it was by no means clear that German recognition would intensify the fighting in the long run.

Shifting Interpretations: From Civil War to Serb Agression

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9. "EC to Recognize Breakaway Yugoslav Republics," *Facts on File - World News Digest*, December 19, 1991, p. 957 F1.

10. David Binder, "U.N. Fights Bonn's Embrace of Croatia," *NYT*, Dec. 14, 1991, p.3.

11. Stephen Kinzer, "German Follow Own Line on Yugoslav Republics," *NYT*, December 8, 1991.

Nonetheless, Germany did not back down. And with the threat of unilateral German recognition of the two breakaway republics——a threat that would destroy efforts to construct a common European foreign policy——the EC declared a change of its collective interpretation of the causes of the conflict. This reinterpretation took place at an EC Council of Ministers meeting on December 16, 1991, during which the EC declared conditional diplomatic recognition of Croatia and Slovenia, placing the blame for the conflict on Serbia. Emerging from that meeting, Douglas Hurd, the British Foreign Minister, diplomatically called the outcome "an exceptional compromise." EC President Hans van der Broek said that he hoped that the prospect of recognition would put pressure on Serbia to end hostilities against Croatia.[12] Serbia, of course, assailed the EC decision, warning that it would recognize the Serb-inhabited regions of Croatia and Bosnia as new, separate republics,[13] and the Serbian media described the new policy as part of an elaborate German plot to dominate Europe and establish the "Fourth Reich."[14]

On February 29, 1992, voters in Bosnia overwhelmingly supported independence in a republic-wide referendum. One month later, Bosnia found itself ravaged by war. On April 7, the EC and the United States granted Bosnia diplomatic recognition. Unable to stop the process of disintegration, national self-determination was now the guiding principle of European Community policy, at least where the Balkans were concerned. With recognition and a prominent place for the principle of self-determination, it became the conventional wisdom that Bosnian Serbs were the aggressors in the new war in Bosnia, that Serbia had been the aggressor in the war in Croatia, and that it followed that Serbia was also providing support to Serb forces now fighting in Bosnia.

In the recent, normal course of international relations, if "aggression" is clearly and consensually defined, there have been attempts to meet it through collective security measures. Certainly, this was the case with the Gulf War in 1991. In the Yugoslav case, however, the only collective security measure taken was a joint and porous embargo against Serbia and Montenegro. Between the period following the diplomatic recognition of Croatia and mid-1994, both European and U.S. leaders demonstrated extreme reluctance to intervene in the crisis with meaningful collective security measures.

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12. Joel Havemann, "EC May Soon Recognize Separatist Yugoslav States," *LAT*, December 16, 1991, p.A16.

13. "EC to Recognize Breakaway Yugoslav Republics," *Facts on File - World News Digest*, December 19, 1991, p.957 F1.

14. Throughout 1990 and 1991, the Serbian press across the entire political spectrum issued anti-German reports, claiming, for example, that the Yugoslav army saw Germany as a potential opponent because of its support for Slovenian independence (DPA, December 4, 1990), that Germany had 20 military advisers in Croatia and was training 10,000 foreign mercenaries to fight against Serbia (DPA, November 11, 1991) and that Germany had wanted to destroy Yugoslavia since 1918 (August 18, 1992). On October 23, 1991, The DPA ran a report from the Belgrade newspaper "Politika Expres" that quoted Radovan Karadzic, the leader of the Serbs in Bosnia as saying: "England and France think they can simply sacrifice Serbia in order to stop German expansionism. I remember how it was in 1939, the way Czechoslovakia was sacrificed. But German expansion wasn't stopped then, because expansionism is part of the 'Teutonic Spirit." If the Western alliance wants to sacrifice Serbia, war will break out as a result of yet another act of German aggression."

There are two explanations for this reluctance: First, there was gradually emerging yet another explanation for the violence, based on "ethnic conflict." This not only replaced the "civil war" account, it also served to complicate the "Serb aggression" account. Second, there was a growing consensual belief that peace in Europe was, indeed, "divisible," and that the Balkans did not matter much, except as the source of endless flows of refugees. Below we analyze each construction in more detail and offer an alternative construction that points to a different explanation for the war.

"Ethnic Conflict" and "divisible peace"

Laying the blame on Serbia for the war in Yugoslavia was complicated by the popular discussion of "ethnic conflict" involving "century-old hatreds." Such a characterization has two components: First it assumes that such hatreds as were evident in the repeated episodes of ethnic cleansing in Croatia and Bosnia are "natural" and "ancient," since modern societies have managed to surmount them. Second, the reason that these ancient hatreds have emerged now, after 1989, is that they were simply repressed by centralized Communist states. With the fall of Communism, goes the metaphor, the lid was blown off the pot, and the potent mix of ancient and natural hatreds quickly came to a boil. Oddly enough, such a characterization was not offered in the early discussions of the war within the EC. It only emerged gradually, becoming dominant *after* the recognition of Croatia. In the United States, the same argument was first promulgated during the Bush admistration. Bill Clinton dismissed it as incorrect during the Presidential campaign but, subsequently, both he and Secretary of State Christopher began to invoke "centuries" of "accumulated hatreds," with primordial origins, as the Administration's rationale for doing nothing (especially in light of the debacle in Somalia).

This view found support among some Western scholars, who argued that the ethnic hatreds flowing from identity politics is both ancient and natural, going so far as to cite sociobiological explanations that "the urge to define and reject `the other' goes back to our remotest human ancestors, and indeed beyond them to our animal predecessors." Balkan elites perpetuated this version of events, as well. During World War II, for example, nationalist "scholars" in Croatia claimed that the first documented reference to Croatians could be found in 2,500 year old Persian sources, which "proved" links to "Aryans" (who are themselves Persians). According to these same Croatian intellectuals, moreover, enmity with Serbs dated back for centuries. Not only had this been used to justify Croatia's wartime alliance with Nazi Germany, it was also the basis for the Ustasha's killing of hundreds of thousands of non-Croats. These works were revived during the 1990 election campaign in Croatia, establishing the basis for Serbia's claim that the new Croatia was the same as the facist one. But Serbia produced its own form of self serving nationalist scholarship in the latter part of the 1980s, too, proclaiming a Serbian right to "greater Serbia," including parts of Croatia, Bosnia and the Serbian "heartland" in Kosovo, which today is ethnically 90 percent Albanian.

In point of fact, however, Serb-Croat hostility is not ancient at all. Rather, it dates only from the Austro-Hungarian period, a result of political divisions that emerged as the Hapsburg Empire began to decay from within. Indeed, Yugoslavia was the creation of late 19th century nationalism that

spread throughout Central Europe. Political elites in both Serbia and Croatia attempted to build a common state based on a shared "southern Slav" identity and a common ideology of humiliation and suffering at the hands of both the Ottoman and Hapsburg empires.[15] As a result, the 1921 constitution of the newly-created state of Yugoslavia was a liberal one, enshrining civil and political rights for all its citizens.[16]

Not all Yugoslavs were happy with this new arrangement, however; many Croatian nationalists felt that they had freed themselves from Hapsburg domination only to be newly-saddled with Serbian hegemony. They mistrusted the new constitution, arguing that it masked Serbian control over Croatia and that a national Yugoslav identity could not be created based on a Serbian king, his army, policy, and administration and on the dominance of the Orthodox church. Indeed, argued such Croats, this "nation" really represented the submission of a Roman Catholic people on the periphery of civilized Europe to an inferior, Oriental culture.[17] Threats of Croatian secession, and the fact that large sections of the Croatian population did not accept the constitutional basis of the Yugoslav state, led to growing centralization of power in Serbia. This and mounting Croatian resistance came to dominate the country's political agenda and prevented the formation of interethnic political coalitions. Even so, the conflict was a relatively mild one, and the bloody battles that created such enmity between Serb and Croat date only from World War II when Nazi Germany encouraged and provoked violent conflict.[18]

Nonetheless, in spite of clear historical evidence that the origins of the conflict between Serbia and Croatia are of recent vintage, the "primordial" hatreds account persists. It is bolstered, as noted earlier, by the argument that links the emergence of violence now to the fall of communist states. But this last point goes beyond the simple "boiling pot" metaphor to suggest that more fundamental issues of identity are at stake. Thus, when the grip of central control is relaxed, "people reflexively grasp at ethnic or national identifications or what passes for them."[19] The argument is, however, tautological: Because conflict has now appeared, it must have been repressed in the past by strong states and powerful empire. The policy implications of this argument are clear: If ethnic conflict does appear, all sides carry some of the responsibility for any violence that does occur, whether aggressor or not. Consequently, intervention on behalf of a "victim" is neither warranted nor feasible.

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15. Jim Seroka and Rados Smiljkovic, *Political Organizations in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1986), p. 34.

16. See Alex n. Dragnich, *Serbs and Croats: The Struggle in Yugoslavia* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1992), p. 46.

17. See Stevan K. Pawlowitch, *The Improbable Survivor: Yugoslavia and its problems 1918-1988* (London: C. Hurst & Co, 1988); Alex Dragnich, *The First Yugoslavia* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1983); Peter Jambrek, *Development and Social Change in Yugoslavia* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1975; Dusko Doder, "Yugoslavia: New War, Old Hatreds," *Foreign Policy* (Summer 1993).

18. Daniel Chirot "National Liberations and Nationalist Nightmares: The Consequences of the End of Empires in the Twentieth Century." p.9 and 27.

19. See, for example, James B. Rule, "Tribalism and the State," *Dissent*, Fall, 1992, p. 519.

The logic of this argument, in concert with the focus on Western states as the objects of security, inevitably led to a new and consensual perception about the requirements for "peace" in Europe. At the end of the Cold War, West European elites often invoked Mikhail Gorbachev's notion of a "common European home" as a political goal, and this vision was reflected in a flurry of activity to enlarge and strengthen institutions, such as the CSCE, to incorporate newly-independent states into a "European" framework where divisions between East and West did not exist. But, as pressures mounted for the diplomatic recognition of Croatia, EC officials began to change their views, speaking instead about a "divisible" peace in Europe. They argued that, in contrast to the pre-World War I period or 1939, conditions now were such that crises in the East would not, inevitably, draw in the West. Western interests in the East were minimal, and the "ethnic conflicts" in the Balkans were being fought over limited aims, none of which involved the EC nations directly. Certainly, war refugees presented a domestic political and social problem, but not a security threat.[20] Throughout the EC, this changing perception weakened any residual enthusiasm for either independent military action or collective security measures in Yugoslavia. The crisis was thus transmuted into a foreign policy issue, external to the EC and the United States, and not something that impinged on the security of Western states.

The entire process described here reflects the optimism and disappointments of the years since 1989. During the Cold War, there was always the possibility that a small conflict might grow into a large one, resulting in nuclear confrontation or war between the superpowers. Peace was, in other words, "indivisible." This was the discourse that dominated the U.S. confrontation with Iraq in 1990 and 1991. If, indeed, Saddam Hussein was, as President Bush claimed, a "Hitler," could World War III be far behind? (One might have claimed, as some did, that Iraq's invasion of Kuwait was strictly an "Arab" affair, not requiring outside involvement.)

There was, however, another discourse available: that of civil war. Technically, the legitimate party in a civil war is usually considered to be the regime in power; practically, of course, such a distinction is difficult to make and sometimes undesirable. Nonetheless, the ideal solution in such a situation is a compromise between the warring sides that satisfies both. Civil wars, while potentially explosive, are often containable, but active intervention by outsiders is required to contain them. Intervention involves, moreover, real economic and political expenditures, domestic as well as international.

Finally, there was a third discourse available that simply wrote off the regions of conflict, dismissing them as irrelevant to the flow of modern politics. There, ancient and primordial forces were at work, and there was nothing that diplomacy, money or military power could do to stop them: if they ran out of bullets, they would use rifles as clubs, and when the rifles were broken, they would pick up sticks and stones. Hence, the best strategy would be to walk away and deny the importance of the war to Europe, as a whole. But this third account of the war in Yugoslavia turns out not to be quite so easy to walk away from. If, indeed, the bloodshed was primordial, or even

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20. Interview, EC Commission official, May 18, 1993.

genetic, anyone might fall victim to it, even Western Europe. Consequently, if the tragedy of Yugoslavia were regarded, and treated, as a part of "post-industrial" history, no one would be conceptually safe. Today, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia; tomorrow, Wallonia and Flanders; Catalonia and Spain; Lombardy and Italy. Reading Yugoslavia "out of history" is, so to speak, a strategy of denial: It can't happen here. It represents, in other words, a woefully short-sighted conception of security.

An Alternative "Discourse": Entrepreneurs and Institutions[21]

It would be irresponsible of us to stop here, without offering our assessment of the security implications of the Third Balkan War. This assessment rests, in part, in a different framing of the "referent object" of security and, indeed, of the significance of the ethnic fragmentation underway in ex-Yugoslavia and elsewhere. Our argument is not a "discourse" in the sense used above—it is not authoritative in having been adopted by political elites and offered as a prescription for action or inaction—but it does, on the one hand, generalize the implications of the Yugoslav case while, on the other hand, offer greater precision, we believe, in linking these implications to European, and Western, security.

If the origins of the Yugoslav, and other, ethnic conflicts are seen not as "primordial" or "natural" but, rather, as a consequence of the intersection of global forces with domestic politics and history, it becomes evident that no community is necessarily immune. Denial is not only potentially self-defeating, it is also a formula for greater difficulties when such conflicts and crises can, finally, no longer be ignored. In our schema, the security "problem" arises as communities of identity are manipulated into exclusivist opposition, with the result that political institutions and states are torn apart.

Our account does not rest on the collapse of Communism as the determining factor. While a weakened state or the collapse of a central control is a *permissive* condition for the emergence of ethnic identity in a form that may lead to violent conflict, it does not follow that such a process is, somehow, "natural." Ethnicity and religion are politicized through a set of historical processes. In specific historical periods, society offers raw material for multiple *social* divisions to become issues of contention; only some of those social cleavages are translated into *political* divisions that turn violent. Thus, despite a potential for "ethnic conflict" in Latin America, for example, ethnicity remains largely unpoliticized. Instead, social class historically has provided the main basis for political divisions there.[22]

We argue that exclusive and oppositional identities are politically constructed during periods of upheaval by certain members of political and economic elites, who we can call "political entrepreneurs." Such political entrepreneurs practice the politics of "identity," rather than the

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21. This section draws heavily on Beverly Crawford and Ronnie P. Lipschutz, "Global Liberalization and the 'New' Ethnic Strife: More Yugoslavias on Order? Working Paper 2, 24, Center for German and European Studies, University of California, Berkeley, February 1994.

22. Geddes 1993.

politics of "interest." These elites politicize ethnic and sectarian divisions in order to mobilize political support in their struggle with other elites for power and wealth.[23] If the rhetoric of mobilization that politicizes these identities is based on claims of superiority, exclusion, and intolerance, the potential for conflict emerges. When "identity politics" are accompanied by claims of collective exclusivity, xenophobia and intolerance, they raise the potential for violence against individuals identified by ascriptive characteristics as part of the excluded group. By contrast, a politics of "interest" is quintessentially liberal, since it is based on the notion that individuals hold multiple and cross-cutting identities and interests. Conflicts of interest can be negotiated, compromised and settled peacefully. The identities fostered by political entrepreneurs, on the other hand, are non-negotiable so long as the practices that follow produce generally positive returns to the practitioners. Thus, identity politics in its most extreme form increases the odds that political conflicts will escalate into repression and violence.

This is not to suggest that the practice of "identity politics" will *necessarily* end in violence. Identity politics often develop in response to similar practices by other groups, because the repression of a particular group based on ascriptive identities requires organizing politically, on the basis of those identities, in an effort to secure rights in the political process. If these reactive groups are convinced that the political institutions governing them will protect those rights, violence might be avoided. But if those institutions are weak or simply non-existent—and being a reaction, the chances are good that any such institutions have been undermined—the probability of escalation to violence is significant.

Below, we will provide, in detail, an explanation for the collapse of Yugoslavia into war. The reader might ask, however, why we present this account as an alternative "discourse?" Our referent object, or unit of analysis, is neither state nor tribe, because we find neither to be particularly useful organizing concepts here. The discourses of state-centered war—and by extension, state security—leads one either to *interstate* or *civil* war, with the implications discussed earlier. The discourse of tribe-centered war simply places the referent object "outside of history." Our referent object is best-understood as *society*. In a society-centered war, a society becomes the locus of violence because the collapse or disappearance of all political institutions leaves behind only the structures of civil society, among which are family, religion and culture (hence, it should come as no surprise that rape, indiscriminate murder of families, and the razing of churches and mosques are so common in these kinds of wars). A society-centered explanation of the wars in Yugoslavia thus rests on the practice of identity politics under institutional arrangements that have both fostered this

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23. A political entrepreneur resembles their economic counterpart in that they seek to maximize their individual interests and in doing so, have an effect on aggregate interests. The political entrepreneur seeks to maximize political power rather than wealth. Like their economic counterpart, they engage in risk taking behavior to maximize their returns. For additional comments on political entrepreneurs, see David Laitin's "Hegemony and Religious Conflict: British Imperial Control and Political Cleavages in Yorubaland."in *Bringing the State Back In*, p.302. See also Paul R. Brass, "Ethnicity and Nationality Formation," Ethnicity 3, No. 3, September 1976, pp. 225-239.

practice and, indeed, encouraged violence as a means of destroying any and all alternatives. Individuals suffered and killed each other because they were identified as part of a collective group.

Two questions follow from this explanation: why did political entrepreneurs choose to practice the politics of identity rather than the politics of interest? And under what conditions did the practice of identity politics lead to violence? What follows is an attempt to answer these questions in three parts: First, we will discuss the policies of the federal Yugoslav state that promoted identity politics by selectively promoting or retarding the economic development of ethnically-defined republics—that is, the practice of *ethnofederalism*[24]; second, we examine the process by which liberalizing groups that had begun to promote civil society and interest-based politics were purged at the end of the 1970s, leaving little resistance against those intent on promoting the identity politics of national exclusiveness when Communism fell; and finally, we explore how a weakened economy and weakened set of federal institutions prevented politicians from distributing *material* resources in exchange for political support. In essence, because the political system left Yugoslav society with a fairly weak civil society, political and economic elites were left with few alternatives to the politics of identity as a basis for political mobilization and virtually no institutions to prevent the increasingly violence-prone politics from ending in the outbreak of war. This discussion is preliminary and illustrative. Its purpose is not to offer positive evidence for an argument that challenges the dominant ones described above. Rather, it is to present the rudiments of an alternative explanation—in this case, a society-centered institutional one—that, as we shall suggest, is potentially applicable even to the members of the European Union and the United States.

The Institutional Construction of Identity Politics in Federal Yugoslavia

Throughout the socialist world, prior to the Soviet demise, Communist ideology reduced the salience of ethnicity as a source of political identity, replacing it with a more "cosmopolitan" socialist political identity. Public debate on ethnic issues as political issues was largely forbidden. In Marxist regimes, the grievances of particular ethnic groups had to be articulated in economic and social terms, since these were the only terms viewed by the state as legitimate.[25] Indeed, the division of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia into "ethnic" republics was an attempt to transform ethnicity into cultural/administrative identities, and thereby prevent its re-emergence as a dominant political force. But these structures were part of the state system, and not civil society; hence, they became the eventual objects of struggle.

The Yugoslav case is fairly typical. Rather than risk the emergence of federation-wide political parties that could challenge communist rule, after World War II Tito established a decentralized Yugoslav federation of republics, each one named for the dominant ethnic group within republican

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24. For an excellent discussion of this process in the former Soviet Union see Philip G. Roeder, "Soviet Federalism and Ethnic Mobilization," in *World Politics* Vol. 43, No. 2 (January 1991), pp.196-232.

25. See Maria N. Todorova, "Ethnicity, nationalism, and the Communist legacy in Eastern Europe," Working Paper, 5, 5, Center for German and European Studies, University of California, Berkeley.

borders drawn to this end. These republics were never intended to become autonomous bases of power for republican politicians; rather, they were meant to serve as pillars of support for the power and authority of the ruling party. Paradoxically, this was best accomplished by *dividing* potential opposition along regional and ethnic lines.[26]

This strategy was not purely political; it included an economic component, as well. The distribution of entitlements among the republics represented an attempt by the federal government to buy their loyalty to the Yugoslav state. Tito reasoned that ethnic tensions could be diffused if each republic were given comparable access to economic and political resources. He thus established an ambitious program that channelled resources to the republics and regions according to his judgement of their economic needs and level of development.

In order to avoid some of the resentments that emerged in the 1930s, the postwar constitution of Yugoslavia implied an unwritten agreement between Tito and Serbia, through which Serbian dominance in the state apparatus and in the political structure, so problematic in the interwar period, would be attenuated. The formula for neutralizing Serbia was Yugoslav centralism in a federal state and a heavy dependence on an ideology of "brotherhood and unity" and the solidarity of partisans from all the republics who had fought against fascism. But many Croat nationalists saw the centralized and unitary state as just another manifestation of Serb dominance.[27] And inasmuch as each republic had already attained a different level of economic development, ranging from "developed" to "less developed," Tito's redistribution program was, inevitably, unequal. This inequality gradually began to create tensions that eventually began to erode support for the federal state. These resentments, which already appeared within the Party itself in the 1960s, were expressed in ethnic rather than republican terms, since ethnicity had been institutionalized in the constitution as the basis of political representation within the country as a whole.

Friction among the republics was intensified by economic crisis. After the break with the Soviet Union in 1949, Yugoslavia had no patron to which it could turn for economic assistance or cheap resources. As the 1950s progressed, the country found itself increasingly isolated and dependent on the West for aid and investment, but never in quantities adequate for its needs. As a result of the oil shocks of the 1970s, Yugoslavia found itself in an ever more economically-perilous position. During that decade and the 1980s, as a communist state—even one courted by the West—Yugoslavia received stern treatment at the hands of the international lending community. As the economy stagnated, the federal government was forced to give up its program for equalizing regional development and push instead for a nation-wide policy of industrial development. This

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26. It should be noted that these feelings of Yugoslav nationalism were only shared by the central and regional party elites. The rank and file members of the party structure maintained their ethnic prejudices, and their support was "bought" by the creation of ethnic republics. The central point here is that the ethnic republics of Yugoslavia were never intended to serve as autonomous bases of power; they were meant to serve as pillars to support the central power of the communist party, and they were created as a kind of "payment" for that rank and file support.

27. See Ivo Banic, "The Fearful Assymetry of War: The Causes and Consequences of Yugoslavia's Demise," in *Daedalus* Spring 1992, p. 145.

penalized those regions that produced raw materials and commodities and rewarded those that were the sources of industrial goods and manufactures, a process which heralded the onset of tension between more- and less-developed regions. Inevitably, of course, such discrimination came to favor some republics over others and, because ethnicity had been institutionalized as a form of political representation, it was a small matter to express resentments in ethnic terms.

Regional allocations of material resources were based on political criteria as well. Although much of the federal investment fund was allocated through a system of auctions, where interested enterprises competed on the basis of interest rates and repayment schedules, regional politicians jockeyed for regional investments to bolster their own regional power base.[28] Historical animosities formed an additional set of political criteria for regional investment. Montenegro, as a less-developed but Serb-dominated republic, received the most investment per capita, while Croatia, the second most developed republic in terms of its ability to maximize output per investment, barely received its share. Clearly Croatia (as well as Kosovo) was being punished for its record in World War II; Montenegro, Slovenia, and Serbia received disproportionate shares, largely due to the clout of their political elites in the Communist Party of Yugoslavia.

Thus, in a reversal of Tito's intentions and hopes, the shrinking of the economic pie and the growing struggle over resources had the effect of *reinforcing* ethnic identities and enhancing the political power of regional and republican political entrepreneurs. It also contributed to further economic decline. As the various regional political elites began to acquire greater autonomy—part of a negotiated deal to keep the increasingly fragile federation from flying apart-—-they began to implement self-protective import substitution policies, leading to significant losses in economies of scale. The governments of the various ethnic republics also failed to coordinate economic policies and foreign exchange stockpiles, which made capital for new investment scarce. Finally, the resulting losses of revenue to the federal government helped to undermine its ability to resist further regional encroachments on its increasingly futile attempts to coordinate economic activity.

The risks inherent in these processes were laid bare when the weakness of the central federal state was revealed: inasmuch as administrative republics defined ethnically became the new basis of state power, the patterns of unequal distribution of resources to these administrative republics ensured a struggle among ethnic groups over those resources. Moreover, economic pressures, both internal and external, dictated that efforts to defuse ethnicity would, eventually, fail. On the one hand, resentment was nurtured between republics; on the other hand, investment programs institutionalized inefficiency in the interest of inter-republic equity. This further reduced international competitiveness already severely hampered by the vagaries of central planning.

Weakening Reformers and Purging Liberalizers

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28. Neuberger, p. 94.

This course of events in effect revived the processes that had politicized ethnic identity before World War II. Throughout the first twenty years of the Communist regime, although ethnic identities were reified in the ways described above, there was little indication that a politics of exclusion and ethnic intolerance was brewing. This particularly violent form of identity politics in Yugoslavia resurfaced with Tito's decision to purge reformers and liberals in both Croatia and Serbia in the early 1970s.

Both liberalizers and hard-line communists were opposed to ethnic nationalist appeals for political support, but liberalizers, with their pressure to strengthen market forces, freedom of speech, a merit-based system of promotions, and the withdrawal of the party from the arts and from culture—all steps that would have helped to build up civil society—threatened the party's central political control. In an effort to put in place these arrangements, in 1965 these liberalizers pushed through a major reform program that sought to lessen central control by giving more political and economic clout to the republics.[29]

Tito's reaction was fast and strong. In Serbia, he expelled from the party all leading reform-minded communists. With their expulsion, political repression and the party's hold on the economy increased markedly. By eliminating the opposition in this way, the party ensured that, in the case of its own demise, hardline nationalists would be positioned to seize power and there would be no civil society to absorb the shocks of a transition.

In Croatia, Tito had less power. The 1965 reform not only emboldened the liberalizers but also nationalist elements, whose rhetoric often contained separatist overtones. Local party leaders attempted to mobilize support for themselves by issuing increasingly vocal complaints about Croatia's disadvantaged position in an "unfair" federal system. They began to call for an end to economic exploitation by Belgrade, reform of the banking and the foreign currency systems, curbs on the wealth of Belgrade's export-import firms, and the redistribution of former federal assets that had been taken by Serbia after the reform.[30] Croatian nationalist movements were most vociferous in their demands for an end to this exploitation. These movements were centered around the *Hrvatska Matica*, a Croation-Catholic traditionalist group that advocated cultural separatism. What worried Tito the most in this situation was the demand for a separate Croatian seat in the United

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29. The deficit and pressure from the IMF led to the economic reform of 1965. The reform removed the central government from its role as the provider of investment funds to the republics by creating a network of republic-level banks that were authorized to take primary responsibility for investment finance (Dyker, 1990). This meant an important power shift from the federal to the regional level. That shift doomed the regional development policy that was supposed to cement loyalty to the federal system. And it weakened the federal government, already hamstrung by the requirement for unanimous consent and the republics' power of veto.

30. Their grievances were backed by the statistics. Despite the fact that Croatia brought in half of all foreign capital as of 1969, it was allocated only about 15 percent of the total credits. Croatia produced most in foreign currency earnings and enterprise profits and received much less through the redistribution process. (Plestina, p. 89). Furthermore, while Croatia produced 27 per cent of Social Product, 30 per cent of the industrial output, and 36 per cent of the foreign currency earnings, Serbian banks controlled 65 per cent of all bank assets in the country. (Racine, 1978, p. 323.)

Nations (as for Ukraine and Belorussia vis a vis the Soviet Union). Ironically, he believed that if Croatia were to obtain a separate seat, it would ally itself with the Soviet Union against him.

Tito tried to discipline local Croatian Party officials, pressing them to suppress the separatist movements. This, however, split the local party structure. Liberalizers supported more pluralism in Croatian society, but when faced with a crackdown, they formed a coalition with nationalist factions against the center. The other republican leaderships realized that the Croatian leadership had lost control of the situation. Fearing the implications for their situations, they pressed Tito to suppress the nationalist elements in Croatia. The 1965 reform had weakened his political power base in Croatia, however, and he would have to use force to do so. The opportunity to do this did not appear until 1971, when there were major student demonstrations in Croatia. Tito called in the JNA to quell the demonstration and suppress the move toward political pluralism. With backing from the JNA, Tito purged the Party in Croatia of both its nationalist and liberalizing elements, leaving conservative centralizers firmly in power. In turn, those centralizers acted quickly to suppress the nationalist movements.

For the moment, relative stability was restored, but the crisis ultimately deepened divisions between the Croatian republic and the federal government. The army officer corps became convinced that the central danger to Yugoslavia was not an external threat from the Soviets but internal "nationalism and chauvinism."[31] Meanwhile, Croatian soldiers balked at serving outside Croatia, and a de facto territorial army in Croatia began to emerge. The JNA began to mirror the weakness of the federal government as a whole. In a more general sense, this crisis represented the most serious threat since 1948 to the viability of Yugoslav federation.

Weakened Institutions and Ethnic Identity as a Political Resource

In an attempt to defuse internal opposition, the new Yugoslav constitution of 1974 further weakened the federal state, creating yet more resentments expressed in ethnic terms. While Croatians believed that Serbia controlled the federal state, Serbian elites believed that they had been singled out for unfair treatment under the new constitution, since it separated Kosovo and Vojvodina from Serbia while leaving the other five republics intact.[32]

In combination with the growing economic crisis, the 1974 constitution weakened the federal state even further. In contrast to what had been possible in earlier times, the weakened federal state could no longer distribute material resources in exchange for political support. The global recession of the early 1980s dealt a fatal blow to the federal Yugoslav state. As external debt grew and export markets closed, regional and republican conflicts over the distribution of economic resources further exacerbated the economic decline. Recall that the regionally-based allocation of resources

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31. Remington, 1985.

32. Under the new constitution, Kosovo and Vojvodina had their own representatives in the federal, state, and party bodies, and they voted against Serbia most of the time. The other five republics had complete sovereignty over their territories. See Aleksa Djilas, "A Profile of Slobodan Milosevic," p. 82.

increased local power and the political strength of local political entrepreneurs at the expense of the central state. As the various regional political elites gained increasing autonomy from the center, they began to follow self-protective import substitution policies, leading to important losses in economies of scale. Furthermore, the regional governments did not coordinate foreign exchange stockpiles. The absence of coordination led to fragmentation of economic activity and the reduction of the stock of available capital for new investment. The resulting losses of revenue to the central government helped to undermine its ability to resist further regional encroachments on its effort to coordinate economic activity.

This was not all. The divergent effects of the international market on the regional economies placed additional and competing demands on the central government. The relatively developed and more competitive republic of Slovenia wanted greater integration into the international economy, whereas the less developed Montenegrins demanded protection from the vagaries of international market forces. Divergent demands further reduced the federal government's ability to deal effectively with pressing economic problems and issues of restructuring. As a state that was both weak and decentralized, Yugoslavia was not capable of withstanding the centripetal forces of conflict that were soon to break out, first along regional and then along ethnic lines.

Finally, what the regional governments did not drain from the central state, the international economy did; in the early eighties, Yugoslavia found itself with an incoherent and ad hoc system of state interventionist policies in the economy—mainly to meet the loudest and best organized demands of various political entrepreneurs—in a period dedicated to neo-classical economic reform. The state began to face a mounting debt obligation without any return on moneys spent.[33] By 1983, devaluations of the currency and an orchestrated drop in domestic demand (12 percent in 1983 alone), both imposed by the IMF, had resulted in a precipitous fall in growth rates for the country as a whole. Unemployment rose from 600,000 in 1982 to 912,000 in 1983, not including the 700,000 who had been forced to emigrate abroad in order to find work.

With its powers and resources drastically reduced, the federal state was seized with paralysis: Centrifugal elements served to divert development funds to those regions with the most political clout while federalists looked on helplessly. As an example of this, consider the impacts of the IMF stabilization program's requirement that the dinar be devalued. Bosnia was strongly opposed to devaluation, because it was heavily dependent on imported intermediate goods from convertible currency areas. Because devaluations had to be approved by all republics, negotiations were time consuming, bitter, and divisive. With the declining authority and power of the central state, the IMF had acquired strong leverage over economic policy and, consequently, the federal government's scope for policy discretion became hostage to its critical need for IMF support in putting together

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33. Finding itself unable to meet its debt obligations, Yugoslavia faced stiff IMF conditionality requirements. The federal government hoped for long-term and extensive debt rescheduling, but without the ability to create a coherent stabilization program, it was turned down. In 1982, Yugoslavia was forced to accept a far more draconian policy of rescheduling. The IMF imposed a strict emergency package on the Yugoslav economy, greatly reducing the state's scope for policy discretion.

the necessary financing arrangements that would allow it to maintain a relative degree of economic and political stability.

Under these conditions, what little loyalty to the federal state was left drained away. The drive toward regional fragmentation and autonomy helped to propogate the widespread belief that federal aid was being given on the basis of ethnic ties rather than rational allocation principles. Given the failure of the program for economic development of the less-developed republics, rapidly-growing regional income disparities, and the impotence of the federal government, the rise of ethnonationalism was almost a foregone conclusion.[34]

Throughout most of the post-war period, the Serb-Croatian alliance had served as the backbone of the Yugoslavian federation. This began to fall apart when political entrepreneurs on both sides, in an effort to mobilize popular support, began to manipulate the cultural and historical symbols and practices that distinguished Serbians from Croatians. On the one side, the famous 1986 memo to the Serbian Academy of Sciences, penned by Dobrica Cosic, inflamed the Serbs; on the other side, the pronouncements of Franjo Tudjman, historian of Croatia and JNA ex-general, did likewise. Playing these cards, Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia and Tudjman in Croatia rose to power not on platforms that recommended a more equitable distribution of resources along regional lines or emphasized economic development of Yugoslavia as a whole, but on the basis of ethnic separatism, with each recasting history as one long struggle against an implacable enemy enshrined in "the other."

The rise of Milosevic was especially critical. After taking control of the federal government in 1987, he abandoned the traditional policies of the Communist party, rescinded the autonomy granted to Kosovo and Vodjvodina in 1974 and stopped the process of decentralization. He revitalized the Serbian orthodox church, making it an instrument of revived Serbian nationalism. He argued that Montenegro was another branch of the Serbian nation and maintained a tight grip on that republic. He complained in public that Serbia had suffered under federalism, that huge transfers of industry from Serbia to Croatia and Slovenia had taken place between 1945 and 1951, and that now the injustices needed to be rectified. All of this was fuel to the fire of rising nationalism in Croatia and confirmation to Tudjman and others that the federation must be destroyed.

Consequently, in April 1990, with $4 million in financial backing from the Croatian emigré community, the ultra-nationalist Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) won Croatia's first democratic elections since 1945. The victory opened the gateway for Croatia's new president, Tudjman, to establish a state identified with the Croatian "nation," and providing no minority rights to the 600,000-strong Serb population. For many Serbs in Croatia, the HDZ victory meant the revival of the World War II fascist Croatian state. In the aftermath of the elections, local Serb leaders in Croatia demanded communal autonomy, legitimating that demand through a referendum. Initially, this was not intended to mean that Serb-dominated territory would secede from Croatia, but it

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34. Tyson.

eventually developed into a demand for secession, if not by agreement, then by force. What followed is, by now, well-known.

Discourses of War: Who secures society?

What was so striking about the wars in Croatia and Bosnia was not that they happened, but their ferocity and the determination of Serbs and Croats, in particular, to eliminate all vestiges of other cultures in the regions over which they gained control. Not only were the local institutions of government "purified"—an act that is not unusual during a time of war—institutions and symbols of society were reduced to rubble in the effort to terrorize and "cleanse." And this type of "social" warfare[35] aimed to destroy not only the few elements of civil society as existed, but even the family through the systematic slaughter of husbands, wives and children and the policy of rape and impregnation, practices mostly attributed to the Bosnian Serb militias.

The referent object of war is, thus, not the state, not competitors for state power, not even the tribe, but society and the individuals that make it up. While the concept of "societal security" is not, as yet, very well-developed, it has mostly been analyzed in terms of threats to identity within larger political units, such as the European Union.[36] In the case of Yugoslavia, however, the threat to security is not to be found in the dissolution of individual or collective identity in a larger whole but in the complete and total destruction of the carriers of identity, individuals, family and civil society. Once such a policy is operationalized, moreover, there looks to be no turning back. No one imagines that Serb, Croat and Muslim will ever live together again as they once did in places such as Sarajevo. In this light, the reluctance of outsiders to intervene in Yugoslavia becomes more understandable, even though it remains inexcusable. To acknowledge that the Hobbesian worlds of Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Somalia, etc. are not "out of history" but a product of late 20th century civilization—to which all might be vulnerable—would be to look into the very maw of Hell.

If our explanation for the war, and its security implications, is correct, what policy response flows from it? Clearly, the security concepts and explanations for the war that guided Western attempts to halt the carnage in Bosnia have been too few and too late; the time for meaningful action was five years ago when states, as such, still existed. But if the security of the social individual in the region is central to the policy response, then it is increasingly imprudent to pretend that implosions such as Yugoslavia are best left alone. The West needs to anticipate, and head off, such collapses, mindful that it is not fully immune from such possibilities.

What are we to do? First, we need to recognize that the creation of a strong civil society and liberal democratic institutions in all states, not just multiethnic ones, are essential to social peace: Strong civil societies create multiple identities and interests and promote the politics of interest over

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35. Jim Seaton, "Social Warfare: The Setting for Stability Operations," Paper prepared for the International Studies Association Annual Meeting, Washington Hilton, Washington, DC, March 29-April 1, 1994.

36. See, for example, Ole Wæver, "Securitization and Desecuritization," in: Ronnie D. Lipschutz, ed., *On Security*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1995.

the politics of identity. Strong liberal democratic institutions protect both collective and individual rights. Intervention in an ethnically-stratified country in order to restore "peace" will not help that place develop a viable civil society and liberal democratic institutions; rather, it is likely, as in Bosnia, to lead only to further separation. The story told here suggests that the early definition of the conflict as a "civil war," combined with a continued effort to find a peaceful solution within the federal state while helping to strengthen civil institutions, could have saved lives. Therefore, it is critical that we develop "early warning systems" which will go into operation before a collapse has begun.

In addition to this, we must also find ways to support local and community groups and organizations engaged in various kinds of welfare providing activities in countries where ethnic stratification exists. Such support is already being provided by many international and governmental agencies, as well as non-governmental organizations in the developed countries, in issue areas such as environment, development, health and human rights. These programs must be made larger and more comprehensive, without becoming politically-intrusive or challenging. It may be that the best way of implementing such programs is through already- existing networks of civil society in developed and developing countries.[37]

We need to provide economic aid to governments in post-communist multi-ethnic societies. We need to help these societies develop democratic markets, and not just liberal ones. Under programs of liberalization, governments are finding it necessary to reduce or eliminate programs that, even in a minimal way, address the problem of maldistribution of resources within societies. In ethnically-divided societies, those who have held power, and who often come from a favored ethnic group, are often ahead at the beginning of the race, and stay in the lead.

Rectifying such economic disparities are essential in order to create a sense of fairness. And this means that some degree of intervention into the allocative operation of markets is necessary. This, in turn, will also help to legitimate newly-democratic governments. Such a process will work only if the industrialized states undertake a concerted effort to consciously engage in some degree of global reallocation of resources. This includes many of the usual elements--for example, opening developed country markets to the goods of developing and post-Socialist countries--but also requires large increases in official development assistance, beyond the current level of around $50 billion a year, to cushion the effects of a transition to markets.

Finally, if Western states continue to put their own security first, as a guide to policy, they should regard such efforts not as altruistic acts on their part, nor as a way of recycling money through the global economy. Rather, they should be seen as the "protection costs" necessary for maintaining a relatively stable global system (protection costs should not be regarded as shameful; after all, in was an integral part of containing the Soviet Union during the Cold War). The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction may alter political elites' perceptions about "divisible peace." In the long run, the costs of keeping the collapsing parts of the world contained, or failing to convince

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37. Lipschutz, 1992; Rich, 1994.

"rougue" countries that there is more to be gained by cooperation than acquiring nuclear weapons, will be much, much more expensive than making investments now in helping to build democratic markets and non-exclusionist political systems.